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THE 'HUNT' FOR MLADIĆ



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The 'Mladić case' is the paradigm of Serbia's social reality – of its attitude towards the past, towards reforms (of the security sector), towards justice and, finally, towards its neighbours. The alleged drama surrounding his arrest is a spectacle everyone is a part of. One of the key reasons for Serbia's delayed progress towards joining the EU lies in the fact that Ratko Mladić has not yet been arrested and extradited to The Hague. His arrest remains one

of the main conditions Serbia needs to fulfill in order to receive EU candidate status. This is why the case of Ratko Mladić always comes to the foreground in the context of Serbia's cooperation with The Hague Tribunal. The strategy of this cooperation, with regards to Belgrade, is carefully thought out and it boils down to the atoning of the international community on the one hand, and not exposing the responsibility of the state of Serbia for the wars and war

crimes, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, on the other.

The quality of the cooperation is inevitably impacted by this approach. Belgrade has, for example, always extradited individuals like Slobodan Milošević or Radovan Karadžić in the past, but it did not make available the documents which would be relevant for their respective trials. When Karadžić is concerned, he has served as some sort of scapegoat, because he does not symbolize the Serbian state. The aim was to contain responsibility from spreading to Belgrade, and to restrict it to Karadžić, that is to Republika Srpska, instead.

The Mladić case exposes Belgrade's strategy towards The Hague Tribunal which has been carried out quite successfully, primarily in terms of minimizing Belgrade's responsibility. Croatia practically hasn't faced a real indictment, whereas, with regards to Bosnia, the responsibility, including that for the genocide against Bosniaks, has been shifted onto Bosnian Serbs. In the closing arguments, Belgrade has managed to impose crimes done by other parties as the main topic and to marginalize the essence of the brutal war fought on the territory of former Yugoslavia. This was also successful partly due to Belgrade's central geographical position in the Balkans, which caused the EU to relativize its attitude towards the events from the 1990s in its strategy towards the Western Balkans.

Ratko Mladić is a symbol of the most gruesome crime and, at the same time, that of Belgrade's resourcefulness in additionally discrediting The Hague Tribunal as an institution whose aim is, among other things, to establish moral standards in the region. As a matter of fact, The Hague Tribunal has not significantly impacted the installing of new values in Serbia to date.

In the Serbian public at large, the Milošević trial has been interpreted as a farce in which he surfaced as the winner, which eventually led to his murder in The Hague, as was reported by Serbian media. The trial of Seselj, with the help of Belgrade, has led to absurdity, whereas the trial of Karadžić did not attract much media attention. The trials of Momcilo Perisic, Frenki Simatovic and Jovica Stanisic hardly got a mention in Serbian media. The only ones informed about these trials are those assisting in them, as well as several independent journalists and Non-Governmental Organizations. Not even global media have shown much interest in the Tribunal's work.

At one point, a thesis, in which Mladić's family played a key role, was put forward, stating that he was not alive. They have engaged the family lawyer in requesting for Mladić to be legally declared dead because they, allegedly, haven't had contact with him for some time. However, according to prosecutor Vladimir Vukčević, such a claim has no grounds. Vukčević stresses that the decision to increase the reward for the information leading to the location and the arrest of Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić shows 'how much we care about respecting the dignity of victims of war crimes and [shows] our dedication to preventing the war crimes from going unpunished'¹ (during 2010, the reward for Mladić was increased from one to ten million euros, and it was increased to five million euros for Hadžić).

General Ninoslav Krstic was probably the closest to the truth when saying that Mladić's arrest will be similar to that of Karadžić in that it will remain unknown by whom the arrest was made. Namely, transparency would open the question of the political background and of the entire network hiding him for all these years. According to General Krstic, Mladić poses

1 Danas, October 29, 2010

more of a problem in light of reforming security structures than he is a problem himself. The key problem is the lack of determination for carrying out these reforms, which enables the co-existence of parallel centers of power. Krstic maintains that 'one group of persons in intelligence and security knew where Karadžić was hiding. He was arrested only after a large part of the evidence he possessed had been destroyed'. Krstic thinks that 'a similar scenario is happening with Mladić. Everything is being done for the potential evidence about some people involved in crimes to be destroyed.'² These are 'members of security services. It is uncertain whether they are in power today', he adds. Up until 2002, our service knew exactly where he was located. Could you believe that the service loses sight of a man? Not even Karadžić has been lost sight of. A suitable situation in the country is awaited in order for Mladić to be arrested'³.

