

**Interview: Had We Accepted a NATO Base, We Would Have Saved Kosovo**

Local Northern Kosovo police reported to the Serbian Ministry of Interior (MUP) about the plundering under the guise of patriotism, the numerous misuses which, during 12 years, funneled moneys allocated for the preservation and return of Serbian population to Kosovo and Metohija into private pockets of swindlers, entrepreneurs and politicians, while curtailing the budget of Serbia by around 2.8 billion euros. "However, many investigations in those cases were halted", Head of the Inquiry Committee Momir Stojanović reveals, speaking for NIN.

**Who has halted the investigations?**

Someone from the MUP leadership.

**Who? Why didn't you publish names in the report? Why are you being this cautious when it comes to the names of high-ranking politicians, members of the ministry and the police?**

The investigative organs should deal with names.

**Who is Agim Hasani? It was reported that he had received 100,000 euros for a 900 sq meter plot of land. Is that a realistic price in Kosovo?**

No, that is not a realistic price, not even close. This is only an example of the plundering taking place in Kosovo and Metohija by blowing up prices of real estate bought in Northern Kosovo for the purpose of resolving staff members' and internally displaced persons' housing issues with the Serbian tax payers' money. In Northern Mitrovica, a total of 137 real estate items were purchased that way.

**What is the mechanism of extracting money from the Serbian budget?**

The companies that mediated between the Kosovska Mitrovica administrative county and the Albanians the real estate in Northern Mitrovica was purchased from, engaged in some shady activities. The money came from the Coordination Center for the Kosovska Mitrovica county, which served as commissioner and financier, while companies such as *Masters* and *Daki* were mediators. One price was paid to those who sold the real estate to these companies, and another one was accounted for to the county.

**Who benefitted from this?**

I can't say whether it was just the mediator companies. Or someone from the county or the Coordination Center. The investigation will show that. But, evidently, even in downtown Belgrade the real estate prices don't go as high as 11,000 euros. Also, indicatively, around 5 million euros were paid in the repurchase in the north, between 2002 and 2012, for 30 apartments and houses. There are no contracts, just pre-contracts, for the real estate which were repurchased through the *Daki* enterprise between 2002 and 2005, which is illegal in and of itself.

**Who owns these companies?**

The *Daki* enterprise is owned by Idriz Šijak who was subject to criminal prosecution in Kraljevo. The District Court reached a verdict, but he was later acquitted.

**Who is Šijak?**

He had a private company in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, and later he relocated to Bar. Judicial organs are looking into the sale of 16 fictitious real estate items out of the total of 137 which don't exist at all. Basically, it is a matter of laundering money from the Serbian budget with the participation of mediation companies and employees in the Kosovska Mitrovica county. The mediation companies were paid two percent of the paid value for each real estate item. And then, since it wasn't enough, those companies were hired for renovation and adaptation following the repurchase of real estate. Additional money from the budget was spent in the process.

**Are there more companies?**

Between 2005 and 2012, a majority of the real estate was repurchased with the mediation of the private attorney's office *Savić* from Northern Mitrovica, and an amount of 800 euros was paid to the attorney's office for each purchase contract.

**Who is behind this office?**

The owner was very close to high-ranking politicians in northern Kosovska Mitrovica and the Kosovska Mitrovica county at the time. That way, the Kosovska Mitrovica county buys a house from Mr. Kalaba, the head of the former Kosovska Mitrovica administrative county, for 400,000 euros and then hands it over Kalaba's son. This detail is not mentioned in the report because there were so many misuses that it wasn't possible for us to include them all.

**What are the police doing the entire time? What is Nebojša Čović doing?**

Čović's name is mentioned in the report concerning the alleviation of the consequences of the earthquake. Čović ordered for the documents on the alleviation from the Kosovska Mitrovica county be handed over to the Coordination Center through Coordination Center official Borislav Pajić.

**The biggest misuse took place concerning the repurchase of real estate. When did this take place? What period?**

Between 2002 and 2005, 30 real estate items were repurchased, and 137 were repurchased from 2005 until 2012.

**Who was head of the Coordination Center at that time?**

It was Čović until 2005, after that Sanda Rašković Ivić and then Slobodan Samardžić.

**Why aren't their names being mentioned? Isn't their responsibility beyond doubt, given the posts they had occupied during that period?**

The Inquiry Committee cannot specify who is responsible. Our task was to determine whether there are indications on misappropriation of budget funds. And that's what we have shown.

