

KFOR Engagement: Experiences of the German Army

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Brigadier General Fritz von Korff began his military career in 1964. He was promoted to company commander in 1972. He received his promotion to Battalion commander of the armoured reconnaissance battalion 6 in Eutin in 1985. In 1996 he became brigade commander of tank brigade 12 "Oberpfalz" in Amberg. From March through August 1999 he was commander of the Engagement Brigade (S) 1. (GE) Contingent of the KFOR-Mission. On 24 March 1999 he was promoted to brigadier general. From June through December 2000 as brigadier general he was commander of both the German forces as well as commander of the Multinational Brigade South in the continuing KFOR Mission. Since 1 April 2001 he has been in command of the Officer School of the German Army in Dresden. He has received a number of decorations. The most outstanding medal being "Das Verdienstkreuz am Bande," a high decoration awarded either for military or civil service by the German government. In addition, he has received the German medal of merit, the medal of honour in gold of the German army, Meritorious Service Medal, NATO Medal, KVM-Medal and the KFOR-Medal.

ABSTRACT

As a result of the Kosovo Engagement, the German Army has made a large number of valuable experiences which can also be transferred to similar engagements of this type in the future. The situation which the multinational brigade was confronted with was governed by many factors which encompassed foremost size population density, multiethnic groups, diverse religions, poverty and a permanent latency towards violence of individual groups of population.

The MNB (S) was able to install a type of order that gave the population trust for living in this area. The achievement of normalcy is the goal of KFOR and the German soldiers. This does not only involve the peaceful interaction of ethnic groups with one another, but it also encompasses the foundation for a functioning society and a social order supported by the population. A very important and challenging task will be the transformation of the UÇK to the TMK, into a disciplined, multiethnic and professional organisation.

The daily activities of the soldiers are primarily governed by security and safety tasks, supporting the reconstruction of destroyed infrastructure and the co-operation with international organisations (IO), government organisations (GO) and Non-government Organisations (NGO) in the region of operation. The resultant subsequent task spectrum, which consists of a number of non-military tasks, can only be accomplished by our soldiers because they can rely on a combination of broad civilian high level educational background and their specialised military engagement training.

In order to guarantee success for such a mission of this type, special emphasis is placed in the area of reconnaissance capability, operational information and the ability to re-supply the troops over the strategic operational distance.

THE BALKANS — JUST A SMALL REGION — THE AOR OF THE MNB (S)

Just as the United States, Great Britain, France and Italy, it is now Germany's turn and a first-time occasion to assume command responsibility for a multinational brigade area of its own. The area of responsibility of MNB (S) is in the southern part of Kosovo. The area as a whole covers about 2,000 square kilometres. Its population structure is unique in reflecting the diversity of the KOSOVO society (Figures 1 and 2).

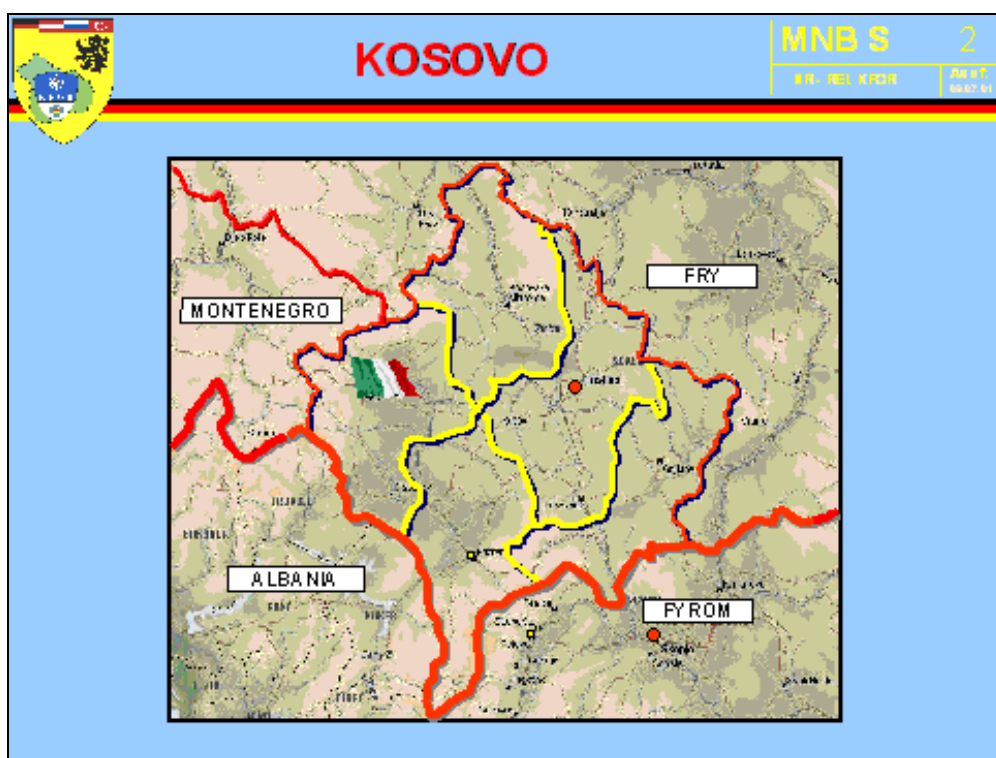


Figure 1: Kosovo.

