OHR Bulletin 51 – June 19, 1997

No. 51, issued June 19, 1997

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Change of High Representative

Mr. Carlos Westendorp arrived in Sarajevo on 18 June to take over from Mr. Carl Bildt as High Representative of the International Community in BiH. Together with Mr. Bildt, Mr. Westendorp held talks with members of the joint BiH Presidency, Chairman Alija Izetbegovic and Presidency Members Kresimir Zubak and Momcilo Krajisnik. Mr. Westendorp also met with members of the BiH Council of Ministers, as well as Federation President Soljic and Prime Minister of the Federation Government Bicakcic before travelling to Banja Luka where he met with RS President Plavsic.

Addressing the press with Mr. Westendorp in a joint conference on 19 June Mr. Bildt said that the changeover would be seamless, representing a *"change of personalities, while the policy would remain the same"*. This policy would be based on the document adopted at the international conference on Bosnia held in early June in Sintra. The task which lay ahead was one which could not be determined by deadlines but by the state of mind of the peoples of BiH, he said. *"When they don't fear the future, that the future will be a repetition of the past, then peace is going to be secured. When all of them see the common state of Bosnia as their state, their protector and their guarantee and their representative, then peace will be set."* It was important not only to stay the course in BiH but to be able to develop policy and principles for the region as a whole, said Mr. Bildt.

Mr. Westendorp acknowledged the challenges his new role would present, and expressed appreciation to Mr. Bildt

for the achievements which had been made so far. *"It will be very difficult to do better than he [Mr. Bildt] has done my task will be very, very difficult, but is easier because of his actions"*. Mr. Westendorp said he had accepted his new role for the same reasons which the International Community was present in BiH – to make an irreversible peace for the country and to create a future of integration, prosperity and democracy. *"We cannot shy away from taking on this job – there is no alternative to Dayton [Peace Agreement]"*, he said, emphasising the need to *"look to the future and not into the past"*. Answering a question on what he believed were the most difficult challenges facing him in his new role, Mr. Westendorp said the priority was to create a durable situation in which war would not return. In order to achieve this there were many important challenges: economic reconstruction; the municipal elections; refugee return; freedom of movement; freedom of the press; the functioning of the joint institutions; war criminals – they all had equal importance in accomplishing the final goal.

Mr. Bildt stressed the importance of international cooperation – *"We can have an impact on this situation on one condition – that we work together"* he said, stressing that progress made in the past 17 months had been a result of this kind of cooperation. *"Peacemaking is not about quick fixes, one liners and photo opportunities, it is a result of the persistence and patience of those working on the ground. Everything else is going to fail"*.

Speaking about the scheduled Donors Conference, Mr. Westendorp expressed his hope that it would be held as planned. He added that almost all conditions had been met, except agreement on customs tariffs. Mr. Bildt said that if the conditions were met the conference would go ahead, if they were not, it could not, as had been agreed in Sintra. He added that there had been severe pressure from the US Government to postpone the Conference. But to postpone while there was still a chance that conditions could be met by using pressure, was to make virtually certain that those conditions would not be met, said Mr. Bildt. This, he added, was *"a rather good example for working together with a coordinated approach to achieve desired results"*.

Responding to a suggestion that the US was perhaps taking over more of the efforts in the implementation of the Peace Agreement, Mr. Bildt said that this was not so, indeed he welcomed the renewed vigour in US engagement in Bosnia. Nevertheless, the dominance of the US media tended to tilt the balance of reporting and offered a skewed representation of realities on the ground. Important issues for Bosnia, such as Ambassador Steiner's long-term strategy with the Coalition for Return would receive less than stories with a more immediate or more American flavour.

Responding to a question asking who the new Principal Deputy would be, Mr. Westendorp explained that the structure would be slightly different. There would be two Principal Deputies. Mr. Westendorp had asked the US to propose a candidate for one of these posts, while Germany had offered a candidate, Gert Wagner, for the other.

n In his farewell address to the people of BiH, which was broadcast on all BiH TV channels following the main evening news on 18 June, Mr. Bildt shared his thoughts on his time spent trying to lead Bosnia from war to peace over the past 18 months. Acknowledging the uncertainty which many people in Bosnia still feel, he gave three main messages – that the international community would never tolerate a new war; that the international community would never tolerate the break-up of Bosnia; and that the international community would never tolerate a Bosnia dominated by one group or one people. These things would not happen, he said. *"I have only one message to your political leaders Ö stop blaming each other, and stop blaming the international community, for what has been done. The political leaders should instead blame themselves every hour, every day they have not taken a step towards reconciliation, towards peace, towards solving all the problems of the ordinary people"*. Mr. Bildt said that though he was handing over to his successor Carlos Westendorp, he would never really leave Bosnia. He had come to love the country and would always do whatever he could to help. Concluding, Mr. Bildt focused on the children. *"They suffered more than anyone during the war. And if there is one duty that you all – irrespective of nationality, of religious belief or political persuasion – have – it is to make certain that what happened to them yesterday will never ever happen to them or their children or to their grandchildren in the future"*.

