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Media Monitoring

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UN mission chief concerned over Kosovo government's position on privatization

BBC MONITORING INTERNATIONAL REPORTS via NewsEdge Corporation : Text of unattributed report: "Government's requests violate UN instructions, Holkeri says", published by **Kosovo** Albanian newspaper Koha Ditore on 29 November

Prishtina [Pristina], 28 November: On Friday [28 November], the **UNMIK** [UN Interim Administration Mission in **Kosovo**] chief [Harri Holkeri] expressed concern over the recent statement of the Kosova [**Kosovo**] government on privatization, **UNMIK**'s information office has reported.

Holkeri clarified that the Kosova government's request for resumption of the first three rounds of tenders would violate instructions that were given to **UNMIK** to advance privatization.

These instructions, which resulted from Holkeri's last visit to UN headquarters, clearly state that the privatization process can continue based on the existing legal basis in the AKM [**Kosovo** Trust Agency] regulation, **UNMIK**'s information office reported.

However, operational policies of privatization should be changed, and the AKM is already working to improve them, reads a press release issued by this department.

The **UNMIK** chief called on representatives of the government on the AKM board to support the AKM's work in restarting the privatization process soon.

KOSOVO-MITROVICA-BOMB

Bomb planted in northern Kosovska Mitrovica

15:05 KOSOVSKA MITROVICA , Dec 1 (Tanjug) - Unidentified individuals planted a bomb in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, in the vicinity of a power sub-station, some fifty meters away from a student dormitory in that town in northern Kosovo.

UNMIK police has blocked that part of town and the arrival of special units is awaited to defuse the bomb.

Georgia rotates peacekeepers deployed in Kosovo

BBC MONITORING INTERNATIONAL REPORTS via NewsEdge Corporation : Tbilisi, 28 November: A company of Georgian servicemen will return home on Saturday [29 November] after a six-month-long peacekeeping mission in **Kosovo**, Nino Sturua, press secretary of the Georgian defence minister, told Interfax-Military News Agency.

"The Vaziani military base will host the welcoming ceremony for the peacekeepers on Saturday. Georgian Defence Minister Lt-Gen Davit Tevzadze will attend the event," Sturua said.

Brig-Gen Dimitri Lezhava, chief of the Defence Ministry's main personnel directorate, told reporters that the peacekeeping unit will be included in the Georgian battalion of the mixed peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone upon its return from the Balkans. The next shift of peacekeepers, totalling 150 servicemen, has got down to peacekeeping duties in **Kosovo**. The unit got additional training in Germany starting from mid-October, Lezhava said.

Georgian peacekeepers have been in **Kosovo** since 1999. Georgia originally maintained a platoon within a Turkish unit. In May 2003, the contingent was expanded to a company with the Bundeswehr's support. The company is now part of the German brigade.

As many as 154 Georgian soldiers are in **Kosovo** at the moment. One hundred and thirty-three of them are professional privates, 19 are officers, and two are warrant officers. Their salary is 330 euros per month, paid by the German government, and another 560 dollars per month are accumulated in their accounts back in Georgia.

After the second peacekeeping company left for **Kosovo**, establishment of the third one began. Lezhava said the three companies will subsequently be included in the special peacekeeping battalion that will always be ready to leave for any place in the world where Georgia decides to take part in peacekeeping operations.

Kosovo was the first trouble spot to which Georgian peacekeepers were dispatched. In August this year, Georgia joined the peacekeeping operation in Iraq.

Final count in Macedonia's census puts ethnic Albanian minority at

BC-EU-GEN--**Macedonia**-Census Final count in **Macedonia**'s census puts ethnic Albanian minority at 25 percent

SKOPJE, **Macedonia** (AP) _ Macedonian authorities on Monday released the final results of a crucial census from last year that estimates the ethnic Albanian minority at about a quarter of the country's 2 million people.

The results of the census, carried out last November, were long awaited because of the politically sensitive ethnic breakdown in the Balkan country shaken by ethnic conflict in 2001.

Macedonia has 2,022,547 people and its population is rapidly growing older, according to Donco Gerasimovski, director of the state Statistics Institute.

"This should be a concern to everyone," Gerasimovski said, adding that 10.5 percent of the population is now over the age of 65.

The final tally put the majority ethnic Macedonians at 64.2 percent of the overall population, while minority ethnic Albanians made up 25.2 percent.

The Turkish minority makes up 3.8 percent; Roma, or Gypsies, 2.6 percent; and Serbs, 1.8 percent. Bosnians and others make up the rest, the census found.

