

Intrigues in the Southern Balkans

IN BRITISH MAINSTREAM commentary, the 1999 NATO bombing campaign against Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia is seen as a 'humanitarian intervention'. Tony Blair still receives much praise for coming to the defence of the ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, whose plight was surely serious as they were subject to increasingly brutal abuses by the Yugoslav army towards the end of 1998. Yet the NATO bombing that began in March 1999 had the effect of deepening, not preventing, the humanitarian disaster that Milosevic's forces inflicted on Kosovo. The bulk of the atrocities committed by Yugoslav forces took place after the NATO bombing campaign began. In fact, some NATO intelligence agencies, including Britain's, were predicting that any bombing might well precipitate the full—scale 'ethnic cleansing' which they used as the public pretext for conducting their campaign.¹

However, there is another critical aspect to this war that undermines its supposed 'humanitarian' motives, involving British collusion with the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which fought alongside al—Qaida militants and essentially acted as NATO's ground forces in Kosovo. The big debate in government and mainstream media circles during the war was whether NATO should put troops on the ground or whether Yugoslav forces could be sufficiently pounded from the air to stop their atrocities in Kosovo. The British and American governments were reluctant to

commit ground forces, mainly for fear of incurring high casualties and getting sucked into a more protracted conflict; instead they turned to finding local allies and used these forces as a tool in their foreign policy. It was in this context that Islamist militants, working alongside the British—supported KLA, essentially took on the role of Western proxies, carrying out some of the dirty work that NATO could not. This story is, as we have seen, by no means unfamiliar in the postwar world.

Much later, in October 2006, then Chancellor Gordon Brown said in a speech on “meeting the terrorist challenge” to an audience at Chatham House: ‘The threat from al-Qaida did not begin on September 11th — indeed the attacks on the twin towers were being planned as the United States was taking action with Europe to protect Muslims in the former Yugoslavia.’² Brown was right; in fact, the British were providing military training to forces working with the very people planning the 9/11 attacks.

THE NATURE OF THE KLA

The Kosovo Liberation Army comprised ethnic Albanians committed to securing independence for Kosovo and promoting a ‘Greater Albania’ in the sub—region. Consisting of a mix of radicalised youths and students, professionals such as teachers and doctors, members of influential families and local rogues, it took to armed struggle and made its military debut in early 1996 by bombing camps housing Serbian refugees from the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and by attacking Yugoslav government officials and police stations.³ By mid—1998 the KLA controlled parts of Kosovo and had armed and organised around 30,000 fighters; it was thus a formidable force on the ground when, amidst a growing civil war, the Yugoslav army launched a brutal full—scale offensive in Kosovo in March 1999.

From its inception, the KLA also targeted Serbian and Albanian civilians, especially those considered collaborators with the authorities. The US and Britain clearly recognised it as a terrorist

organisation. In February 1998, the Clinton administration's special envoy to Kosovo, Robert Gelbard, described the KLA as 'without any question a terrorist group'.⁴ British ministers were equally unequivocal. Foreign Secretary Robin Cook told parliament in March 1998: "We strongly condemn the use of violence for political objectives, including the terrorism of the self—styled Kosovo Liberation Army."⁵ That same month EU foreign ministers signed up to a Common Position condemning the 'violence and terrorism employed by the Kosovo Liberation Army'.⁶ Indeed, in November 1998, and again in January 1999, Cook said that 'most of the killings' in Kosovo recently had been carried out by the KLA, whose activities against ordinary Kosovars were only serving to 'prolong their suffering'.⁷ Parliamentary statements by British ministers make clear that they continued to regard the KLA as a terrorist organisation right up to the beginning of the bombing campaign in March.⁸ The KLA was also widely known to be involved in heroin trafficking into Britain while MI6 was investigating its links to organised crime.⁹

