

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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Interview: Nikola Lovrinovic, removed education minister in Central Bosnia Canton

Vecernji list
By Ana Drmac

July 11, 2005

The Central Bosnia Canton serves as a rare positive example where both Bosniaks and Croats enjoy their right to educated themselves in their mother tongues.

We spoke with Nikola Lovrinovic, Central Bosnia Cantonal minister for education, science, culture, and sport after he was removed from office by Paddy Ashdown.

VL: In light of the several warnings you received previously from the Office of the High Representative, was the High Representative's decision expected?

LOVRINOVIC: This removal was unexpected only in terms of how it was carried out. Namely, only a few days earlier I sent a letter to OHR requesting more detailed interpretation of some parts of the Law on Primary and Secondary Education imposed upon us last year. As the minister who is responsible for implementing that law, I have a right to such a request. But, instead of an answer and clarification, I received a notice of removal.

VL: Which articles are you specifically concerned about and what is unclear in them?

LOVRINOVIC: I am talking about those articles that define the curricular language, cases of "two schools under one roof" and registration areas. Especially unclear is how this imposed law attempts to resolve cases of "two schools under one roof." I don't know if that also applies to cases where in one building you have a primary school and a secondary school, private and public school or schools that follow all European standards and can exist as independent legal entities.

VL: Can you give us an example?

LOVRINOVIC: The primary school in Vitez. There is one school that employs a Croatian plan and program and has 1000 students, and another Bosniak school with 700 students. European standards consider 600 to be an optimal number of students in a school. In this case, both schools have enough students and teachers to work as two independent schools. To combine them would mean violating European standards and rules not encompassed by last year's imposed Law on Primary and Secondary Education. Moreover, that would violate the wishes of parents who want a curriculum in their mother tongue.

VL: The High Representative specifically mentioned you as an obstacle to the rule of law in Central Bosnia. Will there be full rule of law in the Central Bosnia Canton following your removal?

LOVRINOVIC: I would like just that. However, I do not believe I was any sort of obstacle, on the contrary. I would be happy if someone could tell me where else constituent peoples exercised their rights to schooling in their mother tongue, as they did in the Central Bosnia Canton. What is with the rights of Croats in Sarajevo or Tuzla Cantons, or the rights of Bosniaks and Croats in Republika Srpska? (Excerpt)

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Croat returns obstructed

Dnevni list

By Tihomir Bijelic

July 11, 2005

BUNAR/DERVENTA – The Croats of Bosanska Posavina are well aware of the problems they face when working on refugee return.

Many returnee associations have been formed in Bosanska Posavina so that they can decrease the number of those returning, they say.

Because of this, they are aiming to change the situation and establish an association that will work on returnee problems and organize all returnee organization in the municipalities of Derventa, Bosanski Brod, Doboje, and Odzak.

Ivan Radusic returned to Johovac in Derventa municipality. He lives in a garage, but he is on his land again. He points out that it is important to undertake something to realize returns and reconstruction.

“If officials do not support you, then nothing happens. If returns and reconstruction do not happen in the short-term, those of us living here will suffer. People are dying because they cannot return to their homes,” said Radusic.

Radusic is one of 207 Croat returnees who helped establish the Association of Croat returnees to Bosanska Posavina Phoenix. The idea for Phoenix first arose when returnees just starting coming back to Plehan.
(Excerpt)

Bush: We admire strength and courage of those who returned to Srebrenica

FENA

July 11, 2005

U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues Pierre Richard Prosper on Monday read the message of U.S. President George W. Bush at the commemoration in Potocari.

The statement says that the mass murder of nearly 8,000 boys and men was the worst massacre of civilians in Europe since the Second World War and an atrabilious reminder that there are evil people who will kill innocent people without conscience and mercy.

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The U.S. President says that this terrible event remains a source of great pain for the people of Balkans and all those who believe in freedom and dignity of human life.

“Today at this dignified event I join all Americans in expressions of our deepest condolences and sympathies. The United States expresses support to BiH and the families of the victims while they are marking a terrible historic chapter. We mourn for your loss, and admire the strength and courage of those who have returned to Srebrenica to rebuild their lives”, says Bush.

In his message, the U.S. President accented the dedication to the efforts to bring the persons responsible for this crime to justice, and especially Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic.

”I appreciate every individual in favor of reconciliation and a strong European future of BiH. A modern and democratic Balkans is an important element of Europe that is united, free and at peace. While we try to bring peace to the world, we believe in the value of freedom, the sanctity of live and triumph of good over evil. God bless all people of the Balkans,” is the message of U.S. President Bush with the occasion of marking 10 years since the genocide in Srebrenica.

Prosper: International community bears responsibility for events in Srebrenica

FENA

July 11, 2005

“The responsibility for the events in Srebrenica 10 years ago also lies with the entire international community, and the current U.S. administration is resolute to act when such things are happening”, U.S. Ambassador-at-large for War Crimes Issues Pierre Richard Prosper on Monday told a press conference after the commemoration in Potocari.

Regarding the apprehensions of Karadzic and Mladic, says Prosper, there are several levels of responsibility, however the local authorities are absolutely responsible not only when it comes to cooperating with The Hague, but also in taking steps to discover and apprehend Karadzic and Mladic.

