



BALKAN WATCH

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A Review of Current Events

SREBRENICA VIDEO STUNS SERBIA. A video recently released by UN prosecutor Geoffrey Nice at the trial of Slobodan Milosevic and subsequently broadcast on Serbian television showed Serb troops killing unarmed Bosnian Muslims around the time of the 1995 Srebrenica massacre. In the video, four men were forced to lie on the ground and were shot, before two other prisoners were forced to carry their bodies to a grave, where they too were shot by Serb troops. Nice and his colleague, chief UN war crimes prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, remarked that the video was more proof in the case against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and his ultranationalist Serbian political colleagues. After the release of the footage, Serbia & Montenegro President Boris Tadic commented on the video, telling the public that those individuals responsible for the crimes would be arrested. At the beginning of the video, a Serbian Orthodox priest, identified as Father Gavrilko from Vojvodina, is seen blessing the men that would later go on to commit the killings.

UN prosecutors stated that the video was taken and the crimes committed by a paramilitary group known as the Scorpions, near the Bosnian Serb wartime "capital" Pale. The Scorpions were reportedly under orders to commit their acts by Serbian police in Belgrade, which would more directly implicate Milosevic in the act than other previous charges. Tadic also pledged to visit the site of the Srebrenica massacre to "bow to the memory of the innocent victims." Del Ponte announced that she has more video material showing war crimes being perpetrated under Milosevic's rule and they will be played in subsequent cases at The Hague. Aleksandar Vukic, head of the post-Milosevic Serbian Radical Party, claimed that the release of the video was part of an overall campaign against Serbia and the Serbs. While in court, Milosevic denied further claims that he had been responsible for the killings, denying any connection between the Scorpions and the Serbian police force in 1995. The tenth anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre will occur next month on July 11.

ASSURANCES FOR MLADIC'S ARREST; U.S. RESUMES AID TO SERBIA. Officials in Belgrade told UN war crimes prosecutor Carla Del Ponte that indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic would be captured and arrested within a month. Del Ponte was in Belgrade as part of a trip to the region, in which she also stopped in Sarajevo, where she met with a representative of the Mothers of Srebrenica Association and OHR High Representative Paddy Ashdown. Serbia & Montenegro Defense Minister Prvoslav Davinic also stated he was confident that Mladic would be captured and that the war crimes indictee was not hiding within his military, as some have suspected. Meanwhile, U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns was assured that Mladic and his colleague Radovan

Karadzic, believed to be hiding in the Bosnian Serb Republic, would be captured soon, while meeting with Bosnian Serb officials. Burns' statement served as a warning to Bosnia that these two men must be captured if it hopes to be able to join NATO.

The United States also lifted a ban on foreign aid to Serbia & Montenegro, allowing a \$10 million aid package to be sent to Belgrade, noting that Serbian cooperation with the war crimes tribunal at The Hague had improved. Last year, a package of \$16 million was withheld by the United States. Burns noted that, while Serbia had improved its cooperation with the tribunal, Serbia needed to do more to obtain future aid. Serbian Justice Minister Zoran Stojkovic denied allegations that the Serbian government was entering high-level secret talks with Mladic to persuade him to surrender.

MONTENEGRIN PARLIAMENT SETS GOAL OF EU MEMBERSHIP. Members of the parliament in Montenegro adopted a declaration stating that EU membership would be their goal. The declaration, which has limited practical usage, was adopted by a vote of 61-7. The vote is seen as a move that would bolster the campaign by Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic to secede from the state union with Serbia to become an independent and sovereign state. Social Democrat Ivan Brajovic, a member of the parliament, stated that the declaration spelled out a few steps Montenegro would need to take on its way to EU accession. Members of the Serbian National Party, such as Novica Stanic, voted against the declaration, saying that it did not suggest that EU membership could occur within the union of Serbia & Montenegro. Djukanovic has vowed to hold an independence referendum some time next year. Reactions to no-votes on the EU constitution in France and the Netherlands elicited negative responses from various leaders, who warned that the EU has already played a significant role in reshaping the region, while also bringing to mind the Thessaloniki Resolution of 2003, which stated that the Balkans would have a future in the EU.

ANNAN APPOINTS EIDE TO OVERSEE KOSOVO STANDARDS. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed Norwegian diplomat Kai Eide to oversee an international effort to evaluate Kosovo's progress towards democracy, multiethnicity and stability. Eide will initiate a wide-ranging review in Kosovo this summer, seen as a precursor to the initiation of final status talks on Kosovo. The Security Council approved Eide's appointment on May 27. Prior to this position, Eide served as Norway's ambassador to the OSCE in Vienna and as Annan's special representative to Bosnia in 1997-98. Annan noted to the Security Council that officials in Kosovo are expected to continue working toward achieving these goals prior to final status talks. Additionally, UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette has toured various UN peacekeeping bases in

Kosovo, in an effort to investigate sex abuses by peacekeepers around the world.

JESSEN-PETERSEN POSITIVE ABOUT BORDER DEAL WITH MACEDONIA. UNMIK head Soren Jessen-Petersen told reporters that he was positive that an agreement could be reached between Kosovo and neighboring Macedonia regarding the border between the two. Resolving the border dispute has been seen as a necessity prior to launching Kosovo's final status talks.

SANADER EXPECTS APPROVAL FROM DEL PONTE. Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader told reporters that he expects approval from UN war crimes prosecutor Carla Del Ponte regarding his country's efforts to track down war crimes indictee Ante Gotovina. Gotovina has yet to be captured; however, Sanader has claimed that his country has done nearly everything possible to track him down. Gotovina's capture, or sufficient proof he is not in the country has been seen as a prerequisite for initiating EU accession talks for Croatia.

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"Serbia is deeply shocked. Those images are proof of a monstrous crime committed against persons of a different religion. And the guilty had walked as free men until now. The killers had walked freely among us, on our streets, behaving as if they were ordinary, honorable citizens. All those who committed war crimes must be held accountable; only in this way will we be able to have a future. We must not close our eyes to the cruelty that took place."—Serbian President Boris Tadic, commenting on video footage showing Serbs killing unarmed Bosnian Muslims (*AP*, 6/2/05).

"If the assessment is positive, then I think it would pave the way for a process to determine the future status of Kosovo. It certainly is our hope that we will be able to move to that phase."—UN Deputy Secretary-General Louise Frechette, commenting on the upcoming UN assessment on implementation of standards within Kosovo (*AP*, 6/6/05).

"Without the prospect of European integration, we are lost. For the first time in the history of the Balkans we all have the same strategic aspiration, joining the EU. Anything that can put a question mark on that really has negative consequences."—Zivorad Kovacevic, president of the European Movement in Serbia, a pro-EU lobbying group in Belgrade, discussing no-votes on the EU constitution in France and the Netherlands (*Financial Times*, 6/3/05).

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Balkan Watch is a publication of the Public International Law & Policy Group. Balkan Watch is available on the Web: <http://www.pilpg.org/areas/poldev/balkanwatch/>. Questions or comments? E-mail balkanwatch@pilpg.org