



**Kosovo Albanian Mafia and KLA
Reports from USA and other countries**

By Anthony M. DeStefano

NEW YORK - The informant who visited the office of U.S. Attorney Rudolph W. Giuliani last December had a chilling story to tell:

A defendant in a drug racketeering case that Mr. Giuliani was prosecuting was offering \$400,000 to anyone who would kill a certain assistant U.S. attorney and a federal drug enforcement agent.

For 45 minutes Mr. Giuliani and his chief assistant, William Tandy, listened to and evaluated the tale. Five other informants later corroborated it. The threatened lawman-assistant prosecutor Alan M. Cohen and narcotics agent Jack Delmore-were given 24-hour-a-day protection by federal marshals.

For years police and court officials in Italy have had to deal with Mafia attempts on their lives, some of which have succeeded. American gangsters have rarely dared such crimes. But certain criminal groups in the U.S. now seem less restrained. Mr. Giuliani says he has recently heard of more threats against law-enforcement officers and judges around the country than at any other time in his 15 years as a prosecutor. A number of his colleagues share that perception. Mr. Giuliani says that he himself has been threatened.

The "Balkan Connection"

The drug case that brought forth the threats Mr. Giuliani is concerned about involved the disruption of the so-called "Balkan connection" heroin trade conducted by among others a loosely organized group of ethnic Albanians, centered in New York. A federal probe into this drug traffic and other possible crimes, including the alleged plot to kill officials, is in progress. The drug investigation and the criminal activities of small group of Albanian-Americans have attracted little publicity.

Many Albanians came to the U.S. after World War II via Yugoslavia. Others before the war, came directly from Albania. A small, mountainous Balkan country, communist Albania is bordered on the west by the Adriatic Sea and on its other boundaries by Yugoslavia and Greece.

Conservative and industrious, many Albanian-Americans manage real estate and run small businesses, living and working in decent obscurity. An estimated 100,000 live in the New York City area. Other Albanian communities are found in Michigan, Massachusetts and Illinois.

But the small minority of Albanians who take to crime have created new and unique problems for some law-enforcement officers around the country. Language and a code of

silence have protected the Albanian-American crime factions from outside penetration. "They are real secretive" says a detective in Hamtramck, Mich., a Detroit suburb where many Albanians live. He says police have tried but failed to infiltrate Albanian gangs here.

Various Crimes

Albanian-Americans criminals, police say, are involved in everything from gun-running to counterfeiting. In New York City, a police intelligence analyst says, some ethnic Albanians living in the Bronx are involved in extortion and robbery. Federal officials believe that Albanians run gambling in certain New York ethnic clubs.

Violence within the Albanian community can be particularly brutal, whether related to organized crime or not. In Hamtramck, an Albanian, reportedly enraged by the belief that his wife had contracted a sexual disease, shot three people at a clinic and then killed himself. In some attacks, women have been slashed with knives: crowded restaurants and bars have been raked with gunfire. "They're a wild bunch of people," says Capt. Glen McAlpine of the Shelby Township, Mich., police. During an investigation of Albanian crime in Shelby, a bomb exploded next to the police station. A police officer also was threatened, Capt. McAlpine says.

But it is drug trafficking that has gained Albanian organized crime the most notoriety. Some Albanians, according to federal Drug Enforcement Agency officials, are key traders in the "Balkan connection," the Istanbul-to-Belgrade heroin route. While less well known than the so-called Sicilian and French connections, the Balkan route in some years may move 25% to 40% of the U.S. heroin supply, official say.

Ties to Turks

Once serving only as couriers, some ethnic Albanians and Yugoslavs now are taking over more command of the traffic, says Andrew Fenrich, a DEA spokesman in New York. Federal agents say that Balkan crime groups are well suited for trafficking because of close historical and religious ties with the Turks, some of whom are sources of heroin.

DEA agents say the heroin flows from Turkey through Bulgaria and Greece into Yugoslavia. From there it can wind up in Rome, Brussels, The Hague and the U.S.. Once in America, the Balkan heroin is believed by officials to be distributed by some ethnic Albanians and Turks. (Albania itself, long cut off from the most of the world by its recently deceased leader Enver Hoxha, isn't believed by the U.S. to be involved in the drug trade.)