Moreover, the KLA had also developed connections to al—Qaida. Bin Laden reportedly visited Albania and established an operation there in 1994.¹⁰ In the years preceding the NATO bombing campaign, more al—Qaida militants moved into Kosovo to support the KLA, financed by sources in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. By late 1998, the head of Albanian intelligence was saying that Bin Laden had sent units to fight in Kosovo while the media noted CIA and Albanian intelligence reports citing 'mujahideen units from at least half a dozen Middle East countries streaming across the border into Kosovo from safe bases in Albania'.¹¹ US intelligence reports were also noting that al—Qaida was sending funds and militants to join the KLA, while numerous KLA fighters had trained in al-Qaida camps in Afghanistan and Albania. One of the 'links' between Bin Laden and the KLA identified by US intelligence was 'a common staging area in Tropoje, Albania, a centre for Islamic terrorists. The KLA was helping hundreds of foreign fighters to

cross from Albania into Kosovo, including ‘veterans of the militant group Islamic Jihad from Bosnia, Chechnya and Afghanistan’, carrying forged passports.¹² One KLA unit was led by the brother of Ayman al—Zawahiri, Bin Laden’s right—hand man, according to a senior Interpol official later giving evidence to the US Congress.¹³ One Western military official was quoted as saying that the Islamist militants “were mercenaries who were not running the show in Kosovo, but were used by the KLA to do their dirty work.”¹⁴

Asked in parliament in November 1998 about a media article stating that mujahideen lighters had been seen with KLA forces in Kosovo, Robin Cook stated: ‘I read that report with concern.’¹⁵ His deputy, Foreign Office Minister Baroness Symons claimed, however, that the government had “no evidence’ that Bin Laden was funding the KLA.¹⁶ In March 1999, another Foreign Office minister, Tony Lloyd, told the House of Commons that the government was aware of media reports of contacts between Islamic terrorist groups and the KLA but ‘we have no evidence of systematic involvement’; the use of the word ‘systematic’ was likely instructive, implying that the government did indeed have some knowledge.¹⁷

There is some evidence that the Islamist penetration of Kosovo and Albania had been long planned. US terrorism expert Yossef Bodansky noted in a 1996 analysis, a year after the Bosnian war had ended, that the Bosnian government in Sarajevo and its Islamist sponsors had, since the early 1990s, been ‘actively preparing for the next round of assault on the Serbs: this time through Kosovo’, and that the plan was to escalate an armed struggle against Belgrade from bases in Albania. In June 1993, the Saudi Arabian government had donated \$1 million to fund the building of a Bosnian base for guerillas to be sent into Kosovo. According to Bodansky:

These Bosnian operatives would be able to carry out a series of terrorist operations which could be attributed to a Kosovo Albanian organisation, thus instigating a fierce reaction by the Serb security forces, and, consequently, a cycle of

violence. The ensuing widespread violence in Kosovo, Sarajevo believed, would then be used to induce Western military intervention against Yugoslavia itself.¹⁸

At an international meeting in Khartoum in April 1995, Bodansky notes that Islamist groups and sponsoring governments, led by Sudan and Iran, agreed to set up two new centres in Tehran and Karachi, the latter intended to escalate a terrorist campaign in Kosovo. In the autumn of 1995, just as the war in Bosnia was coming to a close amidst continued NATO bombing, the Bosnian government began to deploy experienced mujahideen to Albania. By early the following year, violence had erupted in Kosovo, perpetrated by the KLA, as we have seen, which was seized on by the Clinton administration “as an excuse for a marked increase in US intervention in Kosovo on behalf of “oppressed Albanians””, Bodansky comments, three years before the actual NATO bombing campaign.¹⁹

THE COVERT WAR

At some point in 1996 British intelligence, along with the US and Swiss services, made its first known contact with a senior KLA official in Albania, likely to have been Shaban Shala, a commander who would not only fight in Kosovo in 1999 but also inside Serbia in 2000.²⁰ Formal contacts between the KLA and the US took place in July 1998 when Chris Hill, the US special envoy for Kosovo, met KLA officials; the following day a British diplomat also met KLA officials in their headquarters in the central Kosovan village of Klecka.²¹ The British government later claimed that ‘an initial meeting’ between an official in the British embassy in Belgrade and KLA leaders was held on 30 July 1998.²² If so, this came two days after Baroness Symons recognised in an answer to a parliamentary question that the KLA was a ‘terrorist’ organisation and that ‘it was clear’ that it had ‘procured significant quantities of arms in Albania’.²³ By October, Robin Cook was making clear that Britain

was opposed to the KLA's political objective of forging a greater Albania: "There is no place on the international map for a greater Albania — any more than there is for a greater Serbia or a greater Croatia."²⁴

