
The War Crime Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia

By

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[The following is a reprint of a press statement made by Assistant Secretary John Shattuck, on July 6, 1995, in Washington DC.]

I am here today on a vital mission: to help strengthen the cornerstones of the Clinton Administration's human rights agenda—the war crimes Tribunals' for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia.

I will be meeting with Judge Goldstone and his senior staff and Dutch Minister Pronk and his staff to discuss ways to strengthen the Tribunals and their funding by the United Nations. Tomorrow in the United Nations in New York we will argue for full funding of these Tribunals out of the U.N. budget.

I am also here to emphasize the U.S. commitment to the Tribunals as essential elements of the peace process in both the Former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. The U.S. will oppose any effort to undermine or negotiate away the authority of these Tribunals.

My government has given \$6 million in cash contributions and detailed 25 USG personnel full-time to the Tribunals thus far, and more personnel will be added. We are doing this because we believe that these new and unique institutions of accountability are critical to peace and stability in the post-cold-war period.

Increasingly, as we view the destruction wrought by ethnic, religious and nationalistic violence—in Rwanda and in the Former Yugoslavia—it becomes clear that effective justice must be created or restored if conflict-torn societies are to purge their pasts and reestablish peace.

I witnessed the palpable need for justice as I drove through the Rwandan countryside last August, when the killing had barely receded, past deserted schoolyards, empty houses, and crops waiting to be picked—remnants of a campaign of genocide that claimed at least half a million lives and turned two million others into refugees. That crying need for justice had not dissipated—it had increased—on my most recent trip to Rwanda in May. For there to be any hope of breaking the cycle of violence that has plagued Rwanda, the masterminds of the genocide must be held accountable.

Despite this urgent need for justice, the Rwanda Tribunal faces significant logistical and bureaucratic obstacles. Together with the Prosecutor, the Government of The Netherlands, and other donors, we intend to work aggressively to overcome those obstacles so that the Tribunal can meet its goal of delivering indictments before the end of the year.

The Yugoslav Tribunal—much farther along than its Rwanda counterpart—is a central component of this Administration's Bosnia policy. Unless the persons responsible for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity are called to account, not only will justice not be served, but reconciliation and reconstruction in the Former Yugoslavia will be difficult to achieve. Assignment of individual responsibility for the atrocities will lift the burden of

collective guilt and expunge the cynical illusion that conflicts with an ethnic or religious dimension are hopelessly insolvable.

We commend the Yugoslav Tribunal for its initial indictments of 21 defendants, including Dusan Tadic, whose trial will begin soon. We are also confident that more indictments—higher up the chain of responsibility—will be forthcoming. The Tribunal's recent request to the Bosnian Government to defer prosecutions against Bosnian Serb leaders Karadzic and Mladic was a clear indication of the Prosecutor's intent to pursue prosecutions wherever the evidence leads. The U.S. strongly supports that approach toward the Tribunal's mission, and we will do everything possible to defend it against attack from any quarter.

We are frequently asked by those skeptical of the Tribunal effort whether the Tribunal will be sacrificed for peace negotiations in Bosnia. Let me be very explicit on this point. This Administration has at the highest level made clear that we will not allow the War Crimes Tribunal to be sacrificed, abandoned, or scuttled; nor will we permit an amnesty for the perpetrators.

Peace in the Former Yugoslavia cannot be sustained unless those most culpable for the atrocities are removed permanently from the scene.

As the Yugoslav Tribunal enters a critical phase, we expect greater commitment to cooperation from concerned states. We urge other governments to share intelligence and other information with the Tribunal, as we are doing, and to make resources and personnel available. We also expect full cooperation with any orders of the Tribunal, including compliance with indictments.

Cooperation with the Tribunal is particularly important from the countries under the Tribunal's jurisdiction. As negotiations proceed with the Serb leadership for a peace plan, I want to reiterate what President Clinton has said: "That nothing should be done to affect our commitment to the Tribunal . . . that the Serbs should not interface with its operations, and should not expect to fully rejoin the international community until they affirmatively comply with the Tribunal's requests."