On the surface, at least, Skender Fici seemed to be a law-abiding businessman. He ran a Staten Island travel agency, Theresa Worldwide, which made a specialty of booking trips to Yugoslavia, where many Albanians live.

He became a specialist in handling immigration paper work, and he sponsored a local ethnic Albanian soccer team.

According to federal prosecutors and a sentencing memorandum they filed in Manhattan's Federal District Court, Mr. Fici's travel agency made a perfect vehicle for arranging quick trips for drug dealers and couriers working the Balkan connection. One of Mr. Fici's first shipments arrived in New York in February 1979, according to the prosecutors' memo. A kilogram of heroin was distributed in New York partly through the efforts of Xhevedet Lika, known as Joey Lik, who made his base on New York City's polyglot Lower East Side.

There, according to the sentencing memorandum, Mr. Lika sold the drug to other dealers from a social club located in the midst of Judaica shops and Chinese clothing stores.

By 1980, according to federal court testimony and the sentencing report, Mr. Lika was importing heroin as well as distributing it, traveling to Turkey and Yugoslavia to arrange shipments. He also allegedly dealt in cocaine with Xhevedet Mustafa, who disappeared in 1982. Mr. Mustafa had been a supporter, of the late, deposed Albanian monarch King Zog, who died in 1961.

Mr. Mustafa skipped out before his own federal trial on drug charges could take place in 1982. In September 1982, he reportedly led an unsuccessful invasion of Albania aimed at restoring the monarchy. Mr. Hoxha said the invaders all were "liquidated" but Mr. Mustafa still is listed as a fugitive in federal court records.

Mr. Lika, meanwhile, was expanding his heroin business in New York with other associates, according to federal prosecutors. He had fallen out with one of his old partners, Dujo Saljanin, who in 1991 had agreed to import several kilos of heroin for Mr.

Lika and others but short-weighted the delivery by a kilo. To resolve the discrepancy, a January 1981 meeting was held at a Park Avenue South restaurant Mr. Saljanin operated. Joey Lika and two other men, Mehmet Bici and Vuksan Vulaj, were present. Mr. Bici later testified in federal court that Mr. Vulaj pulled a gun and shot Mr. Saljanin.

"Mr. Lika had a gun, and he shot him, too," Mr. Bici testified. "I was there, too, and I shot him too. And then we just left, crossed the street," he testified.

Even with 13 bullet wounds, Mr. Saljanin lived a short while, long enough to talk. Mr. Vulaj was later shotgunned to death. Hampered by lack of cooperation in the Albanian community, as well as by difficulties with the Albanian language that made electronic surveillance useless, police and federal agents worked about three years before they broke the case in 1984.

Federal officials estimate that the group had imported more than 110 pounds of heroin with a retail or "street" value of \$125 million through the Balkan connection before the ring was broken up. Federal agents believe the drugs had been sold in New York, California, Texas and Illinois.

The trail that Mr. Delmore, the DEA agent, followed led to Mr. Bici, who was then serving a sentence in a New York state prison for attempted manslaughter of his wife. Questioned by Mr. Delmore, Mr. Bici at first denied having any knowledge of drug dealing or the Saljanin murder but ultimately decided to cooperate. He was indicted along with Joey Lika, Mr. Lika's brother Luan, Mr. Fici and others on federal charges of drug dealing and racketeering. Luan Lika was never arrested and remains a fugitive. Mr. Bici pleaded guilty to transporting heroin and to racketeering. He was sentenced to eight years and is serving time under guard in the "prisoner witness" protection program.

The atmosphere at the trial, which began late last year, was highly charged. Early in the proceeding, Mr. Cohen, the prosecutor, mentioned that a witness claimed to have been threatened with death by Mr. Lika's father.

(Judge Vincent Broderick kept Lika family spectators seated near the back of the courtroom.)

Another witness reported that a man outside the Manhattan courthouse had threatened her. Gjon Barisha, a prospective witness, fled before the trial, after claiming that he had been fired at. He evaded federal agents for months before being arrested on a material witness warrant last month. Others who were to be called as witnesses hid out or refused to testify, prosecutor Cohen says, because they feared, as one of them put it, "a bullet in the head." Prosecutors allege that some witnesses perjured themselves at the trial.

