

ORGANized Crime Part IV: Smug Smugglers, Our Gang

By Julia Gorin

“The United States of America and the Kosovo Liberation Army stand for the same human values and principles...Fighting for the KLA is fighting for human rights and American values.” — Sen. Joe Lieberman, April 28, 1999

Nato’s war with Yugoslavia was “a battle between good and evil; between civilisation and barbarity; between democracy and dictatorship”. — Tony Blair (a.k.a. “Tonibler“)

“Nowhere [in Europe] is there such a level of fear for so many minorities [i.e. non-Albanians] that they will be harassed or attacked, simply for who they are.” — Report on Kosovo by Minority Rights Group International

We are reminded of these quotes in the wake of the (finally) breaking story of the murder-for-organs scheme by the Kosovo gangster government — condoned by the U.S. and our closest European allies — in an article by British journalist Neil Clark, who continues:

[“Humanitarian” intervention in Kosovo”] was a fiction many on the liberal left bought into...But if the west had wanted to act morally in the Balkans and to protect the people in Kosovo there were solutions other than war with the Serbs, and options other than backing the KLA – the most violent group in Kosovan politics. They could have backed genuine multi-party negotiations, or offered to lift sanctions on Belgrade if a peaceful solution to the problem of Kosovo could be found. [Note: We never even bothered to back any of Milosevic’s opponents, underscoring that it was the Serbs as a people whom we wanted to bomb — as Madeleine Albright herself said in 1999: “The Serbs need some bombing and that’s what they’re going to get.”]

Instead, a virulently anti-Serb stance led the west into taking ever more extreme positions, and siding with an organisation which even Robert Gelbard, President Clinton’s special envoy to Kosovo, described as “without any question, a terrorist group”. In 2000 the Sunday Times revealed that, prior to the Nato bombing, US agents had been training the KLA. Shaban Shala, a KLA commander, claimed he had met British and US agents in north Albania in 1996.

It was the KLA’s campaign of violence against Yugoslav state officials, Serbian and Kosovan civilians in 1998, which led to an escalation of the conflict with the government in Belgrade...As for democratic advances, Sunday’s elections in Kosovo, boycotted by the Serbian minority, have seen widespread allegations of fraud, with a turnout of 149% reported in one area. [...]

For anyone in need of a crash course on Kosovo amid all these revelations (perhaps some folks hadn’t been interested prior to the macabre “Hostel”-like, or “Saw”-like, news hitting last month), Doug Bandow does the story of “Kosovo ‘n US” in four paragraphs. From the American Spectator blog:

It was never easy to understand why the Clinton administration intervened in Kosovo. **The U.S. had not made a habit of deciding which European state was obligated to grant independence to which disaffected minority. For instance, Spain told Basques to stuff it without much comment from Washington. And the U.S. never worried about its allies using brutality against guerrillas** — the Turkish campaign against the Kurds destroyed thousands of villages and killed tens of thousands of people, while the U.S. provided Ankara with arms.

However, the prospect of getting involved in a conflict with no conceivable relationship to U.S. interests drew the Clinton administration into the Balkans. So Washington joined with a majority of European states in a policy that could be defined as “the Serbs always lose“: Everyone got to secede from Yugoslavia/Serbia, but Serbs could never secede from anyone else, whether Bosnia, Croatia, or Kosovo, irrespective of the principle of ethnic self-determination and threat of human rights violations.

Thus, the U.S. joined with a majority of European states to bomb Serbia for 78 days to force it to relinquish its control over Kosovo. Then the allies presided over mass ethnic-cleansing by the ethnic Albanian majority. Finally, the U.S. and European Union promoted faux negotiations with the understanding that the outcome was already set: independence for Kosovo. And the northern majority Serb areas of Kosovo were supposed to supinely accept their status rather than seek to remain with [the country they’d always been citizens of,] Serbia. When Belgrade refused to go along, the allies

backed Kosovo's unilateral declaration of independence. But Russia has blocked Kosovo's entry into the UN and the majority of states do not recognize the new nation.

Great work, both the Clinton and Bush administrations.

It has long been known that Albania's leaders are, shall we say, a bit "shady." Now comes a new Council of Europe report on Hashim Thaci, Kosovo's prime minister... What a great new addition to Europe. But then, that's what happens when Washington tries to engage in social engineering around the globe.

To continue now with the ongoing coverage of the murder-for-organs affair. The smartest question in all this was asked by, among others, Jim Jatras, of the American Council for Kosovo, which for the past five years has been futilely trying to get the U.S. government to reverse its brutal and self-defeating policy in the region:

U.S.-Backed Kosovo Administration Implicated in Organ-Trafficking Racket – But Will It Matter? (Dec. 15)

One can't help but wonder how many times we have to be hit over the head before it begins to sink in that America's intervention in Kosovo was based on a pack of lies from the start. The "accepted" narrative of Kosovo as the great success story parades under the headline: U.S. and NATO Allies Nobly Stepped in to Stop Genocide by Evil Serbs. The reality was U.S. Dragged NATO Allies Kicking and Screaming Into Support for Muslim Mafia Committing Genocide Against Christian Serbs.

Comes now the Council of Europe's human rights investigator Dick Marty with damning accusations that Hashim Thaci, a/k/a Gjarpër ("Snake"), currently masquerading as "prime minister" of the illegal separatist administration in Pristina, heads a "mafia-like" operation that included murdering captives, mainly Serbs, to sell their organs on the black market. Is even that ghoulish revelation enough to force a reconsideration of the preening self-justification of a "humanitarian" intervention most Americans have long since forgotten? We can hope. But did the plotted attack on Fort Dix changes any minds? No. Now we have organ trafficking. Let's remember the organ-trafficking story first broke over two years ago and seemed to be withering away in the face of brazen stonewalling by "authorities" in Pristina and Tirana (with full backing from Washington, of course.)

Release of Mr. Marty's report, just as Thaci is claiming victory in Kosovo's recent elections, suggests that somebody in Europe wants to jump off this bandwagon to disaster. But for Americans, the question is: **How horrible do the facts need to be before we start looking behind the curtain to see what our government is so desperate to conceal?**

In the unfortunate partisan myopia that plagues American politics, some of my fellow conservatives might be tempted to blame it on Bill Clinton and leave it at that. Of course, it was largely a "Clinton problem" back during the 1999 NATO war against Serbia. To their credit, most Congressional Republicans voted against the war, which our Razorback Rommel illegally launched even though the House of Representatives had voted down the authorization to use military force. But while Republicans mainly voted No, the neoconservative establishment was whipping up support for the Clinton White House. Unfortunately, with neocon domination of the George W. Bush administration's foreign policy, and their desperation to win Islamic friends after 9/11, the Bush policy on Kosovo was even more Clinton than Clinton, leading to the decision to try to force the issue of Kosovo's independence in violation of every principle of international law and national sovereignty.

