

*Washington, DC* - Today, U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer (D-NY), Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-NY) and Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) made a direct appeal to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice asking her to use all available means to pressure the Serbian government to locate the Kovacevic and to return him to the U.S. and to revoke diplomatic immunity for Igor Milosevic, a Serbian consulate official who may have aided and abetted the escape of a Serbian national involved in a gruesome beating of a Binghamton college student. Miladin Kovacevic fled the United States to Germany, and perhaps to Serbia, with an emergency Serbian passport, obtained by Kovacevic three days after he was bailed out of jail on \$100,000 cash bail apparently paid for by the Serbian consulate. Kovacevic was charged in connection to the May 4 beating of fellow BU student Bryan Steinhauer, who remains in critical condition and has not regained consciousness since the assault.

“Helping Kovacevic sneak out the back door and evade justice a despicable act and a violation of U.S. and international law,” said Schumer. “The State Department cannot allow Mr. Milosevic to continue to operate under the shield of diplomatic immunity. There are serious national and international implications to this case. The State Department must move quickly to get to the bottom of what happened here and bring both of the possible criminals involved in this case to justice. The more we learn about the consulate actions here, the more it stinks.”

“It is unconscionable that anybody, let alone a foreign government official, would help a person who is accused of such a violent crime flee the country,” said Senator Clinton. “We are a nation that respects the rule of law and we expect members of foreign nations to adhere to them while they are guests in our country, not hide behind them. I strongly urge Secretary Rice to take all necessary actions to rectify this injustice.”

"The Serbian Consulate's decision to post bond for Kovacevic and enable him to flee the country is irresponsible, incomprehensible and deplorable," Hinchey said. "The State Department must come down hard on the consulate, take action against the official who facilitated Kovacevic's release from jail, and put immediate pressure on Serbian officials to hand him back over to U.S. authorities. The U.S. must make it clear to all foreign governments that we absolutely will not tolerate their obstruction of justice."

Miladin Kovacevic, a former Binghamton University basketball player and Serbian national, was charged in connection to the May 4 beating of fellow BU student Bryan Steinhauer in a bar room fight. After the excellent work done by Broome County District Attorney Gerry Mollen and the local police, Mr. Kovacevic was arrested and held on a felony assault charge in connection with

Mr. Steinhauer's attack.

After being held in jail on felony assault since then, Kovacevic posted bail on June 6, after surrendering his passport. However, three days later U.S. Customs Enforcement said Kovacevic had fled the US via Newark Airport, using a Serbian-issued emergency passport. It was also uncovered that the Serbian Consulate General's Office in New York City posted the \$100,000 bail for Kovacevic on June 6 in Broome County Court.

In response to these facts, the FBI and U.S. State Department are looking into what role the Consulate may have had in Kovacevic's escape and issued a federal warrant for Kovacevic's arrest overseas on June 13, allowing the FBI to look for Kovacevic outside of the US. The letter to Secretary Rice asking her to demand that the Serbian government move to revoke the diplomatic immunity for Milosevic and any other consulate official found to be involved in the case.