**Why aren't these peoples' names mentioned, since the misuse took place over such a long period and it's not possible that they weren't aware of it?**

According to the Rules of Procedure of the People's Assembly, the Inquiry Committee is not authorized to investigate, to interview Čović, Samardžić.

**When did you complete the report?**

On September 18th.

**And what has happened since?**

We didn't want the report to have a political connotation...

**With your report, the Prosecution shouldn't have much of a problem, yet it still fails to react?**

The Prosecution should have reacted, ex officio, much earlier, and so should have MUP.

**Now you have provided them with evidence. What's next?**

The Assembly will consider the Inquiry Committee's report. If adopted, it will be presented to the Government with the recommendation that the competent organs undertake investigative measures considering each item of the report, personnel changes...

**Isn't the Prosecution obligated to react to everything that has been so far publically presented?**

It is. Provided that it does its job and does so independently. Had MUP and the Prosecution done their respective jobs, there would be no need for the Inquiry Committee to deal with it and it would have been subject of criminal prosecution a long time ago. But you are talking about a state founded on rule of law, and I'm talking about the factual situation. And the fact is that that the misuse concerning the expenditure of budget funds in Kosovo and Metohija in the previous 12 years could not have taken place without political support.

**Your report is evidence of a systemic patriotic plunder under the auspices of the state?**

Without strong positions in MUP, prosecution and politics, there is no organized crime, nowhere in the world, and that includes Serbia. And in the case of this misuse in Kosovo and Metohija, the Ministry is obligated - if it funds something - to carry out control thereof through its competent organ. And we have found structures that weren't built at all, and whose building was financed with amounts that largely exceed the necessary ones. In the last 12 years, five, six enterprises had the exclusive rights to carry out construction work in Kosovo and Metohija.

**Why didn't you investigate oil smuggling?**

We can't accuse anyone without possessing serious evidence.

**Are they protecting someone or was it, and still is, a state-organized business?**

No, no, no.

**Have you heard of Zvonko Veselinović?**

You are probably referring to oil smuggling. We haven't dealt with the problem of the delivery of oil products from Central Serbia, or with Trepča, for those two problems call for much more time. Once again, this is a matter of systemic plundering, i.e. the non-functioning of competent state organs, along with possibilities of misuse. When any given user purchases oil at the Pančevo refinery, he pays taxes to the state. But the problem arises due to the disproportional amount of oil products compared with our population in Kosovo and Metohija. According to one of the calculations, it turns out that each citizen of Kosovo and Metohija has two automobiles and drives incessantly, the entire month, in order to spend that much oil. That means that the delivered amount is not proportionate to the real needs of the population. The question is where this oil ends up. A part of it ended up southern from Ibar at gas stations owned by Albanians, another part at gas stations in Northern Mitrovica owned by Serbs. To this day, you don't receive a fiscal receipt at those gas stations. And a part - the largest one, I fear - never reaches Kosovo and Metohija, only the paperwork is laundered in Kosovo and Metohija. The oil is returned and with the VAT added to its price, it is sold at gas stations in the area of Central Serbia. That should be part of the investigation by the Prosecution and MUP.

**Who took part in that business?**

It's not possible without strong positions in the tax administration and the Ministry of Energy.

**Veselinović is brought in connection with the defenders of the barricades and he was allowed to smuggle for this "act of patriotism"?**

You are talking about a political dimension I wouldn't delve into. I don't see the responsibility of just one minister for Kosovo and Metohija, but of all of them in the period between 2002 and 2012. This can be justified with incompetence, lack of resourcefulness or the concealment of such activities.

**According to our Criminal Law, is this a felony of complicity?**

Yes. When it comes to the funds placed via the Coordination Center for Kosovo and Metohija, I believe they should provide explanation.

**Did Goran Bogdanović buy an apartment with state money?**

One of the ministers did obtain an apartment through the *Ibar* enterprise which manages the *Gazivode* hydro-electric power plant. The overhaul of the hydro - electric power plant was overpaid and there are indications that a part of the money paid for the overhaul was used to buy an apartment for one of the ministers for Kosovo and Metohija.

**Are you referring to Bogdanović?**

It is well-known when the overhaul was carried out and who was minister at the time. I'll remind you, the report was written, so if anyone wants to...

**The Prosecutor?**

That's right. We have a Prosecution and if they wouldn't do it before, when assigned to by the Government, if they haven't done it ex officio, they will have to react.

