

Sidste Nyt fra Albanien, Kosóva og Makedonien

The Latest News from Albania, Kosóva and Macedonia

281 - 18.11.2005 Version 1.1 [PDF for printing](#)

Udgiver: **[Bjørn Andersen](#)**

Publisher: **[Bjoern Andersen](#)**



Prsident Crvenkovski fra Makedonien på besøg hos Præsident Moisiu fra Albanien, november 2005. Officielt foto

»Sidste Nyt om Albanien, Kosóva og Makedonien« hører til et *web-site* om de Balkan-lande hvor der lever mange Albanere: <http://bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm>; her kan du også finde »gamle nyheder«, anmeldelser, links og en [Balkan Brevkasse](#). »Sidste Nyt« sættes på nettet hver torsdag aften / fredag morgen hvor der sendes besked til dem der ønsker det. Bestilling / afbestilling sker ved at sende en [e-mail](#) med teksten »Nyheder udbedes« / »Nyheder afmeldes«. Nyheder, materiale, kommentarer og spørgsmål modtages *meget* gerne, både om småting og større ting. Send en [e-mail](#). Tilsvarende hvis du opdager en fejl. Fejl vil blive rettet hurtigst muligt. »Sidste Nyt« og <http://bjoerna.dk/albanerne.htm> drives *non-profit* og uden finansiering »udefra«. Hvis du vil støtte udgivelsen kan du lettest gøre det ved at købe én eller flere af mine bøger. Send gerne en [mail](#) hvis der er - små eller store - tekniske problemer. [Bemærkninger om EDB-sikkerhed](#).



The framework of *The Latest News from Albania, Kosóva and Macedonia* is in Danish - nevertheless, the news are mostly in English. You may send information, comments and questions to: »[The Latest News](#)« [please *click*].

Indholdsfortegnelse Contents

Ugeoversigt Summary

Internationale organisationer International organizations

FN UN

Verdensbanken, IMF m.fl. World Bank, IMF etc.

OSCE, Europarådet OSCE, Council of Europe (CoE)

EU European Union (EU)

NATO NATO

ICTY - Tribunalet i Haag ICTY

Balkan, generelt The Balkans

Kosóva Kosóva [Kosovo]

Øst Kosóva / Presevo-dalen / Syd-Serbien Eastern Kosóva

Albanien Albania

Serbien og Montenegro. Serbien (alene) Serbia-Montenegro. Serbia

Montenegro (alene) Montenegro

Makedonien Macedonia [FYRoM]

Grækenland Greece

Tyrkiet Turkey

Italien Italia

USA United States (US)

England England

Tyskland Germany

Frankrig France

Danmark (Norge, Sverige) Denmark (Norway, Sweden)

Rusland Russia

Kina China

»Albansk Almanak 2003« bd. 1-3

Almanak'en for 2003 er udkommet. Her finder du årets nyhedsbreve. [Årets litteraturkommentarer vil udkomme i 2006 i »Albanske Studier« ## 3-4].

Bogen findes i trykt form og på CD (som pdf-fil). Papirudgave på 800 sider i 3 bind. Bogen sælges som papirudgave m/ CD og som CD alene. Se pris på: [Bestillingsliste](#).

Udgaven for 2004 ventes at udkomme i slutningen af 2005.

»Albanske Studier« bd. 1-2

Kommentarer til Bjøl, Huntington, Machiavelli, Sørlander, DUPI (Humanitær Intervention), Clausewitz, Mao Zedong, Lars R. Møller, Malcolm og flere andre (kommentarerne er suppleret ift udgaver i Almanak'erne m.v.). Englændere på rejse i Albanien: Edward Lear, Edith Durham og Robert Carver. Bøger om slægtsfejder og blodhævn. Diskussion af Anne Knudsen's disputats om blodhævn på Korsika og af Ismail Kadare's roman »Ufuldendt april«. Baggrundsmateriale om den Sønderjyske general Christian von Holstein, der deltog i Habsburgernes felttog ind i Kosóva i 1689-90. Sidst i bogen et forsøg på en sammenfatning i form af nogle 'grundlæggende synspunkter'. Desuden en kommentar til Hans Hækkerup's »På skansen«. På CD'en supplerende materiale om traditionelle Albanske klædedragter og om Holstein.

Du kan downloade indholdsfortegnelsen og kommentaren til Hækkerup fra: <http://bjoerna.dk/albansk-historie/studier-2002.htm>

Bogen findes i trykt form og på CD (som pdf-fil). Papirudgave 368 A4-sider i 2 bind. Bogen sælges som papirudgave m/ CD og som CD alene. Se pris på: [Bestillingsliste](#).

Til dig der kigger på et ældre nummer af »Sidste Nyt«.

Seneste udgave af denne »annonce« kan ses på:

[»Sidste Nyt« \(klik\)](#)

Seneste 4 udgaver af »Sidste Nyt fra Albanien, Kosóva og Makedonien«:

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[Sidste Nyt #279 - 11.11.2005](#) (klik tv.)

[Sidste Nyt #278 - 04.11.2005](#) (klik tv.)

[Sidste Nyt #277 - 03.11.2005](#) (klik tv.)

Alle årets udgaver: <http://bjoerna.dk/nyt-oversigt.htm>

UGEOVERSIGT (resumé)

Kosóva Der er noget rumlen forskellige steder i anledning af de forestående status-forhandlinger. I Serbien finpudser man sin politik. Man insisterer på en dobbeltløsning: Vidtgående autonomi til Kosóva (med et formelt tilhørsforhold til Serbien-Montenegro) og en vidtgående autonomi til den Serbiske Minoritet. Præsident Boris Tadic har været hos Præsident Putin i Moskva for at få bekræftet at Russerne vil støtte den Serbiske politik.

SRSG Søren Jessen-Petersen advarer Kosóva Albanerne mod at vedtage en resolution om Kosóva's uafhængighed. Præsident Rugóva har (muligvis) *flirtet* med Tjekkerne mhp at fremme den Albanske selvstændighedspolitik.

Albanien: Præsident Moisiu har været i England og holdt forelæsning i Oxford om religiøs tolerance [<http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/281.htm#Oxford>]. I forelæsningen får man et rids af Albansk historie - specielt på det religiøse område. Moisiu sagde bl.a.:

A level of pagan faith exists in every Albanian.

The Islamism in Albania is an Islam with a European face. As a rule it is a shallow Islamism. If you dig a little in every Albanian you can discover his Christian core.

"The religion of the Albanians is Albanism" (et citat fra 1800-tallet som Moisiu er enig i).

Today we are the sole country in Europe and elsewhere which confines on the greatest part of the foreign borders with Albanian population.

The Albanians and the Serbs in Kosova together with the other ethnicities are jointly working for six years towards building a democratic, multi-ethnic and European society. There have been obstacles, difficulties and problems, some of whom were incited also by states that interested to have a lack of stability and co-existence in Kosova, but time is proving that the interest on the final status and European future of Kosova has to do with every citizen of Kosova, regardless of the religious belief and nationality. In Prishtina, lately, the politicians and citizens of all religions participated in the beginning of the construction of the Great Catholic Cathedral. They undertook this act in sign of appreciation for their ancient Christian history and also in effort to demonstrate their full willingness for a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Kosova.

The peaceful religious pluralism has served as a unifying element among various peoples, families and groups in society.

Når det kommer til Kosóva, tror jeg Præsident Moisiu nærmer sig skønmaleriet. Hans beskrivelse af forholdet mellem de etniske grupper forekommer at være noget for rosenrødt - ikke mindst fordi flertallet af Kosovo Serberne fortsat opholder sig uden for Kosóva/Kosovo. I øvrigt kan man hæfte sig ved at hans (helt korrekte) bemærkning om at mange etniske Albanere bor uden for Albanien; Moisiu er ikke blandt de få der plæderer for et Stor-Albanien, men måske mener han at Albanerne i Kosóva bør tilgodeses (ekstra)?

OSCE/ODIHR har udsendt den endelige rapport om Parlamentsvalget 2005 [<http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/281.htm#ODIHR-final>]. Hovedkonklusionerne er:

- Der er sket fremskridt, men der mangler en del i at Albanerne lever op til moderne Europæiske standarder. Den afgørende årsag er mangel på ansvarlighed blandt Partier og Politiske Ledere: *the major political parties are yet to demonstrate political will and responsibility.*

- De store partier udnyttede de tekniske muligheder de havde uden at handle ulovligt. [Kommentar: Man har i Albanien 100 kredsmandater og 40 proportionelle mandater. Hver Vælger har mulighed for at afgive to stemmer på to forskellige stemmesedler, én i kredsvalget og én i det proportionelle valg, og derfor virker systemet ikke som det danske med kreds- og tillægsmandater, men animerer til en særlig form for taktisk tænkning, både blandt Partierne og blandt Vælgerne].

- Dækningen i de elektroniske medier havde bredde og seriøsitet, dog var dækningen af de små partier ikke omfattende nok.

- Den Centrale Valgkommission levede op til standarderne. De Lokale Valgkommissioner var påvirkede af partimæssige interesser og kom for sent i gang med forberedelserne.

- Registreringen af Vælgere var bedre end tidligere, men der er tekniske mangler der bør løses snarest muligt, én af dem er at der generelt er problemer med vejnavne og adresser.

- Der var mange små og større problemer med stemmeafgivning og -optælling! Der blev gjort en del forsøg på fusk i denne fase.

- Der var mange klager - en hel del af dem var tydeligvis indgivet *frivolously* [dvs. på et noget tyndt grundlag] - og det tog halvanden måned at få dem alle behandlet.

- Minoriteterne, særligt Roma'erne, er fortsat ikke tilstrækkelig tilgodeset. Der var forsøg på at købe stemmer fra dem.

- Der er fortsat ikke mange Kvinder blandt de Valgte.

Kommentar: Til ovenstående kan føjes at valgdeltagelsen - gennemsnitligt - var temmelig lav, i omegnen af 50% - større i visse områder, lavere i andre. Én af årsagerne til den lave valgdeltagelse er givetvis at mange Vælgere ikke opholdt sig i Albanien på valgdagen, men i Grækenland, Italien og andre steder - og at det ikke var muligt at afgive brevstemme. (Se nærmere i: # 265: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/265.htm#Valgdeltagelsen>)

UM Dr Condoleezza Rice har udsendt 'Religious Freedom Report'. Uddrag er optrykt forskellige steder i # 281.

INTERNATIONALE ORGANISATIONER m.v.

Opmærksomheden henledes på *Economic Reconstruction and Development in South East Europe*. Adressen er www.seerecon.org. Her kan man finde materiale om aktuelle møder og konferencer.

FN

VERDENSBANKEN, IMF M.FL.

Se under de enkelte lande / områder.

OSCE, Europarådet

Se under de enkelte lande / områder.

EU

NATO

NATO's Parlamentariske Forsamling holder plenarmøde i Kbh. Man drøfter bl.a. Kosovo/Kosóva. UM i Serbien-Montenegro skriver:

COPENHAGEN, November 14 (Beta) - The NATO Parliamentary Assembly, meeting in Copenhagen, has abandoned a planned resolution on Kosovo, which prejudiced the outcome of status negotiations by calling for conditional independence for the province.

Instead, the 51st Annual Meeting of the Western alliance's Parliamentary Assembly has adopted a resolution calling for the continued application of UN Security Council Resolution 1244.

The head of the Serbia-Montenegro delegation to the meeting, Aleksandar Pravdic, said that the new resolution insists that the talks on the eventual status of Kosovo must not be prejudiced. "All delegates at the NATO Assembly supported our demand that the resolution calling for conditional independence could not stand, so the new resolution is acceptance of UN Security Council Resolution 1244 and a call to governments for full support of the Euro-Atlantic integration of the region.

"It supports the implementation of standards, the established process of decentralization, protection of the rights of Serbs and other minorities and, of course, securing effective protection of the cultural and religious legacy," said Pravdic.

ICTY - TRIBUNALET I HAAG

Verserende sager vedr. Kosovo: Anklageskrifter og udskrifter af retsmøderne kan findes på:
<http://www.un.org/icty/cases-e/index-e.htm>

ICTY vs Slobodan **Milosevic**, (IT-02-54)

ICTY vs Fatmir **Limaj** et al. (IT-03-66)

ICTY vs Ramush **Haradinaj** (IT-04-84)

BALKAN LANDE, LANDE VED ØSTLIGE MIDDELHAV

BALKAN GENERELT



Udsnit af EU's Europakort 2004. [Udsnittet kan forstørres ved at klikke på det]. Kortet indgår i en præsentationsbroschure, der kan downloades som pdf fra: http://europa.eu.int/comm/publications/booklets/eu_glance/20/da.pdf.

KOSÓVA

Bynavne: Angives der to navne på samme lokalitet, er den Albanske nævnt først. Se oversigten på: <http://bjoerna.dk/kosova/byer.htm> ... Bynavne: Angives der to navne på samme lokalitet, er den Albanske nævnt først. Se oversigten på: <http://bjoerna.dk/kosova/byer.htm> ... [Rapporter fra FNs Generalsekretær](#) ... 040616 SG Kofi Annan udtaler at han agter at udpege Søren Jessen-Petersen som 5' SRSG. Søren Jessen-Petersen blev senere udpeget og tiltrådte i Kosóva 040816. ... 0308 Harri Holkeri tiltrådte som 4' SRSG. Fratrådt 0406 af helbredsmæssige grunde. ... 020214 Michael Steiner tiltrådte i Kosóva som 3' SRSG og fratrådte i begyndelsen af 0307. ... En biografi over 2' SRSG Hans Hækkerup kan læses på [Danske Politikere](#). En anmeldelse af hans bog »Kosovos mange ansigter« kan downloades fra: <http://neva.hjem.wanadoo.dk/Hækkerup2.pdf> (0,4 MB) ... [Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government](#). ... [Kosova's Regering](#). ... [Webside vedr. 2004-valgene](#) ... [UNMIK Politiets oversigt over 2001 \(artikler, billeder og statistik i pdf-format \(fil'en er forholdsvis stor: 2,6 MB\)\)](#) ... [Kriminaliteten i 2002 - Oversigt](#) kan downloades [[klik på titlen](#)]

Parlamentsvalget 2004 [Præsidenten - Ibrahim Rugóva - er valgt af Parlamentet, *the Assembly*], se: <http://kosovoelections.org/eng/>

Kosovo's/Kosóva's fremtid. Forhandlingerne:

SRSR mødes med den Kosóva Albanske Delegation. UNMIK skriver:

UNMIK/PR/1439 Thursday, 10 November 2005 SRSG hosts meeting of Team of Unity PRISTINA – SRSG Søren Jessen-Petersen today hosted a meeting of the Team of Unity at his residence. Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi, Assembly Speaker Nexhat Daci, PDK leader Hashim Thaçi, ORA leader Veton Surroi, and Team Co-ordinator Blerim Shala attended the meeting. COMKFOR Lieutenant-General Giuseppe Valotto was also present. Earlier in the day, the SRSG met the team leader, President Ibrahim Rugova, separately.

The SRSG briefed his guests on the developments since the last Security Council meeting on Kosovo held on 24th October, in particular his recent meeting with the Contact Group in Washington and his two meetings with Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, who will shortly be formally appointed as the UN Special Envoy for Status Talks.

In the light of the imminent start of status talks, the SRSG once again underscored the importance of the unity of the team and he strongly urged the members to get ready and be prepared. "Kosovo is now facing an opportunity it cannot afford to miss. The fate of Kosovo is in your hands and you should demonstrate with your actions that you are worthy of your aspirations and the trust of the people," the SRSG said.

The SRSG reminded the team that it is of the utmost importance to continue with further implementation of Standards during the status discussions, especially in those areas that relate to the minorities. The SRSG reiterated his appeal to the team to reach out to all communities and to civil society. In this regard, the SRSG informed the team that he would also brief the representatives of the Kosovo Serbs and other minorities next week.

The political leaders then gave their account of their preparations for the status talks process and exchanged views on the current situation. They agreed that they would approach this process as a team.

Præsident Rugóva ønsker at Vaclav Havel skal være 'Mediator' i Kosovo/Kosóva-forhandlingerne. SET skriver: »Kosovo President Ibrahim Rugova told visiting Czech Prime Minister Jiri Paroubek that he would like former Czech President Vaclav Havel to mediate the upcoming talks on the future status of the province. Paroubek is making a four-day trip to the Western Balkans to discuss a possible Czech role in the Kosovo process, among other issues.« ... Rugóva er nok ikke så sikker på at forhandlingerne vil få det ønskede resultat og ville benytte lejligheden til at øge sin og Albanernes indflydelse på processen.

Advarsel til Kosóva Albanerne. RFE og Makfax skriver:

The international Contact Group on the Balkans -- which comprises the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, and Russia -- warned the Kosova parliament not to pass a resolution unilaterally declaring independence, Prishtina dailies reported on 15 November.

>BR> In Belgrade, the Serbian parliament passed a resolution demanding that the upcoming talks on Kosova's final status recognize that Kosova is legally part of Serbia and do nothing to change frontiers in the region, RFE/RL's South Slavic and Albanian Languages Service reported. Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica obtained a broad consensus for the vote and spoke first of all with leaders of the opposition Serbian Radical Party and Socialist Party of Serbia about the 10-point measure.

In Prishtina, Kosova's Prime Minister Bajram Kosumi said that he is happy that Kosovars no longer need to pay attention to any resolutions coming from the Serbian government or parliament.

-

Head of UNMIK Søren Jessen-Petersen urged Kosovo's Assembly to give up adopting a resolution on independence of Kosovo, adding that such a document is unacceptable for the international community.

"If the Assembly passes the announced resolution, it would be an unilateral decision. The Contact Group has already hinted that for the time being, such resolution would send a bad signal to the international community", said Petersen today in Urosevac.

According to him, the resolution confirming the will of the Kosovo's Albanians for independence "could serve only as a framework for the Kosovo's negotiating delegation, but cannot assume a qualification of institutional decision".

"If the resolution is adopted as a text framework of the Kosovo's negotiating team, the Assembly will play out its role of a democratic, functional and responsible institution", said Petersen, adding that any other solution would be unilateral and unacceptable for the international community.

Petersen's warning comes just one day before the scheduled session of the Kosovo's Assembly, whose agenda includes adoption of a resolution on independence of Kosovo.

UM Dr Condoleezza Rice har udsendt 'Religious Freedom Report'. Afsnittet om [Serbien, Montenegro og Kosovo](#) er aftrykt nedenfor.

Mod illegalt arbejde. OSCE skriver:

SCE Mission and Kosovo Ministry launch campaign to tackle illegal occupation

PRISTINA, 11 November 2005 - The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, together with Kosovo's Environment and Spatial Planning Ministry, today launched a multi-media public awareness campaign to tackle the issue of illegal occupation of property.

Calling for respect of property rights, the campaign emphasizes that illegal occupation is not a viable or legitimate solution to one's housing needs.

"It is widely recognized that there have been many challenges in the area of property rights and property ownership," said Henry McGowen, Director of the OSCE Mission's Department of Human Rights and Rule of Law, at the launch event.

"We are all very familiar with the reasons and history behind these issues but this campaign wants to focus on the next steps. The first step in resolving this problem is establishing the proper legal framework, as this issue affects all the people of Kosovo," he added.

Stressing the complexity of the issue of property rights, Ardian Gjini, the Minister of Environment and Spatial Planning said, "These rights are not only a standard that Kosovo's people should meet in order to help the rule of law, but they are also important European and international standards to which Kosovo aspires."

The public at large will be made aware of the issues surrounding illegal occupation through television and radio programmes, as well as posters and stickers with the campaign slogan - 'Illegal occupation is not a solution' - placed inside municipal and other institutional buildings and near residential buildings.

Illegal occupation and use of residential and non-residential property is a widespread problem in Kosovo. The campaign primarily focuses on illegal occupation of residential property and its impact on human rights and rule of law principles.

The campaign also seeks to strengthen the understanding that property legislation will be fully implemented and that all property disputes will be resolved and judicial decisions implemented, while creating an understanding that future illegal occupation is not an option.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo, as the institution-building pillar of UNMiK, continues to support and develop Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self-Government. To this end, the OSCE and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning co-chair the Standards Working Group on Property Rights - one of the eight 'Standards for Kosovo'.

Minoritetsgruppernes indtjening. Province of Kosovo - Income Generation and Community Development Projects for Minority Ethnic Groups Receive New Funding. IOM skriver:

IOM's income generation and community development projects for minority ethnic groups in Kosovo has received new funding from the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR).

