

for the premises of the Angolan government diamond company, Endiama, both in Luanda and in the mining region itself. According to an official Armor Holding press release, DSL ceased operations in Angola as of Jan. 16. The Angolan contract represents 15% of Armor Holdings' revenue for 1997, and it remains to be seen how it will affect the company's share price, which is traded on the American Stock Exchange.

### **Broader strategic interests**

But, the significance of this development goes beyond the mere loss of a major security contract. DSL has been involved in Angola since 1986, when it became the first Western security company to operate for the Marxist People's Liberation Army government in Angola. As the British Crown's prime privatized paramilitary-intelligence operation, DSL's deployment into Angola represented a significant shift in British policy, to throw their support behind the Marxist government, which, with massive support from Cuba and the Soviet bloc, was engaged in a bloody civil war with the anti-communist forces of the Western-backed UNITA. London's Lonrho company, which DSL knows from its Mozambique contracts at that time, had extensive discussions in London in January 1986 with a representative of the East German State Security Service, the Stasi, which had a large presence in Angola.

The booting out of DSL from Angola coincided with the conclusion of an agreement and firm timetable for its implementation, on Jan. 13, between the Angolan government and the UNITA opposition. The Clinton administration, in an effort to end the civil war, has acted behind the scenes to help broker an agreement. It is well known that the Clinton administration prevented an Executive Outcomes-assisted effort to achieve a military solution in 1994. EO was ousted from Angola last year. It has been a long-standing demand by UNITA that all mercenary forces be withdrawn from Angola. UNITA had insisted that "private security" companies were involved in combat. In May 1997, the Clinton administration also insisted that a new offensive at that time should be stopped. Similarly, in Papua New Guinea, it is well documented that, in 1997, DSL facilitated the entry into that country of EO and Sandline Security of London. Special Air Services (SAS) "old boy" networks did the same in Angola. DSL's departure from the scene is perhaps testimony to London's duplicity regarding the peace effort.

French sources close to DSL's French affiliate, CIAS, in Corsica (home base also of the French Foreign Legion), have complained that the United States has been orchestrating the reshuffling of private security companies in Angola. The Angolan government has been insisting on domestic control of such companies. The charges that DSL violated Angolan law, seems to indicate that it has run afoul of U.S. efforts to assist the peace process between UNITA and the government.

## **New hot-spots threaten another Balkan war**

by Konstantin George

During December and January, three new flashpoints arose across the southern portion of former Yugoslavia: the Albanian-inhabited region of Kosova, whose 90% Albanian majority has been subjected to brutal Serbian misrule and oppression; the rump Yugoslavia republic of Montenegro; and, the Republic of Macedonia. Each carries the potential to spark a new Balkan war.

The parameters defining both the current slide toward a new Balkan war, as well as for a successful solution to the problems, are located outside the Balkans. No matter how "indigenous" the problems in the Balkans may seem, the conflicts there always are determined by the policy fights "at the top," so to speak, among the larger world powers. The current slide toward a new war was set in motion, unfortunately, despite the good intentions of the Clinton administration, by the foul compromises acceded to by Washington, with London and Paris, in the Dayton Peace Accord. Added to that, is the absence to date of a U.S.-led economic development perspective and program for the Balkan region. Barring such an American initiative, London and Paris, which have orchestrated every war and sabotaged every peace initiative in the region since 1991, will continue to exercise a stranglehold in the Balkans.

### **Kosova at the brink**

The most serious of the three hot-spots at present is Kosova. In this regard, the United States has assigned a national security priority to trying to cool down the situation there. This was evidenced by the mid-January mission of U.S. special emissary for former Yugoslavia, Robert Gelbard, to Serbia, where, for the first time ever, the itinerary included a visit to the Kosova capital, Pristina.

The Kosova situation has been deteriorating for years. Serbian dictator Slobodan Milosevic has used his military and police to imprison thousands of Albanians, and hundreds have been murdered by the Serb authorities. The Albanian majority has been denied all rights, and has even seen their schools and universities closed, under a Belgrade-imposed ban on all teaching in the Albanian language.

Until recently, this torture and humiliation have been met with a policy of non-violent opposition, and civil disobedience, under the leader and modern-day "father" of Kosova Albanians, Ibrahim Rugova, in the awareness that violence

would play into the hands of the Belgrade oppressors, and open the door to a new, southern Balkans-centered war. Any explosion in Kosova would not be contained within the borders of Kosova. Kosova borders on Albania, which over the past year has itself become extremely unstable, and on the Republic of Macedonia, which, alongside its Slav majority, has an Albanian minority comprising about 30% of the total population.

