



April 14, 2005

Lord Paddy Ashdown  
High Representative and EU Special Representative  
OHR SARAJEVO  
Emerika Bluma 1  
71 000 Sarajevo  
Via FAX: 387-33-283-501

Dear Lord Ashdown:

I would like to convey to you again the position of the Croatian-American Association (CAA) regarding your decision on March 29, 2005 to remove Dragan Covic from office as Croat Member of the BiH Presidency. The CAA opposes this use of unchecked, authoritarian power to remove any official from office, especially when charges are based upon hearsay evidence.

On more than one occasion your Office has publicly stated its position on executive officials being indicted: "Persons holding executive positions that have a crucial bearing on the trust of citizens at home, and the reputation of BiH abroad, are expected to stand down if indicted for criminal offences." For reasons unknown, your Office has not applied the same criteria to other branches of government such as the House of Peoples and Constitutional Court, or to advisors of Presidency Members.

The most recent example of your inconsistency, however, comes with the indictment against BiH's Minister for Transportation and Communication. Despite holding high executive office in the Council of Ministers, to the best of my knowledge there has been no call from either your office or the diplomatic corps for his resignation. By no means does our organization call for his removal; rather, we wish to highlight the inconsistency and lack of transparency your Office exercises.

Regarding your Office's use of the so-called Bonn powers, the Venice Commission report from March 2005 clearly stated: "As an urgent step the Commission recommends setting up an independent panel of legal experts which would have to give its consent to any such decision of the High Representative." To my knowledge, OHR has yet to publicly respond to the report in general, let alone to this suggestion. Instead, you have been inconsistent in "protecting" joint institutions and continue to violate what we in the United States cherish as due process rights.

We strongly urge you to engage the proper bodies in discussions to immediately end all use of the so-called Bonn powers and begin immediate transfer of all competences and

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authority to the BiH Government. Let me assure you that the Croatian American Association will be speaking about these concerns with our elected representative during our annual campaign on Capitol Hill later this month.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "George Rudman".

George Rudman  
President  
Croatian American Association

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