So, what will Washington do now about "our" guy Thaci?... [E]ven aside from these organ-trafficking peccadilloes, the U.S. establishment did know – from Day One – that Thaci and Co... were a bunch of thugs. So did the intelligence services of our allies. (And make no mistake – it's not just Thaci. If Thaci needs to be dumped, we can guess that "Plan B" will be to install in his place another of his equally vicious KLA colleagues.) They – our government – knew the KLA were criminals running the drug, slave, and weapons rackets throughout Europe. They knew the KLA was supported by Osama bin Laden (with whom Thaci met personally in Tirana in 1998 to plan the jihad in Kosovo, according to the former head of Albanian intelligence), the Iranians, the Saudis, the Turks, and other supporters of an Islamic re-re-conquest of the Balkans. And we supported them anyway, shredding every rule of law and decency in the process. Now what? In all probability, circle the wagons, hope it will blow over, and keep twisting arms around the world in support of the illegal separatist terrorist entity "KosovA."

As for Serbia — if there were a respectable government in Belgrade, instead of a group of quislings, they wouldn't be preparing to meet with representatives of Thaci's "government" in direct negotiations. Instead, conspiring with their U.S. and European supporters and collaborators in the Serbian Orthodox Church, Belgrade's recent "contribution" to the Kosovo fiasco is their persecution of Vladika Artemije, Bishop of Ras and Prizren and Kosovo and Metohija, who

over two years ago was calling for then-President Bush to refuse to meet with Thaci and demanding an accounting for the organ-selling outrage!

Let us hope that Mr. Marty's fine work doesn't get thrown down the Memory Hole with any and all other facts inconvenient to Washington's policy. But it's not enough just to track down the individual perpetrators, or even to pack Thaci off to jail (though both would be a good start). **It's time for the lies that have undergirded our entire Balkan policy to be exposed, for the United States to stop its obsessive support for Islamic jihad against the indigenous Christian population, and specifically to back off from our absurd and destructive global lobbying on behalf of the KLA regime.**

Some might argue that "we've come too far" to reverse course now, that American commitment to "Kosova" is irreversible. But it's never too late to stop doing the wrong thing and start doing the right thing. If Mr. Marty's organ-trafficking revelations can be a catalyst for a truthful reassessment of American policy and of the events of recent years, the victims will not have died in vain.

In his blog, writer Lee Jay Walker asks the same question: "[W]ill this be enough to dent America's pro-Islamic policies in the Balkans which have been so detrimental to the region? Also, will the world wake up to the de-Christianization of Kosovo and how Western governments enabled radical Islamists to enter the Bosnian and Kosovo conflicts? Or will America and the United Kingdom, and others, continue with their policies of being pro-Muslim in both Bosnia and Kosovo?"

Nor does Walker let the complicit media off the hook:

[I]s it credible to believe that the vast majority of major news agencies and national governments did not know about thousands of Islamists in Europe who were sent to slit the throats and behead Orthodox Christians? After all, if the reality of what really happened in Bosnia and Kosovo [were] revealed then people could not be manipulated and national governments who supported America and the United Kingdom would not have been involved in such folly and brutality. Therefore, the mass media was a tool which worked in the favor of America and the United Kingdom and the Muslim "victim card" works well in many circles of the mass media.

In a piece on Slate.com titled "Prime Minister, Mob Boss," writer Joshua Kucera takes note of the fact that the "revelations" were met with little more than a shrug. Among the Albanian public, this is understandable, since they've known all along what their leaders are, which is why it's taboo to talk about, and which makes the leadership's staged outrage a bit over-the-top: Everyone living or working in the Balkans knows that Thaci's notorious Drenica group heads most of the criminal rackets in Albania itself — and this is whom the Albanian public applauds as it watches their gang transformed into "statesmen" by the U.S. Although most Albanians would prefer less corrupt but more radical leaders (like the Self-Determination movement's Albin Kurti), Thaci and his goons do represent their public, whose primary career option and ambition is crime. Kucera's take:

...In most countries, a report by a respected international body that says your prime minister is the head of a mafia ring involved in organ smuggling might cause a bit of a political stir. But not in Kosovo.

...

You might think that Thaci would pay a political price for dabbling in the flesh trade, but in Pristina, even his political opponents have rallied to his defense, framing the allegations as an insult to Kosovo and the KLA. The head of another political party, former Prime Minister Agim Ceku, said, "Every accusation against the KLA comes from Serbia or its helpers...It's just an attempt to blacken our war and our victory."

That is, Albanians are so used to the world not seeing what they've done to Serbs, that by now they think only Serbs are able to observe or believe anything about dissected Serbs. So if anyone who isn't Serbian finally notices that something is amiss, it can only be because Serbia is whispering in their ear. The same Serbia that is eagerly self-immolating in service to Albanians and their Western henchmen.

And notice the zero distinction between the Ceku quote above and the statements that have been coming from the Kosovo government. That's because there is only one collective Albanian mind, and it functions very much like the Borg collective of "Star Trek." The only time variations are discernible is when there is infighting; much as it is with the Arabs: when the 'Zionist Enemy' isn't providing a rallying cry, they're fighting and killing intra-ethnically. And would like to continue doing so as an independent nation, without being hampered by attachments to a more civilized, laws-bound, host society. A few other interesting sentences from Kucera's Slate article, which also reminds readers that the birth of Kosovo owes to heroin, responsible for half the KLA's funding between 1996 and 1999:

[A] 2008 U.N. report notes that Kosovo's position in the World Bank's rule of law rankings is the lowest in the Balkans, while popular satisfaction with the government is the highest in the region...[T]he influence of the European Union and United States in Kosovo is declining....The E.U. Rule of Law Mission is one of the few remaining international institutions with any authority in Kosovo, and it is increasingly unpopular among Kosovars.

Of course it is! It's a "law and order" mission. As if in an echo chamber, here was acting president Jakup Krasniqi's reaction to the Marty report:

Kosovo's interim president, Jakup Krasniqi, urged the Council of Europe Friday not to endorse an internal report linking Prime Minister Hashim Thaci to organ trafficking and organized crime.

"I welcome your support in not allowing adoption of this report as an official document of the Council of Europe," a statement quoted Krasniqi as saying in a letter sent to all 47 Council of Europe members. "Horrible accusations in this report aim to hamper international recognitions of the Republic of Kosovo as well as to weaken the position of the government of the Republic of Kosovo in the forthcoming dialogue with Serbia," Krasniqi said.

That's what the macabre news all boils down to: something that could, god forbid, finally interfere with Albanian expansion. More echoes from the collective Borg mind:

"The aim of this report is to harm the image of Kosovo, its people and all Albanians in this region, slow down the recognition of Kosovo's independence, block the start of talks between Kosovo and Serbia, and delay the establishment of new institutions," the prime minister [Thaci] said.

The Kosovo Chamber of Lawyers in Pristina sounded a similar note. "The report has no evidence and the Chamber is offering legal and professional support to everyone mentioned...to find facts and protect their dignity," said Musa Dragusha, the head of the Chamber.

