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B e o g r a d

*VIA EMAIL* to toseb@open.telekom.rs

Dear Mr. Todorović and Mr. Radosavljević:

This is in response to your letter to me of December 27, 2013, inquiring about specifics of lobbying activities under the direction of His Grace, Vladika Artemije of Ras and Prizren. I will address your specific questions below to the best of my ability, following three initial observations.

First, since you are attorneys with a private law firm and not public officials, it seems to me that professional ethics and courtesy should have led you to include in your letter a disclosure of the entity on whose behalf you are acting and the scope of your responsibilities. In any case, since you clearly directed this inquiry to me in furtherance of the unjust and unwarranted accusations made against Vladika Artemije, my response is being made public contemporaneously with its delivery to you.

Second, there is nothing in your inquiry that has not been already publicized in detail, either as posted on the website of the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) unit of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ; at [www.fara.gov](http://www.fara.gov)), or included in my “Statement by James George Jatras Regarding Allegations of Misuse of Funds to Support Lobbying in the United States on Behalf of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija” of February 18, 2010 (in English at <http://www.mail-archive.com/news@antic.org/msg12924.html> ) or my response to the scurrilous attack by the Greek publication *Romfea* (in English at [Aleksandar Todorović, attorney  
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Page 1 of 7](http://dijaspورا.wordpress.com/2010/03/15/attacks-on-vladika-</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

[artemije-and-jim-jatras-are-not-subsiding/](#)). Nonetheless, I will answer your questions with as little redundancy as possible. Where appropriate, these earlier responses are cited.

Third, on the face of it the purpose of your request is unclear. You state: “Since the objective of Serbian Orthodox Church is not to pursue [His Grace] without merit, and since the reasons of payments to ‘Venable LLP’ are not completely clear, . . . it would help to put the case ad acta and thereby avoid the conduct of proceedings for offenses against” him if the amounts paid for lobbying could be “covered,” presumably to dispel “doubt” as to “the real motive” of the payments. Regarding this aspect:

- It is unclear whether you are inquiring on behalf of the Public Prosecutor (which the subject heading on your letter would suggest) or on behalf of the Serbian Orthodox Church (per the above quotation from your letter). Your clarification is requested.
- If there is no desire to pursue His Grace and Fr. Simeon (Vilovski) “without merit,” and if you (or the entity on whose behalf you are working) wish “to solve this unpleasant case, that burdens both Orthodox Christians and the public in the Republic of Serbia,” then by all means advise your client to desist from this pointless, unfounded, and destructive vendetta.
- Perhaps most puzzling is the novel suggestion that there is any doubt that the “real motive” for the payments at issue was anything other than lobbying and related services. Indeed, until receiving your letter, my entire understanding of the unjustified accusations against Vladika Artemije and Fr. Simeon (and by association, against me) was that funds intended for another purpose (church repairs to be made by substandard Albanian firms, so that the churches would be in a presentable state for renewed desecration and demolition) were used for supposedly illicit purposes, i.e., lobbying. With respect to such use, as I asked in my February 18, 2010, statement, referenced above, for which no answer has yet been provided by any of Vladika Artemije’s accusers:

“When all is said and done, there is only one legitimate question than can be asked that relates to the lobbying issue: did the funds for it come from some specific source for which it was ***absolutely impermissible*** to be used for any other purpose, such as lobbying? Not being party to the Eparchy’s ledgers, I would strongly doubt it. First, money is fungible. If money is given to the Eparchy for various purposes and then is spent for a number of legitimate activities, how is it determined which money went for what purpose? Second, I categorically reject any suggestion that Vladika Artemije, Fr. Simeon, or any of the monastics and laity associated with him would perform any clearly improper action, financial or otherwise. If, on the other hand, we are talking about questions of judgment, that should be left to the Bishop’s discretion.” [emphasis added]

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Vladika Artemije having decided that due to the emergency situation and extraordinary pressures on his flock it was imperative to devise a sustainable security and protection program, including a deterrent against any further destruction and desecration of Orthodox holy places, and that such a program took precedence over non-sustainable repairs, such use of funds would better serve the same objective in a much more efficient manner. Indeed, this would be an appropriate decision corresponding to accepted “best business practices” of budget administration. Instead of “throwing good money after bad” he wisely sought to eliminate the *political* root cause of the danger to his people: the wrong-headed policy of the western powers, particularly of the United States. To that end, His Grace chose lobbying among the very few peaceful and effective options open to him, to engage professional services with the required qualifications and capabilities to present the case of those under the care of his Eparchy in order to put a halt at the source of the problem to the suffering of his people and to set conditions for securing their lives and property. *Keep in mind that there was nothing secret* about any of this at the initiation of this program, or at any time since.

- But the current suggestion – which I emphasize, is totally new to me – that the funds in question were *not* used for lobbying is an even more outrageous and baseless speculation. If you have any shred of evidence that payments made for lobbying were for some other, surreptitious purpose (“the real motive”), simple decency would suggest that you provide it. If you are unable to do so, I expect your prompt and public apology for this groundless, unsubstantiated, and defamatory conjecture.

