

## **Briefly Noted...**

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Compiled by Emir Suljagic and Stacy Sullivan in The Hague (TU 313, 12-16 May 2003)

Former Slovene president Milan Kucan took the witness stand in Slobodan Milosevic's trial on May 21.

Kucan was the first Slovene politician to stand up to Milosevic in the late Eighties, and was also crucial player in securing Slovenia's independence from Yugoslavia.

He told the court that Milosevic had categorically stated that he would not allow a single Serb to be left outside Serbian territory if Yugoslavia was to break up – and that this had resulted in the forceful redrawing of borders.

In common with the Croatian president Stjepan Mesic, who previously testified against Milosevic, Kucan traded numerous insults with his onetime colleague.

### EX-JNA CAPTAIN PLEADS "NOT GUILTY"

Former Yugoslav national army, JNA, officer Miroslav Radic - who has been wanted by the tribunal for years for his alleged role in the massacre of patients at Vukovar hospital in November 1991 - has appeared in court on May 21.

Captain Radic is facing six charges of crimes against humanity, violations of Geneva conventions and war crimes, all related to the fall of Vukovar.

The indictment alleges that Radic, along with fellow JNA officers Veselin Sljivancanin and Mile Mrksic, supervised the massacre of hospital patients by Serb paramilitaries.

Dressed in a grey suit, his face stoic, Radic pleaded not guilty to all counts of the indictment.

### MILOSEVIC PROSECUTORS GIVEN EXTENSION

The judges presiding over Slobodan Milosevic's trial have given prosecutors a 100-day extension to compensate for time missed due to the former Serbian leader's health problems.

"The trial chamber has come to the conclusion that it is in the interest of justice... to allow the prosecution 100 days from May 16, this year," said Judge Richard May in his ruling.

The extension means that the already lengthy trial will extend well into 2005. The prosecution, which plans to call another hundred witnesses for its case, will finish by the end of the year.

Time has been an issue in the trial from the start, with both the prosecution and the defendant complaining of a lack of it. Until now, Milosevic has been taking up far more time than the prosecution, in spite of frequent warnings by the judges not to make speeches.

#### KARADZIC ARREST "IMMINENT"

When tribunal chief prosecutor Carla Del Ponte arrived in Belgrade this week to demand the arrest of war crimes suspects, she discovered that some of the fugitives still have strong support.

Posters of indicted fugitives Radovan Karadzic and Veselin Slijivancanin were pasted on walls and lampposts along one of the capital's main streets on the day of her visit.

Nonetheless, Del Ponte insisted that Belgrade extradite Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic to The Hague as soon as possible.

In spite of the nasty surprise, Del Ponte said she left assured of the new government's willingness to cooperate with The Hague, describing it as "a new era".

Serbia's new prime minister Zoran Zivkovic said, "It is our international and legal obligation to make a clean break with the past."

While visiting Sarajevo, Del Ponte sent a warning to another war crimes fugitive, former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic, that he will soon be seized.

"NATO is doing a lot and there will be an imminent arrest," she said, adding that there was now "political will" to capture and extradite Karadzic.

General William Ward, commander of the NATO-led peacekeeping force SFOR, concurred, saying that he hopes to arrest Karadzic and 20 other war crimes suspects believed to be at large in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

#### CROATIA SNUBS US FOR EU

The Croatian government said May 20 that it was not going to meet the July 1 deadline for signing a deal giving United States personnel immunity from extradition to the International Criminal Court, ICC.

The authorities' decision not to sign the agreement, in spite of fierce pressure from Washington, will put a possible 19 million US dollar military aid deal in jeopardy.

Analysts see Zagreb's choice as an attempt to forge closer ties with the European Union, which is to review Croatia's membership application in coming months.

Croatia - which has extradited a number of its former army officers to The Hague - sees America's bid for immunity from war crimes prosecution as "hypocritical", but is nonetheless confident of reaching a compromise with Washington.

However, Defence Minister Zeljka Antunovic said Croatia would figure out a way to fund its own armed forces if Washington withdrew military aid.

#### WHEN WILL STANISIC ARRIVE IN THE HAGUE?

Tribunal officials said that they expect Jovica Stanisic to arrive in The Hague any day, but Belgrade officials now claim that the former head of Milosevic's secret service has fallen ill.

Serbia's minister for human and minority rights, Rasim Ljajic - who is in charge of the extradition of war crimes suspects - said that Stanisic was "really very ill".

He added that the spy chief would have to undergo surgery for his unnamed complaint, but would be extradited "sooner or later".

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