The number of ethnic Albanians, earlier believed to have accounted for up to a third of the population, has been questioned for years. The minority boycotted a 1994 census, **Macedonia**'s first poll after declaring independence three years earlier.

Ethnic Albanians at the time were estimated to account for about 23 percent of the population.

Ethnic Albanian insurgents battled government forces for six months in 2001, demanding greater rights for their community. The conflict ended with a Western-brokered peace plan that significantly upgraded minority rights, allowing a degree of self-rule.

The latest census was also important because some aspects of self-rule hinged on its results.

Western monitors in **Macedonia** said the census was performed according to international standards.

“The results present a fair and accurate statistical analysis,” a statement by European Union experts said. “The international community stands fully behind the results published today.”

SERBIA-MONTENEGRO-VUJANOVIC

Montenegrin president for union of independent states of Serbia, Montenegro

15:47 PODGORICA, Dec 1 (Tanjug) - Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic said on Monday that in case that the majority of Serbian citizens decided that a parliamentary monarchy be introduced in the republic, Montenegro and Serbia could function as a union of two independent states.

"I believe that in such a union, Serbia and Montenegro now exist in, a co-existence of a republic and a constitutional monarchy is not possible," Vujanovic told the press while commenting on the recent support of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarch Pavle that a parliamentary monarchy be introduced in Serbia.

Serbia's prime minister complains of lack of Western support

BC-EU-GEN--Germany-Serbia

Serbia's prime minister complains of lack of Western support

BERLIN (AP) _ **Serbia's** prime minister charged that the West shares the blame for rising nationalism in his country in an interview published Monday, complaining that it had backed away from his government.

“It is right that European Union foreign policy representative Javier Solana and NATO Secretary General George Robertson warn of strengthening nationalism in **Serbia**,” Zoran Zivkovic was quoted as saying in the daily Berliner Zeitung. “But the West carries a share of the blame for that, because of its rigid position on bringing us closer to the European Union or letting us into NATO's 'Partnership for Peace' program.”

Serbia faces parliamentary elections Dec. 28, just weeks after a candidate from the ultranationalist Radical Party, which has close ties to former President Slobodan Milosevic, won the most votes in Nov. 16 presidential elections that failed due to low turnout.

A possible success by the nationalists in December would strike a new blow to the pro-democracy leadership that in 2000 ousted Milosevic, now on trial before the U.N. war crimes tribunal in The Hague, Netherlands, for atrocities in the Balkan wars of the 1990s.

Zivkovic asserted in the Berliner Zeitung interview that the West had changed its attitude toward the government in Belgrade over the past year.

``Suddenly they are acting as though we weren't the ones who brought down Milosevic and extradited him to The Hague tribunal, as if we weren't trying to solve the problems in the south, in **Kosovo**," he said.

``It seems as though we are suddenly some kind of villains that had nothing to do with all this."

Milosevic to run in Serbian election

Source: Agence France-Presse English Wire Date: December 01, 2003

BELGRADE, Dec 1 (AFP) - Former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic, currently on trial for war crimes before the Hague-based UN tribunal, will run for parliament in **Serbia** in this month's election, a senior party official said Monday.

The nationalist strongman who led the country into war and isolation in the 1990s is the third war crimes suspect to contest the December 28 poll.

"Milosevic agreed to be first on the list of the Socialist Party of **Serbia** (SPS) and if we win enough votes to enter the parliament he can be a deputy," SPS official Ivica Dacic told AFP.

The Socialist Party, which has collapsed since Milosevic was toppled from power in 2000 and extradited to The Hague the following year, sees Milosevic's nomination as a "symbolic" act of defiance, said Dacic.

"It is a symbolic gesture of recognition to him for his fight in The Hague," he said.

Milosevic has been on trial since February last year, defending himself against more than 60 charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide for his role in wars in Croatia, Bosnia and **Kosovo** in the 1990s.

He becomes the third war crimes suspect to run for parliament after ultra-nationalist Serbian Radical Party leader Vojislav Seselj, also detained at The Hague, and former Yugoslav army chief of staff General Nebojsa Pavkovic.

Seselj surrendered to the UN court in February and is facing trial for crimes committed in Croatia and Bosnia in the early 1990s, when he supported Serb paramilitaries in the battles against Muslim and Croat forces.

Pavkovic is wanted for masterminding, along with Milosevic and others, a "campaign of terror and violence" against the ethnic Albanian majority in southern **Kosovo** province during the 1998-99 conflict there.