Let me now address your specific questions.

### **1. “Were there any reports on performed legal and lobbying activities?”**

The activities described were not in the nature of legal services but were confined to lobbying and related media services. As required by FARA, these were duly reported to the FARA unit at DOJ, which later posted some of them – but for some reason not all of them – at [www.fara.gov](http://www.fara.gov). Since my departure from Venable in January 2007, I no longer have access to those reports; whether Venable still does, I am unable to say. Why the FARA unit would not have posted all of the reports submitted to them, and whether the additional reports not posted online are available for public inspection in hard copy at the FARA office, are questions you are welcome to submit to them.

However, let me draw your attention to two reports that are publicly posted at the FARA unit, at:

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<http://www.fara.gov/docs/5435-Supplemental-Statement-20060630-4.pdf>  
<http://www.fara.gov/docs/5435-Supplemental-Statement-20061229-5.pdf>

These are for two six-month periods of 2006, during which time the “Registrant” (Venable LLP) performed the described services for the Republic of the Philippines, the Embassy of India, the Rodina Political Party (of Russia), and the Serbian National Council of Kosovo and Metohija (the account in question). The various contacts, meetings, media placements relevant to the Kosovo work are listed in a manner comparable to those pertaining to the other matters, which you may take as a representative – but not exhaustive – description of the lobbying work performed under Vladika Artemije’s direction. (Please note that it was probably unnecessary to register this project under FARA at all, since His Grace is not a foreign official under the meaning of FARA. However, since the Serbian National Council could conceivably be construed as a “political party,” and since we anticipated close scrutiny for our opposition to U.S. policy on Kosovo, we decided to register under FARA in an excess of caution.)

**2. “If not, what actions were taken in order to justify the amount of 700.000,00 USD, which was paid by invoices (that we have) for a period of 6 months, as of 22 March, 2006?”**

Per the response to the first question above, I presume the phrase “if not” in this question is inoperable, since there is indeed a publicly available, representative listing of such actions, per the links provided above.

Concerning the amount of payments, please note the following, from my February 18, 2010, statement:

With respect to the money, there is a curious assumption behind the accusation that moneys were “diverted” to lobbying: that while Serbia’s enemies should take full advantage of all the influence money can buy, Serbs should rely solely on goodhearted, voluntary, nonprofessional efforts. That assumption is a large part of why Serbia and Serbs ended up where they did in the propaganda wars of the 1990s. It is an assumption Vladika Artemije wisely understood he had to reject if he was to have any hope of saving his flock. In any case, the cost for services in the agreement signed between SNC and Venable in March 2006 was for an initial six-month period for \$600,000, and continuing thereafter unless cancelled at the same rate of \$100,000 per month. Any search of lobbying records for international clients <<http://www.fara.gov>> shows that this is well within the range of such services, with two provisos:

\* First, that the payments under the SNC/Venable agreement were inclusive of out-of-pocket costs (like media buys, travel, conferences, etc.), and was not just for professional fees to the firm for its work. This is not usual. In most agreements the contract amount is what goes for the work, with costs added on

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top. This means that out of the SNC/Venable contract from one-third to up to forty percent of the funds paid went not for professional fees but for things like ads in papers read by officials, like Roll Call and The Hill; in well-read political sites like DrudgeReport and Daily Kos; conferences at locations like the Capitol Hill Club (Washington's most well-regarded Republican gathering place); for travel around the U.S., Britain, Germany, Russia, India, Israel, Belgium (EU), Rome, and other locations; and similar expenses. This also means that the actual amount paid for the work of Venable's professionals was far exceeded (by a factor of two or three times) by the amount of time devoted to the mission.

\* Second, that funding (\$600,000) for the initial six months, which was paid out over the period March-December 2006, virtually exhausted the sources available for support of the representation. In February 2007, because I had changed firms, the agreement with Venable was reassigned to Squire Sanders Public Advocacy <<http://www.fara.gov/docs/5791-Exhibit-AB-20070208-3.pdf>> , under the signature of Fr. Simeon (Vilovski), continuing at \$100,000 per month, though by then no further funds were available. Notwithstanding, the work continued at the same intensity throughout 2007 and 2008, and into 2009. Since then, it has been necessary to scale back the work but it has never fully ended despite having, in effect, ceased to be professional effort and transformed into essentially a volunteer activity.

So, that means that since the signing of the March 2006 contract, that initial \$600,000 for six months has bought almost four years worth of work of varying levels of intensity. That's an average of about \$12,500 per month, of which, as noted above, a sizeable portion went to costs.

### 3. "Was there a specification of costs?"

No. As noted above, the payments in support of this project were inclusive of out-of-pocket costs, not according to the standard arrangement whereby the agreed payments are allocated entirely to professional fees, with costs incurred added on top. A partial, though hardly exhaustive, list of outside disbursements appears in the two FARA postings provided at the links in my response to your first question.