Judge Broderick remarked during the trial that the case involved the most reckless disregard for human life that he had ever seen. The message wasn't lost on federal officials, who took the threats against them seriously.

Since World War II, there have been more than 800 revenge killings by Albanians in Yugoslavia and several in New York, according to Dushan Kosovich, a scholar who has studied Albanian mores. Mr. Giuliani says of the threat against Mr. Cohen: "This was the most serious threat I have seen yet to an assistant U.S. Attorney."

For three months from late 1984 into early 1985, Mr. Cohen and Mr. Delmore and their wives shared their homes with federal marshals acting as bodyguards. "You can't believe what it is like" says Mr. Cohen, who was guarded in court-even when he went to the men's room.

A Jury this year convicted Joey Lika and Mr. Fici on charges of racketeering conspiracy. Mr. Lika was also convicted of the more serious charge of running a criminal enterprise. To emphasize to the defendants that their opponent was the government, and not just Mr. Cohen, U S. Attorney Giuliani himself appeared in court for the sentencing in March. Mr. Lika denied in court as sentence was about to be rendered that he wanted anyone killed, and his attorney protested the government's use of evidence from unnamed informants about the alleged threats. Nevertheless, Mr. Lika was sentenced to life in prison, Mr. Fici to 80 years. They are appealing their convictions.

Mr. Giuliani refuses to discuss details, but he says he has learned recently that there had been an effort to fulfill an assassination contract against him and Messrs. Cohen and Delmore. "After you have been convicted," he says, "there is no rational reason to kill a prosecutor, except revenge."

While Mr. Giuliani says he now considers the threat against himself "minor," DEA agent Delmore and his family have moved-away from New York. Prosecutor Cohen is still investigating other drug dealers in New York but he, too, has a new residence.

Federal officials aren't sure how much lasting damage they have done to the Balkan connection. Mr. Cohen says the Lika case and others, prosecuted by local authorities, have resulted in the conviction of more than 10 Albanian-American drug traffickers, and that has got to have some impact.

Mr. Fenrich, the DEA spokesman, says that the Lika case made it clear that vendettas against law enforcers wont be tolerated.

As for Joey Lika, prison may be the safest place for him. Because he testified about his part in the Saljanin killing, federal agents say he now is "in the blood" - that is, the object of a vendetta - with relatives of Mr. Saljanin.

Albanian Americans Funding Rebels' Cause

By Stacy Sullivan

Special to The Washington Post Tuesday, May 26, 1998; Page A12

BROOKLYN, N.Y.-A photograph hanging above the entrance to a Brooklyn construction company shows a young man in a white T-shirt with an AK-47 assault rifle slung across his chest and a pistol tucked into his pants.

The young man, Adrian Krasniqi, 25, was a member of the Kosovo Liberation Army, a group of Albanian rebels fighting for independence in Kosovo, a Serbian province whose inhabitants are 90 percent ethnic Albanian. According to his uncle, who owns the construction company here, Krasniqi was killed last October during an attack on a Serbian police position in Kosovo.

The company owner, a 32-year-old Albanian American who emigrated to the United States in 1989, has been supporting the rebel group part-time since 1994, before most of the world knew of its existence. But since his nephew's death, he said, he spends almost all his time organizing Albanian American support for the guerrilla movement, which he hopes will turn into a force capable of fighting the Yugoslav Army.

The contractor, who also is named Krasniqi but who did not want his first name used, is not alone in his quest. His fund-raising efforts in the United States, as well as those of Albania immigrants in Europe, have increased steadily over the past few months. According to diplomatic and other observers with experience in the region, the money thus assembled has helped the rebels get arms and smuggle them into Kosovo over routes through Albania, Macedonia and Montenegro.

Partly as a result, the once obscure group of rural militants has become an increasingly visible guerrilla insurgency that Western diplomats fear could erupt into a war with the potential to engulf the southern Balkans.

Krasniqi said his efforts to raise money for the KLA in the United States were not very successful at first. Between 300,000 and 500,000 Albanian Americans live in the United States, clustered mainly in New York, Detroit, Chicago and Boston. But almost all supported Ibrahim Rugova, who leads a peaceful independence movement and has set up a shadow government.

