

The Int'l Community and Ethnic Nationalism in an Independent Kosovo

Although the International Community is not always timely, effective, and united in its responses to crises in the world, it often does make a good faith effort at improving the lives of at least some people. This has been the case with the Albanian population in Kosovo starting in late 1998 with actions such as the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1199 demanding a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Yugoslav forces that were being used to repress the civilian Albanian population, the positioning of various monitors groups within Kosovo, and the NATO bombing campaign of March-June 1999. It was the signing of the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the Yugoslav National Army on June 9 that ended the hostilities and that provided for the withdrawal of Serbian forces from Kosovo and the deployment of Kosovo Force (KFOR). This was a period of celebration for Kosovo's Albanian population. It is arguably the case that the IC's good faith effort was also meant to benefit Serb and other minority populations, starting with the deployment of NATO-led KFOR, though the summer of 1999 and March 2004 were periods during which there were serious lapses in security for Serbs. The benefits of this international intervention can also be seen in the civilian component under the direction of the UN Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK), which was established by the UN Security Council Resolution 1244 on June 10, 1999. It was this resolution that gave UNMIK its sweeping mandate of conducting all aspects of civil administration, establishing the sort of democratic institutions needed for self-governance, and creating the basis upon which Kosovo's political status would be resolved sometime in the future. Of course, a lot has

accept partition as the solution to the problem of a multiethnic society. Is the IC doing the Albanians any favors by enabling them to stay in a state of denial about who they are and how they are in part to blame for the dysfunctionality found in their country? Perhaps the IC is putting an undue burden

on Thaci's administration and the people of Kosovo by insisting that "there is no democracy without a multiethnic society." It may be far more advantageous to abandon the idea of such a society, which may be doomed to failure given that it is not appreciated by many in either group, than to hold

onto it if the goal is to improve the quality of life of as many Albanians and Serbs as possible. Without widespread and unqualified acceptance of multiethnicity, maybe the best one could hope for is to create the conditions that would give rise to increased quality of life within a partitioned Kosovo.

EU Should Keep Up Pressure on Belgrade

Relaxing conditions on integration can only invite lapses in cooperation and stalls in justice process

We have heard a lot about Serbia's newfound appetite for international justice, and that the European Union should reward its recent efforts, but let's not forget that the man blamed for the worst massacre on European soil since World War Two is still living freely in the Balkans and that his victims still have no justice. Thirteen years after the conflict in the former Yugoslavia ended, former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic and ex-police chief Stojan Zupljanin were arrested last summer, setting EU chiefs gushing about Serbia's long awaited "full cooperation" with the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, ICTY, and its readiness for EU membership. But Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb military commander charged with orchestrating the 1995 Srebrenica genocide - when nearly 8,000 Bosniaks were carted off for slaughter - continues to evade justice. The ex-Serb leader in Croatia, Goran Hadzic, also remains on the run.

Given the recent arrests, not to mention the seriousness of the charges against Mladic, it is regrettable that European chiefs are looking to relax their strict conditions on movement towards integration just when they are starting to work.

The EU told Serbia last week that pre-membership negotiations remained frozen until there was full cooperation with the ICTY, but it is no secret that most member states actually want movement now. According to one European diplomat, "the vast majority" of EU members support initiating a trade agreement with Serbia before any more arrests are made or full cooperation with the tribunal is achieved.

"We think that the Serbian government has shown some very serious pro-European attitude and approaches recently," he said. "What they have shown to us, European politicians, merits some kind of gesture from the European Union side."

Only The Netherlands and Belgium remain rightfully adamant that justice for the war's monstrous crimes should not be exchanged for morale-boosting trade deals. Dutch foreign minister Maxime Verhagen has stuck admirably to his guns and, it is said, will continue to do so until Mladic is in The Hague. Meanwhile, other EU statesmen and

their Brussels counterparts seem to have wildly misunderstood what is at stake. We are talking about a genocide that happened just 13 years ago and a supposed perpetrator who has allegedly been enjoying the good life in Serbia ever since.

The ICTY has a photograph of him celebrating a wedding at a Belgrade restaurant in 2002 and media reports suggest he was still receiving a pension from the Bosnian Serb army seven years after Srebrenica. A second United Nations court, the International Court of Justice, ICJ, in The Hague, also ordered Serbia to hand over Mladic to the ICTY in February 2007. That was almost two years ago.

There can be little doubt that a tough stance on EU progress has helped generate the improvements in Serbia's cooperation with the ICTY we have seen in 2008. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the arrests were more down to Serbia finding the political will to act than actually finding the fugitives themselves; they had been both living right under Belgrade's nose. Zupljanin was arrested in the town of Pancevo, a stone's throw from Belgrade, while Karadzic was finally captured on a bus in Belgrade itself. He had been living a relatively normal life in the city, practicing alternative medicine under a false name, disguised by a long white beard