**You didn't mention Trepča. Why? Is it a sensitive issue in the Belgrade-Washington relations?**

No, no, no. Trepča is a complex problem. We didn't lack documents, on the contrary. They show that the ore was exploited illegally. Trepča mines along the so-called gold vein. An unrealistically small amount of lead and zinc was shown in the ore concentrate. And, thirdly, it was sold by a price much lower than the one on the international market.

**Who is responsible for that?**

The unresolved status of Trepča and the dilemma whether it exists within the Republic of Serbia or within the Kosovo institutions.

**Who does Trepča belong to?**

I cannot say who it belongs to. And before it is determined who it belongs to, nothing can be done. And the reason why it isn't known who Trepča belongs to, that is a question...

**Perhaps because of the American profits, since the owner is an American company?**

There was talk about an American company buying Trepča.

**Did it?**

I don't know whether the contract will be concluded, but it seems to me that the American company still hasn't taken possession. An interest group has for years been making enormous profits in mineral resources.

**Who?**

Who has been the director of Trepča for years? The same person. It is indicative that none of the governments - and there has been quite a few of them since 2000 - controlled that man.

**During this 12-year period, you were the director of the Military Security Agency for a while?**

I was the director of the Military Security Agency from 2003 until 2005. And you are asking whether I was responsible? The answer is no, because it wasn't the scope of my jurisdiction. If the Military Security Agency had reacted, it would have violated the law. The Military Security Agency deals with counterintelligence affairs and we could have reacted if the persons in questions had been military personnel. But this way, it was the exclusive jurisdiction of the Security Information Agency, MUP and the Prosecution.

**Kosovo was presented as the national and security issue No. 1 in all reports during these years and the Military Security Agency stressed Kosovo as the number one risk factor. Why didn't you signalize what was going on?**

The Military Security Agency dealt with Kosovo only as part of suppressing separatist tendencies. We monitored the Albanian factor and that was our scope of activity. Had we dealt with affairs that weren't ours, we would have committed a felony.

**Since no one dealt with this for 12 years, Kosovo was being resolved parallel - while the plundering in Kosovo and Metohija still takes place - in Brussels, as the most important issue for the nation's survival. Is that proof of the fact that the state does not exist?**

That's right. There are three institutions that were supposed to deal with that. These are the Security Information Agency, MUP and the Prosecution. The Security Information Agency, as far as information is concerned. The Prosecution with launching procedures, and MUP in carrying out the procedure.

**I'm asking you specifically as a security officer, namely a years-long high-ranking security official who was also head of the Security Directorate of the Priština Corps. How do you view this struggle for Kosovo and Metohija and the state's integrity, when you look at all these documents?**

I appreciate this question very much. That is the essence... Enormous amount of the Serbian tax payers' money never made it to persons who needed it, but to those who became rich in Serbia proper. And that is why there needs to be a change of the Serbian political elite in Kosovo and Metohija itself, as well as a change of political representatives who deal with Kosovo and Metohija. They have neither the moral, nor political credibility to deal with Kosovo and Metohija anymore.

**Who are you referring to?**

I am referring to representatives of all parties, including the one who predominantly dealt with Kosovo.

**There are Čović, Bogdanović, Samardžić...dozens of names of Belgrade-based people. Their responsibility must be crucial, rather than the one by the leaders in Kosovo and Metohija itself?**

Investigative organs should determine whose responsibility is final. It is of key significance that the report doesn't end up in a drawer. If someone wants an independent investigation, they can reach anyone. The report contains so many obvious elements that it's not difficult to conduct an investigation. It is a matter of political will.

**Politically and factually speaking, Kosovo is a finished story?**

No. In Serbia, nothing can be the same with Kosovo and without Kosovo. *Hashim Thaçi* would be very much willing to give up Northern Kosovo, this 12 percent of the territory. That information comes from circles close to *Thaçi* and from diplomatic sources. But the EU doesn't want this scenario because it fears that, if Northern Kosovo separates, the larger part of Kosovo would accede to Albania which would be the final act of the establishment of a greater Albanian state in the Balkans. The creation of a Greater Albania which would also encompass parts of Macedonia and Montenegro does not suit the European Union and they want this Serbian population in Kosovo and Metohija to keep Kosovo independent.

**Brussels?**

EU. Yes, Brussels.