The 2 million euros funding will allow IOM to continue its efforts to improve the social and economic conditions of minority communities living in enclaves and in isolated areas throughout Kosovo by providing support for enterprise development in minority regions.

The funding will allow IOM to provide equipment, training and support to partners NGOs and individuals who seek to develop businesses that will generate employment and income.

Since its launch in November 2002, the programme has provided small grants of up to 10,000 euros to a total of 531 community and individual projects in northern and southwestern Kosovo, especially in the fields of education, agriculture and health.

One such project in Gracanica has provided computers and voice software to the Association of Blind People, a local NGO that provides computer training for the blind. Other IOM-funded projects have helped to extend the primary school in the municipality of Prishtina/Pristina and have provided an engineering school in Gracanica with metal processing equipment.

"The overall aim of the programme is to provide an improved community environment to encourage members of ethnic communities to remain in Kosovo," says IOM's Chief of Mission in Pristina, Enrico Ponziani. "IOM will continue to work with its partners to identify and provide sustainable assistance to minority communities and municipalities."

For further information, contact

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Tel +381 38 54 90 42
Email: info@iom.ipko.org

Ugerapport fra Dansk KFOR. Hærens Operative Kommando skriver (på <http://www.hok.dk/>):

VIP-besøg, koncert i lejren og operation Uge 45 ved DANBN/KFOR. Et velfærdsarrangement blev gennemført og både "COR BUSTERS og DIE HERREN" fyrede den af i Rød Hal.

Af DANBN/KFOR 13

Bataljonen fik i starten af uge besøg af Chefen for Hærens Operative Kommando. En ny Ortodoks kirke i Mitrovica blev indviet, og der var udveksling af enheder samt operation i den sydlige del af ansvarsområdet. Jo, var en travl uge for bataljonen og dens enheder.

Militærpolitiet i aktion.

En del af militærpolitiets opgave består i at eskortere og beskytte prominente personer, ofte "Very Important Person," der besøger Kosovo. Mandag og tirsdag i den forløbne uge havde den danske bataljon besøg af chefen for Hærens Operative Kommando, generalmajor Poul Kiærskou.

Militærpolitiet stillede med i alt 7 mand til denne opgave og var ansvarlig for sikkerheden under eskortering til og fra lufthavnen og under eskorteringen i det danske ansvarsområde. Militærpolitiet var ligeledes ansvarlig for nærbeskyttelse af generalen, når kolonnen holdt stille og når han bevæger sig rundt i området, som ved besøget ved det danske Liaison Monitoring Team 4 i Skenderaj, hvorfra billedet stammer.

Militærpolitiet er årvågne i byen.

Udover VIP beskyttelsen, der krævede alt disponibelt militærpoliti, har militærpolitiet også deltaget i operationen Drenica Wide og forsøgt at fastholde vores normale framework operationer, så militærpolitiet ved den Danske Bataljon keder sig ikke i dagligdagen.

Indvielse af ny ortodoks kirke



En ny ortodoks kirke blev indviet i den nordlige del af Mitrovica i tirsdags. Åbningen af kirken var meget speciel, da det er den første ortodokse kirke, der er blevet bygget i lang tid i Kosovo. I Mitrovica bor Kosovo albanere og Kosovo serbere side om side, og ofte skal der kun små provokationer til, før begge parter er ude på gaden for at protestere.

Der var derfor særlig opmærksomhed fra bataljonens side på denne indvielse, da begivenheder af denne karakter hurtigt kan udvikle sig til mere end blot end fredelig samling. Dagen var også speciel, forbi den serbiske ærkebiskop Patriark Pavle var kommet for at åbne kirken. Åbningen begyndte om morgenen, og bataljonen havde iværksat en diskret patruljering af området.

Dette for ikke at provokere de mennesker, som kun var interesseret i den kirkelige handling, men for til stadighed at kunne reagere hurtigt, hvis der opstår problemer. I løbet af kort tid var der samlet over 1500 mennesker. Alt forløb dog roligt, og om aftenen var der fest i et tilstødende telt og en rock koncert med et band fra Serbien. Indvielsen sluttede af med fyrværkeri, og omkring midnat kunne bataljonen sænke beredskabet efter en fredelig dag.

Operation DRENCA WIDE.

Denne uge har for bataljonen og især for panserinfanterikompagniet stået i operation Drenica Wide's tegn. Forberedelserne til operationen startede onsdag, idet en del af kompagniet kørte ned til den sydlige del af ansvarsområdet for at se, hvordan området ser ud og planlægge placeringen af de forskellige enheder. Imens gik resten af kompagniet hjemme i Camp Olaf Rye og klargjorde materiellet og køretøjerne, som skulle medbringes på operationen.

Onsdag aften kørte hele kompagniet ned i området, hvor operationen skulle foregå. Derved kørte enhederne ud i udvalgte områder, hvor de skulle blive natten over og holde øje med specielt udvalgte områder - en forholdsvis kold oplevelse - da nattefrosen er startet i Kosovo. Næste dag gik med nogle få patruljer i området, og derudover at få noget søvn oven på nattens observering, inden vi igen rykkede ud i områderne for at observere for natten.

Mens panserinfanterikompagniet gjorde dette i deres område, var der et amerikansk kompagni, der gjorde det samme i området, der grænsede op til vores. Fredag, meget tidlig morgen, lukkede kompagniet det område af, som vi nærterne inden havde observeret på. Dette blev gjort ved hjælp af kontrolposter, der kontrollerede alle ud- og indkørselsveje.

Samarbejde jord til luft.

I området der grænsede op til det amerikanske kompagni, blev der lavet en fælles kontrolpost, hvor der indgik en gruppe fra panserinfanteriskompagniet og en deling fra det amerikanske kompagni.

Denne fælles opgaveløsning med danske og amerikanske soldater gik godt, og der blev udvekslet erfaringer og gode historier indbyrdes. Den amerikanske enhed kom i tirsdags og var derfor så heldig at den kunne deltage i koncerten med "Die Herren", hvor lejrens eget band "COR Busters" var opvarmning. COR Busters blev i øvrigt tilbudt at komme og spille i den amerikanske lejr for 600 soldater.

Alt dette stod på indtil fredag eftermiddag, hvor vi "åbnede" området igen, og det amerikanske kompagni og hovedparten af panserinfanterikompagniet kørte hjem igen. Tilbage i området blev 3 deling, som overvågede området endnu en nat, inden de kørte hjem lørdag morgen til et velfortjent bad og en god gang morgenmad.

Logistik og march.

Bataljonen skulle afgive vores franske enhed (EEI) til amerikanerne og skulle til gengæld modtage en amerikansk enhed. De blev med stabskompagniets hjælp indkvarteret i gymnastiksalen på feltsejge.

Det var ikke de bedste forhold, men de var meget tilfredse med såvel indkvartering som bad og toilet. Indledningsvis var det planlagt, at amerikanerne selv skulle medbringe feltrationer, som de skulle bruge under operationen, men efter at have været i Camp Olaf Rye i et døgn kom deres Sergeant Major op til os i logistiksektionen.

Han havde under en af briefingerne hørt, at der til nogen af vore egne enheder blev bragt transportkost ud. Det var de meget interesseret i, for som han sagde "maden i den danske lejr er jo meget god og varieret".

Logistiksektionen fik arrangeret det med køkkenet, således at de også kunne få transportkost. Hver gang de var inde for at afhente kosten, kom de lige forbi os for at fortælle, hvor glade og tilfredse de var med den gode service, de fik af os. Der var flere af dem, der mente, at det var bedst, hvis de kunne

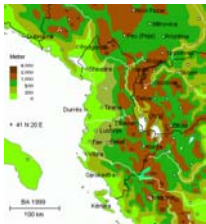
blive her i lejren, indtil de skal rotere hjem i februar 2006.

Det har således været en uge med megen travlhed, mange gode oplevelser og gode erfaringer på det logistiske område. Vi var alle enige i, at det er meget lettere at kommunikere med amerikanerne end med tjekkerne. Engelsk er lettere at forstå end tjekkisk.

ØST KOSOVA / PRESEVO-DALEN / SYD-SERBIEN

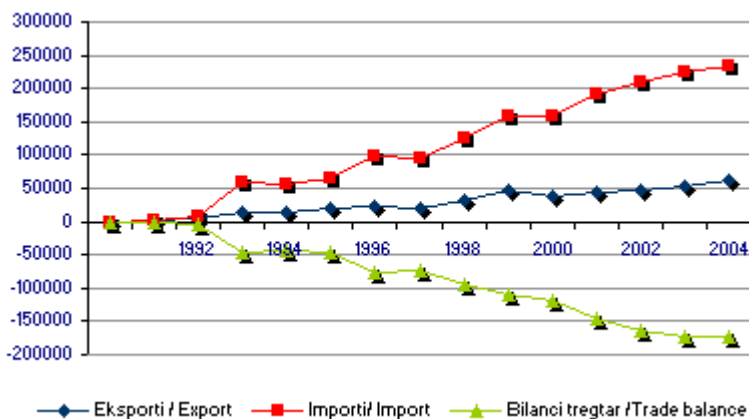
For nemheds skyld bruges betegnelsen *Øst Kosova / Presevo-dalen* om det omstridte område med byerne: Presheva, Medvegja og Bujanoci (Albansk stavemåde). Ca. 75 % af befolkningen skønnes at være etniske Albanere - måske omkring 70.000. En modstandsgruppe har været i funktion, men synes nu at være »lukket ned«. Gruppen kaldtes i forkortet form **UCPMB** (som står for noget i retning af: Ushtria Clirimtare e Presheva, Medvegja dhe Bujanoci; på Engelsk: Liberation Army of Presheva, Medvegja and Bujanoci). Gruppen sagde at den **intet** havde at gøre med Kosova's UCK, og at den var en lokal gruppe.

ALBANIEN



Klik på kortet, hvis du vil have det forstørret / click <http://bjoerna.dk/kort/Albanien.gif> to enlarge it

Info fra Albanien's Statistik: Befolkningstal: 3,1 Mio (1.1.2004). GDP (Gross Domestic Product): 630 Mia Lek (2002, current prices); GDP-structure: Agriculture: 26 %, Industry 10-11 %, Construction: 7-8 %, Services: 55-56 %. Export: 54 mia lek (2003) [heraf til Danmark: 23 mio lek; størrelsesorden 1,2 mio kr], Import: 226 mia lek (2003) [Heraf fra Danmark: 855 mio lek; størrelsesorden: 45-50 mio kr], Tradedeficit: 171 mia lek (2003). Største import fra Italien (75 mia lek) og Grækenland (45 mia lek), største eksport til Italien (40 mia lek). Unemployment: 14-15 % (2004-III)



Det Engelske Udenrigsministeriums 'Country Advice' til rejsende kan findes på adressen: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618385522>. Det Danske UM har pt ingen rejsevejledning, men henviser til det Engelske UM. Den Norske Ambassade kan findes på: <http://www.norvegji.org/>. Det Amerikanske UM har Juni 2004 offentliggjort en 'Background Note' om Albanien: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>

Mother Teresa: <http://bjoerna.dk/albanien/Teresa.htm>.

Præsident Moisiu's aktiviteter [Billederne i denne sektion kan som regel forstørres ved at klikke på dem (mens man er på nettet)]:



Præsident Moisiu har haft besøg af den Makedonske Præsident Crvenkovski. Forskellige aftaler skulle underskrives. Albanien energisituation drøftes. Præsidentkontoret har udsendt flg.:

President Moisiu and President Crvenkovski gave a joint press conference.

November 16, 2005

After the official talks between the two state delegations, President Moisiu and President Crvenkovski gave a joint press conference and answered to the questions of journalists.

In his press release, President Moisiu stated:

"I have the pleasure to declare that we held a friendly a fruitful meeting with President Crvenkovski and the respective delegations. I would like to confirm that Albania gives importance to the enhancing and strengthening of the multilateral relations of collaboration with Macedonia. These relations take a special place in the entirety of the good neighbouring relations with the countries of the region.

The relations between our two countries serve also to the long term joint objectives to be part of the European Union and NATO.

We are convinced that through the development of the climate of friendship, trust and collaboration we invest in the stability and prosperity of the region and in our common European future.

An important part of our talks were the strengthening of the all sided collaboration ways in the economic and trading field, in the energy, culture, education, science. The signing today of four agreements is very meaningful indicator of the perfection of these relations.

We also discussed about the regional developments and collaboration. We hailed the decision of the United Nations Security Council on the beginning of the talks on the status of Kosova.

I express the conviction that these talks will bring to solution of the issue by making Kosova an independent and democratic country that respects human rights and the rights of the minorities and that lives in peace and harmony with its neighbours.

We agreed to continue to keep permanent contacts and to hold meetings in order to exchange views about the future. Once again I would like to congratulate President Crvenkovski and the delegation that accompanies him to have the best time possible during these two days in our country.

While President Crvenkovski emphasized that this official visit has a special importance. "I am happy from the fact that today there were signed some important agreements through which the legal framework of the bilateral relations will be further deepen and it will show a further collaboration between the two countries. Our joint opinion is that between us exist very good collaboration relations, that we will have further collaboration in the future between our common strategies. In the future it must be paid a special attention to the economic and trading collaboration, which is still far away. Another field of collaboration between our two countries in the period to come is also the one in the energy field, on inter-conjunction points between our countries."

Then the press conference proceeded with questions from the Albanian and Macedonian journalists.

Albanian Public Television: I have two questions for both presidents. First, what will the two countries further do in the framework of the "Adriatic 3" Charter? Secondly, it is being talked for quite some time about the liberalization of the visa regime between the two countries. I believe that the citizens of Macedonia and Albania both would want this answer. When will the visas liberalization between our two countries take place? Thank you!

President Moisiu: Regarding the question related to the collaboration in the framework of the "Adriatic 3" Charter, I think that the collaboration among Macedonia, Croatia and Albania is in a very good phase. There have been a series of meetings in this framework between the Ministers of Defence, Joint Chiefs of Staff and other defence personalities. I judge that the signing of this agreement among our countries and the United States of America has been very useful and has helped in preparing to be integrated and adhere. In this framework there have been joint exercises held with the support of NATO that have helped in enhancing the capabilities of the military of our two countries.

As the result of this work, a little while ago, a medical team made by members of Macedonia, Croatia and Albania went to Afghanistan. The respective organs are in constant touch to perfect the work and collaboration among them.

Regarding the second question on the visas liberalization, as you know, the visa regime has been simplified: they can be issued at the border. The Albanians of Macedonia enter without a visa according to an agreement signed before. Of course there is room for this issue to be further perfected. President Crvenkovski can state his opinion.

President Crvenkovski: Regarding the first question, I would like to reiterate the words of President Moisiu. I would like to address the citizens of the Republic of Albania and those of the republic of Macedonia with a message. The eventual meaning that the foreseen NATO Summit will not be held must not in no way cause obstacles in the reforms that must continue, because this would be a great mistake. The process must continue with the sole aim: the collaboration to achieve the main target which is the adhering of all these countries in the NATO Alliance.

Regarding the second question, the visas liberalization, I support the decisions of the European Union regarding the criteria that must be followed in this field. The more a country approaches the membership in the European Union, it is its duty to respect more the decisions and the criteria of this country.

I have also, regarding the visas liberalization, a small objection to make: not to look to which community do the citizens belong regarding this issue. I hope that the Republic of Albania will keep in mind this access also.

A Macedonian journalist: Regarding the constitutional name of the Republic of Macedonia. Has this issue been raised during the talks held here in Tirana today?

President Moisiu: It is known that the use of the name is a problem between Greece and Macedonia. We hope for this issue to be resolved through understanding between the sides and the United Nations Organization. We wish for it to be resolved as soon as possible because it also has to do with the understanding of relations in the region. As far as the stand of Albania, it is already known.

President Crvenkovski: Regarding the issue of the name of the Republic of Macedonia, the contesting between Greece and the Republic of Macedonia, the talks continue between the two countries with the intermediation of the United Nations. On this occasion, I can stress that in the diplomatic relations the Republic of Albania uses the constitutional name: the Republic of Macedonia. This can be seen also in the agreements signed today.

I would like on this occasion to thank President Moisiu, the Albanian government for this very delicate moment connected to the name of the Republic of Macedonia!

Gerti Selenica: Mr. Moisiu, lately we have learned of the contacts that you have had with your homologues regarding the energy crisis in Albania. Mr. Moisiu, did you have similar engagements with this problem of our country? Mr. Crvenkovski, what kind of help has the republic of Macedonia concretely offered to help Albania at this period of crisis?

President Moisiu: It is known that solving the crisis problem it is the issue of the Executive, but I, as the Head of State and as an Albanian citizen can not stand away from this problem.

During the meeting that I held with the Minister of Economy, Mr. Ruli I have asked him how can I be useful to help. In this aspect I have used the personal contacts and communications with the presidents of the region. I talked to President Crvenkovski while he was in Finland. On this occasion I would like to thank him for the readiness he demonstrated to help the Albanian state to overcome this crisis with the means that they have.

I have also held a phone conversation with President Parvanov who also was ready to collaborate and advised the ministers of his government to contact our Minister and help as much as possible.

We have faith in the other measures taken by the government regarding the softening of the energy crisis in our country, that the crisis will be overcome as soon as possible and I hope that the government will study a strategic plan for the future in order for Albania not to face this kind of crisis anymore.

President Crvenkovski: I, immediately after the request of Mr. Moisiu for help regarding the energy crisis, contacted with the respective Minister in this field and was informed that they did all the possible consultations and the decision of Macedonia was to help, to offer Albania an opportunity to overcome this crisis. The measure that was taken was the increase of the level of the energy producing and a greater influx of the waters towards Albania.

I also undertook another step regarding a greater supply opportunity, which is used in maximum by Albania. We made available the transition of electric energy towards the Republic of Albania.

I would like to emphasize that during today's discussions between the Ministers of Economy this issue will be treated more and that the problem in this case is the capacity regarding the transiting of electric energy from Macedonia towards Albania. One of the future projects between the Republic of Albania and Macedonia can be the construction of an aqueduct with full capacity in order to enable the electric energy.

Præsident Moisiu har haft besøg af NATO Repræsentanten i Albanien, den Italienske Gen. Brig. Vito DI Ventura.

November 15, 2005

The President of the Republic, Alfred Moisiu received the NATO representative in our country, Gen. Brig. Vito DI Ventura.



The talks focused in some aspects that have to do with the issue of Albania's integration in NATO. The two interlocutors pointed out that in this structure will adhere Albania and not only the Albanian Army, so there are a lot of things that remain to be done in the military and political field.

President Moisiu expressed the gratitude for the given support by NATO to reform the army and about the fruitful collaboration between the sides in the direction of joint exercises, concrete engagement of the Albanian Armed Forces in its plan-programs, etc., and also the conviction that the Albanian side will continue to fulfill the requirements in order to enable the realization of this major objective of our country.

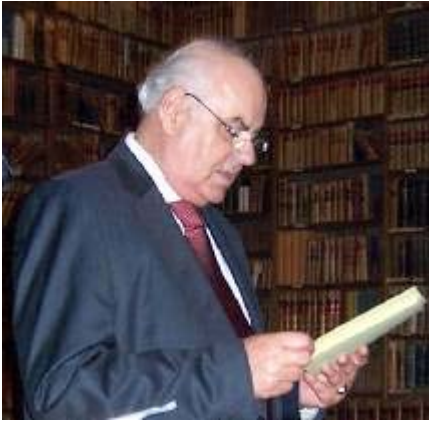
Gen. Brig. Di Ventura stated that the Albanian contribution and the continuous efforts are already known and trustable to hope for an invitation in 2008. Emphasizing that NATO is not only a military organization, but also a political one, the NATO military representative in our country pointed out that during his three months of work here, has gotten to experience the very good and effective collaboration with the Albanian collaborators.

President Moisiu expressed the conviction that the new government will comply with the commitments of the Albanian Parliament on the annual military budget.

Præsident Moisiu har holdt en forelæsning i Oxford om religiøs tolerance. Jf. drøftelserne på de to Tirana-konferencer i 2003 og 2004: <http://bjoerna.dk/tolerance/> og <http://miqesia.dk/Summit-2004.htm>

The Lecture of President Moisiu at the Oxford Forum "The Inter-religious tolerance in the tradition of the Albanian

people."



London, Great Britain, November 9, 2005

From the outset I would like to express the distinctive pleasure for the opportunity to lecture today in such a distinguished auditorium.

I.

Albania is a country that came out late from the self-isolation. After half a century of being separated from the world, after the political transformations that happened at the global scale, the Albanians decided to alienate from their past. As it was expected, a general feeling of impatience to touch "the forbidden world" – the West – took hold of especially the young generation. In the beginning of the nineties, Albania went through a series of massive exoduses, mainly towards Italy and Greece also.

