

# Foreign Press Office - Mostar

## MEDIA REPORTS

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina  
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### **Ashdown's successor only with BiH approval**

Debate in Parliament

Slobodna Dalmacija  
By Zlatko Tulic

July 19, 2005

Paddy Ashdown, the international community's High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, is selling his vacation home on Lake Jablanica and preparing for his departure. A new high representative will arrive in a few months. Of what, perhaps only the European Union or... One of the key questions is, with what authorities and responsibilities.

There has been talk for some time now on the need for local officials to take responsibility for BiH's future. However, their work the past few years does not offer any hope they truly can and want to do this. Really, their work, especially the executive branch, is "submitting drafts of reformist laws" from the laboratory of international representatives into the parliamentary process. Pressure and threats then lead to reforms. No one has their own vision, creativity or proposals; in case they do, then the parties cannot come to an agreement on them.

At the initiative of the HDZ-Christian-Democrats in the state Parliament, a public debate was held on the proposed Resolution on the relation of BiH institutions towards the mandate and appointment of the international community's new high representative in BiH. The Committee for Foreign Affairs, headed by Martin Raguz, verified the conclusions that will be before the House of Representatives today.

The conclusions state that participants in the public debate arrived at complete agreement regarding the beginning of BiH institutions becoming an equal partner in both "nomination consultations and the very nature of the high representative's mandate." A majority of the participants believes the institution of high representative is still necessary, but with necessarily redefined authorities.

The Committee points out the incompatibility of the high representative's existing authorities and the "democratic principles of European states and BiH sovereignty." Furthermore, the Committee states the Office of the High Representative (OHR) has gone beyond its authority by violating "fundamental human rights and freedoms and in that sense OHR needs to take responsibility." There is also consensus that the "so-called Bonn powers must be reduced."

The Committee also agreed that the future role of the high representative in BiH should transform into the role of a special representative of the European Union without the Bonn powers, as well as a "key partner of BiH on its Euro-Atlantic path." The Committee confirmed it is necessary to define an exit strategy for the OHR with a clearly defined timeline. (Excerpt)

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### **Hague defense between \$50,000 and \$1 million**

Six Croats to pay their own defense

Vecernji list  
By Zoran Kresic

July 19, 2005

The six former Croat officials of Herzeg-Bosna indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague criminal tribunal, Jadranko Prlic, Bruno Stojic, Valentin Coric, Berislav Pusic, Slobodan Praljak and Milivoj Petkovic will have to pay more than \$250,000 for their defense, which puts the prosecution and defense in an unequal position.

The Governments of Croatia and BiH are not paying a single kuna for their defense. BiH officials have refused to determine their status after their release from the tribunal's custody. At the request of the six accused Herzeg-Bosna officials, who are awaiting the start of their trial in December, The Hague judicial council has approved certain "discount" so they do not pay the whole defense fee.

The ICTY will symbolically assist in financing the defendants' costs. Berislav Pusic will have to pay the least out of pocket. He has fired his previous attorney Marin Skobic and hired Sarajevo attorney Fahrudin Ibrisimovic, who is also representing Hague defendant Amir Kubura. Kubura, who commanded the 7<sup>th</sup> Muslim Brigade, is accused of crimes against Croats in Central Bosnia. Pusic's defense will cost him \$50,000.

Much worse off is former HVO Chief of Staff Milivoj Petkovic whose defense will cost \$250,000.

According to the Hague Tribunal's decision, General Slobodan Praljak will have to pay for his whole defense by himself.

A similar decision is expected for Jadranko Prlic, Valentin Coric and Bruno Stojic. It is considered they have the funds to finance themselves, although the costs are estimated at \$1 million.

In contrast to the defense, the Hague prosecution is in a much better position since their operations are completely financed from the ICTY budget under the United Nations.

The trial is set to begin December 1 and expected to last at least three years.

### **Two indicted offered plea bargain**

On several occasions, the Hague prosecution has offered two of the six accused plea bargains. It is unknown whether a possible plea bargain would also mean testifying against the others.

(Excerpt)

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### **Roundtable: “NATO – advantages and challenges”**

FENA

July 19, 2005

Bosnia and Herzegovina is on the turning point in its history because it has engaged in the process of making decisions for its future in Euro-Atlantic integration, the U.S. Ambassador to BiH, Douglas McElhaney, said on Tuesday at the roundtable “NATO – advantages and challenges”.

The roundtable took place at the Bosniak Institute, which was also the organizer. Military analyst of daily “Oslobodjenje” Antonio Prlenda was the moderator, while the opening remarks were made by ambassadors of four NATO participating states.

