

## THE TOPIC OF THE ISSUE

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THE ROLE OF THE AGENCIES IN THE "MLADIC PROBLEM"

### ACTION PLAN, OR SALT ON THE TAIL

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**The Agencies had their own agenda in regard to the person Ratko Mladic, an agenda different from the agenda of the politicians who were being dismissed from power in Belgrade.**

An allegory, to begin with: a man comes to a restaurant and says to the waiter: "I see on your menu a special dish, Ratko Mladic; I would like to order this, but I want it fresh". The waiter says: "Yes of course sir, you will get it as soon as it is prepared, and in the meantime we can maybe find also the cold hors d'oeuvre Goran Hadzic in aspic; or, maybe you would like to have piroshki Rodja Djordjevic while you are waiting for this dish to be prepared?". "Both, please", says the guest. "Yes, immediately", says the waiter and goes away. After some time, the guest is asking what happened with the ordered and promised meal; the waiter explains that, unfortunately, the cold hors d'oeuvres are not available yet, but he offered a paper with the recipe for the main dish, so the guest can see whether he will like it. The hungry guest says he likes it, and the waiter goes away. After some time the waiter comes back and says that they had to dismiss the chef, because he did not know how to prepare the main dish as written down in the recipe chosen by the guest. "But we have a new chef and we are going to prepare you the main dish the Dalmatian way, you remember it – Gotovina fish stew?". The guest says: "All right, but please do hurry for heaven's sake, time is running out". The waiter then comes back and says: " Everything is ready, we only have to catch Mladic, we have already prepared the salt to put on his tail, do not worry". The guest gets furious and leaves for Brussels hungry, and the waiter shouts after him: "Sir, we have everything: rosemary and laurel and garlic and truffle if you please, it will be ready in a minute, look, the catchers are already running around, each of them is carrying a handful of salt to put on the tail, they only must catch sight of him! Look, we have caught a few of those who were nurturing him and taking care of him until four years ago, we shall serve them as a cold hors d'oeuvre, just do wait, please!". "Eat them yourself", replies the furious and hungry guest over his shoulder, with some additional comments not suitable for publishing.

Well, now it is time to get serious (though, the above allegory probably is something with more sense than what follows, because the entire story has already become nothing more than a circus): the matter of fact is that from the very beginning of 1992 Ratko Mladic was systematically being proclaimed a "national hero", a "defender of Serbs" and "hearths", and that this type of propaganda remained dominant until today. There is a legion of Mladic's hagiographers and propagandists; there was hardly anybody who dared rethink Mladic's real significance and role as soldier. Hence, Ratko Mladic is a political fact in the first place, and as such yet another artificially produced propagandistic pillars of Milosevic's fiction of the Entire Serbhood. This fiction solemnly failed and demonstrated epochal bankruptcy first in 1995, then in 1999, and finally at the end of 2000, but Ratko Mladic was preserved as a significant component of the ever smaller inheritance property. Apart from that, Ratko Mladic is a psychologically significant fact and a pillar of a newly composed national mythology. He became a symbol, a mythological fact with no links to reality, a character from national poems. By the way, Ratko Mladic himself was successfully adapting to such a development of his own image: he began his warfare as a snappish, crude officer who was treading on the plaque of the local office in Kijevo near Knin in the summer of 1991 and was yelling around; he continued as an even more snappish military leader of the Bosnian Serbs, equipped with people, technical tools, armaments, money and logistics disproportionately bigger than those of the adversary, but therefore noticeably unaware of the basic political parameters of war. He quarreled with Karadzic and the others over money for his soldiers; he was frowning at Milosevic; he scolded Arkan; but he did never undertake anything serious against any one of them. He never asked why his army was waging war and which strategic goal is to be achieved – and why. Finally, in summer 1995 he lost precious tactical time and resources around Srebrenica and Zepa, instead of taking care of his own flanks in Western Bosnia which was slowly, whispering, falling into the hands of the Croatian army and the army of Bosnia-Herzegovina. At that time Mladic decided it was more important to exterminate that little of the poorest ones in Srebrenica, than to preserve Western Bosnia and the Republic Srpska Krajina. The Serbian public seems to have forgotten this, probably because this very same public was impressed with the productivity of Mladic's troops in killing unarmed civilians. This very same public is impressed today as well, otherwise Mladic would not remain a national hero. Is there anybody – even in the present government which is creating action plans for arresting Mladic as soon as

it puts salt on his tail – hence, is there today in this Serbia anybody who will say loud and clear that Ratko Mladic is a snappish and untalented crude officer and war criminal, more guilty in regard to us here, than those there, in The Hague? He is guilty in regard to us because he besmirched our honor in Bosnia from the very beginning, because he was lying to us that he was defending the Serbs, because he let his allies sink as soon as things got serious. Mladic did not fire a bullet in defense of Krajina Serbs, not even during the operation “Flash” in May 1995, nor during the operation “Storm”, in August 1995. No, he did not, because Milosevic, Jovic, Karadzic, Krajisnik and Mladic had already much earlier betrayed the Krajina Serbs and there are documents and living witnesses to this effect. Mladic knew how to cooperate with the Croatian army in the field and to get ammunition and fuel from it– and all this while “defending Serbhood”; he knew how to threaten to occupy Vienna and bomb Florence and London; he knew how to tie unarmed UN observers to posts; he knew how to order or allow killing of unarmed civilians; he only did not know how to help Serbs in need, whatever someone would think of this feeble-minded Martić’s and Babić’s adventure into which, by the way, Slobodan Milosevic pushed them into with his scandalous promises.