A lot of time had gone by and Albania and the West had become stranger to one another. This was their first contact at the beginning of a new era – the open society era.

An ancient history of the Albanian people, connected to the end of Medieval and the beginning of the ottoman rule was being repeated. Back then too, dense waves of emigrants with heavy and painful hearts began their journey towards the West. Albanian emigrants inhabited entire villages in the south of Italy. The local nobility received the displaced Albanians in a great manner. Italy became "Felix Italia" to these newcomers.

There is a great difference between the first Albanian emigration and their second one – the exodus that happened fifteen years ago. In the fifteenth century the richest Albanian families emigrated towards the West, the patronymic families – the ones that took with them the crests, emblems, stamps, chronicles, religious manuscripts, church bells. In the 1990-s the first to emigrate were the most impatient ones, the most desperate. In the fifteenth century the Albanians took to the West an excellent image: they were the sons of "the Champion of Christianity" George (Gjergj) Kastrioti Scanderbeg who had saved the Western civilization from the ottoman threat and now the West was honoured and grateful to make room for those hopeless emigrants who had knocked on its doors. In the 1990s a majority of those that emigrated transmitted in the West the image of a violent, rough and threatening Albania. Very soon a question aroused in the political and academic circles of the West: Is there another Albania, one with a European face, an Albania where the civilization's values had survived?

II.

It was exactly this question, this situation, this need to change the damaged image of the country, to also prove wrong a few tendentiousness trends of the Western press that pushed the Albanian scholars and their colleagues in Europe to search for the illuminated values of the Albanian identity as an identity of the same class with those of the Western countries, regardless that misfortune had brought it about to have a bad reputation.

There was among these values a quality – the inter-religious tolerance – which immediately attracted the well wishing attention of all those scholars and politicians, Albanian and foreign, who believed in and were searching to find another image in the Albanian people, another face worthy to be united in a not so distance future with the ancient continent.

This model makes up a precious asset to us, Albanians, and is also a positive reality with a great deal of value in the region where we live and beyond it borders. Our societies are inevitably moving towards globalization and integration by attempting the founding of a big family in which there is room also for all the assets and values of the

nations and peoples. The small countries are not expected to compete in the global world with their economies and material assets. However they can contribute in enriching the global society with their most precious identity and values by creating a rich mosaic of values and cultures that recognize, respect and develop one another. The integration through values and the co-existence of the national identity with the European one make our Euro-Atlantic aspiration more reachable and useful.

The "Albania Case" as an exemplary case of the religions' coexistence throughout the long way of history began to be treated very soon as the "Albania Phenomenon." This ethno-distinguished character of the Albanians was evidenced more by the situation that was created through the factorization of the international terrorism as a general threat, which at the mean time is also an expression of intolerance at the higher level, gave a special importance to this ethno-distinguishable characteristic of the Albanians. The "Albania Case" or the "Albania Phenomenon" became important not only as a cultural and historical issue, but above all as a useful experience for the humanity, as an evoking and encouraging opportunity in international circles.

The unwinding brought by the overstepping of the traditional opposition between the two opposing political systems, the installing of the democratic governments and the proclamation of the Rule of Law as the ideal for the contemporary politics were accompanied by blooming of new oppositions. While the scholars were discussing whether the future would come with clashes or dialogue among civilizations, the intolerance brought about the September 11th event, which forced humanity to reflect deeply over its past and future.

Exactly at this time there were two international conferences held in Tirana, one of whom had a scholarly topic and the other a clear political aim, under the direct auspices of the institution of the head of state. The academic and university institutions held a series of other activities on the same array of issues.

III.

But what does the inter-religious tolerance mean among the Albanians? Is this the most correct term, or may be another term must be used?

In fact, the scientists, the scholars of the political and religious sociology, foreign or domestic, have used terms that contain changes in the form of nuances. The historians of religion and theologians talk about "inter-religious ecumenism," while the medieval connoisseurs and ethnologists use the term "inter-religious convergence." The secular historians and sociologists are more in favour of the terms "religious tolerance, co-existence or harmony."

In this lecture we will use the term "inter-religious tolerance" judging that either the exaggeration or the under-evaluation will bring the distortion of the truth and the historical value of the characteristic may be missing.

The Albanians are a relatively small people. They have not had many opportunities to promote the values of their historic and cultural identity because they have been divided in parts in the Balkans countries, with no more than half of them living within the borders of the Albanian state or "the London Albania" as it is called by a part of the Balkan press.

In Albania it is not a tradition to officially register on religious bases. The religious pertinence does not take part in the generalities of the population's registration. The reports among the religious communities that are mentioned in the studies done mainly by foreigners refer to the hypothetical numbers concluded by being based on the only state demographic registration that contained also the "religion" indicator, which was conducted in 1929-30.

The religious status of the Albanian people can be judged through two viewpoints:

1. In the vertical-diachronic point of view all the Albanians are Christian;
2. In the horizontal-synchronic point of view, the Albanians is a people in which co-exist the two Abrahamic religions: Christianity and Islam. Each one of these two Abrahamic religions co-exists through their respective branches.

To simplify it: the Albanian population practises two Christian communities: the Western Roman Christianity and the Eastern Orthodox Christianity. The same way, this population has two Muslim communities: the Islamic community and the Bektashian one that represent the same the reforming and liberal Protestantism within Islamism.

As in any other country in the world, there are atheists in Albania and also believers who do not practise rites and are not practising in any praying house and there are mixed families with many beliefs in them. During the first half of the twentieth century a Jewish community existed in Albania which was officially recognized by the state.

Another part of the Albanians, although monotheistic in the core, appear as pantheists in the way they believe, with signs of paganism. Not only for this part, but also for the Albanians in general it is entirely normal to identify God

with a mountain so the majority of the mountains in Albania can have holidays and sacrifice days throughout the year. The Albanian state itself is laic and according to the constitution of the country, the Albanian state does not have an official religion – this does not exclude the responsibility of the state to enable the conditions for the revival and development of the religion and ecclesiastical institutions.

The most realistic view on the religious status in Albania is the vertical one. A level of pagan faith exists in every Albanian. In every Albanian – even in those Albanians who converted to Islamism at the end of Medieval – do exist fifteen centuries of Christianity because the Christianity in the Albanian space has been apostolic and it has been directly spread by the Christian missionaries ever since the first century. According to the Apostles' Gospels including the King James Version of the Bible, the first preacher of Christianity in the Illyric proto-Albanian world was Saint Paul while in Dardania – in the present Kosova – the preacher was Saint Mathew.

That part of the Albanians which did not convert into Islam has in its tradition not simply fifteen centuries of Christianity, but two thousand years of Christianity. The latest level of belief among the Albanians is Islam. This vertical view contains and explains the core of the religious tolerance among the Albanians. In any Albanian, as in any palimpsest can be discovered and found all the historic levels of the spreading of beliefs. In this aspect, placed one by one, level by level, the various forms of belief have not been seen as exclusive forms and further less as fanatical ones.

IV.

The religious tolerance among the Albanians is not a quality developed in modern times and neither formed through education and schooling. It is a tradition that originates from the depth of the centuries.

One of the most common mistakes that are usually made while treating this issue is that this tolerance was born among the Albanians after the arrival of the Ottoman political and religious factor, meaning after the fifteenth century. This goes contrary to the historical facts. The religious tolerance has existed among the Albanians before the appearance of this factor. It must be known that Albania was the area where the two greatest empires of the Medieval met and were divided by one another: the Roman and the Byzantium Empires. The same way, Albania was the point where the authority of the two churches met and separated: the Roman and Byzantine Churches.

The two Empires and the two Churches, although strong rivals and adversaries of one another, never became a cause for conflict among the Albanians. "The Theodosius Line" separated in two parts the Albanian space ever since the end of palaeo-Christianity: one part under the Roman political and religious rule and the other part under the Byzantium political and religious rule. But this separation was never transformed into a borderline between the Albanians themselves. "The Theodosius Line" remained precise only in the ancient maps. During the long process of history it has always been on the move: sometimes more in the East in favour of Rome and other times more in the West in favour of Constantinople.

The Albanians themselves did not become a factor in these movements. They freely alternated the ritual according to the alternation of the political and religious rule. It was a completely normal thing for a generation of Albanians in the Medieval to grow up as schismatic Christian and then for next generation to grow up according to the roman ritual and vice-versa, because in their conscience this was not a divine issue, but simply a case of power competition.

A strong spirit of ecumenism existed in the tradition of the Albanian church. It is a normal thing to find books of the Christian moral translated by the very clerics for the Christian Orthodox from Western models and vice-versa in the libraries with Christian manuscripts of the Albanian churches of the Medieval. In the Christian manuscripts preserved in the Albanian praying houses one can find the Christian Orthodox clerics painted with the typical clothes of a Catholic cleric and vice-versa. Not only this, but exactly at the time when Latin, Hellenic and Staroslav language has achieved the highest level of rivalry and excluding one another as the liturgical language, in the Albanian churches and monasteries such as the Monastery of Saint John Vladimir one can find the three languages used alongside each-others without the slightest sign of fanaticism or emulation, without a sign of lack of tolerance.

It can be concluded that until the appearance of the Ottoman political, military and religious factor, it was important to the Albanian man to be a devout Christian. Whether he would be Catholic or schismatic this was simply a question of the authority of terrestrial institutions, be them state or religious ones.

Some of greatest patronymic Albanian families such as the Balshaj and Topiaj families for example, quite some times changed their religious orientation: in favour of the Roman church, in favour schism, then again pro Roman Church and again pro schism according to the move of the official authority and rule. The very same character of **George Castriota Scanderbeg** himself – the national hero of the Albanians – expresses in itself the full core of the convergence, ecumenism, tolerance and even the religious pragmatism of his people.

He was born in a Christian family that practiced Slavic Orthodox rites; then was educated in the Sultan's court as a

Mohammedan and became a Janissary – which means that he was converted into a fanatical Islam believer – then returned to his homeland and converted into the faith of his forefathers, married the daughter of an Orthodox of Byzantium rites nobleman and wrote in his will that he wanted to be buried in a Roman Cathedral Church in Lissus.

Through all this it can be explained also the fact that the emigrant Albanians that were established in Italy after the Ottoman conquest immediately became units: they accepted the Roman administrative dependency by preserving the Byzantium ritual. Truth be told, they were not the only ones. There do exist tens of documents, including letters addressed to the Popes, through which the Albanians of the coastline asked the same thing: administrative dependency from the Vatican and the Byzantium ritual – because only this assured them protection from the Ottoman factor.

V.

The conversion of a part of the Albanians into Islam began by the end of Medieval. There have been abuses with this new development, especially in politics. The Albanians often are called a Muslim people or with a Muslim majority. This is a very superficial reading of the Albanian reality. First of all, because Islamism in Albania is neither a resource religion, nor a religion spread at the time of origin. It is neither a residential belief, but it is an imported and inherited phenomenon in the language and liturgy of the factor that brought it.

The Islamism in Albania is an Islam with a European face. As a rule it is a shallow Islamism. If you dig a little in every Albanian you can discover his Christian core.

The majority of the Albanian families remember in which generation the conversion occurred. The majority of the Albanian families that was Islamized preserve to this day Christian surnames (they have changed only the names). A good part of them have preserved until lately the faith of the forefathers in the form of crypto-Christianity, or more precisely Muslims in appearance and Christian in content. The history of religion in Albania depicts entire areas where the population practiced in parallel the two faiths. The same way, history describes entire areas where the same praying house served on Friday to preach the Islamic liturgy and on Sunday the Christian liturgy.

The Albanian Muslim believer truly swears in the name of Koran, but at the mean time celebrates Saint Mary of August, Saint George of May, Saint Nicholas of Autumn and Christmas. This means that inside the Albanian, regardless of how he portrays himself at the present, there is a homogenizing factor and this homogenizing factor is exactly the fifteen centuries of Christianity period that each of the Albanians has in the tradition of his forefathers.

The national feeling rests above the religious distinction in the identity of the Albanians. The Albanian is first of all the member of an ethnic community and then of a religious community. One of the ideologues of the Albanians' National Renaissance has stated laconically: *"The religion of the Albanians is Albanism."* Although stated in a philosophic and political notion, this saying brings in mind the sole experience in the world when the religion of a nation is its nationality: the Jews whose religion and nationality is the Hebraism. The case of the Albanians is slightly different: the Albanians have given the priority to nationality while choosing between nationality and religion hence the nationality (Albanism) is their true religion.

VI.

The tolerance among the Albanians is not only religious, but also linguistic and in many cases, ethnic too.

During the years of the First World War there were in Albania endless foreign armies almost as in the entire Balkans: Austrian, French, and Italian, Greek, Serbian, Montenegrin, Bulgarian and Turkish armies. When the war ended and these armies did not have anything to eat, neither medicines to treat the wounds, nor means to return to their homelands, the Albanian people sheltered them in their families although it knew very well that many of them had committed crimes and atrocities on the Albanians themselves.

During the period after September 8, 1943 when Italy and Mussolini capitulated there were in Albania more than twenty thousand militia and officers that had set foot on Albania as occupying army. Within two weeks, these forces were disarmed and were treated as a deserting army, predestined to be annihilated by the Nazi army. The Albanian people saved this army from the horrible end that was expecting it, although they had killed and burned, had ravaged and robbed. The Italian soldiers were dressed with the traditional Albanian costumes and were sheltered in the families of the Albanians.

The treatment of the Jews by the Albanians during the Second World War was unprecedented. The Albanian governments collaborated with the Fascist and Nazi authorities as everywhere in the world at that time, they collaborated as vassal governments, but they never handed over to the foreign armies the lists of Jews. Albania is the only country in the world where, although it had a double occupation, no Jew was handed over, no Jew ended

up in concentration camps and not even one Jew was ever victimized. This goes not only for the Jews of Albania proper, its citizens, but for about three thousand Jews that came over from other Balkan states, escaping the threat of being annihilated where they were. These three thousand Jews, whose majority had entered illegally in Albania found immediate and unconditioned protection from the Albanian authorities and people.

The tolerance consists in an ethno-typical character of the Albanians. It is not that other peoples have no tolerance. Perhaps this quality is connected also to the geo-political position of the Albanian state. While the West has viewed Balkans and its door – Albania – as an exotic East, on the contrary, the East has viewed it as a rich West. At the crossroad of the two worlds, the Albanians have taken and given with both of them by also preserving its identifying core, by serving as a bridge where influences passed and by also absorbing from them. This way was formed among the Albanians the historical conviction that the distinction, be it religious, regional, racist, genetic, national, cultural, etc., is not a threat, but an asset. Such a conviction has formed the inter-religious tolerance and furthers more among the Albanians and such a conviction has made its civilization an open one.

VII.

The co-existence of three religions is an unusual tendency in a region where a religion is often connected to nationalism and in the name of belief there has been caused fratricide wars. Throughout the process of founding and later on of the disintegration of Yugoslavia the Albanians were not the aggressors, but the victims of the others. Today we are the sole country in Europe and elsewhere which confines on the greatest part of the foreign borders with Albanian population. We used our presence and fortitude to found a civil co-existence among ethnicities, peoples and religions and the cases of Kosova, Macedonia and Montenegro are vivid examples of this policy.

In contrast with this positive experience, the conflicts based on religion or entwined with religious elements, which can be found also in countries with developed democracies, have dominated the political developments of the last decade in our region.

Ten years ago, in the neighbouring Bosnia happened one of the gravest cases of ethnic conflicts in the history of Europe. Before the nineties the religious communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina co-existed in peace and understanding with one another. During the disintegration process of former Yugoslavia, the very same faiths and beliefs found themselves in the extreme positions of armed adversaries. The society was divided based on religious belief and also on ethnic origin among the Bosnian Muslims, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats. The extraordinary balance sheet of human, moral and material consequences it is already known worldwide. This way the use of religion and religious pertinence for political gains and ethnic arrogance brought the tragic disintegration of the Bosnian model where the religious tolerance did not lack. The case of Bosnia demonstrated in a vivid way in our region how dangerous it can become when religion is used as a cover to achieve nationalistic political objectives.

The same scenario was prepared to happen in Kosova too. The propaganda of Milosevic tried to present the peaceful Albanian resistance as a war of the Albanian Muslims against the Serb Christianity. The entire world witnessed the expulsion of a million of innocent citizens whose only guilt was opposing the criminal regime of Milosevic and the aspiration to live free. All the Albanian citizens and religious beliefs in Kosova, Catholics and Muslims became victims of the Serbian terror by offering another example that the Serbian violence was not directed against a religious belief, but against an entire people of a different nationality.

Through the help of NATO and the democratic countries, especially through the active role of the United States of America and United Kingdom the humanitarian catastrophe, the genocide over an innocent people and the strategy of the further ethnic cleansing in the Balkans were prevented in 1999. The war of Kosova put an end to the Balkan wars of 1990s which took the lives of more than one million innocent citizens.

The Albanians and the Serbs in Kosova together with the other ethnicities are jointly working for six years towards building a democratic, multi-ethnic and European society. There have been obstacles, difficulties and problems, some of whom were incited also by states that interested to have a lack of stability and co-existence in Kosova, but time is proving that the interest on the final status and European future of Kosova has to do with every citizen of Kosova, regardless of the religious belief and nationality. In Prishtina, lately, the politicians and citizens of all religions participated in the beginning of the construction of the Great Catholic Cathedral. They undertook this act in sign of appreciation for their ancient Christian history and also in effort to demonstrate their full willingness for a multi-ethnic and multi-religious Kosova.

VIII.

The Albanian model of religious harmony based on democratic values and Rule of Law takes upon a great value in the global debate over the need of understanding and co-existence of cultures and civilizations. In the contrary to the pessimistic scenarios and forecasts, the values of freedom and democracy are successfully facing the threats by becoming more and more dominating in approaching and strengthening the ties among cultures, peoples,

religions and civilizations. Inspired by these universal values, the Western community liberated Kosova which had a majority of citizens belonging to the Muslim faith and we, Albanians also joined without hesitation the war of the coalition led by the United States against international terrorism. Our peacekeeping forces are dislocated in Iraq and Afghanistan trying to strengthen the young democratic societies of these countries. Regardless of the hardships of rebuilding, with the fall of the regimes of Saddam Hussein and Taliban, a new perspective has opened for the inhabitants of these countries and terrorism has suffered a major blow and the human world is safer.

In my point of view, terrorism is older than all the present religious beliefs, it has no faith, it has neither homeland and nor a system of values where it can be based. Being such it would be wrong and unjust to identify terrorism with a people or religious belief. All must be united in the fight against terrorism, regardless of the religious belief and ethnic pertinence. Terrorism presents in modern societies the greatest threat for the democratic values and freedoms. Terrorism presents the very same threat in other societies too, where the borderline between freedom and censorship is hard to be defined. Hence it remains a great evil that must be fought by all, together and without hesitation.

IX.

The peaceful religious pluralism has served as a unifying element among various peoples, families and groups in society. The religious communities remain faithful to their initial inspiration to the benefit of goodness and peace and also with a great dedication play an active role in overcoming social problems, in breeding and educating the youngsters, in strengthening the role of family, culture and European national identity. Through their distinctive contribution Albania represents also one of the unique cases of a country with different religious beliefs, where all the political factors of the society, including here the religious communities too, are strong supporters of the country's integration in the European Union and NATO. The Euro-Atlantic spirit knows no opposition and no objectors which demonstrate that our religious and social identity is and still remains a deeply European one.

We are conscious that values are not eternal, that they must be preserved and cultivated in the mentality of the citizens together with the democratic culture and continuous improvement of the legal framework. At the same time, we strive to transform the culture of dialogue among different religious beliefs and communities into a bridge of union and communication, of exchange and stronger connection among the peoples and countries; to work so the citizen, his integrity and the preservation of his human rights can be the main *Leitmotiv* of the Rule of Law that we are building. Through the strengthening of the democratic values and Euro-Atlantic spirit it would be easier to isolate the extremists, to successfully face the challenges of the time and to prevent the possible threats in the relations among peoples in society or in the relations with other countries.

Scanderbeg. Links:

<http://scanderbeg.dk>

Hvad véd vi i dag?: <http://bjoerna.dk/albanien/Skanderbeg.htm>

UM Dr Condoleezza Rice har udsendt 'Religious Freedom Report'. Afsnittet om Albanien følger her:

Albania

International Religious Freedom Report 2005. Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy continued to contribute to the generally free practice of religion.

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights.

