

AN ARMY FOR KOSOVO?

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	i
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. THE INTERIM SECURITY ARCHITECTURE.....	1
A. THE OFFICIAL SECURITY CAPACITY.....	2
1. Indigenous bodies created and overseen by UNMIK	2
2. Kosovo government capacity.....	4
B. AGENTS OF INTERNAL INSTABILITY	6
1. Informal Albanian actors	6
2. Serb structures and the north	8
C. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCES	9
1. KFOR.....	10
2. UNMIK police	11
III. THE KOSOVO PROTECTION CORPS: ALBATROSS OR CINDERELLA?....	12
A. MANDATE.....	12
B. COMPOSITION AND CAPACITY.....	14
C. THE KPC AND KOSOVO SOCIETY.....	17
D. RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY	19
IV. LOOKING FORWARD.....	23
A. THE REGIONAL MILITARY CONTEXT	23
1. Albanian and Serb perceptions of NATO	23
2. Serbia's military concerns and deployments	24
3. Toward collective security	25
4. An army as antidote to paramilitaries	26
B. MILITARY OPTIONS.....	26
1. Uses of an army	27
2. The ideas of the KPC.....	28
3. Perils of the halfway house.....	28
4. With or without the KPC?	29
5. Between disbandment and transformation.....	30
6. Securing the "right stuff"	30
7. Representing Serbia's interest	31
8. Respecting traditions	32
9. The merits of delay	33
V. CONCLUSION	34
APPENDICES	
A. MAP OF KOSOVO	36
B. GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	37

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The international community is just months away from decisions that are expected to make Kosovo a state, but planning for the security ramifications has not kept pace. It must avoid creating a weak state; the future Kosovo needs adequate institutions to ensure the rule of law and the inviolability of its borders, and to combat transnational organised crime and terrorism. Elements important for building a sustainable state must not be traded away to achieve recognition of Kosovo's independence. A key component of post-independence security structures should be an army built in part upon the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), albeit a small one oriented to international missions like peacekeeping and subject in the first years to strict NATO control and limitations on its size and capabilities.

An independent Kosovo's security needs are clear. It requires internal stability and safety from external attack but at the same time, it must not be a threat to its neighbours. Existing formal security structures must be placed under the control of the new institutions of democratic government. Existing informal armed structures, both the legacy of the insurgent Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and those linked to organised crime, must be minimised. Ethnic minorities – particularly Kosovo's Serbs – must be protected, not threatened, by the state's security structures.

NATO should be prepared to maintain its Kosovo Force peacekeepers (KFOR) in the state for a long period to provide external protection and, to a lesser extent, contribute to internal stability, resisting pressures to reduce and then eliminate it altogether before the new state's relations with Serbia are fully normalised and both states have become members of the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.

Some will argue that with KFOR there, a poor and divided place like Kosovo does not need its own military, but full demilitarisation is impracticable. There is insufficient trust to sustain it. It would become a façade, behind which unofficial paramilitary groups would coalesce, making the new state – and its neighbours – less rather than more secure, and less amenable to the rule of law.

A small official army, developed under NATO oversight, is the most appropriate tool, both to prompt the gradual demilitarisation of society and to enable Kosovo's entry into regional collective security arrangements, which are the key to sustainable demilitarisation and security.

If managed well, an army can help develop a stable, multi-ethnic or at least ethnically neutral, identity for the new state. Fashioning a united, representative and professional army for a state deeply divided between the Albanian majority and the rejectionist Serb minority requires a careful choice of building blocks. Unwilling elements cannot be forced to cohere but such an army also cannot be created without regard to existing institutions and the expectations of the majority, who invest hope and authority in the KLA-derived civil protection body, the KPC.

Steering Kosovo's post-status identity away from exclusively Albanian markers is going to be an uphill task. The international community should be realistic and use the levers available to it in Kosovo society. With its partial evolution from paramilitary roots, dependency on NATO expertise, and willingness to undergo substantial change, the KPC offers it an opportunity to exercise a free hand in moulding the army that it should not refuse.

That army should be a small, lightly-equipped, multi-ethnic force of between 2,000 and 3,000 personnel, trained by a dedicated NATO mission to a transparent plan and schedule, and brought to operational capability by 2011-2012. It should not duplicate any police functions but should instead be constructed with an outward orientation, to take its first operational steps in regional initiatives and international peacekeeping operations, and eventually gain membership in PfP and NATO itself. An opportunity should be found as early as 2007 for the first deployment abroad, drawing upon expertise built up in the KPC, like demining. The army's internal security tasks should be severely limited, not much beyond the KPC's present civil protection, engineering and reconstruction mandate.

All this should be framed by accords reached as part of Kosovo's final status settlement. These should also specify a range of limitations on the army's numbers and capabilities, and NATO's role in its governance. Not necessarily negotiated with Pristina and Belgrade, this could even take the form of a conclusion of NATO's North Atlantic Council, or of the six-nation Contact Group guiding the status process. It is better, however, to use the leverage the international community possesses during the final status settlement to create clarity on this sensitive issue, than to leave it hanging, to be dealt with afterwards. The aim should be to graduate Kosovo into the PfP, together with Serbia, when the accords should be superseded by new treaty arrangements. PfP mechanisms can be used to prepare the army to take over security roles from KFOR, eventually allowing for KFOR's complete withdrawal.

NATO and the EU should maintain pressure on Pristina to be creative in bringing Kosovo Serbs on board, in the security sphere and army in particular. Serb tradition should be represented in the army, complementing the Albanians' KLA and KPC tradition. NATO and the EU should also work together to create a supportive environment for Pristina's initiatives. Serbia's pace of accession to the EU and NATO should be partially dependent upon how it treats its southern neighbour, in particular whether it encourages or discourages Kosovo Serbs from integrating into the new state's structures.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Setting the stage:

1. The Contact Group, UN Security Council and the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo (UNOSEK) should frame Kosovo's final status determination in a way that permits development of an army.
2. The Contact Group and NATO should introduce an annex or other form of legally or politically binding understanding into the Kosovo final status determination that outlines the steps that will be taken to develop a small Kosovo defence force, limited in numbers and capabilities – no more than 3,000 personnel and no tanks, heavy artillery, ground to ground missiles or attack aircraft – until such time as both Kosovo and Serbia join NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) program.
3. NATO should view the KPC as the first source of the new army's personnel and should not disband it prior to establishing the new structure.

Interim capacity building:

4. KFOR should develop a closer partnership with the KPC, deepening and standardising the training relationship across Kosovo, with all Multinational Task Forces taking cooperation down to unit level.
5. Donors should breathe more life into the KPC's present mandate: offering more specialised training, more funds for infrastructure and reconstruction projects and more equipment for its civil protection roles.
6. Kosovo's government should build up its security policy capacity, budget for the creation of a defence ministry through 2007-2008, at least maintain the present €15 million annual KPC budget, and ensure that any future rises in what will be its defence budget are sustainable.
7. The donor community should raise funds for demobilising 1,500 to 2,000 KPC members, coordinating with Kosovo's government, which should prepare a legal basis for the demobilisation, and with the International Organisation on Migration (IOM), which should rebuild its capacity in Kosovo for resettlement work.

Steps toward army formation, from 2007:

8. Upon the request of Kosovo's government, and guided by the proposed final status, NATO should establish a dedicated military training mission, attaching it to the KPC coordinator's office: that office should be renamed and report to the KFOR commander (COMKFOR) after the UN Mission (UNMIK) leaves.
9. Kosovo's defence ministry should be built through 2007-2008 on the foundation of the KPC coordinator's office, with an increasing proportion of Kosovo staff; and a national security council should be instituted from 2007, with international officials representing the interests of the Serb minority if it initially boycotts the institution.
10. The KPC general staff, KPC coordinator's office and the NATO training mission should jointly filter all KPC personnel who want to serve in the new army, in accordance with the following principles:
 - (a) NATO should have the last word on candidates;
 - (b) evaluation should be based on tests and candidates' accumulated professional development and disciplinary records;

- (c) KPC members whose candidacies are not accepted and KPC members who do not want to serve will be designated for demobilisation and a resettlement program; and
 - (d) remaining places in the army should gradually be filled by new recruits.
11. The new army should have uniforms in the style of U.S. or European armies, distinct from KPC uniforms or other uniforms with connotations of recent local history, and insignia and symbols that are ethnically neutral.
 12. Willing NATO members should donate equipment to the new army, coordinated through the training mission.
 13. The army's civil protection and reconstruction arm, incorporating the best KPC expertise, should be brought to operational status immediately, its new infantry element, after appropriately thorough training, around 2011-2012.
 14. Small deployments of Kosovo army specialist civil protection elements, such as deminers, should be made within international peacekeeping missions as soon as possible, prior to the army's full operational preparedness.
 15. NATO should set exacting requirements for Kosovo's PfP eligibility, including representation of Serbs in the army, and, together with the EU, should encourage the Kosovo government to create the political space and concrete initiatives that can help in meeting these requirements.
 16. NATO and the EU, working together should make clear to Serbia that its future membership depends importantly on its attitude toward Kosovo, in particular whether it encourages or discourages Kosovo Serbs from integrating into the new state's structures.

Steps beyond, toward Partnership for Peace:

13. The army's civil protection and reconstruction arm, incorporating the best KPC expertise, should be brought to operational status immediately, its new infantry element, after appropriately thorough training, around 2011-2012.

Pristina/Belgrade/Brussels, 28 July 2006

AN ARMY FOR KOSOVO?

I. INTRODUCTION

Should an independent Kosovo have its own army, like virtually every country? Some Contact Group¹ members think not: as a weak state that needs to secure the recognition and confidence of its neighbours and the wider world, it would do better to pour all its energies and resources into civil development. The international community is uncertain which way to go on Kosovo's security. Should it emphasise containment and limitation of the territory and its capacities, or support its development as a security contributor and fully-fledged regional partner? With NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR) intended to remain after Kosovo gains the anticipated conditional independence, many ask why a national force would be needed, especially if it would further rankle a Serbia that will have difficulty anyway accepting the new status. Others point to risks in denying Kosovo formal equality in the security sector with its neighbours, the odd man out in the region, excluded from NATO's Partnership for Peace (PfP) and ultimately membership in that alliance.

The diplomatic compromises on Kosovo's status package may be based not so much on Kosovo's problems as on the international community's problems; a sustainable security model for Kosovo may not fit easily with the Contact Group's lowest common denominator. The Contact Group is, therefore, unsure how much support to give to the conclusions of the Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR) now under way inside Kosovo.² The UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has a seven-year legacy of institution-building, including its maintenance of an aspirant army in the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) successor body, the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). Entrenched Albanian-Serb divisions only deepen as status resolution draws closer, also limiting possibilities for designing ideal security blueprints. When the time comes later in 2006 for the

international community to be explicit about Kosovo's status, Serbian reactions will certainly include a mix of acquiescence, exodus and resistance, in proportions difficult to predict. Kosovo's UN-created, largely Kosovo Albanian security bodies will be thrust into a new context, with debate and consensus about their forms and roles incomplete and much of their capacity still to be constructed.

An independent Kosovo's security needs are fairly clear. A new state will need to be defended from external attack and from internal instability, and at the same time must not be a threat to its neighbours. Existing formal security structures must be under the democratic control of the institutions of government. Existing informal armed structures, both those that are a KLA legacy and those that are linked to organised crime, must be minimised. Ethnic minorities – particularly Kosovo's Serbs – must be protected, not threatened, by state security structures.

Even with KFOR staying on for some years and a new EU-dominated oversight and police and justice mission taking up some of the departing UN's prerogatives, independence will trigger shifts both in Kosovo's internal security regime and the regional security equation. At present, Kosovo's internal security architecture is a complex web of international forces, official indigenous bodies raised by the international administration, and informal, illegal bodies, groups and movements. The latter range from KLA leftovers, through crime syndicates to Kosovo Serb paramilitaries and Serbian security structures. How to ensure that gaps are not filled by undesirable actors? How to ensure that a new Kosovo state contributes to rather than damages regional stability? Are questions of what to do with the KPC and whether to allow Kosovo an army central or peripheral?

These tough questions cannot be left for the distant future. This paper proposes the way forward on the assumption that Kosovo will achieve conditional independence by or not long after the end of 2006.

¹ Originally formed in 1994 to deal with Bosnia, the Contact Group comprises key states interested in the Balkans: the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Russia. It plays a leading role in setting the agenda for determination of Kosovo's future status.

² See Crisis Group Europe Report N°170, *Kosovo: the Challenge of Transition*, 17 February 2006, pp. 9-10, for an account of the ISSR's first steps. For more on the ISSR, see below.

II. THE INTERIM SECURITY ARCHITECTURE

Kosovo's interim security is underwritten by the 16,000-strong NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) drawn from 37 nations and by UN police from 46 nations. While UN Security Council Resolution 1244, the 1999 post-war disposition, remains in force, responsibilities and direct control over security issues are shared between the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG), who heads UNMIK and oversees the law enforcement institutions,³ and the KFOR commander (COMKFOR), who is charged with maintaining a "safe and secure environment" within which the civilian mission can function. The division of responsibility is ambiguous, and the response to the March 2004 riots was consequently disastrous.⁴ Beginning in the last quarter of 2004, the recently departed SRSG Soren Jessen-Petersen forged close relations with successive COMKFORs to avoid recurrence of this problem.

Resolution 1244 and the 2001 Kosovo Constitutional Framework UNMIK crafted in its wake put the reins of security governance in UNMIK's hands but since late 2005, the mission has tried to accelerate a limited delegation of authority by creating a legal basis for the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) and shells of future justice and interior ministries. As long as UNMIK remains, however, it and KFOR still wield the stick, not Kosovo's elected representatives,⁵ just as when they mounted an operation in March 2005 to ensure a tidy removal of Kosovo's serving prime minister to pre-war crimes trial detention in The Hague.

But underneath the overlay of international authority and security institutions, indigenous factors are becoming stronger. Indigenous bodies that UNMIK has developed

³ Chapter Seven of UNMIK's 2001 Constitutional Framework entrusts the SRSG with "exercising authority over law enforcement institutions and the correctional service, both of which include and are supported by local staff", and "exercising control and authority over the Kosovo Protection Corps". Chapter Eight gives the SRSG power and responsibilities for "exercising control and authority over the management of the administration and financing of civil security and emergency preparedness. Responsibility shall be gradually assumed by the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government". Available at www.unmikonline.org/constframework.htm#7.

⁴ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°155, *Collapse in Kosovo*, 22 April 2004.

⁵ See Ilir Dugolli and Lulzim Peci, "Enhancing civilian management and oversight of the security sector in Kosovo", Kipred/Saferworld, November 2005, for a critique of the limited space the UN has allowed for local involvement and responsibility.

over the last seven years, like the KPS, play a growing role. KFOR and UNMIK tailor deployments and policies to deter Albanians and Serbs from mobilising against one another in divided Mitrovica and the north. They co-opt ex-KLA leaders like former and current Prime Ministers Haradinaj and Ceku and bodies like the KPC, which are seen by Albanian society as pillars of security but by Serbs and Serbia as extremists intent upon completing ethnic cleansing.

A. THE OFFICIAL SECURITY CAPACITY

1. Indigenous bodies created and overseen by UNMIK

UNMIK is responsible for several security and law enforcement bodies with indigenous staff: the 7,000-strong Kosovo Police Service (KPS), the 1,200-strong Kosovo Correctional Service (KCS, the prison service), and the 560-strong UNMIK Customs Service. The status resolution timetable and UNMIK's relative unpopularity and likely exit during the first half of 2007 have accelerated the building of local capacity and institutions and the delegation of powers. The KPS has been developed as a distinct indigenous service, which is gradually taking over from the UN's international police. Formally, the prisons and customs services are internationally-run, yet both have developed with overwhelmingly indigenous staff. Each now retains only a few senior foreign officials, who guide their development without the heavy reliance on internationals from which policing is attempting to transition.

The exception is the KPC, put in UNMIK's lap in September 1999 as a product of the June 1999 Undertaking on Demilitarisation and Transformation the KLA gave to KFOR.⁶ While the KPS has expanded, the KPC has contracted. Full-time salaries and employment of 2,000 designated reserves among its 5,000 members ceased in 2003, and the KPC now lacks funds to call them up. While the KPS annual budget has grown to some €60 million, the KPC has been kept to roughly €15 million and has seen the police designated to roles it wanted: close protection, anti-terrorism, security of government buildings and Serb religious sites. Officially, the KPC is not allowed any security role but Albanians

⁶ Its text is online at www.nato.int/kfor/kfor/documents/uck.htm. The transcript of a 21 September 1999 press conference in which SRSG Bernard Kouchner and COMKFOR Mike Jackson commented on the relationship of the Undertaking to the formation of the KPC is online at www.nato.int/kosovo/press/1999/k990921b.htm.

look to it as a security pillar; its popularity outstrips all other institutions, including the KPS and KFOR.⁷

The KPC and KPS each include about 2,000 who claim to be former KLA fighters in their ranks.⁸ Ironically, given the KPC's close identification with the former insurgents and the tendency to sell the KPS as a multi-ethnic success story created by the international community, there are roughly as many former KLA in the KPS as in the active body of the KPC. Roughly 25 per cent of the 7,000 KPS and 70 per cent of the 3,052 active KPC personnel were once rebel fighters. Those in the KPC were trawled from those who registered for the KLA demobilisation program, managed by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM). "I got the KLA members who did not have other options", said former KPC Commander Ceku.⁹ Those in the KPS applied, competed and were selected, half or more in the framework of a quota arrangement negotiated in late 1999, the others individually during later recruitment.

Two other significant KPS components are older, mainly Albanian former police of the pre-1990 Kosovo Autonomous Province, and former and present officers of Serbia's interior ministry (MUP), many of whom receive a parallel salary from Belgrade. All KPC current vacancies are reserved for ethnic minority candidates. It is struggling to fill them against the grain of Kosovo Serb sentiment and Belgrade's hostility. In contrast, the KPS has more easily reached a 15 per cent minority benchmark, and aims for 20 per cent as it fills out its planned complement of 7400 officers. Neither has Belgrade hindered Serb recruitment into the customs and prison services.

⁷ The most recent evidence includes an opinion poll by the Gani Bobi Centre, using a sample of 850 Albanians and non-Serb minorities, published by KUMT Consulting in early June 2006. The KPC had 83.4 per cent approval, the KPS 69.6 per cent, KFOR 63.2 per cent; 3.4 per cent distrusted the KPC, 8.8 per cent the KPS, 9.1 per cent KFOR. Provisional government institutions (PISG) had trust in the 45-50 per cent range. International institutions fared least well: Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) was trusted by 40 per cent, UNMIK by 30.7 per cent; 30.6 per cent distrusted UNMIK. Another June opinion poll, for United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Early Warning Report among all ethnic groups, was comparable: 87.15 per cent expressing satisfaction with the KPC, 81.75 per cent with the KPS, 80.94 per cent with KFOR. The results for the PISG and UNMIK were similar to those of the Gani Bobi poll.

⁸ There is a discrepancy between usual estimates of the KLA's field strength in 1998-1999, 15,000 or less, and the 25,000 who registered as KLA fighters with the IOM demobilisation program in late 1999/early 2000.

⁹ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 23 September 2003.

Yet pressures for ethnic segregation within the KPS and the customs service are growing. Most Serbian politicians favour augmenting the KPS at municipal level in Serb areas and emasculating Pristina's central control. Especially in the north, Serbs are reluctant to join regional-level units or accept senior positions at Pristina headquarters, and Albanians in the regional units and the customs service are made unwelcome. With a mix of MUP parallel control, boycotts and threats, Serb leadership in the north is trying to mould the KPS locally into the force it wants. Similarly, it has effected a territorial-ethnic division in the customs service. Since threats were made to attack Albanian officers in mid-June 2006, only Serb customs officers serve north of the Ibar. All Serbs who previously served elsewhere are now posted there to fill gaps created by the withdrawal of Albanians and the many removals of officers involved in the smuggling rackets that thrive in the north.

UNMIK has developed its early 2005 initiative of posting international officers to Serb enclaves into a network of village police stations in vulnerable areas that are now staffed by local KPS officers. This is leading to a new layer of mostly Serb police, partly detached from predominantly Albanian municipal police commands.

UNMIK is gradually delegating more competencies to the KPS, which now performs all day-to-day policing functions. Its sense of identity has become more tangible, and it appears a more muscular body than two years ago, better able to calm crowds than UNMIK police and with fuller awareness of local criminal fraternities.¹⁰ Citizens are now more willing to help it solve ordinary crimes, though when dealing with powerful crime groups assumed to have political connections, cooperation and KPS mettle fray, and compromised elements within the KPS, courts or prosecutorial service prevent results. In both the KPS and customs, younger generation officers are professionally motivated and able but need the protection of international overseers to keep at bay predatory political forces. Such young professionals run the customs service, protected by an international director general. An older generation still dominates senior KPS posts.¹¹

The KPS is large, with roughly one officer for every 300 citizens. This is comparable with neighbouring Macedonia

¹⁰ See Crisis Group Report, *Collapse in Kosovo*, op. cit., for a contrasting account of the KPS in the March 2004 riots. It lacked equipment, training, and its own chain of command. KFOR and UNMIK either swept it aside or neglected it.