This attitude towards The Hague Tribunal is favorable for Belgrade because The Hague seems to be paying less attention to the past. Out of the total 46 Hague indictees, Serbia has thus far extradited 44 to the Tribunal. The public did not react in either one of these cases nor have the arrests been obstructed, apart from obstructions by a few people from their immediate surroundings. Their trials did not have a significant influence on the perception of the Serbian society with regards to the Tribunal.

The Chief Prosecutor Serge Brammertz has announced that his upcoming June report on Serbia's cooperation with the Tribunal will be negative unless the cooperation is improved. His tolerance for the postponing of Mladić's arrest is running out. Brammertz has also expressed his dissatisfaction in his address to the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Policy

2 Pravda, November 16, 2010

3 Ibid.

in early 2011. According to unofficial sources, Brammertz had listed a number of specific objections with regards to Serbian agencies. His ensuing report will play a key role in the EU granting Serbia candidate status.

The Mladić case displays, among other things, the existing balance of power between different centers of power. The intelligence community is not entirely under the state's control. As long as this is the case, the arrest of Mladić will continue to be a reflection of this balance of power, or rather the lack of power on behalf of the state which is needed to initiate the security system reform in Serbia.

BRAMMERTZ: MLADIĆ STILL PROBLEMATIC

Reports by Serge Brammertz are crucial for Serbia in its efforts to receive EU candidate status. During 2010, Brammertz was benevolent in his reports on Serbia in order for the process of ratification of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) to proceed. This approach was backed by the US, Britain and Germany. The Netherlands remains a strong opponent, though the US pressured it into allowing the Serbian Government and Boris Tadic to proceed with the SAA, without the Agreement being contingent on the arrests of Mladić and Hadžić. The Netherlands was under pressure again when Serbia was to file its EU candidacy.

Brammertz's visit on the eve of the discussion on Serbia's EU membership application and ahead of Brammertz submitting his report to the UN Security Council on December 6, 2010, had a different tone. Namely, Brammertz stated that cooperation with Serbia has been dwindling in the past six months and that the problem of Mladić's arrest remains. He stressed that it was not up to him but rather 'up to the

politicians to choose the methods of pressure. Up until now, the policy of conditionality on Serbia has yielded positive results, but politicians can draw their own conclusions'⁴. Brammertz added that the 'main working hypothesis' was that Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić were hiding in Serbia, although operative activities are not limited to Serbia. He emphasized that: 'if Mladić was successful in hiding so far, there must be reasons for this. He is a professional, he knows how to hide and take counter-measures. Clearly, he is not alone and he is supported by others and this is the focus of our investigation.'⁵ According to some sources, Brammertz is distancing himself from the Mladić case in light of his expectations of a transfer to the International Criminal Court and the fact that he aims to maintain a level of professionalism and independence in his assessments of the case.

Brammertz indirectly expressed his dissatisfaction with Belgrade's conduct, because expectations following Karadžić's arrest were much higher. He stressed that 'it is difficult to sum up the evolution of the cooperation and its quality in one syntagm such as full cooperation. This was a process with many shortcomings in the past and some recent advancements. We have two new areas, such as full cooperation on a daily basis, but there is also the issue of the arrest. Following Karadžić's arrest, we were optimistic, but new arrests have not taken place'⁶. Brammertz added that there still are unresolved issues in the search for Mladić, stating that this is a 'grey zone'. More precisely, nothing is black and white and the issue is highly complex because Mladić is hiding very well⁷.

Belgrade has put in an effort into meeting Brammertz's expectations, especially during the

past months, on the eve of the Security Council session, but only in terms of verbal statements. Prosecutor Vladimir Vukčević expected a positive report in New York because, according to him, the Prosecution is notably cooperating with The Hague Tribunal on certain war crime cases. In addition, representatives of the Prosecution from The Hague are present at meetings of the Action Team, with full access to each operative step. Also, according to Vukčević, Belgrade abides by Brammertz's recommendations which refer to 'increasing the resources and multidisciplinary in the search for Mladić'.

MLADIĆ'S DIARIES

Relations between Belgrade and The Hague in 2010 were marked by Mladić's diaries, which served to produce a positive setting depicting Belgrade's willingness to extradite Mladić. Mladić's diaries received so much publicity in Serbian media for the same reason. These diaries, whose often irrelevant contents were subject to fervent speculation, are revealing after all: Serbia is neither willing nor able to extradite Mladić to The Hague in the near future. The fact that Belgrade has never before published documents which are sent to The Hague is indicative of this. Belgrade has even made deals with the Prosecution to 'black out' certain documents (such as the transcriptions of meetings of the Supreme Defense Council) for the purpose of 'protecting national interests', as is known.

