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[Geoffrey Nice :] “Del Ponte made deal with Serbia”

The prosecutor in the Milošević trial at the Hague claims Carla Del Ponte made a deal with Belgrade.

Zagreb daily Jutarnji List published a letter sent by Milosević's former Prosecutor Sir Geoffrey Nice, in which he accused Chief ICTY Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte of suppressing key evidence in the case of Serbia and its role in the 1992-1995 war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia.

Nice claims that Serbia submitted a major portion of the Supreme Defense Council (VSO) archive in 2003, adding that Carla Del Ponte made a deal with then Foreign Minister Goran Svilanović to place part of the archive under protective measures during its usage before the Court.

Nice accused Del Ponte of making the deal with Belgrade without consulting either him or the Hague Prosecution.

He also said that the agreement benefited Serbia when the International Court of Justice (ICJ) exonerated Serbia of direct responsibility for genocide during the 1992-95 war.

Geoffrey Nice accused Del Ponte of “cutting an unnecessary deal with Belgrade,” adding he could not understand her motives. He also said that the agreement was reached before the Prosecution team gained access to the entire documentation.

Serbia's chief representative before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague Radoslav Stojanović characterized Nice's claims as “nonsensical”, as he “twisted the facts that he was well familiar with.”

“Certain passages in the ICTY documents used by the ICJ were blacked out so as not to be available to the public, while the prosecution and the Court had access to the entire content. They could read the blacked out portions and use them in the proceedings. Parts of the trial based on these portions would, in that case, be closed to the public,” Stojanović said.

He also stated that Geoffrey Nice had been a member of the Hague prosecution until 2006 and that “he had plenty of time to raise this issue earlier.”

Stojanović believes that Nice's statement parallels attempts of by some American media, particularly the New York Times, to challenge the ICJ judgment in Bosnian lawsuit against Serbia.

“I believe that in the context of Kosovo's final status settlement, the attempt to force a revision of the ICJ ruling comes as political pressure on Serbia. A revision would be possible only if fresh evidence appeared,” Stojanović argued.

“Such political insinuations will not have any effect on the International Court of Justice, given its status as a legal institution of the highest rank, whose judges will not let political manipulations affect their work” he concluded.

Sanader: UN to discuss Nice claims

Croatian Prime Minister Ivo Sanader said that should Geoffrey Nice's allegations in regards to a deal made between Carla del Ponte and Belgrade prove to be valid, the issue should be put before the United Nations.

“If Nice's statements proved true, the UN Security Council, being the ICJ's founder, should discuss the matter,” Sanader told the press.

He also said he gave orders to check the authenticity of Nice's statements, deeming it “a rather grave matter.”