¹¹ Crisis Group interviews, KPS and customs officers, May and June 2006.

and high police ratios throughout Eastern Europe.¹² Yet the pre-1990 autonomous province of Kosovo had only 3,000 police. Moreover, the planned KPS complement of 7,400 is nearly double UNMIK's original target of 3,500 to 4000.¹³ Senior officers believe the force may grow further after final status is determined.¹⁴ The expansion may be partially explained as compensation for the absence of a Kosovo army.¹⁵ A more military-like aspect has accompanied KPS development since mid-2004. The six or more Regional Operational Support Units (ROSUs) resemble gendarmerie and are riot-trained and equipped – although UNMIK stresses that “they are trained not to beat people”.¹⁶ There are plans to expand the currently 690-strong border police to 1,700, ultimately to take over most duties from KFOR. A Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) unit is undergoing training.

All police stations and regional commands, apart from Mitrovica, are in the hands of the KPS. KFOR has delegated escort of most Serb convoys and protection of several Serb religious sites to the KPS. It provides security to buildings and senior members of the provisional government institutions (PISG). In April and May 2006 KPS colonels were promoted to assistant commissioner rank at the head of the various divisions, with one raised to deputy police commissioner. With the exception of the KPS's lively administration division chief, most remain happy to take a back seat, as their UNMIK counterparts run most of the show. Earlier ideas that during 2006 UNMIK's police commissioner delegate much of his current role to the new deputy and become his mentor have been shelved – a fair weather plan kept in harbour: UNMIK will retain the tiller in a likely stormy final status security environment.

2. Kosovo government capacity

The early March 2006 government reshuffle included the long-delayed appointment of ministers to the newly

formed ministries of internal affairs and justice. Now that they are in place, UNMIK is considering the transfer of more competencies, including making the internal affairs ministry jointly responsible with its police commissioner for KPS oversight. Some officers fear that the LDK-controlled ministry will tilt the service politically.¹⁷ The minister himself is not confident he will have real powers before UNMIK leaves.¹⁸ Despite the new ministries and ISSR, which is meant to produce Kosovo's own proposal for security service configuration, UNMIK continues to be the driving force behind new security initiatives.

In early June 2006 the announcement of a new body, the council for security of communities, bypassed the ministers of interior and communities and returns. Although Prime Minister Ceku welcomed it as a possible precursor of a national security council, it cannot grow into that unless a wider circle of actors understands and accepts its potential role.¹⁹ All the most popular Kosovo Serb politicians oppose the accumulation of security prerogatives by Pristina and will boycott any PISG body. Kosovo Serbs take a dim view of any of their politicians who do offer Pristina cooperation.²⁰

With UNMIK due to go soon, the government seems content to wait it out. Capacity building for security governance is proceeding lethargically, both in the ministries and the prime minister's office. In the latter, dysfunction has characterised the relationship between successive security advisers and its “Office for Public Safety” since late 2004.²¹ A security coordination suite in the basement of the new government building is without staff and adequate equipment. The minister of the

¹² Macedonia has 8,200 police for a population of 2.4 million, one for every 293 citizens. During the Soviet era, Eastern Europe averaged 1:380. According to a 1965 study of 136 countries, world ratios were roughly 1:715. See David H. Bayley, *Patterns of Policing: a Comparative International Analysis* (New Brunswick, 1985), p. 76.

¹³ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°74, *The Policing Gap: Law and Order in the New Kosovo*, 6 August 1999, p. 7.

¹⁴ Crisis Group interview, 30 September 2005.

¹⁵ Police Commissioner Vittrup advanced an alternative explanation that the large numbers compensate for low levels of expertise and experience in the young service. Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 24 July 2006.

¹⁶ Ibid. Indeed, a journalist witness described to Crisis Group how these units succeeded on 28 June 2006 in arresting dozens of demonstrators without the incidents of police violence that marred previous such encounters.

¹⁷ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°163, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, 26 May 2005; and Crisis Group Report, *Challenge of Transition*, op. cit., for background on Kosovo's political parties and concerns over their ability to manage security institutions impartially. The LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo) is Kosovo's largest political party.

¹⁸ Comments to media, 9 June 2006.

¹⁹ Its first meeting, on 16 June 2006 with no Serbs participating, discussed security implications of declarations by the northern Serb-majority municipalities that they would boycott the PISG and the regional KPS and consider organising self-defence.

²⁰ A recent opinion poll showed that Kosovo Serbs confer trust upon leaders who refuse to engage with Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, giving high ratings to figures such as Bishop Artemije, Marko Jaksic, Milan Ivanovic and Rada Trajkovic. Kosovo Serb politicians who do communicate or collaborate with Pristina, like Oliver Ivanovic or Slavisa Petkovic scored very low. See KUMT Consulting, *Kosovo Perspectives*, No. 7, 16 June 2006

²¹ UNMIK authorised creation of this office under Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi in 2004 to develop the provisional government's security awareness and policy. It has never functioned well. Prime Minister Ceku envisages it becoming the secretariat of the council for security of communities.

interior has the luxury of choosing which issues to embrace and which to duck.²² The prime minister's staff indicates that real security planning will begin only after the structure of the new constitution is known. The possibility of feeding such planning into the drafting is ignored.²³

The Kosovo Assembly also appears poorly prepared to oversee security bodies: closed-list elections, rigid party hierarchies, and its unimpressive record do not promise robust, independent, inquisitive and responsible work in the committees that will eventually have responsibilities for the security and intelligence services. A national security council may be set up once status is resolved, but without adequate preparation it could prove an empty shell.

Several unregulated, privately-financed intelligence services associated with political parties continue to operate, with ties to various Western intelligence agencies that in recent years have also begun cooperating more closely with the Serbian intelligence agencies.²⁴ UNMIK acknowledges the need for a new official intelligence service;²⁵ ISSR is yet to pronounce on this issue. The UK, U.S. and possibly others are each trying to design approaches to its creation. Unlikely to be established before final status, it is projected to report to the prime minister's office²⁶ but the Contact Group is just beginning to deliberate on how far, if at all, to allow Kosovo to develop its own intelligence identity. The neighbourhood offers no examples of successful domestic intelligence agencies. Most are still beyond effective democratic control, and some are closely allied with organised crime. Given the trans-regional challenge of organised crime, a network of credible and cooperating domestic intelligence agencies is needed but it does not exist.

Contrasting with the police and justice sectors, there are no plans to make any Kosovo government ministry responsible for the KPC,²⁷ and its future is uncertain. It is formally overseen by a joint UNMIK-KFOR KPC Development Group that meets roughly every three months. Practically, KFOR keeps it under constant inspection, and since August 2002 its day-to-day interface with UNMIK has been the KPC coordinator's office, headed by successive British major generals, which, with fifteen international staff including four seconded from the British army, supervises implementation of its mandate and controls its purse strings. That office is responsible for KPC strategy and policy, which it tries to keep distinct from the KPC head's command and control responsibilities. It does part of the work of a defence ministry and could be the future core of such a ministry.

Although Kosovo's provisional government and negotiating team are adamant that an independent Kosovo will have its own armed forces, they have no capacity for security planning with which to begin. Instead, they wait for the KPC itself to propose a configuration of personnel and equipment. With Kosovo's GDP of roughly €2.25 billion²⁸ and European NATO members' military spending averaging 1.8-1.9 per cent of GDP,²⁹ a future Kosovo army realistically could not expect an annual budget of more than €13 million, and would probably have to make do with much less. The KPC's preliminary budgeting is that an army's annual staff costs would be some €10 million, and a core budget of €20 million to €25 million might be sufficient for the first three to five years.³⁰ This fits roughly with an "ideal" military budget structure of 50 per cent (or less) for personnel costs, 30 per cent for operational costs, and 20 per cent for investments. If the current KPC size of 3000 were kept, this could amount to an annual budget of €7000 per soldier. The US army spends nearly ten times that per head, the Serbian army roughly €10,000, which, with planned reductions in numbers, may soon rise to around €15,000.

²² In early June 2006 he associated himself with moves to bolster police strength in predominantly Serb northern Kosovo, yet made himself invisible on the question of how to deal with the 8-9 June siege of UNMIK headquarters by the Vetevendosje! Movement (Prime Minister Ceku, in contrast, called upon the protestors to desist). The KPS eventually broke up the demonstration, arresting 80. The minister later criticised the ten-day prison sentences.

²³ Crisis Group interview, prime minister's office, 12 June 2006.

²⁴ Crisis Group interviews, Belgrade and Pristina, 2006.

²⁵ Crisis Group interview, SRSG Soren Jessen-Petersen, Pristina, 1 February 2006.

²⁶ See "Kosova se shpejti behet me Sherbim te Zbulimit?" [Will Kosovo soon have an intelligence service?], *Zeri*, 12 June 2006. Prime Minister Ceku has hesitated over the appointment of a Slovenian intelligence adviser, originally due to start work in July 2006.

²⁷ Though there are plans to link it with the ministry of interior's future department of emergency management for civil emergency response.

²⁸ IMF projection for 2006. See "Aide Memoire of the IMF Staff Mission to Kosovo" 22-31 May 2006.

²⁹ The seven most recent NATO members each committed in 2002 to spending at least 2 per cent of GDP on defence. See Andrew Cottey, Timothy Edmunds, and Anthony Forster, "Beyond Prague", *Nato Review*, Autumn 2002, for background.

³⁰ Crisis Group interview, June 2006.

At €90 million, Kosovo's 2006 budget is €10 million less than in 2005 and is likely to be tighter still in 2007.³¹ Donor money is being sought to make up a roughly €70 million deficit. If room is made for defence spending, Kosovo's disastrously under-resourced infrastructure, healthcare and education systems will be further restricted, and budget donors might be deterred. Moreover, the IMF warns that the government's budgetary discipline has ebbed in recent months.³² International financial experts point out that the war pensions law alone, due to begin payments in January 2007, may cost upward of €20 million per year³³ – not the easiest of budget environments in which to augment the €15 million currently spent on maintaining the KPC. It might be more realistic to assume a reduction in numbers to 2000, in order to accommodate a future army's basic needs within the current KPC budget.

The government's major capacity deficit is in political flexibility and creativity. The UN's Standards for Kosovo program is too easy a template. Demonstrating an effort to "implement the standards" is a little too like painting by numbers. It does not oblige politicians to come up with imaginative solutions to problems. Kosovo Albanian political thinking has not matured to embrace the Serb north, where moves to break all links with Pristina and consolidate a security apparatus that excludes Albanians bring only knee-jerk reactions. Albanians still look to the international community to deliver north Kosovo to them. With the exception of opposition politician Veton Surroi, leaders are making no attempt to divine and address Serb fears.³⁴ Indeed, some are using the north as a crude marketing tool for themselves rather than rising to the challenge of a multi-ethnic Kosovo.³⁵

While the transformation of the KPC into Kosovo's future army is a *sine qua non* for them, it is anathema for Serbs. With their political lethargy, Albanian leaders leave the field to informal groups from below. The lack of ideas is itself a security risk. The Albanian policy

agenda for the day after independence is blank.³⁶ This lessens the likelihood that Kosovo can be guided by institutions, heightens the risk of breakdown and terrifies Serbs, who fear that whatever the Albanians leave unspoken menaces them.

B. AGENTS OF INTERNAL INSTABILITY

1. Informal Albanian actors

While some former KLA have moved on to other walks of life, and over 4,000 are in the active personnel of the KPS and KPC, most of the 25,000 who registered with the IOM in 1999 are unemployed, particularly in Drenica and Decan (Dukagjini). Vocal but marginalised associations represent war veterans, invalids and widowed families. Especially in Dukagjini, former KLA units and groups are cohesive and a magnet for the militant younger generation. They have weapons and could mobilise quickly.³⁷ Many from Dukagjini participated in the fighting in Macedonia in 2001, putting on a stronger performance than the KLA managed in 1998-1999. KFOR was concerned Drenica and Dukagjini fighters might mobilise to assault north Mitrovica during the March 2004 riots. Dukagjini fighters nearly did mobilise when The Hague Tribunal indicted Prime Minister Haradinaj in 2005.³⁸ A Serbian analyst sees the old Yugoslavia's tradition of dual-layer defence, with a central army (JNA) and defence ministry complemented by small defence ministries and largely reservist territorial defence forces in each republic, replicated in Kosovo – with the KPC in the role of the JNA and the irregulars clustered around former KLA groups as Kosovo's version of a territorial defence force.³⁹

Organised crime structures are also part of the security picture. The chief of K-SHIK (the KLA-derived intelligence service associated with the Democratic Party of Kosovo, PDK)⁴⁰ bemoaned how easily "some of our field commanders" were recruited by organised

³¹ The IMF's Kosovo representative, Marc Auboin, warned in a 13 June 2006 press conference that the economy would contract in 2007 and the budget would have to be reduced.

³² "Aide Memoire", op. cit.

³³ Correspondence with Crisis Group, June 2006. The ministry of social welfare's projection of a €10 million to €15 million annual cost was not judged credible.

³⁴ Surroi has run a committee for consultation of ethnic minorities in the context of Pristina's status negotiation preparations and made two visits to north Mitrovica, in May and June 2006.

³⁵ Notably the chairman of the Assembly's security and emergency preparedness committee, Naim Maloku, who in late June 2006 portrayed a projected OSCE-organised regional parliamentarians visit to north Mitrovica as his own initiative. The publicity he created contributed to its cancellation.

³⁶ Questioned on post-independence priorities, Deputy Prime Minister Lutfi Haziri said implementation of decentralisation and other final status settlement provisions would dominate the government's agenda for three or four years. Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 11 July 2006.

³⁷ See Crisis Group Report, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, op. cit.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Crisis Group interview, Aleksandar Radic, Belgrade, 13 May 2006.

⁴⁰ Many also associate this shadowy body with organised crime. See Crisis Group Reports *Kosovo after Haradinaj* and *Kosovo: the Challenge of Transition*, both op. cit., for background.

crime after the war.⁴¹ In recent years some crime groups have attached themselves to the more successful Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK). Some linked the fortunes of a crime syndicate in a southern town with the ascent of a senior LDK politician since 2004. Criminals unrelated to the KLA appear to have created the several “liberation armies” announced in late 2005 in Drenica, Dukagjini, Ferizaj/Urosevac and Kacanik, whose main activity was highway robbery. Between Drenica and Pristina some criminals have mutual protection arrangements with businessmen. The frequent releases on bail or escapes from police custody of hardened Drenica criminal Faton Hajrizi suggest helpers among judges and police.⁴² In Dukagjini members of a KLA unit, the Black Eagles, appear to have consolidated a smuggling network. This unit was a rallying point for possible violent action in the run-up to the Haradinaj indictment. Criminal groups were prominent in the March 2004 riots.

With much of the profit often made in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe ploughed back into construction in Kosovo, many citizens do not view organised crime as a critical security problem.⁴³ Banditry still has a residual social attraction.⁴⁴ Yet, although foreign commentators associate Albanian organised crime with a clan structure, strong traditional family structures in most cases act as a brake upon recruitment; ostracism is a likelier and severer consequence than in a more atomised society.⁴⁵ However, high and rising youth unemployment creates conditions for wider criminalisation.

Albin Kurti’s protest movement, *Vetevendosje!*, has attempted to tap into the large reserves of frustrated Albanian youth, a constituency prominent in the March

2004 riots.⁴⁶ He has mobilised it almost exclusively against UNMIK and Serbian official visitors. He tried to extend an 8 June 2006 demonstration of several hundred protestors into an around-the-clock blockade of the administration’s headquarters, inviting police action. He and his supporters blocked highways in anticipation of Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica’s visit on 28 June 2006. On both occasions, Kurti and dozens of his supporters were arrested.⁴⁷ The movement’s other targets are any concessions to Serbia, including the decentralisation and church protection measures that might create greater space and security for Serb communities. Particular targets have been UNMIK’s special zoning order around Decani monastery and decentralisation proposals in eastern Kosovo. *Vetevendosje!* has largely avoided agitating in more dangerously explosive Mitrovica.

Kurti’s recent campaign for a consumer boycott of Serbian products attracted a complaint from President Tadic, but also support from Kosovo Albanian businessmen interested in cutting out competition. Declaring UNMIK its enemy, it has studiously avoided targeting Kosovo’s government but the organisation has edged further away from roots in conflict resolution and non-violence. Kurti has increasingly aligned with KLA veterans and the radical LPK and National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo (LKCK) parties, adopted more confrontational tactics, and spoken of taking up arms. Nevertheless, *Vetevendosje!* has not become a mass movement.⁴⁸

There is potential, however, for mob activism to turn into “a revolt against institutions”.⁴⁹ It could also target international oversight institutions and disrupt any delicate compromises agreed with Kosovo’s Serbs.

⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, Kadri Veseli, Pristina, 17 November 2005. The PDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo) is Kosovo’s second-largest political party. It is derived from the KLA and its post-war provisional government.

⁴² Crisis Group interview, KPS captain, 17 May 2006; “Prape arratiset Fatoni” [Faton escapes again], *Express*, 12 June 2006.

⁴³ Public opinion surveys for the ISSR; Crisis Group interview, ISSR secretariat official, Pristina, 8 May 2006.

⁴⁴ See Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits* (1969, republished 2000), which chronicled the history of “robbers and outlaws who are not regarded by public opinion as simple criminals, but rather as champions of social justice, as avengers or as primitive resistance fighters”. The *Express*, 30 June 2006, interview with escaped bandit Faton Hajrizi, conducted in the Drenica hills, shows that the attraction extends beyond the rural population to urban journalists.

⁴⁵ A KPS captain stressed that family pressures dampened crime in his area, Crisis Group interview, Skenderaj/Srbica, 17 May 2006.

⁴⁶ See Crisis Group Report, *Collapse in Kosovo*, op. cit., for an account of the riots, and, on p. 32, discussion of Kosovo’s youth-oriented demography and its impact upon political stability.

⁴⁷ By KPS special units, most of whose members were previously in the KLA.

⁴⁸ In a June 2006 opinion poll for UNDP’s “Early Warning Report”, 16 per cent of Kosovo Albanian respondents expressed readiness to join *Vetevendosje!*. A further 40 per cent expressed more limited support. A demonstration called by *Vetevendosje!* and its allies to protest the Vienna status talks on 24 July attracted only 200-300 people.

⁴⁹ Particularly if the government maintains its conspicuous consumption at taxpayers’ expense: procurement abuses, expensive car purchases and absurdly high mobile phone bills. ISSR research has shown significant public disenchantment with the PISG. UNDP’s “Early Warning Report” polling in June 2006 confirmed the government’s declining popularity, with 47 per cent citing “careless spending on luxury goods” as the main budget management problem. See also Berat Buzhala, “Hothead’s dreams may become reality”, BIRN Balkan Insight, 14 June 2006, www.birn.eu.com.

Neither Kosovo's economy, nor its political and government institutions are absorbing the energies of the large numbers of young people.⁵⁰ Unemployment continues to rise, and tight visa policies lock them out of the European Union.⁵¹ The inadequate education system is worsening, not improving. School examination results showed new lows in 2006.⁵² A tiny but growing minority is turning to Wahhabi Islam. The initial report of the Kosovo Internal Security Sector Review rightly concluded that:

The discrepancy between demographic trends and the development of the economy...constitutes a structural threat to the long term security in Kosovo....A large and badly educated population of youth will be a major stimulus for criminal and social upheaval.⁵³

It is when these three major constituencies – war veterans, organised crime and youth – combine outside any institutional framework, as they did in March 2004, that the biggest dangers arise, to Kosovo's cohesion in general and to Serbs in particular. It is crucial to anchor the first and the third to institutions in which they can believe and participate.

2. Serb structures and the north

Serb north Kosovo is preparing to defy Pristina over final status. At the least, it will deepen its boycott of government institutions and make it difficult and dangerous for their representatives and non-local Albanians to venture north of the Ibar. Tensions could escalate should paramilitaries enter the north from Serbia. In the worst scenario, the Serbs in the north, who are mentally detaching themselves from the roughly 60 per cent of Kosovo Serbs in enclaves south of the Ibar, could seek formal reincorporation into Serbia. The more drastic the denouement in the north, the more vulnerable the remainder of Kosovo's Serbs will be to an Albanian backlash.