The great commotion surrounding Mladić's diaries, even before they were admitted into evidence, was created by Belgrade. Such political marketing was to demonstrate Serbia's willingness to cooperate with The Hague, and it proved successful – the chief Prosecutor Brammertz submitted a positive report to the Security Council on Serbia's cooperation.

4 Večernje novosti, October 6, 2010

5 Press, November 15, 2010

6 Ibid.

7 Večernje novosti

The published fragments from Mladić's diary could hardly serve as relevant for any legal case, let alone for the revision of Bosnia and Herzegovina's lawsuit against Serbia before the International Court of Justice.

At the time of the fall of Srebrenica (in July 1995), Mladić makes no note which could incriminate him personally, nor Serbia, for that matter. The published fragments refer mostly to Croatia's aspiration to divide Bosnia (which has been largely documented thus far), the six strategic goals (on which the Prosecution possesses evidence that was used in a number of cases), as well as to Karadžić and Milošević and their role in planning and executing the crime.

The fragment which can be considered the most incriminating (from June 1995) refers to Jovica Stanisic – head of the State Security Service (DB) and one of Milošević's closest allies - who 'promises to bring over more men from Sid' in one meeting. The phrase 'men from Sid' refers to the *Scorpions*, a group which was tried in Belgrade. The verdict does not contain even a hint of their ties with Serbia's Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP), and in it they are treated as a group which has ties with Republika Srpska.

The most contentious issue regarding Mladić's diaries is the way in which they were discovered. The official statement revealed that roughly 3500 pages of Mladić's notes from around 18 working notebooks, originating between 1991 and 1996, were seized during the apartment search of his wife Bosiljka in Belgrade, at the end of February 2010. What is peculiar is the fact that, in spite of such a great number of searches of Mladić's house, these diaries and video materials happened to be found after such a long time had passed, in

the very house which has been under constant surveillance.

The National Council for Cooperation with The Hague Tribunal is participating in the false surrounding Mladić's arrest, announcing continuously that the search for Mladić will continue. At one point, Rasim Ljajić, the Council's President, has announced his resignation if Mladić is not arrested and extradited by the end of 2009 (he did, in fact, turn in his resignation)⁸. The War Crimes Prosecutor Vladimir Vukčević made similar statements at one point, such as the following: 'I am a responsible man, and if Mladić and the rest [of the indicted] are not in The Hague in due time, I will certainly withdraw from the position of the Action Team Coordinator.'⁹

The case of Mladić's diaries was well staged, and it was upheld by some journalists and certain Non-Governmental Organizations, claiming that the diaries were authentic. Dobrica Cosic, the 'opinion maker' on Serbia's political and intellectual scene, announced that 'the struggle for the truth about the past is a struggle for the truth about the Bosnian war, it is resistance to the 'Markalization' and 'Srebrenization' of the Bosnian war and the realization of the truth which was covered up by big powers and those Islamic factors. I think that RS [Republika Srpska] is the last line of defense of the Serbian truth, Serbian democracy and the Serbian right to survival.'¹⁰ This statement, certainly, reflects the attitude of this group of people towards the arrest of Ratko Mladić who is directly linked with the genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

8 Blic, September 24, 2009

9 Dnevni Avaz, November 11, 2007

10 Vecernje novosti, September 2, 2010

EU SUPPORT TO SERBIA'S GOVERNMENT

The European Commission has advocated Serbia's case among the EU member states, whereas Stefan Füle pushed for the Dutch parliament to support forwarding Serbia's application to the European Commission. He has emphasized, however, that a positive opinion on the application is contingent on cooperation with the Tribunal and that Serbia must fulfill all criteria before initiating negotiations: 'Our goals are clear, the European Commission is committed to demanding full cooperation with the ICTY as part of Serbia's European integration. But right now we need to combine our requirements with a sense of politics.'¹¹ Füle feels that 'this has encouraged Serbia to take the remaining steps and complete its cooperation with the Tribunal. Ten years have passed since Serbia had turned a page in history. Each country wanting to join the EU has to fulfill the same conditions, but each also has its baggage.' Füle reminded that Belgrade has made an important leap forward by adopting a joint resolution with all 27 EU states at the UN.¹²

The EU Council of Ministers has unanimously decided to refer Serbia's EU membership application to the European Commission and has reached the conclusion that full cooperation with The Hague Tribunal remains the main condition for membership. Each further step Serbia makes toward joining the EU must be preceded by a unanimous decision of the EU ministers with regards to full cooperation with the Tribunal.