However, playing upon the waning patience among a significant portion of Kosova Albanians, an anti-Rugova group, called the Kosova Liberation Army (KLA, or UCK from its Albanian initials, which has been around for some time, functioning on a low-level "armed struggle" basis), has swung into action. Under the KLA, which has won over a number of clans in the central mountains of Kosova, the beginning of an armed insurrection against Serbian misrule commenced late last year.

The revolt began on Nov. 25, with the first serious clash between KLA insurgents and Serbian forces in the central Kosova district of Skenderaj. The next day, a larger Serbian force entered the district, and after another clash, the Serbians pulled back. Two days later, on Nov. 28 (not coincidentally, Albania's national holiday), at a funeral for a Kosova Albanian teacher killed in the Nov. 26 clash, the first mass rally organized by the KLA drew 20,000 Kosova Albanians. KLA speakers read a "Declaration of War on the Serbian Occupying Power," to the cheers of participants.

Since Nov. 26, for nearly two months, no uniformed Serbian personnel, neither army nor police, have set foot in this district, which has de facto become the first "liberated zone" in Kosova, a zone embracing 52 villages with about 70,000 inhabitants. From Belgrade's standpoint, central Kosova has become a "no-go zone" for Serbian forces.

As of January, the Serbs even called a halt to their previous low-altitude helicopter flights over the district. This reflects the fact that the ethnic Albanian insurgents, who started out well-armed with all sorts of light infantry weapons, probably have procured more sophisticated weapons. Kosova's border with Albania is totally porous, and ever since the chaos that swept Albania, starting in February-March of last year, with the plundering of all arms depots there, there has been an almost daily traffic of arms, smuggled out of Albania into Kosova. It was the breakdown of Albania last year that provided the KLA with the physical capability, namely, tens of thousands of weapons and huge stores of munitions, to mount an armed insurrection. The KLA's ranks have been filled out because of the ever-growing loss of patience among Kosova Albanians in the potential for success of passive resistance. This loss of patience is greatest among the Kosova Albanian youth. These young people (more than half of Kosova's 2 million Albanians are under the age of 25), under the humiliating conditions of Serbian apartheid rule, see themselves with no future, and are easily recruitable into the ranks of the KLA.

## The Macedonian crisis

In December, a wave of bombings hit the western area of the Republic of Macedonia. This region, along Macedonia's border with Albania, and in the north bordering on Kosova, is overwhelmingly inhabited by ethnic Albanians. On Dec. 19, a bomb went off in the court building in the town of Gostivar. The town was the site of the most serious ethnic Albanian protests to date in Macedonia, in July 1997, in which its ethnic Albanian mayor was accused of having incited the riots, and was sentenced to several years in prison. Ever since, tensions have been high. Then, on Jan. 4, bombs went off in the police stations of the Macedonian towns of Kumanovo and Prilep.

The KLA issued a statement saying these bombings had been the work of the KLA, and marked the start of the "liberation" struggle of the Albanians of Macedonia. While the deterioration in Macedonia is not comparable to that of Kosova, there are no grounds for complacency. The breakdown of order in Albania last year, led to a similar huge flow of arms and munitions across the border into Macedonia, as it did into Kosova. Therefore, a well-armed KLA network is in place in Macedonia. The Macedonian regime has to proceed carefully and not lump together non-violent Albanian groups calling for autonomy, with the "armed insurrection" camp of the KLA. In this explosive context, undifferentiated repression could prove to be fateful for the entire region.

Another crisis spot is the proto-civil-war situation in the rump Yugoslav republic of Montenegro, sandwiched between Bosnia, Kosova, and Macedonia. Montenegro was the other stopover of the Gelbard mission; he visited the Montenegrin capital, Podgorica, on Jan. 12.

Last autumn's Presidential elections were won by Milo Djukanovic, who narrowly beat the pro-Milosevic incumbent, Momir Bulatovic. Bulatovic, with the backing of Milosevic, has refused to concede defeat. Beginning on Jan. 11, Bulatovic's followers rioted in Podgorica, trying to block the Jan. 15 inauguration of Djukanovic. The move failed, but the crisis continues, with the republic's population split down the middle.

Following Djukanovic's inauguration, an apparent compromise has been reached. On Jan. 20, President Djukanovic appointed the Interior Minister of the previous government, Filip Vujanovic, as caretaker Prime Minister, until elections for parliament are held in May. It appears that both camps have agreed to await the May results.

This was clearly the result of massive pressure exerted by the United States through the Gelbard mission. Before arriving in Belgrade on Jan. 11, and in Podgorica, Gelbard had spoken in the most unmistakable terms of America's "great concern because of the threats of violence by still in office [then] President Bulatovic," and stated that, for the United States, the inauguration of Djukanovic was "of great importance."