Since the dissolution of the Mitrovica Bridge Watchers as a paid structure in 2003, Belgrade and

the dominant local political force in the north, the Serb National Council (SNC), have been content to maintain a more low profile security presence. With the partial exception of Zubin Potok, they have made the KPS in the three northern municipalities and north Mitrovica their own vehicle.⁵⁴ UNMIK's openness to further recruitment of former MUP officers into the KPS and their training in north Mitrovica rather than the Vushtri/Vucitrn police school, will tilt the KPS north of the Ibar further in their favour.⁵⁵ UNMIK responded to threats of violence in June 2006 by deploying more international police officers and refusing to withdraw Albanians from regional KPS units above the Ibar.⁵⁶ It deployed additional international officers to the two northern boundary "gates"⁵⁷ after a brawl between Albanian KPS border officers and the Serb deputy mayor of Leposavic in mid-July 2006.

Serbia maintains parallel police stations in these areas, staffed by MUP plainclothes officers,⁵⁸ whose numbers appear to have grown in recent weeks.⁵⁹ Though UNSC Resolution 1244 stipulated the withdrawal of all Serbian security forces from Kosovo, UNMIK and KFOR turn a blind eye. Serbs maintain that Resolution 1244 provides at least an implicit right for the return of up to 1,000 Serbian security personnel. Its text speaks of "a small agreed number", "hundreds, not thousands" of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel...permitted to return to Kosovo" to fulfil some specified tasks "under the supervision of the international security presence, but there has been no subsequent agreement."⁶⁰

⁵⁰ See Crisis Group Report, *Collapse in Kosovo*, op. cit. pp. 32-36, for a description of shortcomings and Kosovo Albanian youth's periodic role in social breakdown.

⁵¹ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°168, *EU Visas and the Western Balkans*, 29 November 2005, particularly p. 15.

⁵² See, for example, Beke Abazi, "Testimi i aritshmerise tregon renie te dijes te nxenesit mitrovicas" [Exams show a decline in Mitrovica pupils' knowledge], *Zeri*, 30 June 2006; RTK/BIRN's "Jeta ne Kosove" TV debate, 12 July 2006.

⁵³ KIPRED, Kosovo's Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR), "Stages I & II, Strategic Environment Review & Security Threats Analysis, Initial Findings", March 2006, at www.kipred.net.

⁵⁴ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°165, *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, 13 September 2005, pp. 6, 26-28.

⁵⁵ Deputy SRS/SG Steven Schook announced this initiative in early June 2006 as a confidence building gesture to Serbs in the north.

⁵⁶ Meeting Police Commissioner Vittrup in mid-June 2006, Serb leaders in north Kosovo said they would not answer for the consequences if Albanians in KPS regional units were not withdrawn from north of the Ibar. On 14 June an Albanian traffic officer was told at Grabovac village on the Mitrovica-Leposavic highway that he would be shot if he came again. On 15 June a customs service vehicle was struck by a grenade at Gazivode lake in Zubin Potok municipality.

⁵⁷ The two boundary "gates", near Leposavic and Zubin Potok. See Crisis Group Report *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, op. cit., p. 13 for background on these boundary crossings.

⁵⁸ See Crisis Group Report, *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, op. cit., pp. 6, 26.

⁵⁹ Crisis Group interview, UNMIK Police source, 24 July 2006.

⁶⁰ A banner proclaiming this alleged right has been prominent in the centre of north Mitrovica for the last year. The resolution states that "an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serb military and police personnel will be permitted to return to Kosovo" to liaise, mark and clear minefields and maintain a presence at Serb

This “right” is reiterated in the three northern municipalities’ declarations on “a state of emergency in north Kosovo” of 5, 12 and 13 June 2006 which withdrew cooperation from the regional KPS, mandated emergency committees and demanded that “more than 100” Serbian police be allowed to return or they would recruit “999 Serbian police” themselves.⁶¹ Unobtrusively, they have begun to raise a paramilitary force. Roughly 360 former Yugoslav army reservists, with combat experience from the wars of the 1990s, appear to have been gathered so far, their salaries paid from municipal budgets furnished by Belgrade, under cover of formal posts in village administration and the like.⁶² Considering the size of the territory, this is not a large number. Most appear to be based where they live, acting like a neighbourhood watch and patrolling unarmed rather than formed into a strike force.⁶³

The Serbs of the north, and north Mitrovica in particular, have maintained a careful balance so far. Their military qualities and reflex of quickly mobilising for armed defence have deterred Albanian incursions but they have been careful to keep their arrangements low profile and not to provoke unnecessarily. This has avoided raising tensions to a degree that might produce an all-out Albanian mobilisation and assault. Belgrade shares this caution, as was evident during the March 2004 riots, when the Mitrovica Serbs declined help from paramilitary groups in Serbia and Serbian security services interdicted those groups before they could cross into Kosovo.⁶⁴ Rhetoric around the new paramilitary force has been loud, but the deployments nearly invisible, allowing UNMIK conveniently to maintain that: “we have not seen any evidence of such actions on the ground”.⁶⁵

patrimonial sites and key border crossings. The plainclothes MUP officers in the north are not carrying out any of these duties. The Serbian interior minister informed UNMIK’s deputy SRSG for police and justice that the ministry had 1,000 officers and officials in Kosovo. Crisis Group interview, D-SRSG Jean Dussourd, Pristina, 31 August 2005. Informing is not the same as agreeing, yet Serbia might have grounds for interpreting UNMIK’s silent acquiescence as agreement.

⁶¹ Zvecan’s declaration was first, then Zubin Potok and Leposavic. See Serbia’s Kosovo Coordination Centre website for the Zvecan declaration, www.kc.gov.yu.

⁶² “Kosovo Serbs recruit ex-soldiers for defence”, Reuters, 20 June 2006; Crisis Group interviews, Mitrovica, Washington DC, June 2006.

⁶³ Crisis Group interviews, June and July 2006.

⁶⁴ Crisis Group interview, Serbian security source, Belgrade, 11 May 2006.

⁶⁵ UNMIK spokesperson Neeraj Singh, weekly press conference, 14 June 2006.

Hopefully, such restraint can maintain an informal truce during the status denouement. However, formation of a northern Kosovo Serb paramilitary structure follows a logic of escalation, which has crept into the calculations of the SNC leadership. Aware that they lack the manpower to oppose a determined assault from the KLA heartlands, the SNC recently organised rallies to drum up support in Kraljevo, Jablanica and several other towns in southern Serbia. In doing so, however, the SNC has probably miscalculated that the cause for restraint on the Albanian side has been solely fear of Serb capacities rather than also a sense of responsibility and concern for international reputation.⁶⁶

C. INTERNATIONAL SECURITY FORCES

NATO’s KFOR will stay in Kosovo after status resolution. For how long is unclear, but this will affect Albanian and Serb calculations. A commitment to stay for decades if necessary is likelier to head off trouble than the prospect of handover within three or four years to an EU force with a less vigorous mandate. With their mission to close down in 2007, UNMIK police look to preserve a core of officers and retain some executive power, with the EU becoming their new sponsor sometime that year. EU officials have other ideas and want to wield a new broom. In policing, and in wider security spheres, the UNMIK-EU handover may not be altogether smooth. The former wants to protect its legacy and personnel, the latter to plan unencumbered.

The March 2004 riots exposed the fragility of the international grip. Over the last eighteen months, UNMIK’s leadership has developed an appetite for Kosovo prime ministers from the KLA and KPC who can offer security guarantees. After initial scepticism, UNMIK and KFOR appreciated Haradinaj’s contribution to keeping the peace when he was indicted for war crimes; he has continued to play a big backstage role, while on pre-trial release.⁶⁷ Indeed, the Hague prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, accused SRSG Jessen-Petersen in May 2006 of inappropriate closeness to him and of fostering an atmosphere that hindered investigation of KLA war crimes.⁶⁸ Belgrade

⁶⁶ Crisis Group interview, SNC leader Marko Jaksic, north Mitrovica, 14 June 2006.

⁶⁷ After meeting Haradinaj on 11 July 2006, acting SRSG Steven Schook was reported to say: “I think that the AAK chairman will continue to contribute to political stability in Kosovo, especially the security situation”.

⁶⁸ Her report to the Security Council was frank in its criticism: “First, there is a wide public perception in Kosovo that Ramush Haradinaj enjoys the support of the UNMIK, including the

officials say their international interlocutors represent Prime Minister Ceku to them as someone who can guarantee security.⁶⁹

1. KFOR

KFOR's gradual downsizing from its late 1999 peak of 45,000 was halted due to the March 2004 riots. Since then it has been politically imperative to maintain roughly the same numbers. KFOR has largely reconfigured to deal better with any new riots. More troops are riot-trained and equipped, and there is more flexibility over deployment and use. The five regional multinational brigades have been relabelled as six multinational task forces, less tied to territories and more accountable to KFOR headquarters. But the force is both too large and too small. Fewer soldiers could perform its day-to-day tasks but there are not enough to cope if serious rioting were again to break out in several locations.

KFOR has taken the KPS under its wing as a partner. Privately, its officials say the KPC could have some security uses but the political environment around Kosovo's status make this impossible at present. Former COMKFOR de Kermabon agreed that "of course" the KPC could provide the Serb monasteries more sustainable security than KFOR,⁷⁰ implicitly acknowledging that the highly abrasive KFOR approach was the second-best option.⁷¹ Some see

personal support of its Head, SRSJ Jessen-Petersen. This perception, which is justified by numerous facts, sends a chilling effect on ICTY witnesses and deters potential witnesses from speaking to OTP investigators. Second, the UNMIK's handling of witnesses has been negligent in several instances, so that the confidence in the system's ability to protect them has been lost. Third, the UNMIK is deliberately obstructing OTP's access to relevant documents or key information contained in documents. The co-operation provided by the UNMIK is therefore highly unsatisfactory" (S/2006/353, 31 May 2006, Annex II, paragraph 34 available at www.un.org). UNMIK issued a denial: "UNMIK rejects ICTY Prosecutor's assessment as having no basis in fact". UNMIK Press Release 1563, 8 June 2006, online at www.unmikonline.org.

⁶⁹ Crisis Group interviews, Belgrade, 11-12 May 2006.

⁷⁰ Crisis Group interview, 30 August 2005.

⁷¹ Following a series of KFOR television advertisements promoting respect for religious monuments, a second group in mid-2005 warned: "The following emergency broadcast will be used to alert the public in...case of civil unrest that threatens the safe and secure environment". It showed the signposts KFOR would erect to establish "blue and red zones" around Kosovo. Blue zones "are protected by KFOR and the police. If you enter these areas you will do so at your own risk. KFOR and the police are committed to use all necessary means to remove you from these areas". Red zones "are controlled by KFOR only. No civilians are granted access to these areas...Be advised, KFOR

closer partnership with the KPC as a symbolic ceding of an international security monopoly which has been difficult to maintain credibly since the 2004 riots, however much KFOR advertises itself on TV.

Beyond defending Kosovo's borders and preparing to do better against rioters than in 2004, KFOR's approach to providing a secure environment for UNMIK's work is minimalist. It has mostly not helped get convictions against extremist and organised crime groups. In north Kosovo it has not acted to reverse either creeping erosion of UNMIK's authority or moves toward partition. It has involved itself at the soft end of politics, producing TV advertisements for inter-ethnic tolerance and cultural heritage and attending municipal events. "The only difference between us is that we turn up in white cars and KFOR in black cars", remarked a civilian international official.⁷²

Until very recently, KFOR has shown little visible commitment to the Serb north, with no bases there.⁷³ One international official worried that KFOR fails to appreciate the value of deploying "such a commanding presence that violence never arises".⁷⁴ Another said the weak deployment gave the north the feel of "Indian country".⁷⁵ In late July 2006, a German temporary reinforcement battalion was deployed there. Earlier, in June 2006, KFOR made the symbolic gesture of re-establishing its vacated "Nothing Hill" military base in Leposavic, the northernmost municipality. But this has room for only a company, and KFOR plans it to be more like a hotel than a permanent garrison. A different company rotates through every several weeks, usually from a different national command. Although a diplomat hoped it would serve as "a symbol that there is an international border in the north from the day after status",⁷⁶ KFOR officers seem resigned to partition on the River Ibar.⁷⁷ Yet KFOR mostly remains popular with Albanians. With that popularity and its post-status role assured, it exudes a sense of stability.

will use any means necessary, including lethal force, to deny your access to these areas".

⁷² Crisis Group interview, 16 June 2006.

⁷³ A U.S. official privately dismissed as "bullshit" KFOR's public refrain that it does not matter where troops are based but where they conduct operations. Crisis Group interview, Pristina, May 2006

⁷⁴ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, April 2006.

⁷⁵ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 24 May 2006.

⁷⁶ Crisis Group interview, Western European diplomat, Pristina, 23 May 2006.

⁷⁷ Crisis Group interview, north Kosovo, June 2006.

2. UNMIK police

UNMIK is more in flux. There are 1,800 international police, including 500 riot police but the peak was 5000, with still 2,400 in late 2005. A further phased reduction to 1,325 planned by mid-2006 was reconsidered. The EU is planning its post-status police mission to replace the UN police, which may retain some 800 to 1,000 of its officers. UNMIK police stand behind the KPS, holding the reins of the most sensitive investigation units, such as organised crime, high-level corruption and war crimes. Some officers previously deployed to monitor and mentor KPS field performance have been switched back into operational tasks.

The Polish, Romanian, Ukrainian and Pakistani anti-riot Formed Police Units (FPUs), 500 officers in all, are UNMIK's strong arm, the first two now deployed in the Mitrovica region. But UNMIK, conscious of its unpopularity, tries not to confront Albanian crowds unless absolutely necessary, as clashes erode its standing even further.⁷⁸ KPS Regional Operational Support Units (ROSUs) were deployed to arrest demonstrators blocking UNMIK's headquarters on 9 June 2006 and blocking highways during Serbian Prime Minister Kostunica's visit on 28 June.⁷⁹

UNMIK has heightened its policing sensitivity toward Kosovo Serbs as the status decision approaches. Since early 2005 it has deployed more officers in Serb enclaves, where they are much better trusted than the KPS. In the last few months, groups of 40 officers have been switched from monitoring to operational mode in the Serb areas of Gracanica, Strpce, and north Mitrovica. In June, UNMIK claimed that it deployed 350 additional international police to north Kosovo in response to the Serb municipalities' state of emergency declarations. 150 more were due to follow in mid-July. In each instance the political gesture of deployment took precedence over operational preparedness or appropriateness, and the

actual deployments appeared to be smaller than claimed.⁸⁰

The post-status replacement police mission the EU plans is to be smaller and to deal with both the police and judiciary, while retaining "limited executive functions", as part of a larger, continuing international presence.⁸¹ Kosovo Serbs in particular may consider that sharply reduced numbers of international police would leave their enclaves more exposed.

⁷⁸ Though there have been relatively few attacks on UNMIK personnel or sites in the past year. A Nigerian UNMIK policeman was killed by a booby trap in his car in Prizren in January 2005. See Crisis Group Report, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, op. cit., pp. 4-6; and Crisis Group Report, *Collapse in Kosovo*, op. cit., pp. 11-13, for descriptions of periods when such attacks were frequent.

⁷⁹ Yet, clumsy UNMIK planning has brought episodic physical clashes between its officers and Albanian war widows, stoking local resentment. They removed sit-down protestors in the centre of Pristina on 30 August 2004, and injured 30 on 25 May 2006 in the war-devastated village of Krusha e Vogel/Mala Krusa in defending two Serbian lawyers they rescued from a likely lynching.

⁸⁰ Crisis Group interviews, senior UNMIK officials in Pristina, UNMIK police sources in north Kosovo, July 2006.

⁸¹ "The Future EU Role and Contribution in Kosovo", paper submitted jointly by Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, and Olli Rehn, EU Commissioner for Enlargement, to the Council of Ministers in July 2006; as with previous reports they submitted in June and December 2005, the paper was not published but has been widely circulated informally.

III. THE KOSOVO PROTECTION CORPS: ALBATROSS OR CINDERELLA?

Of all the official security bodies, the KPC' has the most confused role. It is not allowed any security tasks, yet all sides see it as a vitally important security factor.⁸² Albanians place trust in it more than the KPS, KFOR and UNMIK police, yet it is excluded from security transformation plans and has an uncertain future. But the KPC cannot be wished away. It is an established part of the institutional landscape, though one perceived in widely differing ways by the key parties. It tries to project an image of discipline and apolitical service to a future Kosovo state. Albanians place enormous trust in it but the international community regards it warily, as an embarrassment it does not know what to do with. Serbs consider it directly responsible for atrocities against their civilians during the late 1990s in its previous incarnation as the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Is the KPC a throwback, hampering Kosovo's future, or a malleable instrument that can aid Kosovo's state-building?

Most of the KPC's personnel and six territorial zone commands endure rather than embrace their interim civil protection mandate, which indeed is what neither Albanians nor Serbs perceive the KPC to be about. Albanians value it as Kosovo's army in waiting. Serbs fear and despise it for its past.⁸³ If Kosovo's communities see it either in terms of history or the future, the international community's purports to see only its present, making implementation of its interim, compromise mandate one of the eight UN standards by which Kosovo's readiness for final status is judged.

A. MANDATE

On 20 June 1999, KLA commander Hashim Thaci and KFOR commander General Mike Jackson signed an Undertaking on Demilitarisation and Demobilisation of the KLA. The KLA agreed to turn in to KFOR over three months weapons other than pistols and hunting rifles and comply with Resolution 1244, which set the terms for ending the war and introducing KFOR into Kosovo. The KPC officially came into being on 20 September 1999. Simultaneously, KFOR signed the Kosovo Protection Corps Statement of Principles, and UNMIK promulgated

a regulation that gave the KPC legal status.⁸⁴ The SRSG and UNMIK took control over the KPC, while COMKFOR was given responsibility for day-to-day supervision. Thus, taking a lead from their representatives on the ground, NATO and the UN Secretariat created an institutional successor for the KLA that finessed Resolution 1244's stipulation that it be demilitarised.⁸⁵

Strict limits were placed on the KPC's use of force. It was explicitly not given a role in defence, law enforcement or riot control. Selected members were allowed to carry only very limited weapons, largely for use in defending their installations.⁸⁶ The KPC was primarily designed as a civil emergency corps, with disaster response capabilities including fire fighting, industrial accidents, search and rescue and humanitarian assistance. In addition, it was charged with ceremonial duties, demining and community reconstruction projects. The hope was that it would eventually be able to conduct this broad range of services without international support. At the outset, in late 1999, SRSG Kouchner tried to get its hierarchy and personnel to see the worth of the French Sécurité Civile model.⁸⁷ He envisaged hundreds of KPC travelling to France, Belgium, Italy and Germany to see such services in action and the practical work in rescue and reconstruction gradually winning Serb trust.⁸⁸

From an international perspective, the main idea was to contain former fighters while postponing the final status question. The KLA clearly yearned to establish the KPC as Kosovo's future army, and that desire has not diminished. Senior NATO officials who worked with the KLA during the 1999 bombing campaign encouraged it in this belief. A senior international military official observed: "The KLA signed on to the 1999 demilitarisation agreement understanding that they would be transformed into an army".⁸⁹ That agreement did allow for "the formation of an Army in Kosovo on the lines of the U.S. National Guard in due course as part of a political

⁸⁴ UNMIK Regulation 1999/8, at www.unmikonline.org.

⁸⁵ The resolution required that "the KLA and other armed groups end immediately all offensive actions and comply with the requirements for demilitarisation as laid down by the head of the international security presence in consultation with the [SRSG]" at *ibid*.

⁸⁶ The KPC is allowed to hold 200 weapons for security and guarding installations. After denying training requests for three years, KFOR permitted these guards to be trained in weapons safety in mid-2006. Training in weapons firing has not yet been allowed.

⁸⁷ See the French interior ministry's presentation for a description of its functions and structure at www.interieur.gouv.fr/sections/a_1_interieur/defense_et_securite_civiles/presentation

⁸⁸ Press conference, 21 September 1999.

⁸⁹ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 25 February 2005.

⁸² Although, "not currently a security force, it is a security factor". Crisis Group interview, then KPC commander Agim Ceku, Pristina, 30 August 2005.

⁸³ Public opinion surveys for the ISSR; Crisis Group interview, ISSR secretariat official, Pristina, 8 May 2006.

process designed to determine Kosovo's future status, taking into account the Rambouillet Accord".⁹⁰

The international community and the KLA each took from the negotiations what they wanted to hear. Although Kouchner was able to declare on the day of formation that, "this Corps must not be an army, and it is not an army",⁹¹ the KLA saw KFOR as its primary interlocutor and was led to believe the KPC would be an army in waiting. The negotiations were difficult, and this eased the KLA's acceptance. It is the belief that continues to fuel the KPC's compliance with its limited civil protection mandate.

Yet, as years went by, turnover of personnel dealing with the KPC meant the context in which the mandate was forged was lost, and more literal interpretations became prevalent. "People have forgotten why we are here, where it started, and where it is supposed to finish", said an international military official of his colleagues in 2004.⁹² Another international official working with the KPC recalled in 2005, "a promise was made", and KPC aspirations were based on the 1999 agreements and an assumption that the international community would keep its word.⁹³ However, a different view is now voiced at NATO headquarters in Brussels: "When the KPC was formed, the mandate it would have was explained... it was not supposed to transform into an army".⁹⁴ In lawyerly fashion, NATO can argue that the language on formation of an army in the June 1999 demilitarisation agreement has no direct link to the KPC's September 1999 formation, thus allowing creation of a Kosovo army from other sources but this would strike the KPC and most Kosovo Albanians as a breach of trust.