But it gets even better, from President Krasniqi again:

The draft report is bluntly biased and even contains racist statements, when it refers to "the structure of clans" in the Kosovo Albanian society and "the lack of a genuine civil society".

...

Ultimately, we welcome all legal and political initiatives taken both inside and outside of Kosovo to condemn these absurd and indecent defamations, which do not contribute to making the Balkan a region of peace, stability and safety.

First, the second of those last two paragraphs: Everyone is welcome to condemn the report; that is the allowed reaction. Further, he's welcoming condemnations against the allegations instead of getting to the bottom of them. And of course, the reason that the 'defamations' don't contribute to peace, stability and safety is that things are less peaceful, stable and safe when you piss off Albanians. As has been the 'wisdom' guiding Western policy in the region since 1999.

But I really do need to address the first paragraph in the president's quote above. This is the first time I'm seeing an official Albanian objection to the less than censored, less than politically-correct, language used to describe Albanian pre-modern society. It's certainly not the first time we're reading about their "clan-based" society, about "tight clans," or a "culture of silence." Even in the '80s, there were headlines like this from the NY Times: "Pristina Journal; Blood Will Have Blood; It's the Code of the Clans." Albania even has a TV station called Klan, so it's not like they don't know they're all about clans. Nor is it the first time we're reading something about Albanians with terms such as "blood feud"; "violent, closed society"; "lawlessness"; or "criminal tribe," as the Hungarian Intelligence Service considers them. Such descriptions are a regular feature of one report after another — whether UN, OSCE, HRW, EU, or any European intelligence agency. And check out this quote from a 1901 British diplomatic cable sent to the Marquess of Lansdowne: "Old Serbia [Kosovo] is still a restive region because of the Albanians' lawlessness, vengeance and racial hatred." And don't just take it from non-Albanians. Here were some adjectives used by Albanian Albanians about Macedonian Albanians earlier this year:

"Hatred towards their own country, extreme Islamism, extremely low culture". These were the quali[ties] which several Albanian intellectuals used in attacking [Macedonian politician Mundux] Thaci....According to [writer Maks] Velo, there is a frightening, extreme Islamism among the Albanian parties in Macedonia and it is not a coincidence that DPA's leader Mendux Thaci is on the U.S. blacklist for years.

“The mosques in the villages in Macedonia seem like Iranian missiles. If the Albanians there can not climb to a higher cultural level of social life, not to discriminate against women, to build civil society, you will never be able to go up against the Macedonians in any way, especially not intellectually.

So what is it about these characterizations that the Albanians are suddenly objecting to now? Is it that finally someone could be listening? They didn't seem to mind when no one was paying attention, but it's embarrassing now that they're on the public's radar — at least temporarily.

(Oh, and here's a blunt one, from former State Dept. officer George Kenney, who at some point went rogue by turning into a human being: “In the latter phases of Yugoslavia's Civil War there were an unusually large number of reports from Kosovo alleging Albanian harvesting and trafficking of organs from Serb prisoners. It long seemed to me that...the circumstantial evidence was strong and merited serious investigation....we now have a report [that] lays out the details. **How long will it take historians to conclude that America's Kosovar-Albanian clients are one of the most barbaric criminal gangs in the world?**”)

Also using the “racism” card is Albanian Prime Minister Sali Berisha, who called the accusation that he himself — a well-known crook — was a weapons dealer during the 1998-99 war “racist,” again diminishing the distinction between criminals and Albanians in general while doing the standard evil-Serb deflection trick for good measure:

...Legal documents reportedly identify Prime Minister Sali Berisha of Albania as one of the key arms traffickers during the 1998-99 war in Kosovo.

“Sali Berisha was one of the main arms traffickers during the Kosovo conflict. His name is mentioned by four witnesses in documents from the (Serbian) war crimes prosecutor,” Politika, a pro-government daily, said on its frontpage. [The government being pro-Western, anti-nationalist, U.S.-installed surrender monkey.]

...

“Claims by Politika, a mouthpiece of Serb ultranationalists and the advocate of the Serb genocide in Bosnia and Kosovo, are nothing but racist slander,” Mr Berisha said.

He linked Politika's report to an “anti-Albanian hysteria, led by (Council of Europe special rapporteur) Dick Marty, a racist who, without any proof, is trying to do everything to soil the Albanians' war in Kosovo.”

...

Politika says the file, number 33-08, of the war crimes prosecutor, quoted witnesses who identify a house belonging to Berisha in northern Albania close to the town of Tropoje, near the border with Kosovo, as “an arms buying centre”. The witnesses, not identified by name, are members of the Kosovo Liberation Army, (KLA)...The men were arrested by Serb security forces during the 1998-99 war and questioned about how the KLA got its arms, according to the daily.

...

“The slurs that Belgrade's Politika and Dick Marty are propagating again...prove their blind racism and their big disappointment with the liberation of one nation,” Mr Berisha said. [...]

To be fair, while Berisha — in what sounded more like a dare — ultimately “welcomed” an international investigation, Serbian war crimes prosecutor Vukcevic was encouraged by statements coming from another official in Albania, Iljer Neta, who “offered that the matter has to be investigated in Albania.” Vukcevic nonetheless laments the three years lost, as “Three years ago, Serbian prosecutors called for co-operation with their Albanian colleagues, but no joint investigation was ever launched.”

Diplomatic ping pong is what it was called by Philip Alston, a special UN rapporteur on extrajudicial killings, in a press conference in Tirana last February:

Albanian officials had played “diplomatic ping pong” and stalled investigations. There had been “no meaningful cooperation from Albania”, he said...Council of Europe investigators are understood to have been among those who, according to Alston, received only limited assistance from Albania during their inquiries.

Which brings us to the rich, reverberated reaction by the National Albanian American Council — speaking, no less, for the entire Albanian community in America and thereby once again conflating Albanian criminals with Albanians in general: “The Albanian American Community Strongly Denounces Dick Marty's Accusations“:

The Albanian American community strongly denounces the unsubstantiated allegations made by Mr. Dick Marty... The report is an uncorroborated attack attempting to smear not only PM Thaqi, but also the heroic resistance against the Serbian ethnic cleansing campaign [sic] made by the Kosova [sic] Liberation Army (KLA).

Mr. Marty's report alleges fresh evidence but presents no new information, contends to have spoken with multiple witnesses, but refuses to publish names. [As you can imagine, not having witnesses' names is ESPECIALLY frustrating to Albanians, since how else will they be able to kill them? Notice also the way Albanian spokesmen and authorities accuse the Marty report of not being based on facts, while ignoring the facts in it.]

The international community has been extremely critical of Mr. Marty's report:

Mr. Bernard Kouchner, former Foreign Minister of France and UNMIK Chief at the time of the allegations, responded, "My first reaction, and I read the report very carefully, is that I'm very skeptical about those accusations of the organ trade. My second reaction is to have somebody investigate this, conduct a real investigation."

...