Yet it was around this time that Britain started to train the forces it recognised as terrorists, whose political agenda it was opposed to and which had documented links to al—Qaida: a level of expediency that would have impressed British officials collaborating with the Muslim Brotherhood or Ayatollah Kashani in the 1950s, for example.

At some point in late 1998, the US Defence Intelligence Agency approached MI6 with the task of arming and training the KLA, the Scotsman newspaper later reported. A senior British military source told the newspaper that: "MI6 then subcontracted the operation to two British security companies, who in turn approached a number of former members of the (22 SAS) regiment. Lists were then drawn up of weapons and equipment needed by the KLA.' 'While these covert operations were continuing] the paper noted, 'serving members of 22 SAS regiment, mostly from the unit's D squadron, were first deployed in Kosovo before the beginning of the bombing campaign in March."²⁵

A few weeks into the bombing campaign, the *Sunday Telegraph* reported that KLA fighters were receiving SAS training at two camps near the Albanian capital Tirana, and at another near the Kosovan border, most likely near the town of Bajram Curri.²⁶ This was the centre of the KLA's military operations, where a series of training camps were dotted in the hills and from where arms were collected and distributed.²⁷ Crucially, it was also where jihadist fighters had their 'centre' and common staging area with the KLA, as noted by the previous US intelligence reports. The British training involved instructing KLA officers in guerrilla tactics and weapons handling, demolition and ambush techniques, as well as conducting intelligence—gathering operations on Serbian positions.²⁸ The whole covert operation was funded by the CIA

while the German secret service, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND), provided weapons and training.²⁹ The BND had been providing covert support and training to the KLA since the mid-1990s.³⁰

British ministers consistently denied any knowledge of the KLA's sources of arms or training when asked in parliament. On 13 April, three weeks after the bombing campaign began, and just days before the *Telegraph* reported the British training, Tony Blair told parliament that 'our position on training and arming the KLA remains as it has been — we are not in favour of doing so ... We have no plans to change that.'³¹ Sometimes ministers used revealing language. Baroness Symons stated on two occasions, in March and May 1999, that there was 'no firm evidence' and 'no reliable information' on the KLA's sources of weapons and training — the use of the words 'firm' and 'reliable' being usual ways in which officials feign ignorance of issues they are perfectly aware of.³² One reason for secrecy was that such training was in violation of UN Security Council Resolution 1160; which forbade arming or training forces 'in all Yugoslavia.

James Bissett, a former Canadian ambassador to Yugoslavia and Albania, later noted that the US training of the KLA in 1998 involved 'sending them back into Kosovo to assassinate Serbian mayors, ambush Serbian policemen and intimidate hesitant Kosovo Albanians.'³³ 'The hope', he wrote, 'was that with Kosovo in flames NATO could intervene and in so doing, not only overthrow Milosevic the Serbian strongman, but, more importantly, provide the aging and increasingly irrelevant military organisation [NATO] with a reason for its continued existence.'³⁴ KLA leaders similarly explained that 'any armed action we undertook would bring retaliation against civilians [by Serbian forces]' and that 'the more civilians were killed, the chances of intervention became bigger.'³⁵ This was precisely the strategy that Yossef Bodansky had outlined three years before NATO's bombing campaign. It seems that the KLA's escalation of ethnic tensions was an integral part of London and Washington's strategy — a familiar theme of postwar covert action in