Although the KPC will wait if necessary, maintaining the status quo is an unproductive option. The KPC has outlived its mandate by at least four years; the emergency phase is over, and municipalities are developing capacities that replaces part of the present KPC role. "We are running out of momentum as a civil emergency organisation", said General Ceku in 2005.⁹⁵ The coordinator's office agreed the KPC "hasn't got enough to do".⁹⁶ Moreover, it

receives insufficient donor funds.⁹⁷ It often lacks equipment for emergencies, such as the floods that disabled Kosovo's electricity generators in February 2006.⁹⁸ Less than a third of active personnel are qualified specialists; the rest have no professional training. Only dozens have trained abroad, not the hundreds Kouchner envisaged.

The intention has been to centralise KPC rescue, fire-fighting, demining and similar capabilities in a 500-strong Civil Protection Brigade, though only 330 are engaged in it to date. Other units have medical and engineering capabilities, but up to 2,000 not participating in any of these elements are kicking their heels. The 2,000 reserves stood down in 2003 are even more neglected. Periodic call-ups kept them involved until 2005 but there is no money for this as yet in 2006. The KPC has not re-shaped its identity: it still wants to be an army.

The KPC has begun to understand much better in the past year how to move toward its goal within its present mandate. In 2004, UNMIK launched its standards program for evaluating PISG maturity in governance and accommodation of minorities. The eighth and last of these standards (colloquially, "Standard Eight") was designed to measure KPC professionalism, implementation of its mandate and progress in recruiting and retaining non-Albanians.⁹⁹ Quarterly evaluations began in mid-2004 and the KPC has taken the process as a challenge and a tool. Standard Eight has helped crystallise a spirit within the KPC of wanting to "do the right thing". Recognition for its efforts, both in the Eide report and the UN Secretary-General's quarterly reports, has helped consolidate this spirit.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ Agreement on Undertaking of Demilitarisation and Transformation by the UCK [KLA], signed by KFOR and the Kosovo Liberation Army, 20 June 1999.

⁹¹ Press conference, 21 September 1999.

⁹² Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 24 January 2004.

⁹³ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 31 August 2005.

⁹⁴ A NATO official speaking under condition of anonymity to Kosovo Albanian journalist Augustin Palokaj. See his article "TMK-ja nuk mund te jete ushtri e Kosoves" [KPC cannot be Kosovo's army], *Koha Ditore*, 19 May 2006.

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interview, 30 August 2005.

⁹⁶ Crisis Group interview, 31 August 2005.

⁹⁷ The IOM training was funded by the U.S. at a cost of over \$20 million. That funding expired in 2004, and no other donor took over. In November 2005 the Netherlands and UK provided some project funding.

⁹⁸ Half the "chemical and biological battalion" lacks appropriate equipment and can only train theoretically. Search and rescue equipment is also lacking. To extract a corpse from a well, KPC Zone Three's commander had to buy a rope from his wages. With no protective clothing, personnel went home with uniforms smelling of the corpse. Crisis Group interview, Peja/Pec, 1 June 2006.

⁹⁹ Standard Eight requires that the KPC comply thoroughly with its mandate as "a civilian emergency organisation, which carries out in Kosovo rapid disaster response tasks for public safety in times of emergency and humanitarian assistance." The KPC should operate "in a transparent, accountable, disciplined and professional manner and [be] representative of the entire population of Kosovo." See www.unmikonline.org for the action points, implementation of which UNMIK evaluates on a quarterly basis.

¹⁰⁰ Eide's report is online at www.un.org/depts/dhl/da/kosovo/kosovo3a.htm, the most recent report of the Secretary-General at www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep06.htm.

The KPC has taken on many infrastructure projects, nearly a third in Serb villages. Much of the little donor money it gets is for such projects. It has become much used for preparing return sites, removing rubble from the Mitrovica Roma Mahala in 2005 and similar work in the Serb village of Bablak in June 2006. In that same month, UNMIK entrusted it with reconstruction in the Serb village of Svinjare/Frasher, devastated in the March 2004 riots – one of the Contact Group’s thirteen specific standards fulfilment requests. It has remained admirably committed to this work, for which it receives no material reward and no recognition from the wider Kosovo Serb community. Three of the zone commands proactively solicit funds from municipal authorities for projects in minority villages.¹⁰¹ The KPC styles itself the leading Kosovo institution for minority outreach. “The KPC is helping the achievement of other standards, like return, and not only our own”, remarked a KPC general, who also expressed concern that emphasis on projects for Serbs was being overdone and could backfire on the KPC’s standing with Albanians.¹⁰²

Discipline has greatly improved since chaotic beginnings in 1999 and scandals in 2002-2003. A disciplinary code was introduced in December 2005. KFOR and UNMIK are helping upgrade the internal inspectorate (now provost) office. A KPS captain rued that his police fell short of the discipline standards in the local KPC zone command.¹⁰³ Young people studying at university alongside KPC officer cadets were impressed with their example.¹⁰⁴ On television the KPC presents itself as obsessive in inculcating cadet discipline.¹⁰⁵

The KPC has given 7 per cent of the force extensive English language training and is putting officer cadets through university. Yet, senior management capacity remains underdeveloped, leaving much of the corps unused. Too much energy is devoted to military and commemorative posturing and frustrated attempts to expand the mandate. Much of the personnel is simply waiting, reflecting a general attitude in Kosovo – waiting for independence rather than building capacity for it.

B. COMPOSITION AND CAPACITY

Unlike the gradually expanding KPS, the KPC is stagnating with mainly the same pool of ex-KLA men who joined in late 1999. Of the 25,000 who registered then with the IOM as former KLA, 20,000 applied for the 5,000 KPC slots.¹⁰⁶ There was great continuity from the old KLA, not only in personnel, but also uniforms, insignia, ranks and structures. Since then, the rigidity of the KPC’s structure and composition has been reinforced by the uncertainty it will be allowed to become a military organisation again. Until this is guaranteed, the KPC is reluctant to change. Individually, members do not want to leave until they have reliable pensions or alternative jobs. The average age has risen from 29 to 37. Many personnel are insufficiently fit and educated, or too old for soldiering. A KPC general acknowledged: “We don’t have soldiers in the KPC now. We’ll have to recruit a new generation”.¹⁰⁷

KFOR and KLA leaders selected KPC members. There were places for 3,052 active personnel and 2,000 reserves, though these roles were little differentiated until 2003. While 10 per cent were supposed to be non-Albanian, few minority personnel were appointed. Genuine efforts to reach this target began only with the UN Standards program in 2004. UNMIK knows the minority recruitment target cannot be met, because few Serbs are willing to join a KLA-derived organisation. Serbs who do are often browbeaten into resigning by peer pressure or Belgrade.¹⁰⁸ Ethnic minority representation has gradually increased, from 4.9 per cent in July 2004 to 6.7 per cent in July 2006, but the dropout rate is high:¹⁰⁹ to retain any Serbs, some in the KPC believe that disciplinary standards were lessened, especially regarding absenteeism.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, the KPC commander, Sylejman Selimi, appointed a Serb woman as major in his outer office within weeks of his own 10 March 2006 appointment and has committed to naming a Serb deputy commander.¹¹¹

¹⁰¹ Crisis Group interview, KPC coordinator General Chris Steirn, Pristina, 28 April 2006.

¹⁰² Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 9 June 2006.

¹⁰³ Crisis Group interview, 17 May 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Crisis Group interview, April 2006.

¹⁰⁵ An RTK program broadcast in May 2006 gave lengthy attention to rigorous room inspections and the punishments meted out for imperfect bed-making and dust in cupboards.

¹⁰⁶ “Kosovo Protection Corps Training Program”, IOM, Pristina 2004.

¹⁰⁷ Crisis Group interview, General Kadri Kastrati, Pristina, 9 June 2006.

¹⁰⁸ Since November 2004 the office has established a “Task Force Eight” to recruit and retain ethnic minority candidates.

¹⁰⁹ Of roughly twenty non-Albanians who signed up for KPC basic training in May 2006, only two Bosniaks, a Turk and a Roma graduated. Four Serbs quit on the first day.

¹¹⁰ “They are privileged. They don’t have to show up. They just receive their salary”, remarked a KPC unit commander. Crisis Group interview, 16 May 2006.

¹¹¹ See Perparim Isufi, “Sylejman Selimi I gatshem ta emeroje nje serb ne postin e zevendeskomandit te TMK-se”

KPC senior officers were determined in late 1999 by the KLA leadership and have remained much the same. A sprinkling of war crimes indictments, resignations, and removals on suspicion of dubious activity have created a few gaps but only in April 2006 was a professional evaluation system instituted – too late to reshape the hierarchy. An international official who worked closely with the KPC observed: “The upper levels are absolutely incapable. It is all about how many people you shot and killed in the war, family and clan.” Most of these officers joined the KLA at a relatively early stage. This same officer said younger KPC members are generally much more attuned to modern military doctrine and practice, whereas, “the older guys are hard core communists, and they will not change”.¹¹² PDK leader and former KLA chief Hashim Thaci confirmed that ranks were handed out with scant regard to professional capability: “I know; I assigned many of them”.¹¹³ All this sends a discouraging message to juniors that whatever their efforts, the closed circle of those who made their name in 1998-1999 stays in control.

UNMIK’s KPC coordinator concurs with a KPC general¹¹⁴ that most of the body’s potential is in the middle ranks and lower: “There is genuinely growing professionalism, an honest enthusiasm to do things properly and plenty of talent...we have invested a lot in the middle management.”¹¹⁵ Since all vacancies have been reserved for minorities for two years, there is little room for young Kosovo Albanians to get involved. Nevertheless, the officer cadet scheme indicates their interest. In 2005, 400 applied for twelve places; in May 2006 600 applied for 22 places.¹¹⁶

The force is top-heavy, “the biggest former officer support scheme in the Balkans”,¹¹⁷ with nearly 80 officers to command each active duty private and as many or more colonels as some West European armies. The officer corps is over a third of the active personnel. The KPC implemented reductions by sending 2000 into the reserves in 2003 in a way that further skewed the structure: 60 per cent of sergeants and lower ranks were demobilised, but the officer corps lost less than 20 per cent. The table illustrates the dysfunction.

[Sylejman Selimi ready to name a Serb to the post of deputy commander of the KPC], *Zeri*, 1 June 2006.

¹¹² Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 2 March 2005.

¹¹³ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 6 March 2005.

¹¹⁴ Crisis Group interview, Brigadier General Kadri Kastrati, Pristina, 9 June 2006.

¹¹⁵ Crisis Group interview, Major General Chris Steirn, Pristina, 28 April 2006.

¹¹⁶ Crisis Group interview, A. Haxhosaj, chief of KPC basic training centre, Gjakova/Djakovica, 16 May 2006.

¹¹⁷ Crisis Group interview, staff of the KPC coordinator’s office, Pristina, 31 August 2005.

The KPC’s Force Structure as of July 2006			
<i>Rank</i>	<i>Active</i>	<i>Serving members</i>	<i>Reserve</i>
Lt. General	1	1	0
Maj. General	2	1	0
Brig. General	14	13	0
Colonel	50	48	2
Lt. Colonel	119	117	2
Major	209	203	13
Captain	356	356	60
Lieutenant	440	436	136
Staff Sergeant	439	438	96
Sergeant	366	365	188
Corporal	1,035	1,028	1,438
Private	21	20	65
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,052</i>	<i>3,026</i>	<i>2,000</i>

The KPC senior command understands the problem. The ex-commander, Ceku, reported that his six zone commanders agreed to a plan for a smaller, professional and centralised force.¹¹⁸ But some demur. “I do not see the need for refreshment of the ranks, for new people...after all not all of us will stay here until we die”, said an influential unit commander, adding that the KPC could sort out its top-heavy structure by merely demoting some officers.¹¹⁹

For three years the KPC benefited from a well-funded training program, through the IOM. The U.S. funded it, and training and doctrines drew upon its military experience. KPC trainers were themselves trained. But funding ended in 2004, and the KPC was left largely on its own. It has enhanced its three major training facilities (Pristina, Ferizaj/Urosevac and Gjakova/Djakovica), and the more professional attitude tangible in the last several years has helped. However, its Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is not self-sufficient. Many of its senior personnel do not speak English, which limits their ability to draw on international professional literature. The KPC knows it needs NATO to develop, with training for senior and staff officers emphasising management and logistics a necessary next step. Although it has not yet acted on the professional development records it has

¹¹⁸ Crisis Group interview, 30 August 2005.

¹¹⁹ Crisis Group interview, 16 May 2006.

accumulated on members, it is determined not to waste training opportunities on officers unlikely to survive future selections.¹²⁰ In early 2006, U.S. KFOR began six-month career officer training for 50 KPC officers but it does not have professional trainers so the KPC hopes for a specialised NATO mission.

The KPC's six territorial zone commands trace descent from the KLA's regional operational zones, as does their relationship to KPC headquarters. During the war, KLA "general headquarters" existed at a tangent to the powerful regional commanders. Many were accustomed to operating with great latitude and little command oversight.¹²¹ This has helped create a situation in the KPC where senior leaders often function in more of a circle than a pyramid. Commanders from the Drenica KLA heartland in particular do not regard commands from headquarters as definitive. Ceremonial Guard commander Nuredin Lushtaku reportedly refused an order for his unit to provide the honours at President Rugova's funeral, and another had to be deployed.¹²² Although Drenica zone Commander Bashkim Jashari defers to a headquarters working group to produce a blueprint for the KPC's future, he is sure that: "the final word will be given by the zone commanders".¹²³

Professionally, the KPC's zones have developed at different paces. The chiefs who fashioned the KPC were predominantly from Drenica, which was designated Zone One and is considered the KPC's core. The Pristina-based prestigious KPC guard unit is also Drenica-dominated. The eastern Gjilan/Gnjilane region saw little fighting, and its KLA structures were rudimentary. But though designated lowly Zone Six, it has become thanks to partnership with U.S. KFOR the most dynamic, advanced command and the best-equipped. Other zone commands felt humiliated in a 2003 field exercise: they slept in small UN High Commissioner for Refugees-issue tents, while Zone Six members used large U.S. Army air-conditioned ones.¹²⁴

KPC officers spoke of fruitful training with British KFOR in and around Pristina until most UK troops were withdrawn in 2003. The Scandinavian forces that then took the lead in Multinational Brigade Centre froze the

KPC out.¹²⁵ It has taken until June 2006 for KFOR headquarters and the KPC to agree a standardised three-month training package, which the former has instructed all KFOR multinational task forces to implement with local KPC zone commands.¹²⁶ The lack of standard training had diminished NATO standing with the KPC, which developed strong preferences for the UK and US and more negative attitudes to some of the other NATO members.

Zone Six Command is pro-active in seeking municipal infrastructure projects, has 10.4 per cent ethnic minorities in its ranks and ties with KFOR MNTF East down to unit level. It does earthquake evacuation training (Gjilan/Gnjilane had an earthquake in 2002), KFOR channels humanitarian aid through it, and UNDP has contracted it to rehabilitate three access roads for Serb villages. The zone command uses its mandate to forge partnerships and has developed management and operational skills.¹²⁷ Zone One presents a contrasting picture. Its commander says reserve demobilisation in 2003 damaged its capacity for humanitarian projects: "we are not doing much".¹²⁸ The two zones differ also in training exercises. Zone One is developing how the KPC would work with the KPS if a large criminal band threatened.¹²⁹ Zone Six prefers not to spend energy on situations outside the KPC mandate and concentrates simulations on reacting to natural disasters and other possible civil crises.¹³⁰

With English valuable for NATO training and army inter-operability, the two zones' comparative achievements are also indicative. Access to English-language training at TRADOC is limited, so Zone Six has arranged with local schools for regular teaching.¹³¹ While the most senior officer offered by Zone One for recent language certification was a major, virtually the entire Zone Six hierarchy took the tests.¹³² To make the grade in a future force, officers will need English. Other zone commands fall between these poles, with most closer to Zone One.

¹²⁰ Crisis Group interview, Brigadier General Kadri Kastrati, Pristina, 9 June 2006.

¹²¹ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°88, *What Happened to the KLA?*, 3 March 2000, pp. 6-10, for an account of regional field commanders' influence in the KPC.

¹²² Lushtaku himself insists that no formal order was received. Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 16 May 2006. See Crisis Group Report, *Challenge of Transition*, op. cit., p. 20 for background.

¹²³ Crisis Group interview, Skenderaj/Srbica, 17 May 2006.

¹²⁴ Crisis Group interview, KPC Zone Three Commander Nazmi Brahimaj, Peja/Pec, 1 June 2006.

¹²⁵ Crisis Group interviews, May 2006.

¹²⁶ KFOR will train the KPC in democracy and human rights; logistics and personnel and team management; financial management; organisation analysis, media skills; training program development; information security and physical security; project management; and management of medical emergencies.

¹²⁷ Crisis Group interview, KPC General Imri Ilazi, Gjilan/Gnjilane, 19 May 2006.

¹²⁸ Crisis Group interview, Skenderaj/Srbica, 17 May 2006.

¹²⁹ Crisis Group visit and interviews, TRADOC Simulation Centre, Pristina, 15 May 2006.

¹³⁰ Crisis Group interview, KPC General Imri Ilazi, Gjilan/Gnjilane, 19 May 2006.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Crisis Group interview, KPC Collective Training Centre chief Muharrem Rrahmani, Ferizaj/Urosevac, 15 May 2006.

The slimmed down KPC that might emerge from any professional evaluation filter would look very different from the KPC formed in late 1999. Zone Six's commander urges his personnel to train hard to make the grade in any future cut and believes 90 per cent will.¹³³ The two major unit commanders from Drenica, however, say that nearly all the present contingent deserves automatically to pass into a future defence force.¹³⁴ KFOR and UNMIK see these commanders as an impediment to further KPC professional evolution. The internationals look to Sylejman Selimi (also from Drenica) to sideline them. A voice from the targeted camp says: "Some high-ranking KPC men are ready to sacrifice the rest of us just to satisfy the internationals. I won't accept it; I'd leave with my soldiers".¹³⁵

C. THE KPC AND KOSOVO SOCIETY

In the second half of 1999 the new KPC appeared part of a broad KLA front that would dominate Kosovo's institutions. Unelected, the KLA had control of all municipal administrations except the three Serb-majority ones north of the Ibar. Its leader, Thaci, headed a provisional central government.¹³⁶ General Agim Ceku, the later KPC head, 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 defence force. And another part will form a political party".¹³⁷ The NATO-KLA demilitarisation agreement declared that the "international community should take due and full account" of the KLA's contribution during the recent crisis, and consider including KLA members in the administration and police.

Particularly in those early months, ill-disciplined and confident KPC members behaved as if they were new masters of Kosovo, able to create their own rules. Some set up road checkpoints, some tried making arrests and handing their charges over to KFOR or UNMIK police. People were taken into KPC bases for interrogation. In several instances, Roma were found dead in the vicinity of KPC bases.¹³⁸ KPC personnel tried to impress their seniority upon the fledgling KPS. With

UNMIK police still thin on the ground, as late as spring 2000 ideas were circulating among the international community of coopting the KPC for law enforcement.¹³⁹ In the Decan/Decani canyon, the KPC reportedly even issued a construction licence for a restaurant.¹⁴⁰ As late as 2003, two KPC members were arrested for kidnapping and assaulting a civilian,¹⁴¹ and UNMIK police had to extract a Russian TV documentary crew detained while filming outside their barracks on the edge of Pristina.¹⁴²

A KFOR officer observed that "General Ceku is engaged in more diplomacy than giving direction" with other senior officers.¹⁴³ Having come late to the war as a professional military interlocutor for NATO with the KLA's patchwork structure, Ceku brought a veneer of central command and popularity to the KPC but lacked the clout to bend it to his will. He was frequently in the awkward situation of not being able to remove recalcitrant officers, and cooperation with KFOR and UNMIK often broke down over this.¹⁴⁴ He also fought changes KFOR and UNMIK made over his head. He could absent himself from Kosovo at awkward times, such as February 2004, when the Prizren zone commander, Selim Krasniqi, was arrested for war crimes.¹⁴⁵ His wish for the KPC inspectorate to report to the KPC coordinator showed understanding of his limitations. Although apparently less assured and educated than Ceku, the new commander, Sylejman Selimi, carries weight inside the KPC and knows the internal changes necessary to secure the KPC's future. In his first months, he instituted personnel changes at headquarters, such as promoting minority officers, that Ceku had balked at, and he has impressed KFOR and UNMIK.