Dr. Sali Berisha, Albania's Prime Minister, stated, "This is a report absolutely not based on any facts, evidence or reality, which shows the clear taking of sides of the author, including a flagrant abuse of the authority of the Council of Europe." [As if a respectable, real, head of state is being cited here, rather than a fellow gangster. "International community" indeed.]

The Albanian American community fully stands behind the government of Kosova's demand that Dick Marty step back and allow competent, impartial authorities to look into these unsubstantiated allegations and commit to cooperate fully with any fair and unbiased inquiry. Additionally, we implore the international community to continue to support Kosova's inevitable membership into Euro-Atlantic institutions. [That's what's most important! And "inevitable" — you got that?]

Back to the big question: "Will it matter?" Nebojsa Malic points out that "Reuters speculates that the furor over Marty's report may eventually amount to nothing, since the Empire [that's us] has invested too much in Kosovo "independence" to reverse course now. And Srdja Trifkovic writes of how the U.S. media are helping make sure this story once again has no legs through their "feeble and half-hearted reporting":

The Chicago Tribune, for instance, did not deem it fit to publish a story about the Council of Europe report itself. It published two related items critical of the report instead, on the European Union expressing doubt about its factual basis and on the "government" of Kosovo planning to sue Dick Marty for libel. No major daily has published a word of doubt about Bill Clinton's wisdom of waging a war on behalf of Thaqi and his cohorts a decade ago, or perpetuating the myth of it having been a good war today.

That Thaqi aka "The Snake" is a criminal as well as a war criminal is no news, of course. The intriguing question is who, on the European side, wanted to end his "untouchable" status, why now, and what is the U.S. Government — his principal enabler and abettor — going to do about it.

...Thaqi's American enablers and their media minions are already embarking on a bipartisan damage-limitation exercise. Its pillars will be the assertion that the report rests on flimsy factual evidence, an attempt to discredit Dick Marty personally, and the claim the Council of Europe as an irrelevant talking shop.

The good news is that Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are calling for a EULEX probe into Marty's findings and for Western governments to demand a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation that leads to prosecutions. (Both organizations' previous calls over the past 11 years for something to be done about Kosovo impunity have fallen on deaf ears.) The bad news is that, knowing that prosecuting our Kosovo friends would be a deadly undertaking for all involved, the Kosovo-based EULEX is already trying to find a way out, citing "no jurisdiction" in Albania.

And yet:

The murder of one man, and the beating of others during the 1999 war in the northern Albanian town of Kukes and in other makeshift detention centres, has recently become the subject of a court case in Prishtina, in Kosovo, although the alleged crimes took place in Albania. Law enforcement bodies there never attempted to inquire into the incidents.

Hand in hand with the “will it matter” issue is the fact that it was known all along to Western governments that their KLA weren’t just terrorists, but an organized crime syndicate:

Kosovo PM Hashim Thaci’s crimes ‘known to the West’

Western leaders have been accused of turning a blind eye to murders, drug running and organ trafficking in Kosovo. The West elevated a man it knew to be a criminal boss to the rank of European statesman...”What shocked me is that most of the facts illustrated in this report were known to numerous organisations, which until now have remained silent,” Mr Marty said at a press conference.

Will Dick Marty’s revelations be dismissed the way all negative things about Albanian-run Kosovo have been? The Kosovo mission itself became — for all involved except a few quickly suppressed exceptions — about just keeping one’s job and not causing any waves. Tom Gambill laid it out clearly in a 2005 CNS News interview titled “Whistleblower: Kosovo ‘Owned’ By Albanian Mafia.” Naturally, anyone wanting to look into the criminality of the powers-that-be was dismissed. After all, this would endanger everyone more than professionally.

Realize, our leaders knew everything even as they invoked Kosovo as a “successful” war, a model they contrasted with our current wars. One Democratic presidential candidate after another — in 2004 and 2008 — flaunted that party’s Kosovo credential to a public they knew wouldn’t know any better, in interviews with hosts who they knew wouldn’t question it, correctly relying on media personalities — of both political persuasions — having been thoroughly propagandized. All the while, as Chris Deliso wrote in *The Coming Balkan Caliphate*, “longtime UNMIK employees in Kosovo who have watched the process disintegrate over the years express disbelief at how the Western media and politicians can get away with calling the intervention a success.”

But a war is easily going to feel like a “success” if you’re fighting for the enemy, against a non-enemy that’s powerless to do anything about it (as I wrote in my 2007 *American Legion* article, “The ‘Successful War’ We Lost in Kosovo”).

A particularly odious example of a Western official who knew what was going on is the case of French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner. The following Dec. 22 report is from the German-owned Belgrade paper Blic:

Canadian Captain Stu Kellock, former Chief of the UNMIK Police Department for crime in 2000 and 2001, claims that then first man of the UN mission in Kosovo Bernard Kouchner ‘must have known’ details concerning organized crime in Kosovo. ‘However, Hashim Thaci was among the ‘untouchables’ because he was as early as then chosen to be Kosovo Albanian leader’.

‘I cannot confirm that Kouchner knew about organ trafficking but it is absolutely impossible that he did not have information about organized crime in Kosovo [he was always kept informed of organized crime in Kosovo]...[Kellock] explains that after [the] arrival of the UN mission and the NATO troops, it was the mafia to arrive in Kosovo next. I was completely aware of who Thaci was and of how huge his influence was[, he said]. However, in circles I acted in, any discussion involving criticism of Thaci and his associates would be immediately dismissed. I was a witness to [the] creating of a statesman. It was clear to me that Thaci had been chosen and that he would never been brought [up] in connection with any criminal activities in spite of the fact that he had influence on tax collection, drug, human and arms trafficking and goods smuggling’, Kellock said.

Stu Kellock’s experiences trying to police Kosovo are worth a brief visit as well:

...Kellock says that rumors of [the] Albanian organ trade were circulating during his service in Kosovo – in 2000 and 2001 – but that his staff was so overwhelmed with Albanian crime that, says Kellock, he did not have time to investigate rumors.

“Rumors about organ trade appeared even in my time but were not proven. There was talk about a hospital in Pristina and the criminal activity that is going on there, but at the time there were so many other, burning priorities. I had way too few people to be able to investigate rumors,” Kellock is quoted by the RTS.

Kellock said that the Pristina hospital moved enormous amounts of money whose source was completely unknown.

“In one case, a gun battle broke [out at the hospital] when one security guy was killed and one million Deutsche Marks was stolen. Absolutely nobody could explain to us how and why was there one million Marks at the hospital,” said Kellock. [...]

In this breathtaking 2006 interview by Chris Deliso with Detective Kellock, which details another infamous example of evidence-suppression and -destruction in Kosovo — the 2001 Podujevo Bus Massacre that killed 12 Serbs including two children — “readers get the inside story of how UN investigators in Kosovo sought to crack down on criminals and terrorists — but were systematically stopped, because of the perceived need to safeguard the interests of the Western political elite and their local proteges.