After the Dayton peace accords for Bosnia were signed, however, more and more Albanians in Europe and the United States became disillusioned with Rugova's peaceful struggle and began shifting their support to the Kosovo Liberation Army. Now many of Rugova's biggest donors are supporting the KLA. Their support ranges from contributing money, to signing up volunteers to fight, to arranging shipments of humanitarian aid and weapons.

"I loved Rugova and his ideals," said Ramiz Hoti, 33, a waiter in a New York restaurant

who came to the United States in 1983. "But what has it brought us? Nothing! The only way now is to fight."

Hoti, a former prisoner in Kosovo, said he has registered as a volunteer to fight with the KLA and gives the group \$300 a week. His brother, Hariz Hoti, a 36-year-old construction worker from the Bronx, has already left for Kosovo to join the KLA, he added.

Supporters of the Kosovo rebels have set up a fund, "Home Land Calling," which has a bank account at People's Bank in Bridgeport, Conn. KLA supporters in Europe have set up "Home Land Calling" accounts in Sweden, Italy, Belgium and Canada. The bank names and account numbers are advertised in Albanian newspapers printed in Europe.

"There is absolutely no doubt that the fund-raising of the KLA supporters in the U.S. and Europe is funding the KLA. All the money in Kosovo, not only for the arms, but for everything, comes from abroad," said Tiho Loza, associate editor of Transitions, a monthly journal specializing in east European affairs.

KLA meetings and fund-raisers mostly take place in Albanian-run restaurants. They are emotional and well-attended events. On April 20, the KLA held a fund-raiser at Bruno's, a restaurant in midtown Manhattan where a teenager from Drenice gave an emotional speech about the deaths of his teacher and several students, who were killed in a Serbian attack on his village. More than 150 Albanians from all over the country attended the event.

Many wrote checks; others donated in cash. One young Albanian, who asked that his name be withheld for fear his contribution might hurt his private business, donated \$50,000.

"Everything I've got, I'll give to these guys," said Jesse Musliu, a 45-year-old mechanic who flew in from Alaska for the event. "I'll mortgage my house again if I have to."

The once secret fund-raisers are now held openly and advertised in the weekly Albanian American newspaper Illyria, based in the Bronx. The most recent issue advertised a kick-boxing tournament in Waterbury, Conn., at an Albanian-run martial arts studio. The \$10 entrance fees were earmarked for the KLA.

Krasniqi said that from \$3 million to \$4 million has been raised in the United States. Albanians who support the rebel army displayed receipts of money transfers of more than \$500,000 to banks and individuals in Albania since December, as well as several briefcases of cash they said was bound for Albania.

According to John Russell, a Justice Department spokesman, U.S. law does not bar contributing money to an insurgent army, or fighting in one, unless that army is listed as a terrorist group by the State Department.

State Department officials pointed out, however, that any Americans caught smuggling arms into Kosovo would be violating an international arms embargo against Yugoslavia.

Example of strong KLA marketing and misinforming:

From: thomas coonan <tcoonan@EMAIL.UNC.EDU
To: ALBANIAN@LISTSERV.ACSU.BUFFALO.EDU
Subj: [ALBANIAN] \$ for KLA
Date: 7 ???? 1998 ?. 18:50 [Albanian characters]
Albanian Discussion List
Archives: <http://listserv.acsu.buffalo.edu/archives/albanian.html>

Dear List members,

Because of recent developments on the battlefield, I believe that, of necessity, the KLA (UCK) will conduct a more guerrilla-style campaign from now on. It is nearly impossible to hold onto territory if you are fighting an enemy armed with all kinds of heavy weapons while you have mainly just light ones. But, as we learned in Vietnam, guerilla fighters can often be victorious. Serbia is so weak financially that it cannot sustain a protracted guerrilla war.

The main thing is to keep the money flowing to the KLA. Since Germany and Switzerland have cracked down (shamelessly) on KLA bank accounts there, it is imperative that people in America increase their financial support on this side. For those new, English-speaking members of the List who may not have heard, the organization known as "Vendlindja therret" is collecting funds for the KLA.

Their US account number is: 0617008215. Check can be mailed to: People's Bank, 328 Shippan Ave., Stamford, CT 06902-6014. Remember, the KLA is the ONLY one standing between the Albanian population and the Serb-government killing machine!