Seven years on, the KPC has become well-disciplined, used to operating within its mandate, its relationship with Kosovo Albanian society changed. The KLA swagger has gone. Many Albanians feel the KPC has

¹³³ Crisis Group interview, KPC General Imri Ilazi, Gjilan/Gnjilane, 19 May 2006.

¹³⁴ Crisis Group interviews, Nuredin Lushtaku and Bashkim Jashari, 16-17 May 2006.

¹³⁵ Crisis Group interview, May 2006.

¹³⁶ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°79, *Waiting for UNMIK: Local Administration in Kosovo*, 18 October 1999.

¹³⁷ "U.S. warns KLA to disarm or lose aid", Associated Press, 30 August 1999; also Crisis Group Europe Report N°88, *What happened to the KLA?*, 3 March 2000, which examined the KLA legacy in the fields cited by Ceku, as well as organised crime, six months on.

¹³⁸ Crisis Group Report, *What happened to the KLA?*, op. cit.

¹³⁹ Ibid, pp. 7, 9, 15.

¹⁴⁰ Crisis Group interview, UNMIK official, December 2004.

¹⁴¹ See Naser Miftari and David Quin, "Policing the Protectors", Institute for War and Peace Reporting, Balkan Crisis Report, 30 June 2003.

¹⁴² Crisis Group interview, UNMIK police spokesperson Derek Chappell, late 2003.

¹⁴³ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, February 2005.

¹⁴⁴ Reportedly, Ceku had asked SRSB Holkeri to dismiss a KPC officer whom police caught carrying a gun and dressed as a civilian in north Mitrovica in November 2003; Holkeri instead included him on a list of twelve who were suspended for six months in December 2003 and subsequently reinstated. Crisis Group interview, international official, Pristina, 12 December 2003.

¹⁴⁵ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°155, *Collapse in Kosovo*, 22 April 2004, p. 9.

been humiliated, enduring inquisitions and a restricted mandate. Society carefully guards the KPC's image, trying to shelter it from a sceptical, sometimes hostile international community. Indeed, the KPC does stand out in contrast to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG): its Spartan frugality and discipline contrast with the PISG's reputation for corruption, profligacy and sloppiness. International researchers noted how much more transparent the KPC is than the KPS.¹⁴⁶ Collectively the Kosovo Albanian media frequently criticise the KPS but very rarely the KPC. The public broadcaster RTK takes the patriotic task particularly seriously, making laudatory programs and video-clips about the KPC.

Opinion polls show the KPC to be the most popular body among the Albanian majority, and it generates popularity for its chief commanders. A May 2006 poll not only gave former KPC chief Ceku a high rating, but showed his successor, Selimi, emerging as one of Kosovo's most liked leaders.¹⁴⁷ In public meetings on security, conducted by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 31 municipalities in early 2006, the KPC was the second most discussed body, behind the KPS and ahead of municipal government, the PISG, UNMIK and others. Given most citizens' frequent encounters with the KPS and comparatively rare glimpses of the KPC, that is a telling indicator of societal preoccupation. By contrast, hardly anybody was interested in discussing KFOR. The KPC emerged from these meetings with more positive feedback than any other institution, but all from Albanians and other non-Serbs. Serb comments were all negative.¹⁴⁸ The less popular KPS was also not quite so polarising.

With Thaci having assigned many senior ranks, KPC identification with his PDK and consequent LDK wariness have been pronounced¹⁴⁹ but the last two years have seen this political semi-monopoly broken. The KPC now has a richer weave of relationships across the Kosovo Albanian political spectrum. Former KLA and KPC zone commander Haradinaj's forging of a government coalition with the LDK shook up assumptions within the KPC, and now that Ceku has followed in his footsteps as prime minister of this coalition, many KPC look to him to lobby more effectively on their behalf. Selimi distanced

himself from the PDK in January 2005 newspaper interviews¹⁵⁰ and in April 2006 allowed himself to be photographed reading the LDK newspaper *Bota Sot*.¹⁵¹ President Sejdiu of the LDK has helped heal old rifts. Soon after taking office, he paid respects at the Jashari family memorial complex in Skenderaj/Srbica,¹⁵² a trip Rugova never made. The KPC's Ceremonial Guard paraded for Sejdiu at the 24 May 2006 "President's Day" celebration, and upon his return from a trip to the U.S. in late June.

Although the KPC is learning to be more apolitical, this does not change the balance of its personnel. Only a relative few were admitted at the outset from the LDK's Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosova (FARK), which variously rivalled and complemented the KLA in the war.¹⁵³ The LDK would welcome a turnover in KPC personnel. In 2002 it reportedly made overtures that the KPC should more accurately reflect the LDK's 47 per cent electoral support but it has not pushed the issue. It recognises that undue tampering could exacerbate tensions with the PDK and stir violence. Representing much international community opinion on the KPC, a diplomat said that it "does not represent society".¹⁵⁴ It does nevertheless do a reasonable job of coopting the wilder fringes of Kosovo Albanian society. With Drenica influence a likely casualty of KPC reform, current harmony may not last. Just as the PDK resisted university reform that might dislodge mediocre academics aligned with it, it might oppose removal of professionally challenged Drenica KPC commanders.

Professionally challenged senior officers have used the KPC's popularity to shield their positions but themselves have mellowed in the process. In KLA militant strongholds like Drenica and Decan/Decani, the KPC exerts a moderating, stabilising influence on the younger post-KLA generation. Moreover, most of the more controversial

¹⁴⁶ Crisis Group interview, May 2006.

¹⁴⁷ With a highest potential rating of five, Prime Minister Ceku scored 4.18, President Sejdiu 4.16. Selimi scored 3.83, just above deputy Prime Minister Haziri, and far ahead of opposition leaders Thaci and Surroi. *Kosovo Perspectives*, KUMT Consulting, 2 June 2006.

¹⁴⁸ Crisis Group interview, ISSR Secretariat, Pristina, 8 May 2006.

¹⁴⁹ See Crisis Group Report, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, op. cit., pp. 17-22, for discussion of relationships between the PDK, Drenica, and KLA veterans.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁵¹ "TMK-ja do te mbetet ushtri e gjithë qytetareve te Kosoves" [The KPC will remain the army of all Kosovo citizens], 21 April 2006.

¹⁵² Where KLA militant Adem Jashari made a last stand against Serbian forces in March 1998. He, many of his extended family, and other villagers were killed, sparking a wider insurgency. The damaged houses have been preserved; Jashari and the site have become objects of reverence for Kosovo Albanians.

¹⁵³ For a good discussion of the emergence of the KLA and FARK, see 'Wag the Dog: The Mobilisation and the Demobilisation of the Kosovo Liberation Army', Bonn International Centre for Conversion, Brief 20, Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, 2001. Hashim Thaci's PDK is the main KLA political successor; the FARK was associated with the LDK, the party of the late President Rugova.

¹⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, EU official, 31 August 2005.

local KLA figures, like Avdyli Mushkolaj in Decan,¹⁵⁵ and Sami Lushtaku in Drenica,¹⁵⁶ are now outside the KPC. The KPC sees itself as a buffer between society and the international presence. An extreme manifestation of this was a plan for it to play honest broker in Peja/Pec between protestors and UNMIK and KFOR in 2005, including to shield Serb villages and churches from mob action.¹⁵⁷

In the few instances when KFOR did not forbid them to act during the March 2004 riots, KPC commanders tried to reason with crowds. The Drenica KPC Zone One commander, Bashkim Jashari, dissuaded marches on two Serb villages. In Gjilan/Gnjilane and Ferizaj/Urosevac, the KPC was less successful during the riots but was assigned by U.S. KFOR afterwards to guard the Serb church in Gjilan/Gnjilane and to patrol jointly with U.S. troops. The KPC's prestige in heartlands like Dukagjini and Drenica has given it confidence to make several requests to UNMIK and KFOR to guard Serb churches and monasteries. It can point to a venerable Albanian tradition of protecting Serb monasteries in Kosovo,¹⁵⁸ though others see that tradition as closer to a mafia protection racket.¹⁵⁹

Isolated minority communities that consent to the KPC taking them under its wing experience improved security. The KPC is not permitted direct security tasks but the success of a pilot project begun in April 2005, under which it guards unoccupied, rebuilt Ashkali houses in Vushtrri/Vucitrn, convinced UNMIK in January 2006 to add "monitoring unoccupied reconstructed homes of minority communities" to the KPC mandate.¹⁶⁰ In early 2001, an Ashkali sports teacher invited KPC members to spend nights in his urban neighbourhood to deter attacks by other Albanians. It worked, while KFOR patrols were relatively ineffective. When the KPC members eventually gave up the work for fear of getting into trouble with

KFOR, attacks resumed.¹⁶¹ A side effect of the KPC's regular appearances in Serb return project villages in Dukagjini in 2006 for humanitarian medical purposes and other assistance has been a reduction in crime. Thefts from Siga village ceased after the KPC got involved there.¹⁶²

Whatever strides the KPC has made in representing Albanian society and currying favour with small, isolated Serb communities, for most other Serbs it still epitomises the enemy, promoting Albanian symbols, embodying and commemorating the KLA and containing personnel who likely took part in war-time and post-war attacks on Serbs and other minorities. In 2004 Gracanica Serb politician Rada Trajkovic used it to profile herself, issuing statements about it digging sinister trenches around Serb villages.¹⁶³ In 2005 a Kosovo Serb municipal official rebuffed an offer of KPC construction aid, telling a U.S. officer "the KPC is for us what al-Qaeda is for you".¹⁶⁴ Some Serbs will tolerate the KPC if it sticks to civil protection but only a handful of marginalised Serbs, mostly in the south east, are prepared to join. It has a Mitrovica zone but no representation north of the Ibar. In late 1999, Kosovo Serb politicians quit UNMIK's Transitional Council to protest the KPC's formation,¹⁶⁵ while in north Mitrovica the Serb Bridge Watchers formed partially as a response to it.¹⁶⁶

D. RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Because of its origins and ultimate aim, the KPC has attracted sharper international attention for member misdeeds than UNMIK-created institutions such as the KPS,¹⁶⁷ although scope for corruption and consort with organised crime is arguably greater in the police and customs service. In fact, while KPS disciplinary

¹⁵⁵ Crisis Group Report, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, op. cit.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid and Crisis Group Report, *What happened to the KLA?*, op. cit.

¹⁵⁷ Crisis Group Report, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁵⁸ See Valon A. Sylva, "Rojet e kishave" [guardians of the churches], *Express*, 11 June 2006; Mark Krasniqi, "Manastirske vojvode u Kosovsko-Metohiskoj oblasti" [Monastery guards in the Kosovo-Metohija region], *Glasnik muzeja Kosova I Metohije*, 3 (Pristina, 1958), pp. 107-128.

¹⁵⁹ Crisis Group interview, Serbian Orthodox priest, March 2006; Milutin Djuricic, *Obicaji I verovanja Albanaca* [Customs and beliefs of the Albanians] (Belgrade, 1994).

¹⁶⁰ UNMIK Regulation no. 2006/3, 24 January 2006, amending UNMIK Regulation no. 1999/8 on the "Establishment of the Kosovo Protection Corps".

¹⁶¹ Crisis Group interview, Ferizaj/Urosevac, April 2001. See also "Denied a Future? The Right to Education of Roma/Gypsy children in Kosovo", Save the Children (UK), 2001, p.10.

¹⁶² Crisis Group interview, KPS source, Peja/Pec, 1 June 2006.

¹⁶³ D. Damjanovic, "Rovovi oko enklava?" [Trenches around the enclaves?], *Vecernje Novosti*, 22 November 2004.

¹⁶⁴ Crisis Group interview, 24 November 2005.

¹⁶⁵ See Crisis Group Report, *What happened to the KLA?*, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁶⁶ Press conference, SRSB Bernard Kouchner and COMKFOR Mike Jackson, on creation of the KPC, 21 September 1999.

¹⁶⁷ In September 2005 a KPS officer and his brother were killed when a bomb blew up their car in Vitia/Vitina, south Kosovo. The evidence suggests they were carrying the bomb, and its target may have been one of two Serb houses they had parked between late at night. Attention receded quickly, contrasting with international community attitudes toward the KPC after the Loziste railway bridge bombing.

problems are growing, they are receding in the KPC. As the KPS transitions to local control, its officers worry about creeping politicisation. Meanwhile most of the KPC is trying to escape from local politics. Since the KPS took many of its coveted roles, the KPC has had to begin to conceive itself anew. It understands it cannot get what it wants by creating facts on the ground. It needs outside support. It needs NATO to want a partnership with it.

In 1999 UNMIK and KFOR relations with the KPC started with a sense of trust and common endeavour. UNMIK chief Bernard Kouchner and COMKFOR Mike Jackson created as much space as they could for the KLA within the framework of Resolution 1244. But from 2000, the KPC entered a period when it was seen as a problem, its members linked to ethnic Albanian insurgencies in southern Serbia (2000) and Macedonia (2001), political violence within Kosovo and organised crime. As early as March 2000, the international press was reporting that internal UN assessments had linked KPC members to “criminal activities – killings, ill-treatment/torture, illegal policing, abuse of authority, intimidation, breaches of political neutrality and hate-speech”.¹⁶⁸

This did not really change relations with KFOR and UNMIK. KFOR kept liaison officers in the KPC zone commands, and IOM trainers worked closely with it, but although UNMIK had titular responsibility for the KPC, there was little regular interface. It was only in September 2002 that it introduced the office of the KPC coordinator, coordinating the policy efforts of UNMIK, KFOR and the diplomatic offices of the five NATO countries (the Quint) in the Contact Group. The coordinator also became adviser and mentor to KPC chief Ceku. In spring 2003 this office was supplemented by the KPC Development Group, bringing the SRSG, COMKFOR, the KPC commander, the KPC coordinator and the Quint offices together every two months for talk.

Outside attention to war crimes and neighbouring insurgencies began to shift perceptions of the KPC. In July 2001, an executive order barred twenty Kosovo Albanians tied directly to unrest in Macedonia and southern Serbia as well as war crimes from entering the U.S. or doing business there. The list included four KPC generals, including Daut Haradinaj and Rexhep Selimi. Daut Haradinaj, brother of Kosovo’s recently indicted prime minister, was later jailed in Kosovo for war crimes. Selimi resigned in 2003 after two years of

suspension. Other KPC officers indicted for war crimes included Prizren zone Commander Selim Krasniqi and two subordinates in February 2004 and a liaison official, Colonel Lahi Ibrahimaj, in March 2005.

Interneine KLA conflicts spilling into the KPC began to occupy UNMIK’s justice system. In May 2000, Ekrem Rexha (aka Commander Drini), a prominent former leader and KPC senior officer was murdered in Prizren, and another KPC commander was subsequently tried, acquitted, then sent for retrial, which is ongoing. There was a spate of violence against former FARK fighters across Kosovo. In October 2003 Ceku handed two-month suspensions to seven KPC men he suspected of plotting to kill another senior KPC officer. He had hoped a police investigation would take the matter off his hands but when nothing happened, he reinstated them in December 2003, just two days before UNMIK and KFOR included them on a list of twelve it suspended for six months.¹⁶⁹ Police investigators had little to go on and all were reinstated in mid-2004. In April 2004 KPC officer Shaqir Krasniqi was murdered near Klina. He had infuriated ex-FARK colleagues by celebrating the killing of a FARK commander the year before.¹⁷⁰

But it was suspected involvement in organised crime and especially terrorist attacks against Serbs that seriously soured KFOR and UNMIK on the KPC.¹⁷¹ Over 250 were expelled between 2001 and 2003.¹⁷² The January 2002 Nis Express bus bombing was linked to KPC members. KPC regional spokesman Hamze Behrami was one of those who blew themselves up in the botched Albanian National Army (ANA/AKSh)¹⁷³ bombing of the Loziste railway bridge above Mitrovica in April 2003.¹⁷⁴ This at last prompted sustained attention from UNMIK and KFOR, who temporarily banned training abroad. KFOR inspected KPC bases with new vigour, and absences without leave plummeted. Ceku was given a month to hand over

¹⁶⁸ “Revealed: UN-backed unit’s reign of terror”, *The Observer* (UK), 12 March 2000. See also Crisis Group Report, *What happened to the KLA?*, op. cit.

¹⁶⁹ Crisis Group interview, international official, Pristina, December 2003.

¹⁷⁰ See Crisis Group Report, *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, op. cit., pp. 10-11, for background on the FARK commander, Tahir Zemaj.

¹⁷¹ See Crisis Group Report, *Collapse in Kosovo*, op. cit., pp. 8-9, for an account of the KPC’s troubles in 2003.

¹⁷² See Artan Mustafa and Jeta Xharra, “Kosovo officers under investigation”, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, *Balkan Crisis Report*, 11 December 2003.

¹⁷³ A “phantom” guerrilla army with a pan-Albanianist agenda. See Crisis Group Europe Report N°153, *Pan-Albanianism: How Big a Threat to Balkan Stability?*, 25 February 2004, pp. 7-10, for an account of the ANA’s rise and fall.

¹⁷⁴ Jeta Xharra, “Kosovo: ANA Menace Growing?”, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, *Balkan Crisis Report*, 16 May 2003.

names of KPC officers involved in dubious activity. He provided only one but reportedly sent strong internal messages that there was no room for the ANA in the KPC. Roughly 70 officers resigned; KFOR investigated a further 54. Based on intelligence assessments it recommended sixteen or eighteen for dismissal, all of which boiled down to the above-mentioned suspension of twelve officers.¹⁷⁵

The episode weakened Ceku's authority and left KFOR exasperated at KPC inability to cleanse its own ranks. It exposed a dysfunctional reliance on legalistic solutions in an institutional environment incapable of delivering them. The suspensions attracted criticism from the Ombudsperson for arbitrariness. KFOR intelligence did not help the police to build cases against the suspended officers. Although supposedly vested with absolute power in Kosovo, KFOR and UNMIK had tied their own hands.

The KFOR commanders between September 2002 and September 2004, General Mini and General Kammerhoff, disliked the KPC.¹⁷⁶ Mini, who contemplated its dismantling and reorganisation along civilian lines, withdrew KFOR advisory officers from the zone commands in 2003. It was in this atmosphere of distrust that the March 2004 riots struck. KFOR's central brigade explicitly regarded the KPC as a potential wing of the rioting forces,¹⁷⁷ and it was mostly kept confined to barracks. Only U.S. KFOR used it to help calm riots and stabilise the situation.¹⁷⁸

Gradually since the riots, UNMIK and KFOR have revised their perception of the KPC. A KFOR official summarised: "The KPC is the only organisation that did not fail in March 2004...only afterwards [we] started to understand the role of the KPC in Kosovo". The riots were a "wake-up call", he said, for those who previously thought little Kosovo did not need an army.¹⁷⁹ UNMIK initially expected the least from Standard Eight but, as noted, results have been encouraging. Rapprochement has also been made easier due to the increasing alignment of UNMIK, and behind it, the Contact Group with Kosovo Albanian ambitions for independence.

The KPC itself and many Kosovo Albanians consider the organisation a factor for stability, and are baffled why the international community has not better

understood this and given it more support. The former commander, Ceku, reflected on the widely divergent perceptions: "One of us is wrong, and I believe it is the international community".¹⁸⁰ He added that UNMIK and KFOR generally deprived the KPC of chances to look good. KPC officers say their organisation has not received the same high-level assistance in recruiting Serbs or operating north of the Ibar that the KPS gets.¹⁸¹ KFOR television advertising promotes the KPS but not the KPC.

The KPC does represent a foothold for KLA tradition in Kosovo's official interim institutions. This has a stabilising effect. Yet, there is a difference between preserving security in the short term and establishing the structures that will preserve it for the future. The internationals involved in these two tasks are not always the same, and the KPC is receiving contrasting signals from them, within and outside Kosovo.

Inside Kosovo, UNMIK and KFOR are quietly giving the KPC signals from which it draws the impression it can continue toward its military goal. They are also interpreting its mandate more flexibly and doing more to build its capacity. In January 2006 UNMIK amended the KPC regulation to allow selected personnel to attend security courses, thus enabling U.S. KFOR's comprehensive career officer training course. Recently, each KFOR multinational task force has been encouraged to offer training to its local KPC zone command.¹⁸² After asking since 2002, the KPC was allowed in 2006 to do weapons safety training for personnel who guard its bases and carry rifles. The KPC's April-May 2006 TV ad for cadet recruits calls it Kosovo's future army, and zone commanders report more open discussions with KFOR counterparts about this ambition.¹⁸³ But in internal UNMIK and KFOR discussion, adventurous proposals still meet hostility.¹⁸⁴ KFOR and UNMIK know final decisions on the KPC are not theirs. The best they can do for the KPC is quietly guide it to becoming a more eligible candidate. Their main concern is preserving stability during their present mandates, and throwing bones to the KPC is part of this.

¹⁷⁵ Crisis Group interview, international officials, Pristina, September 2003.

¹⁷⁶ Crisis Group interviews, officers and officials, 2003-2005.