He has refused to surrender to The Hague and the authorities in Belgrade have not publicly announced whether they have started extradition procedures.

Nationalist parties have enjoyed an upsurge in popularity in **Serbia** recently and nearly won a presidential election last month. The Radicals are tipped to become the strongest party in parliament after December 28.

Convicted prisoners are banned from contesting elections in **Serbia**, but not suspects or those who have served their jail terms.

Former Yugoslav general requests delay of war crimes trial

Podgorica (dpa) - Pavle Strugar, a retired Yugoslav general and accused of war crimes by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former **Yugoslavia** (ICTY), has requested a delay of proceedings due to medical reasons, his lawyer said Monday.

Strugar, accused by The Hague-based ICTY as one of four military officers responsible for crimes in the war zone around the Croatian city of Dubrovnik in 1991, turned himself in in October 2001. He was subsequently released and due to return to stand trial on Tuesday.

``General Strugar is of poor health so the start of the trial should be postponed from December 9, as well as his scheduled appearance at the court," lawyer Goran Rodic told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

Rodic said that he has filed the request to The Hague-based tribunal. Strugar is being treated in a Podgorica hospital.

``If necessary for the approval of the delay, ICTY medical experts may visit him in Podgorica to assert that General Strugar's health is in a really bad condition," he added. dpa dc bb

Ex-Yugoslav general too ill to face trial at The Hague

BC-EU-GEN--Montenegro-War Crimes

Ex-Yugoslav general too ill to face trial at The Hague

PODGORICA, **Serbia**-Montenegro (AP) _ A retired army general indicted for the 1991 shelling of Croatia's coastal town of Dubrovnik is too ill to travel to the Netherlands for his trial next week before the U.N. war crimes tribunal, his lawyer said Monday. Pavle Strugar, who surrender to The Hague tribunal in 2001 and pleaded innocent to allegations of murder stemming from the Yugoslav troops' bombardment of Dubrovnik, was hospitalized in Montenegro, said his attorney, Goran Rodic.

Rodic said that he and his client sent letters to the U.N. tribunal explaining the retired general's ill health and providing Strugar's medical documents.

Strugar, 70, who suffers from chronic kidney illness, was hospitalized in early November. The lawyer described his condition as ``serious."

``My client affirms his support for the U.N. court and his intentions to see the trial through to the end," Rodic told The Associated Press. ``This was a personal appeal for a postponement of the trial due to illness."

Strugar returned to his native Montenegro after the U.N. tribunal allowed his provisional release pending the scheduled Dec. 9 start of the trial.

Montenegro and **Serbia** make up the loose union which succeeded the former **Yugoslavia**.

Strugar is accused of commanding a three-month offensive on Dubrovnik that killed dozens of civilians and destroyed nearly 70 percent of the medieval town.

The siege on Dubrovnik began after Croatia declared independence from **Yugoslavia** in 1991, setting off a decade of Balkan wars.

Croatian police report record heroin haul

Source: Agence France-Presse English Wire Date: December 01, 2003

ZAGREB, Dec 1 (AFP) - A 25-year-old man was caught trying to smuggle 53 kilograms (117 pounds) of heroin across the border from **Serbia** into Croatia, police said Monday, adding that the find was the largest ever of the drug in the Balkan country.

Police said the man was arrested Saturday as he tried to pass through the main border crossing at Bajakovo, on the highway linking Belgrade and Zagreb.

The heroin, with a street value of 1.25 million euros (1.5 million dollars), was hidden in the man's car and was bound for western Europe, they said.

Police seized 21 kilograms of heroin at the same border crossing in early November.

The Balkans is one of the major trafficking routes for illegal drugs between Asia and Europe, providing income for organised crime networks which plague the region.

ljv/smc/cn/ds Croatia-drugs

Trip underscores Bush's resolve

Ronald Brownstein ; Los Angeles Times

Source: The Cincinnati Post

WASHINGTON -- With his dramatic visit to Baghdad, Iraq, President Bush has demonstrated again the depth of his commitment to the military mission that could decide his fate in the 2004 election.

In his speech to the troops, and even more emphatically with the symbolism of his presence in a war zone half the world away, Bush underscored his resolve to stay the course against growing violence on the ground in Iraq and growing doubts about the effort at home.

"We will stay until the job is done," Bush insisted.

The unexpected trip, cloaked in secrecy and received enthusiastically by the troops, drew praise not only from Republicans but aides to several of the Democratic presidential candidates.

