

War Crimes and the Recognition of Kosovo: Observations on the current political leadership in Kosovo

By [Major General \(ret'd\) Lewis MacKenzie](#)

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I regret that I was not able to attend this event due to other commitments. I thank the organizers and Ambassador Bissett for giving me the opportunity to say a few words. The Balkans are not easy to understand and I do not consider myself an expert by any stretch however starting in 1992 with the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina I witnessed the beginning of international anti-Serb bias based in no small part due to the efforts of professional North American based public relations firms hired by two sides in a three sided civil war. The Bosnian Serbs were slow off the mark, hired no one and have paid the price.

This anti-Serb bias and sympathy for their "victims" was exploited by the Kosovo Liberation Army, (KLA), an internationally recognized terrorist organization at the time when it commenced killing Serbian security personnel in the late 90s. The KLA hired the same North American PR firms employed by the Bosnian government and successfully won the PR war in spite of the fact their organization initiated the armed conflict. No one could ever accuse the Serbs of treating the Kosovar's with kid gloves; however, discrimination in civil service and university hiring procedures is hardly justification for armed resistance with independence and the creation of Greater Albania as a goal.

Canadians should be concerned regarding Kosovo's current leadership. The current Prime Minister Hashim Thaci was the leader of the KLA. He has admitted that the KLA orchestrated the infamous Racak "massacre" dressing their KLA dead in civilian clothes, machine gunning them and dumping them in a ditch and claiming it was a Serbian slaughter of civilians. NATO bought into the ruse and on its 50th birthday looking for a role in the post cold war world the alliance became the KLA's air force and bombed a sovereign nation from the safety of 10,000 ft. No one in NATO was hurt.

His predecessor as Prime Minister was Agim Cheku. He was in command of Croatian Forces in the Medak Pocket where Serb families were burnt alive in their cellars necessitating intervention by Canadian soldiers and he was also in charge in 1995 during Operation Storm when the Croatian Army cowardly shelled and over- ran Canadian peacekeeping positions. For both of those actions Canada called for the indictment of Cheku for war crimes.

Canada should remain united with the approximately 157 member countries of the United

Nations and with the leaders of the vast majority of the world's population, India, China, the world's most populous Muslim nation, Indonesia, Russia, Argentina, Greece, Cyprus and 149 others in not recognizing Kosovo's illegal unilateral declaration of independence. Independence has to be earned by a group meeting specific criteria and in accordance with legal protocol. Kosovo does not even come close to qualifying for such recognition.

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