

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

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Izetbegovic comment at Konrad Adenauer Foundation meeting

Vecernji list
By Miso Relota

June 18, 2005

During the Konrad Adenauer Foundation meeting held two days ago in Sarajevo's House of the Army, representatives from SDA, HDZ, PDP, SDP and NSRZB discussed European charters and standards which need to be implemented in the domestic society as soon as possible.

Bakir Izetbegovic, vice-president of SDA BiH and son of the late Alija Izetbegovic, speaking of the Bosnian identity, pointed out that the concept "Bosnian" is generally accepted in BiH. Currently, between 80 and 90 percent of the people in BiH consider themselves Bosnians and identify themselves with the Bosnian identity.

"Herzegovina is a region and a part of this country, respectively, just like Krajina and Semberija, for example. It is normal that Herzegovina is, in fact, a part of Bosnia," said Bakir Izebegovic at the meeting. His comments caused a fierce reaction among the audience, who argued that his claim was an absolute lie.

PDP president and BiH minister of foreign affairs Mladen Ivanic replied that that is incorrect, pointing out that Croats are currently the most vulnerable people in BiH. The Program Declaration of SDA BiH states that the party supports the protection of traditional values and Bosnian identity.

SDA promotes a Republic of BiH as a civil, decentralized state with three levels of government – local, regional and state. Furthermore, such organization presupposes local self-rule according to European standards, which would consist of municipalities and cities, with considerably more authority and financial inflows than currently exist.

The party supports organizing BiH into five economic regions, the affirmation of BiH identity and securing equality for the Bosnian language.

Bosnian nationalism

Vecernji list
By Radoslav Dodig

June 18, 2005

The example of Bakir Izetbegovic, son of Muslim, Bosnian, and Bosniak magnate Alija Izetbegovic, shows that the Bosnian apple does not fall far from the Bosniak tree.

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Following Alija's pan-Bosnian ideas, he stated that in Bosnia and Herzegovina the concept "Bosnian" has become a generally accepted phrase for all citizens. How does one reply to the numerous attempts by the political and state capital Sarajevo to impose a Bosnian identity as the state and national super-identity?

One does not need to be too bright to conclude that group labels heavily burden Bosniak intellectuals. When the medieval Bosnian identity was lost, Benjamin Kallay attempted to impose it by decree, Mehmed Spaho turned to Muslim paths, comrade Tito returned Muslims to the ethnic stage, and wartime 1993 again inaugurated the concept Bosniak.

Bosniaks today, Muslims yesterday, Bosnians tomorrow consider national identity to be like a windmill, turning this way and that. It is awkward that a state Bosnianism comes from the powerful vice-president of the most powerful Bosniak party. We can, thus, speak of Bosnian nationalism. It was long ago that academic Redzic stated, "BiH is all the stronger, as her nationalisms are weaker."

Accordingly, the Bosnianism of Bakir Izetbegovic is no connecting factor for BiH, but rather a disintegration factor. Whether or not pan-Bosnians admit it or not, Bosnianism can only be a geographic, regional or folklore attribute. Or, speaking in medical terms, Bosnianism is not a nation, but a diagnosis.

Bosnia: Balkan parliamentarians back continuation of EU association process

HINA

June 18, 2005

Sarajevo - Representatives of parliamentary commissions for European integration from Southeast European countries signed a joint declaration in Sarajevo on Saturday [18 June] confirming readiness to cooperate with a view to joining the European Union as soon as possible.

The declaration was signed at the end of a two-day meeting by representatives from Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro, and Macedonia. Albania adopted it in principle, but its representatives did not attend due to elections in the country.

The document underlines the commitment to full EU membership and the continuation of the association process in parallel with the solving of the current problems surrounding the adoption of the EU Constitution.

Fatima Leho of the Bosnian Parliament said cooperation among regional parliaments was a task stemming from the EU summit in Thessaloniki in 2003.

The implementation of that goal began with this meeting in Sarajevo, which also adopted the rules of procedure of the conference of parliaments of countries in the Stabilisation and Association process (SAP).

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Bosnia will chair the conference over the next six months, during which period the fundamental goal will be to secure for all access to EU pre-accession funds which will be available within the EU budget for the period up to 2013.

The joint statement points to the possibility that SAP countries might suffer because of announcements that the EU's development funds would be limited.

