

Operation Horseshoe 2 and Wahhabism

By Xhavit Shala

In its 8 and 9 March 2007 issues¹, the Serbian daily Vecernje Novosti tries to blackmail international opinion in order to delay Kosova's [Kosovo] independence as much as possible.²

Allegedly citing intelligence reports from Western countries that have troops in Kosova, the newspaper claims that "the Albanians are making preparations for a new war in the Balkans." According to the newspaper, "Islamic jihad is threatening Kosovo." In order to make its report as credible as possible, it says that "Islamic extremists and mujahedins from Albania, as well as from Egypt" are in the regions of Peje and Drenice.³

The offensive that is being mounted by the Serbian media is intended to make the international public believe in the existence of a threat not only to Serbia, but also to the whole of the Balkans, if the independent state of Kosova is allowed.

The Serbian allegations about the Albanians being linked to "Islamic extremism" and attempts at playing on Western sensitivities to radical Islam in order to prevent Kosova's independence are nothing new. What is new about them is that by describing the Albanians as Islamic extremists, certain Serbian circles, with the assistance of Wahhabis, seem to have planned the implementation of an Operation Horseshoe-2 ("Horseshoe" was the codename for Serbia's ethnic cleansing of Kosovo in 1999).

This time the Serbian aim is to carry out ethnic cleansing on territories within Serbia's administrative boundaries, Presheve, Medvedgje, and Bujanovc, and to blame the Albanians for it.

According to the Serbian newspaper, "Albanian terrorists are planning to occupy the northern part of Kosova, more precisely its Serb-inhabited territories. The plan is to be carried out in Drenice by terrorists and mujahedins, who have also been reinforced with local Wahhabis." Their aim is to push the border northward toward Serbia's Sandzak

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² The article was first published as an editorial in the daily "Korrieri", of 19.03.2007, (<http://www.acnss.com/html/studime/1903patkoi.htm>). It was subsequently picked up and distributed by BBC Monitoring/BBC. Source: Financial Times Information Limited, under the title Serbia planning an ethnic cleansing of Preshevo area.: The article was also carried by <http://www.khilafah.com/kcom/analysis/news-watch/serbia-planning-ethnic-cleansing-in-presevo-area-albanian-paper.html>

³ "Večernje novosti", 8 mars 2007

province. "The mujahedins personnel is stationed in the southern part of Mitrovica, where the notorious Abu Bakir detachment under Ekrem Avdia's⁴ command has been deployed.

According to this imaginary Serbian plan, Albanian "extremists" intend to cause a new exodus of Serbs from Kosova. Vecernje Novosti says that ". . . simultaneously with the Serb retreat, the Albanian extremists plan to create incidents with the columns of Serb refugees. The aim is that, revolted by the Albanians' provocations, on crossing Kosova's border with Serbia, they will attack the Albanian villages in the Presevo Valley and Bujanovac and 'occupy' some of them. This would give the Albanian extremists a pretext to attack these columns allegedly in self-defence. The plan is to provoke the Serbian security forces into intervening in defence of the Serb refugees."

Whatever the Serbs may say, the Albanians have no reason to try to occupy the Serb-inhabited northern part of Kosova. Kosova's territorial integrity was among the non-negotiable conditions of the Contact Group. These territories are an indivisible part of Kosova. Currently they are under NATO control and, consequently, under the administration of the Kosova Government.

Prompted by their Serbian inspirers, the Kosova Serb leaders have all along been stating that, in the event of Kosova's independence, the ethnic Serb population of northern Kosova will leave their territories and migrate to Serbia.

It is for this reason that the international community has long been trying to convince the Serbs that this should never happen and that they should see their future within the borders of Kosova. Albanian political forces in Kosova have been doing the same.

Hence, it is absurd to think that the Albanians intend to expel the Serbs from their territories, when all their efforts are intended to make the Serbs refrain from carrying out their intention.

The Serbian propaganda that the Albanians intend to occupy northern Kosova and carry out ethnic cleansing against the Serb population there is sheer lunacy. [Passage omitted]

The Serbian plan is clear enough. The Serbs who leave Kosova are supposed to occupy the Albanian villages in southern Serbia by evicting their Albanian inhabitants. The Serbian security forces are supposed to stamp out any possible resistance from Albanian "terrorists." This will be, albeit on a minor scale, a re-enactment of Operation Horseshoe, which Milosevic carried out in Kosova in 1999.⁵

⁴ Ibid

⁵ "Veçernije novosti", 09.03.2007: "Albanians are making serious preparations for a new war in the Balkans". A source quoted by "Novosti" says that UNMIK and KFOR forces have received strict instructions not to enter into a conflict or discussion with armed groups, and if they come across any such group they should retreat and return to base."

At the conclusion of Horseshoe-2 the Serbs will try to pass off the eviction of Albanians from their territories in southern Serbia as an exchange of populations, an option that they regret not having raised at the negotiation table.⁶

⁶ Following this article, the Italian Radical Radio made the following comment, “Xhavit Shala, an Albanian expert on Regional Security in an article written for the Albanian daily Korrieri informs that the Serb daily “Veçernije novosti”, of March 8, 9, 2007, quoting sources from the Secret Services, unconfirmed ones of course, speaks of an Albanian organization to start a new war in the Balkans! According to Shala, the Serb paper has denounced a secret plan of a religious nature to be carried out by the Kosovar Albanians. While knowing very well that this is not true, the paper also says that Mujahedins from Albania, Macedonia and even Egypt have already arrived in Kosova. Having investigate on behalf of the Radio Radical about the alleged Islamic danger in Kosova after some statement made in this regard by Massimo D’Alema, after the war in 1999, I would like to know whether D’Alema and Farnezina have again become victims of these Serb machinations. (<http://fainotizia.radioradicale.it/2007/03/24/i-balceni-sorprendono-ancora-dal-kosovo-in-grecia-macedonia-ed-in-serbia>)