The area of the Multinational Brigade South has a population of about 410,000. Ninety percent of the population are Albanians. In addition, there are about 31,000 Slavic Moslems (Goranians, Torbesch, Bosniacs), about 12,500 Turks and other minorities primarily consisting of 5,000 Roma, and about 2,000 Serbs. In comparison to the ethnic structure before the war, some 20,000 Serbs used to live in this area.

This confusion resulting from the multitude in the ethnic structure is compounded further by a variety of religions. Examples of these different religious factions are represented by the Sheikhs belonging to Islamic Dervish orders of diverse orientations, the Serb-orthodox Christians, the Albanian Catholics, a developing Protestant community and the Sunnite Moslems who make up the majority of the population. Every one of these factions regardless of size must be taken seriously with respect to their needs and concerns.

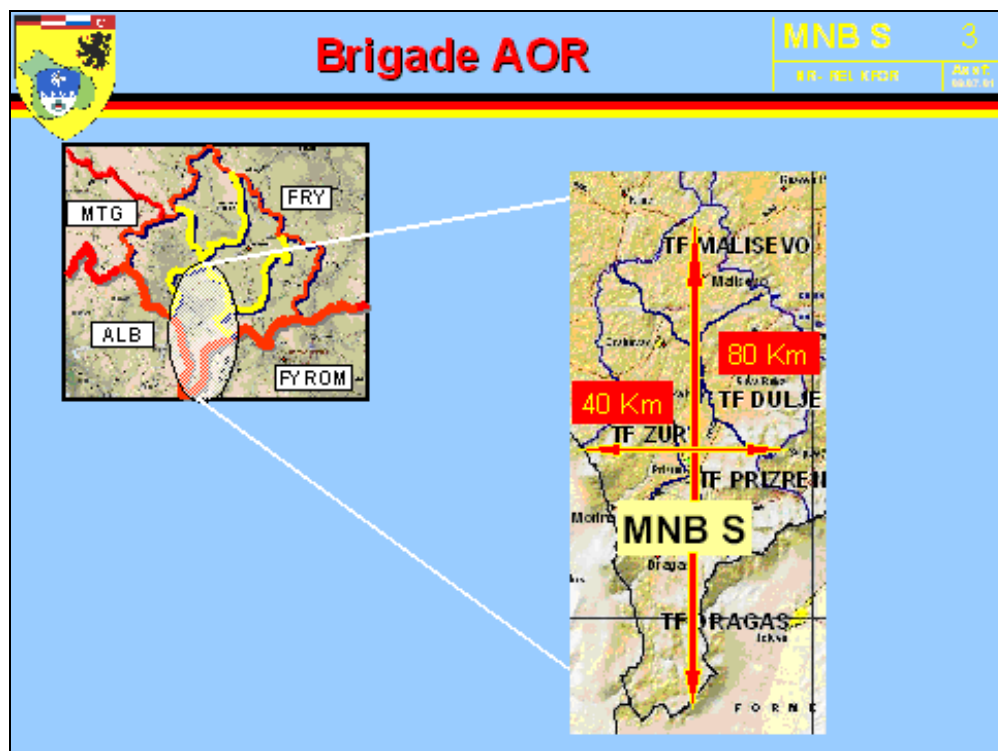


Figure 2: Area of operations of the Brigade.

In addition to the various religions, the social habits and customs which differ greatly from region to region must be considered. These differences are due to the contrast between urban and rural areas but also result from the diverse composition of ethnic communities. Tensions exist not only between the minorities and the Albanian majority, but in many cases also within the same ethnic community. The city of Prizren with a population of roughly 100,000 is something which might be called the “second” capital of Kosovo. Due to this situation the MNB (S) has an important regional centre of political, economic and cultural dimensions in its area of responsibility.

Life in this region is characterised by a rural environment with agriculture and the cultivation of vineyards, where wine production is the principal sources of income. Industrial enterprises are very scarce and the rate of unemployment is high (60-65 percent). Sometimes, it makes you wonder how people are earning a living and from what source. A very important role in this context is played by business operations not officially registered and by the assistance provided by family members living outside the country. A well-organised family structure including all relatives is the platform which provides for the social security of each individual. Moreover, life in Kosovo and the street scenes in that country are characterised by the international community of nations (Figures 3 and 4).

