

masters in Kosovo — at least on the street where the real power lies. For this reason, the Allies face an excruciating predicament.

K-For commanders on the spot instinctively want to hound the intimidators, but they fear that a forceful campaign against the underground terrorists would provoke a fierce backlash from an Albanian population which regards the former guerilla fighters as national heroes.

Meanwhile, at a political level, the UN has no option but to do business with the KLA leaders because they are the only show in town.

Reincarnated as the most powerful political party in Kosovo, the KLA can make or break the UN's efforts to establish the framework for a democratic society.

The guerillas are careful to proclaim their commitment to democracy, to express their dismay at the persecution of the Serbs and to endorse the UN's commitment to a 'multi-ethnic' Kosovo.

However, this conciliatory language means precious little and everyone in Kosovo knows it. The only hope is that the KLA's word — despite the wealth of evidence to the contrary — will one day become its bond.

HOWEVER, the KLA's endgame has not changed since their fighters first took arms against Milosevic: it is nothing less than complete independence for Kosovo — though, at the moment, their leaders prefer to avoid the issue.

I had to ask the KLA's political boss and self-proclaimed 'prime minister of the provisional government' the same question nine times before he admitted that for the KLA 'democracy and independence are inseparable — you can't have one without the other'.

The reason for this reticence is simple enough: UN Resolution 1244 explicitly rules out Kosovan independence; instead, it endorses autonomy within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Security Council and the KLA are thus on a collision course, though — for the moment — it suits both to pretend otherwise.

In the meantime, any prospect of creating a 'multi-ethnic' democracy in Kosovo has retreated over the horizon while the promised elections have had to be postponed into the indefinite future.

The UN is doing its best — against the odds — to erect the scaffolding of a civic society and K-For is holding the line against anarchy. But Kosovo is still in ruins, not only physically and economically, but, far more importantly, politically and psychologically.

What of the architects of this shambles? Milosevic, of course, still struts his stuff in the ruins of Serbia.

And what of the moral crusaders who led Nato into this Balkan imbroglio to avert a

obligatory photo-calls in for the troops but, in harsh contrast to their relentless tirade against Serbian tyranny, they have remained remarkably — shockingly — silent in the face of the recent outrages perpetrated in Kosovo by those liberated by Nato last summer. So much for moral crusades. So much for the new world order.

■ JONATHAN DIMBLEBY'S documentary, *A Kosovo Journey*, is on ITV at 10.45pm tomorrow.

Nato accused of violating international law in Kosovo

NATO BREACHED international law in its air attacks on Yugoslavia last year, a respected human rights body says in a report issued today.

The report, by Human Rights Watch, is particularly critical of the use of cluster-bombs. The United States stopped using the munitions halfway through the war, but Britain continued using them, raising serious issues about the Government's concern for civilian casualties.

Nato killed at least 500 civilians during the Kosovo conflict, the report concludes after visits to the sites of many of the attacks. "Human Rights Watch has found no evidence of war crimes," it says. But, it adds, "the investigation did conclude that Nato violated international humanitarian law".

The report says that Nato may have breached the Geneva Convention in five areas: it conducted air attacks using cluster-bombs near populated areas; attacked targets of questionable military legitimacy; did not take adequate measures to warn civilians of strikes; took insufficient precautions to identify the presence of civilians when attacking mobile targets; and caused excessive civilian casualties by not taking sufficient measures to verify that targets did not have concentrations of civilians.

Most of the attacks resulted from missing military targets. But "nine incidents were a result of strikes on non-military targets that Human Rights Watch believes were illegitimate", including Serb Radio and Television in Belgrade.

At least one-fifth of those who died were killed by cluster-bombs, which spray bomblets over a wide area. "Overall, cluster-bomb use by the United States and Britain can be confirmed in seven incidents throughout Yugoslavia (another five are possible but unconfirmed)," the report says.

BY ANDREW MARSHALL in Washington

"Some 90 to 150 civilians died from the use of these weapons."

It reveals the United States stopped using the weapons after a hitherto secret presidential order: "Widespread reports of civilian casualties from the use of cluster-bombs and international criticism of these weapons as potentially indiscriminate, in effect, led ... to an unprecedented US executive order in the middle of May to cease their further use in the conflict," the report says. "The White House issued the order

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■ For me, the proof came when Nato bombed a hospital at Surdulice... and James Shea announced it was a "military target"

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only days after civilians were killed by Nato cluster-bombs in the city of Nis on May 7."

But Britain, according to the RAF's own reports, continued to use the weapons. "Cluster-bombs should not have been used in attacks in populated areas, let alone urban targets, given the risks," it says. "Nevertheless, the [RAF] continued to drop cluster-bombs, indicating the need for universal, not national, norms regarding cluster-bomb use." The report also says there is "some evidence" Yugoslav forces used civilians as human shields.

The body calls on Nato to "establish an independent and impartial commission ... that would ... consider the need to alter targeting and bombing doctrine to ensure compliance with international humanitarian law".