...[F]ighting crime in Kosovo was a tiring and never-ending battle, “a series of shootings, bombings, kidnappings, explosions, rapes and other serious crimes including human trafficking and terrorism...”...National, clan and supranational interests were inextricably interwoven in complex and murky ways, out of all proportion to the size of the territory in question.

...
[The] audacious arrest of a leading KLA founder got Kellock’s superiors sweating, and may have restricted the reach of further investigations. Most ominously, says Kellock, “I certainly did feel threatened after the arrest and detention of Sabit Geci”...dubbed at the time “a kingpin in Pristina’s underworld with highly placed political allies in the PDK [of Hasim Thaci]...Detective Kellock emphasizes how astonished some of his peers were by his vigorous action against the crime lord...how dare I arrest a modern war hero!”

...Kellock recalls “a very interesting statement made to me by a *very* senior police officer after [Geci’s] conviction – along the lines of ‘we did not know whether or not to *allow* you to continue your investigation...’” The investigation had cemented for him something that had been apparent at least since January 2000 when according to AFP, UNMIK Chief Administrator Bernard Kouchner ordered police that his explicit permission would be required if they sought to raid the premises of any of Kosovo’s leading families.

...As has been repeated again and again by internationals working in Kosovo and the independent media, prosecuting the warlords would cause a backlash against KFOR and UNMIK — meaning that for the past six and a half years, the UN has been living as a virtual hostage to the “decommissioned” leaders of the KLA....

Which brings us back to Kouchner. That is one Western player in Kosovo whose culpability in all this is worth emphasizing.

In March of this year, I wrote: French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, who was the UN chief in Kosovo from 1999 to 2001, was asked to comment on the KLA’s 1999 organ-removal operation...and respond to accusations that he himself bore some responsibility in either covering it up or else turning a blind eye. This video shows his over-the-top reaction, which included mimicking human dissection.

If only his outburst mocking the Voice of America reporter had stopped at calling the man crazy for thinking that he [Kouchner], a doctor by profession, could be involved with such a thing. But Kouchner didn’t stop there. He went on to scoff at the idea of the now infamous “Yellow House,” where it all took place and which has been the subject of more than one active investigation...So far, I hadn’t suspected Kouchner of anything close to knowing about the operation at the time, much less being involved in it...The closest thing to elaboration on this accusation came from the Serbian newspaper Vecernje Novosti (“Evening News”) in May, 2008. As translated and excerpted by the de-construct.net blog:

“Serbian officials were an inch away from the kidnapped [victims] in Kosovo and Metohija on a number of occasions, but were always prevented from reaching them”, the members of the former investigative teams of the state’s Coordinating Center for the province said.

“This is why not a single search had produced any results, even though many of the kidnapped were still alive at the time, and were imprisoned in Kosovo and Metohija”, Serbs who were leading the investigations after the war said, adding that the whole “business” took place in the years 2000 and 2001...when the Western officials, including Kouchner, [had] already been firmly established in the southern Serbian province...Milorad Pejcjinovic, leader of the Serbian investigative team assigned with the task of finding the secret makeshift prisons and concentration camps in Kosovo and Metohija, said that there can be no doubt UNMIK [had] been purposely thwarting every single investigation.

“There is no question that every serious search of our team has been thwarted by the UNMIK police, claiming that the locations for which we had solid evidence that they contain our kidnapped people, are not safe. Whenever we would come within an inch of uncovering them, UNMIK police would forbid us to move further, claiming that the Albanians have learned about our intentions and that our lives are at stake,” Pejcinovic said.

He revealed that the UNMIK police was also preventing every individual attempt by the families to find their kidnapped loved ones, telling them that they must have a court order to enter certain locations, which “served to provide sufficient time for the Albanians who held kidnapped Serbs imprisoned to move them to other locations”.

“The biggest problem was the fact that Albanians had their men in UNMIK, who would inform them about each of our intentions to search the terrain. The same thing happened during one of the most complex searches which lasted three days. When we came to the entryway of one of the secret locations, UNMIK ordered us to turn back, because ‘they can’t guarantee our safety’,” Serbian investigators said.

According to a report last week, Serbia has filed a claim against UNMIK at the ICTY for hiding organ-harvesting and is demanding an investigation.

While Kouchner’s role may fall short of direct “involvement,” as he has been accused of by some in regional media, it does qualify as complicity if one is helping cover something up. And why would he have such a laugh — so forcefully deny — something he knew nothing about, if he in fact knew nothing about it? Interestingly, in 2008 then-State Dept. spokesman Sean McCormack had the same reaction — laughter — to the only question asked about the grisly affair. Ridicule has been an effective tool by Western governments to deal with the rare occasion that some strange, lowly human being dares confront them with something Kosovo-related, which they’d thought was successfully swept under the rug.

Kouchner’s behavior is all the more egregious because he is the founder of Doctors Without Borders. Not that this group’s record on Kosovo Serbs was clean to begin with, as Stella Jatrass documented:

Even the 1999 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, France’s Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF) or Doctors without Borders (DWB) expelled the Greek arm of DWB because the Greeks showed compassion by treating those injured or dying Serbians in Yugoslavia during NATO’s bombing campaign. Apparently the Hippocratic Oath by France’s Medecins Sans Frontieres stopped at the Serbian border.

And of course, here is the doctor-humanitarian (second from left) with two of the organized-crime chiefs who have been overseeing all the rackets:

Now we know what was meant by this, from March:

“President Sejdiu thanked Mr. Kouchner for the unwavering support that Republic of France has provided to Republic of Kosovo...saying that [Mr. Kouchner] has always remained a friend and a supporter of human freedoms.”

The human freedoms to kill, rob, rape, plunder and dissect.

Western leaders knew. They knew. And it didn’t matter. The sadness of the Kosovo reality is conveyed in the poignant fact that the news in Serbia is that the organs story is actually considered newsworthy to the world. They’re not used to Serb suffering being of concern to anyone but Serbs.

Indeed, international media are incredulous. “Is it possible?” asks Berlin newspaper Tageszeitung, according to a report mistitled “Was Europe Blind?” (Just the opposite, actually.) The rest of it:

Is it possible that people could have been kidnapped on orders from the prime minister of a European state? That he had them murdered in order to extract organs from their dead bodies, e.g. kidneys for rich customers...asks the Tageszeitung (TAZ). “Is it possible that Hashim Thaçi, the prime minister of Kosovo, unanimously backed by Berlin, London, Paris and Washington, owes his political power to wealth he amassed in criminal activities?”

...

“If Eulex, the EU mission in Kosovo, wants to remain credible, it will now have to conduct an impartial investigation into Thaçi & Co – which it has refrained from doing so far because a number of Albanian politicians are former guerrilla commanders and still have armed groups at their disposal.”

So how will Brussels react? Hard to say: “In September 2010, the War Crimes section head for EULEX made statements that completely, or almost completely, contradict Dick Marty’s report”, notes Le Temps. There was “no evidence”, according to Finnish police officer Matti Raatikainen, to corroborate the charges of organ trafficking made against Thaçi’s entourage, recalls the Swiss daily. [And we now have a clearer understanding of why that is.]