¹⁷⁷ Crisis Group discussions, Multinational Brigade Centre officers, 18 March 2004.

¹⁷⁸ Crisis Group Report, *Collapse in Kosovo*, op. cit.

¹⁷⁹ Crisis Group interview, March 2006.

¹⁸⁰ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 23 September 2003.

¹⁸¹ Crisis Group interviews, May 2006.

¹⁸² Now they "are competing to train us". Crisis Group interview, TRADOC, Pristina, 15 May 2006. A team from NATO's Naples southern command is helping the KPC and the coordinator's office plan training.

¹⁸³ "They don't get so angry now". Crisis Group interviews, 16, 17 May 2006.

¹⁸⁴ Crisis Group interviews, international officials, Pristina, May 2006.

Outside Kosovo, the KPC appears to many a stumbling block on the road to creating a functional, multi-ethnic territory and identity. Its KLA heritage repels Serbs, and consolidation would imply international recognition of Albanian victory in the war, resolving some of the ambiguity of the international intervention. Has the international community been a forceful but neutral referee or a KLA ally? Can Kosovo claim to have liberated itself or is its future a gift? The KPC is as awkward for those who favour building a Kosovo defence identity, such as the UK, U.S., and NATO headquarters, as for those who favour its demilitarisation, such as Germany and Russia.

Now that the international community has chosen Kosovo statehood, disputes with the Kosovo Albanians in the next few years will likely revolve around the identity of that state. To pull Kosovo as far as it can toward multi-ethnicity, nuanced methods will be needed. Today's KPC still embodies many partisan elements that will not serve a more inclusive Kosovo: KLA continuity, Albanian symbols, annual commemorative ceremonies devoted to the KLA war and the cult of Adem Jashari. But these are partly consequences of the neglect with which the organisation has been treated. When KFOR has engaged with the KPC, it has evolved and focused on practicality rather than symbols: Zone Six changed commanders four times until one emerged in late 2003 that U.S. KFOR deemed reliable. French KFOR's lesser engagement left Zone One to its own devices with a young, inexperienced and not particularly capable commander from the talismanic Jashari family.

Gradualist approaches to transforming the KPC have not been given a chance. Some internationals believe the KPC has only itself to blame: "Ceku could not get rid of the bad guys. With them inside, the KPC cannot be a credible state military organisation....We have tried to get the KPC to filter its ranks. It won't do it. Several nations have offered buy-out schemes, retiring with honour and so on, but the KPC wouldn't take it".¹⁸⁵ The KPC has been reluctant to transform until it has a guaranteed final destination. The transformation General Mini had in mind would have wiped out any military future. Moreover, the KPC's experience of demobilisation has been progressively worse, fraying trust. The IOM-managed program in 1999-2001 gave a range of training and business start-up options that softened re-entry to civilian life for some 15,000 KLA but many still ended up

unemployed. Demobilisation of the 2,000 reserves was more brutal: "They were just kicked out into the street....As unit commanders we compromised ourselves; we had to lie to them that they would be integrated in future processes".¹⁸⁶ Older KPC members can only look forward to a standard €40 monthly pension when they reach 65.

On transformation, the KPC and the international community are caught in a vicious circle of mistrust and incomprehension. The KPC will protect its bloated officer corps until it sees plans and perspectives it can rely on. It has lagged in introducing an organisation-wide professional evaluation scheme for its officers but its senior planners look forward to transformation as the opportunity to apply test criteria as filters through which "no more than 50 per cent will pass".¹⁸⁷ "We don't want to be badly treated....Reforms should be careful and secure, not massive and sudden", argued a once-bitten KPC officer.¹⁸⁸ An international official agrees donor countries are quick to offer security related aid while often failing to follow through.¹⁸⁹ The UN acknowledges that: "In case after case,...demobilisation is not accorded priority by funders".¹⁹⁰ A March 2006 UN report acknowledged:

[a failure] to place the KPC in Kosovo's broader development matrix. It is securely tucked away from the Kosovars and the development community alike. As a result it is almost impossible for serious development and reform of the KPC to occur. The political and financial resources are not forthcoming because these constituencies are excluded from the decision making process regarding KPC's future.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁵ Crisis Group interview, senior international official, Pristina, 24 May 2006.

¹⁸⁶ Crisis Group interview, KPC officer, Gjakova/Djakovica, 16 May 2006.

¹⁸⁷ Crisis Group interview, senior KPC officer, 25 May 2006.

¹⁸⁸ Crisis Group interview, KPC officer, Gjakova/Djakovica, 16 May 2006.

¹⁸⁹ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 30 May 2006.

¹⁹⁰ "A more secure world: Our shared responsibility", UN High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 1 December 2004, p. 72. This is so even though the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has classified such aid as official development assistance.

¹⁹¹ Edward Rees, "Security Sector Reform and Peace Operations: 'Improvisation and Confusion' from the Field", United Nations Peacekeeping external study, March 2006, p. 17.

IV. LOOKING FORWARD

Kosovo's security prospects in coming months and the immediate post-status years will depend heavily both on Belgrade's attitude and the international community's political will. To what extent will Serbia acquiesce in creation of the new state? How far will it go to make Serb areas, particularly the north, ungovernable for Pristina? It is close to formalising partition as its strategy.¹⁹² Any plans for consolidating a multi-ethnic identity for Kosovo are acutely vulnerable to Belgrade's next moves; it holds a key to whether independent Kosovo becomes an ethnic Albanian rump or retains enough material with which to patch together some form of multi-ethnicity.

But the international community can make a difference. Its ban on partition is not self-executing: it needs to be converted into a strategy. At present, both Serbs and Albanians may interpret it as merely a temporary injunction, likely to be abandoned sometime after status resolution. If the international community wants to reverse rather than harden the existing *de facto* partition and to avoid Kosovo having only mono-ethnic security forces (official or unofficial), those requirements have to be at the core of the strategy on security sector reform. Without an international commitment of energy and resources to incorporation of the Serb north into Kosovo, citizens will not invest in a multi-ethnic identity and the security architecture to sustain it.

Tension will inevitably rise in the Serb north and across the Mitrovica divide as status is decided. Although Belgrade seems to have ruled out bringing its army openly to north Mitrovica's aid in extremis, it could well give a green light to paramilitary groups. Its government money is already financing local paramilitary structures in the northern municipalities. It is still to be hoped the SNC and Belgrade will opt for restraint. If their goal remains to deepen separation of the territory above the Ibar from Pristina, a gradualist approach would minimise risk.

Mobilisation of Kosovo Albanian fighters from Drenica and Dukagjini against north Mitrovica might result, depending on how the Serbs of the north reacted to announcement of independence, and what KFOR and UNMIK did. Violence could rupture Kosovo permanently at the Ibar or drive Serbs from north

¹⁹² In early May 2006 the idea of partitioning Kosovo was floated prominently in *Politika* and *NIN*. Crisis Group interviews with Serbian government officials in May and June 2006 confirmed official Belgrade's renewed interest in the project.

Mitrovica. The prospects for ultimately stitching together a common security community between central Kosovo and the Serb north would be torpedoed. Serbs south of the Ibar and Albanians in south Serbia would be intensely vulnerable.

A. THE REGIONAL MILITARY CONTEXT

1. Albanian and Serb perceptions of NATO

In relation to the other, Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, Pristina and Belgrade, have seen their security in zero sum terms. Given this, it is positive that all sides agree KFOR must remain in Kosovo for an extended period. To a lesser extent, these sides unite upon consolidating the KPS as an indigenous security pillar, though most Kosovo Serbs still distrust it.¹⁹³ But Pristina and Belgrade do not yet see NATO as a vehicle for transforming their relationship, only for freezing it. Both still regard regional security as a balance of power equation. Security cooperation is not on their agendas. Pending final status, NATO, too, cannot move from a holding role to guiding the parties to participate in regional security integration.

For Belgrade, KFOR contains the Albanians, a proxy for what its own army can no longer do. President Tadic has told Crisis Group Belgrade will insist on KFOR remaining a long time,¹⁹⁴ while one of Premier Kostunica's advisers has said: "we don't even want our army there, but it would be good for the international forces to stay in Kosovo".¹⁹⁵ Senior Serbian security sources claim protection of international forces is one of their own top three Kosovo priorities.¹⁹⁶ Serbia also sees KFOR as an argument for denying Kosovo its own armed forces and demilitarising the territory. Although "giving up from return of the army in the province, [we] have to fight to keep air space over Kosovo and Metohija and demand satellite surveillance of the territory in agreement with NATO", argued a Kosovo Serb politician.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹³ Quarterly polling conducted for UNDP's Early Warning Reports between July 2004 and December 2005 shows trust in the KPS never rising above 5 per cent of Kosovo Serb respondents. See Report No.12, www.kosovo.undp.org/publications/publications.asp.

¹⁹⁴ Crisis Group conversation, President Tadic, June 2006.

¹⁹⁵ Aleksandar Simic, who is also a member of Serbia's negotiating team, 22 April 2006, reported in Belgrade media.

¹⁹⁶ Crisis Group interview, Belgrade, 11 May 2006.

¹⁹⁷ Rada Trajkovic, *Danas*, 19 December 2005, excerpted in KIM Info Newsletter, 21 December 2005.

After Milosevic's fall, Belgrade started revising relations with NATO and KFOR.¹⁹⁸ Cooperation in ending the Kosovo-based, ethnic Albanian insurgency in Serbia's Presevo Valley was a turning point. In May 2001 the then Serbia-Montenegro military chief, General Nebojsa Pavkovic, told a U.S. military newspaper: "We are no longer the hostile army".¹⁹⁹ The defence minister, Prvoslav Davinic, said: "The moment we enter [NATO's] Partnership for Peace, we will become the allies and partners of all the countries which are in Kosovo within KFOR".²⁰⁰ In late June 2005 the defence minister met for the first time with KFOR's commander in Pristina, and a program of joint exercises and coordination of border patrols was announced. It took KFOR several days to deny Serbian claims that the exercises would be inside Kosovo as well as in Serbia. In July 2005 NATO and Serbia-Montenegro agreed on free passage of peacekeepers through the latter's territory. This allows KFOR supplies to flow through Serbia and would permit peacekeepers in Bosnia-Herzegovina rapidly to reinforce KFOR in any repeat of the March 2004 riots.

For Kosovo Albanians, NATO's presence excludes the Serbian army's return. Although NATO's relationships with the KLA were ambiguous, Kosovo Albanians regard it as a wartime ally and abundant goodwill is helped by pro-Americanism. Yet, this did not prevent thousands from clashing with KFOR in March 2004. NATO's post-status presence must be designed to preserve the positive environment, and attitude toward the KPC is an important weather vane. Otherwise, it may be a matter of time before KFOR's reconfiguration, accelerated since March 2004, to a force designed for internal containment begins to attract hostility. Its aggressive TV campaign in 2005 warned of a forceful response should crowds again attack Serb monasteries or settlements. After the KFOR commander met with Serbia-Montenegro military chiefs on 12 August 2005, both communiqués emphasised KFOR's increased readiness to defend patrimonial sites. On 23 August 2005 it exercised before Serb Orthodox priests and monks with 700 riot-equipped troops against a mock Albanian mob. This stance will have to give way to something more partnership-oriented. Now Prime Minister Ceku regretted KFOR was investing so much in rehearsing confrontation, not in building local security capacity.²⁰¹

Despite KFOR, most Albanians still feel threatened: "We still think we live in danger here, the shadow of seven years ago is very long".²⁰² Folk memory of the invasion of 1912-1913 persists, but Serbia's military capacity and appetite have declined since 1999,²⁰³ so Albanians worry about infiltration, not the re-entry of tanks. Many nationalist Serb politicians, officials and intellectuals say they will refuse to recognise Kosovo's independence, suggesting that when circumstances change, in twenty or 100 years, they will re-take it. However unrealistic, such rhetoric overshadows proposals such as the plan for a twenty-year moratorium on final status raised by President Tadic in February 2006. Statements from officials like "Kosovo could never survive independently, either financially or security-wise. It will either become part of Serbia or part of Albania",²⁰⁴ remind Albanians of how vulnerable their territory has been when supra-national entities like the Ottoman Empire and Yugoslavia became enfeebled, and they were left to face Serbia. Belgrade's defence budget is €60 million, the KPC's €5 million. Neither the Balkan Stability Pact, NATO's Partnership for Peace nor the EU are seen as offering adequate reassurance.

2. Serbia's military concerns and deployments

For Serbia, the picture is reversed: under Yugoslavia's 1974 constitution and post-1999 UNMIK, with Belgrade held at arm's length, the Albanian majority pressured Kosovo Serbs into leaving. Kosovo has spewed out insurgencies in neighbouring Albanian-inhabited territories: the Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac (UCPMB) in south Serbia in 2000, the National Liberation Army (NLA) in Macedonia in 2001. As it reduces from a mostly conscript force of 70,000 to some 21,000 professional soldiers by 2010,²⁰⁵ Serbia's army will concentrate in a defensive arc to the east and north of Kosovo.²⁰⁶ Securing the Albanian-inhabited areas of south Serbia that adjoin Kosovo and straddle the road link to Macedonia is the highest priority. Two brigades are based in the area but in future an all-professional 78th Mechanised Brigade will fulfil the task.

¹⁹⁸ This change of policy has not applied to civilian relations between the Serbian government and UNMIK.

¹⁹⁹ Kevin Dougherty, "Yugoslavia considers petitioning NATO for Partnership for Peace membership", *Stars andStripes*, 3 May 2001.

²⁰⁰ Interview in *Glas Juga*, July-August 2005.

²⁰¹ Crisis Group interview, General Ceku, 30 August 2005.

²⁰² Crisis Group interview, May 2006.

²⁰³ Many of Serbia's more than 1,000 tanks are inoperable, due to lack of parts and fuel. Reform plans include reduction to 180.

²⁰⁴ Serbia's former Kosovo coordinator Nebojsa Covic, interview in *Blic*, 14 March 2005.

²⁰⁵ Reportedly adopted on 6 June 2006, Serbia's military reform plan envisages army numbers dropping to 27,000 in 2007 and further reforms through 2010 producing a fully professional force. RTS and B92 television reports, summarised in VIP Daily News Report, 15 June 2006.

²⁰⁶ A small brigade is based in the Sandzak.

Nearly 30 platoon-sized bases are strung along the border between Kosovo and the two Albanian majority municipalities in Serbia, Presevo (90 per cent) and Bujanovac (55 per cent).²⁰⁷ A new base under construction between the two municipalities at Tsepotin has been delayed several years and completion is uncertain. A company of the paramilitary Gendarmerie is deployed in support of the multi-ethnic police in Presevo and Bujanovac. Troop rotations in southern Serbia have now been shortened to one month, “to avoid corruption by the Albanians”.²⁰⁸

Serbia’s deployments show that for practical purposes its army has accepted Kosovo’s loss. It does not appear to be configuring regular forces for an intervention. Its posture is primarily defensive, regarding south Serbia as the next threatened domino and clandestine pan-Albanian military groups as the enemy, not the official structures Albanians have developed in Kosovo and Macedonia. The defence establishment sees continuity and vitality in the networks that from 1997 to 2001 produced consecutive insurgencies in Kosovo, south Serbia and Macedonia. A Belgrade defence analyst cited an alleged instance with worrying potential for south Serbia: ethnic Albanian fighters infiltrated over the Macedonia-Kosovo border from Tetovo to Peja/Pec during the March 2004 riots, without KFOR reaction.²⁰⁹ Although press allegations of KPC plotting have subsided over the last eighteen months, the military still regards the KPC as a vanguard or incubator for a parallel Albanian military organisation, and it believes that the KPC has cut into and compromised all military communications in south Serbia.²¹⁰

3. Toward collective security

The western Balkans is in transition from large, cumbersome conscript and reservist armies to smaller, flexible professional establishments. NATO’s collective security model is gradually making inroads, to displace balance of power concepts, whether between ethnicities or states.²¹¹ Macedonia, Albania and Croatia are

candidates to join NATO and are contributing units in theatres such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Macedonia has disbanded its air force and entrusted defence of its airspace to NATO member Bulgaria. Force interoperability and complementarity is being encouraged. Serbia is not yet in Partnership for Peace (PfP) but has trained an engineering unit for possible deployment in international missions and restored defence links with Croatia; one possible project is joint military medical teams, building upon battle surgery experience of the 1990s.²¹² Newly independent Montenegro can rationalise paramilitary forces it built up as a bulwark against Serbian interference during the confederation period.

But there are still roadblocks to a new security model: the ties of Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina to the security legacy of the 1990s, Mladic and two non-integrated entity armies prevent accessions to PfP. Neither popular nor elite understandings of the role of the army have been developed; a critical mass of imagination remains stuck in the past. Serbian army planners still base simulations and exercises on re-taking Kosovo: “It’s a seriously schizophrenic situation...Is it for the sake of academic exercise? If you ask these officers individually, they realise it is not for real...Quite a few hotheads believe in a *Dolchstoss* legend²¹³ but they know deep down there’s no point to further war”.²¹⁴

In both Serbia and Kosovo, politicians have little idea of their responsibilities to oversee security, due in large part to a tradition of security forces operating without democratic civilian control. In Serbia, there is no agenda for a strategic defence review to identify objectives and craft and cost capabilities to achieve them. Instead, “they just ask ‘how fast can we downsize?’”²¹⁵ In Kosovo the lack of a security elite is even more critical. The UN has kept the PISG at arm’s length in this field. The Assembly is immature. Deficits of knowledge and experience stem from Kosovo Albanian exclusion from government in the 1990s and from poor educational standards. A KPC officer spoke of “a Balkan mentality, that you are strong when you have a strong army”, though “more Kosovars understand now that the uniform should implement rather than bring political decisions”.²¹⁶

²⁰⁷ See Crisis Group Europe Report N°152, *Southern Serbia’s Fragile Peace*, 9 December 2003, and Crisis Group Europe Briefing N°43, *Southern Serbia: In Kosovo’s Shadow*, 27 June 2006.

²⁰⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Belgrade, 11 and 13 May 2006.

²⁰⁹ Crisis Group interview, 13 May 2006.

²¹⁰ Reported discussion inside Serbia-Montenegro ministry of defence, Crisis Group interview, Belgrade, May 2006.

²¹¹ Dimitar Bechev, “Worst-case scenarios and historical analogies: interpreting Balkan interstate relations in the 1990s”, in Aleksandar Fatic (ed.), *Security in southeastern Europe* (Belgrade, 2004), traces the region’s incremental steps toward stability by comparing the Yugoslav succession wars of the 1990s with the wider conflagration of the 1912-1913 Balkan wars.

²¹² Crisis Group interview, Belgrade, 12 May 2006.

²¹³ Literally, the “stab in the back” legend: the idea prevalent in German nationalist-military circles after World War One that their army was not defeated in the field but betrayed by the political class and others on the home front.

²¹⁴ Crisis Group interview, defence analyst, Belgrade, 12 May 2006.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Crisis Group interview, KPC Collective Training Centre chief Muharrem Rrahmani, Ferizaj/Urosevac, 15 May 2006.

Neither Kosovo nor Serbia can yet imagine defence cooperation or convergence. There are no forums in which they can address this. Serbia still hopes to exclude Kosovo from having an army, and Kosovo cannot yet represent itself on such matters.²¹⁷ But the region has “common security problems: organised crime, corruption, instability”,²¹⁸ and its security forces are likelier to face common threats such as natural disasters than new wars.²¹⁹ Bilaterally, NATO’s PfP can guide planners toward convergence. Candidate countries in the western Balkans have created the Adriatic Charter as NATO’s regional multilateral complement²²⁰ but neither Serbia nor Kosovo are members.

Is keeping Kosovo’s military status a black hole in the regional constellation likely to enhance stability? Kosovo Albanians argue that accepting a dictate not to raise armed forces would amount to a retrospective military defeat, a negation of independence and dangerously second-rate status: “Kosovo cannot be a sheep among wolves”.²²¹ While some micro-states have no forces of their own, and Costa Rica refrains from a standing army, Kosovo’s nearly two million Albanians would balk at this. Their population is similar to Slovenia, now a NATO member with an army of roughly 10,000. Every Eastern European country that has joined the EU has joined PfP and NATO first. Without an army, Kosovo would not be able to join NATO.²²²

4. An army as antidote to paramilitaries

Perhaps crucially, denying Kosovo a military would perpetuate illegal networks. Instead of building a state institution subject to normative pressures from NATO, regional peers and bodies overseeing Kosovo’s performance in governance and multi-ethnicity, loyalties would flow into the clandestine sphere, easily exploitable by organised

crime. “If we bar them from having an official army, there will automatically be an illegal replacement”, said a Western officer.²²³ Conversely, a small Kosovo army could reinforce Albanian pride and investment in the new state, sapping vitality from latent pan-Albanianism. The host of phantom liberation armies – often a cover for bandits – that have proclaimed themselves in Kosovo in recent years would be stripped of any shred of legitimacy in Kosovo Albanian eyes if there were a real army. “If we have an army it can gradually convince people that illegal weapons should be legalised or decommissioned, but this will take five to ten years,” said a KPC officer.²²⁴

A relatively smooth ride to final status determination should help cause paramilitary networks gradually to fall into disrepair. However, if tensions escalate, there is a risk of mobilisations on both sides that could revitalise the paramilitaries. This could happen if north Kosovo Serbs move beyond rhetoric about self-defence militias and call upon armed supporters from the southern Serbian towns they are cultivating; other groups associated with the Serbian Radical Party join in; and official Serbian security bodies do not block them from entering Kosovo. Albanians in the KLA heartlands would probably mobilise, too. Such reinvigorated paramilitary networks would overshadow official armies, setting back a cooperative security regime in the western Balkans.

