



29 May 2000

SRSG STATEMENT FOLLOWING CERNICA KILLINGS

Last night I was revolted by the news that three Serb males, including a four year old child, Miki Petrovic--as well as Vojin Vasic and Tihomir Simonovic--were murdered in cold blood during a drive-by shooting in Cernica, a village south of Gnjilane, at around 8:30 p.m. - Two other Serb males were injured seriously and are now being treated in Camp Bondsteel.

UNMIK Police have identified a suspect. Police have worked all night, with the support of KFOR, to find him. They will not stop until they arrest him.

This horrible incident follows a series of attacks on Serbs over the past few days around Kosovo. I wish to condemn in the strongest possible terms these outrageous acts. And I want to ask: what can possibly be gained by killing a child?

The answer is that everyone loses. First of all the families, to whom I extend my deepest condolences. But they are not alone: Everyone loses, except the regime in Belgrade. Such despicable crimes are well-received by those who want to see UNMIK and KFOR leave Kosovo and who want instability to remain.

Last night's killer, in his own disgusting form of extremism, has only strengthened the hands of all extremists, and the hand of President Milosevic.

This is not only an intolerable and deplorable crime, but also an incredibly stupid one, which can cause serious harm to the progress of bringing Kosovo towards a positive future, and towards acceptance by the Western community of nations, to which Kosovo so desperately aspires.

I can assure you: we are not leaving. Last night's crime will not go unpunished. And I will continue to fight for justice, tolerance and peaceful co-existence in Kosovo.

