

The Kosovo Protection Corps
In Search of a Future

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Field Notes

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Preface

Stabilisation, reform and the normalisation of ethnic relations in Kosovo have proven to be extremely difficult. Moreover, clearness about a framework for the upcoming negotiations on a final status is lacking up to date and opinions on this status that should be acceptable to all parties involved is varying from full independence for Kosovo to autonomy within Serbia. After years of relative tranquillity regarding this outstanding issue, the international community was rudely shaken awake during the March 2004 riots in Kosovo. Since then Kosovo received increasingly attention and headway was made in stepping up reforms to make sure that the ground is solid for the start of status talks. One of the topics that is rarely mentioned in relation to these talks or reforms for that matter – but at the same time crucial from a security perspective – is the role, development and envisaged future of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC). Does the KPC foremost consist of the remnants of the UCK or is it a newly setup civil emergency organisation? Should it become a full-fledged military orientated defence organisation, a civilian based emergency structure or something in between? These are important questions need to be clarified and resolved in the short run.

This report deals with the KPC since its establishment after the Kosovo-crisis and aims to assess where further attention is needed and in what direction the KPC might develop during and after status talks later this year. The initial idea was to compile information on the KPC and produce an internal Centre for European Security Studies (CESS) report. However, it turned out that there was widespread interest in a report on the KPC – both in South-East Europe and within the international community – which convinced us to publish the internal report as ‘field notes’ from research in Kosovo and Serbia-Montenegro. Erik Petersen who worked as a fellow at CESS wrote these field notes on the basis of (i) extensive desk research at CESS in Groningen; and (ii) interviews in Belgrade and Pristina with several key figures that are involved with KPC issues on a daily basis.

During his three-month fellowship Erik Petersen co-developed and assisted in organising two workshops on defence reform and PfP-admittance, in Belgrade, Serbia-Montenegro (SCG) and Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). He has a Masters Degree in International Relations and specialised in peace-building and democratisation of ethnically divided societies in post-conflict environments. In 2003 he lived for three months in Sarajevo and conducted research for and advised the Netherlands Embassy on the possibilities of increased co-operation between 16 donor countries in the field of good governance. Later that year he worked for four months with

the Netherlands Delegation to the United Nations (UN) in New York, where he was responsible for reporting on the First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) and Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization Issues) of the UN General Assembly.

I would like to express the hope that these field notes will serve as a modest though useful contribution to informed debate on the future of the KPC and its further development. To conclude I would like to thank Erik Petersen for his persistence in doing research on this sensitive and important issue.

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Note I Towns and regions are referred to in their Serbian names as these are still most common on maps of the region. The author wants to express explicitly that this choice is not politically motivated.

Note II The author would like to thank the KPC, international diplomats and their offices, local (political) representatives of different ethnic groups, international organisations, and independent experts for their cooperation and assistance in providing information, as well as their comments on the draft text.

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Introduction

By the end of 2005 negotiations are expected to start on the future status of Kosovo. The perimeters in which these Final Status Talks are to take place range between independence, as advocated for by a large majority of Kosovo Albanians, and the 'more than autonomy and less than independence' – standpoint of the Belgrade political class. The initiation of Status Talks depends however on the outcome of a Comprehensive Review that is conducted by United Nations (UN) Special Envoy, Kai Eide, who will assess progress in the implementation of the so-called Standards for Kosovo. Should significant progress be noted – measured against the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan – then Final Status talks may commence. The Standards consist of eight criteria and were formulated by the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).¹ Their fulfilment should lead to a 'Kosovo where all – 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.' The eighth and last one of these Standards is about the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), the subject of this report. The overarching aim of Standard eight stipulates that:

The Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) thoroughly complies with its mandate, as stated in the Constitutional Framework, 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 operates in a transparent, accountable, disciplined, and professional manner and is representative of the entire population of Kosovo.

Standard number eight consists of the following items:

1. The KPC performs its mandated functions in full compliance with the rule of law.
2. All Kosovo communities are fully and fairly represented in the KPC without being subject to discrimination.
3. Funding is transparent and independently audited.
4. The number of KPC installations has been reduced by at least one-third; contingent size is reduced to 3,052 active members and 2,000 reserve members
5. All misconduct is punished, under a rigorous Disciplinary Code and Performance review System.
6. The KPC has engaged in a comprehensive campaign to recruit in ethnic minority communities.
7. The KPC has devoted a proportionate share of reconstruction activities to ethnic minority communities.

¹ UNMIK document, UNMIK/PR/1078. <<http://www.unmikonline.org/press/2003/pressr/pr1078.pdf>>

8. A Terms of Service Law for active and reserve members has been adopted and implemented.

This report is written for the Centre for European Security Studies (CESS). The report has four main aims:

1. To provide an introduction to the KPC – history, mandate, organisation, and assigned tasks;
2. to identify and analyse certain deep-rooted ideas/beliefs about the KPC, both of critics as well as of advocates of the KPC;
3. to assess how the KPC is performing in accordance with the goals set in several documents; and
4. to identify where further training, assistance, education, and research is needed.

1. History of the Kosovo Protection Corps

The character of the KPC cannot be properly understood without tracing its origins back to the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK).² During the three-month NATO air-campaign against the Milosevic regime, in the spring of 1999, the UCK fought on the ground in Kosovo against Serbian (para-) military forces. Officially the United States (US) government and other members of the international coalition tried to keep up an appearance of neutrality in the conflict between UCK and Serbian forces in Kosovo. Nonetheless, before the air-war there were already intensive contacts between the US, some other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) allies, and the UCK.³

In the chaotic situation after the war the main priority of KFOR was to establish basic security in Kosovo. In order to make way for KFOR and the UN to exercise legitimate military, political and administrative control, the UCK had to be disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into society. Because of the UCK's dominant position during the war it gained substantive political influence which resulted in the International Community's (IC) willingness to enter into negotiations with the

² In this report the Albanian abbreviation UCK is used instead of the English language Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA).

³ To illustrate this point, there are several articles and books that describe how the UCK was being trained, armed and assisted by the Americans, British and Germans. For its part NATO took advantage of UCK knowledge on Serbian targets. For further reading see: Lani, Remzi, 'Rugova and the UCK: chronicle of a shifting balance', *International Spectator* Vol XXXIV (4) 29-40; Heinemann-Gruder, Andreas and Wolf-Christian Paes, *Wag the dog: the mobilization and demobilization of the Kosovo Liberation Army*, Bonn International Center for Conversion, Brief 20 (Bonn 2001); Ivo H Daalder and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning ugly: NATO's war to save Kosovo* (Washington 2000).

UCK leadership. As a result the IC made important concessions to the UCK, in order to make them agree on disarmament and demobilisation.