Dorris Pack, MEP, is more explicit in her messages to Serbia, as usual. She stresses that failure to arrest and extradite Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić could temporarily freeze Serbia's integration process in the near future. 'I am convinced that Belgrade and the European

Union should start negotiations on Serbia's European integration. This process, alongside the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance programme (IPA) will facilitate reforms in Serbia.'¹³

British expert Jonathan Eyal asserted that leading European countries increasingly believe in the necessity of Serbia's EU integration, whereas the issue of finding The Hague fugitive Ratko Mladić isn't as big of an obstacle it once was: I am not sure that today Mladić represents such a significant instrument in stopping Serbia on its path toward Europe. Primarily because of the fact that there is a growing confidence in the most important European capitals that Serbia's European integration is a necessity.'¹⁴

Eyal emphasized that many western capitals strongly believe that President Boris Tadic and the Belgrade government were determined to capture and extradite war crime indictees, and that, on the other hand, European countries had put in great efforts to normalize relations with Serbia and assist its integration into the European club: 'That's why I don't believe that there are any doubts in Europe that the current government is really involved in hiding and helping Mladić and in that sense I believe that a much more balanced Brammertz's (Hague Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Serge) report can be expected.'¹⁵

Eyal points out that the time when Serbia posed a danger and threat to the region has passed and that the general political direction that the country is taking now and will be taking in the future is clear and predictable. He assesses that the European integration of the region 'represents the most convincing strategy which will lead to its stabilization' and 'the only way to prevent these countries from remaining permanently fragile and vulnerable'¹⁶.

11 Ibid.

12 Politika, October 7, 2010

13 Danas, October 26, 2010

14 TANJUG, November 21, 2010

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

BELGRADE'S RESPONSE

President Tadic has become actively involved in the campaign for Ratko Mladić's arrest, claiming that his apprehension has been the state's top priority only as of 2008, when the current Government of the Republic of Serbia was formed: 'As is known, Mladić is not an ordinary fugitive, rather he is a soldier with substantial war experience. According to the information that we possess, those people who had participated in hiding Ratko Mladić earlier are former and retired officers who also have plenty of experience in intelligence and security structures. And all those proven to have helped in hiding Mladić will suffer harsh punishments. We are coordinating activities regarding the location of Mladić and the uncovering of his ally network with our European partners. Through cooperation, we are trying to provide an answer about the hiding techniques used by Mladić'¹⁷.

Tadic stressed that, following a successful completion of the cooperation with The Hague Tribunal, the government would deal with the political background of the causes of Mladić's non-arrest throughout the years and it would deal with uncovering those responsible. He stated that, regrettably, during the past 15 years, the political will to arrest him had not always existed. Up until 2000, he was not even hiding, and it was not until 2002 that the Law on Cooperation with The Hague Tribunal was adopted. Unfortunately, previous governments have not given this issue adequate importance.¹⁸

The Prosecutor for War Crimes Vladimir Vukčević notes that the arrest of the remaining fugitives is a priority, but not because of pressures, but for our own sake: 'This is our number one task, no matter what. We concur with

Brammertz that their hiding network is extremely strong, and interesting as well.'¹⁹

Chief of the National Council for Cooperation with The Hague Tribunal Rasim Ljajić maintains that any further policy of pressures is essentially counterproductive and that it may have made sense at the beginning of the cooperation, or when the cooperation was at a halt. Ljajić commented on Brammertz's findings that the fugitives were within the reach of Serbian authorities: 'I do not understand the syntagm 'within reach of Serbian authorities'. Does this mean that the Prosecutor thinks that we know where they are, or that they are in Serbia but we do not know how to arrest them?' Ljajić feels that, by making such a statement, Brammertz has stepped into the political arena²⁰.