The Kosovo Albanians feel that they have won the war and continue to regard NATO/KFOR as an ally. They (which means all parties in the Kosovo) seek to obtain independence for Kosovo. Due to the political change in Belgrade and the attitude of the international community, this objective seems more remote today than in the past. So far, this has not yet resulted in a changed attitude toward NATO/KFOR. The Presevo valley and the situation in FYROM / Tetovo must be considered separately, in this context.



Figure 3: Street scenes in Kosovo.



Figure 4: Different Ethnic Groups in the area of operation.

Most ethnic groups represented in this region live together on the basis of a pragmatic attitude of “a mutual give and take policy.” However, this policy causes friction and an unstable situation with regard to the Serb minority. Here the policy is separation in terms of

space and adequate protection by KFOR and is also based on the tolerance of small minorities. But even minor events and incidents may disturb this balance and result in an increase in ethnic tensions. The platform of this apparent calm is quite thin and brittle (Figure 5). A fact that is illustrated time and time again by incidents involving massive threats or attacks on minorities. An example are mortar attacks at night which endanger villagers as well as other attacks which claim victims among the population.

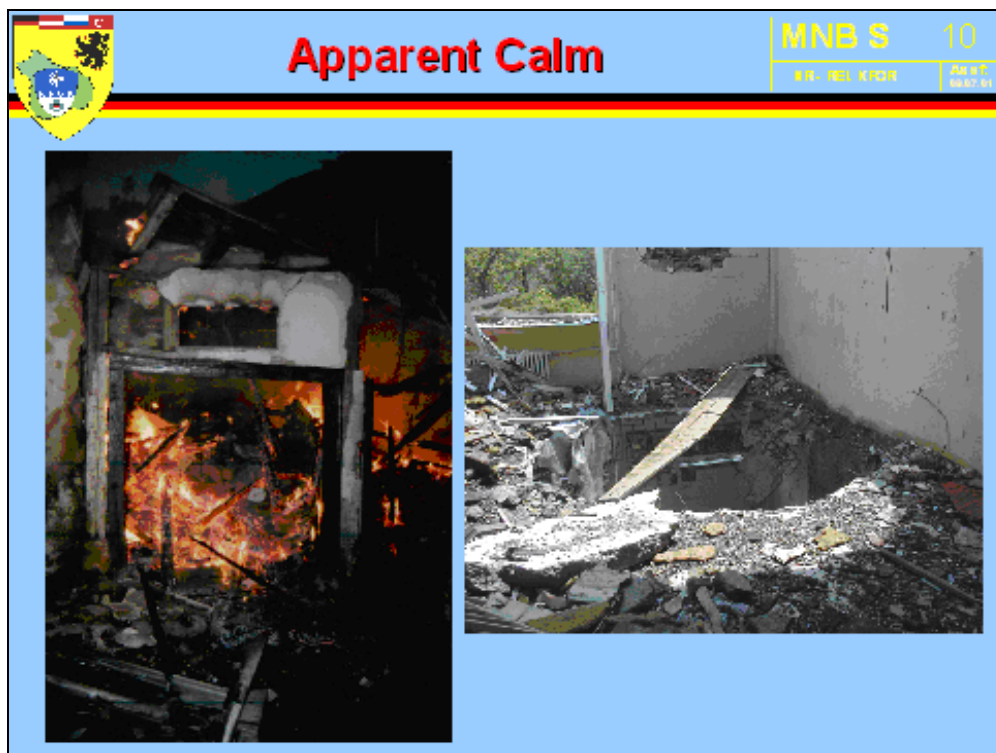


Figure 5: Apparent Calm.

Against this background, the return of refugees from outside Kosovo as well as the return displaced persons must be considered as a particular problem. It is necessary to analyse almost each region and each town or village separately for their economic potential of accepting refugees. Moreover, it must be determined whether the local population is willing to accept any tendency of changing ethnic structures as they currently exist. Due to current safety and security risks, Serbs are not free to move within the area or can only do so under the protection of KFOR. The escorts to be provided for that purpose represent a great burden for troops and equipment.

The date 28 October 2000 is to be considered as a landmark in Kosovo: On this day the first free municipal elections were held. While the task force contingent of MNB (S) was deployed there, the major effort was focused on the preparation and safeguarding of those elections. What was particularly important for MNB (S) was to continuously insure safety and security in the best possible manner through deployment of KFOR units while supporting the organisations involved.