And yet, adds the paper, “The European Union knows that everything that emerges about Thaçi’s criminal involvement will put the EU in the dock. How can it then keep demanding that Belgrade arrest Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb general still on the lam? Above all, how can it argue against those, like the young nationalist Kosovar politician Albin Kurti, who call for EULEX to get out after its shady concessions to the power elite?”

U.S. government and media, in contrast, are immune to any such sober questions, or questions of morality. Much like Kosovo’s ambassador to Switzerland — who complacently said the allegations wouldn’t “affect bilateral relations between the two countries” — we had State Dept. spokesman Michael Murphy in Kosovo justifying this complacency with an almost identical statement that the Marty report will have “no impact” on U.S.-Kosovo relations. Or, as Serbianna.com paraphrased it: “US State Department said that extraction of organs out of Serbs is unimportant and Washington will continue to cooperate with Thaci irrespective of his involvement in that crime.” The news site also quoted an analyst explaining that “To the US, in particular, Marty’s report and the extraction of Serbian organs is just another little obstacle in their grand design to extract Kosovo out of Serbia.”

Which puts the likes of Austria and Switzerland on a higher moral plane than the U.S. Switzerland called for a probe, and as for Austria:

Leader of the Freedom Party of Austria Heinz-Christian Strache [on Dec. 16] said that Hashim Thaci should be urgently arrested and extradited to the Hague Tribunal. He said [he was not] surprised at all [at the] allegations against Thaci. “Three years ago I insisted that Thaci, according to a report by the German intelligence service, is connected with the organized crime.”

That’s, of course, despite the side-show aspect to these two countries on the matter, with Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey hedging her bets and pointing the finger at Austria:

“...The declaration of independence and its recognition by many states does not depend on [Thaci],” she said in an interview published on Wednesday in the Tages-Anzeiger newspaper. She added Switzerland had not been the first country to recognise the independence of the former Serb province. “Austria did it before us, if that is any reassurance,” she noted.

Which of course begs the question: So why did she cancel the Dec. 21 award ceremony to be hosted by Switzerland’s Kosovo Albanian community for her support for their state — if Thaci is no reflection on the wider community or the wisdom of Kosovo independence?

All the more since Switzerland has had a clue for a long time:

Thaci was banned from entering Switzerland

CoE [Council of Europe] rapporteur Dick Marty has stated that **Switzerland has known for years about outgoing Kosovo Prime Minister Hasim Taci’s alleged involvement in drug and organ trafficking and even banned him from entering the country.**

One does not do that to respectable persons, Marty stated for the NZZ am Sonntag, a Swiss weekly. Taci’s name can be found in police records, said Marty....[T]he Federal Department of Foreign Affairs confirmed that Switzerland denied visa to Taci [in the late ’90s]....

Numerous Kosovo rebels lived in Switzerland during the nineties. Taci also studied in Zurich, before he became KLA political leader. Switzerland was of strategic importance for KLA. This is where the organization recruited members and handled the financing of the resistance [sic], the paper reads, adding that about 200,000 people from Kosovo live in Switzerland today.

Owing to his efforts in the fight for Kosovo’s independence [such as blowing up refugee convoys and killing cops of varying ethnicity], Taci became an important political figure, which earned him persecution by a certain state. This is

why a decision was made that he be denied a visa, the directorate's statement reads, adding that the Swiss authorities did not want Taci in the country as he was wanted by Serbia for war crimes.

[So you see — everything is relative. If it's just Serbia that's after you for atrocities, it's for persecution, not prosecution. So Serbian warrants aren't taken seriously.]

During the debate on Kosovo's recognition in 2008, Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey did not inform the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National Council on Taci's ban on entry, the then committee chairman Gary Miller stated.

...

Marty claims that the alleged mafia network around Taci took over the control of the money that KLA received from the Kosovo diaspora. The money was deposited into accounts in Swiss and German banks. President of the Foreign Affairs Committee Christa Markwalder seeks a clarification of the accusations according to which the money from drug and organ trafficking was paid into accounts in Switzerland [including into radical Islamic charity accounts.]

If the allegations are confirmed, the state prosecution must react, she underlined. The serious accusations that Marty made, particularly against Taci, will be discussed by the Foreign Affairs Committee at its next session on January 10-11, when Minister Calmy-Ray will have to provide some answers as well, the Swiss paper reads.

Of course, we know about the deep and dirty role played by Swiss bank accounts in Kosovo. From June 2007:

Bexhet Pacoli, the richest Kosovo Albanian in the world from whose telephone, according to BND findings, a transaction in the amount of two million euros was arranged from a Swiss bank to one in Cyprus in the name of **Kosovo special envoy Martti Ahtisaari**, openly claims that he is paying 60 people just in Washington who are lobbying for the independence of Kosovo.

...

In terms of financial power [Pacoli's company] Mabetex is among the 70 strongest companies in Switzerland, with representative offices in the USA, Austria, Germany, Italy, the Czech Republic, China, Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Slovenia and elsewhere.

...

His decision to make his economic empire work for political purposes is confirmed by the newly founded organization of Kosovo Albanians in the USA called the Alliance for a New Kosovo, which he finances directly... The Alliance for a New Kosovo is headed by two lobbyists from the U.S. offices of Jefferson Waterman, **former vice chairman of the National Intelligence Council Samuel Hoskinson and former deputy assistant secretary for East-West trade in the State Department Kempton Jenkins**.

This lobbying group will also act through its advisory body, which **includes former U.S. secretary of defense and deputy CIA director Frank Carlucci, who served as secretary of defense in the Reagan administration and the long-time president of the Carlyle Group**, a powerful military-industrial corporation.

Among the senior advisors of Carlyle is former U.S. president George Bush, and until the September 11 attacks its executive board also included the Bin Laden family.

Upon arriving in Kosovo, BND agents uncovered a clear and frequent relationship and communication between the leading figures of the Albanian mafia, their intermediaries and [UN envoy] Martti Ahtisaari.

According to what the agents uncovered, several calls were made to the building of the special envoy for Kosovo, Martti Ahtisaari, from numbers known to belong to Albanian billionaire Bexhet Pacoli.

The content of the conversation from this number related to an unknown monetary transaction in the amount of two million euros from a Swiss bank in Basel, from account number 239700-93457-00097, protected as an offshore sub-account under the code XS52-KOLER, which is owned by Exhet Boria, the right hand of the head of the Albanian mafia, to account number 3459346699004533, account code VOLANND, at the Bank of Cyprus.

(See also: Evidence That UN Special Envoy for Kosovo Marti Ahtisaari Received Albanian Mafia Bribes for Kosovo Independence)

Well now, how could anyone compete with a deck stacked like that? Kosovo was going to get independence ten times over. Organs for everyone!

Meanwhile, Thaci “swore” to avenge himself at the international court and seems to already have a sense that “justice will [not] be neutral towards [Marty].” He told Reuters that “Under no circumstances will Dick Marty escape justice for this slander,” adding that Marty should “prepare good lawyers to defend him” — by which he probably meant bodyguards.