**What are the interests of the foreign intelligence services, BND, MI6, CIA?**

Kosovo's accession to Albania by means of a single parliamentary decision would represent the unfolding of a bad scenario for the EU. Europe fears the creation of a Greater Albania. But if we know that the EU will not accept a partition of Kosovo and Metohija, then we have to use this position in a manner that is wise, both politically and diplomatically. OK, if we are destined to be guardians of the military frontier, a buffer zone to the creation of a Greater Albania, let's articulate our vital state and national interests and ask: 'What can you do when it comes to the preservation of our vital interests and the preservation of our territorial integrity?' OK, we do not want a partition of Kosovo and Metohija but we do want Kosovo and Metohija to remain an integral part of Serbia and then you elaborate the entire methodology. If you ask me about the interests of BND, MI6, CIA, FBI, FSB, they are all different. The policies of USA and the EU do not concur.

**They are all present in Serbia?**

Of course, and MI6 is the most present of them all. And with the best knowledge of the situation. In the international division of interest zones, in terms of security, Serbia belongs to Great Britain, i.e. MI6, so it comes as no surprise that the influence of the British Ambassador and the British intelligence service, on events in Serbia has been the most important for years.

**How did MI6 become dominant in Serbia?**

Up until 1996, BND and Germany had the dominant role in Kosovo and Metohija and in Albania. The training of terrorist organizations which, at that point, was not connected with Kosovo and Metohija, took place in some camps in Germany and Switzerland. Also, the temporary Bukoshi Government formed in 1992 was located in Germany and it is well-known that the German BND agency had the dominant influence on its establishment.

**What is CIA doing during this time?**

In 1996, CIA caused the operation of inciting out and management of the crisis in Albania by means of a pyramid saving scheme; that is when gangs entered military and police depots and took weapons. You had an uncontrolled situation in Albania, the weapons in Northern Albania, money in Kosovo and Metohija and the arming had begun. That is how CIA took the dominant role in Albania and in Kosovo and Metohija, suppressing BND.

**Did you take note of this in the military secret service reports?**

Everything is in the military archives. This conflict between Germany, as figuratively leading EU country, and the USA, is reflected in the cases of *Ramush Haradinaj* and *Hashim Thaçi*. It is well-known that *Thaçi* is backed by Washington and that Madeleine Albright and Walker<sup>[1]</sup> helped *Thaçi* emerge as the leader in this conflict, while Haradinaj, as a player for BND, ended up in The Hague. Haradinaj worked as a bouncer in Swiss night clubs and he was recruited there and infiltrated, along with *Thaçi* and five others, in Kosovo and Metohija to start an armed rebellion.

**That exists in the Military Security Agency's archives?**

Everything is there.

**What is going on regarding the redistribution of CIA and BND leverage?**

Due to the pressure by the German public, the USA wanted to redeploy a part of the American contingent which was located on the territory of Germany in military bases. The USA had the necessity of creating a military base closer to the Caspian basin, closer to Russia.

**As part of the operation of expanding NATO towards the East?**

That's right, and in order to cut down expenses of fuel transport, soldiers... Whenever you want to cut down expenses, you are getting closer to a potential goal. And the goal is the Caspian basin and the resources of the Caucasus region and the Caucasus basin. Then, during the *Rambouillet* negotiations - and this is documented in the archives - there was a demand for the creation of a military base at the Slatina airport near Priština, which was refused by our negotiation team.

**What did they ask for?**

They only asked for a military base near Priština, that's all. We refused it back then, due to the politicians' unrealistic assessment.

**Had they accepted, Kosovo would have remained within Serbia?**

That's right. We now have these problems, we had a war, we were militarily defeated and the Bondsteel base was built and, by doing so, the Americans accomplished their goal. They formed a large military base close to potential crisis hotbeds and they are no longer interested in Kosovo. They handed over the sensitive issue to the EU. And now the EU is faced with a key issue: what to do with Kosovo and Metohija.

**What are the interests of the foreign agencies, specifically the MI6 as the most dominant in Serbia?**

Traditionally, for a number of years, MI6 has been ever-present in Serbia and the best operative positions in Serbia were created by the British agency. It managed to position people in key places where the key decisions are made and where the key information lay.

**Are those our people or their people?**

Those are both our people and theirs, who work as agents.

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*\* Momir Stojanović, Head of the Inquiry Committee of the National Assembly of Serbia, is former Director of the Military Security Agency, between 2003 and 2004, when he was replaced after his statement on the danger of spreading of wahhabism in Serbia. Prior to his appointment as Military Security Agency Director, he was head of the Operations Division with the Priština Corps Command, 3rd Army of Serbia and Montenegro. He is now retired army general.*

[1] US diplomat William Walker, translator's note