Sincerely, Thomas Coonan

**NATIONAL NARCOTICS INTELLIGENCE CONSUMERS COMMITTEE (NNICC) THE
NNICC REPORT 1996**

The Supply of Illicit Drugs to the United States

The NNICC Report is produced annually for the use of NNICC member agencies and other entities and individuals interested in this subject. Comments and queries are welcome and may be addressed to the:

Drug Enforcement Administration

ATTN: Intelligence Division

Washington, DC 20537

(202) 307-8111

[...]

Heroin was shipped from Turkey primarily to European countries and, to a much smaller extent, the United States. Bulk heroin shipments destined for European markets were transported along a combination of numerous land and sea routes collectively known as the Balkan Route. Smaller quantities destined for the United States were shipped directly, or transshipped through Europe. The Balkan Route encompasses highways running from Turkey through Greece, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia, Romania, the Czech and Slovak Republics, and Hungary, to Austria, Germany, and Italy, as well as ferry routes between Greece and Italy. From Italy, heroin shipments were routed to markets elsewhere in Western Europe.

Nigerian heroin smugglers in Italy sought out U.S. servicemen based there to act as couriers bringing heroin from Turkey to Italy or distribution there and elsewhere in Europe. Seventy-five percent of the heroin seized in Europe in recent years, however, was transported by way of the Balkan Route. Significant 1996 seizures of heroin en route from Turkey to Western Europe included 190 kilograms seized in January by Turkish police from a tractor-trailer bound for Germany; 217 kilograms of heroin seized in May by Italian authorities from a truck aboard a passenger ferry that arrived in Venice, Italy, from Izmir; and 65 kilograms seized in June by German customs authorities from a truck that had arrived from Turkey by way of Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and Austria.

Drug trafficking organizations composed of ethnic Albanians from Serbia's Kosovo Province were considered to be second only to Turkish groups as the predominant heroin smugglers along the Balkan Route. These groups were particularly active in Bulgaria, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM), and Serbia. Kosovar traffickers were noted for their use of violence and for their involvement in international weapons trafficking. There is increasing evidence that ethnic criminals from the Balkans are engaged in criminal activities in the United States and some of that activity involves theft of licit pharmaceutical products for illicit street distribution.

Albanian Terrorists of KLA Pay Weapon in Heroin

Date: 99-02-02 17:14:11 EST

Romania Libera"

July 30, 1998.

By Vladimir Alexe

The weapon traffic routes

According to the experts, the region of Kosovo has in the last years become the real stepping stone of the weapon traffic, not only for the Balkans, but also for the entire Europe. Prishtina, Podujevo, Pec and other places are the centre of the international routes' cross-roads used by the traders. The experienced weapon traffickers consider the

Albanians from Kosovo and Metohija as the people with whom big deals can be closed. The first "channel" used by the Albanian weapon traffickers was, as understood, the Yugoslav route, the surplus of weapon from the former Yugoslav republics to be more precise. But the Albanians from Kosovo had soon formed several other secret channels for the weapon traffic, in the direction of Germany, Belgium, Switzerland and Denmark.

The Slovenian border crossing "Sentilj" was proclaimed by the weapon traffickers as the "ideal border crossing". Albania provides a special channel for smuggling the weapon into Kosovo, but the traffickers consider it "risky" because of the numerous Serbian Army units stationed at the border between the two countries and the (counter) attack of the snipers or Serbian guns, well camouflaged within the zone. The latest addition to the weapon market is China, practising the "dumping" policy in this field and, for example, offers rifles for just 200 DM at the black market. Turk's Mafia and Albanian's heroin

In principle, the weapon black market in Kosovo is in stable "mobility". So, the traditional "kalashnykov" can be bought at the prices of 700 to 1700 DM (the only acceptable currency). "Papovka" costs 600-800 DM and the revolvers could be bought at 400 to 700 DM. Grenades and mines are 30 DM a piece, almost a symbolic price. In the recent years the European Union recorded the fact that the Turk's Mafia is bringing in weapon galore to Kosovo and Sandzak, through Bulgaria and Skopje (Macedonia).