The first concession of KFOR was that the UCK led Provisional Government of Kosovo (Thaci government) was recognised as legitimate.⁴ By recognising the Thaci government and ignoring other political groupings, like for instance the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK) led by Ibrahim Rugova (who dominated Kosovo Albanian politics until 1998, when the UCK gained in popular support), the IC chose for a policy of favouring one political (-military) element rather than another. Although this proved to be the best solution for stability in the short run, it complicated the transition process in Kosovo at a later stage.⁵

A second concession of KFOR to the UCK was that in the future there would be an 'army on the lines of the US National Guard' for Kosovo.⁶ Only on this condition was the UCK willing to demobilise and develop into the KPC; a civil emergency organisation. The NATO led international coalition, KFOR and the UN did not explicitly state that the KPC would *not* evolve into a future army of Kosovo. This was a deliberate refusal to stifle aspirations of the UCK – and later the KPC – to become the nucleus of a future defence organisation for Kosovo. The short-term objective of establishing security in the immediate post-war period was given priority over the longer-term objective of finding a clear and durable solution for the governance of Kosovo; at the time totally dominated by the UCK. As a result there remains confusion among members of the international presence in Pristina about what the KPC in essence is and what it should become.⁷

These concessions were necessary to come to an agreement with the UCK. Through its military commander Agim Ceku, the UCK declared full cooperation on disarmament. This meant that in September 1999, after three months, 10,000 weapons had been handed over to KFOR. At the same time however, the business of disarmament was left to individual UCK commanders and was (strangely enough) not conducted by KFOR. Disarmament of UCK combatants was not seen as a priority during the first year after the crisis. It remains unclear how many weapon caches there still are in Kosovo and Northern Albania, but it seems likely that the UCK has a considerable arsenal stored in these areas.⁸

⁴ During the war in April 1999 the UCK established a 'Provisional Government of Kosovo' led by UCK political spokesman Hashim Thaci. When NATO entered Kosovo, this Provisional Government of the UCK was the de facto civil authority in Kosovo. Because of this position the UCK was able to take full political advantage of its military dominance over other Kosovo Albanian political groupings.

⁵ Hysa, Ylber, 'UNMIK and KFOR in Kosovo'. In Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (ed.), *The Southern Balkans: Perspectives from the region*, Chaillot Papers no. 46 (Paris) 2001, p. 55.

⁶ *Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK*, 20 June 1999, <<http://www.nato.int/kfor/kfor/documents/uck.htm>> Art. 25.

⁷ Interviews with representatives of several bilateral representations in Pristina in May 2005.

⁸ Heinemann-Gruder, Andreas and Wolf-Christian Paes, *Wag the dog: the mobilization and demobilization of the Kosovo Liberation Army*, Bonn International Center for Conversion, Brief 20 (Bonn 2001), p. 19-21.

As part of the agreement between the UCK and KFOR, the UCK cooperation also extended to the relatively smooth transition from the guerrilla force UCK into the smaller and civil emergency oriented KPC. With the forming of the KPC a Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) mechanism was developed to deal with the UCK and the relatively large forces it had mobilised. To stimulate demobilisation preference was given to UCK members when screening applications for rank and file membership of the KPC.⁹ The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) was responsible for the screening of applicants. This DDR programme was successful in registering, demobilising and reintegrating thousands of UCK members. Over a period of five months altogether 20,000 people applied through the IOM for a position with KPC, of which 17,000 were former UCK fighters from a total force of 27,000. This successful demobilisation without doubt contributed to the initial stabilisation of post-war Kosovo.

Should the described compromises lead to the conclusion that the KPC is just the UCK in another guise? No, such a view would be simplistic and would not do justice to the evolution of the KPC since 2000 and its development in the direction of a truly civil emergency organisation.

The KPC was envisioned by the IC as a civilian, non-political, non-military, multidisciplinary, multi-ethnic and indigenous civil protection agency. In February 2000 the IOM was entrusted the task to further develop the capacity of the KPC to perform its civil protection duties. The KPC Training Programme was developed to empower the KPC to meet its responsibilities and consisted of five phases, each building on the previous one.¹⁰ Training was designed to promote personal accountability, discipline, basic individual and organisational skills, and specialised civil protection and emergency services training. In addition to this training programme, the IOM Trust Fund was developed with the aim of providing KPC members with practical experience and on-the-job training through civil and humanitarian work projects.

⁹ "A significant portion of the Kosovo Protection Corps will initially come from the leadership and ranks of the demilitarised UCK and the remainder from the civilian population at large". *The Kosovo Protection Corps. Commander of Kosovo Force's Statement of Principles* (1999), <http://www.iom.ipko.org/Projects/kpc/KPCT_Book_English_PDF/10-Appendix.pdf> Article 3.2.

¹⁰ The Kosovo Protection Corps Training Programme is an elaborate description of 5 phases of training for the period February 2000 to April 2004. In May 2004 a 6th phase was added.

Phase I (February 2000 to September 2000): The objective was to provide KPC members with basic training in activities that promoted personal accountability, discipline, and basic individual and organisational skills.

Phase II (October 2000 to May 2001): primary goals were to consolidate control and resources at the KPC HQ, and to develop unity and cooperation between key KPC leaders and regional authorities.

Phase III (June 2001 to May 2002): Sought to strengthen the unity of command within KPC and demonstrating the increasing willingness of KPC leaders and regional commanders to respond to civil authorities needs and strengthening relations with them.

Phase IV (June 2002 to May 2003): This phase concentrated on further institutionalised individual training, focussing IOM resources on further development and expansion of the Protection Academy, Simulation Centre, two basic training centres, and the collective training centre.

Phase V (June 2003 to May 2004): Focused on further specialised training acquiring new skills/knowledge abroad, and prepare the KPC to function efficiently as disaster relief response organisation, with a view to the eventual departure of the IC.

Phase VI (May 2004 to present day): This phase has been newly developed and has the overall objective to continue to productively engage the KPC in projects that assist communities of mixed ethnicity and ethnic returns communities where possible.

Over the years the IOM remained strongly committed to the training and capacity building of the KPC. Through the Trust Fund (controlled by the IOM), it was one of two organisations implementing the KPC Training Programme – the other one being KFOR. Continuity in the implementation was secured through a stable core group of IOM staff that had been involved from the start and has a lot of experience in the region. This strong relationship between the IOM and the KPC, had a positive effect on transforming UCK combatants into members of a humanitarian and reconstruction corps.¹¹ In May 2004 the IOM Training Program ended however, and since then the earlier established UNMIK Office of the KPC Coordinator (OKPCC) and KFOR have endeavoured to assist the KPC to develop its own training capacity. Also efforts have been made to secure specialist trainers from service-providing nations and from international organisations within Kosovo.¹²

