



KOSOVO

COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

August 4, 2008

Who is ruling Kosovo?

By Hannes Hofbauer, Neues Deutschland

<http://www.neues-deutschland.de/artikel/132874.wer-regiert-kosovo.html>

*The new Serbian government, too, has a Minister for its Kosovo and Metohija province - where ethnic Albanian majority declared itself independent on February 17th. The 45-year-old Goran Bogdanovic is member of Serbian president Boris Tadic's Democratic Party (DS). Since the beginning of July, this agricultural engineer born in the Kosovo village of Leska, near Kosovska Mitrovica, has been holding the post of Minister in the Belgrade Government. **Hannes Hofbauer** talked to him in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, where Serbs are majority.*

ND: We were controlled, as we tried to enter Northern Kosovo, by the Serbian police, the Kosovo Police Force, the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) and the NATO-led KFOR. We have seen no trace of a Kosovo flag anywhere. Who actually rules Kosovo?

BOGDANOVIC†: Good question... We wonder, too. Our main concern here, in Northern Kosovo and Metohija, is who is in charge of our security. There is no legal protection here. When someone commits a crime, there is no one to protect the victim from the criminals.

ND:

But there are Serbian courts in Kraljevo, Nis or Vranje, which have Kosovo under their jurisdiction.

BOGDANOVIC: If one is to make use of that possibility, one would have to arrest the suspect first. But no one has the competence to do that.

ND:

Serbian judges' and prosecutors' attempt of March 17th to take over the Courts in Northern Kosovska Mitrovica was quelled by a bloody intervention of UNMIK and KFOR. Were you here at the time?

BOGDANOVIC:

No, I was not at the Court House at the time. Protests of this sort are not a good way to tackle problems. But UNMIK, too, made a big mistake. It reacted in no appropriate manner while trying to end the conflict. According to the UN Security Resolution 1244, UNMIK must protect Serbian citizens, too - but it didn't.



KOSOVO

COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

ND:

Albanians, too, criticize UNMIK. The Kosovo Albanian opposition criticizes the colonial system which is de facto ruling Kosovo. That sounds like a possible common approach to the issue of international management...?

BOGDANOVIC:

I reject this sort of parallels or comparisons. The thing is that radical minded Albanians in Pristina are nourishing totally different goals. The Albanians wish to achieve a mono-ethnic Kosovo, whereas we must work for a multi-ethnic Kosovo, even though it does not appear to be remotely possible at the moment.

ND:

How should this work in a Kosovo which has declared itself independent, is being ruled by Prime Minister Hashim Thaqi, and has been recognized by the United States and many EU countries?

BOGDANOVIC:

We do not recognize that independence and we shall never do. But this should not be an obstacle to dialogue.

ND:

What kind of a solution can you think of as Minister in the new Serbian Government?

BOGDANOVIC:

I've been in office for just a couple of days. We shall, however, focus in particular on economic development and on return of refugees. To achieve this, we shall have to work more closely with UNMIK because it is the only legitimate institution of the international community in Kosovo. European Union's EULEX has, on the contrary, no legal basis for its work in Kosovo and therefore, cannot be our partner for dialogue.

ND:

Who's preventing you to improve the bad infrastructure?



KOSOVO

COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

BOGDANOVIC:

There is not enough money. We've got lots of promises from Belgrade, but no money has arrived here yet.

ND:

Serbian regional elections for Kosovo took place on May 11th, but the results were not recognized by UNMIK. The winners were the Radical Party (SRS) of Tomislav Nikolic and the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) of Vojislav Kostunica. On June the 28th, a regional Parliament was constituted under the name of "Union of Communes of Kosovo and Metohija". You and your Democratic Party (DS) did not attend the first session. Why not?

BOGDANOVIC:

We do recognize the Serbian regional Parliament, but we wanted to wait for the formation of a Government in Belgrade (which has, in the meantime, happened). Moreover, we think that UNMIK, too, will soon recognize the legality of the regional and municipal elections.