

Kosovo

The year 2006 was one of uneasy stasis for Kosovo. In February, Serbian and Kosovo Albanian leaders met in Vienna to launch talks overseen by UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari on the future status of the province, still technically under Serbian sovereignty.¹ With both sides under pressure to reach agreement by the end of the year, the international organizations that have held executive authority in Kosovo since 1999 undertook detailed planning for their future roles there. While it was assumed that an external presence would be required for some time, the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led Kosovo Force (KFOR) emphasized the transfer of responsibilities to local police and administrative structures. But a lack of progress in the status negotiations meant that the basic peacekeeping framework had not undergone major alterations as 2007 approached.

This framework is a complex arrangement, by which KFOR maintains military security, while executive policing and civilian duties lie with UNMIK. The latter includes not only UN staff, but also personnel of the EU (overseeing economic matters) and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (responsible for developing both political structures and the country's police academy). After three days of rioting severely tested the international presence in March 2004, KFOR maintained its force level at 17,000 until early 2006, and then it shrunk by nearly 1,000 during the year. Conversely, UNMIK gradually entrusted day-to-day security to the 7,000-strong Kosovo Police Service (KPS), reducing its own police element from 3,500 to 2,146 during 2005. In December 2005

it launched domestic interior and justice ministries, despite concerns raised by evidence of criminality in the government of President Ibrahim Rugova. The ministries had limited initial duties, but Belgrade argued that their formation represented a de facto step toward Kosovar statehood.

Kosovo's political landscape was altered significantly by Rugova's death from cancer on 21 January 2006. This followed a period of political drift caused by his illness and the resignation of his popular prime minister Ramush Haradinaj in March 2005 to face war crimes charges at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The president's death allowed a new leadership to emerge: Fatimir Sejdiu, a longtime Rugova ally, became president and appointed a new prime minister, Agim Çeku. The latter is also rumored to have committed war crimes, but had worked closely with the international community as a reforming commander of the Kosovo Protection Corps (KPC), a civil defense force with ties to criminality and Albanian radicalism. Soon after taking office, Çeku insisted that the status talks should lead to Kosovo's independence.

The initiation of the status talks had both positive and negative effects inside Kosovo. After a brief increase in low-level violence in late 2005, the province remained relatively calm through much of 2006, as Albanian radicals refrained from upsetting the negotiations. The government also made some progress toward achieving international standards on minority rights and a decentralization plan intended to give Serb-ethnicity enclaves greater self-governance. Nonetheless, the Serb

community (approximately 5 percent of the total population), always wary of dialogue, reduced its cooperation with the government still further as the status talks failed to progress. Talks between Kosovar and Serb authorities on issues other than status also lost impetus.

Although faced with limited immediate security challenges, KFOR was shaken in January 2006 when a plane crash killed forty-six Slovak troops flying home from the mission. Through the rest of the year, KFOR ran a series of military exercises aimed at demonstrating its ability to bring NATO reserves into the province on short notice should the situation deteriorate, and to sustain high-intensity operations in two parts of the province simultaneously. These were intended to dispel the poor impression the force made in the March 2004 riots, after which its structure was reformed to emphasize flexibility.

Meanwhile, the UN, EU, and OSCE prepared for a transition from UNMIK should the

status talks conclude successfully. An informal steering group, including representatives of the three organizations, and Martti Ahtisaari's negotiating team held a series of meetings through the year under the chairmanship of UNMIK's Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). While the OSCE indicated its interest in maintaining a long-term role on governance issues, it was accepted that the EU should take over justice and policing responsibilities from the UN under any future settlement. In April 2006 the European Council mandated a planning team to be based in Kosovo. Deployed in June, this consisted of twenty-four staff, including five police and four justice experts, authorized to operate until the end of the year. By September 2006, EU member states were contributing 608 of UNMIK's 1,907 police, and it was assumed that any post-status international police presence would be below current levels.

The strategic direction for the international

Box 4.11.1 Macedonia

While planning to reorient its roles in Kosovo and Bosnia, the European Union also reshaped its presence in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) in 2006. December 2005 saw the replacement of a two-year police mission, the EU Police Mission Proxima (EUPOL Proxima), with a smaller mission, the EU Police Advisory Team (EUPAT), having a six-month mandate. Police reform was a significant element of the 2001 Ohrid Agreement, which averted civil war between ethnic Albanians and Macedonians. The agreement envisaged decentralization of authority to the local level on issues including policing. EUPOL Proxima was required to balance this political priority with helping the domestic police develop a professional culture and tackle cross-border crime. EUPAT was mandated to support

these reforms, emphasizing police relations with the judiciary, and internal control mechanisms.