Also calling Marty the real criminal here was Thaci’s co-accused, former head of the KLA’s secret service, Kadri Veseli: “But since [Marty] is trying to manipulate the facts by imposing his version of the truth, he has committed a crime.”

Responding to Thaci’s tantrums about suing him, Dick Marty (who points out that Thaci knows Council of Europe rapporteurs have immunity), said in an interview with Serbian daily *Vecernje Novosti* that in addition “Thaci should sue the German police, the Italian secret services, the FBI, because his name appears in all of their reports” — and furthermore:

He lashed out at what he called a climate of fear and political opportunity in Kosovo that allowed the alleged crimes to go uncovered and called for an end to what he described as a double standard — applying one set of justice for winners and another for losers.

“Most of the facts mentioned were known...and there is a silencing of facts,” Marty told the press conference. “Those things were known to intelligence services of several countries. They were known to police services, to many people who told us in private, ‘Oh yes, we know this,’ but chose to remain silent for reasons of political opportunity.”

Marty said such investigations were not possible earlier because of the tightly-knit clan structures of Albanians, and because potential witnesses were scared to testify. He said his team had to convince witnesses that their security and confidentiality would be preserved in order to get them to talk.

Marty accused the Albanian authorities of shying away from the investigations, leaving the alleged crimes undiscovered....“The Albanian authorities told us, ‘we have no reason to investigate, because we were not party to the war, so our territory has nothing to do in this story,’” Marty said.

“It is now sufficiently proven that...the KLA exercised the power in all the region and in this period the criminal actions took place,” he said....“One of the taboo aspects Kosovars knew but never spoke about was that the KLA killed also Albanians, not only Serbs,” he said. [...]

Nonetheless, here is the Albanian president doing his part for the tribe:

Albania President Condemns Organ Harvesting Report (Dec. 17)

Albania’s President Bamir Topi condemned on Friday the Council of Europe report linking top Kosovo politicians to organised crime and organ-trafficking, as baseless and hearsay.

“The president condemns forcefully all accusations not based on concrete proof and allegations spun in a web of hearsay, which seem to have been cooked up in a démodé kitchen of ultra-nationalistic circles, which unfortunately continue to exist in the Balkans – a territory where time after time the mass graves of the genocide of Milosevic’s forces are discovered and war criminals wanted by the Hague tribunal find sanctuary,” Topi said in a statement. [Again, the requisite “Milosevic” deflection that’s reached-for any time Albanian criminality is noticed.]

...

In his statement Topi said that the dangerous smokescreen created by the report not only undermined Albania’s image but also risked peace and stability in the region. [CODED THREAT ALERT]

He suggested that the best way to put an end to the allegations [not “to get to the bottom of them,” mind you] would be through renewed cooperation between national and international investigative bodies, like EULEX, the Hague tribunal and national prosecutor’s offices, which, he said, despite thorough investigations have found no proof to bring anyone before the courts. [...]

Carla Del Ponte — who, as Nebojsa Malic points out, only after retiring from her post as the ICTY prosecutor felt “free to reveal that she had considerable evidence of KLA’s macabre atrocities” would beg to differ:

“They [the tribunal staff’s 2004 organ investigations] were stopped,” she said, rejecting claims that the tribunal had ever concluded that the allegations were unfounded. A thorough criminal investigation into the allegations has never been carried out, she said.

More:

...Del Ponte also questioned whether the EU mission in Kosovo, known as Eulex, has the resources and political support to handle the case.

“I fear that Eulex will not be able to do this investigation because you can imagine the obstacles they would face with personnel based in Kosovo,” she said. Del Ponte said investigators and witnesses face serious threats from the Albanian mafia and former Kosovo Liberation Army operatives.

...

Del Ponte praised Marty and his final report. “Dick Marty is a courageous man and he’s not under political pressure or looking to score political points.” [...]

Former Yugoslavia war crimes prosecutor demands Thaci inquiry

In an interview with the German Press Agency dpa, del Ponte - now Switzerland’s ambassador to Argentina - **cautioned however that such an investigation should not be handled by either Albanian or Kosovar authorities. ‘They have already said that everyone is innocent,’ she said about the regional authorities’ position on allegations about illegal human organ trafficking which had surfaced in the past.**

...

She said that at the end of her work as chief prosecutor she had been ‘shaken’ when she learned that evidence of the possible extraction of organs in Albania had gone missing at the tribunal.

‘There were blood samples, lobes, photos and similar (materials) from the yellow house in Rribe in northern Albania,’ she said. ‘It was clear to us at the time that in that house something to do with medicine had gone on there.’

The initial investigations of the Yugoslavia tribunal became stalled when Albania broke off its cooperation. ‘We had heard about mass graves with possible victims of the extraction of organs in Albania and I wanted it to be investigated, but the Albanian authorities blocked us,’ del Ponte said.

In addition, witnesses refused to testify. ‘They were afraid because several of our witnesses had been murdered,’ she noted.

Ex-prosecutor details Kosovo organ trafficking (Dec. 17)

...“We, that is the prosecution of the Yugoslavia tribunal in The Hague, were ourselves in the so-called yellow house in northern Albania where the crime took place,” Ms Del Ponte told the daily Tages-Anzeiger.

“We found traces of blood there, and we saw clothes that were stained with blood. That was evidence that something surgical could have taken place there.”

Ms Del Ponte...said she had seen photos and reports, and had witness accounts to support suspicions of organ trafficking. “These showed that something was done there - not to animals but to humans,” she added, also pointing to evidence of a mass grave for the victims in Albania.

She said her team had to stop the investigation before they could gather more evidence to warrant a formal prosecution, after being blocked by Albanian officials and the court’s limited mandate, which did not cover the Balkan state. [...]

Carla Del Ponte feels vindicated by Kosovo report

... **The ICTY said it had never seen evidence to substantiate her claims**, and Thaci and the Albanian prime minister Sali Berisha publicly rejected them. [Readers, note this lie from the ICTY; it gives a sense of how the tribunal operates.]

...

[Del Ponte] said the claims in her book were backed by “credible and verifiable physical evidence“ obtained by researchers from the ICTY and the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (Unmik) during a mission to Albania and in the presence of an Albanian government prosecutor.

“The reason I included these claims in my book was to provoke a serious follow-up, so that, if the findings warranted it, a criminal investigation would be launched,” she explained.

...

Del Ponte said she was glad the Council had taken over the investigation, describing it as the “only credible one ever carried out by any competent body, either local or international”.

“Neither the Kosovo authorities nor the government or judiciary of the Republic of Albania have carried out any investigation into the statements in my book, and have now just dismissed the serious accusations contained in the Council of Europe report,” she told swissinfo.ch.

...

“So I beg the European Union, the United States, other interested countries and the United Nations to give Eulex every political and material support to conduct a criminal investigation into these accusations and to bring to trial all those suspected of involvement in these crimes,” she said. [...]