Also KFOR was in the beginning strongly dedicated to training and building the KPC. However in the period 2001-2003, the KPC stagnated in its development. During that time KPC members were suspected of subversion, organised crime and involvement in attacks on ethnic minorities. In February 2001 a bus was blown up carrying Serbs from Nis, in Serbia proper, to the Gracanica area (close to Pristina), killing 11 people and injuring more than 40. In connection with the bombing several KPC members were arrested.¹³ This, among others, led to a deterioration of trust from KFOR in the KPC. As a result several successive KFOR Commanders had a rather negative view towards the KPC, which led to declining support. In this period the KPC was under close scrutiny from the OKPCC and attention was given to washing out individuals suspected of involvement with criminal or terrorist activities. With the arrival of the KFOR Commander Lt. Gen. de Kermabon in 2004, relations between KFOR and the KPC improved again.¹⁴

KFOR training can be described as erratic during this period. The frequency and nature of training depended heavily on the KFOR Commander in charge. Furthermore, because the international presence was divided into four large multi-ethnic brigades, it was also dependent on the lead nation in these zones what kind of assistance was given. Although this has improved recently as a result of efforts of KPCC and KFOR, it is an issue that still needs attention today.¹⁵

¹¹ For more information on the quality of IOM training to the KPC, see Anna Di Lellio, 'A Civil Alternative: An Evaluation of the IOM KPCT Program', in: *Kosovo Protection Corps Training Program* (Pristina) 2004, p 23-37, p 27.

¹² Interviews and feedback from the Office of the KPC Coordinator in Pristina, Kosovo.

¹³ The KPC member that was arrested managed to escape under unclear circumstances from the American military base Bondsteel. <www.un.org/peace/kosovo/briefing/pressbrief14may01.html> According to another source interviewed by the author, four persons were held in detention at Bondsteel, of which two KPC and at least one former KLA member. The person who managed to escape, Ejup Florjim, was KLA and not KPC, and was arrested in June 2004. The other three were later released.

¹⁴ Interviews with several members of the Office of the KPC Coordinator.

¹⁵ Interviews with the Office of the KPC Coordinator.

The KPC stagnation was also heightened by irritation about the disappointing results achieved by UNMIK; its slow pace of reforms, and the ineffectiveness of UNMIK in general.¹⁶ At the same time the good news was that alleged criminals were being discharged from the KPC. Furthermore, the KPC kept on delivering valuable services in the field of reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. At the moment a significant part of the KPC has not much work to do as funds have been severely cut due to reduced American funding, and despite other countries stepping in.

2. Mandate

The Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC) thoroughly complies with its mandate, as stated in the Constitutional Framework, 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 operates in a transparent, accountable, disciplined, and professional manner and is representative of the entire population of Kosovo. The KPC is capable of enforcing discipline and is fully funded in a transparent way.¹⁷

One of the most debated issues about the KPC is what the organisation is to become; a future army of Kosovo, or a civil emergency service? The issue has gained new relevance in the light of the upcoming status talks for Kosovo. Several articles and IC representatives in Kosovo are uncertain to what extent the founding documents of the KPC point to a future of the KPC as an armed organisation.¹⁸ This paragraph, apart from providing a general description, attempts to offer some clarifications on this issue.

The KPC is based on the following (legal) documents:

- UNMIK Regulation 8 (1999);
- the Commander KFOR Statement on principles for KPC;
- Paragraph 7 of the Constitutional Framework of Kosovo;
- The Benchmarks of the SRSG; and
- The Standards for Kosovo.

¹⁶ UNMIK’s performance in relation to the KPC was inadequate and erratic, until the establishment of the UNMIK KPC Coordinator’s Office (OKPCC) in 2002. *A Review of Peace Operations: A Case for change. Kosovo, Conflict, Security and Development Group, King’s College London (2003) Paragraph 100.*

¹⁷ Standards Implementation Plan, (April 2004), <<http://operationkosovo.kentlaw.edu/symposium/resources/KSIP%20final%20draft%2031%20March%202004b.htm>> Standard 8.

¹⁸ The author is aware of the sensitivity surrounding the word ‘army’ in relation to the KPC and would like to state explicitly that the word is meant to be interpreted in the context of the discussion, and does not involve any personal convictions of the author.

Other documents in which the KPC is not mentioned as such but that have relevance are:

- The UN Security Council Resolution 1244; and
- The 'Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK'.

Looking at the founding documents of the KPC, we find no ambiguity and no duality about the purpose of the organisation. The KPC is meant to be a multidisciplinary, multi-ethnic and indigenous emergency service agency with the following tasks:¹⁹

- Respond to any disaster affecting the population and territory of Kosovo;
- Conduct search and rescue operations;
- Assist in rebuilding the infrastructure and community of Kosovo;
- Provide assistance to UNMIK and KFOR when required;
- Perform ceremonial duties;
- Assist in de-mining; and
- Provide a capacity for humanitarian assistance in isolated areas.

However the prospect of a Kosovo military organisation is mentioned in another document – the 'Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK', signed by both KFOR and UCK on 20 June 1999, only ten days after the Kosovo war between NATO and the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) ended. In this document KFOR and the UCK agreed that the IC "should take due and full account of the contribution of the UCK during the Kosovo crisis"...and, "give due consideration to: The formation of an *Army* in Kosovo on the lines of the US National Guard in due course as part of a political process designed to determine Kosovo's future status."²⁰ This is a clear indication that at least KFOR had the impression that there will be a defence organisation in the future with more military competencies than the current KPC. Furthermore in the earlier mentioned key document 'Commander KFOR Statement on Principles for KPC', it is said that the KPC members will act in accordance with the earlier mentioned document 'Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK'. Thus a direct link is provided between a future military organisation in Kosovo and the current members of KPC.

This ambiguity in key documents has contributed to KPC's negative international image, and it is often portrayed as 'the UCK in another uniform'. Its critics point to the military features of the KPC: a command structure based on the old structure of the UCK, military uniforms and ranks, a badge looking similar to the UCK symbol, and the Albanian name of the KPC that can be interpreted as both 'protection' and 'defence' organisation.²¹ As one Kosovo Serb remarked

¹⁹ *On the establishment of the Kosovo Protection Corps*, UNMIK/REG/1999/8 (20 September 1999) Section 1, and *The Kosovo Protection Corps. Commander of Kosovo's Force's Statement of Principles*, Article 3, <http://www.iom.ipko.org/Projects/kpc/KPCT_Book_English_PDF/10-Appendix.pdf>.

²⁰ *Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK*, 20 June 1999, Art. 25b, <<http://www.nato.int/kfor/kfor/documents/uck.htm>>.

²¹ The Kosovo Albanian name of the KPC is *Trupat Mbrojtes se Kosoves* (TMK), where 'Mbrojtes' has both the meaning of 'Protection' and 'Defence'.

during an interview 'If the KPC is a civil emergency agency, why should it have all the appearances of an army, scaring the smaller ethnic communities in Kosovo?'

While all these signs may point to possible *future* developments of the KPC towards a defence organisation, they do not say much about the performance of the KPC *today* as a professional civil emergency agency. One should not forget that the creation of the KPC was then seen as a DDR mechanism necessary to demobilise the UCK while the UCK made concessions to keep the dream of a recognised army alive. Nonetheless, people that are more acquainted with the KPC look beyond the military appearance and recognise the KPC's engagement in serving local communities.

