



BALKAN WATCH

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A Review of Current Events

KARADZIC SIGHTINGS; MOTHER BURIED. A funeral was held for Jovanka Karadzic, mother of indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic. The service was presided over by Serbian Orthodox Metropolitan Amfilohije, the priest who delivered a very nationalistic sermon at the funeral of assassinated Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic that angered Djindjic's family and caught the Serbian government and international community off-guard. The priest is married to the sister of Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica. International observers attended the Karadzic funeral, hoping to be able to capture her son, who has successfully evaded capture for ten years and acquired the nickname the "Bosnian Fox" among Bosnian Serbs for his ability to skirt arrest. Most recently, there were reports of a sighting of Radovan Karadzic eating lunch with his wife at a restaurant near the town of Foca in the Bosnian Serb Republic. London's *Guardian* newspaper reported that officials informed the tribunal at The Hague that there were two sightings of Karadzic in April, the other being a week before the restaurant sighting when he was seen with his brother in Belgrade. His wife, Ljiljana Zelen-Karadzic denies having met with him.

U.S. OPPOSES SERBIAN-RUN WAR CRIMES TRIALS. U.S. Deputy Ambassador to Serbia & Montenegro Roderick Moore told participants at a seminar organized by the OSCE and the American embassy in Belgrade that Serbia is not ready to prosecute its own war crimes cases. Anton Nikiforov, an advisor to tribunal chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, noted that many cases may have to be transferred if the tribunal at The Hague is to meet its deadline of 2010 for case completion. Nikiforov suggested that only ten or so low-profile cases would be transferred to Serbian courts. Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica has continuously argued that more cases be turned over to Serbian courts. Moore argued that public opinion polls in Serbia have shown that over fifty percent of Serbs have not even accepted the fact that the Srebrenica massacre of 1995 even ever occurred. Serbia has been criticized for its failure to fully cooperate with the tribunal, failing to capture war criminals without their having surrendered to the Serbian government in the first place. Moore stated that the means by which these surrenders to The Hague took place were insufficient. He also stated that it would be difficult for Serb judges and reporters to remain impartial during trials.

TADIC PROPOSES EUROPEAN CHARTER. Serbian President Boris Tadic proposed a "European charter" last week in an attempt to encourage Serbian politicians to support Serbia's bid to join the European Union. A draft of the charter was to have been sent to the offices of various political parties and

organizations. Serbia has been criticized for its failure to cooperate with the war crimes tribunal at The Hague and for having failed to make serious steps toward reaching EU goals and requirements. The charter proposes various areas upon which the country must improve for serious consideration by Brussels, including "stability and responsibility of state institutions, full respect of human and minority rights, monetary and economic stability and wide reforms within society." Tadic expects the document to be signed and approved by all of his country's political parties within a month.

SREBRENICA LAWYERS LAUNCH CASE AGAINST NETHERLANDS. Lawyers in the Netherlands representing victims of the 1995 massacre at the town of Srebrenica have begun pre-trial hearings to determine whether to go forward with a planned case against the Netherlands. During the massacre, approximately 8,000 Muslim men and boys were killed by Bosnian Serb forces led by indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic. At the time, Srebrenica was supposed to have been a "safe haven" officially controlled by Dutch peacekeepers in the region under UN mandate. The first witness to take the stand in the case was Berend Oosterveen, a former soldier who served at Srebrenica in charge of personnel matters. The first preliminary testimony focused on the case of an electrician, whose family has since moved to the Netherlands after having been granted asylum there. Liesbeth Zegveld, lawyer for the family, stated that if enough evidence were to be produced during the pre-trial hearings, she would proceed with a civil case against the Netherlands. The Netherlands have faced continuing scrutiny for its role in the Srebrenica massacre. In 2002, the entire Dutch government resigned after a report was released that traced failings on the ground in Srebrenica by Dutch troops back to politicians and bureaucrats in Holland. In 1999, UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan released a report that was also critical of the role of the United Nations itself in the lead-up to the massacre. Former Dutch defense minister Joris Voorhoeve and former military commander at Srebrenica Ad van Baal are expected to take the stand during the hearings.

SERBIA, KOSOVO BEGIN REFUGEE TALKS. Serbia and Kosovo began talks over the status and future of refugees displaced during the 1998-99 Kosovo war last week. Gottfried Koeffner, representative of the UN agency chairing the talks, noted that the parties were discussing "practical issues" and would continue talks in Belgrade and Pristina over the next few weeks. Serbia and Kosovo Albanians have disagreed about the number of refugees displaced during the military campaign. Serbia estimates that approximately 200,000 Serbs were forced to leave Kosovo as a result of the

fighting. The government in Kosovo has placed that number near 70,000. Thus far, only 12,500 former Serb refugees have returned to their homes since the war.

CRISIS GROUP BOOK DETAILS RUSSIAN INVOLVEMENT IN KOSOVO TALKS. A recently-released book by International Crisis Group official John Norris titled "Collision Course: NATO, Russia and Kosovo," was discussed by its author at the Washington office of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty last week. Norris's book touches upon the role that Russia has played and will play in settling matters in the Balkans, including in Kosovo. Norris previously served under former senior State Department official Strobe Talbott, who held talks with the Russian government under the Clinton administration. Norris noted that determination of Kosovo's final status would have an impact on neighboring Macedonia, where a sizeable Albanian minority has called for more autonomy since the Lake Ohrid Peace Accords. He added that Serbia had the potential to become the most productive Balkan nation in the EU if Belgrade could come to terms with its own destructive past.

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"I do not believe that the political climate in Serbia is really favorable for equitable war crimes trials before local courts. I do not believe that your society has accepted the magnitude of the crimes committed by the Serbs in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo."

—U.S. Charge d'Affaires in Serbia & Montenegro Roderick Moore, discussing the possibility that war crimes cases be tried in Serbia instead of at The Hague (*AFP*, 5/12/05).

"The claimants feel that their family members were not sufficiently protected on the Dutch military compound. They also believe there were signals that mass executions were either happening or impending."

—Judge Bart Punt, overseeing civil proceedings against the Netherlands for negligence leading to the Srebrenica massacre in 1995 (*AFP*, 5/12/05).

"[Jovanka Karadzic was] the mother of an immortal."

—Serbian Orthodox Church Metropolitan Amfilohije, responsible for Montenegro and tipped by many to be the next Patriarch of the intensely nationalistic Serbian Orthodox Church, speaking at the funeral of the mother of indicted war criminal Radovan Karadzic (*New York Times*, 5/8/05).

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