relation to collusion with Islamist groups. The KLA certainly proved useful to Anglo—American planners. Tony Blair stated a month into the bombing campaign that ‘the KLA is having greater success on the ground in Kosovo and indeed has retaken certain parts of it’.³⁶ Described in media reports as NATO’s ‘eyes and ears’ on the ground in Kosovo, the KLA was using satellite telephones to provide NATO with details of Serbian targets.³⁷ Some of this communications equipment had been secretly handed over to the KLA a week before the air strikes began by some US officers acting as ‘ceasefire monitors’ with the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); they were in reality CIA agents. They also gave the KLA US military training manuals and field advice on fighting the Yugoslav army and police. It was reported that several KLA leaders had the mobile phone number of General Wesley Clark, the NATO commander³⁸ Robin Cook, meanwhile, held a joint press conference with KLA representatives at the end of March and was in direct telephone contact with its commander in Kosovo, Hashim Thaqi; the latter would in February 2008 go on to become the first prime minister of post—independence Kosovo.³⁹

By early April 1999, more than 500 Albanians living in Britain had volunteered to go to fight in Kosovo, according to KLA representatives in London, though they were likely exaggerating the numbers. Just as during the Bosnian War a few years earlier, Britain and the US allowed, and may have facilitated, British and other Muslims to travel to Kosovo volunteering for the jihad. B. Raman notes that Pakistani militants associated with the Harkat ul-Mujahideen (HUM) terrorist group who had fought in Bosnia were diverted to Kosovo by the CIA.⁴⁰ Following the 2005 London bombings, John Loftus, a former US Justice Department prosecutor and US intelligence officer, claimed that MI6 worked with the militant Islamist organisation al—Muhajiroun (The Emigrants) to send jihadists to Kosovo.⁴¹ Al-Muhajiroun was founded in Saudi Arabia in 1983 by Omar Bakri Mohammed, who in 1986 fled to

Britain after Saudi Arabia banned the organisation, and set up its British branch in early 1986. By the mid—1990s Bakri was being described in the British media as the ‘head of the political wing of the International Islamic Front’, founded by Bin Laden in 1998, and openly supported Bin Laden’s calls for jihad; he told the media he was raising funds for the KLA and supporting their struggle in Kosovo.⁴² Loftus told a US television station that al—Muhajiroun leaders (all worked for British intelligence in Kosovo) and that ‘British intelligence actually hired some al-Qaida guys to help defend Muslim rights in Albania and in Kosovo.’ He claimed the CIA was funding the operation while British intelligence ‘was doing the hiring and recruiting’.⁴³ These claims were, Loftus said, based on an interview given by Bakri himself to al—Sharq al-Awsat, a London—based Arabic-language newspaper on 16 October 2001.⁴⁴ However, despite extensive research, I have not been able to locate this interview on this or any other date; Bakri also denies (not surprisingly) ever working alongside British intelligence.⁴⁵

Loftus also claimed that one of the Britons recruited for Kosovo by al—Muhajiroun was Haroon Rashid Aswat, a British citizen of Indian origin who later became Abu Hamza’s assistant at the Finsbury Park Mosque, and who would later crop up in the investigations surrounding the 2005 London bombings. According to Loftus, Aswat was a ‘double agent’, working both for the British in Kosovo and after, and for al—Qaida.⁴⁶ Soon after Loftus made the claim, a Times report on Aswat’s possible connections to the London bombings of July 2005 noted that questions were being asked about whether he was a ‘useful source of information’ to British intelligence and noted that ‘senior Whitehall officials deny “any knowledge” that he might be an agent of MI5 or MI6’ — a cautious formulation that can only add to suspicions.⁴⁷

One Briton who can be more definitively linked to the Kosovo camps was Omar Khan Sharif who in 2003 would become notorious for his aborted attempt to blow himself up inside a Tel Aviv bar: he pulled out at the last minute, but his accomplice detonated a bomb,

killing himself and three others. According to a BBC documentary, Sharif spent three weeks at a camp in Albania during the Kosovo jihad, but the film (predictably) failed to mention that covert British training was also taking place in Albania at the time. Sharif had attended al—Muhajir0un meetings in Britain and was an admirer of Abu Hamza, who became his mentor; he also met Mohamed Siddique Khan, the 7/7 bomber with whom he tried to recruit other jihadists in 2001.⁴⁸