United Nations Security Council

The UN Security Council (SC) adopted on 12 June a resolution (SC Resolution 1112) agreeing to the designation of Carlos Westendorp as High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on BiH.

Through its unanimous adoption of the resolution the SC reaffirmed the importance it attached to the High

Representative's role in monitoring implementation of the General Framework Agreement and its annexes, as well as giving guidance to and coordinating the activities of the civilian organisations and agencies involved in assisting the Parties to implement the Agreement. The Council reaffirmed that the High Representative was the final authority in theatre regarding the interpretation of Annex 10 on civilian implementation of the Peace Agreement. It also reaffirmed that in case of dispute he may give his interpretation and make recommendations, including to the authorities of BiH or its Entities, and make them known publicly. In addition the Council welcomed the conclusions of the Ministerial Meeting of the Steering Board of the Peace implementation Council held in Sintra on 30 May and expressed its warmest appreciation to Carl Bildt for his work as High Representative.

Presidency

The Presidency of BiH held its 19th session in the National Museum in Sarajevo on 11 June. In the absence of the Chair of BiH Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, the session was chaired by Kresimir Zubak. The absent Chair of the Presidency was represented by the Co-Chair of the Council of Ministers of BiH, Haris Silajdzic.

The Presidency analysed the political declaration of Sintra and established its concrete obligations and dynamic of their realisation. In that respect:

1. Session of the Standing Committee for Military Issues was scheduled for 16 June.
2. A Working Group for preparation of the proposal of BiH symbols was formed.
3. It was decided that at the next session of the Presidency organisation and distribution of diplomatic and consular offices would be discussed.
4. Ministry of Foreign Affairs was instructed to prepare a proposal of the document.

The Presidency established basic principles for participation at the next Donors Conference. The delegation was appointed for negotiations with the EBRD on a new loan for BiH for urgent reconstruction of electric power system in the amount of US$ 15 million. A Working Group for sports issues comprising: Jusuf Pusina, Vlado Miskovic and Rajko Popovic. Accreditations of new Ambassadors of China, Pakistan, Hungary and Greece to BiH were approved.

Council of Ministers

The Council of Ministers (CoM) held a session in Lukavica on 5 June at which Ministers failed to agree on priorities within their scope of work. The session focused mainly on the border crossings with Croatia. After the meeting, Co-chair Boro Bosic stated that the BiH Foreign Ministry was instructed to contact the relevant authorities in Croatia in order to finalise the agreement on border crossings. The CoM tasked Foreign Minister Jadranko Prlic to resolve the visa question with Croatia. The second part of the session was dedicated to preparations for the London Club meeting in advance of the 30 June deadline. It was agreed that a platform for this meeting should be prepared for review at the next session 12 June. At this session, a CoM delegation will be selected to participate in the talks on BiH external debt to be held in London from 17-20 June.

Following a postponement of the scheduled 10 June CoM session due to the failure of the Serb representatives to show, the CoM met again on 12 June.

In what turned out to be a constructive session the CoM discussed the status of the World Bank programmes and debt servicing, and the draft agreement with the IMF. Decisions were taken on the delegations for the London Club negotiations and the Donor's Conference. A pre-meeting of Principal Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Michael Steiner and the Chairs paved the way for a smooth adoption of the agenda, and the presence of World Bank and IMF focused attention on their respective programmes. The message regarding the QSP and Donors Conference was reiterated strongly by Ambassador Steiner, who warned that the readiness of the international community to contribute resources would be seriously affected if parties failed to live up to their commitments.

BiH Federation

On 6 June, President Izetbegovic, President Zubak, President Soljic and Prime Minister Bicakcic met in Sarajevo with the leadership of the Herzegovina Neretva Canton and of the City of Mostar to discuss the establishment of the integrated Canton police as well as the amendments to the Constitution of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton regarding Mostar. The meeting was chaired by the Principal Deputy High Representative, Ambassador Michael Steiner. Foreign Minister Granic of the Republic of Croatia also attended. The Commander of SFOR, the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the UN, the Deputy Police Commissioner and the Head of OHR South also participated.

The participants took the following decisions:

1. Effective as of 16 June, the establishment of the integrated cantonal police of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton would start in accordance with written instructions of UN IPTF and be completed by 5 July. UN IPTF would certify the fulfillment.
2. As soon as UN IPTF certifies that the new integrated cantonal police of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton has been fully established, OHR, UN IPTF, and SFOR would regard this police force in its new uniforms as the only legal force to exercise police and law enforcement functions throughout the whole Hercegovina-Neretva Canton. After this UN IPTF certification, any other police force including police force in old uniform would be regarded as illegal.
3. The headquarters of the cantonal police of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton would be temporarily in the former Unified Police Force (UPFM) building in the Central Zone of Mostar. The Minister of Interior of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton, his Deputy, Chief of the uniformed police, and appropriate headquarters staff would move their offices to this building.