Rasim Ljajić stressed that he had resigned from his post as coordinator of the Action Team for 'moral reasons', because Ratko Mladić had not been arrested²¹. He stated that 'the public's attitude has remained largely unchanged during the past years', and that 'it is wrong to bid on dates' when the arrest of Mladić is concerned, adding that he had expected 'the enormous effort that we have put in during the past year to have yielded results'. Ljajić noted that 'a little luck is also needed in the Mladić case', and that 'Mladić's team is now severely downsized; a very small number of people participate in his hiding and know his whereabouts'. Ljajić stated that these are persons who 'are there for their beliefs and not for personal gain. Given his psychological profile, and the way he has been hiding so far, according to our reconstruction, it is clear that his hiding does not require large financial assets. Larger amounts of money were needed earlier, when he was surrounded by 47

17 Blic, October 20, 2010

18 Ibid.

19 Blic, October 7, 2010

20 Ibid.

21 Dnevni Avaz, November 14, 2010

people; however, this number has now been reduced to the minimum.²²

The incumbent government places the blame on the previous government for Mladić and Hadžić being out of reach. The Government's War Crimes Prosecutor Vladimir Vukčević has confirmed that in 2006 – that is before the Action Team for ending cooperation with The Hague Tribunal was formed – Rade Bulatovic, as Director of the Security and Information Agency (BIA) offered to negotiate the surrender of Ratko Mladić to the War Crimes Prosecution. The Prosecution had responded positively, however the negotiations have fallen through after Bulatovic has had a meeting with Kostunica.²³

The information on Mladić's whereabouts received from The Hague Tribunal by Bulatovic was not used in order to enable the arrest. The annual report of The Hague Tribunal, presented at the United Nations General Assembly in New York by ICTY President Patrick Robinson includes, among other things, parts of the Prosecution's assessment of its cooperation with Serbia. This report communicates that Serbia's National Security Council and Serbia's Action Team in charge of tracking fugitives have conducted complex and extensive searches for the two indictees. It is also stated in the report that the 'Government's services are currently analyzing the gathered information in detail, including information that was available previously, but which has not been acted upon'²⁴.

The Government's services in charge of the search for and arrest of Mladić during Vojislav Kostunica's mandate as Prime Minister clearly have not acted on the information provided by the Tribunal, which was also discussed in Karla

22 Ibid.

23 Blic, October 17, 2010

24 Ibid.

Del Ponte's book 'The Hunt'. Her book reveals details of her conversation with Vojislav Kostunica during her visit to Belgrade following the arrest of Zdravko Tolimir on May 31, 2007: 'Kostunica told me that it will be more difficult for Serbia to arrest Mladić than it was for Croatia to arrest general Ante Gotovina, because the Serbian authorities do not know him. We do not know Mladić. We have never seen him. He is from Bosnia. His whereabouts are unknown.'²⁵ According to Del Ponte, Kostunica assured The Hague delegation that the final phase of the cooperation with the Tribunal, following the arrest of general Tolimir, would be easier.

Vukčević stresses that much has changed since Bulatovic stepped down as the Director of the Security and Information Agency (BIA). He notes that, as of Bulatovic's departure, the Action team includes Dejan Mihov, Head of the ICTY office in Belgrade, and an investigator from The Hague: 'They have been cooperating with us ever since and are informed about all actions on a daily basis. In addition, the Action team has direct communication with Brammertz via video link. They are witnesses to a great number of raids, searches for financiers, as well as validations whether the information gathered while Rade Bulatovic was in charge was adequately used'²⁶.

THE SERBIAN PROGRESSIVE PARTY AND THE COOPERATION WITH THE HAGUE TRIBUNAL

Tomislav Nikolic joined the campaign for Mladić's arrest in order to present himself as the acceptable opposition on the one hand, but also to discredit the government, on the other. Nikolic has never seriously altered his political attitude regarding The Hague Tribunal and he

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

constitutes the 'political background' which is preventing Mladić's arrest, alongside DSS. Bozidar Delic, one of his party's high officials, was a defense witness in the Milošević case. There are serious leads that he should be in The Hague himself, given that there is evidence for this, including video materials depicting Delic as he entered an Albanian village on an army tank. He was also the chief of command in Pristina during the NATO intervention. His diary notes have been admitted as evidence in the Milošević case. He says that he would 'never extradite Mladić to The Hague, even if he were Serbia's Defense Minister himself, because this is a political court where no Serb can be proven innocent. Also, as far as the statement given by Nikolic in which he claims that he would extradite the general is concerned, that is his personal opinion to which he is entitled to'²⁷.

Nikolic states cynically that he would fulfill the obligations towards The Hague Tribunal if he were in power, though he adds: 'But whether I could arrest him, I do not know. Tadic would gladly arrest Mladić as well, and yet he doesn't. Perhaps because he is not here.'²⁸ Nikolic uses every opportunity to criticize Serbia's Government, so he stresses that 'Serbia has set aside more money for any information about The Hague fugitive Ratko Mladić than it has allocated to help Kraljevo, which was hit by an earthquake last week.'²⁹

His attitude towards The Hague Tribunal is well known. He has repeatedly proclaimed that he believes that 'Mladić and Karadžić must not be arrested' (June 2005); also saying that if Mladić sought his advice 'he must continue to hide' (also June 2005) and that 'he would not extradite another Serb to The Hague' (April 2008). In December of 2008, Nikolic stated that he 'was proud to be equated with Mladić on CNN'.