A significant step towards democracy was achieved when considering the fact that an election campaign involving 245 registered rallies attended by a total of nearly 46,000 people, had no particular incidents to report during those rallies nor on the election day (Figure 6). The election results gave the LDK (Democratic Party of Kosovo, the party of

Ibrahim Rugova) a majority in all districts of the MNB (S). The acceptance of these elections makes us hopeful and confident that a stable peace is possible in this area.

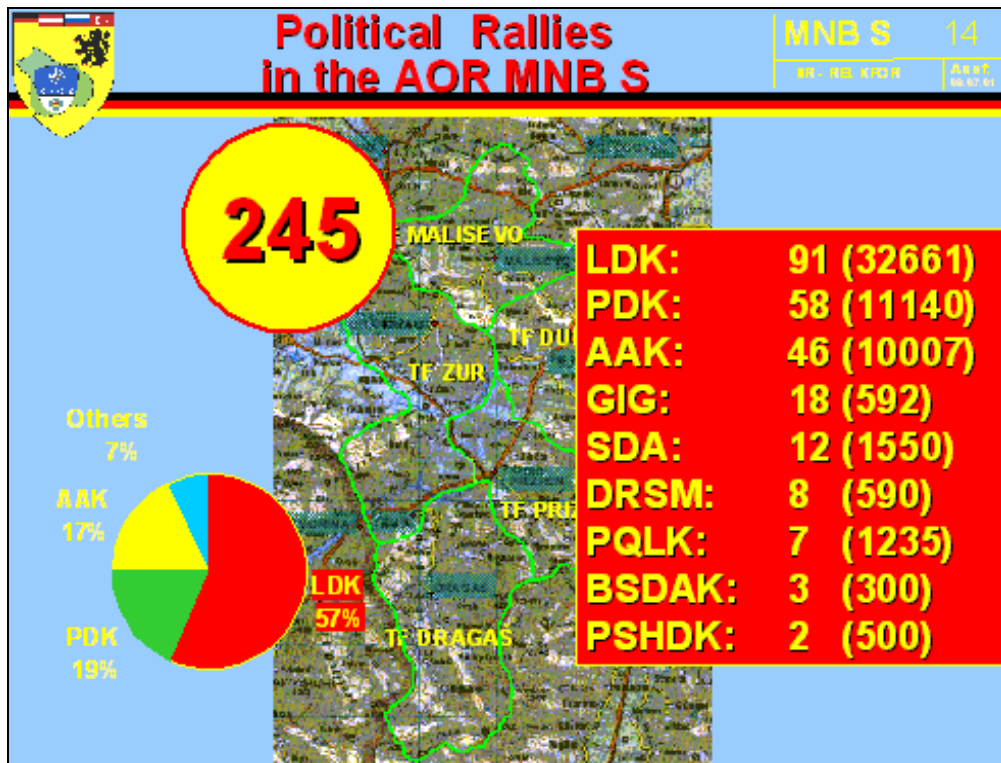


Figure 6: Political Activities within AOR MNB (S).

SITUATION WITHIN THE AOR OF THE MNB (S)

SITUATION MAP — STATIONING OF THE MNB (S)

The current strength of KFOR is about 43,500 military personnel, about 39,000 of whom are stationed in Kosovo. The area of the MNB (S) combines 7,600 soldiers from Germany, Turkey, Austria, Switzerland, Slovakia, Georgia, Azerbaidshan, Bulgaria and Russia, who accomplish their mission under German command with five task forces, which is what they are called today — plus additional support elements (Figure 7). Due consideration was given to the ethnic configuration of the force. For example, Turkish units are deployed in areas populated by Turkish minorities (Figure 8). All in all MNB (S) has 16 military installations, because the philosophy is to have troops present and readily available at hotspots to prevent conflicts from the outset.

With one exception the Task Force commanders and their command posts are positioned in the district towns. There are company command posts in downtown Prizen and Dragas. There is one platoon command post deployed right in the middle of a Serb neighbourhood at Orahovac and Velika Hoca. This concept culminates in the permanent guarding and protection of a single Serbian woman by two soldiers in her house at Prizen.