EUPAT was scheduled to be replaced by a European Commission monitoring team in June 2006. Its operations coincided with the run-up to national elections on 5 July, which were accompanied by low-level but frequent violence in the second quarter of the year. Nonetheless, EUPAT judged that the domestic police were advancing in initiating investigations, working with public prosecutors on organized crime, and coordinating border control. Less progress was made on the decentralization issue, due to both delays in necessary legislation and the resistance of some senior police officers. On concluding its operations in June, EUPAT drafted a series of recommendations for further improvements. While the European

Commission duly took over monitoring duties, the July elections failed to produce a majority government, and political attention was temporarily focused on coalition building. In September, the parliament finally passed a police reform law, which had been drafted by the previous government and supported by the EU.

EUPAT thus contributed to real, if slow, progress on implementing the Ohrid Agreement, but events in FYROM may be affected by disputes over Kosovo's status. The current government excludes former Albanian guerrillas who were backed by Kosovar radicals during the 2001 conflict. While FYROM's leaders remain committed to moving toward EU and NATO membership, renewed violence in Kosovo could unsettle their plans.

community in Kosovo also required further definition. A 2005 policy statement agreed by the European Council and Commission declared that the key mechanism for such direction “could take the form of an international office with an important EU component but cannot be EUMIK.” In September 2006, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan reported to the Security Council that the nucleus of such an international office had already been established in Kosovo.

But if there was progress on planning for the post-status environment, progress on sta-

tus itself was minimal. While Kosovar leaders insisted on independence, it was clear that Belgrade would not yield it up easily. Belgrade’s line hardened throughout the year, and after Montenegro voted for independence in a referendum in May 2006, a new Serbian constitution was drawn up reasserting sovereignty over Kosovo. When this was made public in September, Kosovo’s calm gave way to a spate of attacks on Serbs and a warning of potential “revolts” by the speaker of the province’s parliament. In early October, Martti Ahtisaari admitted that he could not see either side backing down. On 10 November, he responded to a decision by Serbia to hold national elections in January by announcing that he would make recommendations on Kosovo’s future immediately after these polls.

Ahtisaari’s decision prompted widespread speculation that he would urge the UN Security Council to recognize Kosovo’s independence in spite of Serbia’s opposition. But the fragility of Kosovo’s security situation was demonstrated on 28 November when Albanian protesters attacked the UN headquarters in Pristina. One possible compromise, previously rejected by the international community but occasionally raised by Belgrade, would be a partition of Kosovo by which its ethnically Serb north would revert to Serbia. This option gained attention during 2006, as the Serb authorities in the north increasingly cut off contact with the provincial government. Opinion polls conducted for the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) saw support for partition among Kosovo Serbs jump from 8 percent to 47 percent—an important shift, given that the minority had previously been overwhelmingly opposed to any outcome other than Kosovo remaining part of Serbia in its entirety. But partition might well endanger the many Serbs living in enclaves in Albanian-majority Kosovo, and the precedent would encourage secessionism among Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

UN officials predict that, whatever arrangement is reached over northern Kosovo, it may

UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

• Authorization and start date	10 June 1999 (UNSC Res. 1244) (note: paragraph 19 of the resolution states that international civil and security presences are established for an initial period of twelve months, to continue thereafter until the Security Council decides otherwise)
• SRSG	Joachim Rucker (Germany)
• Police commissioner	Stephen J. Curtis (United Kingdom)
• Chief military liaison officer	Brigadier-General Raul Cunha (Portugal)
• Budget	\$217.9 million (1 July 2006–30 June 2007)
• Strength as of 30 September 2006	Military observers: 37 Police: 1,870 International civilian staff: 509 Local civilian staff: 2,044 UN volunteers: 148

For detailed mission information see p. 305.

NATO Kosovo Force (KFOR)

• Authorization date	10 June 1999 (UNSC Res. 1244)
• Start date	June 1999
• Head of mission	Lieutenant-General Roland Kather (Germany)
• Budget	\$31.4 million (October 2005–September 2006)
• Strength as of 30 September 2006	Troops: 16,160 Civilian staff: 30 (approximate)

require the maintenance of a heavier international presence compared to the rest of the province. But with negotiations adrift, KFOR and UNMIK may find themselves responding to threats from both Serb and Albanian radicals throughout the province in the near future.

Note

1. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan informed the Security Council of his intention to appoint President Ahtisaari as his Special Envoy for the Kosovo status talks on 31 October 2005, and indicated that Albert Rohan of Austria would be Deputy Special Envoy. The Security Council welcomed this decision in a letter of 10 November 2005. The United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo (UNOSEK) was established in Vienna, employing eighteen international staff as of 30 June 2006.