A second issue related to the mandate of the KPC is to what extent the founding documents of the KPC have full legal legitimacy. In a strict sense, under UN resolution 1244, there was no agreement to form the KPC. The section in resolution 1244 that comes closest to referring to the KPC is paragraph 15, where the Security Council "demands that KLA and the other armed Kosovo Albanian groups end immediately all offensive actions and *comply with the requirements for demilitarization* as laid down by the head of the international security presence *in consultation* with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General."²² The requirements for demilitarisation were laid down in the document 'Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK', signed by both KFOR and the UCK. However, also in this document no direct reference is made to the formation of the KPC: Paragraph 25a stipulates that the UCK "is committed to propose individual current members to participate in the *administration* and *police forces* of Kosovo."²³ And although in paragraph 25b it is mentioned that the IC will give consideration to the formation of an army in Kosovo on the lines of the US National Guard, it is said in the same paragraph that this will be part "of a *political process* designed to *determine Kosovo's future status*."²⁴ And this *political* process is only expected to begin after the outcome of the Comprehensive Review that is conducted at the moment by UN Special Envoy, Kai Eide. Furthermore an army on the lines of the US National Guard is not the same as the KPC. And although COMKFOR and the SRSG had some manoeuvring space in determining the requirements for demilitarisation, one could argue that the KPC legally and logically is not within the limits of demilitarisation.

The KPC is ultimately founded on UNMIK resolution 8 (1999), directly under the authority of the SRSG. It is argued therefore that the KPC is an internal matter of Kosovo under the SRSG. From this perspective it does not matter that the SRSG does not have overall responsibility over all security issues in Kosovo, because the KPC is a *civil* emergency service agency, and thus falls

²² *United Nations Security Council, Resolution 1244, S/RES/1244* (10 June 1999), <<http://www.unmikonline.org/>>, paragraph 15.

²³ *Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK* (20 June 1999), <<http://www.nato.int/kfor/kfor/documents/uck.htm>>, Article 25a.

²⁴ *Undertaking of demilitarisation and transformation by the UCK* (20 June 1999), Article 25b.

within the civil responsibilities of the SRSG under resolution 1244. However as said before there is no direct reference in resolution 1244 to an organisation like the KPC, also not in reference to the international civil presence. It is doubtful whether this would have been possible, given the outlook of some UN Security Council members towards the UCK at the time; mainly Russia and China.²⁵ The lack of agreement on the status of Kosovo clearly prevented such an outcome from the UN Security Council. Therefore the establishment of the KPC, despite its authorisation by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, has not the firmest of all legal footings. Furthermore it is strange that the document 'Commander KFOR Statement on principles for KPC' (on the purpose, principles, command status, organisation, etc of the KPC), is issued by the head of the international security presence, while the KPC is a *civil* organisation. Also, no reference is made in this document to UNMIK resolution 8, or vice versa. This blurs the *civil* mandate under UNMIK resolution 8. In the end however the question about the legality of the KPC is maybe not that important anymore: During interviews with several Serbian experts on defence and security issues, they admitted that although in the eyes of the critics one could question the legitimacy of the KPC, the organisation is now simply a reality.²⁶

3. Organisation

The KPC consists of a central Headquarters (HQ) in Pristina, and six Regional Protection Zones/HQ spread over Kosovo, each with a Task Group for planning.²⁷ There is one Guards Unit and a Ceremonial Unit; there are seven central support/service support groups;²⁸ and there is a training academy and several training colleges.²⁹ The Commander of the KPC is Lt. Gen. Agim Ceku, who served as an officer in the Croatian Army during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and later in the nineties became a Commander of the UCK in Kosovo.

The KPC is a Reserved Power under the Head of UNMIK, i.e. SRSG, or in other words it operates fully under his authority. He has final authority over the members of the KPC and can dismiss them if necessary. KFOR is responsible for the day-to-day supervision of the KPC, and the Commanders of the four KFOR multinational brigades exercise supervision over the KPC

²⁵ James Pettifer, *The Kosovo Protection Corps in Transition*, Conflict Studies Research Centre (2003) p.1.

²⁶ During these interviews it was stated that although created on a shaky legal foundation, the KPC was now a practical reality and can not be abolished anymore. According to these experts every member of the KPC regards himself as a soldier and they expect to be part of a future army. Therefore NATO control is regarded as positive and will play an important role in any scenario. Serbian politicians understand this, although stating this openly will mean the end of a political career.

²⁷ Srbica, Prizren, Pec, Kosovska Mitrovica, Pristina, and Gnjilane.

²⁸ Communications, Engineer, Environmental – Chemical Protection, Air Search and Rescue, Medical, Transport and Supply, and Maintenance.

²⁹ *The Kosovo Protection Corps. Commander of Kosovo's Force's Statement of Principles*, <http://www.iom.ipko.org/Projects/kpc/KPCT_Book_English_PDF/10-Appendix.pdf>, Article 3.

within their respective region. Furthermore there is a KPC Development Group co-chaired by the Commander of KFOR, and the SRSG, with members including the UNMIK KPC Coordinator, the Prime-Minister of Kosovo, the representative of the European Unions High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the European Commission, the KPC Commander, the Contact Group countries (USA, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, and France), and since recently The Netherlands – although not as member of the Contact Group.

At the operational level, the command structure of the KPC is remarkably similar to that of the UCK. When the KPC was established, it was in essence a demilitarised force. The idea was that it would only take 2-3 years to figure out what kind of organisation it should become. A humanitarian mandate was developed and in addition the military character was preserved. Also the command structure of the old UCK was left in place. Even most of the commanders that served in the UCK kept their positions in the new KPC; from the six former zone commanders of the UCK, five became commander of KPC Protection Zones in exactly the same geographical area.

The current command structure of the KPC is very territorial in nature and not well suited to serve a modern civil emergency organisation. The reason for this is that the old Yugoslav Army (JNA) left a strong territorial legacy. This army was created for homeland defence, and developed to make optimal use of the territory of Yugoslavia. When experienced former soldiers of the JNA were included in the UCK, it inherited its territorial legacy. The UCK was divided into six main regional HQs that also had a clear advantage of being able to recruit as many young people as possible all over Kosovo. As a result of this legacy, the current KPC is too heavy at the top of the rank-structure, somewhat resembling an upside-down pyramid. There are too many high-ranking officers in relation to mid-level officers and junior members. Moreover, six regional HQs are too much for a small territory like Kosovo. It would be good to trim the higher officer cadre, and to cut the number of regional HQs. Of course this will have severe social implications and should be implemented by a well thought through and guided process.

