

## **Kosovo auf Deutsch**

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Forget about status negotiations for a moment. The near-term outlook for Kosovo is unalterably grim: an economy stuck in misery; a bursting population of young people with "criminality as the sole career choice;" an insupportably high birthrate; a society imbued with corruption and a state dominated by organized crime figures.

These are the conclusions of "Operationalizing of the Security Sector Reform in the Western Balkans," a 124-page investigation by the Institute for European Policy commissioned by the German Bundeswehr and issued last January. This month the text turned up on a weblog. It is labeled "solely for internal use." Provided one can plow through the appallingly dense *Amtsdeutsch* - "German officialese" - that is already evident in the ponderous title, a reader is rewarded with sharp insights about Kosovo.

Occasionally a flicker of human frustration with the intractability of Kosovo's people appears in the stolid German text. That reminded me of an encounter 44 years ago in the fly-specked cafeteria of Pristina's Kosovski Bozur Hotel, occupied by a lone guest drinking a beer. He introduced himself as an engineer from Germany.

What was he doing here?" I inquired. "Ich verbloede," he replied - "I am stupefying myself." - (or, I am making myself stupid).

In this text, the authors make clear that Germany's interest in Kosovo rests on its "geographic proximity" and its roles as the most important supplier of troops and provider of money for the province. Failure would mean "incalculable risks for future foreign and security policy" of the Federal Republic. The authors point out a "grotesque denial of reality by the international community" about Kosovo, coupling that with the warning of "a new wave of unrest that could greatly exceed the level of escalation seen up to now."

The institute authors, Mathias Jopp and Sammi Sandawi, spent six months interviewing 70 experts and mining current literature on Kosovo in preparing the study. In their analysis the political unrest and guerrilla fighting of the 1990s led to basic changes which they call a "turnabout in Kosovo-Albanian social structures." The result is a "civil war society in which those inclined to violence, ill-educated and easily influenced people could make huge social leaps in a rapidly constructed *soldateska*."

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

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

They cite its failure to improve Kosovo's energy supply, and "notable cases of corruption that have led to alienation from Kosovo public and to a hostile picture of a colonialist administration." They describe both UNMIK and KFOR as infiltrated by agents of organized crime who forewarn their ringleaders of any impending raids. "The majority of criminal incidents do not become public because of fear of reprisals.

Among the negative findings listed are:

The justice system's 40,000 uncompleted criminal cases;

The paucity of corruption-crime investigations (10-15 annually);

The province's 400 gas stations (where 150 would suffice), many of which serve as fronts for brothels and money-changing depots;

A Kosovo Police Service "dominated by fear, corruption and incompetence";

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

In an aside, it quotes one unidentified official as saying of the American who is deputy chief of UNMIK, "The main task of Steve Schook is to get drunk once a week with Ramush Haradinaj."

Concerning the crime scene the authors conclude that "with resolution of the status issue and the successive withdrawal of international forces the criminal figures will come closer than ever to their goal of total control of Kosovo."

Among the dismal findings of the German study are those on the economy:

Sinking remission of money from Kosovans working abroad, a primary source of income for many Kosovo families, pegged now at 560 million euros per annum;

Some 88 percent of the land now in private ownership, meaning ever more subdividing of plots, usually among brothers, leading to less and less efficient agriculture;

Proliferation of NGOs - now numbering 2,400 - the great bulk of which exist for shady purposes;

A hostile climate for foreign investors, frightened by political instability and the power of mafia structures.

A central issue in Kosovo is an "inexhaustible supply of young people without a future and therefore ready for violence," the study says. The only remedy for dealing with this "youth bulge" is to open northern Europe's gates to young Kosovans seeking jobs, the authors say.

In anticipation of a transfer of oversight from the UN to the European Union, the authors warn: "the EU is in danger of following too strongly in the wake of a failed UN and to disintegrate under the inherited burden unless they make an open break with practices and methods of UNMIK." One of the experts they interviewed put it more bluntly: "the EU is inheriting from UNMIK a fireworks store filled with pyromaniacs."

In the estimate of the authors neither NATO nor the EU or UN appear capable of self examination, much less self-criticism. The authors draw a picture of self-satisfied incompetents in all international organizations dealing with Kosovo.

However, in their depiction, Kosovans appear equally beholden to legend - in their case of historic exploitation - such that if they finally achieve independence, all will suddenly be well. In the past Kosovans could and did always blame somebody else for their troubles: Ottomans, Yugoslavs, Serbs. Now they have begun to blame UNMIK. But what will happen if they have only themselves to blame?

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