This was a short historical introduction regarding the image and deeds; there is more to it, if somebody would be interested to know...

Let us now see also this Action plan and what it is based upon, apart from this recipe mentioned in the introduction. As if we are going to (we are going to, we all are going to) “fulfill obligations” regarding “two-track cooperation” (hey, “two-track”!) with The Hague Tribunal. Then it is claimed in unison that “Mladic is somewhere in Serbia and Montenegro” (when we were as if together). In order to be able to logically claim that somebody is “not” in some place, one has to know where this “somebody” is, because this “somebody” can also be absent also from brotherly Guatemala, as well as from friendly North Korea. When things became serious, it appeared that “somebody” was here and under our official protection as long as up to 2002 (there is also a picture). Well, “somebody” is now not in Serbia, and where he is – we do not know, although we do know that in Serbia he is not. How do we know? Well, it crosses our minds. And how does it cross our minds? The Agencies tell us.

Well, that is where we are. The Agencies tell us...

What were the Agencies saying to Sloba in 1995, when Ratko Mladic was accused of the massacre in Srebrenica? Paradoxically, but they probably were saying the truth. This author is certainly not among those who respect the image and actions of Jovica Stanisic, although he respects his slyness and other resources necessary for the post of the Director. Ratko Mladic was no problem for Jovica – except as a potential witness against Milosevic and his agents, including this very same Jovica. What and how did Mladic perform in regard to those French pilots in the autumn of 1995 can be found in another place, in a book which is soon to be published here as well (“Our dear war criminals” by Jacques Masse). To put it in broadest possible terms, Mladic was important for the Agencies (the civilian RDB/BIA and the military ones) as a person which keeps silent and does not speak, particularly not in regard to certain unpleasant circumstances, well, how should I put it... He was even more important to informal structures of Sloba’s main political power (Milosevic was everything doing informally!) which is alive and vehement today as well. If he goes crazy and starts talking, even to somebody in The Hague – there comes inconvenience for us. Hence, the Agencies had their own agenda in regard to the person Ratko Mladic, an agenda different from the agenda of the politicians who were being dismissed from power in Belgrade. These very same politicians have continued to be impressed with Milosevic up to our days: if he built his success on nationalism, we can, too (but he failed, he did not succeed; however, they only have not yet understood this), hence, these very same politicians continue to think, i.e. they were thinking, from late Djindjic up to Kostunica and Tadic, that Ratko Mladic is really very important for them and the Serbhood which should give them their votes. All of them impressed with Mladic and his terrifying security personnel, but actually not completely sure as who Mladic actually is and why he is important. Not that this did interest them very much, obviously, because otherwise they would have comprehended the obvious. Let us just remember how the Croatian neo-ustasha camarilla from Herzegovina gathered tens of thousands of demonstrators on the Split town quay for Mirko Norac, and then kept their tails between their legs when Norac got twelve years in prison and – no harm done. Today Mladic’s media logistics remind of that circus as something that should be admired, but this is an old story: all war criminals and all their groups for support are on the same side, allies; this is why they agree so well in Sheveningen, where they do belong.

But let us come back to the Agencies. The last truly reliable track of Ratko Mladic, at least according to the knowledge of this author, belongs to summer 2003. It was the time when two BIA agents discretely observed the whereabouts of Darko Mladic (son), who spent the summer in a tourist resort in the mountains in West Serbia. According to a later transferred report, at some point Darko had medical problems; the guards put him in a car and headed not for the nearest town with a hospital, but in the opposite direction, the wild mountains. BIA agents followed them as far as they could and in the first reconnoitering of the terrain, in the thick forest, understood that the locality to which the young man was taken is seriously guarded by well armed men with radio-links. From a tactically unfavorable situation

(they were not allowed to use radio-links, and their cell-phones were out of reach), the BIA agents hardly managed to escape in a manner worthy of action features. They immediately made a report, but it was too late: later checking of the terrain showed that there used to be a number of people, but they disappeared. Darko Mladic, fortunately, was O.K., and the situation was marked as a potential lead to Ratko Mladic. Reports say this was a remote church object. It was also the broader tri-border region between Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, a difficult terrain, and it was known that Mladic used to visit it frequently. Anyway, this was happening in 2003.

We should go back a little: we saw why the non-governmental organization State Security had a rational political interest that Mladic does not get to The Hague. Quarrelsome and snappish as he is, he could say all sort of things; he did not like either Karadzic or Milosevic, or Biljana Plavsic (compromisers and traitors of Serbhood, the whole lot, in short); he considered Dayton to be more a treason than a defeat, because he himself was to be blamed for the defeat which led to Dayton. On the other hand, he knew a lot on how all this developed and what was whose role in the common shady deals and affairs: what is the place of Sloba, what of Tudjman, what of Karadzic and what of the Yugoslav People's Army (later, Army of Yugoslavia).