Another issue that hinders the KPC in becoming an organisation with a fully modern command structure is the existence of the clan or 'fis' structure, which is also found in other parts of Kosovo Albanian society.³⁰ The UCK is often misunderstood because of its roots in the clan culture. Many in the IC see the UCK in the context of a traditional unified guerrilla force, while it did not have a unified command structure until September 1999. The UCK was made up of different

³⁰ The fis consists of several families and is led and united by a respected elder member of one of the families. All member families pay obedience to the head of the fis. At the beginning of the nineties the Fis gained even more importance as the Kosovo Albanians gathered around the fis structure to oppose the Milosevic-regime. After the war it lost some of its significance because many people migrated from rural areas to the cities (mainly Pristina), disrupting old social patterns. However, in rural areas and around smaller cities the Fis still is a dominant building stone of Kosovo Albanian society. The influence of the Fis should not be underestimated as it seems to underlie many political, criminal and clan rivalries.

families and clans from different regions, combatants whose loyalty was to a particular commander, and elements of rural defence forces were mixed with different political groupings.³¹ Some elements of this fragmentation were carried over into the newly formed KPC, which in the beginning had the structure of a rebel group lacking clear lines of responsibility and procedures. US financial help helped remedy this to some extent.

Even today the clan structures and family networks prevent the emergence of a fully unified KPC. Many members of KPC, especially higher ranking officers still have strong relations with their clans, which creates issues of rivalry and competition within the KPC. This in turn is affecting the authority and unity of the KPC chain of command. Lt. Gen. Ceku transcends these rivalries to a certain extent, as he has no strong bonds with a particular clan. This is his strength as well as his weakness. Ceku has a difficult horse to ride; he has to satisfy the hardliners but also has to think about the future, while maintaining peace and stability. Obviously this affects his manoeuvring space for reforming the KPC. To be able to truly push through reforms he needs assistance from the IC.

Next to organisational problems, there is also a lack of democratic control of the KPC. One of the causes of frustration among Kosovo Albanian politicians is their lack of involvement and information on KPC business. The Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG) are not able to exercise any formal democratic control over the KPC. In the end both the PISG and the KPC are accountable to the SRSG. The Parliamentary Committee for Preparedness and Emergency is to a certain extent involved in (among others) oversight of the KPC, but it has no formal competencies. According to a Kosovo Albanian representative it is time to transfer more responsibilities from the IC to the PISG (including Parliament); "At the moment we have in UNMIK and the PISG two governments running the country. This is not constructive and even counterproductive. With UNMIK at the helm it is also easy to blame the IC for things that go wrong. We should take over responsibility as soon as possible."³² However this is not likely to happen in the short run. The IC is still sceptical about the ability of the PISG to exercise effective legislative oversight of the KPC and is hesitant to transfer more responsibilities to the PISG in the field of security. "Political parties strive for power and control, and the opposition has not yet learned to operate in a constructive way. The question is if they can grow up and solve these problems before the status talks begin."³³ This strong inter-political rivalry is confirmed by a recent report of the International Crisis Group (ICG), which characterises the situation as extremely tense, with threats and even assaults between political parties in 2005.³⁴

³¹ James Pettifer, *The Kosovo Protection Corps in Transition* (2003) Conflict Studies Research Centre, p. 2.

³² Interview a Member of Parliament, May 2005, Pristina.

³³ Interview with the Office of the KPC Coordinator, May 2005, Pristina.

³⁴ *Kosovo after Haradinaj*, International Crisis Group (ICG), Europe Report No. 163 (26 May 2005).

4. Assigned Tasks and Problems

The aim of this section is to provide an overview of the performance of the KPC as a civil emergency organisation and to identify problems concerning the KPC.

4.1. KPC Performance

The KPC has steadily been transformed from the guerrilla army it was in 1999, into a civil emergency organisation. It is capable of delivering emergency services in several areas ranging from humanitarian assistance and reconstruction, to more specialised tasks such as search and rescue and de-mining. It has implemented up to 180 projects to date, mainly in the field of reconstruction (restoring bridges, roads, electricity and water) but also in the return of ethnic minorities. During interviews several international donors characterised the KPC as a reliable partner, capable of performing most of the tasks assigned to them. Often quoted examples of KPC professionalism are search and rescue operations during the earthquake of Gjilan, fire fighting at the Kosova B power plant, reconstruction work in ethnically mixed villages, de-mining activities, and public health service in rural areas.³⁵

In April 2004 the KPC finished the three and a half year IOM Training Programme, thereby entering a new phase. After the US stopped funding the KPC in April 2004, KPC activities have been mainly aimed at maintaining the current level of KPC skills, through implementation of practical projects. Another even more important goal for this year is the KPC's fulfilment of the Standards for Kosovo. Only then – so it seems – will the IC be willing to talk about the future of the KPC. Although it will not be easy for the KPC, it seems well on its way to fulfilling Standard eight, and in the last months impressive progress was made.³⁶

Since May 2004 the IOM engages the KPC in projects that assist communities of mixed ethnicity. Here the KPC plays an interesting role in the first steps of a reconciliation process between the different ethnic groups. Often the KPC is one of the first to enter ethnic Kosovo Serb villages again. By repairing roads and bridges for the Kosovo Serbs, they manage to make positive contact, thus initiating the reestablishment of contact between different ethnic groups in these villages. In this way former UCK combatants play a leading role in establishing some trust

³⁵ Gani Bobi, 'The KPC and its Future. Kosovo Citizens Perspectives and Opinions', Sept-Oct 2003: Anna Di Lellio, 'A civil alternative: An evaluation of the IOM KPCT Program', in: *International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kosovo Protection Corps Training Program* (Prishtina 2004) 23-38, <<http://www.iom.ipko.org/Home.htm>>, p. 2.

³⁶ For recent information on progress made in implementing the Standards see: *Kosovo Protection Corps and Standard 8. Progress Towards Implementation* (February and March 2005), and the detailed schedule on implementation of Standard 8: *KPC progress towards achieving Standard VIII*. Joint (KPC, PKPCC and KIKPC) Assessment, 15/5/2005.

between local ethnic groups. In essence the KPC is a unique example of DDR: former combatants paving the way for confidence-building between ethnic groups.³⁷

Although the KPC is well on its way, it has not yet fulfilled all the demands stated in the 'Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan'. What problems still exist at this moment?

4.2. KPC Problem Areas

The problem areas for the KPC will be divided into two main groups: Problems of the KPC; and external problems concerning the KPC. These problems have, to a differing extent, relevance for the following organisations or groups: KPC, IOM, KFOR, UNMIK, UNMIK KPC Coordinator's Office, NATO, OSCE and bilateral presences. The author would like to mention that the information in this section is largely derived from interviews conducted in Serbia and Montenegro and Kosovo, and primary source data. Some of the people interviewed by the author expressed their wish not to be referred to.

4.2.1. Problems of the KPC

1. Recruitment of ethnic minorities: This is one of the priorities of the Standards for Kosovo. The mandated goal is to have at least ten percent ethnic minorities as stipulated under UNMIK Regulation 8 (1999) and the Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan (which amounts to 305 ethnic minority members of the active contingent and 200 reservists). On the 31st of July there were 36 active Serb members and the stated numbers will very probably not be achieved. Because one cannot enforce the impossible, it is essential that the KPC can show it has done everything within its powers to recruit members of ethnic minorities.³⁸ Therefore the KPC has embarked on an extensive recruitment campaign, using tri-lingual press releases, billboards, advertisements, recruitment website and leaflets, a public information campaign, outreach activities, and training in Serbo-Croatian to reach out to ethnic minorities.