“The citizens of this country, and especially of RS if they wish a better tomorrow, if they wish integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions, than they will also give information to the local or international forces”, he said.

Regarding the United States, Ambassador Prosper said that President Bush has clearly underlined that the United States is determined to bring the persons responsible for war crimes to justice.

According to the former peace mediator, Richard Holbrooke, the entire BiH represents the greatest failure of the international community since the 1930s and many people share responsibility for this.

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“Srebrenica is not the failure of the United States, responsibility lies elsewhere”, he said, reiterating that the UN was not in favor of strong air strikes after the beginning of the attack on Srebrenica.

Meron: Bosnian Serb forces committed genocide

FENA

July 11, 2005

We in the International Court have the responsibility to ensure that the people who lost their lives here are bestowed justice and that those responsible for these terrible crimes are tried and punished.

The President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, Theodore Meron, made this statement on Monday at the commemoration dedicated to the victims of genocide in Srebrenica.

He said that those who are responsible for this genocide would bear the hallmark of warning for those who even think of committing such a terrible crime in the future.

He regarded the platform in Potocari as an appropriate place for making the request to apprehend Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic and bring them to The Hague.

“The sense of what had happened here is written in the lives that have been lost, the prayers that are still being prayed, and the hearts that are still weeping. Sympathizing with the victims and their dearest, we in the International Court will persevere in our efforts to realize justice and respect the basic principles of human rights, and through our work we will attempt, in a humble but proper manner, to pay respects to the victims we are remembering today”, said Meron.

Wolfowitz: We are here also to comfort those who survived the genocide

FENA

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We are here today to pay respects to the victims of the worst genocide that happened in Europe since the Second World War and we are also trying to comfort the survivors and help them rebuild their lives, President of the World Bank Paul Wolfowitz on Monday said at the commemoration for the victims of the Srebrenica genocide at the Memorial Centre in Potocari.

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“We are also here to confirm our resolve to prevent such horrible crimes from happening here ever again”, pledged the WB President. He stressed that those who committed crimes are responsible for them, but added that this massacre nevertheless represents a stain in the consciousness of entire humanity.

“It is a fact that we did not do enough, that we could have done more to prevent that”, said Wolfowitz.

Wolfowitz said that he was impressed by the progress BiH has achieved over the past ten years, given this tragedy, and expressed pride by the fact that the World Bank is participating in the progress and building a better future in BiH.

Jovic and Tihic meet Prosper, Holbrooke and McElhaney

FENA

July 11, 2005

BiH Presidency Chair Ivo Miro Jovic and BiH Presidency member Sulejman Tihic met with US Ambassador for War Crimes Issues Pierre Richard Prosper in Sarajevo on Tuesday.

Ambassador Richard Holbrooke and US Ambassador to BiH Douglas McElhaney also took part in the meeting.

Members of the BiH Presidency thanked the US delegation for the participation in the commemoration in Potocari, and the message of US President George W. Bush, which was read by Ambassador Prosper in Srebrenica.

They stressed that the arrival of the US delegation for the commemoration in Srebrenica represents support for the BiH policy.

All participants in the meeting stressed the need for arresting all indicted war criminals, especially Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic.

“Ongoing reforms of the sector for arresting indicted war criminals and prosecuting them, as well as police and defence reform, are helping create an environment in which it will be possible to resolve all these issues”, Jovic said.

Tihic said that BiH citizens highly appreciate the American role in the constant insistence on the arrest of indicted war criminals and the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, as well as the support for the defence reform process.

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The plan of continuing progress in efforts on bringing to justice indicted war criminals, especially Karadzic and Mladic, are the top priorities in the future work, Prosper stressed.

Participants in the meeting agreed that this is an important year for BiH, during which the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Agreement will be marked, and that decisions that will help the development of BiH and speed up its integration into Euro-Atlantic are expected to be made, the BiH Presidency stated.

Official Zagreb

Vecernji list

By Miroslav Vasilj

Forum

Op-ed

Zagreb today is equally official or even more official than any other European metropolis. Such is the perception of BiH Croats regarding relations between Croatia's government and the Croats in BiH. This would not be so bizarre if BiH Croats were not part of the Croatian corpus and if official Zagreb did not drag BiH Croats, against their will, into the escapade known as Dayton BiH. Today, ten years after Dayton, when BiH Croats, due to their own mistakes, the international community's double standards, and the "official-ness" of official Zagreb, are reduced to a national minority, the Croatian government acts as if it does not care. Repressing the right to use the Croatian language in education and public media, siphoning of funds from Croat to Bosniak territories, fabricating judicial processes against Croats, criminalizing the Homeland War, constantly attacking businesses in Herzegovina... this is the daily routine BiH Croats obviously unsuccessfully continue to warn of and attempt to correct. On the incapability of the Croat political leadership in BiH some other time. However, why is official Zagreb silent? Croatia uses its budget to help veterans and BiH Croat institutions that are of vital national interest. But much more important that the financial dimension of assistance is the political aspect. Croatia, which today enjoys a reputation in international circles, with its lobbying and support can greatly assist rightless Croats in BiH without anyone arguing that official Zagreb is meddling in BiH's internal affairs. If the fate of fellow Croats is not enough to take action, then official Zagreb should, because of its constitutional obligations and as a co-signor of the peace agreement, together with BiH Croat leadership attempt to drag Croats out of the Dayton grave.