Yet the underlying message of Bush's trip seems more likely to harden than rearrange the increasingly polarized lines of domestic debate over the struggle to reconstruct Iraq.

To Bush's supporters, the trip is likely to highlight the traits they like best about him: determination, forcefulness, empathy and commitment to his causes.

"They will perceive this as a reinforcement of the things they prize about him," said Bruce Buchanan, a political scientist at the University of Texas at Austin who has followed closely Bush's political career.

Indeed, some analysts noted that it is difficult to imagine how Bush could have more vividly displayed his determination than to fly into a war zone, even briefly, on a trip considered so dangerous that the White House said it was prepared to turn back if word leaked out before he arrived.

"What the president did today was show he was willing to put himself in harm's way, like the troops," presidential historian Douglas Brinkley told CNN.

But to Bush's Democratic critics -- and the voters sympathetic to their arguments -- the trip could receive a more mixed response.

On the one hand, even critics of the war Thursday praised Bush for making the effort to show support for the troops.

"On this Thanksgiving, all Americans are grateful for our troops who are spending this day far from family and loved ones," said Tricia Enright, communications director for former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, whose candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination has been fueled by his opposition to the war. "I think we all honor their service and continue to pray for their safe return. (The visit) was good for the troops, certainly."

On the other hand, some Democrats argued that Bush's demonstration of support for the troops, while deserving of praise, did nothing to resolve the larger questions about America's direction in Iraq.

"It's great for him to do this; you can't criticize the president for spending time with the troops," said Matt Bennett, communications director for retired Gen. Wesley K. Clark, another Democratic presidential contender who has criticized the war. "But this isn't a substitute for having a policy for success in Iraq."

Where both sides agree is that the trip was emblematic of Bush's approach to politics. From his repeated tax cuts to the changes in Medicare that he steered through Congress this week and his attempt to reorient U.S. national security policy around his vision of pre-emptive defense, Bush has consistently set out large goals -- and then pursued them tenaciously, even at the price of sharply dividing opinion at home and around the world.

When challenged, he usually digs in deeper -- and that may be precisely what he intended to convey with his visit Thursday.

"It was very much him making an emphatic statement that he believes in this, that he is going to persist," said one GOP strategist close to the White House. "Instead of backing away when he is criticized he redoubles his efforts. It's his instinct. It's true to his nature of the man. He's strong willed, and he's certainly combative, and he doesn't back up; he is always forward."

From a political perspective, the trip offered a strikingly different picture than the images generated May 1, when Bush landed on the USS Abraham Lincoln in a flight suit to declare the end of major combat operations. Then Bush seemed bursting with bravado as he stood before a banner that triumphantly declared, "Mission accomplished."

That image has seemed so out of tune with the grueling and deadly struggle in Iraq since then that it has been first used in a commercial not by Republicans, but by Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts, one of the 2004 Democratic hopefuls.

The pictures from Iraq Thursday showed a much more somber president, with a message for the troops and the nation that portrayed the struggle in Iraq as closer to the beginning than the end and acknowledged the likelihood of difficult days ahead.

In his words to the troops, Bush certainly seemed to be speaking from the heart, even Democrats said. But they said his chastened message may represent an implicit admission from the White House the pictures of the president strutting across the aircraft carrier were now more a problem

than an asset. "This trip was born of good intentions; I don't doubt it," said Bennett. "But I also think it will provide them an opportunity to replace the swaggering imagery of the flight suit with more responsible imagery."

The trip occurred against a backdrop of growing public anxiety about the mission in Iraq. Amid the steady drumbeat of U.S. casualties, public "sticker shock" at Bush's request for \$87 billion to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan and the inability of coalition forces to find conclusive evidence that former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein possessed weapons of mass destruction, doubts about the war have grown steadily in polls since Bush's aircraft carrier landing.

In a Los Angeles Times Poll released last week, 45 percent of Americans said they approved of the way Bush was handling the situation in Iraq, while 51 percent disapproved. That was a sharp drop from April, when a Times Poll found over three-fourths of Americans expressed approval of Bush's Iraqi policy. Similarly, the share of Americans who said the war was worth fighting fell from 77 percent in the April to 48 percent now.

And the new poll found 35 percent said the war was worth the cost in American lives.

Several analysts said Thursday Bush's visit could temporarily shore up those doubts, but that conditions on the ground in Iraq will undoubtedly exert more impact on American opinions over time.