27 Vesti online, November 27, 2010

28 Kurir, November 11, 2010

29 Politika, November 8, 2010

An interesting turn of events was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the Serbian Progressive Party and United Russia, Russia's ruling party. The agreement states that 'the two parties will consult each other and exchange information about the current situation in Russia and Serbia, about bilateral and international relations; based on their experience, [they will] inform each other about party organization, control and revision, as well as personnel education and training'³⁰. There is an emphasis on the 'closeness of the parties which is rooted in their common understanding of the importance of full-fledged integration of the Russian and Serbian peoples into the European cultural, social, legal and economic space'³¹. Russia's attitude towards The Hague Tribunal should be considered in this context as well.

Russia had called for the Tribunal to be adjourned during Serge Brammertz's first visit to Moscow (Karla Del Ponte was never received in Moscow for her previous engagement against the Russian mafia).³² Živadin Jovanović, former Foreign Affairs Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, stressed that Russia had officially called for The Hague Tribunal to be shut down, because its starting position was not that of a legal institution, rather it was a political institution, based on the politics of pressuring and blackmailing Serbia.³³

The DSS and the radicals continue to stick to their positions. Milos Aligrudic, vice president of the DSS, notes that The Hague is 'a political court, not a court of law. Ever since Vojislav Kostunica's Government, we have been cooperating with this court as far as our international obligations went and in a manner which does not insult the dignity of the defendants.'³⁴ The

30 Beta, October 27, 2010

31 Ibid.

32 Politika, November 14, 2010

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

Serbian Radical Party, during its meeting of support for its leader Vojislav Seselj proclaimed that 'Serbia isn't Boris Tadic, Serbia is Ratko Mladić'³⁵.

THE INCREASE OF THE REWARD

Acting upon the Action Team's suggestion, Serbia's Government increased the reward for the information leading to the arrest of Hague indictees. This decision was meant to encourage citizens to act out of 'patriotic reasons' and point to potential clues which would lead to the uncovering of Mladić's hideout. The raise of the reward from one to ten million euros was clearly signalling to the world that as a state, Serbia was prepared to close the Mladić case. It was also a message to Mladić's allies, who could potentially be encouraged by the larger sum to turn him in; and it also served as a message to Prosecutor Serge Brammertz.

Such a high reward could attract 'head hunters' as well. They have already operated in Serbia, which was uncovered after the disappearance of Goran Hadžić. The Prosecution of The Hague Tribunal has published secretly filmed photographs of the former President of Republika Srpska Krajina as he was carelessly exiting his family home in Novi Sad. Karla Del Ponte's spokesperson at the time Florence Hartmann confirmed that the Prosecution had hired special forces which were searching for indictees throughout Serbia. Florence Hartmann explained that these were mostly persons from west European countries who specialized in intelligence services. The disappearance of Hadžić served as 'crucial evidence of Serbia's non-cooperation with The Hague' because it was ascertained that someone from the state bodies tipped Hadžić off about his impending arrest. Following a detailed investigation, it

was established that someone from the Foreign Affairs Ministry at the time served as Hadžić's 'mole'. The person is a member of the SPO.

The Security and Information Agency (BIA) introduced a special phone line with the number 9191, so that anyone could report the information. Previously, Serbian authorities have been receiving information about the hiding and whereabouts of Ratko Mladić from The Hague Tribunal, which relied on the hired special forces for gathering the information. The Tribunal has also been receiving information from individuals in Serbia; however these pieces of information turned out to be incorrect.

The Tribunal also frequently accused Serbian authorities of not verifying the information about the indictees' hiding. As a result, Zoran Zivkovic has, admittedly, called members of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to witness the actions undertaken by security services. According to Zivkovic's statement for the daily Politika, the CIA agents were in Belgrade in December 2005 and they monitored one of the police searches for Radovan Karadžić which was carried out in Bezanijska kosa, a suburb of Belgrade. It later turned out that the tip about Karadžić's hiding place was false and that it was passed on to Serbian authorities only to convince CIA operatives that our country is doing everything to arrest the indictees.