B. MILITARY OPTIONS

With its emphasis to date on building police rather than a military in Kosovo, the international community’s concept has been one of human security, a Kosovo where all people, “regardless of ethnic background, race or religion, are free to live, work and travel without fear, hostility or danger, and where there is tolerance, justice and peace for everyone”.²²⁵ Kosovo Albanians have been reluctant to adopt this agenda; Belgrade regards it as dangerously delusional.

It is getting late in the day for the international community to engage the parties in the necessary discussions about Kosovo’s security. Once decisions are made on final status, its leverage will be substantially reduced, including its ability to micro-manage the security issue. All the various components, including legal, institutional and administrative measures, will need to fit together, and “cross-border skirmishes must be

²¹⁷ An opportunity for KPC and Serbia-Montenegro army chiefs to meet was missed during the 1 September 2005 KFOR change of command ceremony. KFOR failed to prepare its invitation to Serbian chief of general staff Paskas. Media reaction led most Albanian political leaders to boycott the ceremony. Against their better judgment KPC leaders felt obliged to join the boycott.

²¹⁸ Crisis Group interview, Professor Zoran Dragisic, civil defence faculty, Belgrade University, 12 May 2006.

²¹⁹ Crisis Group interview, Pavle Jankovic, International and Security Affairs Centre Belgrade, 12 May 2006.

²²⁰ See “Fact sheet on the Adriatic Charter”, U.S. State Department, at www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/fs/51348.htm.

²²¹ PDK politician Jakup Krasniqi, quoted in Leonard Kerquki, “Duarthate midis ujqerve, kjo s’do te ndodhe” [Empty-handed among wolves, this must not happen], *Lajm*, 26 May 2006.

²²² Iceland joined without an army but NATO is unlikely to take another such candidate. Its demands are becoming more exacting.

²²³ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 28 April 2006.

²²⁴ Crisis Group interview, Ferizaj/Urosevac, 15 May 2006.

²²⁵ A phrase in UNMIK’s Standards preamble, adopted by the Contact Group in its statement of 22 September 2004.

avoided at all costs.”²²⁶ Unfortunately, the international community has tied its hands behind its back, not creating sufficient space for the security debate and leaving too much room for unpredictable outcomes.

The Contact Group is at last beginning to examine the security question: meetings on it have become more frequent, and non-papers are being circulated. Agreement is beginning to crystallise on areas where reserved powers must be retained, such as intelligence. This Contact Group work in capitals, however, inevitably rubs against a mechanism sponsored by other parts of the international community to develop security architecture from the ground up, through consultations inside Kosovo: the Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR). With donor funding belatedly sorted and its secretariat in the Pristina government building since April, it has become a visible, if still perplexing, process for Kosovo citizens. The OSCE organised town hall meetings for it in nearly all municipalities; billboards proclaiming “have your say on security” dot the landscape; the ISSR name is promoted in flash TV ads; its bus roams from town to town; and it has a bi-weekly debate show on public television.

There is some concern it may reach conclusions that jar with Contact Group designs,²²⁷ though the U.S. worries about its slow pace, risking delay in final status decisions it wants this year. Nevertheless, in May Washington appeared to back away from “competing” proposals it had commissioned in a National Defense University non-paper.²²⁸ Illustrating the difference between the containment priorities of the capitals and the Kosovars’ perspectives, those proposals were heavy on anti-terrorism and organised crime prevention. ISSR consultations show the former in particular to be a very low priority among Kosovars.²²⁹

The exact role of a new Security Council Resolution in creating Kosovo’s new status is still not known. It may provide a broad framework, without specific stipulations on armed forces, perhaps using general phrases to assign international actors like NATO and the EU to roles in developing indigenous security structures. But squeezing Kosovo’s independence through the Security Council could as well strip it of features such as a UN seat or an army. In establishing the KPC, KFOR and UNMIK had to manoeuvre around the text of Resolution 1244. The need for similar textual sleight of hand should be avoided this time. Any language on an army has to be sustainable. Status settlement gives the international community a

chance to place Kosovo’s military aspirations on a reliable, predictable track. If it is taken as an opportunity to dam up this aspiration, it is likely to flow in more dangerous directions. The opportunity should instead be used to map out a future for it, channelling it into a course that, however irksome for Serbia, is not threatening. Leaving all options open for the post-status period invites instability. Clearly laid out restrictions on its future army should be part of the framework for Kosovo’s military development.

Debate should revolve around whether Kosovo is to have an army and if so, what its purpose and tasks should be rather than be distorted by too much consideration over the KPC’s fate. The mismatch between poor economic prospects and a young, rapidly growing population is arguably Kosovo’s greatest long-term security problem, threatening more criminality, social upheaval, and extremism.²³⁰ By this argument, supporting an army would only add to economic problems, accelerating crisis. Moreover, with Kosovo still subject to an inter-ethnic fault-line, to which the Ibar gives partial territorial form, might complete demilitarisation be safer? Serbia would certainly agree.

1. Uses of an army

The KPC suggests that the greatest benefit its own army would bring Kosovo might be the very fact of its existence: “A legally established defence force is the defining symbol of an independent nation state”,²³¹ one that “will play a major role in helping the emerging state develop...will help lead the nation through the difficult times of transition by setting the example for unity, integration, cooperation for others to follow”.²³² It should provide “a clear example within Kosovo of institutional professionalism and non-political service to the state...a focus for leadership, self-discipline”. Although pooling of sovereignty in the EU has given glimpses of post-modern statehood in Europe, and Kosovo will not have nineteenth century style independence, the suggestion is that to argue away the need for an army is premature. One that functions well can be a bulwark against state failure.

Yet, if an army is accepted, there remains great scope for flexibility over form and capacity. A Kosovo army would need no offensive capability: aircraft, tanks or heavy artillery. It could be built with a logistics and engineering slant, incorporating KPC expertise. It might even be primarily designed to contribute to international missions, with specialised units capitalising on KPC/KLA experience

²²⁶ Crisis Group interview, NATO official, 8 May 2006.

²²⁷ Crisis Group interviews, Brussels and Pristina, May 2006.

²²⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Pristina, May and June 2006.

²²⁹ Participants in the town hall meetings barely raised the issue, Crisis Group interview, ISSR Secretariat, Pristina, 8 May 2006.

²³⁰ See ISSR Strategic Environment Review, op. cit.

²³¹ KPC document, May 2006.

²³² “Our Way to NATO”, KPC, 2005.

and Kosovo's geography, for instance in de-mining and mountain warfare. Through PfP and the Adriatic Charter, Kosovo could fuse parts of its military with its neighbours', just as the Czech Republic and Slovakia have partly done with each other. Kosovo might develop joint units and mutual arrangements with Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro and, eventually, Serbia. Regional clusters of NATO members are developing joint battle groups. Just as, for example, a Scandinavian-Baltic battle group is being put together, NATO might eventually look to formation of a western Balkans battle group.

2. The ideas of the KPC

From initial ideas formed in isolation of becoming an army 10,000 to 20,000 strong, the KPC leadership's vision has gradually adapted to the reality of budget constraints and international cooperation. In October 2005 former Commander Ceku circulated a document, "Our Way to NATO", outlining a defence force to emerge from the KPC and achieve full operational capacity in five years. Although "rhetoric about an air force scared off casual readers",²³³ its broad thrust was reasonable enough for some in KFOR to suggest it be refined. UK and U.S. officers gave inputs to a KPC working group set up in December. The KPC aims to produce a "white book" mapping steps; the overseers also see the exercise as strengthening KPC capacity for organisational analysis.²³⁴

A notable KPC evolution from the October 2005 paper to the current draft is a reordering of the projected tasks. Homeland defence – "the least likely but most important" priority – dropped to fifth of five, with support to the civil authorities as lead priority, followed by civil protection, civil engineering and healthcare (for remote areas); helping maintain essential services during civil emergencies; and backstopping police during riots or other breakdowns of constitutional order. Other proposed tasks, in descending order, are contributing to regional security and participating in coalition operations overseas, contributing to the global war on terror, and ceremonial duties.

The proposals include a projected force strength of 3,500: a light brigade with additions. Its centrepiece would be a new 1,540-strong rapid reaction brigade with two infantry battalions of 513 men each, an intelligence and reconnaissance battalion (320 men), and a 120-strong logistics support company. Existing civil protection and infrastructure project capacity would fold into a 916-strong Land Force Command. The three regional

commands would retain aspects of the territorial zone structure, liaising with municipalities, recruitment, reserves, and "national mobilisation". The other main commands would be training and doctrine, and logistics support. Other elements, in a general headquarters support battalion, would be: military police (75), ceremonial guards (90), and four-helicopters. Step-by-step training, with emphasis on the rapid reaction brigade, is envisaged to last to 2011.

Some proposed units could be reduced or eliminated but it might be difficult to produce a coherent force with less than 2,000 to 2,500 soldiers. Salaries and site maintenance costs are not so much a problem as purchasing and maintaining equipment, consumables and fuel. Helicopters are too expensive unless donated. Even then, running costs might distort the budget. A more prosaic need is transport vehicles. The KPC has a motley collection of second-hand, donated trucks.

3. Perils of the halfway house

Some proposals for KPC transformation have stressed reserves or suggested forms short of a regular army. The language in the KFOR-KLA demilitarisation agreement on "formation of an Army in Kosovo on the lines of the U.S. National Guard" is perhaps unfortunate. A NATO officer said: "Reservists are traditionally the least reliable soldiers and tend to cross over into the paramilitary sphere, which Kosovo must avoid at all costs. [If they] retain strong links with their home community [they] tend to be more susceptible to politicisation and corruption, and...represent a danger to this unstable society". He emphasised that any reservists should be soldiers who served in the future army so for a few years there should be none.²³⁵ There are strong arguments for centralising an army in or near Pristina. Soldiers should live with soldiers and move away from the KPC's commuter approach. This would nurture esprit, make costs more manageable, allow more training and help break a residual sense of a force composed of old KLA networks and with loyalties to regions and local chiefs outweighing official structures.

A possibly costly measure that could also help break connections with the paramilitary world would be to eschew the AK-47 rifle, the ubiquitous paramilitary weapon in favour of U.S. M-16 rifles, or rifles used by a Western European NATO country. The AK-47s used by KPC guards are from KLA stocks, held in trust by KFOR.

Although some have proposed limiting Kosovo to a gendarmerie or an ambiguously titled "Kosovo Guard",

²³³ Crisis Group interview, KPC Coordinator Major General Chris Steirn, 28 April 2006.

²³⁴ Crisis Group interviews, Pristina, March-May 2006.

²³⁵ Crisis Group interview, 2 September 2005.

these apparently softer options are problematic. Kosovo's police have already edged toward some roles that would otherwise be military, their Regional Operational Support Units arguably fill the gendarmerie niche. If an army was ruled out, this military evolution would likely continue, distorting the police ethos.²³⁶ Giving the KPC, or a new force featuring KPC members, the gendarmerie role could produce a surfeit of police and turf wars with the KPS. The recent formation of the European Gendarmerie Force notwithstanding, there are no common standards for such paramilitary forces and the track record of local equivalents in the Balkans is atrocious. "It would send the wrong message to neighbouring countries", said an international official.²³⁷ In contrast, a small army could be anchored in NATO rules. PfP membership would "lock the force into a set of standards and criteria that cannot be overruled by local politics and patronage".²³⁸

4. With or without the KPC?

The numbers and capabilities of a future Kosovo army may gain broad agreement; where to start the new army from is trickier. The KPC thinks it should be that starting point. NATO officials in Brussels prefer a fresh start, with individual KPC members applying for the new army. The divergence is not so much about the likely number of KPC in the new army – this might be between 700 and 1,500 under either approach, as about the validity of the KPC as a foundation. Is it a well-functioning organisation or a compromised, dysfunctional structure? In truth, it is a bit of both, but showing more tendencies toward functionality in the last two years. The other point of difference is whether the new army should be a further evolution from the KLA, or have more generic roots, theoretically making it easier for Serbs to join. But nothing can start without a formula

accepted both by Kosovo Albanians and the KPC, and by NATO, including willing funders.

The resources and capacity building needed to make that start are significant. First would come demobilisation: resettlement or retirement of some 1,500 to 2,400 of present, active KPC members. A UK-funded pilot €400,000 scheme to buy-out 80 senior officers or those over 55 and set precedents for redundancies and pensions was delayed a year while UNDP tried to raise more money.²³⁹ With nothing else in the pipeline, further demobilisation could be stymied. The project was halted in July 2006 since few volunteered. Members either await opportunities in the KPC's future transformation, or for the Kosovo government to propose KPC pension arrangements. Its UN-approved pension law for families of KLA dead and invalids, due to take effect in January 2007, however, ties a future Kosovo state to validation of the KLA and to a sizeable recurring cost.

The IOM structure that gave vocational training or support for self-employment to 11,000 registered former KLA in 2000-2001 took a few months to start working and has since been dissolved. The training did not necessarily match the job market.²⁴⁰ The KPC is very sensitive to the quality of the scheme to be offered and expects the Kosovo government to take the initiative in mediating with the international community:

Resettlement cannot happen like it did with the KLA in 1999, when there was no government, no budget, no assembly to pass laws. Now is a very different time. Here's the paradox: the internationals are working like in 1999 or 2000. Instead of pressuring and offering the money to the government so that they adopt a law for the resettlement, they are pressuring the KPC directly....But we can offer the members nothing. The time of doing it the dirty way has passed. Now Kosovo has an institutional structure in place; the internationals should work with the institutions.²⁴¹

Experience in Serbia and Croatia, however, suggests it is better for an experienced international agency such as IOM to handle resettlement. A domestic agency would be too susceptible to corruption.²⁴²

²³⁶ Over the last year UNMIK has attempted to bring the KPS closer to Serb communities in particular and to underline that it is a "service" rather than a "force". This could be undone if Albanians begin to see it as the vehicle through which to pursue ambitions for a military. Montenegro's build-up since 1997-1998 of a 4,500-strong paramilitary under cover of its police force, commanded by professional military officers and equipped with armoured vehicles and anti-tank missiles, is a recent example. In examining policing in Northern Ireland, the Patten Report concluded it would be a mistake to add military-style support units to the police: better to continue to call upon the army, including its engineering capacity, for major public order challenges. See The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, p. 48, online at www.belfast.org.uk/report.htm.

²³⁷ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 31 August 2005.

²³⁸ Crisis Group interview, staff of the KPC coordinator's office, Pristina, 31 August 2005.

²³⁹ Crisis Group interviews, staff of the KPC coordinator's office, Pristina, August 2005-June 2006.

²⁴⁰ See "Wag the Dog", op. cit.

²⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, KPC Zone Three (Dukagjini) spokesman, Peja/Pec, 1 June 2006.

²⁴² Crisis Group interview, defence analyst, Belgrade, 24 July 2006.

Army training requires both strategic decisions on modalities and resourcing. At minimum a five-year task, it could be contracted to a private company, entrusted to a NATO team or to KFOR. The likeliest option is the second. To what extent will the KPC's existing training infrastructure and staff, senior command and officer corps be used? Where will ownership of the new army reside? The process cannot begin until NATO, the Kosovo government and the KPC agree on a selection and training plan, with resources at the ready.

5. Between disbandment and transformation

From the KLA's June 1999 Undertaking on Demilitarisation and Transformation,²⁴³ NATO emphasises demilitarisation, the KPC transformation. In setting standards for the KPC to meet, the international community embroiled itself in an additional transaction from which little was expected but the KPC has done surprisingly well. SRSJ Jessen-Petersen told it in May 2006: "In all areas there is continuing impressive progress, and you are the lead institution and model in the implementation of Standards".²⁴⁴ The quarterly UNMIK report to the Security Council on 20 June 2006 had only positive things to say about the KPC.²⁴⁵ The sotto voce messages arriving from Brussels about KPC disbandment particularly sting because they appear heedless of its efforts to do the right thing, as if NATO is applying the doctrine of original sin.

If a Kosovo army is to be established, there are three possible models for relating the KPC to its creation:

- no relation: either disbanding it first or recruiting the army alongside the KPC with no structured program for its members to apply;
- filtering the KPC and assigning members who fit the criteria to the new army, with further members to be recruited from outside. The KPC would either disappear or remain as a residual body, possibly awaiting a resettlement program; and
- simple transformation of the KPC into the new army, with or without filtering.

The middle option appears most practical, the only one likely to be acceptable to the international community and Albanians alike. It would also get around the tricky proposition of reclassifying KPC ranks.

6. Securing the "right stuff"

It would be easier to create an army embodying a non-ethnic Kosovo identity by going with, rather than against, the grain of Albanian and KPC expectations. If the KPC is the starting point, it will acquiesce in NATO's control over the vetting of members who want a future in the transformed body. Between a third and a half would likely take redundancy or retirement if donors and Kosovo's government came up with an appropriate resettlement and pension package; 1,500 to 2,000 would try to qualify to stay. In addition to testing, NATO would have discretion to reject those it suspected of dubious activities, e.g. those KFOR wanted Ceku to dismiss in 2003.

This process would likely leave 700 to 1,000 for the new force. The KPC's own plans, drawn up with KFOR advice, then would give NATO another opportunity to shape matters. They envisage that the two largest components would be a 916-strong land forces command, doing present KPC functions, and a new 1,600-strong infantry brigade, so NATO could allocate most KPC survivors to the former. In reality, the numbers of both components – particularly the infantry – might be smaller. Ultimately, 500 or even fewer KPC members might be posted to the infantry element, most of whose slots would be open to new recruits.

Like the KPS, the army's insignia and symbols could be designed as ethnically neutral. The KPC general staff is already working on such designs. The present KPC uniform is essentially the KLA uniform and must be replaced. Written insignia might be in English to help pitch the army's identity outward, toward regional cooperation and participation in international missions. While the KPC's civil engineering and construction activities could continue, the army's security tasks inside Kosovo should be minimised, again to keep the projection outward.

Donors are often negligent about financing multi-ethnicity. With €500 monthly salaries Serbia outbids the PISG's €200 salaries for the loyalties of Kosovo Serb teachers and medical staff. The pay budgeted for an army will have a great impact on who can be recruited and retained and the extent of its multi-ethnicity. Most KPC members receive roughly €200, a standard Kosovo public sector salary, but one difficult to survive on. In poorer regions such as Decan, Drenica and Mitrovica there is little alternative employment but in areas such as Pristina KPC members claim it is a sacrifice to stay with the organisation. If army salaries are comparable, most recruits are likely to come from the poorer, more martially minded areas, and proportionately more reliance would have to be placed on the stoicism and

²⁴³ See footnote 6 above.

²⁴⁴ "KPCDG congratulates KPC on efforts to reach out to ethnic minorities", UNMIK Press Release 1556, 31 May 2006.

²⁴⁵ See "Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo", S/2006/361, 5 June 2006, at www.un.org/Docs/sc/sgrep06.htm.

commitment of existing KPC members.²⁴⁶ Few better-educated Albanian urban youth and few Serbs will apply unless pay is much higher.

7. Representing Serbia's interest

As Serbia prepares for final status talks, its statements have become more precise on removing an army from the equation. Meeting with NATO's Southern Europe commander in January 2005, President Tadic said: "A formation of some new army in Kosovo-Metohija in some independent state, which, looking at it in the long term, would be hostile toward Serbia-Montenegro, would be absolutely unacceptable in terms of stability, and it would destabilise the region".²⁴⁷ Elaborating Belgrade's "more than autonomy, less than independence" concept in May 2005, Prime Minister Kostunica's adviser, Aleksandar Simic, specified Kosovo should not have its own army, customs or complete monetary control.²⁴⁸ In September 2005, Co-ordination Centre chief Sanda Raskovic-Ivic suggested more sensitively that Kosovo be demilitarised to prevent paramilitary formations forming and dispel Albanian fears the Serbian army might return.²⁴⁹ In May 2006, negotiator Leon Kojen envisaged "gradual inner demilitarisation", with neither Serb nor Albanian forces "and especially no paramilitary organisations" in Kosovo. Aware of the backdoor route to an army, he wanted police numbers, makeup and equipment to "comply with European standards".²⁵⁰

On whether Kosovo should have an army, there is little room for finessing between Pristina and Belgrade. The disadvantages of an ambiguous, paramilitary-style halfway-house have been discussed above. The international community should decide commensurate with its fundamental decision to separate Kosovo from Serbia, recognising it as an independent country. Ruling against the grain of this decision would be the more destabilising option, pandering to and possibly prolonging Serbia's non-recognition of Kosovo and encouraging it to take more daring action. If Kosovo belongs to the fullest range of regional, European and multilateral processes and bodies,

including security and military ones, it will be much more difficult for Serbia to maintain non-recognition.