The interesting matter is that the Albanian terrorists grouped into the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army, pay for the weapon not only in German marks but in heroin, as well. In 1994, the European Union seated in Brussels, published a report based upon a study of drug traffic routes in Europe, identifying the well-organised Albanian traffickers from Macedonia and from Kosovo, who paid for the smuggling of weapon in heroin. The weapons provided in this matter were handed over to the Albanian terrorist groups, fighting for the separation of Kosovo from the FR of Yugoslavia. The European Union report stated:" The recent larger quantities of heroin were recorded in Switzerland, Germany, Italy and Greece, and the investigation proved that these quantities come from the centers like Prishtina (Kosovo), Skopje (Macedonia) and Shkoder (Albania). The Yugoslav army storage of weapons did not go unnoticed by the Albanian traffickers from Kosovo. The Albanians-Moslems broke into the weapon storages in Raska and Novi Pazar, and took out (as in September 1997) automatic guns large quantities of explosives, tens of mortars

and thousands of ammunition. Just one of these "breakings in" the quantity of weapon taken was worth about 1000 DM in the black market.

"Those in possession of the Balkans, especially Kosovo and Metohija, control the stability of the entire Europe"

The Albanian terrorism and separatism obscures the geopolitical and the strategic dimension known only by some. In the offices of the Great, the Balkans is considered to have the deciding role of the stability or instability of Europe. Within this context, Kosovo and Macedonia seem to be in possession of keys of stability in the Balkans. The date of origin of the Albanian separatist terrorism is not, as believed, recent. In 1991 in Kosovo and Metohija around 200 Albanian terrorist attacks were registered, against the police officers but against the civilians as well. Since the very beginning, among the terrorists' civilians-victims were the Albanians, too, their only guilt being their respect of law and not supporting the terrorist actions. But all the terrorist actions are not committed by the Albanians from the "Kosovo Liberation Army" and "The National Movement for Kosovo". Both terrorist organisations are positioned in Switzerland and both are considered by the experts as the main sponsors of the terrorist operations in Kosovo and Metohija. The main goal of the Albanian terrorist is not only the separation of the Kosovo Province from the FR of Yugoslavia, but the "ethnic cleansing" particularly. Ibrahim Rugova himself, seen as a moderate and opponent of the secessionist ideas, says to Spiegel: "Kosovo will belong to those ones who will stay there", and thus discreetly creating, beside terrorism and separatism, a deceitful geopolitical and geostrategical design. It gives the control Kosovo a different dimension: the Province is the "key" of stability in the Balkans, and the Balkans are the "Key" to the stability of the entire Europe (and not only the south east Europe, as perceived).

Those ones in possession of Kosovo and Metohija, control the stability or the instability of Europe. The involvement of all the great powers in the zone (including China) not seems quite justified. To own the "key" to peace or war in the Old Continent is not a small matter. "Phantom Government" of the so-called Kosovo Republic -still unrecognised by any state - has its seat in Ulm near Bonn, in Germany. The leader of this phantom "republic" - Buyar Bukoshi - receives significant "donations", later to be deposited in the Swiss banks or secret safes. Bukoshi himself, with his family, lives in Ulm. Meaning, far away from the bloodshed in Kosovo. Contrary to the leader, Ibrahim Rugova, who has not left the region and is looking forward to the US State Department support. In 1997, the Carnegie Foundation" invited Rugova to USA and introduced him to the public through mass media in the right way. If Bukoshi is "the Germany man", Rugova is "the American man". In practice, in the background of the bloody scene of Kosovo protagonists, the interests of one or the other great power can be discerned. The region of Kosovo being the geostrategic area of extreme importance to Europe, the "former Kosovo" could be later mentioned in other cases as well in connection with the ethnic separatism in Europe. Renowned cases.

From: www.kosovo.net

HEROIN ROADS

On 2 April 1998, police control at the Gosevo border crossing point revealed 11 kilos of heroin worth 14 million Deutschmarks on the street (on aggregate), hidden in the boot of the car of a 53-year old Albanian woman.

In May 1998, Lausanne police arrested one Musa Rifat Salemani of Pozarenje village in Kosovo. His group of criminals imported as much as half a tonne of heroine into Switzerland between 1992 and 1995.