Section I. Religious Demography

The country has an area of 11,100 square miles, and its population is approximately 3,144,058. It has a largely homogeneous ethnic population, consisting of Ghegs in the north and Tosks in the south. The ethnic Greek communities, the largest minority group in the country, are located in the south. Other small minorities include the Roma, the Egyptian community (an ethnic group similar to the Roma that does not speak the Roma language), Vlachs, and Macedonians.

The majority of citizens are secular in orientation after decades of rigidly enforced atheism under the Communist regime, which ended in 1990. Despite such secularism, most citizens traditionally associate themselves with a religious group. Citizens of Muslim background make up the largest traditional religious group (estimated at 65 to 70 percent of the population) and are divided into two communities: those associated with a moderate form of Sunni Islam and those associated with the Bektashi school (a particularly liberal form of Shi'a Sufism). Recently, the Muslim community, known as the Albanian Muslim Community, resumed using its historical name of the Albanian Islamic Community. In 1925, after the revolution of Ataturk and the Bektashi's expulsion from Turkey, the country became the world center of Bektashism, although it has not been recognized as such by the Government. Bektashis are estimated to represent approximately one quarter of the country's Muslim population.

The Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania (referred to as Orthodox) and the Roman Catholic Church are the other large denominations. An estimated 20 to 25 percent of the population belongs to communities that are traditionally Albanian Orthodox, and approximately 10 percent are Roman Catholics. The Orthodox Church became independent from Constantinople's authority in 1929 but was not recognized as autocephalous (independent) until 1937. The Church's 1954 statute states that all its archbishops must have Albanian citizenship; however, the current archbishop is a Greek citizen who is still seeking Albanian citizenship.

Muslims are found throughout the country but are concentrated mostly in the middle of the country and to a lesser extent in the south. The Orthodox live mainly in the south, and Roman Catholics in the north of the country; however, this division is not strict, particularly in the case of many urban centers, which have mixed populations. The Greek minority, concentrated in the south, belongs almost exclusively to the Orthodox Church. No data are available on active participation in formal religious services, but estimates indicate that 30 to 40 percent of the population practices a religion. Foreign religious representatives, including Muslim clerics, Christian and Baha'i missionaries, members of Jehovah's Witnesses, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and many others freely carry out religious activities.

According to the State Committee on Cults, during the period covered by this report, there were approximately 17 different Muslim societies and groups active in the country; some of these groups were foreign. There were 30 Christian societies, not including evangelical groups, representing more than 74 different organizations. Additionally, there are 571 Christian, Baha'i and Jehovah's Witnesses missionaries, and 379 Catholic and 115 Muslim missionaries. The largest foreign missionary groups were American, British, Italian, Greek, and Arab.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution provides for freedom of religion, and the Government generally respects this right in practice. According to the 1998 Constitution, there is no official religion and all religions are equal; however, the predominant religious communities (Sunni Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic) enjoy a greater degree of official recognition (e.g., national holidays) and social status based on their historical presence in the country. All registered religious groups have the right to hold bank accounts and to own property and buildings. Official holidays include religious holy days from all four predominant faiths. Religious movements may acquire the official status of a juridical person by registering with the Tirana District Court under the Law on Nonprofit Organizations, which recognizes the status of a nonprofit association regardless of whether the organization has a cultural, recreational, religious, or humanitarian character. The Government does not require registration or licensing of religious groups; however, the State Committee on Cults maintains records and statistics on foreign religious organizations that contact it for assistance. No groups reported difficulties registering during the period covered by this report. All religious communities have criticized the Government for its unwillingness to grant them tax-exempt status. Since 2003, foreign religious missionaries have been exempted from the residence permit tax.

The State Committee on Cults is charged with regulating the relations between the Government and all religious communities, large and small. The Chairman of the Committee has the status of a deputy minister and answers directly to the Prime Minister. The Committee recognizes the equality of religious communities and respects their independence. The Committee is charged with working to protect freedom of religion and to promote interreligious cooperation and understanding. The Committee claims that its records on religious organizations facilitate the granting of residence permits by police to foreign employees of various religious organizations. No organization claimed that the Committee did not facilitate access to residency permits during the period covered by this report. In 2004, the State Committee on Cults assisted 1,084 foreigners in obtaining residency permits.

There is no law or regulation forcing religious organizations to notify the Committee of their activities; however, Article 10 of the Constitution calls for separate bilateral agreements to regulate relations between the Government and religious communities. In the period covered by this report, the Government drafted separate bilateral agreements with the four predominant religious communities (Sunni Muslim, Bektashi, Orthodox, and Roman Catholic). To date, only the Catholics have finalized their bilateral agreement with the Government. It is expected the other bilateral agreements will be finalized in 2005.

Additionally, the State Committee on Cults drafted a law on religion to deal with all religious communities according to a common standard; however, no action had been taken on the draft by the end of the period covered by this report.

In December 2004, the Government hosted a regional summit with the heads of states from Southeast Europe to promote interethnic and interreligious dialogue. In March 2005, in a ceremony organized by the nonprofit group Religions for Peace, the four predominant religious communities signed a statement of shared moral commitment. Under this initiative, the religious leaders committed themselves to promoting tolerance, coexistence, and respect for other faiths. According to official figures, there are 14 religious-affiliated schools in the country, with approximately 2,600 students. The Ministry of Education has the right to approve the curricula of religious-affiliated schools to ensure their compliance with national education standards, and the State Committee on Cults oversees implementation.

In January 2005, a new Roman Catholic-affiliated university with 200 students, the Lady of Good Counsel, was opened in Tirana. Additionally, the Government made a verbal commitment to allow the development of a Muslim-affiliated university.

There are 85 vocational training centers with approximately 6,000 students administered by religious communities. Some organizations described difficulty in registering religious-affiliated schools. As a result, religious-affiliated schools and vocational training centers continued to operate either as unregistered religious schools or converted to a secular curriculum or were closed. The Government reported the closing of several schools because they were unregistered or had changed the activities for which they were registered. Inspections by the Ministry of Education resulted in the closure of 12 religious-affiliated schools and kindergartens.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion. The Government is secular. The Ministry of Education asserts that public schools in the country are secular and that the law prohibits ideological and religious indoctrination. Religion is not taught in public schools. No restriction is imposed on families regarding the way they raise their children with respect to religious practices.

In 1967, the Communist government banned all religious practices and expropriated the property of the established Islamic, Orthodox, Catholic, and other churches. The Government has not returned all the properties and religious objects under its control that were confiscated during the Communist regime. In cases in which religious buildings were returned, the Government often failed to return the land that surrounds the buildings, sometimes because of redevelopment claims by private individuals who began farming it or using it for other purposes. The Government does not have the resources to compensate churches adequately for the extensive damage many religious properties suffered. Although it has recovered some confiscated property, including one large parcel of land near Tirana's main square where construction of a cathedral is under way, the Orthodox Church has claimed delays in local approvals for construction of churches and other buildings associated with the Church. Further, the Orthodox Church claims a lack of action on a number of other property claims throughout the country, as well as difficulty in recovering some religious icons for restoration and safekeeping.

The Roman Catholic community also has outstanding property claims but was able to consecrate a new cathedral in central Tirana in 2002 on land provided by the Government as compensation for other land confiscated during the Communist era. The Sunni Muslim and Bektashi communities have also requested that the Government return a number of religious properties, including, in the case of the former, a large parcel of land located across from the Parliament building in the center of Tirana on which a mosque once stood. However, the new Urban Regulatory Plan for Tirana sets aside land for a new mosque in another location. The Islamic community does not approve of this location, nor has it received permission to build a mosque in the approved location. The Bektashi community is also seeking compensation from the Government for victims of religious prosecution during the Communist regime.

In July 2004, Parliament approved a new law on the restitution and compensation of properties confiscated during the Communist regime. According to the new law, religious communities have the same rights as private individuals in matters of property restitution or compensation. However, the religious communities question the law's limitation on property restitution to 150 acres. The Government has not established a monetary fund for compensation.

The Albanian Evangelical Alliance, an association of approximately 98 Protestant churches throughout the country, claimed that it encountered obstacles in accessing the media. However, Evangelical Alliance representatives stated that it was not clear whether the limited access was due to the organization's small size or to its religious affiliation. The growing evangelical community has expanded its relationship with the country's various public institutions such as the universities.

In response to media reports alleging because of their teachings, Jehovah's Witnesses were responsible for a recent series of juvenile suicides (see Section III), the state police announced all "suspicious sects" in the country would be investigated and examined. At the time of this report, no such "suspicious sects" had been investigated or examined. The Government also banned the dissemination of religious literature in "public places." The Government provided no definition of "public places," but it is assumed this ban refers to public schools and government facilities.

There were few Jews in the country before WWII. During WWII, many Jews from other countries found shelter in the country, but almost all emigrated to Israel after 1991. There are believed to be fewer than 100 Jews left in the country, and there were no reports of synagogues or community centers functioning in the country.

There were no reports of religious prisoners or detainees.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

There were no reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations during the period covered by this report.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

The generally amicable relationship among religions in society contributed to religious freedom. Society is largely secular. Inter-marriage among members of different religions is extremely common. Religious communities take pride in the tolerance and understanding that prevail among them.

Early in 2005, some elements of the media repeatedly attacked the Jehovah's Witnesses community, alleging their influence in a recent series of juvenile suicides. These accusations led to increased incidents of intimidation and threats of violence against Jehovah's Witnesses. Other religious communities expressed similar problems after the media attack on the Jehovah's Witnesses community. Additionally, the media also alleged that the death of two Muslim men while preparing explosives was related to their membership in the Islamic community.

The investigation regarding the 2003 killing of Sali Tivari, the former General Secretary of the Islamic Community, was ongoing.

Representatives of the Orthodox Church expressed concerns that some churches, crosses, and other buildings were the targets of vandalism, although these incidents were isolated and believed to be the result of weaknesses in the country's public order mechanisms rather than due to religious intolerance.

In June 2004, Kastriot Myftari, author of the book "Albanian National Islamism," was acquitted of all charges of inciting religious hatred.

Unlike in some previous years, the Bektashi community did not experience intimidation, threats, vandalism or violence.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the Government as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. The U.S. Government has employed numerous initiatives to further religious freedom and tolerance. The U.S. Embassy continues to urge the Government to address outstanding religious property claims and to return church lands to the denominations that lost them under Communist rule. Embassy officers, including the Chief of Mission, meet frequently (both in formal office calls and at representational events) with the heads of the major religious communities in the country.

The Embassy has been active in urging tolerance and moderation as a continued hallmark of society. The Embassy has provided grants to local organizations to promote interfaith tolerance and understanding and to support the teaching of civic affairs and religious tolerance in secondary schools, including schools operated by faith-based organizations. Projects that support inter-faith understanding and that strengthen civic education in religious-affiliated schools help ensure that tradition is preserved as forms of Islam and Christianity, new to the country, seek to take root.

In July 2004, a group of religious leaders participated in a three-week International Visitor's program to gather insight into the nature of religious diversity in the U.S., including the educational role of religious institutions and the mechanisms through which religious communities play a positive role in a vibrant civil society.

From September 2004 through April 2005, using an Embassy grant, the "Civic and Faith-based Education Project" continued to expand its activities throughout the country bringing together local authorities, teachers, students, religious leaders, and civil society representatives to discuss ways of cultivating values that can contribute to a more democratic, diverse and tolerant society.

The project also extended cooperation with the Education Department of the Albanian Islamic community, which, as a result, introduced constructive, cooperative civic education curricula into Muslim-affiliated high schools in Tirana. The project seeks to replicate this experience in other Muslim-affiliated high schools throughout the country.

The Embassy also continued to support the project "Tolerance Days in Religious Schools" through which secular and religious community leaders, government officials, and others explored how to strengthen mutual understanding among faiths. The U.S. Government continued funding for a project on fostering religious tolerance. This 2-year project started in May 2004 and seeks to support the peaceful coexistence of different religious groups and to foster greater understanding among persons of different faiths.

Released on November 8, 2005

PM Sali Berisha's aktiviteter: [Billederne i denne sektion kan som regel forstørres ved at klikke på dem (mens man er på nettet)]



PM Berisha har besøgt Pave Benedikt

Fire Ambassadører er blevet afskediget: FN-Ambassadør: Agim Nesho. Ambassadør i Rusland, Belarus, Kazakhstan og Uzbekistan: Avni Xhelili. Ambassadør i Østrig og Slovenien: Shpresa Kureta. Ambassadør i Bulgarien og Moldova: Fatmir Kumbaro.

Parlamentet har vedtaget en resolution om korruptionsbekæmpelsen. Beslutningen faldt efter en meget lang debat. Der er delte meninger om Parlamentets måde at diskutere emnet på. Edi Rama (Tirana's Borgmester og Socialisternes Formand) er stærkt kritisk.

Parlamentsvalget i 2005 [Præsidenten vælges af Parlamentet for 5 år, næste gang i 2007]: Se nærmere i: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/265.htm>

OSCE's Missionschef, Pavel Vacek, er blevet interviewet til TV-Klan af Ilva Tare. OSCE skriver:

Albania failed again to have free and democratic elections. Instead it was said that they partly met the standards. Do you feel responsible for this since you have offered assistance during the reforms on the electoral process?

We are responsible for the assistance, not for the results. Those are always and entirely in the hands of the Albanian political representation.

Smaller parties accuse the OSCE of having failed in Albania with the frequent electoral reforms. According to them, the OSCE has fallen in the trap of the larger parties and that you have ignored the smaller parties' interests, listening only to the two main parties. How do you comment on these allegations?

Accusations are always difficult as we all know, but I think that the biggest trap people can fall into is to put the blame on the international organisations. I think that the principal question is whether all partners on the Albanian political scene have been mutually receptive and whether they have listened to each-other. Obviously, we always listen to people and we always know the concerns. To what degree those concerns have been part of whatever consensus which underlies the current electoral code, that's another question.

Maybe you considered it enough for the consensus to be reached between the two main parties?

Obviously, that consensus was the key to having the Electoral Code passed.

After every election there is a need for further improving the legal framework. And after this gets accomplished there is another call for other improvements. What is going wrong with the changes?

Well, it's always about the degree of the progress. Obviously, the comments and the recommendations made after each of the elections in the past were meant to further that progress. It's about the approximation to the standards as interpreted by the ODIHR and this brings us to the recently-published report by ODIHR on the last elections in Albania.

Did the OSCE have any possibility to prevent the Dushk scheme before the elections took place, which, according to the report, violated the Constitution?

There is quite a number of replies to this question contained in the report itself. It was much more an issue for the Albanian political parties and it is widely known to all those concerned, especially to those directly concerned, i.e. the political parties themselves, that there have been concerns about the mechanics of these strategic voting deals which have been shared with the parties. In a way, the distorting effects of those strategic voting deals have turned against those who actually initially promoted them.

You want to say that the blame goes to the political parties and that the OSCE couldn't do anything to prevent it?

Obviously, the OSCE, like other international organisations, can not either make things happen or prevent things from happening. Its role is advisory; the role there is one of assistance, not of interference. I think that the concerns were raised with many actors in the political scene and they knew very well.

According to the ODIHR report the use of the Dushk scheme went as far as violating the constitution. In this context do you consider the current Parliament a legitimate one?

I will not pass judgements, because first of all it is about the formulations contained in the report. I do not think that the report says that this implementation of the strategic voting deals was unconstitutional and, secondly, it is about the distorting effects of those deals, and the judgement on the constitutionality or not is not up to us to pass.

Will you remain a partner in the electoral reform process, even though some small parties would not want to see you as part of such a process?

The assistance in furthering the electoral reform is one of the mandated tasks of ours, so there is no question that we would shy away. The other thing is the consensus on the fundamental parameters of the further electoral reform. That has to be reached by the Albanian political parties themselves. And I am not saying this for the first time - we would be more than happy if that consensus is reached by themselves without any outside facilitation or involvement and then we can come in with the technical expertise in legislative drafting, when it comes to it.

Aren't you tired of all this negotiating?

The debate is only beginning and it is good that it has begun and I will be looking forward to the emerging agreement on the principal contours, on the fundamentals of the electoral reform and I think that possibly more time is needed for that to happen.

As it has been usually the case, the report and the recommendations are read differently by different people. Some of them say that the changing of the electoral system is required in ODIHR's report and some others say the report does not suggest such a thing. What do you think?

Well, the report, certainly, does not prescribe that. It makes a number of recommendations which relate to the current Electoral Code, but I don't think it is the logic of the ODIHR's work to prescribe choices, to impose them, and that is why this is left open and this is up to the political representation of the country. And this brings us exactly to the report which needs to be read by all of those who are interested in pursuing the reform and I very much believe that the report has become a reference material not only for the political parties, but also for instance for the special committee established by the Assembly and this certainly goes beyond one's short comments one could be able to make on this occasion.

Mr. Ambassador you do not have any comment of your own for this issue?

Not really, not in terms of interpreting the report, because there will be an opportunity to receive such a presentation from the most authoritative person. That will be the Director of ODIHR who is coming to the country, and the visit is coming soon and one of the purposes of the visit is to present the findings and the recommendations of the report.

There have been proposals especially by the small parties to change the electoral system into a pure proportional system or a regional proportional one? Which of these choices would you be in favour of?

That is a choice which has to be done locally. This is exactly one of the fundamental questions which have to be resolved by the Albanian political actors, not by international institutions and that is why ODIHR deliberately did not make any such recommendation or did not prescribe any such choice. Because it is known that various electoral systems have both pros and cons in terms of their consequences, in terms of their impact on the political scene and life of the country. And there are practices of various countries, which adhere to various systems, and this will have to be looked at, but nobody will prescribe any particular choice in that regard.

According to the information you received out of the monitoring of the elections what went wrong was the electoral system or the infrastructure of the elections?

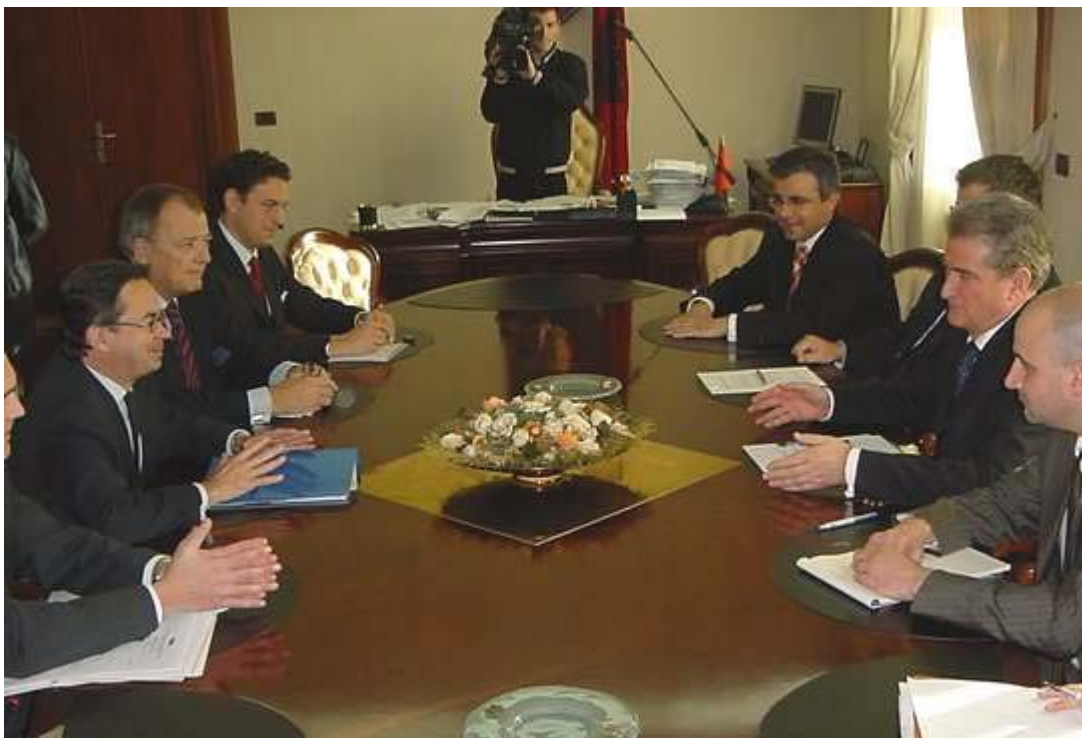
Well, it is perhaps a third thing which you did not mention and that's rather the performance of the political parties in terms of their undue influence on the electoral administration. That is perhaps the core of the problem there and again this is quite well described in the ODIHR report itself.

With whom of the Albanian authorities you find it easier to work with, the President or the Assembly?