The Security Department of the Yugoslav People's Army (later, Army of Yugoslavia) had a lot of its own vested interests in the life and carrier of Ratko Mladic: three very able security officers found themselves instantly in the closest vicinity of Mladic; this is hardly a coincidence. The then captain Dragomir Pecanac was commanding over the military police of the Knin Corps at the time when Mladic was its head commander; colonel Ljubisa Beara was a security officer at the Herzegovina war theater in 1991; colonel Zdravko Tolimir was also serving in Croatia at the beginning of the war. General Aleksandar Vasiljevic, Head of the Security Department of the Yugoslav People's Army until 1992, described all three of them as "best officers"; he regretted he agreed to give them over to Milan Martić, from where they went to Karadzic and Mladic, when Vasiljevic was already removed and detained in May 1992. Military security was known as a serious and professional department which was not inclined to "let things go spontaneously", as comrades communists used to say. This is how it was until 1992, only to sink now to Aca Tomic, about whom somewhat later. Whether they liked it or not, Ratko Mladic belonged to them; they were inevitably "in charge of him". General Aca Dimitrijevic could say much to this effect, if he wanted to: it was him, anyway, who occupied the chair of the Head from 1993 to 1999. He saw it all: from the initial successes of Mladic, over crisis and quarrels with Karadzic and Milosevic, taking UN hostages (with which, however, Jovica Stanisic was dealing, and not he), up to Srebrenica, the "Storm" and Dayton.

To tell the truth, the military Agencies did not have it easy during this time: there goes Ratko Mladic flying high on his personal boosters and getting ever more independent in the field; there goes Milosevic systematically holding both the Army and its Agency out of balance, confused, disoriented and in constant fear of repeated personnel purges. Finally, after Dayton, the only thing that both agencies, the civil and the military one, could do with Mladic was to have moderate control over possible damages he could inflict; hardly to have control over him. Namely, Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic (among others) managed in the meantime to develop serious media support and underground logistics among its supporters and extreme nationalists who saw the Dayton agreement as treason. They have acquired – and are keeping them until today – their hagiographers, propaganda men, media, graffiti writers and those who glue the placards; their academicians, poets and painters; they have the support of the Serb Orthodox Church, of extreme right-wing organizations which sniff with the Agencies; their political parties. They also have organized and paid upholders along all these lines. Wherefrom the money? This at least is easy: from war booty, from whole-scale smuggling, from war profits and racketeering of war profiteers and compromised nouveau riche, particularly those who care about their "patriotic" legitimacy.

Tribute should be paid to the ability with which Mladic's logistic and protective structures were performing. The public, that of the media, but also the underground one, which is more important, was systematically getting disinformation on the fugitive: he is here, he is there, due to which the chase was overstretching due to limited resources. There was constantly the story that Mladic is surrounded with "50 heavily armed and loyal people, ready to be killed" and accompanying brigands' legends. Later it was shown that Mladic was cleverly walking around Belgrade practically alone, because 50 people would certainly be noticed. In such a big city a man alone, a little disguised (ten kilos less, glasses and a moustache are sufficient), with some convincing papers (no problem) and enough money can live unnoticed for years – if he does not stand out and if he takes care not to make contacts with suspicious persons; particularly if he does not use phones. So the general was calmly strolling Belgrade, whilst the unlucky ones were looking for him in the hills and mountains, all the time praying God not to find him. All the way until today the chase is late for at least one year, and the trail cooled down a long time ago.

All this, however, would not be that successful and smooth if in the Serbian society there would no longer prevail the system of values in which Mladic, Karadzic and other Hague indictees and war criminals and common criminals (ending with those who murdered Prime Minister Djindjic) are seen as national heroes, patriots and "Serb knights". In this context and under constant political, propaganda

and collegial pressure, it is hard to expect the members of the police force and security services to search to the end and without compromise, to find and arrest Ratko Mladic and other fugitives from justice. This system of values penetrated inside, into the entire structures, deeply. The dominant ideology of the ruling coalition – a mixture of fear from nationalists and authentic sympathies for Ratko Mladic and the others – is very visible and is clearly pressurizing both the public and public servants. This state has not yet managed to neutralize and remove from her offices even members of the former JSO (Unit for Special Operations) and obviously compromised people from the State Security and the police, not to speak of officers and others. Somebody will say that this would require political purge, “differentiation” along the lines of support to Ratko Mladic; unfortunately, this is true, because Ratko Mladic is a political issue related to the final breakup with Milosevic’s suicidal policies. The agencies are part of the society, and an organic part they are: without the support of the society, and without a clearly and uncompromised change in the value system, the Agencies will not overwork themselves in chasing Mladic, Karadzic, Hadzic and the others who are missing. Moreover, in the present political atmosphere of guileful “moderate nationalism”, overall loud wailing over Kosovo and accompanying manifestations, there will hardly anyone raise a finger, let alone really make an effort to find and arrest any of the Hague indictees. What we have here is a tacit agreement with this government and its allies and everybody hears very well the unspoken message.