US covert support of the KLA guerrillas did not stop when NATO's Kosovo campaign was brought to an end in June 1999, or even with the fall of Milosevic in October 2000. After the Kosovo conflict, KLA forces launched new wars in southern Serbia and _ Macedonia to promote their aim of a greater Albania, both of which were initially supported by the US — but, not apparently, by Britain. The BBC reported in January 2001 that 'Western special forces were still training' the KLA as a result of decisions taken before the fall of Milosevic. Now the KLA was reported to have several hundred fighters in the 5—kilometre—deep military exclusion zone on the border between Kosovo and the rest of Serbia, and were fighting to promote the secession of certain municipalities from Serbia. Moreover, 'certain NATO—led' forces 'were not preventing the guerrillas taking mortars and other weapons into the exclusion zone', and guerrilla units had been able to hold military exercises there, despite the fact that NATO was patrolling the area.⁴⁹ Other media reports noted that European officials were 'furious that the Americans have allowed guerilla armies in its sector to train, smuggle arms and launch attacks across two international borders', and that the CIA's 'bastard army' had been allowed to 'run riot' in the region.⁵⁰

Of interest from the perspective of British foreign policy is that when, in March 2001, the guerillas began another war, this time across the other nearby border with Macedonia, it was led by several commanders previously trained by British forces for the Kosovo campaign. Now fighting under the banner of the National

Liberation Army (NLA), formed in early 2001, two of the Kosovo-based commanders of this push into Macedonia had been instructed by the SAS and the Parachute Regiment at the camps in northern Albania in 1998 and 1999. One was organising the flow of arms and men into Macedonia, while the other was helping to coordinate the assault on the town of Tetevo in the north of the country.⁵¹ Another NLA commander, Gezim Ostremi, had been previously trained by the SAS to head the UN—sponsored Kosovo Protection Corps, which was meant to replace the KLA.⁵²

NLA forces were now being called ‘terrorists’ by Foreign Secretary Robin Cook and ‘murderous thugs’ by NATO Secretary-General Lord Robertson, just as they had been before the March 1999 bombing campaign, when, as the KLA, the British were cooperating with them.⁵³ The NLA’s ambushes and assassinations in Macedonia were little different from those perpetrated as the KLA. It also, initially at least, continued to be covertly supported by the US, which in one operation evacuated 400 NLA fighters when they became surrounded by Macedonian forces, and whose arms supplies helped the guerillas take control of nearly a third of Macedonia’s territory by August 2001; it was only after this that Washington, under pressure from its NATO allies, started to rein in its proxy force and throw its weight behind peace talks.⁵⁴ The following month, al-Qaida struck New York and Washington.