That's a question which is not answerable. By definition, I am in a working contact with a number of Albanian institutions and office holders and I very much value the interaction I am able to have with both the President's Office and also the Assembly and I can not help you on this one, because this is a sort of labelling into which one does not go.

The last question. I will leave without understanding who was guilty for the serious problems in the 3 July elections...

The problem is in looking for whom to put the blame on. This probably does not lead too far, if we only look for how to put the blame on others... That in itself does not help too much. It is rather the search for solutions which has to be there. And that's my suggestion.



Jørgen Grunnet m.fl. hos PM Sali Berisha 17.11.2005. Officielt foto

OSCE har udsendt den endelige OSCE/ODIHR-rapport om Parlamentsvalget i Juli 2005. OSCE/ODIHR-Missionen blev ledet af Jørgen Grunnet. Rapporten kan downloades fra: <http://bjoerna.net/balkan-dokumenter/Albania-2005-final.pdf>. [I skrivende stund kan rapporten endnu ikke findes på OSCE's internetsted]. Hovedkonklusionerne er:

- **Der er sket fremskridt, men der mangler en del i at Albanerne lever op til moderne Europæiske standarder. Den afgørende årsag er mangel på ansvarlighed blandt Partier og Politiske Ledere: *the major political parties are yet to demonstrate political will and responsibility.***

- De store partier udnyttede de tekniske muligheder de havde uden at handle ulovligt. [Kommentar: Man har i

Albanien 100 kredsmandater og 40 proportionelle mandater. Hver Vælger har mulighed for at afgive to stemmer på to forskellige stemmesedler, én i kredsvalget og én i det proportionelle valg, og derfor virker systemet ikke som det danske med kreds- og tillægsmandater, men animerer til en særlig form for taktisk tænkning, både blandt Partierne og blandt Vælgerne].

- Dækningen i de elektroniske medier havde bredde og seriøsitet, dog var dækningen af de små partier ikke omfattende nok.
- Den Centrale Valgkommission levede op til standarderne. De Lokale Valgkommissioner var påvirkede af partimæssige interesser og kom for sent i gang med forberedelserne.
- Registreringen af Vælgere var bedre end tidligere, men der er tekniske mangler der bør løses snarest muligt, én af dem er at der generelt er problemer med vejnavne og adresser.
- Der var mange små og større problemer med stemmeafgivning og -optælling! Der blev gjort en del forsøg på fusk i denne fase.
- Der var mange klager - en hel del af dem var tydeligvis indgivet *frivolously* [dvs. på et noget tyndt grundlag] - og det tog halvanden måned at få dem alle behandlet.
- Minoriteterne, særligt Roma'erne, er fortsat ikke tilstrækkelig tilgodeset. Der var forsøg på at købe stemmer fra dem.
- Der er fortsat ikke mange Kvinder blandt de Valgte.

Kommentar: Til ovenstående kan føjes at valgdeltagelsen - gennemsnitligt - var temmelig lav, i omegnen af 50% - større i visse områder, lavere i andre. Én af årsagerne til den lave valgdeltagelse er givetvis at mange Vælgere ikke opholdt sig i Albanien på valgdagen, men i Grækenland, Italien og andre steder - og at det ikke var muligt at afgive brevstemme. (Se nærmere i: # 265: <http://bjoerna.net/sidste-nyt/265.htm#Valgdeltagelsen>)

Nedenfor the EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In response to an invitation from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Albania to observe the 3 July 2005 parliamentary elections, the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (OSCE/ODIHR) established an Election Observation Mission (EOM) on 18 May 2005. It assessed the electoral process for compliance with the OSCE Commitments, and other international standards. The OSCE/ODIHR EOM joined efforts with observers from the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly (OSCE PA), The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) and the European Parliament (EP) to form an International Election Observation Mission (IEOM) to observe election day procedures.

The 3 July 2005 parliamentary election complied, only in part, with OSCE commitments and other international standards for democratic elections, and marked some progress in the conduct of elections in Albania. It was a competitive contest and voters were offered a wide electoral choice from a range of political parties. Yet, the process was again protracted and at times uncertain.

Major parties mounted highly visible campaigns. The electronic media were generally balanced in their coverage of electoral subjects and strived to meet their legal obligations. However, they provided the two largest parties with more than their legal entitlement and were inconsistent in the coverage of smaller parties. Despite a generally calm campaign, a few incidents occurred including a fatal shooting on election day.

These elections were the first to be held under a new Election Code, adopted in 2002 and subsequently amended. While there is room for further improvement of the legal framework, the law is overall conducive for the conduct of democratic elections. However, the major political parties are yet to demonstrate political will and responsibility commensurate with the broad authority granted to them for the electoral process. This was particularly evident in the parties' approach to the election administration, the full respect for citizens' fundamental freedoms, and the implementation of electoral strategies to maximise electoral gains. These strategies undermined the constitutional objective of proportionality "to the closest possible extent" of the electoral system, which remains open to abuse and should be reformed in an inclusive manner.

This report is also available in Albanian. However, the English version remains the only official document.

The Central Election Commission (CEC) administered the process in line with the provisions of the Electoral Code and consolidated its reputation for an effective, transparent and largely impartial collegial body. Many of the 100 Zone Election Commissions (ZECs), the Voting Centre Commissions (VCCs) and the Counting Teams (CTs) were formed late, for which parties bear their share of responsibility. Observers reported that often ZEC and VCC

members appeared to give priority to party interests, rather than to fully respect the law.

A considerable and relatively successful, if late, effort by the state and local government authorities introduced a new framework for voter registration providing for a clear division of responsibilities of the bodies involved. In many election zones this exercise resulted in improved accuracy of voter lists. However, the significance of these efforts was lessened by the long standing inaction of the Albanian authorities in introducing a uniform system of addresses of buildings and new personal identification documents. Consequently, voter lists remained a contentious issue. Nevertheless, with a few exceptions, observers did not detect deliberate attempts to disenfranchise voters or otherwise manipulate voter lists for political gain.

The conduct of the voting demonstrated only limited progress. In many cases, VCCs did not have sufficient respect for correct procedures, particularly regarding the use of ink to prevent multiple voting, the secrecy of the vote and the checking of voters' identity. Fewer voters were turned away from polling stations because their names did not appear on voter lists.

The counting of votes was often contentious and took considerably longer to complete than foreseen in the law. While some delays were attributable to fatigue, most were caused by obstruction of the process. As the count progressed, observers reported a number of serious irregularities in some zones including cases when votes were not counted honestly.

While it took over six weeks for the CEC and the Electoral College to hear all post-election complaints, largely as a consequence of parties filing frivolous cases, complaints were handled fairly. However, in a few cases, appellants were denied effective legal remedy due to the emphasis on the form of an appeal over its substance, as well as the CEC's unwillingness to use fully its powers of investigation in such cases.

Minority populations, notably Roma, continued to be marginalized and were subjected to election intimidation and attempted 'vote buying'. Further efforts are needed to improve their registration as voters and participants.

The election brought only a marginal increase in the low number of women MPs. Women are also considerably under-represented in the election administration. A genuine effort is required to address the gender imbalance in Albanian public affairs.

The OSCE/ODIHR, as well as the institutions represented in the IEOM, remains committed to support the efforts of the Albanian authorities to bring the conduct of elections in Albania fully in line with OSCE Commitments and other standards for democratic elections.

Socialisterne forbereder mistillidsdagsorden mod Parlamentsformand Topalli. ADN skriver:

The Socialists are preparing a motion of non-confidence against the Speaker of Parliament, Jozefina Topalli, dictated by the Monday parliamentary session. This was declared by the Political Secretary of the Socialist Party (SP), Ben Blushi. "Considering even the way how she has directed the parliamentary proceedings over the last three months, we have noted the Speaker of Parliament is in militant positions, in cynical positions with the opposition and in certain cases, she is transformed into a prosecutor for the deputies," Blushi said.

EU Grant Agreement. EU skriver:

Albanian Government, European Commission sign €44.2 million Grant Agreement

The Minister of European Integration, Mrs. Arenca Trashani and the Charge d'Affaires of the Delegation of the European Commission, Mr. Robert Nelson, attended on 15 November 2005 a signing ceremony for the Financing Agreement for CARDS[1] 2005. The CARDS programme has been supporting the Stabilisation and Association Process since 2001. CARDS 2005 will provide an additional €44.2 million of grant funding for projects and programmes in the sectors agreed between the Government of Albania and the European Commission.

This signing follows last week's presentation of the Commission's Progress Report. The Report judges that progress of reforms in Albania has been sufficient enough to pave the way towards concluding the Stability and Association Agreement between Albania and the European Community.

Between 2000 and 2004 Albania benefited from around 240 million euro of EU assistance. Since 2001 CARDS has been the main EC instrument of financial assistance. The main purpose of CARDS is to support Albania's participation in the Stabilisation and Association Process, by assisting Albania in its efforts to fulfil the requirements of this process in the context of building its institutional, legislative, economic and social framework.

Being one of the EU's instruments for external action, CARDS is implemented on the basis of a country support strategy, multi-annual indicative programmes and annual action programmes. The Financing Agreement signed on 15 November will provide €44.2 million of grant assistance for funding the Annual Action Programme 2005.

The four main areas of support are:

- Democratic Stabilisation (to enhance the role of civil society and the media in the European Integration Process),
- Good Governance and Institution Building (to support, among others, judicial reform and support to the Albanian State Police),
- Economic and Social Development (to improve, among others, the investment climate; to address environmental challenges);
- Participation of Albania in Community Programmes (to fund Albania's participation in EC programmes, such as "Youth" and "LIFE" for environment).

The contracts for the implementation of projects under CARDS 2005 will be prepared jointly with the responsible beneficiaries and tendered and signed

over the next three years.

Nyt fængsel i Korça. EU bidrager - og skriver:

The Minister of Justice Mr. Aldo Bumci and the Acting Head of Delegation of the European Commission, Mr. Robert Nelson, endorsed on Monday, 14 November 2005 a contract worth € 3.6 million for the construction of a new prison at Korça. The works are expected to start soon and are likely to last for 18 months.

The construction of the new prison at Korça is part of the European Union's assistance to the Albanian Justice and Home Affairs Sector in the context Stabilisation and Association Process and will be funded from the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation programme, CARDS. This new project follows EU-funded constructions of prisons in Lezhe (completed) and Fushe Kruja (started in January 2005). The main objective of these interventions is to enhance the prison infrastructure in Albania, creating additional capacity and improving conditions for inmates.

The complex will be built on an area of approx. 40000 m² at Korça. The works involve the construction of key prison infrastructure, such as security wall, detention block, visiting block, medical care & laundry, didactical and meeting area, and others. Apart from the civil, structural and architectural works, the contract also includes the installation of a heating and ventilation system and electrical and utility installations. The prison can accommodate 350 inmates.

Modernisering af Statspolitiets hovedkvarter. EU støtter ... og skriver:

Commission funds renovation of the Albanian State Police Head Quarters in Tirana

The Minister of Interior Mr. Oldashi and the Charge d'Affaires of the Delegation of the European Commission, Mr. Robert Nelson, endorsed on Tuesday, 15 November 2005 a contract worth € 1.2 million for the renovation of the Albanian State Police Head Quarters in Tirana. The works are expected to start soon and are likely to last for 12 months.

The renovation of the Albanian State police Head Quarters in Tirana is part of the European Union's assistance to the Albanian Justice and Home Affairs Sector. This support is an important element of our cooperation in the context Stabilisation and Association Process and is funded from the CARDS[1] Programme.

Because of the difficult working conditions of the Albanian State Police: limited space, overcrowded offices and units/sections divided, in July 2003 the Albanian Government dedicated the "Arbana" hotel as the new head quarters for the ASP.

After ownership of the property was transferred to the ministry the EC funded the design of the Renovation of the "Arbana" hotel from CARDS to serve as ASP Head Quarters. All designs were prepared according to acceptable European Standards. The room and functional programme, this decides who is where in the building, was carried out by the ASP with strong assistance of PAMECA, the Police Assistance Mission of the European Commission to Albania.

This contract has a value 1,2 million euro and the renovation works are expected to last for 1 year. The EC also funds the supervision of these works and the balance of the available 1,5 million euro budget will be used to supply furniture and equipment, with co-financing from the Albanian State budget.

Forsvarsministeriet har haft møde med Ambassadørerne fra NATO-landene. Ministeriet skriver:

November 12, 2005. Yesterday afternoon, the Ministry of Defence has organized a meeting in AF Cultural Center where it was presented a briefing about the topic 'The progress of Albanian AF'.

The Ambassadors of NATO countries and PfP, military attachés from these countries, representatives from NATO Staff, SAIC, American Office for Defence Collaboration, DIE and Turkish Mission in Tirana have participated in this event.

The Minister of Defence FATmir Mediu, the Chief of General Staff Pellumb Qazimi, the Deputy Ministers of Defence Petrit Karabina and Zana Xhuka, directors from MOD and General Staff and high officers from AF have also attended this briefing.

During the opening speech, the Minister Mediu has greeted the participants. Thereafter, he highlighted the progress of AF in the irreversible reformation process, stressing the work done on the way of the fulfillment of required standards and the realization of the tasks required by NATO for Albanian integration in 2008. He said the AF have the support of President of Republic, Parliament and Government.

Thereafter, Minister Mediu has introduces some important goals as the creation of a small force that must be professional, well-disciplined and collaborative with NATO's countries and others.

The Minister Mediu has thanked the governments of the Countries represented by the Ambassadors for the constant support given to Albanian AF.

Thereafter the Chief of General Staff Lieutenant General Pellumb Qazimi has introduced the briefing about the transformation of our AF. He pointed out the achievements of the last years as the adoption and renovation of some basic documents of AF; the development of educational system; the logistic support and the infrastructure; the improvement of the direction – command system etc. The General Qazimi has also talked about the future plans as the development of Strategic Plan of Air Forces Operation, the dismissal of MIG until the end of this year; the elimination of reservist element and the creation of regional command, according to the Law, the retirement of the military that overpass the limit of military service, the demolition of ammunition and military equipments that fall out of use, etc.

Some ambassadors that participated in this event, have thanked the MOD and General Staff for this briefing.

NATO baselukning?

TIRANA, Nov. 12 (Xinhuanet) -- The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on Friday closed two military bases in Albania, the newspaper Gazeta Shqiptare reported on Saturday.

One of the bases was located at the Durres port along the Adriatic Sea, and the other in the inland area of Kukes bordering Kosovo.

Present at a closing ceremony in Durres were Albanian Defense Minister Fatmir Mediu and representative of NATO military forces Attilo Massimo Iannuci, also Italian ambassador to Albania.

Iannuci explained that the situation in southeast Europe has changed and NATO has accomplished its military mission in Albania.

Mediu expressed hope that Albania will continuously intensify its cooperation with NATO, particularly Italy, and try to gain the membership of the group by 2008.

The two bases were established in 1998-1999 to guarantee NATO logistic support and traffic security on the roads to Kosovo when NATO launched air strike on former Yugoslavia and Kosovo was mired in armed conflicts.

The Albanian in Italian AF, 1939-1943. Forsvarsministeriet skriver:

On the occasion of November 5, the Day of Italian AF and the Unification of Italy, the DIE in collaboration with MOD has organized the presentation of the book titled 'The Albanian in Italian AF, 1939-1943', written by Prof. Piero Crociani and translated in Albanian by Colonel Guri Pashaj. This event has been held in the Theatre of Opera and Ballet in Tirana.

This activity has been attended by the Chief of General Staff, Lieutenant General Pëllumb Qazimi, the Deputy Minister of Defence Zana Xhuka, the Italian Ambassador in Tirana Massimo Jannucci, the Chief of DIE Brig. Gen. Salvatore Gravante, Generals and officers from Albanian AF, Italian officers from different missions in Albanian, ex-militaries that have studied and attended Italian army, and other visitors.

During this presentation, as well as the writer Prof. Crociani, some important representatives as the Chief of Strategic and Historic Studies Center Faik Xhaferri, Prof. Proletar Hasani, retired Colonel and ex-student of Italian AF during these years, Ali Ohri have talked about the values of this book.

This meeting was a symbol of the good relation between our countries and armies and also the support given by Italy in the initiated and irreversible process of Albanian integration in the Euro-Atlantic structures.

Tyskland vil støtte et par projekter om bedring af vandforsyning og kloakering m.v. i Pogradec ved Ohrid søen. Man vil give et lån på 7.7 mio €

Sorte ruder i bilerne er ikke tilladt: Statspolitiet skriver:

Tomorrow, police services will intervene to abolish curtains and dark tinted windows on auto vehicles

10.11.2005

As we have informed on October 10, today is the last day of the deadline for removal of curtains and dark tinted windows on all auto vehicles, with the aim of carrying out the Road Code demands, and in the framework to enhance the road security and prevention of the criminal activity.

Starting from tomorrow, State Police will intervene to carry out the Road Code demands by setting administrative sanctions with the fine 20.000 Albanian money as well as it will operate to remove curtains and dark tinted side and back windows on all auto vehicles.

General Director of State Police in functioning of intervention in services of the Road Police, has approved the Measures Plan on "Procedure controls on auto vehicles who circulate with curtains and dark tinted windows as well as execution of the law requests on issuing administrative punishment"

The Road Police services at all sub/departments near the Police Commissariats in cities, were ordered to exercise control and take measures to remove curtains and dark tinted windows as well as issuing administrative sanctions on drivers who have not respected the legal dispositions of the Road Code.

State Police, requires from all drivers understanding and co-operation and invites them to respect and enforce the law rigorously.

General Directorate of State Police

Kaffesmugling. Indenrigsministeriet skriver:

Police officers arrested the citizen Medi Shabani with 12 ton contraband coffee-beans. On 14.11.2005 at 03:00, the Counter-Organised Crime Sector at the Police Directorate of Shkoder in collaboration with the Counter-Organised Crime at the General Directorate of State Police arrested in flagrante the citizen Medi Brahim Shabani, 47, born and native in Koplík. He is the owner of the trading enterprise F.M.SH in "Malesia e Madhe"

Tyskland har udleveret Resul Myzafer Xhaferri til Albanien Statspolitiet skriver:

Interpol Tirana extradited the citizen Resul Myzafer Xhaferri, sentenced to 25 years in prison charged for murder

Today, on 15.11.2005, International Central Office, Interpol Tirana extradited from Germany to Albania the citizen Resul Myzafer Xhaferri, 48, inhabitant in "Tre herojnte" street, Vlore.

This citizen had been searched for on international level because the Court of Fier by the decree of the date 23.03.2000 sentenced him to 25 years in prison charged for murder.

The citizen Resul Xhaferri on March 25 of the year 1998, at the "Isa Buletini" street shot the 35-year citizen Reshat Mustafa Bega to death. Bega lived at the "Isa Buletini" street. The incident occurred after a conflict for a demesne.

Extradition of this citizen from Frankfurt was carried out in order this citizen suffer his conviction for the penal act of murder in Albania. The Court of Fier had declared him guilty.

Anholdelse i sagen om drabet på Behar Kastrati, former leader of the Democratic Party in Has Statspolitiet skriver:

Police officers arrested the two perpetrators who killed Behar Kastrati

11.11.2005

Yesterday, police officers arrested the perpetrators who killed Behar Kastrati, former leader of the Democratic Party in Has. The perpetrators of the crime committed are the two brothers Qamil and Abedin Rexhaj born in Has and native in "New Katund" village in Durres. Qamil Sahit Rexhaj born on

22/12/1957 and Abedin Sahit Rexhaj was born on 12/ 09/ 1962. Both of them have previous offences, and they were arrested yesterday in the afternoon at 18:00 in their respective homes.

Police officers arrested the two perpetrators after a four-month investigation carried out by counter-terrorist acts and open crimes Directorate in close co-operation with Prosecutor's Office of high crimes.

Police possesses evidences who prove these two persons are the perpetrators who committed the crime but due to investigations, these evidences can not be made public.

Behar Kastrati was kidnapped on July 7, 2005 and was found killed under a bridge at Drin River on August 28, 2005.

The court of high crimes based on materials gathered issued the warrant "Arrest in prison" for the two persons charged for kidnapping and killing the citizen Behar Kastrati.

SERBIEN og MONTENEGRO. SERBIEN (alene)

Det Amerikanske UM har Juli 2004 offentliggjort en 'Background Note' om Serbien - Montenegro: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5388.htm> ... Det Engelske Udenrigsministeriums 'Country Advice' til rejsende kan findes på adressen: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618386622> ... En biografi over tidligere Forbundspræsident Kostunica kan læses på [Serbiske Politikere](#) ... Mht ICTYs sag mod tidligere Præsident Milosevic, se (evt.) under ICTY ovenfor.

