



# BALKAN WATCH

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## A Review of Current Events

**TADIC TELLS SERBS TO JOIN MODERN WORLD.** In a dramatic speech to the nation on October 5, President Boris Tadic told the Serbian people that they must put aside nationalist resentments and agendas, accept accountability for war crimes through compliance with Hague tribunal demands, and move forward to become part of Europe and the West. In a direct challenge to the government of Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, he warned that if the government was not capable of decisive action, "it should accept the consequences." The speech came less than a week after strong messages to Serbia from senior U.S., EU and war crimes tribunal officials urging Belgrade to resolve outstanding issues of reform, cooperate with the West and the tribunal, and back voting by ethnic Serbs in the October 23 Kosovo elections. Tadic was supported by the president of Serbia and Montenegro, Svetozar Marovic, and his decision to support the election also won praise from EU authorities and reformist elements within the Serbian government. EU foreign policy chief said the speech reflected "a very courageous decision," noting that "without the participation of the Kosovo Serbs in the political process, it will be difficult to achieve progress on the key concerns of Kosovo Serbs."

However, Kostunica and the Serbian Radical and Socialist parties continued to support a Serb boycott of the elections. The day after the speech, Kostunica claimed that elections would not be free unless the security of Kosovo Serbs was guaranteed, and one of his spokesmen expressed concern that participation of the ethnic Serbs would legitimize the balloting. Supporters of former Serbian leader and indicted war criminal Slobodan Milosevic announced that they had obtained a minimum number of votes in parliament to launch a potential impeachment process against Tadic. Impeachment of Tadic would require a two-thirds majority vote in the Serbian parliament, followed by a majority vote in a national referendum. If the referendum failed, the parliament would then have to be disbanded and new parliamentary elections held. Tadic defended his comments by noting that, "Maybe I am totally alone in calling for Kosovo Serbs to vote in Kosovo. But I did it because I really believe in European principles."

**EU REVIEWS TALKS WITH SERBIA & MONTENEGRO.** The EU said on October 11 that it would relaunch its review of the feasibility of opening talks with Serbia and Montenegro on negotiating a stabilization and association agreement. EU External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten to EU foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg that "full cooperation with the international court prosecuting alleged war crimes in the former Yugoslavia" was a requirement for improved ties with the EU. The report could be ready by spring 2005.

## UN'S KOSOVO OMBUDSMAN SEEKS

**RIOT INFORMATION.** Marek Nowicki, head of the UN's ombudsman office in Kosovo, has asked authorities there to see information regarding the state of investigations into the deaths of various people during rioting in the disputed province in March. Nowicki is interested in seeing information about people believed killed by NATO and UN peacekeepers during the turmoil. Nineteen people were killed during the two-day, anti-Serb rioting in Kosovo. Thus far, authorities have only issued indictments against two ethnic Albanians believed to have murdered two ethnic Serbs. Thomas Monaghan, head of the UN administered justice system, said that officials believe four ethnic Albanians were killed by UN police or NATO peacekeepers during the rioting. Monaghan stated he did not believe any criminal actions took place by the international authorities in those four cases.

**FRENCH PARATROOPERS DROP INTO KOSOVO.** In the first major operational drop by French troops since their intervention in Zaire in 1978, over 350 French troops parachuted into Kosovo on October 6. The commander noted that they were in Kosovo to enhance security for the October 23 elections.

**MILOSEVIC TRIAL RESUMES.** The trial of former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic has resumed at The Hague. The trial was delayed while Milosevic's court-appointed defense team, headed by Steven Kay of Britain, worked to gather evidence and prepare for their new task. Kay was appointed by the court after health reports suggested that Milosevic would no longer be able to represent himself because of hypertension. The decision regarding whether Milosevic can defend himself is concurrently being discussed by an appeals panel of the court. Meanwhile, some potential defense witnesses have refused to testify before the court unless Milosevic is given the ability to defend himself. Kay noted that Milosevic has a "fundamental right" to defend himself.

**KARADZIC AIDE DISCUSSES AMNESTY.** A former aide to indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic told interviewers that Madeleine Albright, former American Secretary of State, offered not to indict Karadzic for war crimes so long as the Bosnian Serb wartime political leader were to leave the country. Milovan Bjelica told ATV television that Karadzic had a "gentlemen's deal" with Dayton peace negotiator Richard Holbrooke. Bjelica stated that Karadzic promised to step down as head of the Bosnian Serbs and only work in the capacity as leader of his political party after the war ended and the charges were dropped against him by The Hague. Bjelica, on the other hand, has been arrested twice already this year, each time for being suspected of helping Karadzic evade arrest. The EU has also imposed a travel ban on Bjelica. High Representative for Bosnia Paddy Ashdown froze Bjelica's assets earlier this year.

## BOSNIAN SERB WAR CRIMES

**INDICTEE SURRENDERS.** War crimes indictee Ljubisa Beara, suspected of involvement in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, has surrendered to authorities. Beara was a colonel and chief of security for the Bosnian Serb army during the massacre, in which nearly 8,000 Muslim men and boys are believed to have been killed. Beara reportedly was directly involved in the decapitation of 80 to 100 Muslims in the town of Potocari in July 1995, according to the indictment.

**DEL PONTE CRITICAL OF CROATIAN COOPERATION.** UN War Crimes Tribunal chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte criticized the Croatian government for its inability to track down wanted war crimes suspect General Ante Gotovina. Del Ponte announced a November 23 deadline for the Croatian authorities to find Gotovina, suggesting that if the deadline is not achieved, the EU should delay potential talks regarding Croatian membership into the EU. Dennis MacShane, Britain's European Affairs Minister, noted that Zagreb is expected to increase its efforts to find Gotovina, but that if he is not found, Croatian membership in the EU is not necessarily threatened. Del Ponte claimed she had information that Gotovina was seen in August on the Croatian coast, now a popular tourist destination. The European Council will hold its biannual summit in December and will discuss whether to give Croatia a start date for membership negotiations.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"Serbia is at the crossroads, it will either move forward to development and a better life, or it will forever stay in one place because it is not capable of solving problems which have been a burden and a limitation."—Serbian President Boris Tadic, speaking to the nation about democratic reforms and accountability for war crimes (*Reuters*, 10/5/04).

"The Macedonian people face a clear choice between a future with NATO, where stability and economic growth can flourish, or return to the past. We support your sovereignty and territorial integrity and your wish to become a part of NATO."—U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, in Skopje. (*AP*, 10/11/04).

"The Hague is really the big battle for the European future of Serbia and Montenegro. It is not punishment of the generals nor extradition of individuals nor treason. It is modern patriotism."—Serbian President Boris Tadic, speaking to the nation about complying with the UN war crimes tribunal (*Reuters*, 10/5/04).

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