2. Poor management skills and methods: A problem among high-ranking officers in the KPC is their limited knowledge of modern organisations; more specifically modern management, and 21st century organisational requirements. The leadership overall lacks the required capacities to manage 3000 members with varying degrees of skills. This has resulted in a dependency on international help from organisations such as IOM. Furthermore the KPC is still not able to

³⁷ Recently a delegation of the SRSG, head of IOM, Commander of the KPC and the Commander of KFOR visited the region of Pec/Peja, and were impressed by the project approach and the achieved results. The author also visited the area with representatives of IOM.

³⁸ The low number of Kosovo Serbs in the KPC is also a result of pressure from the Kosovo Serb community not to join the KPC. This often takes the form of serious intimidation. Furthermore returning refugees are often afraid of the KPC because of the many negative stories told in the Serbian media. This was acknowledged during several interviews of the author with independent Serbian experts and members of the international community involved in the KPC.

manage a complete project cycle. It was one of the original Trust Fund aims to enable the KPC to act independently in the preparation of proposals and project documents, to implement projects, and to report on their progress in an effective and timely manner. Although this capacity has been developed, in the words of an IOM document, 'in practice the programme would give poor results if left unsupported by the IOM.' Also the KPC is not self-sufficient concerning training, and still depends on international experts for training and advice. Although many KPC members have effectively been trained, without outside help the KPC will not be able to entirely take care of its own training needs. To confront these issues more high quality training is needed: first to prepare officers for the challenges of modern civil emergency response and; secondly to train more Kosovo Albanian teachers (give more attention to 'training the trainers' courses), and third attract more highly educated Kosovars. Also the KPC needs further practice with project cycles in such a way that they could gradually take over the whole process and eventually function without help of the IOM. Finally members of the chiefs of staff and high senior staff should be selected on their capabilities to manage a diverse and dynamic organisation that fulfils today's century requirements.

3. Lack of a broad strategy aimed at local ownership and reconciliation: Although the KPC is active in reconstruction in ethnically mixed areas, and play a grassroots role in reconciliation, their projects would prove more fruitful if being part of a broader strategy. This strategy should encompass not only reconstruction/humanitarian projects, but also economic development and justice. In this way the impact of reconciliation efforts between ethnic groups could improve.

4. The KPC is not yet a truly cohesive body: Many of the doctrines and procedures needed for a civil protection organisation have not been established or fully institutionalised. Although the KPC has come a long way, it needs expertise and time to let the KPC's command and control structures mature. Therefore continued international support is needed.

5. Equipment and infrastructure: Although the KPC is in possession of some equipment and machines (like excavators, trucks, bulldozers, jeeps, etc.), there is not enough hardware to efficiently perform all the assigned tasks. There is a lack of heavy machines for reconstruction projects. Also the hardware is out of date. According to several people at the IOM, the KPC has (had) low priority when it comes to distribution of new machinery by UNMIK. Furthermore a significant part of the KPC workforce (except the Trust Fund Project) is burdened by a lack of readily accessible funding to purchase the minimum materials, tools, technical advice and expertise to support the implementation of humanitarian and civic projects.³⁹ Therefore the KPC is in need of more and better (basic) equipment.

³⁹ Another example is that while individual fire fighters and search and rescue personnel have personal equipment, at the same time they lack means of transport.

6. *Low wages of KPC members*: KPC members start at 170 Euro, which is barely enough to sustain a family. The KPC Commander earns about 650 Euro. Often the KPC members are dependent on family financial support in order to survive. Despite their relative low salaries KPC members remain motivated and perform hard manual labour at reconstruction projects. Part of this motivation needs to be contributed to their expectations about the future of the KPC. They see themselves as soldiers and are willing to wait and invest now to become recognised soldiers in the future.⁴⁰

4.2.2. External problems concerning the KPC

1. *Widespread scepticism and misguided opinions regarding KPC's mandate and purpose*: This is true for the ethnic minority groups and the international presence in Kosovo, as well as the neighbouring countries. The conception that the KPC is the UCK in another uniform still persists. Although this was maybe true in the beginning, the KPC has evolved in a fairly efficient civil emergency organisation, giving to a certain extent pride to KPC members and part of the population. Furthermore, in today's KPC only a third of its members are from the original UCK, the others have been newly recruited. Further research is needed as well as an increase of public information to inform people about the KPC. This issue also needs attention from a regional perspective (dimension) by involving independent security analysts and experts from Albania, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro.

2. *Reluctance of international donors to include the KPC in plans for assistance to minority returnee communities*: In the last year it proved to be very difficult to overcome the overly cautious views of the international presence, despite the fact that the KPC has implemented over forty projects in ethnically mixed areas and has proven to be one of the most effective ways of breaking through ethnic barriers. The KPC should not be seen as a hindrance, but as added value and a unique way to help return and reintegrate ethnic minorities.

3. *An underdeveloped security elite exists in Kosovo*: Besides some well-informed politicians, there is no security elite in Kosovo that could take the lead in stimulating public debate on security issues. The media lacks knowledge on security and defence and is still biased to a certain extent (which became apparent during the March 2004 riots). There are few Kosovar NGOs dealing with security issues and there is not really an intellectual community that can assist legislators and the PISG in giving their informed opinion (although it should be noted there are at least a few local security think-tanks such as the Kosovo Institute for Policy Research and Developments – KIPRED). Moreover, to date a real public debate is lacking, while there is a need for sharing experiences and debate between all ethnic groups. One way to facilitate this is through seminars

⁴⁰ During several field interviews with KPC members in the Peja region, all officers openly admitted that they saw themselves as soldiers and becoming part of a future military organisation.

and workshops. Other elements could be training for the media and support for local security NGO's.

4. Lack of democratic control: The Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG) are not able to exercise real (formal) democratic control over the KPC, which is only accountable to the SRSG.⁴¹ The Committee for Preparedness and Emergency has no formal competencies. A lack of involvement of the Kosovar politicians in the oversight of the KPC will contribute to frustration among Kosovo Albanians. Another issue that several legislators brought up is the lack of knowledge among Members of Parliament and support staff on how to exercise effective oversight. There is little understanding on the role of specialist committees and how these should function. How should they oversee a security organisation? Which topics should they focus on? How should a meeting be set up (for example should representatives of the executive be invited to explain and justify policy)? Specific attention should be given to budgetary oversight; there is very little knowledge of reviewing budgetary cycles. Also more expert staff is needed to assist MPs in their work. These shortcomings need to be remedied regardless of the future status of Kosovo and the future makeup of the KPC.