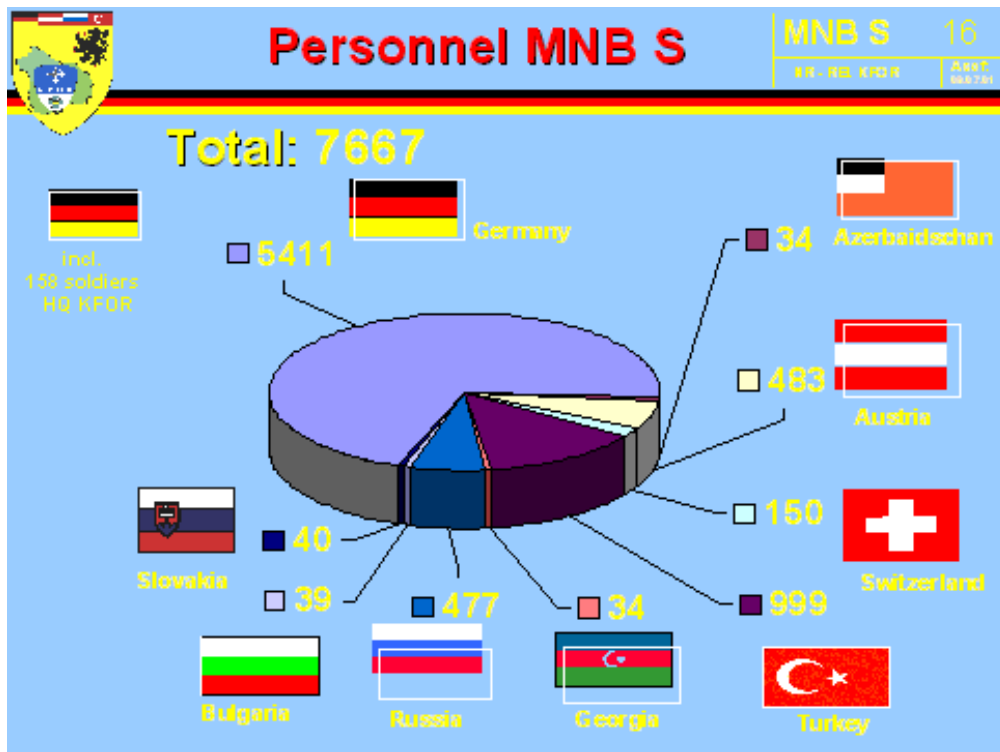


Figure 7: Personnel of the MNB (S).



Figure 8: The different areas of responsibility of the brigade.
WHAT DOES THE COUNTRY LOOK LIKE?

Brigadier General von Korff, as former commander of the German Army Contingent of Kosovo Forces and Commander of Multinational Brigade South, personally remembers two operations conducted under KFOR. He was the first German Commander to enter Kosovo after the end of the air strikes on 12 June 1999, and then after exactly one year, on 12 June 2000 he returned to this region for a second time. Due to his personal experience, he is therefore in a position to compare what has been achieved so far in this country or what has not yet been achieved. He can assure that many things have changed for the better within a little more than one year.

The destruction of Albanian houses and mosques by the Serbs during the war was followed by acts of revenge committed by the Albanians. Shortly after the withdrawal of the Serbs, there was a time when at least one Serbian house in Prizren would be burning. We should thank God that today, one and a half years later, a long way in the direction of normalcy has been achieved (Figure 9).



Figure 9: Reconstruction.

But still the scars left by the war cannot be overlooked and the great number of houses damaged and destroyed, in some cases entire villages give evidence to that effect. But meanwhile reconstruction is under way throughout the country. Countless houses have been repaired or rebuilt. Life in the towns and at markets is flourishing, fields are being cultivated, crops have been harvested and schools are open once again. Hospitals have been provided with important medical equipment that had previously been lacking, and doctors and nurses are meanwhile working again around the clock.

CIMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Credit for this fact may be claimed mainly by the international community of nations and their assistance, but also by non-governmental organisations and, last but not least, by KFOR. The war, the expulsion and persecution of Albanians and the flight of Serbs had caused the collapse of the economy and agriculture in the KOSOVO. The infrastructure had broken down. Electricity was available only from time to time. The water supply system had to be put back on track with the assistance of military forces.

Based on the positive experience gained during the SFOR operation, the support for reconstruction but also the humanitarian aid are co-ordinated and channelled by a separate staff division within the brigade headquarters of MNB (S) and implemented by a specific task force which is called Civil-Military-Co-operation Task Force, abbreviated CIMIC.

The record of achievement of MNB (S) with CIMIC activities is quite impressive for example: 32 schools and 964 houses have been built since 1999 with the assistance of MNB (S), another eight schools and 337 houses are under construction and some more are in the planning phase. But, in addition to those achievements, more than 350 other projects such as playgrounds and gymnasiums have already been carried out.

As part of the humanitarian aid effort, about 956 tons of relief supplies have been distributed. This aid has been given in particular to smaller villages, especially mountain villages where in many cases other organisations do not go, a fact which may be explained by the rough terrain or by the lack of media coverage.

But the other task forces also provide their share of support in this area. The road system which is disastrous in many places has at some locations been restored for use only through the efforts of army engineer units.

Thanks to their efforts bridges have been repaired as well. Currently, about 5 % of the in-patient facilities and 10 percent of the out-patient capabilities provided by the military field hospital are being kept busy by civilian emergencies. And in many cases it is the small assistance efforts in place which lend a helping hand. An example of such assistance is that one task force organised a training course in a village, teaching people how to repair their own tractors.

