

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

NEWS BULLETIN

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Serbs in Drvar, Grahovo and Glamoc disgruntled

Vecernji list
By Miso Relota

June 20, 2005

Representatives of Serb returnee associations in the municipalities of Drvar, Glamoc and Grahovo have in recent days intensified their idea from last year to territorially and administratively remove themselves from the Herzeg-Bosna Canton. They are seeking to form a separate district comprised of the three mentioned municipalities, form a new canton or add the three municipalities to Republika Srpska. (Excerpt)

Association BiH 2005 presents Platform for a new constitution

Slobodna Dalmacija
By B. Kristo

June 21, 2005

There would be three territorial and organizational levels: state, region and municipality. Only the state level would have legislative powers. For now, five regions are being considered: Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Zenica, Tuzla and Mostar

SARAJEVO – Members of the working groups Association BiH 2005 Vehid Sehic, Slavo Kukic and Sahbaz Dzihanovic presented their Platform for a new BiH constitution in Sarajevo on Monday.

“This platform, a draft for a new constitution, gives the state the name Republic of BiH. The state would be organized as an independent, sovereign, democratic state of equal citizens and protection of

all vital citizen interests, and would contain all that is stipulated by human rights and European standards documents,” stated Sehic during the press conference.

As Dzihanovic presented, the republic would be organized into three branches of government: legislative, executive and judicial. There would be three territorial and organizational levels: state, region and municipality. Only the state would have legislative powers.

At the head of the state is the president elected by Parliament. Parliament is bicameral, with 123 members in the House of Representatives and 58 delegates in the House of Peoples (17 representatives from each constituent people and 7 from national minorities and others).

For now, there are five regions being considered: Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Zenica, Tuzla and Mostar. This number is not final. (Excerpt)

200 million KM for reconstruction

Dnevni list
By Sanja Bjelica

June 22, 2005

The state Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees will provide 62 million KM this and next year. The rest of the funds for reconstruction and sustainable return are to be provided by municipal and cantonal budgets.

MOSTAR – The state Committee for Refugees and Displaced Persons met in Mostar yesterday. The Committee’s president Ivica Marinovic stated that around 200 million KM will be invested in reconstruction of destroyed housing units.

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The state Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees will provide 62 million KM this and next year through projects SUTRA 1 [TOMORROW 1] and SUTRA 2 [TOMORROW 2], projects of 30 municipalities, OPEC Fund project, and the Development Bank of the Council of Europe. The rest of the funds for reconstruction and sustainable return should be provided by municipal and cantonal budgets.

Mostar at the center of Committee's focus

Asked whether certain areas of our country will receive priority for future reconstruction, Marinovic answered that the committee identifies its priorities according to strict criteria, in order to avoid past mistakes and unequal and non-transparent distribution of funds.

“The state committee has elaborated criteria for selection of priority areas. These criteria take into account two facts: level of destruction and level of interest for return. According to this information, we then rank the municipalities. Those at the top become our priority. We also have a methodology for selecting end users in an attempt to assure that funds are utilized transparently and efficiently,” explained Deputy Minister for Human Rights and Refugees Marinovic.

He concluded that Mostar would continue to be at the center of the committee's focus.

“During the last four years we have successfully renovated 1164 housing units. Inasmuch as we wish to make Mostar a model for organizing the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is logical that it will receive the full attention of the state Committee for Refugees and Displaced Persons,” emphasized Marinovic. (Excerpt)

“SDA is a radical party with connection to Al-Qa'ida”

Vecernji list and index.hr

June 23, 2005

During a recent session in Congress, Republican Congressman Trent Franks (AZ) harshly criticized the State Department for granting agrément BiH Ambassador to the U.S. Bisera Turkovic, arguing that she is one of the founders of the “radical Islamist Party for Democratic Action [Stranka demokratske akcije – SDA]” and that she played a significant role in bringing radical Islamists to BiH during the war.

SDA and Al-Qa'ida

News agencies report that, upon hearing that the State Department granted an agrément, Franks stated “since its establishment SDA has maintained strong connections with Al-Qa'ida and numerous other terrorist organizations, even with intelligence services in Iran.”

“President Bush has stated several times that in the war on terror you are either with us or against us. I am now starting to ask whether the State Department is with us,” said the Republican Congressman from Arizona. Franks also mentioned that Alija Izetbegovic politically promoted Turkovic during the founding of SDA.

“Izetbegovic was respected by Ayatollah Khomeini. When he became president, Izetbegovic once again released his Islamic Declaration from 1970 and openly circulated his views that there cannot be peace and coexistence between Islam and non-Islamic faiths,” declared Franks. He pointed out that “immediately after the outbreak of war in BiH in 1992, Turkovic became BiH ambassador in

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Zagreb,” which SDA constantly utilized, along with other instruments, in order to “secure passports, visas, humanitarian status and logistical support for radical Islamist mujahideens coming to BiH.”

Anwar Shaban

“That is how Anwar Shaban, Al-Qa-ida’s spiritual leader in BiH, Abu al Madani, who died fighting in Sarajevo, and even Osama bin Laden entered into BiH,” stated Franks.

During Turkovic’s mandate in Zagreb, SDA organized massive arms transports from Iran, thereby violating the U.S. embargo.

“Is this fact not enough to prevent awarding diplomatic status to someone who played such a key role,” asks Franks.

Franks continued that awarding letters of credence to Turkovic is damaging “to the President, shameful for the U.S. and violates human freedoms.”

“The people of this country deserve better from a State Department that helps the enemy and then lies in order to cover its tracks,” concluded Congressman Franks.

PIC recommends that BiH's High Representative be replaced by EU envoy

SRNA

June 24, 2005

Sarajevo - The political directors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina have decided to recommend that the post of the international community's High Representative in BiH be abolished and replaced with the post of a special EU

representative as well as that the process of the transfer of authorities to the local government continue.

According to a statement by High Representative Paddy Ashdown which comes after a two-day session of the political directors of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, the mandate transfer will have to be approved by the EU. He added that it was a process which depended on the capability of the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to assume their responsibilities and move decisively towards Europe.

The main condition of the transfer of the mandate and authorities of the international community's High Representative is that BiH starts decisively the process of stabilization and EU accession and, according to Ashdown, the Peace Implementation Council would recommend this only when BiH gains candidate status in negotiations on the Stabilization and Association Agreement. (Excerpt)