5. Widespread suspicion on the KPC's involvement in organised crime and ethnic violence: During several interviews with members of the international bilateral presence in Pristina, with IOM and with UNMIK, it was pointed out there is still widespread distrust among the international presence in Kosovo, ethnic minority groups and neighbouring countries towards the KPC, concerning its possible involvement in organised crime and ethnic violence. Although this involvement may be true for individual KPC members, it is unlikely that today there are organised groups within KPC involved in such practices, let alone on an institutional level. Although in 2000-2001 there were regular reports of KPC members that were suspected of involvement in crime and attacks on ethnic minorities, these criminal elements were largely washed out by KFOR. Another often cited example of KPC involvement was the attempted attack on a railway bridge in which the perpetrator was blown up and remains of a KPC uniform were found. However, as Ceku stated in the KPC's defence, 'everybody can buy a KPC uniform on the black market'. Furthermore since that time the KPC has been implementing a disciplinary system that complies strictly with the KPC Disciplinary Code, sanctioning members who break the Code.

6. Securing the necessary financial (and political) support for the full implementation of Standard 8 and the KPC Mandate: Although maybe an obvious problem, it cannot be stressed enough that funds are needed. This has always been a problem for the KPC, but since the US decided to drastically cut back funding in April 2004 the need became more apparent. As a result training of the KPC has strongly diminished.

⁴¹ One exception is that the KPC is accountable to the PISG for progress towards the fulfillment of Standard 8.

5. The Future of the KPC

The coming months will prove crucial to the future of the KPC. The future of the KPC is related to the future political status of Kosovo. The status of Kosovo will determine what kind of security arrangement is needed. The security needs of an independent Kosovo will differ from those of an autonomous Kosovo. In that light the SRSG invited a Security Sector Development Advisory Team (SSDAT) at the end of 2004, to make recommendations for a research process aimed to determine the possible future security needs for Kosovo.⁴² In a recent report they concluded that a comprehensive Internal Security Sector Review (ISSR) needs to be conducted along the whole spectrum of security institutions in Kosovo, taking into account the needs, possibilities and wishes of the Kosovo population.⁴³ The outcome of this review will also have an impact on the future of the KPC. Moreover, developments are already underway that give shape and direction to the future set-up of the KPC (of which the newly formed Civil Protection Brigade (CPB) is not unlikely to become part of this new organisation).

This section will shortly pay attention to the views of Belgrade, the Kosovo Albanians, and the Kosovo Serbs on both the future status of Kosovo and the future of the KPC. The information here is mainly derived from interviews with both independent experts as well as political representatives from KA and KS. Again all parties asked caution with regard to references.

5.1. The Perspective from Belgrade

According to several Serbian experts, the political arena in Belgrade has for some time been characterised by a certain extent of political indifference and maintenance of the status quo towards the Kosovo issue. Recently there have been some changes, and Serbian politics has been trying to at least open up more for discussions on the subject. At the moment the official standpoint of the Serbian government is 'more than autonomy and less than independence'. This has become a slogan in Serbian politics, but in reality it does not mean anything. There is no policy and Serbia has no negotiation strategy. At the same time the view is growing among the Serbian public that most of Kosovo is lost for Serbia proper. However, this is not a majority standpoint (yet), and many politicians are restrained and feel obliged to stick to the old rhetoric about Kosovo remaining part of Serbia. Saying otherwise can still end a political career in Belgrade's political arena.

⁴² This SSDAT is financed by the British Department for International Development.

⁴³ To this purpose a special secretariat will be formed under the Office of Public Safety. The review will be conducted by local experts with the help of international experts. The research will be aimed at the KPC, the Kosovo Police Service, all (para)military organisations, intelligence, border control, Fire Brigade, Explosive Ordnance Disposal, rule of law, prisons, civil oversight, etc.

The Serbian Government thinks that developments are currently moving slowly in their direction. Russia and China are not in favour of an independent Kosovo as they believe this can create a precedent (Chechnya, Tibet), while also the US might be hesitant in granting full independence (the Kurds in Iraq). Furthermore the Serbian government is now carefully reaching out to the West for a better relationship with NATO and future PfP membership; and ICTY Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte has been showing more flexibility towards Belgrade recently. What should be clear is that Belgrade's approval of guarantees and security arrangements for the Serb minority in Kosovo, will be important for the future relations between Belgrade and Pristina, and therefore it certainly has a role to play in future negotiations.

During the interviews in Belgrade it became clear that there are several views in Serbia at the moment on how to enter the negotiations. One view is that the Kosovo Serbs will be used by Belgrade as a bargaining chip to get as much financial and political gains from the IC as possible. This view presupposes that Kosovo is not seen as an essential interest anymore and Serbia is willing to give up its standpoint on territorial integrity with regard to Kosovo. Another view is exchange of territories (the Presevo Valley for Northern Kosovo) or the division of Kosovo. This idea was labelled by the IC as a non-option. The fact remains that Belgrade has no answers to the status question and no policy with regard to the upcoming final status negotiations. Most likely the Serbian governing coalition will aim for a face-saving defeat. In the case that Kosovo is lost they can tell the population that outside powerful forces (EU, US, NATO) have taken Kosovo away from them and that they have tried to negotiate the best option for Serbia. Only in that way support among the population for nationalistic parties can be counterbalanced in the view of some Belgrade experts.

With regard to the KPC, the only non-starter in Serbia is the army-option.⁴⁴ All other options can be talked about. Most Serbian politicians regard the KPC simply as a fact of life and that it provides an acceptable way to keep an eye on the former UCK.

5.2. The Kosovo Serb perspective

From interviews with Belgrade experts and KS representatives the following groups and perspectives can be distinguished. The first group is associated with the Kosovo Serbs mainly in the North of Kosovo (concentrated in Mitrovica) who have strong bonds with Belgrade. One view from their side is that Kosovo Serbs and Belgrade should make a tough stance, but also remain open for negotiations. A second view is that Belgrade already made all the concessions they

⁴⁴ All Serbian Experts interviewed in Belgrade unanimously declared that the Serbian government is willing to negotiate on the status of the KPC, but a full-fledged army is ruled out by Belgrade.

could make, and that the line should be drawn at independence for Kosovo. Far-reaching autonomy is possible, but nothing more, in which case there should at least be strong provisions for human rights, territorial integrity of Serbia-Montenegro, and guarantees that religious sites will not be harmed. Another group of Kosovo Serbs is scattered all over Kosovo, but mainly seem to have proponents for cooperation around Gjilan and Lipjan. This group stepped out of the shadow recently when Kosovo's Minister of Returns, Slavisa Petkovic founded the Serbian Democratic Party – Kosovo and Metohija (SDS – KiM), in June 2005. The new party's main principle is that Serbs in Kosovo must take responsibility for their own future and cannot rely on Belgrade, which has different interests. This in reality comes down to an acceptance of a future within Kosovo.