Ambassador McElhaney, who worked as a diplomat in NATO for a substantial period of time, said that in a world that faces global challenges such as terrorism, we cannot expect to face them by ourselves, and that “we need each other”.

The Alliance has kept its headquarters in BiH and is determined to support BiH on the road to NATO, if this country is willing to do its part of the work, said McElhaney.

McElhaney regards the signing of the draft laws on defense reform yesterday as the key step forward and urged the institutions to pass the laws as soon as possible, “so that BiH could send a signal to the European Union and NATO that it is serious about joining Euro-Atlantic integration”.

He stressed that insecurity in the country is the greatest obstacle to greater investments, but that membership in PfP and NATO would make the country more attractive for investment. He added that every new participating state recorded a substantial rise in foreign investments.

Turkish Ambassador to BiH Sina Malek Baydour spoke about the benefits her country achieved through NATO membership, stressing that Turkey had joined the free world, satisfied its security requirements and developed its economy within the democratic system.

Turkey deems that BiH and SCG should be admitted into the Partnership for Peace once they have fulfilled the necessary conditions and supports the proposal of the Defense Reform Commission, said Ambassador Baydour.

Germany benefited from NATO membership more than any other participating state, said the German Ambassador to BiH Arne Freiherr von Kittlitz.

Stressing that he can see parallels between BiH and Germany in regard to NATO, the German Ambassador said that NATO offers security, prestige, and membership in the club in which everybody has an equal status.

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Canada was one of the first signatories of the Washington Agreement, by which NATO was founded, and it never debated whether it belongs in the Alliance or not, said the Canadian Ambassador to BiH, Shelley Whiting.

NATO is one of the most important multilateral agreements, and although there is no soviet treat anymore, there are some new complicated threats that call for a coordinated approach, stressed Whiting.

### **Ashdown addresses BiH House of Representatives**

FENA

July 19, 2005

In his address to the BiH House of Representatives on Tuesday, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, said that the basic aims BiH is facing refer to the admission into the Partnership for Peace and launching negotiations for signing a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU.

Given the results we have achieved, I think that BiH is currently on a relatively small distance from these aims and achieving them.

“Only Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic now stand in the way of BiH’s admission into the Partnership for Peace. This is the first phase BiH must cross to join the world’s strongest military alliance. Only these two men are holding BiH away from this goal”, said the High Representative.

Regarding the EU, Ashdown said that there are two key matters that have not been resolved – passage of the law on PBS in line with the European Commission's principles and police reform in line with the European Commission's principles.

Our primary goal, stressed Ashdown, is to remove these two remaining obstacles and to do so over the next several weeks.

“Commissioner Rehn told Adnan Terzic and myself last month in Brussels that despite certain setbacks, there is still hope that BiH could achieve these goals before the fall, i.e. before the 10th anniversary of the Dayton Accords”, said Ashdown.

I am convinced, he added, that this can be achieved. I am still convinced that, depending on the Constitutional Court’s decision, which I expect this week, the law on PBS will be issued on time and that it will be in line with the principles of the European Commission. I am still optimistic, despite the recent setbacks, that the matter of police reform can also be resolved timely.

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“We only have a few weeks to complete these tasks. Police restructuring must be arranged by mid September if this country wishes to gain the green light for opening negotiations on Stabilization and Association”, said Ashdown and added that if BiH does not manage to do this within the planned period, “we shall enter the election process and than it will be far more difficult to issue difficult political decisions”.

**The High Representative informed the representatives that once the negotiations on Stabilization and Association begin, the PIC should launch the process of withdrawing the OHR, which will most probably be succeeded by an EU-led mission, i.e. the Special Representative of the EU, but without the Bonn powers.**

He declared that the transition of OHR into the EU Special Representative mission could happen in the next 15 months.

### **Izetbegovic refused peace plan**

Jose Cutileiro, author of international community’s first plan for BiH

NINA

July 19, 2005

Had Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats accepted the 1992 peace, there would not have been a war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and reconciliation would be much easier, claims, Jose Cutiliero, author of the international community’s first plan for BiH.

In a conversation with Belgrade daily Blic, he confirmed that Alija Izetbegovic at first accepted the plan only to satisfy Europe, and then refused it in order to satisfy the Americans, who had encouraged him.

“He [Izetbegovic] believed Washington would support his idea of a unitary Bosnia. Dayton proved him wrong,” stated the Portuguese diplomat, pointing out that the European Union was opposed to a unitary Bosnia.

Cutileiro’s plan called for each constituent people in BiH – Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats – to have their own federal unit of autonomous unit, using the census as a principle.