All in all, more than 68,800,000 DM were spent for construction during the first task force contingent tour of service or used to help people in our area of responsibility.

CO-OPERATION WITH IOS, GOS, AND NGOS

During all the activities, with which the MNB (S) has been involved, it is quite obvious that contacts with other governmental and non-governmental organisations was essential. Apart from KFOR's responsibility for safety and security, the UN resolution 1244 is the basis on which the UNHCR is responsible for humanitarian aid. The UNCA (UN Civil Administration) is in charge of administration during the transition phase. The OSCE handles preventive diplomacy and the EU is responsible for economic reconstruction. UNMIK has to consolidate and combine all those tasks and the NGOs provide assistance in diverse form. However, at the end of the war those organisations were not immediately present on the scene or at least not fast enough; nor was it possible for them to get there in time.

Currently, 72 non-governmental organisations are represented within the AOR of MNB (S). In addition to permanent liaison with UNMIK, OSCE, UNHCR on the one hand and with the municipal councils on the other, periodic contacts are being insured and maintained with the NGOs as well (Figure 10). Only if everybody works hand in hand, will it be possible to solve the great diversity of problems.



Figure 10: Various Contacts.

Moreover, KFOR provides for safety and reliability in the event of emergency situations. Frequently members of organisations receive initial medical care at the field hospital. Many mine-clearing organisations can only do their work because they are assured by the brigade that in case of an emergency they will have the MNB (S) rescue helicopters to fall back on. As a last resort, there are contingency plans for an evacuation which would be protected by KFOR — a situation which is currently not imminent.

All in all, co-operation with most organisations is really good. It is characterised by a spirit of mutual trust which is valuable for both sides in view of our common mission of reconstruction and assistance. It was not always that way in 1999!

This, however, should not convey the impression that KFOR has established or is establishing something like a KFOR relief organisation. Each relief organisation does its own independent work in its specialised area, and this work is viewed very favourably by the population. Their work – just as the presence of the military forces-contributes to the goal of strengthening peace in the AOR of MNB (S) and of reintegrating the minorities in the long run even if sometimes one might wish that specific activities were better co-ordinated.

TMK KOSOVO PROTECTION CORPS (KPC)

An important role in the reconstruction effort can also be played by the Kosovo Protection Corps with a current strength of 3,052 active personnel and 2,000 reservists. The international community of nations wanted the creation of the KPC and concluded the appropriate agreements and arrangements to that effect (Figure 11). The creation of the KPC made it possible for KFOR to disband and disarm the KLA (Kosovo Liberation Army = UÇK).



Figure 11: Kosovo Protection Corps.

At that time, it was an achievement of major strategic dimensions and it continues to be so. The situation KFOR must deal with in the Kosovo of today would be quite different if a large and heavily armed KLA underground movement still existed. The misgivings MNB (S) has today concerning the activities of some KPC members and their possible implication in illegal operations are much smaller than the problems they would have if the KLA were still an active executive element within Kosovo. In this respect, the KPC has proved to be an important strategic success for NATO and the International Community.

The idea is that the KPC under the direction of UNMIK and IOM should become a multi-ethnic, disciplined and professional civil organisation working in charge of controlling or

preventing disasters. The responsibility for this lies with the civilian sector. But even in this area KFOR cannot afford to stand idly by. The MNB (S) must provide support, and supervise and control the KPC but they also have to train its members and provide guidance for its commanders.

Apart from that it should be noted that many leaders and commanders of the KPC regard this Protection Corps only as a provisional framework for a future Kosovo National Guard. Referring to their armed struggle of liberation, they feel they have a right to be converted to regular national armed force. This long-term objective and their frustration over the fact that they are to be integrated into a civilian organisation will determine the attitudes of individual members at least in the foreseeable future.

It must be emphasised that Lieutenant General Ceku, the commander of the KPC is making maximum efforts to organise the KPC in accordance with the statement of principles established by the International Community. Under the daily supervision of KFOR he has created an organisational and supervisory framework for former KLA fighters, which is an absolute necessity in KOSOVO. In about 100 cases he has already taken disciplinary measures against individual KPC members for violations/offences and has also initiated discharge proceedings.

There have been and there still are sufficient positive examples of co-operation. Also with regard to MNB (S) Force Protection it is useful and practical to maintain close contacts with the KPC so as to take advantage of the possibilities for control and co-ordination, which do exist.

The KPC is held in high esteem by the population. It is therefore important to act in compliance with negotiated agreements — funding, equipment, training — to train the KPC in such a manner that it will be able to perform their security tasks. The KPC members may now proudly participate in the construction of their own country. In promoting this construction MNB (S) has to work hand in hand with the KPC, rather than work without it and certainly not against it.