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In closing, allow me to again address the absurdity and injustice of the persecution to which Vladika Artemije (with Fr. Simeon, and others loyal to him) have been and continue to be subjected. The underlying premise of these false accusations is either that His Grace "wasted" funds on lobbying or (as your letter now suggests) that the lobbying payments were a cover for some mysteriously unidentified "real motive." It should be patently obvious that the *opposite* is the case: that Vladika Artemije is being maltreated precisely because the lobbying and media services he procured for even a limited time were

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far too effective and had become a threat to the policy of those governments (sadly, that of my own country in the forefront) wishing to wrest Kosovo and Metohija from Serbia, and a discomfort to their Serbian collaborators. As observed in my February 18, 2010, statement:

We believed we could win only by changing the terms of debate. When we began, “Kosovo” meant only “the place where America stopped genocide of peaceful Albanians by evil Serbs.” Due to our efforts, for many, many Americans “Kosovo” now means “the place where our government insanely helps jihadists and gangsters terrorize Christian Serbs.” [ . . . ]

Let us remember that when we began our efforts Washington fully expected smoothly to arrange the “final status” of Kosovo well before the end of 2006. The architects of American policy expected minimal resistance from Belgrade and were sure the Russians were not serious in their opposition to independence. And of course there were virtually no dissenting voices in the United States. While our efforts may not have been early enough to have accomplished a reversal of American policy, I am confident that if not for this campaign under Vladika Artemije’s guidance and direction Washington would have moved much faster than it did to “resolve” the issue. Instead, we threw enough sand in the gears that contributed to a delay of almost two years, by which time the Russian position had become rock-solid and it had become impossible for anyone (openly, anyway) in Serbian politics to consent to losing Kosovo. Even when Washington did make its move in early 2008, in concert with the KLA kingpins and with unprecedented bullying of our European allies, they did so with the increasingly desperate knowledge they were losing ground and that it was “now or never.” The result – the ongoing, unresolved crisis – is not one anyone wants to see but is far better than what likely would have been the case if we had not moved when we did at Vladika Artemije’s initiative. I sincerely believe we helped give Serbia a fighting chance, which it is still her option to take advantage of or not.

The proof of our effectiveness is in the fact that there is reason to suspect that the campaign (of which you evidently are a part) to eliminate His Grace as an obstacle to the policy of the Western powers was undertaken in direct response to a NATO, and perhaps specifically U.S., initiative. As reported by NATO, U.S. Admiral Mark P. Fitzgerald, then Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and Africa, and Commander, Allied Joint Force Command (JFC) Naples, “with operational responsibility for NATO missions in the Balkans, Iraq and the Mediterranean,” took part in meetings in Kosovo in January 2010 (“JFC Com Visits Kosovo” at <http://www.jfcnaples.nato.int/page8840506.aspx> ; note, this occurred on January 8, the second day of Orthodox Christmas according to the Old Calendar) and February 2010 (“JFC Commander visits [*sic*] Viskoki [*sic*] Decane [*sic*] Monastery” at <http://www.jfcnaples.nato.int/page8840281.aspx> ). During his January visit the Admiral publicly stated that he considered Serbian so-called “parallel institutions” – that is, the legitimate structures of the sovereign Serbian state, as opposed to the Albanians’ illegal separatist administration installed under NATO patronage – to be a “security threat.” Further, an unconfirmed report indicates that a high NATO

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officer – whether Admiral Fitzgerald or someone else is not specified – stated in the course of one of the January meetings (this is verbatim or a close paraphrase) “What we need here is a more cooperative bishop.”

Again, I cannot confirm this report or firmly identify the speaker of the comment. But the timing is indicative. Just over a month after Admiral Fitzgerald’s earlier visit, and just before his later one, Vladika Artemije’s authority over his Eparchy was “temporarily” suspended. This was followed in due course by his physical removal from the province of Kosovo and Metohija and by an unlawful and legally void declaration of the Holy Hierarchical Assembly of the Serbian Orthodox Church that he had been stripped of the Episcopal dignity and reduced to the level of a monk. (For a further account of these developments, see “ANY PRETEXT WILL DO: Totalitarianism in Service to the West: Serbia Betrays God, Helps Evict Last of Kosovo Christianity,” by Julia Gorin, at <http://www.juliagorin.com/wordpress/?p=2324>; the speaker in question is identified, perhaps imprecisely based on available information as “a KFOR officer”; and “Eleven Years Later: NATO Powers Prepare Final Solution In Kosovo,” by Rick Rozoff, <http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2010/03/19/11-years-later-nato-powers-prepare-final-solution-in-kosovo/> .)

There is little question that the removal of Bishop Artemije was undertaken in the service of a broader policy initiative to “resolve” Kosovo’s status. I will leave it to those in the upper echelons of the Serbian State and Church who behind the scenes unworthily acted to comply with NATO’s evident wishes, to explain their motives and answer to their consciences.

I trust this answers your questions, if not quite to your satisfaction.



James George Jatras, Esq.\*

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\* Admitted in the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the Supreme Court of the United States