What happens to millions of Deutschmarks and Swiss francs earned by the Albanian mafia from this death trade throughout Europe?

ROUTES OF TERRORISM, NARCOTIC DRUGS AND ARMS ARE CLOSELY INTERTWINED - BEHIND IT ALL STANDS MONEY AND POWER THAT MONEY CAN BUY

The main drug routes connecting Turkey with Western Europe go through the Balkan region. These routes have always been "busy", but not as busy as in the last couple of years. Police are well aware of the key points on the "Balkan drug route", such as Gostivar (Macedonia) and Tropoja (Albania), transit points for scores of international transport (TIR-carnet) trucks. In Kumanovo, just beside the motorway, there is a barracks housing a state-of-the-art heroin processing facility. The necessary inputs come from a factory near the border with Greece that was built by the Germans. The main headquarters of drug dealers is a trendy spot - Grand Hotel in Skopje (Macedonia).

However, Albania is the biggest Balkan money laundering and illicit drugs centre. The pyramid schemes, which triggered the bloody political riots in Albania in 1997, were, in fact, a front to channel in the drug money legally (State Department Report). A political mess in that country has made it possible for the drug mafia to develop the business on an unprecedented scale. Last year alone, about 200 kilos of pure heroin entered Albania. The Albanian drug mafia is in close contact with many Albanian expatriates throughout Europe and the United States, precisely through the Kosovo Albanian drug mafia. Indeed, Kosovo is the seat of one of the most powerful drug cartels in the world - the Camilla drug cartel which is responsible for drug dealing across Western Europe. A huge chunk of the proceeds of the drug business goes to Kosovo to meet the needs of the "Kosovo Liberation Army" ("KLA") terrorist organization, namely to buy weapons for them.

According to police sources, the Albanians of Kosovo and Metohija hold sway over 80 per cent of drug (heroin) trade in Europe. At least half the countries of Europe have a network of individual drug dealers connected to the suppliers in Kosovo. The largest quantities of heroin confiscated in Germany, Switzerland, Italy and Greece come in via Skopje (Macedonia), Shkoder (Albania) and Prishtina (Kosovo). Several groups of Kosovo Albanians work together with Turkish Kurds and jointly acquire drugs coming to Turkey from Afghanistan. This involves huge amounts of this deadly powder from which dealers reap millions of Deutschmarks.

[The] Albanian mafia is one of the most powerful drug mafias worldwide, primarily thanks to its clan-like organization and an infinite brutality of its members that ensures an absolute unity. Fear makes the tissue of this lethal organism. Terrible fear ensures silence and an unquestionable loyalty in the mafia ranks. Albanian mafia members live modestly and in awe. Only the top bosses live in grand style. Where does all that money go? The Albanian mafia spends the bulk of its drug money in Italy on arms intended for Albanian and Kurdish separatists. According to European criminal police authorities, the money earned from heroin in Western Europe is transferred to Kosovo, notably to Veliki Trnovac, a place considered to be the drug peddling centre. Heads of Kosovo dealer groups are all men coming from the same area and directly working for the terrorist Kosovo National Front, whose armed wing is "KLA". They use the heroin money and the "laundered" money to fund "KLA" terrorist actions and the separatist Albanian parties in Kosovo.

From: <http://www.kosovo.net/terrorism/heroin.html>

THE GLOBE AND MAIL

Monday, November 9, 1998 International News; p. A14

UNREPENTANT KLA DISMISSES ACCUSATIONS

Kosovo rebels unlikely to co-operate with probe by Canadian war-crimes prosecutor

Tom Walker

Special to *The Globe and Mail*

Pristina, Yugoslavia

The Kosovo Liberation Army does not consider itself guilty of war crimes, and is unlikely to co-operate with the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague, sources in the rebel group say.

The issue of bringing to justice those responsible for the hundreds of deaths in the fractious Serbian province this year stalled last week when Yugoslav authorities in Belgrade barred the tribunal's chief prosecutor, Canada's Louise Arbour, from visiting Kosovo. The KLA warned over the weekend that it, too, is equally unlikely to help Ms. Arbour and her investigators.

