

Report: NATO plans to seize control of Kosovo's north

By [Global Research](#)

Global Research, November 21, 2007

[Serbian Unity Congress](#) 20 November 2007

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [United Nations](#), [US NATO War](#)

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NATO and the UN police in Kosovo are reportedly planning to tighten their control over northern Kosovo.

The move would come in case Kosovo declares its independence unilaterally after talks on its future end next month, Balkan Insight reported on its website.

The action would be aimed at preventing Serb-run areas from joining Serbia, an international diplomat told the online publication Monday.

The UN police and the NATO-led KFOR peacekeepers are “are planning to take over Serb-run Kosovo police stations” in the ethnically-divided city of Kosovska Mitrovica, the neighboring municipality of Zvečan and the towns of Zubin Potok and Leposavić, the Belgrade-based diplomat said on condition of anonymity.

“KFOR will also gradually seal the border between Kosovo’s north and Serbia. After completing that action, KFOR will mount a series of raids aimed at discovering weapons caches in Serb communities and at arresting potential troublemakers,” the source said.

Referring to the planned moves, the diplomat said that that “through this action, KFOR will also send a message to Serbia’s leadership to stay out of meddling in Kosovo’s affairs.”

The diplomat added that “the Serbian military and police will get a clear message not even to think about moving forces closer to the Kosovo border.”

Asked by Balkan Insight if he could confirm the report, Alexander Ivanko, spokesperson for the UN administration in Kosovo, UNMIK, said that his organization was “doing some planning for the repositioning of UNMIK in the north”.

“However, we cannot talk about our plans”, Ivanko said.

Meanwhile, an officer with KFOR confirmed to Balkan Insight that that peacekeepers were planning to carry out raids to discover weapons held illegally by members of the public, and that they will try to highlight those considered “troublemakers” in the north.

However, he did not comment on the reported plans to take over Serb-run police stations or tighten border security.

According to the diplomatic source, UNMIK and KFOR believe that “the pacification of

northern Kosovo will also serve as a warning to Serbia not to try to flex its muscles” in Serbia’s southern, predominantly-ethnic Albanian municipalities along the boundary with Macedonia and Kosovo.

The Balkan Insight report refers to the Preševo Valley region, where ethnic Albanians launched attacks on Serbian police and civilians which “ended in 2001 with a NATO-brokered peace deal that secured the rebels’ disarmament and their integration into society.”

Defense Minister Dragan Šutanovac recently pledged swift action in case of a spill-over of potential violence from Kosovo or from Macedonia where police and armed ethnic Albanians clashed earlier this month.

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