For Serbia the issue is highly symbolic, tied to its sense of identity. Although it does not want to rule the Albanians again, much of its approach to final status has been about finding ambiguous, face-saving formulas that let it cling to formal sovereignty. A Kosovo army seems to make that impossible, putting a seal of defeat on its recent history. Limiting Kosovo to a police force would allow Belgrade retrospectively to claim a limited victory. However, Serbia's security calculations are crippled by lack of knowledge and interest in the workings of Kosovo Albanian society: "We only have one or two books on the subject";²⁵¹ "since 1912 our army still has not understood Kosovo; it's made a whole century of mistakes".²⁵² Serbia's plan for demilitarising Kosovo would provoke the very Albanian paramilitary growth it most fears.

There are, nevertheless, at least four areas for compromise in the army issue: restricting numbers and capabilities; reducing or eliminating the KLA legacy; delaying activation; and giving NATO a strong role in forming and running it. Each must be carefully gauged: overdoing compromise might both backfire in Kosovo and encourage Belgrade too much. Moreover, if Serbia maintains its present all or nothing stance, none of these compromises are likely to attract it until final status has been determined.

Although few in Belgrade are ready to discuss Kosovo's independence, let alone an army, some who are say "an army is a state prerogative, but neighbours' fears and anxieties must be accommodated too". They can envisage a professional force of 3,000 to 4,000, "without an air force or tanks, and under strong control of international forces for a long period".²⁵³ In discussions with Western officials, the army command acknowledged "through gritted teeth" that a professional, NATO-tutored Kosovo army was a

²⁴⁶ To be fair, some of these are the best military professionals available in Kosovo, at least among the Albanian majority.

²⁴⁷ "President Tadic: Army of independent Kosovo to destabilize region", FoNet news agency, 24 January 2005.

²⁴⁸ Speech made at the conference: "Assessing Developments in the Western Balkans: Problems of Today, Ideas for the Future", Bratislava, 20-21 May 2005, summary at: www.sfp.sk/dok/2005-06-21-ConferenceSummary.doc.

²⁴⁹ "Srbiji suverenitet, Kosovu izvrsna, zakonodavna i sudska vlast" [Sovereignty to Serbia, executive, judicial and legislative power to Kosovo], *Danas*, 22 September 2005.

²⁵⁰ VIP Daily News Report, 31 May 2006.

²⁵¹ Crisis Group interview, Dr Zoran Dragisic, civil defence faculty, Belgrade University, 12 May 2006. See also historian Predrag Markovic's commentary in *Vecernje Novosti*, 15 July 2006: "Do you know how many Serbian academics know Albanian? Not one... If the Albanians in Kosovo are such a great problem, why didn't the Serbian learned people make an effort to get to know them better?... The attitude of underestimating has led to us not noticing the process that was developing within them, until it was too late. Whatever the solution for Kosovo might be, we must get to know the Albanians better", translated in VIP Daily News Report, 17 July 2006.

²⁵² Crisis Group interview, Aleksandar Radic, defence and security editor, VIP News Services, Belgrade, 13 May 2006.

²⁵³ Crisis Group interviews, defence analysts, Belgrade, 12 May 2006.

better option than its likely illegal, paramilitary alternative.²⁵⁴ Others who admit a possibility of independence still insist on police only.²⁵⁵ The difficulty the international community has in understanding local anxieties may be seen in the puzzlement of a Western officer, who mused: “If Serbia really understands PfP, it surely could not object to another PfP nation to its south?”²⁵⁶

Imposing formal limits on numbers and capabilities could be part of an overall status settlement. Although the present structure of talks and attitudes in Belgrade and Pristina make it an unlikely subject for direct negotiation, both should be obliged sooner rather than later to put on paper their concept for indigenous Kosovo security structures. Detailed questions should then be posed, probing positions, as has been done for decentralisation, property and debt, and community rights.

Given that the Contact Group rather than the UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy for the status process (former Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari²⁵⁷) will likely determine security aspects in the final status settlement,²⁵⁸ either it or, by delegation, NATO could draw up a letter, annex or decision in some other legally or politically binding form to be affixed to the final status accords, setting numbers and capability ceilings for an indigenous Kosovo military force just above planned levels: no more than 3,000 troops, no tanks, heavy artillery, ground-to-ground missiles or attack aircraft. This might square the circle between Pristina’s aspiration and guarantees Belgrade needs that Kosovo could not be a threat. The restrictions might be time-limited (perhaps ten or twenty years), or better, linked to both Kosovo’s and Serbia’s PfP entry: enough to allow attitudes to mature, not so much as to be perpetual restrictions of sovereignty.

Such a letter or annex is likely to represent NATO’s allowance for Serbia’s security interests rather than a formal agreement with Belgrade. It would be preferable if Serbia could draw some satisfaction from having negotiated a ceiling to Kosovo’s army and the continued NATO presence, but its apparent determination to remain behind the policy curve on Kosovo could well lose it this opportunity.

8. Respecting traditions

Beyond KFOR, the only shared security experience Albanians and Serbs have is the old JNA, whose image changed dramatically during the 1990s, as it morphed into a Serbian army. Albanian enlistment ended by 1991. Albanians regard the KLA and its KPC successor as their bulwarks, Serbs the JNA (and the MUP) as theirs. North Kosovo Serbs have their own tradition of resistance, expressed through the semi-disbanded Mitrovica Bridge Watchers and the ex-JNA reservists now being formed into a defence militia.²⁵⁹ Can any new army span this gulf? With the Serb north likely to hold out against incorporation into central institutions, the alternatives may be allowing recruitment of separate largely Serb units there, which could solidify division and even lead to intra-army clashes, or accepting that Serb recruitment will be low, at least in the early years. Those who do join could be preferentially promoted to compensate for low numbers, and larger numbers of other Kosovo ethnicities – Bosniaks, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, Egyptians – could be recruited to maintain some multi-ethnicity in the interim.

Nevertheless, NATO should not give Kosovo’s government and army a free pass. The Standards program has mostly focused on efforts rather than results. As it judges Kosovo’s readiness for PfP, NATO should be more results-oriented. This will require more political creativity from Kosovo’s leaders, not just “painting by numbers”. If the new army absorbs the KLA tradition via the KPC, it should also absorb some Kosovo Serb defence tradition. Otherwise, there will be unfair asymmetry, and individual Serb recruits might be labelled as collaborators by their community. It is unrealistic to expect much Serb willingness to join the army immediately but the five-year recruitment and training process for the infantry element would be an opportunity to make up ground later. Circumstances might then be calm enough for the defence ministry to invite groups of Bridge Watchers or northern defence militia to apply for positions in the army, just as former KLA and former MUP officers were invited to apply to the KPS in 1999-2000 and 2003-2006 respectively.

Needing to create a new beginning for a security body identified with one of two conflicted ethnicities in Northern Ireland, the Patten report considered it imprudent to disband the Royal Ulster Constabulary

²⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, Western defence official, 19 July 2006.

²⁵⁵ Crisis Group interviews, Goran Svilanovic, 11 May 2006, and a senior elected official, June 2006.

²⁵⁶ Crisis Group interview, Pristina, 28 April 2006.

²⁵⁷ Ahtisaari’s office rejoices in the acronym of UNOSEK.

²⁵⁸ Crisis Group interview, NATO official, Brussels, 24 July 2006.

²⁵⁹ “Kosovo Serbs recruit ex-soldiers for defence”, Reuters, 20 June 2006; Crisis Group interviews, Mitrovica and Washington DC.

but recommended renaming it, giving it new insignia and gradually changing the balance of its personnel.²⁶⁰ A Kosovo army needs to absorb the KLA identity, while being broad enough also to incorporate other identity strands. "In the KPC the KLA became more civilised, disciplined and smooth. The job is done", argued one of its more hard-line zone commanders.²⁶¹ The KPC is ready to put itself in NATO's hands to be reshaped, "even if only ten members make it into the new force".²⁶² Its officers accept they are only half way to becoming professional soldiers, with more challenging tests ahead. They also appreciate that NATO engagement and training offer the only chance of success. What they refuse to accept is "deletion of history", spurning the KPC as the army's starting point.²⁶³ It seems perverse for NATO not to exploit KPC openness to change: the destination would be similar, the ride smoother.

Since May 2006 and off the record, NATO officials have been saying: "The KPC needs to be disbanded. It is dysfunctional and carries too much past baggage".²⁶⁴ But this is based not on an assessment of what might work best on the ground but rather on an effort to square the views of diverse NATO members: "The international community is not open to the KPC becoming an army...there would be more support for the creation from scratch of a different professional security force, with clear criteria".²⁶⁵

From a distance this radical approach may look attractive. At ground level it is likely to backfire, stirring resentment and failing to create a solid, inclusive institution. A new army created this way may fail to secure either Albanian or Serb loyalty, leaving parallel private forces as the instruments of choice. It is too late to design Kosovo from first principles, as if present institutions do not exist. "Our friends are designing Kosovo in their computers...Kosovo is not a toy," argued a KPC officer in Peja/Pec.²⁶⁶ A zone commander with a moderate reputation was dismayed that years of development might be lost: "Any solution that skirts around reality will produce crisis...People will not apply to join the new army if they know the KPC was

turned down".²⁶⁷ Another zone commander said he would urge Albanians not to join such an army.²⁶⁸ A Pristina-based diplomat worried that throwing away the KPC would be insulting and impractical: "We should not fly in the face of Kosovar expectation. The KPC is respectable and disciplined".²⁶⁹

9. The merits of delay

One idea circulating among international officials is to impose a three to five-year delay after a status decision before Kosovo could begin to form an army and during which the KPC would continue to exist.²⁷⁰ In this way, international assistance and licence for Kosovo's military aspirations could be made contingent upon its good-faith implementation of the provisions of the final status settlement, in particular regarding treatment of minorities, and so give the international community additional leverage over the new state. Delay can offer benefit, giving time for better and more interactive political dynamics between Albanians and Serbs, for a more security-literate elite to emerge and to embed a human security approach. The ISSR experience may help here.

Yet delay can easily mean drift. Its quality would be crucial. Would it be part of a clearly scheduled, proactive program for capacity building, or a cover for second-guessing Albanian-Serb relations, disengagement and acquiescence in a semi-failed Kosovo state? Delay will not contribute to stability unless the intervening period is used to reorganise the KPC, train elements of the future army, and create policy capacity and a defence ministry. Even implementation of an agreed plan would involve long timescales for finalising the details of the NATO training mission and deploying it, attracting donor funds, filtering the KPC for those who will stay and those who are to be resettled, and the consequent reorganisation. The lead time to achieve operational military capacity is in any case at least five years. The trainee army's infantry element would, therefore, mostly be confined to barracks and training grounds that long, not an operational presence on the streets.

²⁶⁰ See The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, op. cit., p. 99.

²⁶¹ Crisis Group interview, 16 May 2006.

²⁶² Crisis Group interview, KPC zone commander, 31 May 2006.

²⁶³ Crisis Group interviews, May and June 2006.

²⁶⁴ Crisis Group interview, 8 May 2006.

²⁶⁵ Anonymous diplomatic sources, Brussels, quoted in Augustin Palokaj, "TMK-ja nuk mund te jete ushtri e Kosoves" [The KPC cannot be Kosovo's army], *Koha Ditore*, 19 May 2006.

²⁶⁶ Crisis Group interview, 1 June 2006.

²⁶⁷ Crisis Group interview, 19 May 2006.

²⁶⁸ Crisis Group interview, 1 June 2006. Yet another zone commander said: "If they think they can find less patriotic members for the new structure, they are wrong". Crisis Group interview, 31 May 2006.

²⁶⁹ Crisis Group interview, 24 May 2006.

²⁷⁰ See reported comments of a UNOSEK official in Leonard Kerquki, "Shperblim per permbushjen e standardeve!" [Reward for implementation of standards!], *Lajm*, 25 May 2006.

Delay in forming an army would be especially problematic if combined with prior KPC disbandment. The U.S. National Defense University non-paper proposed a 180-day gap between KPC disbandment and recruitment of a new force. Some Contact Group members would prefer such a gap to be years – or indefinite. Although governments such as Germany's express confidence KFOR can prevent any security vacuum,²⁷¹ this is not realistic. KFOR is too big and unwieldy to fill the social and security niche occupied by the KPC and the aspirations that accompany it. Undesirable local actors would rush in to fill it if it was suddenly vacated.

V. CONCLUSION

Full demilitarisation is impracticable for Kosovo. There is insufficient trust to sustain it. It would become a façade, behind which unofficial armed groups would coalesce, making the state less, not more secure. A small army, developed under NATO oversight, is most appropriate, both to prompt gradual demilitarisation of society and to bring Kosovo into regional collective security arrangements. The latter is the key to sustainable demilitarisation and regional security.

Nearly all states have armies. If the security pillar is downplayed, the state will be weakened. Kosovo has abundant institutional and structural weaknesses militating against its success. Translating KPC popularity, authority and growing professionalism into a permanent security institution would shift odds in the new state's favour. If managed well, an army can be a tool in development of a stable, non-ethnic identity for the new state. Fashioning a representative, professional army for a territory deeply divided between its Albanian majority and rejectionist Serb minority requires a careful choice of building blocks. Unwilling elements cannot be forced to cohere. Nor can the army be created without regard to existing institutions and the majority's expectations.

Steering Kosovo's identity from exclusively Albanian markers toward multi-ethnicity, or at least ethnic neutrality, will be an uphill task. The international community should be realistic in using, not spurning, the levers available. It should not pass up the opportunity the KPC offers – through its partial evolution from paramilitary roots, dependency and need for NATO's expertise and willingness to change – to enjoy a free hand in moulding an army.

The historical baggage of the KPC question aside, the specific proposals being devised either to transform it into the new army or to create a new force are strikingly similar. Some envisage a new infantry-based defence force as a stand-alone structure, with the KPC remaining a separate civil protection and engineering arm. The KPC's own working paper proposes that both structures come under the roof of the future army. Under either approach, at least half the present KPC would be demobilised, and most members who make the grade would do so in the civil protection and engineering arm, not the infantry brigade, which would rely mainly on recruits.

If the result would be similar, there is little benefit to managing the transition abrasively. There is value in ensuring the KPC perceives the process as one of its further transition, not its rejection and disbandment. Combining both structures under the same roof would also likely be more cost effective than maintaining separate

²⁷¹ Crisis Group interview, German diplomat, 28 June 2006.

organisations. Just as it would be unnecessarily disruptive at this late stage to transfer KPS special, border and SWAT units to the military sphere, so it would be jarring to strip KPC civil protection and engineering functions of military status.

The army should be small – between 2,000 and 3,000 – lightly equipped and trained by a dedicated NATO mission to a transparent plan and schedule. It should not duplicate KPS functions but rather be built with an outward orientation, toward taking its first operational steps in regional initiatives and international peacekeeping. An opportunity should be found as early as 2007 for the first deployment abroad, drawing upon KPC, such as demining. Internal security tasks should be severely limited, not going much further than present KPC operations.

A Contact Group or NATO-authored letter, annex or other form of legally or politically binding understanding appended to the final status accord endorsed by both the Security Council and Kosovo's Assembly,²⁷² should codify this and also specify limitations on the army's numbers and capabilities and NATO's role in its governance. The aim should be to graduate Kosovo into NATO's PfP (together with Serbia), upon which the agreement would be superseded by new treaty arrangements.

Any delay in activating Kosovo's army should be occasioned by a pro-active training and capacity-building program. The intervening years must not be perceived as a vacuum but should feature benchmarks for the army's gradual ascent to full operational capacity under NATO guidance. Demonstrated international commitment to establishing Kosovo's army in this way would help stabilise all parties' assumptions about Kosovo's future, its gradual evolution toward security provider status and its equality with neighbours.

NATO's KFOR will, of course, stay beyond final status determination, but for how long? It is possible that after a few years the U.S. might wish to withdraw and advocate handover to an EU Force, as in Bosnia-Herzegovina? That would make the international security guarantee less robust and possibly saddle the EU with more prerogatives than it could constructively handle. NATO should see its relationship with Kosovo through.

Should Kosovo's new army ultimately take on KFOR's defence role, and if so, should this be sequenced and scheduled in the agreement? Setting deadlines can offer hostages to fortune; benchmarks are preferable. As an international peacekeeping mission, KFOR cannot integrate local forces into its command. What would be

possible once Kosovo qualifies for and joins PfP, is that PfP mechanisms could be used to prepare the army to take over KFOR roles and eventually allow KFOR's complete withdrawal.

Much depends upon how Serbia adapts to Kosovo's new status and its own progress in Euro-Atlantic integration. If its isolation deepens to the point that it becomes a rogue state, even a twenty-year KFOR presence might not be long enough. If Serbia adjusts quickly and decides to facilitate Kosovo's progress, KFOR may become redundant much sooner. NATO must plan, however, to be in Kosovo long-term; a premature signal of withdrawal could backfire. Much also depends upon Kosovo's own progress in building good governance that bridges the inter-communal divide and creates economic development to forestall social unrest and lessen organised crime influence.

NATO should have a strong advisory role as Kosovo's defence policy develops, and it should retain at least dual control over the army as long as KFOR remains. But Kosovo has to grow its own capacity. The KPC coordinator's office should be the basis for building a defence ministry. From early 2007 the coordinator (rebranded and reporting no longer to UNMIK but to KFOR) should be an international defence civil servant, not a major-general. Over two years international staff should step back into advisory roles, with a defence minister in place by 2008.

Kosovo must also develop mechanisms and habits of inclusive security governance. A national security council, to include Kosovo Serbs, should be established at independence to guide and coordinate policy, its rules calibrated to overcome the boycott tactics Serb leaders likely will adopt. The international oversight mission to be established upon final status could second an official to fill any empty chair and represent the interest of the missing party.

NATO and the EU should keep pressure on Pristina to be creative in accommodating Kosovo Serbs generally and in the security sphere in particular. They should also work together to create a supportive environment for Pristina's initiatives. Serbia's pace of accession into the EU and NATO should be partially dependent upon treatment of its southern neighbour: whether it encourages or discourages Kosovo Serbs from integrating into the new state, and in particular whether it fosters a breakaway Serb north or guides it toward accommodation with Pristina.

Pristina/Belgrade/Brussels, 28 July 2006

²⁷² See Crisis Group Europe Report N°161, *Kosovo: Toward Final Status*, 24 January 2005.

APPENDIX A
MAP OF KOSOVO

Kosova / Kosovo

Produced by
HCIC
 GIS/Map Centre



The boundaries and names displayed on this map do not imply official recognition by the United Nations

Source: NIMA, WEU

APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAK	Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, the political party of Ramush Haradinaj
ANA/AKSh	Albanian National Army, a “phantom” guerrilla movement declared a terrorist organisation by the UN’s Kosovo mission in 2003
COMKFOR	Commander of KFOR
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General
EU	European Union
FARK	Armed Forces of the Republic of Kosovo
FPU	Formed Police Units, i.e. anti-riot police
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISSR	Internal Security Sector Review
JNA	Yugoslavian National Army
KCS	Kosovo Correctional (i.e. prison) Service
KFOR	The NATO-dominated Kosovo Force
KLA	Kosovo Liberation Army
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps, the civil protection successor structure of the KLA
KPCDG	Kosovo Protection Corps Development Group
KPS	Kosovo Police Service
K-SHIK	An unofficial Kosovo intelligence service that operates loosely on behalf of the PDK party
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo, the largest political party in Kosovo, formerly headed by the late President Rugova
LKCK	National Movement for the Liberation of Kosovo
LPK	People’s Movement of Kosovo
MNB	Multinational Brigade, until 2005, KFOR’s five regional components
MNTF	Multinational Task Force, the six more flexible successors of KFOR’s MNBs
MUP	Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs
NLA	National Liberation Army

NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PDK	Democratic Party of Kosovo, the main political successor of the KLA and largest opposition party, led by Hashim Thaci
PfP	NATO's Partnership for Peace
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self-Government
ROSU	Regional Operational Support Unit, special police units of the KPS
RTK	Radio Television Kosovo, the public broadcaster
SNC	Serb National Council, a Kosovo Serb political umbrella-organisation
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
UNOSEK	United Nations Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the future status process for Kosovo
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UCK	Kosovo Liberation Army
UCPMB	Liberation Army of Presevo, Medvedja and Bujanovac