- 1 See my *Web of Deceit*, chapter 2
- 2 Gordon Brown, speech, 10 October 2006 www.hm-treasury.gov.uk
- 3 US Senate, Republican policy committee. 'The Kosovo Liberation Army Does Clinton Policy Support Group with Terror, Drug Ties?', 31 March 1999, www.senate.gov; Zoran Kusovac, 'The KLA: Braced to Defend and Control', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, April 1999
- 4 Agence France Presse, 23 February 1998, cited in US Senate, Republican policy committee
- 5 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 10 March 1998, Col.317
- 6 Letter from Derek Fatchett, Foreign Minister, to Chair of House of Lords European Union committee, 20 April 1998, in House of Lords, European Union Committee, Session 1998/99, European Communities — Report, 2 February 1999
- 7 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 27 November 1998, Col.441; 18 January 1999, Col.567
- 8 See, for example, Home Secretary Jack Straw's parliamentary answer equating the KLA with 'terrorist activity' at: House of Commons, *Hansard*, 9 March 1999, Col.182
- 9 Neil Mackay, 'Police alert as KLA heroin floods Britain', *Sunday Herald*, 27 June 1999
- 10 Chris Stephen, 'Bin Laden opens European terror base in Albania', *Sunday Times*, 29 November 1998
- 11 Chris Stephen, 'US tackles Islamic militancy in Kosovo', *Scotsman*, 30 November 1998; AP, 'Bin Laden operated terrorist network based in Albania', 29 November 1998
- 12 'US alarmed as mujahidin join Kosovo rebels', *Times*, 26 November 1998; Jerry Seper, 'KLA rebels train in terrorist camps', *Washington Times*, 4 May 1999; Intelligence sources were also reported stating that the Iranians had sent a 120-man commando unit to Kosovo, including Albanians, Bosnians and Saudis and which was commanded by an Egyptian, Abu Ismail, who served in an Iranian mujahideen unit during the Bosnian War, Iran was by now sending considerable quantities of arms to the KLA, seeing the Kosovo operation — like the Bosnian before it — as a beachhead for the expansion of Iranian influence in Europe. Steve Rodan, 'Kosovo seen as new Islamic bastion', *Jerusalem Post*, 14 September 1998; Milan Petkovic, 'Albanian Terrorists', 1998, www.fas.org
- 13 Testimony of Ralf Mutschke of Interpol's Criminal Intelligence Division to the House Judicial Committee, US Congress, 13 December 2000, cited in Michel Chossudovsky, 'Regime Rotation in America', 22 October 2003, www.globalresearch.ca
- 14 Cited in Isabel Vincent, 'US supported al-Qaeda cells during Balkan wars', *National Post (Canada)*, 15 March 2002, www.globalresearch.ca
- 15 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 27 November 1998, Col.441
- 16 House of Lords, *Hansard*, 18 November 1998, Col.WA168
- 17 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 9 March 1999, Col.182
- 18 Yossef Bodansky, 'Some Call it Peace' Part III, section 5
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Tim Judah, *Kosovo: War and Revenge* (Yale University Press, 2000), p. 120, which mentions a meeting but does not name the official. Shaban himself later claimed to have had this meeting; Tom Walker and Aidan Laverty, 'CIA aided guerrilla army', *Sunday Times*, 12 March 2000
- 21 Ibid., p. 170
- 22 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 10 May 1999, Col.29
- 23 House of Lords, *Hansard*, 28 July 1998, Col.WA181

- 24 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 19 October 1998, Col.958
- 25 *Scotsman*, 29 August 1999, cited in Chossudovsky, 'Regime Rotation
- 26 Philip Sherwell, 'SAS teams move in to help KLA "rise from the ashes"', *Sunday Telegraph*, 18 April 1999
- 27 Judah, Kosovo, p. 172
- 28 Sherwell, 'SAS teams move in to help KLA'; Ian Bruce, 'SAS faces own trainees in Balkans', *The Herald*, 27 March 2001
- 29 *The Scotsman*, 29 August 1999, cited in Michel Chossudovsky, 'NATO invades Macedonia', 29 August 2001, www.globalresearch.ca
- 30 Chossudovsky, 'Regime Rotation in America'
- 31 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 13 April 1999, Col.25
- 32 House of Lords, *Hansard*, 11 March 1999, Col.WA47-8; 27 May 1999, Col.WA114
- 33 James Bissett, 'War on terrorism skipped the KLA', *National Post* (Canada) 13 November 2001, www.globalresearch.ca
- 34 James Bissett, 'We created a monster', *Toronto Star*, 31 July 2001
- 35 Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, *The London Bombings: An Independent Enquiry*, (Duckworth: London, 2006), p. 191
- 36 House of Commons, *Hansard*, 26 April 1999, Col.28
- 37 Sherwell, 'SAS teams move in to help KLA "rise from the ashes"'; Richard Lloyd Parry, 'War in the Balkans: KLA engaged in fierce fighting with Serb army', *Independent*, 12 April 1999
- 38 Tom Walker and Aidan Laverty, 'CIA aided Kosovo guerrilla army', *Sunday Times*, 12 March 2000
- 39 Lloyd Parry, 'War in the Balkans'; George Jones, 'Cook shows support for KLA', *Telegraph*, 31 March 1999
- 40 B. Raman, 'Punishment Terrorism', 31 March 2002, www.saag.org
- 41 'Video of Fox news report, linking terror suspect to British intelligence MI6', 1 August 2005, www.globalresearch.ca
- 42 David Bamber and Chris Hastings, 'KLA raises money in Britain for arms', *Sunday Telegraph*, 23 April 2000; 'Bush opposes 9/11 query panel', CBS News (US), 23 May 2002
- 43 'Video of Fox news report, linking terror suspect to British intelligence MI6', 1 August 2005, www.globalresearch.ca
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 Email correspondence with the author, August 2007
- 46 'Video of Fox news report, linking terror suspect to British intelligence MI6', 1 August 2005, www.globalresearch.ca
- 47 The report also noted: 'Questions are also being asked about whether the British did not wish to have Aswat arrested as he was seen as a useful source of information. To some, British intelligence is too willing to let terrorist suspects run in the hope of gathering useful leads and other information} Richard Woods et al, 'Tangled web that leaves worrying loose ends', *Times*, 31 July 2005
- 48 'Britain's first suicide bombers', BBC 2, 11 July 2006
- 49 'Kostunica warns of fresh fighting', BBC news, 29 January 2001, www.bbc.co.uk
- 50 Peter Beaumont et al, "'CIA's bastard army ran riot in Balkans" backed extremists', *Observer* 11 March 2001; Rory Carroll, 'West struggles to contain monster of its own making', *Guardian*, 12 March 2001