Sources in the rebel group, who asked not to be identified, have admitted that many of the KLA's victims — both Serb and ethnic Albanians deemed loyal to Belgrade — endured brutal deaths. One fighter said that two Serb police officers captured in the western village of Glogane were executed by being dragged behind cars, and that bodies of Yugoslav army soldiers were gratuitously mutilated.

Although the ethnic Albanians generally encourage international involvement in the Kosovo crisis, the KLA sources said there was little point in trying to bring the often ill-disciplined local command structure of the KLA to heel. "In a way I think what we did was helpful; it made the Serbs think again before repeating their massacres," said one man, who described how the police officers' bodies were decapitated as they were dragged behind cars driven by young rebels "in some sort of show" organized by a village rebel chief.

"It's not something the KLA favours and not something that is usually done," he said. "But you must understand that these policemen had a long history of physically mistreating local people. People involved in conflicts like this know the risks they run."

Belgrade has argued that Kosovo is an internal crisis, not a war, so there is no reason for Ms. Arbour and her investigators to become involved. Observers suspect that behind the refusal to let the Hague team in (and one of the reasons international sanctions against Yugoslavia remain) is a fear that senior police and army personnel could face indictments, and that even Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic might be vulnerable.

U.S. war-crimes envoy David Scheffer criticized the visa decision, which also bars the

tribunal's president, Gabrielle Kirk McDonald, from travelling to Kosovo. "In the UN Security Council, there is unanimous consent of all its members that investigators have full authority to do their job in Kosovo," Mr. Scheffer noted Saturday.

So far, Belgrade has only allowed a team of Finnish forensic experts to examine grave sites in Kosovo. One of Serbia's senior forensic pathologists, however, has publicly advocated that international teams be allowed to investigate all deaths in Kosovo, and the evidence they gather be sent to The Hague.

"I'll continue to ask for experts to come," said Zoran Stankovic, senior pathologist at Belgrade's military hospital and Yugoslavia's only UN-accredited forensic scientist.

Mr. Stankovic accused the Serbian media of grossly distorting some incidents where Serbs have been killed, but also said authorities had failed to bring home the brutality of the KLA and its methods to the foreign press.

Kosovo is Mafia's 'heroin gateway to West'
FROM EVE-ANN PRENTICE IN BELGRADE

THE Kosovo conflict has turned the province into a magnet for many of the world's notorious drug barons, according to a director of the International Narcotics Enforcement Officers' Association.

More than 40 per cent of the heroin reaching Western Europe comes through the Serb province because of a lack of border controls, says Marko Nicovic.

"Kosovo is now the Colombia of Europe. There is no border between Kosovo and Albania or between Macedonia and Kosovo," he said yesterday. "For the Turkish, Russian, Italian and Albanian mafias," Kosovo really had become a paradise.

Mr Nicovic is a former Belgrade police chief and drug squad detective who worked for years in co-operation with police in Britain and the US. He says he began to notice Albanian gangs dealing in drugs in the mid-1980s.

Heroin trafficking increased, he says, after Yugoslavia lost its membership of Interpol with the imposition of international sanctions in 1993. "Our police had great expertise and experience with this," Mr Nicovic says. The Kosovo conflict has left the province without police or customs controls and "Kfor soldiers are not criminal investigators".

Mr Nicovic said drugs were being brought into Kosovo from Asia and Turkey, then taken on to Western Europe by road and sea by drug barons from Italy and Albania.

Mr Nicovic says many Kosovo Albanians have bought harbourside sites in Albania in the past few years. Much of the heroin shipped from there to small ports in southeastern Italy are run by Italian Mafiosi. Other favourite routes are by road, north through Serbia to Hungary, the Czech Republic and Germany, he says.

The former Yugoslav drugs squad chief says the Albanian drugs and arms mafia is particularly hard to penetrate. Albanians have strong family ties and it is hard to find informers. "They have a brotherhood which gives them a far greater ability to form a mafia than even the Sicilians."

Mr Nicovic says hundreds of pounds of heroin are being stored in the village of Veliki Trnovac, near Gnjiliane, in the southeast of Kosovo, and Djakovica in the west. "The criminals have found the one country between Asia and Europe which is not a member of Interpol," he says.

"This is a cancer area for Europe as Western Europe will very soon discover. As each day passes the Albanian mafia becomes richer and more powerful."