



# BALKAN WATCH

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## A Review of Current Events

**MLADIC NEAR ARREST?** Indicted war criminal Ratko Mladic may be near arrest, according to Serbian authorities. Serbian officials stated that they had sought contact with Mladic's secret support network which has helped keep him in hiding for the past eight years. Speculation that the Serbian government has been in negotiations with Mladic over the past few weeks to urge him to surrender for transfer to The Hague officially has been denied by Serbian officials. Natasha Kandic, head of the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Center, stated that Mladic has been supported by two networks, one consisting of Bosnian Serbs and the other of former members of the Yugoslav intelligence service. A recent poll by the daily newspaper *Blic* showed that 43 percent of Serbs were in favor of Mladic's extradition, while 37 percent were opposed. The remaining 20 percent were undecided.

**SERBIA DROPS WARRANT FOR MARKOVIC ARREST.** Last month, Serbian authorities dropped an international warrant for the arrest of Mirjan Markovic, wife of former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic. However, she faces charges in Serbia and would be arrested if she were to ever return to her former home, according to General Police Inspector Vladimir Bozovic. Markovic and her husband are believed to have issued orders in 2000 that led to the murder of former Serbian President Ivan Stambolic. She is believed to have been living in Russia since 2003 with her son Marko. Authorities note that the lifting of the international warrant allows her to travel to Brussels to meet with her husband.

**TADIC SREBRENICA PLANS DRAW FIRE.** Serbian President Boris Tadic's plans to visit Srebrenica next month on the occasion of the anniversary of the 1995 massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys has drawn criticism from various memorial organizations. A representative of "The Srebrenica Mothers" stated that Tadic would not be welcome to visit the memorial unless war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic are captured first and if he announced in a press conference that people from Serbia & Montenegro crossed over into Bosnia and took part directly in genocide. The memorial is scheduled to be held on July 11 in the town of Potocari, near Srebrenica. Tadic offered to "kneel down and apologize for the awful Srebrenica crime." Meanwhile, chief UN war crimes prosecutor Carla Del Ponte announced that she would not be attending the memorial events because she could not face the victims of the massacre when Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, two of the leaders behind the massacre, are able to enjoy impunity.

**UN KOSOVO ENVOY OUTLINES PLANS.** Kai Eide, the newly appointed UN envoy assigned to assess whether Kosovo has met international standards preparatory to final

status talks, visited Serbia & Montenegro and promised to "take the time we need" and "travel as much as possible and see as much as we can" before issuing a report that he said would be "fair and credible." He said he would visit Kosovo early next month.

**ROMANIA WEIGHS IN ON KOSOVO DEBATE.** Romania, a country expected to join the EU in 2007, has announced its opinion on Kosovo's final status. Romanian Foreign Minister Mihai Razvan Ungureanu met with Serbian President Boris Tadic in Bucharest, stating that he would be willing to help negotiate between the parties in the dispute. Ungureanu stated that his country would prefer that Kosovo remain a part of Serbia & Montenegro, instead of becoming an independent state. Senate chairman Nicolae Vacaroiu met with Tadic and urged greater rights for the Romanian minority in Serbia.

**SCUFFLE IN MITROVICA LEADS TO ARRESTS.** A fight between a Kosovo Albanian and a Kosovo Serb in the ethnically divided town of Mitrovica led to the arrest of two ethnic Albanian individuals by UN police. A car driven by a group of ethnic Albanians over the bridge linking the two sections of the town hit a van driven by a Serb. A group of Serbs nearby became involved and members of the two groups began throwing stones at each other. Tensions between the two groups have increased in Mitrovica since the recent re-opening of the bridge, which links the Serb-dominated part of the town with the Albanian-dominated section. International officials had hoped that re-opening the bridge would serve to improve inter-ethnic communications and calm tensions between the groups prior to the opening of negotiations on Kosovo's final status.

**MONTENEGRO CONFERENCE ON KOSOVO.** A conference of EU and Balkan legislators held in Budva, Montenegro, focus on the relationship between resolving final status issues for Montenegro and Kosovo. Kosovo political party leader Vetton Surroi told conferees that, "waiting for Serbia to resolve the problem is wasting time and this has been realized by the international community. It is clear that Kosovo and Montenegro cannot be held hostage, nor Montenegro [held hostage] by Kosovo, rather the natural course of events must take effect."

**MAROVIC AND DRASKOVIC SLAM KOSTUNICA OVER MONTENEGRO.** Serbia & Montenegro President Svetozar Marovic and Foreign Minister Vuk Draskovic criticized Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica for releasing a list of Montenegrins living in Serbia who he claimed should be allowed to vote in a potential independence referendum to be held next year. The list

contains over 260,000 names, enough to significantly impact any referendum on Montenegro. Marovic and Draskovic felt that Kostunica's actions were inappropriate and "secretive, underhanded." The European Union declined to comment on the list.

**AHERN PROMISES BALKANS ON EU.** Irish Taoiseach Bertie Ahern assured Serbia & Montenegro President Svetozar Marovic in Dublin that the EU was still committed to ensuring that one of its long term goals was that the western Balkans would be invited to integrate into the EU. Ahern told reporters that he praised Serbia & Montenegro for its improved cooperation with the war crimes tribunal at The Hague and that he looks forward to preliminary accession talks in the future. Ahern also noted that he would like to see the creation of a "constructive dialogue" at various levels between Belgrade and Pristina. Ahern emphasized the goal of making Kosovo multi-ethnic, "based on European standards."

**OSCE HOLDS ORGANIZED CRIME CONFERENCE IN BELGRADE.** The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe held a conference in Belgrade to address transnational crime. Douglas Wake, deputy of the OSCE mission in Belgrade, suggested that crime has been on the rise in Serbia and that authorities would need to take a new approach in handling it and place a greater emphasis on regional crime cooperation to solve the problems associated with human and drug trafficking.

## QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"The absence of real action in the Serbian parliament regarding the massacre, the massive tragedy in Srebrenica, is not only regretful but also deeply disturbing. It is not enough to issue general statements against war crimes committed in the history of mankind, when we talk here about a concrete circumstances and condemnation of concrete and real human sufferings."—U.S. Ambassador Michael Polt (*Danas*, 6/17/05).

"Let no Serb or Bosnian Serb official come here until they arrest Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic."—Munira Subasic, member of "The Srebrenica Mothers," criticizing Serbian President Tadic's plans to attend a memorial in Srebrenica (*AP*, 6/20/05).

"The failure to bring Karadzic and Mladic to The Hague is severely undermining the role and the potential success of this tribunal."—UN Chief War Crimes Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte (*AP*, 6/23/05).

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