- 51 'Albanian rebels, trained by the SAS are gaining ground in Macedonia, aiming for the key city of Tetevo', *Sunday Times*, 18 March 2001
- 52 UPI, 1 July 2001, cited in Chossudovsky, 'NATO Invades Macedonia'
- 53 Richard Norton—Taylor, 'Nato pays the price for letting extremists off the hook', *Guardian*, 23 March 2001; Bissett, 'War on Terrorism Skipped the KLA'
- 54 In May, US diplomat Robert Fenwick secretly met leaders of the KLA and Albanian political parties in Kosovo. A month later, a force of 400 KLA/NLA fighters became surrounded in the town of Aracinovo near the Macedonian capital, Skopje, but as Macedonian forces moved in, they were halted on NATO orders. Instead, US army buses arrived to remove the heavily armed terrorists to a safer area of the country. They were accompanied by 17 US military advisers from the 'private' military company, MPRI, which had been training the KLA/NLA. 'It was clear the United States was backing the Albanian terrorist cause', Bissett comments. One of the KLA militants evacuated by the US was Samedin Xhezairi, known as Commander Hoxha, who was the leader of the mujahideen 112th brigade operating in the Tetevo area, and had previously fought in Chechnya and trained in Afghanistan. According to a German TV documentary, broadcast on the mainstream channel, ZDF, Hoxha was an agent working for the German intelligence service, the BND, and an intermediary between Albanian extremists and al-Qaida. By August 2001, the KLA/NLA had established control over nearly a third of Macedonia's territory, largely thanks to arms supplied from the US. Canadian reporter Scott Taylor wrote from Tetevo of a variety of US military supplies including rifles, grenade-launchers, heavy mortars and ammunition which the NLA was using to bombard Macedonian towns. By now, however, it appears that the US had begun trying to rein in its proxy force, presumably under considerable pressure from its NATO allies, and threw its weight behind peace talks. These led to a ceasefire and peace agreement in August, followed by the deployment of a NATO force of 3,000 peacekeepers. The NATO force was meant to "disarm" the same rebels supported by the US and, before that, also Britain. Bissett, 'War on Terrorism Skipped the KLA'; Mira Beham, "When Intelligence Officers Fan Flames", 25 November 2004, www.globalresearch.ca; Scott Taylor, 'Macedonia's Civil War: "Made in the USA"', 20 August 2001, www.antiwar.com; Chossudovsky, 'NATO Invades Macedonia'