

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

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20.6.2005

Hague investigators in Bugojno yesterday

Vecernji list
By Ana Drmac

June 17, 2005

A group of Hague investigators including judges, prosecution staff, and members of Enver Hadzihasanovic's and Amir Kubura's legal team were in Bugojno yesterday, after earlier visiting Zenica, Travnik, and Vitez.

Security

They spent about two hours in Bugojno and they were heavily guarded by numerous security personnel. The Hague investigators visited the most infamous of the twelve Bosniak concentration camps that were operating in Bugojno during the war: "Stadium" (which held 550 Croats; 294 of them for a full eight months), "Furniture store," and "BH Bank."

Sources of information

They also visited the monastery in Bugojno where a Croat national was allegedly murdered during the war. The reason for their visit, about which Croats in Bugojno were only unofficially informed, remains a secret, just like the information they gathered.

Only Bosniak representatives had the opportunity to meet with the Tribunal representatives.

Despite requests, we learned that no one from Croat associations of the Homeland War, including the Association of Croat POWs, had the opportunity to meet with the Hague judges and prosecutors, although they are the only ones who can legitimately speak of the horrors.

The Hague investigators cancelled their planned visit to the Bugojno rectory and the municipality informed us they did not meet with Bugojno municipal chairman Hasan Ajkunic.

The only ones given the opportunity to convey their version of what happened during the war were Bosniaks and people walking by (one of whom owns a kiosk near BH Bank), many of whom know of Croat casualties only what they learned from the media.

Fate of Republika Srpska unites Croats

Vecernji list
By Miso Relota

June 17, 2005

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The recently held meeting involving all BiH Croat political parties, held in Club Lira in Sarajevo, concluded that BiH as it is organized today does not satisfy fundamental conditions necessary for the protection of basic Croat national interests or the country's stability in international affairs.

It is no secret that Croat parties are currently split over a national or citizen solution for the future structuring of BiH. Many political analysts argue that the parties gathered around NHI [New Croat Initiative] and HSS [Croat Peasant Party] support a citizen solution in an effort to please the international community, as was the case up till now.

It was unofficially concluded that, if Republika Srpska remains, Croat representatives will insist that Croats also receive a federal unit in BiH.

BiH's internal structure is unsustainable in political and security terms and does not guarantee protection of rights, interests, and the needs of its peoples and citizens, because it does not offer basic preconditions for employment, financing state institutions and all joint needs of the citizens, such as social protection, health, and education.

The current structure maintains BiH in a permanent crisis and such a country can only function under direct management of the international community. Experience has shown thus far that such a structure does not guarantee equality of the Croats.

It was concluded that fundamental constitutional changes are necessary in which all three ethnic groups and all citizens will be equal.

Sarajevo: Conference of SE European parliamentarians starts

FENA

June 17, 2005

A two-day conference of parliamentary commissions for European integration from Southeast European states participating in the stabilisation and association process started in Sarajevo today.

BiH House of Representatives Speaker Sefik Dzaferovic said at the start of the conference that one of the conditions for the success of the process of European integration is the strengthening of regional cooperation, including cooperation between parliaments.

He expressed confidence that the conference will contribute to the strengthening of relations between

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participating states and mark the start of an exchange of experiences and views on many important issues.

“I think that this conference and further cooperation will allow the strengthening of our relations with the European Parliament, parliaments of EU member states and the Conference of Commissions for European Issues of the EU Parliament”, Dzaferovic said.

Chairperson of the European Parliament Delegation for Southeast Europe Doris Pack said that all participating countries are more or less at various phases of accession to the EU.

“Parliaments of EU member states, or better yet the European Parliament, can help you. You need to be aware that no more countries will be accepted unless they are truly prepared to join”, Pack said.

Chairpersons of BiH Parliament’s Joint Commission for European Integration Fatima Leho said that BiH is in the final phase of meeting all requirements from the Feasibility Study.

“I believe that police reform, together with the adoption of the Public Broadcast System law and the arrests of war criminals, will allow the European Commission to open talks by the end of the year. In this case BiH will need a higher level of exchange of experiences and cooperation in the region, especially in the field of return, freedom of movement, fight against organised crime, trade, energy and transport”, Leho said.

“One thing is certain – the process of EU enlargement cannot be completed before West Balkan states are integrated into the EU”, Leho said.

Parliamentarians from BiH, Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro and Macedonia are taking part in the conference.