Del Ponte has also stated that her team knew there were mass graves in Albania and that had they not been obstructed they might have found bodies with organs missing. A translated French report quoted her as saying, “The clues were in Albania and the Albanian authorities refused to investigate, claiming that they had already done [so] without success...The UN Mission in Kosovo could have resumed the investigation, but did not...We worked in very difficult conditions...We did not have the support of NATO because it was allied to the KLA, UNMIK did not give us the documentation we asked for. It was a general problem.” And another French report quoted Del Ponte’s spokeswoman Florence Hartmann as saying that the latter “had asked NATO to provide satellite images that would have helped locate them [the mass graves]. She never received anything. Today, Dick Marty seems to have received information from Western officials who held [it] for years without ever do[ing] anything with it.”

Albania’s Minister of Interior: “This is Dumb!”

Albania’s Minister of Interior Lulzim Basha has denied assisting an ICTY expert who travelled to the country in 2003 to investigate claims that the Kosovo Liberation Army harvested organs of Serb prisoners.

“This is a dumb declaration, I have never been in any yellow house,” Basha told reporters in the city of Shkodra....

The allegations that Basha assisted the ICTY as a translator were made by former forensics expert Pablo Baraybar.

In an interview for Swiss newspaper Le Temps, Baraybar said that [he] had visited northern Albania incognito to investigate the claims in 2003, and had been assisted by Basha, who worked as a legal expert for UNMIK in Kosovo at the time.

“My translator was Lulzim Basha, he became interior minister in Albania later and I have heard him say that the allegations were nonexistent, while he was with me,” said Baraybar. “I know that he knows, we were together and he has seen the dossier,” Baraybar added. [...]

Albanian prosecution: We did not obstruct investigation

The Supreme Court of Albania dismissed all accusations...The Albanian prosecution stated that all insinuations that Albanian institutions obstructed the investigation on this issue are groundless...the prosecution’s media advisor Plator Nesturi...claims that...the prosecution was not informed about it, nor were any requests for investigation submitted by international bodies, he added.

Which would certainly make it hard to explain this report:

...The Ministry of Justice failed to respond to requests from the EU rule-of-law mission in Kosovo, EULEX, for assistance in investigating alleged crimes that Kosovo Albanians committed in Albania.

Officially, Albania was not party to the Kosovo war. But it played a crucial role in the conflict. It sided with its ethnic brethren across the border and the KLA had access to training facilities throughout the country. Albania rejoiced in the fact that some of the world's leading powers supported the Kosovo Albanian cause.

The government in Tirana let the Kosovo Albanian guerrillas use northern Albania as a base from which to organize their armed resistance [sic] to the Serbs. Different factions in the Albanian government, army and intelligence services all gave them a hand.

The Marty report also says that Thaci operated "with the support and complicity not only of Albania's former governance structures, including the Socialist government in power at the time, but also from Albania's secret service and the formidable Albanian mafia." (And, of course, recall from earlier in this post that Albania's current prime minister Berisha directly trafficked weapons for the insurgency against Yugoslavia — as well as the fact that the mass graves of the missing dot the Albanian landscape.) This is all without even mentioning the fact that NATO's 1999 bombing raids were part of an assault coordinated not only with the KLA but also with the Albanian military. According to an Oct. 2005 Milosevic trial dispatch by Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), former Yugoslav Army colonel Vlatko Vukovic testified that on at least two occasions "Albanian troops had even crossed over into Yugoslav territory...He also asserted that the army of neighbouring Albania helped in the attack against Serbian and Yugoslav security forces by shelling over the border into Kosovo." In addition, it came out during the Milosevic trial that KLA radio communications showed "NATO instructors were training as many as 10,000 KLA terrorists at camps in Albania and Turkey."

Had Albania helped mount such a war against any country other than the designated eternal pariah Serbia, that country would be within its right to invade Albania. Especially after Marty's findings. Imagine also, American citizens being kidnapped by foreign nationals and the U.S. not prosecuting them because doing so would be seen as "politically motivated" — the reasons cited by the Serbian government for not prosecuting those responsible for the organ scheme.

In case the Albanians need any help obscuring the finally-surfaced ugliness of their path to statehood, so that they can slip back under the world's radar, several news outlets have been diverting attention to the fact that a disproportionate number of the Albanian organ ring's customers have been Israeli. And Slate.com addressed the "wider" story: "The Kidney Trade: Can economists make the system for organ transplants more humane and efficient?"

Ah, that's the problem — not enough flexibility in the kidney supply system. Ol' Snakey was just an entrepreneur/philanthropist trying to fill a gap caused by market failure and thereby alleviate human suffering. A regular humanitarian! Indeed, the whole thing boils down to a health/medical story, with the closing line: "[P]reventing any American from seeking an organ on the black market...would reduce incentives for unscrupulous and often dangerous cartels to supply them. And if the United States can solve its kidney problem, it might encourage other countries, all the way to Kosovo, to solve theirs." Yes, that's it: Kosovo is looking for a solution to making money.

Warning, unheeded. From a blogger in Albania during Bush's 2007 visit:

"Washington learned the hard way what the costs are of turning a blind eye to corruption and human rights abuses. America should be reminded of its past mistakes. We Albanians would be grateful if Washington would remember the principles and values that so many of us have come to admire about the United States of America."

The rest:

...[M]y predominantly Muslim countrymen draped our streets with star spangled banners and lined up by the thousands to shower [President Bush] with praise...As the Western press pointed out during the visit, we were taught in history class that President Woodrow Wilson stood up for Albania's independence about a century ago...

But here's what the press didn't report: our government, led by Prime Minister Sali Berisha, has abused this relationship with Washington, using it as cover to shore up his increasingly tyrannical rule... With seemingly unconditional US support, Berisha is slowly undermining respect for human rights and democracy.

Media crackdowns have become a routine, and most of the public is only exposed to governmental airwaves, which often accuse critics of being 'jews' and 'faggots'...Berisha talks about progress and reform, but these are euphemisms for cracking down on the independence of the judiciary, redistributing private property, solidifying his grip on secret services and stacking the public administration with hardcore supporters of his Democratic party irrespective of their competence.

...

There are no McDonalds or ClubMeds in Albania, and not because we oppose globalization. On the contrary, we welcome it — but businesses here are constantly harassed, extorted and shut down if not found favourable with the ruling regime...In the 1990s, he was our president...and he proved very adept at jailing his political opponents, shutting down newspapers and stacking the security services with party loyalists...Washington turned a blind eye to his autocratic tendencies.

This policy came back to bite the United States, however, because Berisha's government became so corrupt and abusive, that it eventually imploded. In 1996-97, a string of fraudulent pyramid investment schemes collapsed, bilking tens of thousands of people out of their lives' savings. They took to the streets and demanded his resignation, but not before they raided the country's armories. Many of these weapons they looted eventually wound up across the border in Kosovo, provoking yet another war in the former Yugoslavia....

So they celebrate those who support their self-determination even while suffering under the chains of this "independence."