Præsidentvalg i Serbien. Boris Tadic blev i Juni 2004 valgt som Præsident. Seneste Parlamentsvalg: 031228.

Præsident Boris Tadic har besøgt den Russiske Præsident Putin. Se under: [Rusland](#). Kosovo / Kosóva: Den Serbiske Regering skriver:

Government's aim is full unanimity on the resolution on Kosovo-Metohija

Belgrade, Nov 14, 2005 - On the occasion of the Serbian government's special session on the future status of Kosovo-Metohija scheduled for tomorrow, head of the Serbian government's Office of Media Relations Srđan Djuric said today that the government's aim is reaching the full unanimity of all parliamentary party groups on the resolution on Kosovo-Metohija.

In a statement to the Tanjug news agency, Djuric said that the government will invite all parliamentary party groups to separate talks and that the final version of the resolution will only be issued after these consultations.

"Introducing changes in a document is a natural process, and the government's aim is to draw a resolution which will be endorsed by all party groups in the Serbian parliament", concluded Djuric.

Belgrade's two demands in battle for Kosmet, says Draskovic. UM i Serbien-Montenegro skriver:

BELGRADE, November 15 (Tanjug) - Serbia-Montenegro (SCG) Foreign Minister Vuk Draskovic said on Monday evening that the biggest battle in the process of negotiations on Kosovo and Metohija would be waged over two demands of the Serb side - respect for the current status of the borders and a European level of protection of Serbs and other non-Albanians.

Speaking in a broadcast on Belgrade-based TV Politika, Minister Draskovic said that the reality in which Serbia was beginning the negotiations on Kosmet was dramatic because of everything that had occurred in the past, when anti-national, anti-democratic forces had plunged the country into problems in the southern province.

Draskovic said he had been happy to hear the statement by United Nations (UN) special envoy for the talks Martti Ahtisaari, who said that this process should not continue indefinitely, but should not be rushed, either. Draskovic said he believed no solution had been determined in advance for this province. In the event that the principles and recommendation of UN secretary-general's special envoy for standards in the province Kai Eide are violated, and that a sovereign Albanian state is proclaimed, most of the Serbs who now live in Kosmet would move out of the province, Minister Draskovic said.

"That option would mean, for Serbia, the building of hostile relations with Albanians, the instability of the Balkans, and a long period of disasters," he said. Speaking about possible solutions for the southern Serbian province, Draskovic pointed out the example of South Tyrol - a state within a state, where the borders, since both Italy and Austria became European Union (EU) members, are practically non-existent even in maps.

Drøftelse næste uge i det Serbiske Parlament. Den Serbiske Regering skriver:

Discussion on Kosovo draft resolution scheduled for Nov 21

Belgrade, Nov 16, 2005 - Speaker of the Serbian parliament Predrag Markovic said today that the parliament will discuss the Draft resolution on the mandate for political talks on the future status of Kosovo-Metohija, proposed by the Serbian government, at a session on November 21.

Markovic said that this agreement was reached today at a meeting with the whips of all parliament caucuses, excluding that of the Democratic Party.

The parliament speaker said that the discussion on the draft resolution will be the only item on the agenda of the sixth regular parliament's session which will begin on November 21 at 10 am.

Decentraliseringen afgørende: Den Serbiske Regering skriver:

Decentralisation of Kosovo-Metohija of essential importance

Belgrade, Nov 16, 2005 – Foreign Policy Advisor to the Serbian Prime Minister Vladeta Jankovic said in an interview today with the news agency Tanjug, that the issue of the decentralisation of Kosovo-Metohija is of essential importance and that in the Plan of the Serbian government, which the parliament adopted more than a year ago, the issue has been elaborated in great detail, including the creation of separate entities in the province.

Jankovic said that the Draft resolution that the government adopted yesterday rests on the Plan of the Serbian government in which the issue of the decentralisation of the province has been thoroughly considered, which clearly demonstrates that the formulation of the idea of entities as a form of decentralisation has been elaborated in previous documents.

Speaking about the proposal of two entities which Serbian President Boris Tadic presented yesterday in his talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Jankovic said that the issue is the modality of decentralisation and recalled that the Serbian government's Plan contains a fully developed idea about the creation of regions, which would all together form an area of, for example, predominantly Serb population.

IOM projekt om bistand til irregular migrants. IOM skriver:

Serbia Montenegro - Providing Assistance to Stranded Migrants in Distress

The IOM office in Belgrade is launching a new one-year programme to provide voluntary return assistance to irregular migrants who find themselves stranded and in distress in Serbia-Montenegro whilst trying to reach Western Europe.

The programme, which is funded by the British and Swiss governments, aims to provide counselling, medical assistance, travel and transit assistance and reception arrangements for some 200 migrants who wish to return to home.

IOM will work closely with the Ministries of Interior of Serbia and of Montenegro and with the countries of origin of the migrants to carry this programme, which will also include an information campaign to raise awareness of the risks of irregular migration.

As part of the programme, IOM will also provide training on human rights and assisted voluntary return standards and procedures for officials working in alien reception centres in order to build their capacity to implement and offer assisted voluntary returns in the future.

With the recent accession of Hungary to the European Union, Serbia and Montenegro has become an important transit country for many irregular migrants trying to reach Western Europe, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans, South Asia, China and Africa.

For more information, please call
Tamara Vucenovic
IOM Belgrade
Tel +381 11 404 228
Email: tvucenovic@iom.int

OSCE Mission welcomes adoption of new law on police, calls for effective implementation and oversight

BELGRADE, 16 November 2005 - The Head of the OSCE Mission to Serbia and Montenegro has welcomed the adoption of the new Law on Police by the Serbian legislature, but noted that effective implementation is essential and that the legislative framework for law enforcement activities should continue to be improved in the future.

"The new law is a major step towards the worthy goal of creating a professional and de-politicized police service in Serbia," said Ambassador Maurizio Massari, the Head of the OSCE Mission.

He also said that effective implementation of the new law will be critical in ensuring that the principles of modern policing are put into practice in Serbia.

"Meaningful and independent internal oversight is crucial in order to prevent and punish any abuses, and external oversight of the police must be strengthened through further legislative measures," he added.

"We encourage the Government to adhere to the principle of transparency in the work of the police in line with other relevant legislation."

The OSCE Mission remains committed to providing assistance to the Government of Serbia in order to develop a professional police service that will be able to combat crime effectively while ensuring full respect for the human rights of all its citizens.

In order to promote implementation of the new law, the Mission is prepared to continue strengthening the capacity of the Serbian police through education and training, and stands ready to share expertise and best international practices in the field.

MONTENEGRO (alene)

Præsidentvalg 030511: Filip Vujanovic blev valgt. Seneste Parlamentsvalg 021020.

MAKEDONIEN

Det Engelske Udenrigsministeriums 'Country Advice' til rejsende kan findes på adressen: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618386163> ... Det Amerikanske UM har Maj 2004 offentliggjort en 'Background Note' om Makedonien: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/26759.htm>

Der er omkring 25 % etniske Albanere i Makedonien. Folketælling afholdtes 021101-021105.

Præsidentvalg i Maj 2004: Branko Crvenkovski - hidtidig PM - blev valgt (efter Boris Trajkovski som omkom ved en flyulykke). **Seneste Parlamentsvalg fandt sted 020915.** Der kan henvises til flg. OSCE/ODIHR-oversigtsside: http://www.osce.org/odihr/elections/field_activities/skopje2002/.

Folkeafstemningen 041107 om decentralisering (= imødekomelse af Makedonien-Albanske interesser): Folkeafstemningen "faldt". Stemmedeltagelsen var kun omkring 26 %. Hvis afstemningen skulle have kunnet udvirke en ændring af decentraliseringslovgivningen, skulle deltagelsen have været mindst 50%, og desuden skulle der have været flertal mod lovgivningen. Det var ventet at stemmedeltagelsen ville have været noget større, selv om både Regeringspartierne og den Albanske minoritet anbefalede at man blev hjemme. Man kan nu gå videre i overensstemmelse med Ohrid-aftalerne.

Præsident Crvenkovski har besøgt den Albanske Præsident. Se under: [Albanien](#).

GRÆKENLAND

Seneste Parlamentsvalg 040307. Olympiade 13.-29. August (se Græsk side: <http://www.athens2004.com/athens2004/> og Dansk side: <http://www.dif.dk/index/ol-3/ol-ol2004.htm>).

Læserbrev i »Kathimerini« 10.11.2005:

Misunderstandings in Tirana

I must confess that most of us Albanians were deeply surprised by the behavior of Greek President Karolos Papoulias during his recent visit to Tirana. One might attribute his return to Greece to cowardice; perhaps he was afraid of a few peaceful demonstrators. I personally would like to think that Mr Papoulias does not suffer from this vice, yet one can never be sure. Another explanation might be that he was very surprised at seeing people gather to defend their rights. That also doesn't make much sense since Greece is a democracy, a country where you'd expect people to honor the right of others to assemble peacefully in front of their leader (the Albanian president) and his guests. Thus his behavior is still quite inexplicable. Certainly we, just like you, can put together countless conspiracy theories, like the Greek newspaper which implied that the assembly had been backed by the Americans and that the protesters had been bussed in from northern Albania, but I do not believe much in conspiracy theories.

Since we cannot explain the behavior of the Greek president I can tell you a bit about the behavior on our side, the Albanian people. In the articles that I've read on your site the demonstrators are often referred to as nationalistic extremists. But how can these demonstrators be "nationalistic extremists" when they are requesting Greek citizenship? Also the leaders of the "protesters" have revealed in countless interviews in the Albanian press that they had posted a welcome sign for Mr Papoulias at the Albanian-Greek border crossing, that they were prepared to welcome him with flowers and, ironically enough, had been planning to release doves in the air when he stepped out of his car.

I don't know your beliefs and value system. Yet as a journalist I would hope that you would take the pain to consider both sides of the story. That would certainly be beneficial to all sides.

LLUKAN TAKO Chicago, USA

TYRKIET

UMs rejsevejledning: <http://www.um.dk/da/menu/Borgerservice/FoerRejsen/Rejsevejledninger/RejsevejledningTyrkiet.htm>.

Seneste Parlamentsvalg blev holdt 021103. Det blev i December 2004 aftalt (med EUs Regeringschefer) at der i Oktober 2005 skal indledes forhandlinger om **optagelse af Tyrkiet i EU**.

LANDE UDEN FOR BALKAN OG ØSTLIGE MIDDELHAV. NATO-LANDE

ITALIEN

Mother Teresa. I anledning af saligkåringen ('beatificeringen') 031019 har Vatikanet etableret en internetside: http://www.vatican.va/news_services/liturgy/saints/ns_lit_doc_20031019_index_madre-teresa_en.html

USA



Kosovo/USA: Bill Clinton har til RFE sagt:

Former U.S. President Bill Clinton told RFE/RL in Prague on 11 November that the people of Kosova should put their conflicts behind them and work together for a better future. "I supported your freedom and I still do," he said. Clinton added that "it's very important now that we maintain both order in Kosovo and respect for the legitimate rights of all people including the minorities. What the Serbs did to the Kosovar Albanians was terrible, but the Kosovar Albanians should not now respond in kind. We should all find a way to live together, work together, and go forward together."

UM Dr Condoleezza Rice har udsendt 'Religious Freedom Report'. Indholdsfortegnelse kan findes på: <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2005/>

SECRETARY RICE: Good afternoon. Hi there, how are you? Today, I have transmitted to Congress the 7th Annual Report on International Religious Freedom. Religious freedom is a constitutional right for Americans. It is also a universal human right, enshrined time and again in international law and declarations.

Our goal is to promote the fundamental right of religious freedom as a part of what President Bush calls "our agenda for a freer world, where people can live and worship and raise their children as they choose."

Preparation of this report, which will be available on the State Department's website, is an intensive, year-long effort led by Ambassador John Hanford and involving a wide cross-section of our Department, including our Office of International Religious Freedom, our regional bureaus and our many embassies abroad.

Production of the report is greatly assisted by the dedication and close collaboration of nongovernmental organizations and individuals around the world who are committed to documenting the status of religious freedom, often at risk to their own lives and their liberty.

The 2005 report covers 197 countries and territories. In some countries, we find that governments have modified laws and policies, improved enforcement or taken other concrete steps to increase and demonstrate respect for religious freedom. In far too many countries, however, governments still fail to safeguard religious freedom. Across the globe, people are still persecuted or killed for practicing their religion or even for just being believers.

This year, we have re-designated eight "Countries of Particular Concern" -- Burma, China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Eritrea, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Vietnam. These are countries where governments have engaged in or tolerated particularly severe violations of religious freedom over the past year. We are committed to seeking improvements in each of these countries, improvements like those we have actually seen in Vietnam, which have been further advanced by agreement on religious freedom that our governments signed just this last May.

If Vietnam's record of improvement continues, it would enable us to eventually remove Vietnam from our list of "Countries of Particular Concern." Through this report, through our bilateral relationships and through our ongoing discussions with communities of faith around the world, America will defend the rights of people everywhere to believe and worship according to their own conscience. As President Bush has said, "Freedom of religion is the first freedom of the human soul. We must stand for that freedom in our country. We must speak for that freedom in the world."

It is now my pleasure to introduce Ambassador Hanford, who stands at the forefront of the Department's work to promote our religious freedom agenda. He has worked tirelessly on this report and works tirelessly throughout the year in bilateral and other discussions with countries to raise awareness of this issue and to help us make progress. And he's going to provide additional details about the report and he will take your questions.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, as the National Security Advisor, did you know about secret CIA prisons?

SECRETARY RICE: Saul, the President made very clear the other day, yesterday, that the first obligation of the President of the United States and those who work with him is to protect this country, protect against the kind of terrible attack that we experienced on September 11th. Now, we do that within the constraints of our law, within the constraints of our Constitution and indeed cognizant of our values. And that is what we have done and that is what we will continue to do.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary just if I could just follow up on that, please? It is very laudable that the United States is talking about morality and religious freedom around the world, but is that not a bit inconsistent when you won't even talk about this issue of secret prisons that has provoked such concern all over the world?

SECRETARY RICE: The United States has stood for the values of human decency, of a government that respects the religious freedoms of its people, that respects the individual rights of its people for its entire history. And I think the United States has an exemplary and exceptional record of having defended these rights. I think if you talk to people in the former Soviet Union, for instance, about how they were able to eventually put enough pressure on a regime that had 30,000 nuclear weapons and five million men under arms, they will talk about the triumph of values and they will credit, as people like Nathan Sharansky have, the United States' steadfast concern for and promotion of those values as having helped Russia become a place, which is not perfect on these measures, but which is far different than the Soviet Union. So the United States has held for these values.

And let me just be very clear, we hold for those values today as strong as we ever have. We are in a different kind of war, where people who know no boundaries, know no treaties, know no borders or territories are assaulting these values, are assaulting free peoples, are killing innocents on a wanton scale. And of course, we, our allies, others who have experienced attacks have to find a way to protect our people.

But I want to be very clear, the President made very clear to everyone that he did not want and would not tolerate torture. And that, in fact, we were going to operate within our laws and within the Constitution, within our values and those assessments have been made.

Thank you. I will turn this over to Ambassador Hanford.

Afsnittet om Albanien - Se under: [Albanien](#). Afsnittet om **Serbien og Montenegro inkluderer Kosovo** og

aftrykkes her:

Serbia and Montenegro (includes Kosovo)

International Religious Freedom Report 2005

Released by the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

Report on Kosovo is appended at the end of this report.

The Constitution and laws of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro and its constituent republics provide for freedom of religion, and state union and republican Governments generally respect this right in practice. There is no state religion in Serbia and Montenegro; however, the majority Serbian Orthodox Church receives some preferential consideration.

There was no change in the status of respect for religious freedom during the period covered by this report, and government policy contributed to the generally free practice of religion.

There were some instances of discrimination and acts of societal violence directed against representatives of religious minorities in Serbia and Montenegro. The Jewish community in Serbia reported an increase in anti-Semitism, including anti-Semitic books, during the period covered by this report; however, there were about the same number of incidents against religious groups overall as there were during the previous reporting period. Leaders of minority religious communities often relate acts of vandalism to negative media reporting labeling them "sects." Police and government officials have taken some positive steps in response to acts of hate speech and vandalism.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with the state union and republic Governments as part of its overall policy to promote human rights. Embassy representatives meet regularly with representatives of ethnic and religious minorities as well as with government representatives to promote respect for religious freedom.

Section I. Religious Demography

The state union of Serbia and Montenegro (excluding U.N.-administered Kosovo) has an area of nearly 35,300 square miles and a population of approximately 8,186,000. Religion plays a small but growing role in public life. The predominant faith in the country is Serbian Orthodoxy. Approximately 78 percent of the citizens of Serbia and Montenegro, including most ethnic Serbs and Montenegrins who profess a religion, are Serbian Orthodox. The Muslim faith is the second largest in Serbia and Montenegro, with approximately 5 percent of the population, including Slavic Muslims in the Sandzak, and ethnic Albanians in Montenegro and southern Serbia, and Roma located throughout Serbia and Montenegro. Roman Catholics make up approximately 4 percent of the population and are predominantly Hungarians in Vojvodina, ethnic Albanians in Montenegro, and Croats in Vojvodina and Montenegro. Protestants make up approximately 1 percent of the population and include Adventists, Baptists, Reformed Christians, evangelical Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses, the Church of Christ, and Pentecostals. Members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) are also present. Serbia and Montenegro has a small and aging Jewish population numbering less than 4,000. The remainder of the population professes other faiths or considers itself atheist. In a 2002 census, 3 percent of Serbian citizens claimed to be nonbelievers or declined to declare a religion. According to Montenegro's 2003 census, almost 70 percent of its population is Orthodox, 21 percent is Muslim, and 4 percent is Catholic. Approximately 100 foreign missionaries from several Protestant faiths operate in the country.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

The Constitution and laws of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro and its constituent republics provide for freedom of religion, and the Governments generally respect this right in practice. The Governments at all levels generally strive to protect this right in full and do not tolerate its abuse, either by governmental or private actors. There is no state religion in Serbia and Montenegro; however, the Montenegrin Republic's Constitution mentions the Orthodox Church, Islamic Religious Community, and Roman Catholic Church by name, stating that these and other religions are separate from the state. The majority Serbian Orthodox Church receives some preferential consideration.

In December 2004, an amendment to the Serbian property tax law removed the blanket exemption for property of religious organizations used for religious services and substituted an exemption covering only the seven "traditional" religious communities: the Serbian Orthodox Church, the Muslim community, the Roman Catholic Church, the Slovak Evangelical Church, the Jewish community, the Reform Christian Church, and the Evangelical Christian Church. The Serbian Religion Minister claimed to be unaware of the amendment when a local religious leader asked him about it, and he said he would ask the tax authorities not to begin enforcing the amendment before it could be reconsidered. Tax officials reportedly have not started collecting the tax on formerly exempt religious property.

The Serbian Government began requiring all religious organizations to submit annual financial statements as businesses. On March 2 2005, Novi Sad's commercial court fined Serbia's Baptist Union \$308 (20,000 dinars) and its vice-president, Zarko Djordjevic, \$62 (4,000 dinars) for failure to comply, but suspended the fines because the Baptist Union had been unaware of the requirement. In 2004, the Adventist Church was fined \$395 (500 euros) for the same offense. In 2005, legal proceedings were underway against the Adventist Church and the financial director of the Serbian Orthodox diocese of Raska/Prizren for failure to submit annual financial statements.

The requirement for religious groups to register lapsed when the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), predecessor of the state union of Serbia and Montenegro, ceased to exist in 2003. By the end of the period covered by this report, there was no formal registration of religions in either republic. However, to gain the status of a juridical person necessary for real estate and other administrative transactions, religious groups may register as citizen groups with the Ministry of Interior in their home republic. During the reporting period, the Serbian Government circulated several drafts of a religion law that would provide for registration of religions.

Religious education in Serbian primary and secondary schools continued during the period covered by this report. According to a 2001 Serbian government regulation, students are required either to attend classes from one of the seven "traditional" religious communities or to elect to substitute a class in civic education. The proportion of students registering for religious education grew during the period covered by this report and now equals the proportion registering for civic education courses. Some Protestant leaders and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in Serbia and in Montenegro continued to voice their objection to the teaching of religion in public schools, as well as to proposals that would officially classify some of Serbia's religions as traditional.