MNB (S) POLICY

If MNB (S) trusts the reactions coming from the population, KFOR continues to be the institution which enjoys maximum trust and confidence. The people in KOSOVO have from early on been familiar with the unity of military and political power. This was confirmed after the deployment of KFOR troops because KFOR had to take charge of many activities which are actually not a soldier's job. This included police responsibilities, the organization of waste disposal and the operation of the prison.

From the very beginning MNB (S) set up the Cabinet within the area of responsibility of Multinational Brigade South. This was the panel on which the leading representatives of the responsible International Organisations (MNB (S), UNMIKPOL, OSCE, UNHCR, EU) would meet on a weekly basis in order to discuss current problems and come up with solutions. These meetings also served to initiate plans and programs for the future. This institution still exists and proves its necessity every week.

It was clear from the outset that non-military functions assumed by the armed forces under the pressure of necessity can only be handled as a transition phase. The competent civilian organisations should live up to their responsibilities as quickly as possible. It is absolutely in the interest of KFOR to hand over civilian functions back to civilian authorities. But in many cases the appropriate authorities to take charge over those functions did not yet exist.

This does not mean that MNB (S) intends to withdraw completely into its barracks compounds. Experience has shown that it is essential to maintain contacts with the population and to know the concerns and needs of the people, if the mission is to be accomplished successfully. In doing so MNB (S) feels that the assistance provided in this context is absolutely helpful in enhancing the force protection for MNB (S) personnel. You do not bite the hand that helps you. However, it is important to observe a strict neutrality in dealing with the various ethnic groups.

First of all, the KFOR units are also an important economic factor in the country. In the area of responsibility of MNB (S) alone, about 600 local inhabitants were employed. The intense construction activities aimed at improving infrastructure ensures employment in many ways. In this respect, KFOR is a major source of employment with such tasks including the construction of barracks compounds or the repair of roads, which are of military importance. Adding to this, KFOR quite naturally makes purchases in Kosovo, thus creating additional jobs related to the reconstruction of the economy.

In co-operation with the competent members of civilian organisations in the area of responsibility of MNB (S) and with the help of the Cabinet previously mentioned MNB (S) created an economic circle in October to serve as a panel for discussing all issues related to the reinstatement of commercial enterprises. There are positive signs, but the road is long and bumpy. This is especially true once they try to get any manufacturing enterprises. Unsolved issues of ownership as well as the previous policy stipulated by UN Resolution 1244 are factors which deter foreign investors at the present time from engaging in an increased financial involvement in Kosovo.

But the brigade also plays an active role in other sectors of public life which are not quite so obvious. The Multinational Brigade South has not only been responsible for the safe environment in the brigade's AOR, but was also, as already mentioned responsible for the reconstruction in all sectors according to its capabilities. This also includes a country's culture. The establishment and safeguarding of peace in this country may best be expressed through its art and the way it is presented. The exhibitions of these arts are an important milestone on the road to a peaceful future.

Acting as an initiator, the MNB (S) in co-operation with UNMIK opened the first art exhibit at Prizren in mid-November involving local artists. This exhibition has been a full success both for the artists and for the great number of visitors. Furthermore, music events involving a diversity of artists from Kosovo are staged at periodic intervals and on the occasion of various festivities. Those presentations have an enriching effect for the cultural program in the public sector but also for everyday military life.

Medical care is another factor that has clearly improved (Figure 12). Based on the health concept, the initial care administered to sick and injured people is provided in out-patient

services which have been established in major rural communities and which come under the functional responsibility of the respective Health House of a municipality.

The five Health Houses (Dragas, Prizren, Suva Reka, Orahovac, and Malisevo) serve to ensure follow-on care and treatment (surgery, internal medicine, eye treatment, dental care and gynaecology) for all those cases which require follow-on medical treatment. Each Health House includes a rural doctor who performs house calls to people who live in those regions which are poorly accessible. He therefore ensures basic medical care. The rural population has the opportunity to also receive in-patient treatment in those Health Houses. All other measures which are medically necessary are performed at the Prizren hospital.



Figure 12: Medical Care.

At present, however, the situation is not yet quite so positive as just pointed out. In some cases the doctors do not have a vehicle which would take them to the rural communities. The equipment of out-patient services is very variable. Only about 50 percent of out-patient services have nurses or skilled personnel and the provision of medical drugs is somewhat sluggish and not quite sufficient.

In this area, the MNB (S) continues to provide support and assistance by co-ordinating and distributing donations of material and money and by giving advice for the establishment of a civilian rescue system.

A SOLDIER IS A SOLDIER, BUT WHAT ABOUT
THE "POLITICAL" SOLDIER?