Among the group of Kosovo Serbs in the North of Kosovo there is a deep-rooted distrust of the KPC. The KPC was founded on the basis of UCK, which in turn was a terrorist organisation in their eyes. They perceive it as a threat that within the KPC so many military symbols are maintained (uniform, ranks, commando structure). The possibility of the KPC transforming into an army or defence organisation is the biggest threat to them. In this case there is a strong possibility there will be more armed groups emerging in Kosovo. For the Kosovo Serbs to accept the KPC it must be reduced significantly in size, placed under complete democratic control of the PISG and the parliament, and it should transform in a complete civilian organisation, with no ranks, a manager instead of a general, and it must give up aspirations of becoming an army. Only then this group might be interested to serve in the KPC.

5.3. The Kosovo Albanian perspective

Among Kosovo Albanians there is currently only a small minority that is willing to enter into negotiations with Belgrade to talk about options less than independence (far reaching autonomy). For the large majority anything less than independence is unacceptable. In their view Belgrade has had its chance and although Serbia is their neighbour, in the words of a KA MP 'they do not want to live in the same house anymore'. However there are differing views on what should be the road to independence. One group wants to become independent and expects the IC to transfer all responsibilities as soon as possible. Another group that has emerged among Pristina's liberal intelligentsia is in favour of a more gradual transfer of powers. They are afraid that if UNMIK and KFOR would leave too quickly, a weak state will be left behind with criminal and corrupt elements.

The Kosovo Albanian population and KPC members have never given up their dream about a KPC that one day will be the army of an independent Kosovo. During interviews KPC members all indicated that they see the KPC as a professional army in the future. They perceive themselves as soldiers working with a humanitarian and civilian mandate. Although Kosovo

Albanian politicians articulate it differently they also see the future in terms of a Defence Force capable of fulfilling PfP standards, with capabilities that the current KPC has developed, but also a force that is capable of taking responsibility for the internal security. Of course this force should be defensive in nature and be acceptable to the ethnic communities as well as to its neighbours.

5.4. Elements of a future Kosovo Protection Organisation

The discussion on the future of the KPC is characterised by clear ideas and ambitions on the Kosovo Albanian side (both among the political and the KPC leadership), hesitance and carefulness by the IC (partly because of uncertainty with regard to the status of Kosovo and partly because of differing opinions in the IC), and opposition by one group of the Kosovo Serbs and willingness to cooperate by another group. Much depends on the results of the Internal Security Sector Review. Furthermore for any formal changes to take place the KPC has to make significant and continued progress towards the implementation of Standard eight.

However, my impression – based upon interviews with members of the international bilateral presence, local and international representatives, IOM, UNMIK, independent experts and the KPC itself – is that:

- Fulfilment of Standard 8 is an essential requirement for the KPC development.
- There will not be a Kosovo *army* in the nearby future. This is unacceptable to a large part of the Kosovo Serbs, Belgrade, while several countries in the EU and Russia also have difficulty with this prospect. Nevertheless a Kosovo army is something that the majority of the Kosovo Albanian population wants (as expressed by the PISG, civil society and KPC members themselves).
- A new organisation will not have a military defensive capacity in the sense of deterring possible aggressor states, and it will certainly not have an offensive capacity.
- It is likely that a new force will have the capabilities of maintaining *internal* security.
- The military security of Kosovo is likely to be guaranteed by NATO in the medium term.
- Much will depend on the Internal Security Sector Review being conducted by a group of international and Kosovar experts.

A KPC successor organisation after determination of Kosovo's status is difficult to predict but might include the following elements:

- A core consisting of the Civil Protection Brigade (500 men) purely purposed for civilian tasks.
- KPC units such as the de-mining and Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) will be phased out the KPC and then be incorporated in the KPC successor organisation.
- It will be based on NATO standards.
- It will be a 'light' force.

- It will be able to aspire for PfP admission.
- It should be possible to perform humanitarian tasks in international missions.
- It will have Rapid Reaction Units.

To conclude this short analysis on the future of the KPC one could argue that the *label* (army or civil emergency response or...) is not important but the assigned *mandate* of a future KPC is crucial. The KPC should be *appropriate* so that it can deal with traditional tasks and new threats; it should be *affordable* taking the limited Kosovar budget and other priority areas into account; and it should be *acceptable* to the Kosovar Albanians, the Serbs, neighbouring countries and the international community as a whole.

Conclusion

The KPC has come a long way from a guerrilla force in 1999 to a relatively effective civil emergency organisation today. Yes, it is true that KPC members see their future in terms of an official military organisation, and maybe one cannot expect a former fighter to keep on building brick buildings. However it is important to realise that the transformation to a new organisation – be it civilian or defence orientated – has to be a legitimate process and will ultimately require authorisation from the IC. Until that time the members of the KPC should be kept at work; nobody is served by a situation where 3000 KPC members have nothing to do in their barracks. In such a situation valuable skills acquired by KPC members will slowly diminish and frustration will mount. Furthermore keeping at least a part of them ‘busy’ with reconstruction work in ethnic minority areas is one of the best practical ways of overcoming distrust between ethnic groups. This is an additional factor that should not be underestimated in the (tense) coming year with the start of the political process determining the future status of Kosovo.

At the same time it is important that the IC also remains committed to the KPC in the long run. This reports’ analyses suggests that – despite much progress in the last few years – a lot of work still needs to be done. Organisational, financial and management aspects need more attention. International Organisations such as NATO, the EU and the OSCE should stay committed to further qualitative development of the KPC. Moreover, the KPC also deserves attention from NGOs, Research Institutes and Think Tanks. Not much research has been done up till now and there are certainly also educational aspects that need attention. It is important here that the dialogue about the future of the KPC is enhanced, both in Kosovo as well as from a regional and international perspective. Intensified contact between civil-society in Kosovo – assisted by outside independent expertise – with the PISG and the KPC would certainly be worthwhile to

further develop. Expectations are high on the outcome of the ISSR; nonetheless some problems need to be addressed anyway in the short run: the KPC information gap; development of a security community; and legislative and civilian oversight. All involved players; the PISG, the KPC, Kosovo's civil-society, outside independent organisations and international organisations should jointly play a role in this process.

Annex I: List of Abbreviations

CESS	Centre for European Security Studies
COMKFOR	Commander of the Kosovo Force
CPB	Civil Protection Brigade
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Integration
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
HQ	Headquarter
IC	International Community
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
ISSR	Internal Security Sector Review
KA	Kosovo Albanians
KFOR	Kosovo Force
KS	Kosovo Serbs
KPC	Kosovo Protection Corps
LDK	Democratic League of Kosovo
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NL MFA	Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OKPCC	Office of the KPC Coordinator
PISG	Provisional Institutions of Self Government
QUINT-countries	USA, Germany, United Kingdom, Italy, France
SDS – KiM	Serbian Democratic Party – Kosovo and Metohija
SRSG	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SSDAT	Security Sector Development Advisory Team
UCK	Kosovo Liberation Army
UNMIK	United Nations Mission in Kosovo
USA	United States of America

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