There was limited progress in Serbia during the period covered by this report on restitution of previously seized religious property. The Government reported that it was near to completing a register of seized religious property. As a temporary measure, a few religious communities have been granted free use of some facilities that had been seized from them. There was no progress noted in drafting a law on restitution of religious property in Serbia. Montenegro's Law on Restitution, passed in 2004, covers religious property on the same footing as privately owned property.

The Government of Montenegro built a temporary waste facility on a site in Lovanja in 2004. A claim filed by Catholic priest Don Branko Zbutega that the Catholic Church held title to some of the land was rejected and a countersuit filed against him by the Montenegrin Government was upheld. Zbutega has appealed the \$2510 (2,000 euros) fine imposed on him in the case.

While municipal governments in Serbia at times fund rehabilitation of historical religious property of various faiths, the Serbian Government also is funding construction of one religious building--a large Serbian Orthodox Church--by raising postal charges. After the widespread destruction of the

Church's property in Kosovo in March 2004, the Serbian Government decided to subsidize salaries of Orthodox clergy in Kosovo.

Orthodox Christmas and Orthodox Easter are public holidays in Serbia and Montenegro. These holidays do not negatively affect other religious groups.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

Government policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion. However, there are examples of Serbian municipalities' suspicion and caution with regard to certain religious groups.

Police response to vandalism and other societal acts against religious groups rarely resulted in arrests, indictments, or other resolution of incidents. One notable exception was action that state union Human and Minority Rights Minister Rasim Ljajic obtained when criminals demanded protection money from Jehovah's Witnesses.

There is no chaplain service in the armed forces. Although local Serbian Orthodox priests are the only clergy offering religious services at armed forces chapels, members of the armed forces of other faiths can attend religious services outside their barracks and spend important religious holidays with their families. Due to cost considerations, the Army has not yet implemented plans to meet Muslim soldiers' dietary requirements, which would require separate kitchens.

The Belgrade Islamic community reported continued difficulties in acquiring land and government approval for an Islamic cemetery near the city. Religious organizations generally continued to report difficulty obtaining permission from local authorities in Serbia to build new worship facilities.

The town of Bor, Serbia, forbade distribution of 2,500 gifts donated by the U.S. religious organization Samaritan's Purse, reportedly at the request of a Serbian Orthodox clergyman; the gifts were subsequently distributed. The mayor of Bor had expressed concern that Baptists and Jehovah's Witnesses are dangerous.

The town of Leskovac, Serbia, has a municipal Council for the Prevention of Addictions and Religious Sects. The Council has identified Adventists, Baptists, Pentecostals, the Evangelical Church, Jehovah's Witnesses and "satanists" as sects and promoted propaganda against them.

The Montenegrin Government challenged a decision by the Ministry of Defense of the former Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to transfer military property to the majority Serbian Orthodox Church in 2003. Montenegrin officials claim the transfer was an illegal attempt to prevent the Republican Government from obtaining this property when the federal state was dissolved and replaced by the state union of Serbia and Montenegro. The case remained unresolved by the end of the period covered by this report, largely because of a moratorium on most transfers of military property.

The town of Leskovac did not follow through on its offer to provide land, electricity, water, sewage, and a road to facilitate relocation of a tent church used by Protestant evangelical Roma that had been singled out for destruction; however, the town also did not follow through on its plan, approved by the Serbian Supreme Court, to raze the tent church, and there is no indication that it will.

Local authorities ordered the demolition of a Romanian Orthodox church built on private, rural land (which does not require building permits) in the village of Malajnica, Serbia. The authorities evidently acted because the local Serbian Orthodox clergy had not granted approval for the church—an issue of Orthodox Church rules and jurisdiction. The case was before the Serbian Supreme Court at the end of the reporting period. In May 2005, a local Romanian Orthodox priest who led a religious procession without police permission was charged with inciting religious hatred but quickly acquitted.

There were no reports of religious detainees or prisoners.

Forced Religious Conversions

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States; nor were there reports of the refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

There were no reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations during the period covered by this report.

Improvements in Respect for Religious Freedom

The amount of anti-sect reporting in the media declined slightly during the reporting period.

The Serbian Government has been responsive to concerns expressed by religious organizations and the international community about a draft religion law presented in July 2004. Successive drafts have come closer to addressing concerns about dividing religions into categories with different privileges, such as government financial support, and imposing conditions on registration of religions.

There was widespread criticism of anti-Semitic graffiti in March 2004 by government and democratic political leaders, as well as by the Serbian Orthodox Church.

Human and Minority Rights Minister Rasim Ljajic was able to assist the Jehovah's Witnesses when criminals demanded protection money from their Kingdom Hall in Loznica, Serbia, in December 2004. The demand for protection money was never repeated after Minister Ljajic contacted Interior Minister Dragan Jovic about the problem and the latter sought intervention by local police. The perpetrators were not charged for the extortion attempt, but at the end of the reporting period they were on trial for the 2000 killing of a paramilitary commander.

In May 2005, police in Sremska Mitrovica filed a criminal complaint against two minors who allegedly threw rocks at the Adventist Church there, breaking windows and damaging a wooden fixture.

Police have been stationed outside the Belgrade mosque since the attack on it in March 2004. Police also provide security in front of the Belgrade synagogue.

The Government has not become involved in the canonical dispute between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Macedonian Orthodox Church, which the Serbian church considers schismatic. For more on this issue, see the report for Macedonia. At its May 2005 Assembly, the Serbian Orthodox Church excommunicated followers of the Macedonian Orthodox Church and asked that Orthodox churches around the world recognize the autonomous status of the Ohrid archdiocese.

Section III. Societal Attitudes

While relations between members of different religious groups were generally good, there were some instances of discrimination against representatives of religious minorities in the country and at least one instance of discrimination against the Serbian Orthodox Church in the Muslim-majority Sandzak region. Religion and ethnicity are intertwined closely throughout the country, and in some cases it was difficult to identify discriminatory acts as primarily religious or primarily ethnic in origin. Harassment of the Romanian Orthodox Church appeared for the first time during the reporting period.

Minority religious communities in Serbia continued to experience problems with vandalism of church buildings, cemeteries, and other religious premises. Most attacks involved spray-painted graffiti; thrown rocks, bricks, or bottles; or vandalized tombstones. In Serbia, in July 2004, dozens of gravestones

were damaged and knocked over in a Catholic graveyard in Sombor. Windows were broken at Baptist and Christian Community Churches, and an entry door and windows were broken at Rainbow (a Christian humanitarian organization) in Novi Sad during the July 31-August 3 weekend. The same weekend, windows were broken at an Adventist church in nearby Kovilje. In August 2004, windows and an entry door were broken at a Romani Christian kindergarten in Jagodina. In October 2004, stones were thrown at a Baptist church in Novi Sad, graffiti ("We'll burn you," a swastika, and a three-legged skinhead-style swastika with "KKK") were spray painted on a Christian Reformed Church in Sombor, windows were broken on the house and car of an Adventist preacher in Novi Sad, a grave was desecrated at a Catholic graveyard in Novi Sad, and graffiti were spray painted on a Catholic church in Kovin. In November 2004, graffiti, including swastikas, were spray painted on a Catholic church in Petrovaradin, and windows were broken on the home of a Christ Spiritual Church priest in Aradac. In December 2004, stones were thrown at a Church of God church in Belgrade, and windows and an entry gate were broken at a Church of God church in Sremska Mitrovica. On January 8, 2005, a window was broken at an Assembly of God church in Pancevo and graffiti (fascist symbols) were spray painted on a memorial to Jewish Holocaust victims in Novi Knjezevac during the nights of January 26-27, 2005 (the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz). On March 1, 2005, graffiti ("death to the sects") were spray painted on an Assemblies of God church in Pancevo; anti-Semitic graffiti and posters were found in Belgrade on March 22, 2005 (see details below); and graffiti ("death to Adventists," "sect," a drawing of an AK-47 and a Serbian nationalist symbol) were spray painted on a Belgrade Adventist facility during the nights of March 27-28, 2005. Finally, on April 4, 2005, windows were broken at an Adventist church in Smederevo, and on April 5, 2005, graffiti ("orthodox or death," "they serve the devil here," "Jews out," "gays out of Serbia," a swastika, and a Serbian nationalist symbol) were spray painted in Zrenjanin on the Jewish community center, an education center, and Adventist church. Local officials quickly painted over graffiti that appeared at the Jewish cemetery in Belgrade and at an Adventist church in Zrenjanin.

While harassment of religious minorities was generally limited to crimes against property and occasional verbal abuse, there were a few physical attacks on persons in Serbia during the reporting period. In October 2004, an Adventist preacher suffered a verbal attack and then was grabbed and shaken in Novi Sad; the attacker's identity was known, but no charges have been pressed. Also, in October 2004, three youths first verbally attacked a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses arriving at the Kingdom Hall in Leskovac and then hit his leg with a rock and beat him with their fists, causing minor injuries. Police have identified the attackers, and the injured person and Jehovah's Witnesses community were preparing private criminal charges. (In Serbia, private individuals can initiate criminal charges.) A member of the Jehovah's Witnesses was beaten in Novi Pazar because of her religious affiliation. In early 2005, a preteen Muslim boy was verbally abused and then beaten in Belgrade by other youths in his basketball league after they learned he had a Muslim surname. On at least one occasion, a rock was thrown at Serbian Orthodox clergy in the Muslim-majority Sandzak region.

Jewish leaders in Serbia reported a continuing increase in anti-Semitism, including an increase in the quantity of small-circulation anti-Semitic books. The release of new books or reprints of translations of anti-Semitic foreign literature often led to a spike in hate mail and other expressions of anti-Semitism. These same sources associated anti-Semitism with anti-Western and anti-globalization sentiments, as well as with nationalism. Anti-Semitic Internet postings (often translations of foreign websites) also remained a problem. On February 24, 2005, a Nazi website in the United States listed names, phone numbers, and addresses of what it claimed were "prominent Jews" in Serbia.

There was a spike in anti-Semitic graffiti and vandalism before the September/October 2004 local elections, paralleling the spike in incidents against other religious and ethnic minorities at the time.

During the night of March 21-22, 2005, anti-Semitic graffiti appeared, targeting the Jewish cemetery in Belgrade, buildings owned and used by Western-leaning TV/Radio B-92, and two human rights NGOs. In addition, anti-Semitic posters targeting B-92 appeared in several highly visible downtown areas. The posters were signed Nacionalni Stroj (National Formation). The Government quickly painted over the graffiti at the cemetery and arrested three people caught putting up the posters. There was widespread condemnation of the incidents by government and democratic political parties. On March 31, 2005, police arrested another person caught writing graffiti on the wall of the Jewish cemetery in Belgrade.

In March 2005, a tabloid attacked the president of the Serbian Supreme Court because of her "Jewish origin," and provided her address, a photo of the building where she lives, and her home phone number.

In 2004, police arrested 110 persons for an attack on the Belgrade mosque in March 2004. In April 2005, one of these persons was sentenced to three months' imprisonment in connection with the attack. A trial of eleven persons indicted in the attack was ongoing at the end of the reporting period. The Serbian Government has repaired the outside of the mosque but has not yet repaired the interior. The Government has also pledged funds toward repair of other buildings on the mosque compound.

Because of the failure of defendants to appear, the trial has not yet started for the 11 persons charged in an attack on the mosque in the southern Serbian city of Nis, which occurred the same night as the attack on the Belgrade mosque. Authorities have issued arrest warrants for at least five of the defendants. Nis authorities provided \$4,688 (300,000 dinars) toward repair of the Nis mosque.

Anti-sect propaganda decreased slightly in the Serbian press, which labeled smaller, multiethnic Christian churches—including Baptists, Adventists, and Jehovah's Witnesses—and some other smaller religious groups "sects" and claimed they were dangerous. Religious leaders have noted that instances of vandalism often occurred soon after press reports on sects. In August 2004, the daily Politika published a report from a contributor that attacked Adventists, Baptists, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses as "pseudo-Christians." In September 2004, a guest on BK Television spoke for a half hour against Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses and claimed that they used sports events and language schools to recruit members. In September 2004, local television in Jagodina reported that a "Gypsy Christian Center" was luring children into a sect. The daily Vecernje Novosti reported in September 2004, in an article quoting Serbian Orthodox priests, that Zealots (a small Orthodox Christian group) were creating pandemonium and that their temple was for "unclean spirits." In October 2004, a guest on RTS 1, a government television station, claimed that Jehovah's Witnesses were worse than satanists. On February 18, the daily Politika attacked the Zealots as an "Orthodox sect." According to some sources, the fact that one of Serbia's leading experts on sects is a police captain whose works are used in military and police academies further complicates this situation.

In Montenegro, the Catholic, Muslim, and Orthodox communities coexist within the same towns and often used the same municipally owned properties to conduct worship services. Tensions continued between the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Montenegrin Orthodox Church. These tensions are largely political, stemming from Montenegro's periodic drive for independence that started in 1997, and appear to be increasing as the prospects for a referendum on independence grow. The two churches continue to contend for adherents and to make conflicting property claims, but this contention was not marked by violence. However, NGO representatives reported concern at the level of nationalism and hate speech in Montenegro. Members of minority religious communities in Montenegro also reported being labeled "sects" and "cults" in the media. In May 2005, after Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan Amfilohije presided at the funeral of the mother of indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic and used the occasion to deny the existence of the Montenegrin state, Amfilohije was criticized by Montenegrin President Vujanovic for improper political interference.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government continues to promote ethnic and religious tolerance throughout Serbia and Montenegro. Embassy officials meet regularly with the leaders of religious and ethnic minorities, as well as with representatives of the Serbian Orthodox Church and the Government to promote the respect of religious freedom and human rights. Embassy officials worked with the Serbian Religion Minister and leaders of religious communities to improve a draft law on religion. Embassy officials also worked with religious leaders to organize a public interfaith event to help minimize the public perception that certain minor religions are dangerous "sects." The Embassy also counseled religious groups to report all incidents against their property or adherents to senior government officials, to counter often lackluster response by local police. Embassy officials interceded with local authorities concerning an evangelical tent church that had been singled out for destruction. Embassy officials also sponsored a seminar on the chaplain's role in the U.S. military. Embassy officials continued to urge senior government officials to speak out against incidents targeting ethnic minorities (including their places of worship and cemeteries) and to find and punish the perpetrators.

KOSOVO

Kosovo continued to be administered under the civil authority of the U.N. Interim Administrative Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), pursuant to U.N. Security

Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1244. This resolution called for "substantial autonomy and meaningful self-administration" for the persons of Kosovo "within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia." UNMIK and its chief administrator, the Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG), established a civil administration in 1999, following the conclusion of the NATO military campaign that forced the withdrawal of Yugoslav and Serbian forces from Kosovo. Since that time, the SRSG and UNMIK, with the assistance of the international community, have worked with local leaders to build the institutions and expertise necessary for self-government under UNSCR 1244. UNSCR 1244 also formed an international peacekeeping force in Kosovo (KFOR) mandated to deter hostilities and establish secure conditions.

The UNMIK-promulgated Constitutional Framework provides for freedom of religion, as does UNMIK Regulation 1999/24 on applicable law in Kosovo; UNMIK and the provisional institutions of self-government (PISG) generally respected this right in practice. The number of attacks by Kosovo Albanians against Kosovo Serbs, which peaked following the NATO campaign in 1999, again rose in March 2004 when violence perpetrated by Kosovo Albanians resulted in the deaths of 19 persons (11 Kosovo Albanians and 8 Kosovo Serbs), 954 injuries, and widespread property damage, including 30 Serbian Orthodox churches, monasteries (two of which are listed by UNESCO as cultural heritage sites), cemeteries and more than 900 homes. The number of attacks by Kosovo Albanians against Kosovo Serbs decreased during the period covered by this report.

Respect for religious freedom increased somewhat during the period covered by this report. However, most of the tensions between Kosovo's Albanians and Serb populations were largely rooted in ethnic, rather than religious, bias. Catholic institutions were not targets. Attacks on Orthodox religious sites significantly decreased after the March 2004 riots.

The events of March 2004 stalled the transfer of responsibility for the protection of Serbian Orthodox churches and other religious symbols from the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) to U.N. international police (CIVPOL) and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS). The process was in fact halted immediately following the March 2004 riots and KFOR increased the number of checkpoints; however, the transfer process has since continued. Since the riots, Kosovo leaders, with prompting by international groups, sought to address the concerns of persons displaced by the violence and agreed to cooperate with religious site reconstruction.

In March 2005, UNMIK released a follow-up report to its June 2004 "Human Rights Challenges Following the March Riots." The report declared that KPS needed to become a more effective, accountable and human rights compliant police force. This report supplemented those of various groups analyzing the performance of KFOR, CIVPOL and KPS during the March riots and the future role of each entity. The municipalities of Gjilan/Gnjilane and Decan/Decani (home to the UNESCO world heritage site Decani Monastery) were the first of more than 30 jurisdictions to be transferred to KPS control. However, the Decan monastery requested and received continued heavy presence of Italian KFOR troops on site.

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with UNMIK, the PISG, and religious representatives in Kosovo as part of its overall policy of promoting human rights. The U.S. Government also supports UNMIK and KFOR in their security and protection arrangements for churches and patrimonial sites. In December 2004, the SRSG and KFOR commander signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) which specifies response mechanisms and cooperation between the KPS and KFOR to maintain order. Contingency plans for riot control have been revised, and now include operational presence in municipalities and permanent contact among local police, UNMIK, communities, village leaders and local authorities.

In January 2005, under a new community policing initiative, UNMIK police began phased deployment of 350 international police officers to 30 locations in the region--sites for potential return of a displaced Serb population and those inhabited by Serbs.

Section I. Religious Demography

Kosovo has an area of approximately 4,211 square miles and its population is approximately 2 million. Islam is the predominant faith, professed by most of the majority ethnic Albanian population, the Bosniak, Gorani, and Turkish communities, and some in the Roma/Ashkali/Egyptian community, although religion is not a significant factor in public life. Religious rhetoric is largely absent from public discourse, mosque attendance is low, and public displays of conservative Islamic dress and culture are minimal. The Kosovo Serb population, of whom approximately 100,000 reside in Kosovo and 225,000 in Serbia and Montenegro, is largely Serbian Orthodox. Approximately 3 percent of ethnic Albanians are Roman Catholic. Protestants make up less than one percent of the population and have small populations in most of Kosovo's cities. Approximately 40 persons from two families in Prizren have some Jewish roots, but there are no synagogues or Jewish institutions.

Foreign clergy actively practice and proselytize. There are Muslim, Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant missionaries active in Kosovo. There are approximately 69 faith-based or religious organizations registered with UNMIK which list their goals as the provision of humanitarian assistance or faith-based outreach.

Section II. Status of Religious Freedom

Legal/Policy Framework

In 2001, UNMIK promulgated the Constitutional Framework for Provisional Self-Government in Kosovo (the "Constitutional Framework"), which established the PISG and replaced the UNMIK-imposed Joint Interim Administrative Structure. Following November 2001 central elections, the 120-member Kosovo Assembly held its inaugural session in late 2001. In 2002, the Assembly selected Kosovo's President, Prime Minister, and Government. Since that time, UNMIK has transferred most of the authority authorized by the Constitutional Framework to the PISG, while retaining authority in such areas as security and protection of communities.

Kosovo's Constitutional Framework incorporates international human rights conventions and treaties, including those provisions that protect religious freedom and prohibit discrimination based on religion and ethnicity; UNMIK and PISG generally respect this right in practice. UNMIK, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the PISG officially promote respect for religious freedom and tolerance in administering Kosovo and in carrying out programs for its reconstruction and development.

UNMIK recognizes as official holidays some, but not all, holy days of the Muslim, Catholic and Orthodox faiths. UNMIK recognizes the major religious Orthodox and Islamic holidays of Orthodox Christmas, Eid-al-Adha, Orthodox Easter Monday, Orthodox Assumption Day, the beginning of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr and western Christmas.

There are no specific licensing regulations with regard to religious groups; however, to purchase property or receive funding from UNMIK or other international organizations, religious organizations must register with UNMIK as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Religious leaders have complained that they should have special status apart from that of NGOs.

In response to this complaint, the Kosovo Prime Minister's Office established a working group to draft a law on religious freedom and the legal status of religious communities; the group first met in 2003. The group consisted of representatives of the Catholic, Protestant and Islamic religious groups in Kosovo; however, Serbian Orthodox representatives have declined to participate. Nonetheless, the working group continued to provide Serbian Orthodox representatives with drafts of the law.

