



# BALKAN WATCH

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## A Review of Current Events

**BIDEN CALLS FOR SPECIAL U.S. ENVOY FOR KOSOVO.** Ranking minority member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Sen. Joseph Biden urged the Bush administration to appoint a special envoy to “make a full-court press to resolve Europe’s most volatile issue.” Citing the March ethnic violence in Kosovo, Biden warned that “the stakes are too high to wait any longer.” He criticized the “poor job” by UNMIK, which had “lost credibility” in Kosovo and needed to be reformed by its new director. Biden noted that the inauguration of reformist President Boris Tadic in Serbia opened a “window of opportunity” for the Bush administration “to reverse its policy of disengagement from the Balkans and resume America’s indispensable role in the region as a proponent of human rights and democracy.”

**TADIC VISITS UNITED STATES; HADZIC ESCAPES.** Recently elected Serbian President Boris Tadic met in Washington with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld. In a news conference prior to leaving Belgrade, Tadic announced that he would be discussing Serbian-American relations, the status of Kosovo, and Serbian participation in international organizations, especially NATO. Tadic also wants to pave the way for eventual Serbian integration into the European Union. In a speech at the National Press Club, Tadic asserted his intention to capture war crimes indictees, including Bosnian Serb former military commander Ratko Mladic. He noted that his election as president has helped turn the political tide in Serbia toward enabling war crimes indictees to be brought to justice.

Tadic’s remarks came before the Hague tribunal’s chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte announced that the Serbian government has assisted indicted war criminals. She cited an occurrence on July 13, in which rebel Serb leader Goran Hadzic was told about a secret warrant for his arrest right before he was to be apprehended. Hadzic reportedly immediately packed his belongings, got into his car and drove away from his home. He has not been seen since. Hadzic’s escape came only ten days after Tadic was inaugurated in his new office as president of Serbia.

**TOP SUSPECT IN DJINDJIC KILLING ARRESTED.** Dejan Milenkovic was arrested in Thessaloniki, Greece for the assassination of former Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. Milenkovic was spotted by Greek authorities while he was walking in the streets of Thessaloniki. Greek law requires that Serbia file official documents to have Milenkovic extradited within 50 days of his capture.

**MONTENEGRIN PRESIDENT BLAMES BELGRADE.** Montenegrin President Filip

Vujanovic reportedly told Dutch Foreign Minister Bernhard Bot that non-cooperation with the Hague tribunal is the fault of Serbian leadership in Belgrade, not Podgorica. Bot is currently president of the EU Council. Vujanovic’s remarks underscore disagreements between Serbia and Montenegro regarding their state union, created with the help of the EU. Vujanovic also discussed the withdrawal of a lawsuit by Serbia and Montenegro against NATO members. Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Draskovic intends to discuss the withdrawal with the Council of Ministers. Withdrawal of the lawsuit is a requirement for membership in the Partnership for Peace, considered a precursor to eventual NATO membership.

**FESTIVAL HONORS KARADZIC.** Several thousand people attended a festival honoring indicted Bosnian Serb wartime political leader Radovan Karadzic in Sula, the village where he was born in northwest Montenegro. Karadzic is believed responsible, along with then-Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladic for organizing the 1995 massacre of over 8,000 Muslims in Srebrenica. At the festival, merchants sold goods such as a tee-shirt emblazoned “Karadzic, the Serbian Hero.” Experts believe Karadzic is hiding in a mountain town along the border of Bosnia and Serbia, possibly disguised as a Serbian Orthodox priest.

**MOSTAR BRIDGE REOPENED.** Bosnia inaugurated the reopening of the Stari Most (“Old Bridge”) in the ethnically diverse town of Mostar. The bridge was ordered destroyed in 1993 by Bosnian Croat general Slobodan Praljak, who is currently awaiting trial at The Hague. High Representative Paddy Ashdown ordered Mostar to be integrated earlier this year, taking six ethnically diverse municipalities and unifying them into one multi-ethnic town. The EU set the reunification of Mostar as a precondition to hold talks regarding Bosnian membership. The bridge was originally built in 1566 by Ottoman architect Mimar Hajrudin. The bridge symbolized the unification of peoples of different backgrounds. The rebuilding of the bridge is intended to give hope to prospects for reconciliation between the Muslim and Croat groups that comprise Mostar.

**EU TO INVESTIGATE SUGAR FRAUD IN BOSNIA.** The European Commission’s delegation in Bosnia has opened up an investigation into possible fraudulent imports and exports of sugar between Bosnia and EU member states. Bosnian government officials are believed to have lied about exports to the EU, by understating amounts of sugar sold. Bosnia is believed to have imported excess amounts of sugar from third countries at low prices and resold some to EU member states at market prices, reaping a large profit.

**JUDGES CONSIDERING SEPARATING**

**MILOSEVIC INDICTMENT.** Judges in the trial against former Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic are considering separating his indictments for the wars in Kosovo, Bosnia and Croatia. The three indictments were originally combined, in the hope of making three trials into one long trial. Now, officials believe that separating the indictments may make Milosevic’s defense easier, because he will not have to address all 66 counts from the three indictments altogether. Additionally, the charges against Milosevic from the war in Kosovo may be the easiest to prove, because Milosevic was most clearly at the top of the chain of command during that war, compared with Bosnia and Croatia, which he may assert that he had less control over. The trial will resume on August 31.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES:

“Full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal is in our national interest, as is a resolution of all outstanding issues concerning the wars of Yugoslav succession. Enough time has passed for guilty individuals from all sides to take responsibility for the crimes they committed. My victory has cemented the political consensus necessary to locate the indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic and other fugitives from justice. If Mladic is in Serbia, we will capture him.”—Serbian President Boris Tadic, in an op-ed (*Washington Post*, 7/24/04)

“Although President Tadic has advocated return of Serbian sovereignty to Kosovo, no serious observer believes the province will ever again be ruled from Belgrade. The violent anti-Serb riots that claimed nearly 20 lives last March and destroyed hundreds of homes and churches showed that resolution of Kosovo’s final status can not be postponed much longer.”—Sen. Joseph Biden, in an op-ed (*Washington Times*, 7/25/05).

“This is a defining moment because it concerns the essence of what the conflict of 2001 was fought over. It is a clear indicator of this country’s determination, will and capacity to succeed.” —Soren Jessen-Petersen, EU representative to Macedonia, on the decentralization agreement giving ethnic Albanians control over municipalities where they form a majority (*AP*, 7/19/04).

Prepared by John Sannar