   Until the Assembly of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton adopts the cantonal symbols, the following arrangements concerning the uniform and the cap would be applied:

   The only identifying insignia would be the IPTF Identification Card to be displayed on the left breast pocket of the outer garment and a metal plate bearing the words: “Federation of BiH” (first line), “Herzegovina-Neretva Canton” (second line) and “Police” (third line) on the right breast pocket.

4. By 14 June, the Constitution of the Sarajevo Canton and the Constitution of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton would be amended in parallel by the Assemblies of the two Cantons as agreed. The text for the amendments of the Constitution of the Sarajevo Canton is as agreed in the Sarajevo Agreement of 27 March.

The 5th session of the House of Representatives (HoR) of the Federation Parliament was held on 11 June. HDZ representatives failed to appear for this session. Following a brief discussion on the financing of political parties the Federation Budget for 1997 was adopted, as was the Bill on Privatisation, Restitution and Sale of Apartments. The session resumed on 12 June, once again in the absence of HDZ delegates. The Law on Privatisation of Enterprises was adopted after some discussion on the rules of Procedures for adopting amendments. Although scheduled, the second day of the HoR session did not include discussions on the current situation in the Federation, the issue of ethnic cleansing and citizen’s safety, because deputies asserted these problems could not be reviewed without representatives of the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) and a report by senior Federation officials.

On 17 June, a continuation of the 4th session of the Federation House of Peoples (HoP) was held in Sarajevo and attended by representatives of both constituent peoples. (The 4th session started on 29 April.) The discussion once again concentrated on the sensitive issue of the Law on Split and New Municipalities, in particular the size of the principally agreed new (Croat) municipality of Usora.

After a three hour break, the Collegium decided to postpone the session for three days and set up a working group on the municipality issue consisting of four Croats and four Bosniaks. Should the working group achieve a compromise, the Law on Split and New Municipalities will be adopted at the next sitting of the session on 20 June. If the working group does not reach a compromise, the HoP will nevertheless continue its work on the agenda.

World Bank

From 14-17June, Mr. Caio Koch-Weser, Managing Director of the World Bank in charge of operations, visited BiH. His visit coincided with two Bank missions, one which reviewed the implementation of the 16 on-going projects in the Bank's portfolio and the other which looked at the future of the cooperation between the World Bank and Bosnia & Herzegovina over the next two years. Mr. Koch-Weser visited a number of project sites in Derventa, Gracanica, Gorazde and Sarajevo and later met with officials from the State and the Entities.

At a press briefing held on 17 June he presented the Bank's latest Economic Report ("Bosnia & Herzegovina, From Recovery to Sustainable Growth") expressed his satisfaction with the quality of on-going projects and of his discussions with authorities on future cooperation between the Bank and BiH. He also stated that an agreement had been reached on the settlement of BiH's arrears to the World Bank and his hope that the Donors Conference would be held soon. He urged action on the customs laws, which would pave the way for a successful conference.

Finally, Mr. Koch-Weser indicated that Mrs. Christine Wallich, Country Director for Bosnia & Herzegovina at the World Bank's headquarters had been appointed Director for Strategic Analysis and Planning and would be replaced on 1 July by Mr. Christiaan Poortman, formerly division chief for several countries of Eastern Europe. Mr. Rory O'Sullivan will continue as Director of the World Bank's Resident Mission in BiH.

OSCE

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) announced the further extension of voter registration for September's municipal elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The deadline for voter registration has been extended from June 14 to June 28. Political parties had requested the extension to allow for the approximately half of eligible voters who have not yet registered. Out-of-Country voter registration ended on 14 June, following a one week extension.

Voter registration in Brcko re-opened on 18 June and will continue for 21 days until12 July. During that period, all eligible voters who have already registered are required to reregister. This follows the discovery by OSCE staff of violations of the Rules and Regulations regarding voter registration in the Republika Srpska area of the Brcko Municipality. With the agreement of Deputy High Representative Farrand, Ambassador Frowick decided to immediately close all four Voter Registration Centres involved. The Provisional Election Commission further decided on removal of the President and the Secretary of the Local Election Commission in Brcko Grad and called for their replacement. The Presidents at each of the four voter registration centres in Brcko Grad were also removed.

Central European Initiative

A two-day ministerial conference of the Central European Initiative (CEI) member countries took place on June 6-7 in Sarajevo. CEI is Europe's biggest regional group, consisting of 16 countries, and its aim is to solve political and economic problems of the CEI member countries as well as establishing cooperation with other European organisations. The meeting focused on implementation of the Dayton and Washington agreements, reconstruction in Bosnia, the situation in the CEI region, new European integration processes and the situation in Albania. A resultant final document was adopted which underlines the support of the CEI-member countries for the implementation of the Dayton accords and expresses readiness for further assistance in the reconstruction of BiH. The participants agreed on the need for further economic and political cooperation and supported the expansion of the European Union and NATO on the European continent.

Looking Ahead

23 June:

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana visits BiH

26 June:

NATO Ambassadors meet in Brussels to discuss the Stabilisation Force

See our Chronology for a full list of activities

The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

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