



BALKAN WATCH

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A Review of Current Events

U.S. TREASURY DESIGNATES DAYTON OBSTRUCTIONISTS. On December 16 the Treasury Department listed three organizations and six individuals as having obstructed implementation of the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia by aiding suspected war criminals and hindering their capture. The three organizations listed were the Serb Democratic Party (SDS), Zdravo, and Komoto. According to Treasury, the SDS provided material support to war criminals, while also being linked to the government of the Bosnian Serb Republic. Zdravo and Komoto are both organizations headed by war crimes indictee Radovan Karadzic's brother, Luka Karadzic. Previously in 2004, Luka Karadzic stated that his brother had no intention of surrendering to authorities to face international justice. The six individuals listed by Treasury were all previously indicted by the war crimes tribunal at The Hague: Ljubisa Beara, Miroslav Bralo, Vlastimir Djordjevic, Goran Hadzic, Vladimir Lazarevic, and Sreten Lukic. Of these individuals, Beara and Bralo are already in the tribunal's custody.

IVANIC AND MIKEREVIC RESIGN. Bosnian Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic resigned after international sanctions were placed on Bosnian Serbs for failing to capture and extradite wanted war criminals. Ivanic's resignation was preceded by the resignation of Bosnian Serb Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic, who left protesting the international sanctions. Paddy Ashdown, High Representative in Bosnia, had imposed the sanctions prior to the resignations. Ashdown fired nine Bosnian Serb law enforcement officials believed to have assisted war crimes fugitives wanted by the Hague tribunal. Ivanic also condemned Ashdown's actions, saying they were an attempt by the international community to impose forceful change on the Bosnian Serb Republic. Sanctions also include a travel ban for the leadership of both major Bosnian Serb political parties.

BOSNIAN SERB ARMY HID MLADIC. EUFOR commander, British Maj. General David Leakey told reporters that members of the Bosnian Serb army aided in sheltering indicted Bosnian Serb war criminal Ratko Mladic in an underground bunker in the last six months. Leakey said he had evidence that Mladic was in hiding in the Veliki Zep underground bunker facility, built by the former Yugoslav communist regime, within the past six months. Bosnian Serb authorities have yet to apprehend any indicted war criminals for extradition. Leakey noted that the use of the facility must have been with the knowledge of the Bosnian Serb authorities. Captain Milorad Zeric, head of Bosnian Serb forces which guard the facility, insisted that Mladic had not been in the bunker at any point in the previous year. He added that Mladic and Radovan Karadzic reportedly only occasionally visit Bosnia and spend most of their time living in Serbia. He stressed that, "it is very important that the two leading war crimes suspects Mladic and Karadzic are

detained because until they are detained and the Bosnian Serb Republic and Serbia have fulfilled their obligations, Bosnia will not move forward."

The EUFOR commander's comments followed the leak of information earlier in December in Belgrade that Mladic has been receiving a military pension of \$520 per month from Belgrade, which was picked up regularly by a member of Mladic's family. Serbian President Boris Tadic defended the payments, claiming that the family was legally entitled to the money under Serbian law. Tadic denied that payment of the pension meant that the Serbian authorities knew where he was hiding.

LABUS SAYS EXTRADITION BY END OF JANUARY; TADIC UNDER PRESSURE. Serbian Deputy Prime Minister Miroljub Labus stated that four top police and army officials should be extradited to the UN war crimes tribunal at The Hague by the end of January to face trial. Labus said his G-17 Plus party, which is a part of the current governing coalition, would insist that authorities extradite the individuals. Meanwhile, Serbian President Boris Tadic is under pressure by international authorities to hand over war crimes indictees to the Hague tribunal. In an interview, Tadic noted that his country's isolation is a price it pays for its actions in the 1990s under the Milosevic regime. Tadic encouraged the international community to be careful about who it defines as the victim and the aggressor in the wars in the Balkans in the 1990s. He also noted differences between himself and Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica, who is more reluctant to hand over suspects to the international tribunal. Tadic urged consistency in handling war criminals from Serbia, Albania, Croatia, and Bosnia.

HUMANITARIAN LAW FUND DEMANDS INVESTIGATION. The Humanitarian Law Fund, a human rights group in Serbia & Montenegro, has demanded that parliament form a commission to investigate mass graves of Kosovo Albanians in Serbia and to find those responsible for carrying out such crimes, which occurred during the Kosovo War in 1998-1999. Thus far, the bodies of hundreds of victims have been uncovered from mass graves located in Serbia. Hundreds of more victims remain unaccounted for. The Humanitarian Law Fund also said that bodies were buried in "inaccessible" areas in southern Serbia and that many bodies were burned in an effort to destroy evidence. The organization also called upon Serbian authorities to name individuals responsible for the crimes and to say publicly how the victims were killed.

MARKO MILOSEVIC SENTENCE OVERTURNED. A Serbian court overturned the sentence and conviction of Slobodan Milosevic's son, Marko, for allegedly threatening to kill his father's political opponents. Marko Milosevic was tried in

absentia in his hometown of Pozarevac. Marko is believed to have escaped to Russia shortly after his father's fall from power. He was charged with kidnapping the head of a resistance organization in March 2000 and threatening to kill him with a power saw if he did not reveal supporters of his organization. The court cited procedural violations in the original trial.

RUNOFF NEEDED IN CROATIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION. Croatians went to the polls on January 2 to elect a new president, giving incumbent President Stipe Mesic received 49 percent of the vote. He will face a runoff January 16 with Croatian Democratic Union candidate Jadranka Kosovo, a minister in the current government, who received 20 percent of the vote. The percentages of several other candidates were in the single digits. Mesic, who needed 50 percent of the total to win outright, called his vote count a "brilliant victory." During the campaign, he had pledged to lead Croatia to EU membership by the end of the decade. The EU said it would begin membership talks with the country on March 17, provided that indicted Croatian war criminal General Ante Gotovina is captured and extradited to the Hague tribunal by that date. Gotovina is accused of leading the killing of 150 Serbs and the forced expulsion of some 150,000 other ethnic Serbs from Croatia after the war in 1991.

QUOTABLE QUOTES:

"I don't want to compare Osama Bin Laden and Ratko Mladic, but it's difficult because of his own experience and his knowledge of secret hiding places. My perception is that the war criminals are crossing between Serbia and Bosnia."—Serbian President Boris Tadic, commenting on the search for indicted Serbian war criminal Ratko Mladic (*The Washington Times*, 12/27/04).

"By not disclosing information about the fate of the missing Kosovo Albanians, Serbia is violating its state obligation to inform the families of the missing about their loved ones and recognize responsibility for the suffering of the Albanian victims."—Statement from the Serbia & Montenegro human rights group Humanitarian Law Fund (*Associated Press*, 12/24/04).

"We have no fears for Croatia if either Mesic or Kosor wins. But for democracy it would probably be better if the HDZ did not have everything—parliament, government and president."—A Western diplomat in Zagreb, commenting on the two leading candidates for the presidency (*Reuters*, 12/30/04).

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