The Kosovo Assembly passed the first reading of the Religious Freedom Law, which would further protect the rights of religious communities and individuals. Protestant religious groups, a minority in Kosovo, initially reported that their input had not been incorporated into the law; the group later became a member with equal status of the legislative drafting working group. International observers, OSCE, and the Protestant community expressed concerns to USOP, UNMIK and the PISG about the following elements included in the initial draft document: the stipulation that each religious group's name include the word "Kosovo," that religious community leaders must be citizens of Kosovo, that the amount of funding received from the domestic budget be tied to the number of a religion's registered members, and that in order for a religion to be registered it has to be established for a minimum of 5 years and have a minimum of 500 members.

In December 2004, the SRSG sent a letter to the Prime Minister's Office citing these concerns. The final draft had the objectionable elements removed and it reached the Assembly on May 20 and passed its first reading without amendment. Before the draft law's first reading, the Islamic community and Catholic leadership voiced to the USOP their own proposed amendments to this draft, which include: labeling the Islamic community the "only representative" of Kosovo Muslims, establishing a ministry of religion, and exempting religious communities from paying utilities. After the first reading in the Assembly, the law went back to parliamentary committee for further debate, and Islamic community leadership has lobbied local political leadership for inclusion of their amendments. The Speaker of the Assembly, the President of Kosovo and the leader of the political party in opposition then publicly supported including the proposed changes as amendments during the second parliamentary reading to be held July 20. Following a second reading, the law is scheduled to be sent to the SRSG for final approval.

Restrictions on Religious Freedom

UNMIK, the PISG, and KFOR policy and practice contributed to the generally free practice of religion; however, the Kosovo Islamic Community has at times publicly complained that Kosovo lacks genuine religious freedom, citing as examples UNMIK's refusal to provide radio frequencies for an Islamic radio station and the closing of a prayer room in the National Library by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology. The same community also alleged that although 32 acres have been allocated for building a Catholic cathedral in the municipality of Pristina, the Pristina Municipal Assembly refuses to grant their request to allocate space for new mosques for what the Islamic community claims is a growing Muslim population in Pristina. Some Kosovar Muslim leaders have complained that they were not consulted prior to registration of foreign Islamic NGOs with UNMIK.

During the period covered by this report, Kosovo political leaders--government and political party officials--have increasingly called for tolerance. During the end of August and the beginning of September 2004, then-Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi and SRSG Soren Jessen-Petersen visited Serb-inhabited areas in the municipalities of Gjilan/Gnjilane, Novoberde/Novo Brdo, Prizren, Mitrovice/Mitrovica, and Peje/Pec, appealing to Kosovo-Serbs to return. On February 27, 2005, former Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj addressed a letter to Kosovo citizens calling upon them to respect the rule of law and exercise tolerance, stating: "The Albanian majority has a special obligation towards the Serb community. They should be able to move freely in Kosovo." During an April 2005 visit to Montenegro, Minister for Local Government Administration along with Minister for Returns and Communities Slavisha Petkovic, Minister of Local Government Administration Lutfi Haziri, appealed to all of Kosovo's displaced to return home.

Spurred by two separate events, the media openly debated the pros and cons of wearing the traditional Islamic headscarf in public. On May 23, 2005, a principal suspended a public school teacher for wearing a headscarf to class, citing a provision of Kosovo's law on education that obligates public institutions to adopt a neutral attitude towards religion when providing education. On May 29, Pristina Municipality's Department of Education dismissed the teacher. Another case in April 2005 involved a primary school student who was dismissed from class for wearing a headscarf. A similar case resulted in a June 2004 non-binding opinion from the Ombudsperson that the Ministry's interpretation should only apply to school teachers and officials, not students. Both parties have filed petitions with the Ministry of Education and formal complaints with Kosovo's Ombudsperson.

Protestants still report that they feel discriminated against in media access, particularly by the public Radio and Television Kosovo (RTK).

There were no reports of religious detainees or prisoners.

Forced Religious Conversion

There were no reports of forced religious conversion, including of minor U.S. citizens who had been abducted or illegally removed from the United States, or of the government authorities' refusal to allow such citizens to be returned to the United States.

Abuses by Terrorist Organizations

There were no reported abuses targeted at specific religions by terrorist organizations during the period covered by this report.

Improvements in Respect for Religious Freedom

Prior to and following the March 2004 riots, KFOR and UNMIK international police, with increased participation of the KPS, reported a reduction in the number of crimes committed against Orthodox persons and sites. During July, August and September 2004, UNMIK reported no serious crimes with potentially ethnic motive. Assembly elections were held in October 2004, without the Serb population participating and without major ethnically-motivated incidents. In March, then-Prime Minister Ramush Haradinaj called for calm after he was indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and the event passed without major incident. Both the elections and the indictment were seen locally and internationally as possible flash points for inter-ethnic violence and/or attacks on religious sites. In response to the lack of aggression following these probable "trigger events," the SRSG and international community have praised both sides. One of the most serious challenges facing the international community in its administration of Kosovo has been to stop ethnically motivated attacks on Serbian Orthodox churches and shrines and on the Orthodox population of Kosovo. Following the riots of March 2004 during which 30 Orthodox religious sites and more than 900 homes and businesses of ethnic minorities were burned or damaged, the number of attacks on Serbian Orthodox churches decreased steadily. Members of the PISG and some political leaders made efforts to communicate with Kosovo Serbs and Serbian Orthodox officials and expressed a public commitment to assist in their return and the reconstruction of damaged or destroyed churches.

Prompted by international organizations, Kosovo leaders sought to address the concerns of persons displaced by the violence and agreed to cooperate with religious site reconstruction after the March 2004 riots. On the basis of a Council of Europe damage assessment, the PISG allocated \$5.3 million (4.2 million euros) for the initial phase of the reconstruction of churches and monasteries damaged in the March riots. On March 25, 2005, after protracted negotiations with Serbian Orthodox Church (SOC) officials, the PISG and SOC signed an MOU laying down the general principles of cooperation for the reconstruction process. On the basis of this MOU, representatives of the SOC, the Serbian Ministry of Culture and the PISG became part of an implementation committee chaired by an international heritage expert. However, the process stalled when Bishop Artemije of Raska and Prizren withdrew his assent to the MOU and participation in the committee. The international community, USOP, and the SRSG appealed to the Bishop to reconsider his decision, but to no result. However, Father Sava of Decan Monastery reports that during a week-long meeting from May 18 to May 25, 2005, of the Holy Synod of the SOC, church leadership decided to accept the PISG's funds.

In its March 2005 report on post-March 2004 conditions, UNMIK states that 348 individuals have been brought before Kosovo courts for riot-related offenses; of these 179 cases have been completed, 71 are awaiting trial, and 98 were still under investigation. At least 57 serious cases have been prosecuted by international lawyers and have concluded with sentences of up to 16 years in prison. Local judges have handed down more than 85 convictions, ranging from court reprimands and fines up to 200 euros (\$240) to convictions from two months to two years. In addition, on May 19, 2005, an international panel of judges of the Gjilan/Gnjilane District Court convicted six Albanians in connection with the killing of two Serbs during the March 2004 riots and sentenced them to a total of 38 years in prison. (One received 16 years, another 11, another three-and-a-half. Three others each received two and a half years in prison.)

Section III. Societal Attitudes

Ethnicity and religion are inextricably linked in Kosovo. While most Kosovo Albanians identify themselves as Muslim, the designation has more of a cultural than religious connotation. Kosovo Serbs identify themselves with the Serbian Orthodox Church, which defines not only their religious but also their cultural and historical perspectives. During and after the 1999 conflict, some Serbian Orthodox leaders played a moderating political role, but most have since withdrawn from political life as secular Serb leaders have stepped forward, especially following the November 2001 elections and subsequent establishment of Kosovo's Provisional Institutions of Self Government.

Societal violence continued but decreased sharply from the last reporting period. Of 32 killings in Kosovo from July 2004 through January 31, 2005, there was one Serb victim and that crime was found to be neither ethnic nor politically motivated. Although tension between communities has remained

high, the prevailing crime trend is against property instead of persons. In 2004, 59 percent of potential ethnically motivated incidents were property-related offences. There were some reported incidents of rock-throwing and other assaults against Serbian Orthodox clergy as they traveled outside of their monasteries, and monks and nuns at some monasteries reportedly remained unable to use parts of the monasteries' properties due to concerns about safety.

The 2004 report cited a media story claiming that an imam was kidnapped and assaulted by masked assailants. After an investigation, UNMIK police forces have determined this incident did not occur.

Security concerns continued to affect the Serb community and its freedom of movement and also affected their freedom to worship, particularly after the March riots. Some Kosovo Serbs asserted that they were not able to travel freely to practice their faith due to security concerns. Serb families with relatives living in both Kosovo and Serbia were restricted by security concerns from traveling for religious holidays or ceremonies, including weddings and funerals. Father Sava told USOP that KFOR stopped escorting non-clergy parishioners to religious sites in April 2005, and he has seen attendance at services decline as a result. Sava also reports that when traveling through Kosovo, his van is sometimes pelted with stones and verbal insults, although he and his co-religious generally traveled freely and without incident on Kosovo's main highways during the period covered by this report. Father Sava and Bishop Teodosije both traveled to USOP, escorted but without incident, on June 8, 2005, for a visit with the Department of State Undersecretary for Political Affairs, a visit preceded by their first tour of Pristina in six years. On April 21, 2005, KFOR withdrew its last two armored cars from the bridge connecting majority Serb-inhabited Mitrovica North and Kosovo Albanian dominated Mitrovica South and on April 29 opened 24-hour passage on the bridge, although KFOR stands ready to re-secure the bridge at a moment's notice. On January 8, 2005, checkpoints and barbed wire were removed from the Serbian village of Binca and UNMIK announced that enclaves no longer existed in Klina municipality.

Some minor attacks on Serbian Orthodox religious sites continued during the period covered by this report. Father Sava reports that in Gjakova/Djakovica municipality, some graves were vandalized in Piskote village, and some family members told him bodies were removed. Serbian media reported on May 12, 2005, that an explosive device was found 200 meters from an Orthodox church in Viti/Vitina; the investigation is still ongoing.

Local media reported that that a Catholic cemetery in Prizren vandalized in 2001, was vandalized again on May 24, 2005.

Many of the churches and monasteries burned in the March 2004 riots were constructed in the 14th century and are considered part of Kosovo's cultural and religious heritage. Father Sava provided a comprehensive list of religious sites destroyed or damaged between March 17 and 19. The list included 30 sites altogether in the following 14 locations: Prizren, Rahovec, Gjakova, Skenderaj, Peja, Ferizaj, Kamenica, Shtime, Pristina, Fushe Kosove, Vushtrri, Obiliq, Mitrovica, and Podujevo. A Council of Europe mission to assess the damage concluded that approximately \$11.83 million (9.7 million euros) would be required to repair and restore the damaged sites. A joint commission with representation from the PISG, Serbian Orthodox Church and international donors is in the process of issuing tenders and repair is expected to begin shortly after.

On May 13, 2005, UNESCO, in cooperation with UNMIK, the Council of Europe, and the European Commission, held an international donor's conference in Paris for the protection and preservation of cultural heritage in Kosovo. The conference determined that 75 priority cultural and religious monuments and sites would be restored, among them 48 Serbian Orthodox (including the Decani Monastery which UNESCO classified a World Heritage Site in 2004), 14 Islamic and 13 secular/historical. Attending with the SRS, the Minister of Culture distributed an inflammatory document disavowing the historical validity of the Serbian Orthodox monuments and describing a singular Kosovo-Albanian history in Kosovo. The SRS immediately condemned this action and retrieved all the documents. The Synod has called for the minister's immediate resignation.

In addition, problems with the unfinished Serbian church located on University of Pristina grounds continued. During the 1990s, the Serb-dominated administration in Pristina during the 1990s gave the land on which the church sits to the Serbian Orthodox Church. In 2003, the Pristina Municipal Assembly passed a resolution to return the land to the University. The UNMIK representative in the Pristina municipal government immediately suspended this decision, and no further action has been taken to date. In February 2005, a Christian cross attached to the church was bent. The media reported that Roma from Albania were squatting around the unfinished church for several months until they were removed in April after Orthodox leaders sent an open letter to the SRS complaining of the situation.

In light of societal violence in Kosovo against properties owned by the Serbian Orthodox Church and Serbian Orthodox religious symbols, UNMIK authorities continued to provide special security measures to protect religious sites and to ensure that members of all religious groups could worship safely. KFOR deployed security contingents at religious sites throughout Kosovo to protect them from further destruction, such as that which had occurred immediately after KFOR's intervention in 1999; however, KFOR gave priority to saving persons' lives rather than property and was unable to stop the burning and destruction of many sites in March 2004. Due to improving security conditions and decreasing interethnic tensions in some areas, KFOR removed static checkpoints from most churches and religious sites during the period covered by this report, relying instead on patrols by the U.N. international police (CIVPOL) and indigenous Kosovo Police Service (KPS). In most cases, such changes in security measures did not result in a change in the level of safety of, or access to, the religious sites. During the March 2004 riots, KFOR, CIVPOL and KPS were involved in crowd control and protecting lives and property. The priority was evacuating persons over saving property, even religious property. Immediately following the March riots, the process of transfer of jurisdiction over local police stations from KFOR to CIVPOL and KPS was halted; transfer has since continued and 27 of 32 jurisdictions in Kosovo are now under local KPS patrol.

Although previously Protestants have reported suffering violence and discrimination, during the period covered by this report they had no major complaints and even said they perceived a slight improvement. They reported discrimination through verbal attacks and exclusion from interfaith initiatives by the Islamic leadership who defended their actions on the grounds that Protestants are not considered a "traditional" religion in Kosovo. They also stated that while public television station RTK as an institution has not specifically reported on the Protestant religion, some individuals within the RTK had a more positive approach. In March 2005, these individuals organized a religious program and invited Protestant representatives. Protestants also reported slight discrimination in schools where sometimes parents of pupils were allegedly called in to deter their children from following Protestantism.

On April 13, 2005, Kosovo-Albanian municipal authorities called upon Serbs to return to Frahsër/Svinjare village, which has been entirely rebuilt following its destruction during the March 2004 riots. On January 8, 2005, UNMIK announced it had removed checkpoints and barbed wire from the Serb village of Binca in Klina municipality; they reported that residents felt safe and were not harassed.

Catholic leaders reported that they had good relations with the Muslim community but hardly had any contact with the Orthodox leadership, whom they consider highly politicized. Orthodox leadership believes the same of the Catholic leadership. The Muslim community made similar remarks concerning their relationship with the Catholic leadership and lack of relationship with the Orthodox community.

In September 2004, Radio Free Europe together with Serbia's TV Most broadcast a dialogue between Serbian Orthodox Father Sava and Qemal Morina, an associate dean at the Islamic Faculty in Pristina. This was the first dialogue and first contact between a representative of the SOC and the Islamic religious community in Kosovo since the events of March 2004. Both the Islamic community and Father Sava report no dialogue has since occurred between the two entities, although the Islamic community said it has informally reached out to invite dialogue with Orthodox leaders.

On May 1, 2005, the Decan monastery hosted the SRS, USOP's Chief of Mission, the local municipal president and the PISG's minister for environment and spatial planning, Ardian Gjini, for Orthodox Easter services. Father Sava described the event as "positive" and had a "moderate" conversation with Kosovo-Albanians--an effort he plans to continue with the municipal president and Gjini.

The withdrawal of FRY and Serbian troops from Kosovo in 1999 and establishment of UNMIK resulted in an improved situation for the majority, largely Muslim, ethnic Albanian population, and a cessation of attacks on their mosques and religious sites.

Islamic, Orthodox, and Catholic leaders have attempted to encourage tolerance and peace in Kosovo, in both the religious and political spheres.

Section IV. U.S. Government Policy

The U.S. Government discusses religious freedom issues with UNMIK, the PISG, and religious representatives in Kosovo as part of its overall policy to promote human rights and has sought to promote ethnic and religious tolerance in Kosovo. U.S. officials have also maintained close contacts with religious leaders.

The U.S. is involved actively in UNMIK, whose goal is to secure peace, facilitate refugee return and reconstruction, lay the foundations for democratic self-government, and foster respect for human rights regardless of ethnicity or religion.

U.S. KFOR peacekeeping troops have worked to prevent ethnic and religious violence in Kosovo and have guarded religious sites. USKFOR was credited with preventing the situation from further escalation in their sector during the March 2004 riots and they have increased their presence within the sector they patrol.

The U.S. Government funded the remainder of a survey of Islamic manuscripts in Kosovo to help the local Islamic community preserve its religious heritage.

The Department of State funds a U.N. international police (CIVPOL) advisor in Pristina and provided \$40 million (31.86 million euros) to support KPS and CIVPOL. KPS and CIVPOL have worked to prevent ethnic and religious violence in Kosovo.

The Department of State provides \$3.5 million in funding for returns programs for Muslim and Orthodox Roma, Orthodox Serbs, and Muslim Bosnians. USOP also funds a locally-engaged staff member dedicated to this issue.

In the wake of the March 2004 inter-ethnic violence, U.S. officers met with Islamic, Orthodox, and Catholic authorities to discuss ways of supporting reconciliation and interfaith dialogue. Many high-level U.S. Government and military officials visited Kosovo and met with both political and religious leaders to assess the situation and urge reconstruction and progress toward a multiethnic Kosovo and continued to do so. The U.S. Office also urged the Kosovo government to quickly reconstruct Serb homes and allow UNESCO to take the lead on reconstruction of destroyed and damaged religious sites in Kosovo. At the May 13 donor's conference in Paris, USG pledged one million dollars for this purpose.

On July 14, 2004, representatives of the PISG, leaders of Kosovo Albanian political parties and representatives of the Serb community reached an agreement at the U.S. Office for establishing the Ministry for Returns and Communities within the Government.

Released on November 8, 2005

ENGLAND

TYSKLAND

Efter lange forhandlinger er der dannet ny Regering under ledelse af Angela Merkel. Se evt. reportage på BBC: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4434812.stm>. Ny UM / Udenrigsminister bliver Frank-Walter Steinmeier fra SPD, se: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4339302.stm>.

Tyskland vil støtte et par projekter om bedring af vandforsyning og kloakering m.v. i Pogradec ved Ohrid søen. Man vil give et lån på 7.7 mio €.

Tyskland har udleveret Resul Myzafer Xhaferri til Albanien Statspolitiet skriver:

Interpol Tirana extradited the citizen Resul Myzafer Xhaferri, sentenced to 25 years in prison charged for murder

Today, on 15.11.2005, International Central Office, Interpol Tirana extradited from Germany to Albania the citizen Resul Myzafer Xhaferri, 48, inhabitant in "Tre herojnte" street, Vlore.

This citizen had been searched for on international level because the Court of Fier by the decree of the date 23.03.2000 sentenced him to 25 years in prison charged for murder.

The citizen Resul Xhaferri on March 25 of the year 1998, at the "Isa Buletini" street shot the 35-year citizen Reshat Mustafa Bega to death. Bega lived at the "Isa Buletini" street. The incident occurred after a conflict for a demesne.

Extradition of this citizen from Frankfurt was carried out in order this citizen suffer his conviction for the penal act of murder in Albania. The Court of Fier had declared him guilty.

FRANKRIG

DANMARK (NORGE, SVERIGE)

Ugerapport fra Dansk KFOR. Hærens Operative Kommando - se under: [Kosova](#).

LANDE UDEN FOR BALKAN OG ØSTLIGE MIDDELHAV. IKKE NATO-LANDE

RUSLAND

UMs Rejsevejledning: <http://www.um.dk/da/menu/Borgerservice/FoerRejsen/Rejsevejledninger/RejsevejledningRusland.htm>

Den Serbiske Præsident Boris Tadic har besøgt Præsident Putin. UM i Serbien-Montenegro skriver:

PUTIN SAYS DISINTEGRATION OF SERBIA-MONTENEGRO IMPERMISSIBLE DURING SEARCH FOR SOLUTION TO KOSOVO

MOSCOW, November 15 (Beta) -. Russian President Vladimir Putin said during a meeting with Serbian President Boris Tadic in Moscow on November 15 that "the disintegration of the union of Serbia-Montenegro is impermissible" as long as Belgrade is trying to find a solution to the Kosovo problem, the Kremlin said in a statement.

The statement said that the main subject of the talks was the situation in the Balkans and prospects for developing economic cooperation.

At the start of the meeting, Putin told Tadic that Serbia and Russia had always had a special historical relationship. Speaking on the importance of economic cooperation between Russia and Serbia, Putin said that trade between the two nations could easily reach US\$2 billion this year.

KINA

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