Neven Mimica of Croatia said the citizens in every country of the region were committed to joining the EU as soon as possible and that it was very important for regional parliamentarians to meet, notably at present, when the Union is encountering internal problems. He added that these problems must not undermine the EU's existing decision to expand to Southeast Europe.

Mimica also said that meetings like this one must not be treated as the establishment of a regional package, but as impetus to every country to invest additional effort to meet EU membership criteria.

International prosecutor John McNair speaks with “Dnevni avaz:”

Dnevni Avaz

By Sead Numanovic

June 18, 2005

We are not losing the battle against organized corruption

Judgments against Maktouf and Cengic soon * We are extremely satisfied with progress in the Jelavic trial * More new indictments soon

Head of the Special Department for Organized Crime in the BiH Prosecution John McNair does not believe that he is losing the battle against crime and corruption in our country.

“It is true that we lost the first battle in the Fzlic case. We expect to submit an appeal and it is possible that a judgment will come down in the second instance court,” said McNair in a conversation with “Dnevni Avaz.”

Difficult cases

He reminds us that his department took over very difficult cases and that they are conducting processes against very powerful and influential individuals who allegedly committed grave crimes.

“We are extremely satisfied with the progress in the Jelavic trial. He is free because the BiH State Court was overwhelmed with cases and could not complete his trial in the allotted timeframe. We contested his release

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from prison, but, according to the law, he has a right to be released one year from the confirmation of his indictment. However, as a result, the situation with the trial did not change,” states McNair.

His department is also working on the “Sidoil” case, dealing with a large amount of money, and expects a judgment on Monday.

“Cengic is a difficult case, as is Maktouf. I do not expect to win every case. There are currently five big cases underway,” comments McNair and points out that judgments could soon come down in two cases.

Asked whether his department is “aiming” only at politicians from nationalist parties, thereby avoiding members of the former Alliance, the chief international prosecutor answered in the negative.

“We are not trying individuals because they occupy a high position or belong to a specific party, but rather based on information whether or not that individual broke the law,” emphasized McNair.

He says he has read numerous charges in the media against Zlatko Lagumdžija, but that he has not received any official accusation.

Cooperation with SIPA

Generally speaking, McNair is very satisfied with cooperation with SIPA, Federal Interior Ministry, Federation Police Director Zlatko Miletić, the Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecutor, and Entity Prosecutors. Likewise, he collaborates well with the RS Interior Ministry, although to a lesser degree, and points out the arrest of individuals involved in the white slave trade.

He also points out that he has not received any documentation from provisional administrator of “Privredna Banka Srpsko Sarajevo” Toby Robinson regarding illegal activity in that institution.

Prosecutor McNair announces that his department will continue to bring new indictments, in accordance with the receipt of material and its analysis. He is currently working on five cases.

“The cases ahead of us are “Covic,” “Sugar affair,” which should begin by July 1, and “Croat self-rule” and “Jelavic.” We need to keep in mind how much work we are doing and how much capacity we have at hand,” concludes McNair.

“Fazlic” case

”An important witness in the “Fazlic” case dies after the indictment was confirmed, but before the trial began. We knew at that moment that it would be much more difficult to go to trial because we could no longer receive any information from the important witness.

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I cannot say more about this case. We have still not received the written version of the judgment, so we have not had an opportunity to review it,” said McNair.

Bosnian Croat Peasants' Party Rejects "Unjust" Dayton Constitution

Croat Radio Herzeg-Bosna, Mostar

June 18, 2005

[Announcer] The presidency of HSS BiH [Croat Peasants' Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina] has adopted, at an extended session in Siroki Brijeg, a document entitled: The HSS BiH stance on constitutional reform in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It is pointed out in the adopted document that the Dayton constitution forced on Bosnia-Herzegovina is unjust, dysfunctional and an obstacle to the political and economic progress of Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as [an obstacle] to EU and NATO integration, and is an utmost threat to peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the region and Europe as a whole.

It is further stressed that the Dayton constitution is particularly damaging for Bosnia-Herzegovina Croats and they can longer support it. Amongst other things, the document says that Bosnia-Herzegovina should be defined as a republic in which the individual and collective rights and constitutionality of Bosniaks [Bosnian Muslims], Croats and Serbs throughout the state will be guaranteed, while the protection of minorities has to be regulated by a separate law.

Following coordination with other Croat political parties and associations, the HSS says that a procedure to adopt a Bosnia-Herzegovina constitution promptly will be launched. At the same time, the HSS says that work will proceed on amendments to the Election Law of Bosnia-Herzegovina.