On several occasions it was pointed out that the work performed by the MNB (S) in Kosovo is different from what is considered to be as the soldier's mission (Figure 13). Let's highlight this fact from yet another perspective. As soldiers they consider themselves as citizens in uniform, but also to be politically neutral while in uniform. But in this case it was not always possible to strictly follow this principle. In Kosovo they had a wide spectrum which ranges from the construction of a by-pass road for Prizren to keep the trucks out of the city. In addition, the request to provide security forces when it was necessary to tear down illegal buildings and, last but not least, imposing curfews for Prizren and Dragas.



Figure 13: Soldier contacts with political leaders.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE KOSOVO OPERATION

The key lessons learned from the Kosovo operation are derived from the parameters of the initial situation and its further development and are still valid today. During the initial phase of the operation, the foremost task was to immediately re-supply the population with food and clothing, but also to enforce the MTA (Military Technical Agreement) calling for the withdrawal of the Serbs and for disarmament of the KLA in order to get reconstruction under way. Since there was no functioning state power — no parliamentary structures in place —, the military units had to take charge of the entire spectrum of public functions and implement those functions (Figure 14).

Efforts were made very quickly to give the Kosovo-Albanian population an active role in these activities. However, those challenges could only be met through our military presence and through the determination and skills (civilian and military) of our soldiers. The necessity of diverse civilian skills of the troops was not considered of essential importance at the beginning but proved to be a very important factor for the accomplishment of the mission. It

turned out that the military mission and the accomplishment of subsidiary functions were two sides of one coin.

Figure 15 portrays the details of the spectrum of activities to be handled in the theatre of operation, activities which are actually of a non-military nature, but which had to be handled by the military units in the initial phase and/or must still be handled by them today.



Figure 14: Tasks that had to be performed.



Figure 15: Non-military tasks.

The diversity is quite impressive. In this context only the activities marked in orange are related to military capabilities, such as medical services or military police duties. A civilian administration was established step-by-step with the support of UNMIK. Most responsibilities have now been turned over, either as a whole or in parts to other organisations.

The key lesson learned, as far as this area is concerned, is that the military training given to the soldiers of MNB (S) was appropriate. They were able to successfully handle even those civilian responsibilities in a smooth manner without any turmoil. The combination of a wide diversity of civilian skills among the German troops, a conscript army by-the-way, and a concentrated preparation for the forthcoming military operation has proved to be an efficient asset, especially when it came in handling unexpected tasks.

The success of peacekeeping missions is essentially dependent on the provision of intelligence collection capabilities, so as to be able on the one hand to assess the entire political, economic and social environment under the aspect of a comprehensive fact-finding effort and, on the other hand, to identify irregular and underground forces. In addition to autonomous reconnaissance aircraft (LUNA), HUMINT assets have also proved to be an efficient instrument during operations.

Another mission which has been substantially upgraded and sophisticated and which requires relatively few assets and resources is what we call “Operational Information” and may be compared with “Psychological Operations” at allied level (Figure 16).

Operational Information MNB S 48

- *Force Protection by
 - *loudspeaker appeals
 - *"Radio Andernach"
- *Reduction of causes for potential conflict using
 - *Radio-Spots "Radio Prizren"
 - *Print-Medien "DITË T e SHPRESES"
- *Troop welfare broadcasts by
 - "Radio Andernach"

Edition of a newspaper in Albanian language (30 000 copies)

DITË T e SHPRESES
Duhet të regjistrohen të gjitha ndërmarjet ekonomike

Figure 16: Operational Information.

Some of the tasks handled under this concept are not really of a military nature, such as radio programs and the publication of a newspaper in the Albanian language (daily 30,000 copies) aimed at informing the public where other reliable sources of information are not available.

FINAL REMARKS: MNB (S) — JUST GREAT

It is a first-time occasion for the Federal Republic of Germany while acting as lead nation during a peacekeeping operation to be responsible for a sector of their own. Excellent work in this respect is being done by NATO formations and non-NATO units integrated within the Multinational Brigade South under German command. Despite the necessity, whenever a contingent has completed its tour of duty that many unsolved problems and unsettled issues remain.

These issues are than transferred by the soldiers to their successors. Anyone touring the countryside with open eyes, is bound to notice the progress which has been achieved within 6 months. And anyone who remembers what the country was like just after the end of the war will inevitably concede that the men and women, the male and female soldiers who made that progress possible have been doing an outstanding job by ensuring a safe environment, but also by giving direct aid and assistance in the reconstruction of this country, and particularly by helping people find their way back to normalcy.

It is important that people are shown a perspective. The presence of the multinational KFOR units ended the organised killing and expulsion of people. There are fewer acts of violence thanks to the presence of KFOR and UNMIK- police. This enables the population to live a relatively normal life.