'BLACKWATERS' CHASING MLADIĆ!

The agents of the largest US private security firm 'Xe Services LLC', also known as 'Blackwater' have, allegedly, joined the chase after Ratko Mladić after the reward of ten million euros was offered. The security firm 'Blackwater' was founded in 1997 and is currently one of the three largest private companies contracted by the US State Department. Roughly 90% of the firm's assignments are related to government

services world-wide. Blackwater ran State Department's operations in Iraq; however the company's licence was revoked by the Iraqi Government because reports demonstrated the involvement of their agents in as many as 14 incidents. Ten civilians lost their lives in these incidents, and seven were wounded. 'Blackwater' was renamed 'Xe' in 2007 in order to 'distance the company's name from its engagement in Iraq'³⁶.

Local security experts stress that allowing 'Blackwaters' to participate in the chase for Mladić could easily turn Serbia into the Wild West, which could endanger the security of citizens. Boza Spasic, a private investigator and former official of the State Security Service (DB) says that a high reward will attract an even greater number of 'head hunters', whereas, based on the information that he possesses, some of them already began operating.³⁷

Military analyst Veljko Kadujevic says that it is absurd to allow foreigners to 'wave their weapons on our territory chasing a man who is our citizen, after all'. He emphasizes that there is always the possibility of a conflict eruption when someone shows up with a weapon. 'Blackwaters are a serious military which has operated in Iraq, where they have had problems because of civilian casualties and corruption, resulting in the change of name. This country possesses sufficient security services and defence forces capable of solving the problem it defines as its priority. I do not see the need for issuing such a high reward. Does that imply that [the search] yielded no results only because the reward was not raised to ten million?'³⁸

Marko Nicovic, President of the International Narcotics Enforcement Officers Association (IN-EOA) says that 'Blackwater is a special unit of

36 Press, October 31, 2010

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

the CIA, which is registered as private in order to clear the US government in case of a scandal. They are also privately contracted by other governments, if it pays well. They have not stepped in solely because of our Government's reward; it is suspected that they were paid by the Saudis to capture our *big fish*'³⁹.

Zoran Dragisic, Professor at the Security Faculty, also notes that there is no legal framework for the operations of private security companies: 'This is the result of an ill-considered decision to issue a reward of ten million euros in order to score some cheap points, so as to underestimate Serge Brammertz's intelligence. The Americans are offering five million dollars for Mladić, but they have an entirely different legal system. The 'Blackwaters' do not have legal grounds for action. If they should appear, the police would need to arrest them. The problem is that they are a large American company, and I don't know who is going to tell them this. We have a government which is avoiding to deal with football fans, how would it stand up to a serious American firm?'⁴⁰

THE ARMY IS NOT HIDING RATKO MLADIĆ

Svetko Kovac, Head of the Military Security Agency (VBA) claims that neither Ratko Mladić nor Goran Hadžić are hiding in objects under the control of the Defense Ministry and the Military, and that no member of the Ministry or the Military is in any way participating in their hiding. He emphasizes the engagement of VBA members on locating and arresting The Hague fugitives as one of the Agency's priorities.

Kovac says that the VBA's primary goal was to check whether the fugitives were hiding in

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

military objects and whether they were given any kind of support by members of the Military and the Defense Ministry. There were examples of the Military being accused of hiding The Hague indictees. 'I can state that Mladić had left military objects on July 1, 2002 and that we have not since had any clues that he has resided in military objects or in the apartments of members of the Military or the Ministry'.

Kovac maintains that the decision to increase the reward for the information leading to Mladić's capture will have positive effects: 'This decision is aimed at demonstrating that the state is doing everything in its power to find this Hague indictee. I must emphasize that this effort is not being obstructed. All measures taken in the search for Hague indictees are coordinated, just the same as the fact that all actions that are undertaken have their goals and specific effects, regardless of how some might interpret them.'⁴¹

PAST SEARCHES FOR MLADIĆ

Based on the warrant issued by the War Crimes Prosecution, special police forces have conducted search actions for Ratko Mladić. Minister of Internal Affairs Ivica Dacic says that the search for Ratko Mladić's allies constitutes our regular activities as part of the cooperation with The Hague. Regarding the raid on 'Bajka' restaurant in Arandjelovac, Dacic stated that 'the search was conducted on several locations, and one person was detained for questioning. Therefore, these are part of regular, and not some sort of extraordinary activities which could be assumed to have resulted from a phone tip off after the issuing of the reward.'⁴²

41 Danas, November 11, 2010

42 Press, November 3, 2010

Ljubodrag Stojadinovic, a commentator for the daily Politika says that 'the police have so far always searched for Mladić in places where he was not located.'⁴³ Zoran Dragisic assessed that vast media presence indicated that no one seriously believed Mladić will be located in the action in Arandjelovac: 'After these ten million, we now have this action as well. It comes down to what kind of report Brammertz will write, and I think this is more of a spectacle for the media than an actual clue leading to Mladić.'⁴⁴

Former Chief of the Serbian Military Security Agency (VBA) General Aco Tomic is under police investigation for assisting in the hiding of Hague fugitive Ratko Mladić. He has been summoned for hearings several times because of claims that he had personally guarded Mladić. Tomic asserts that he has not been hiding general Mladić and that he has never participated in that. He adds: 'If the authorities want me to bring them Mladić on a platter, they will not

43 Searches for Mladić to date:

- May 2007: Military police searched the military object in Deligradska street in Belgrade.
 - October 2007: Military barracks in Bela Crkva were searched
 - November 2008: Search of the home and factory 'Vujic Valjevo', property of Vujic brothers who are cooperating with the 'Impact' company, property of Darko Mladić
 - December 2008: The police searched Darko Mladić's family home in Blagoja Parovica street 119; Mladić was chased in Kolonija, a neighbourhood in Arandjelovac
 - February 2009: In East Sarajevo, the police raided the homes of Mladić's sister Milica Avram and sister in law Radinka Mladić
 - May 2009: In Bijeljina, EUFOR raided the apartment of Rajko Banduk, former Military colleague of Mladić
 - September 2009: A search action for Mladić was carried out by the Serbian police in the outskirts of Novi Sad
 - November 2009: Apartments of close colleagues of Ratko Mladić and Goran Hadžić were raided, a substantial amount of documents, tapes and CDs was confiscated
 - February 2010: In Mladić's home, the police found his diaries handwritten in over 100 notebooks as well as hundreds of tapes Mladić used to record phone calls
 - April 2010: EUFOR search for Mladić in Han Pijesak
- 44 Ibid.

live to see that day! Even if I knew where he was, I would never tell them!⁴⁵

Military analyst Ljubodrag Stojadinovic explains that Mladić could not have been hiding in military objects without the knowledge of the Military Headquarters and the Military Security Agency: 'Surely someone has been hiding him for all these years, this is beyond any doubt. They have been hiding him up until late 2006! The question is only whether it was the Military or some of its fragments which felt that he should not be arrested. I do not have any specific information about who has been hiding him, but if he was in fact hiding in military objects, he definitely could not have resided there without the knowledge of the Army Chief of Staff and the chief of military intelligence. And for this very reason I think that conducting an investigation and finding out who protected Mladić is a good thing.'⁴⁶

The search for Mladić has re-opened the topic of the murders of two soldiers in the military

45 Press, November 11, 2010

46 Ibid.

barrack in Topcider, who were believed to have seen Ratko Mladić in this military object in 2003. At least five soldiers have died under very suspicious circumstances in Serbia's military barracks in the period between 2004 and 2005, and Mladić has always been linked to their deaths. Apart from Dragan Jakovljevic and Drazen Milovanovic, the two guardsmen murdered in Topcider on October 5, 2004; soldiers Dragan Kostic (died on August 27, 2004) and Srdjan Ivanovic (died on August 3, 2005) have both lost their lives under unresolved circumstances in the same period; whereas Radoman Zarkovic died on June 30, 2005 in the Ground Security Zone (also in the Leskovac area). All of these soldiers lost their lives during regular military service. Jelena Milić, CEAS, has rightfully raised the question of these murders and has stressed the need for conducting a more intensified investigation about the links with Mladić; especially given that Mladić's allies and omissions in the investigations are being increasingly discussed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Prosecutor Serge Brammertz's impatience with Serbia is growing, given that there is a huge gap between verbal proclamations and what is actually being done. Serbia is not abiding by Brammertz's recommendations, although representatives of the War Crimes Prosecution keep claiming that the opposite is true. Not enough effort is being put in, nor are a sufficient number of personnel engaged to promptly respond to any incoming information on Ratko Mladić's potential hideout. Measures taken against allies and other accomplices are either too soft or non-existent.

Such inconsistent behavior with regards to Serbia's obligations to The Hague Tribunal, as well as wrong political assessments on this matter, could stop Serbia once more on its path toward the EU. This situation suits those who want to slow down the process of Serbia's European integrations.