

Transcript of the Press Conference held in Paris

Carl Bildt: Very briefly really from my side, reinforcing some of the points raised by the Minister. This has been an important and successful meeting at the ministerial level of the Steering Board. Eleven months ago in Paris after Dayton, the Peace Agreement was signed. We've spent eleven months establishing the basis for the peace process. With all of the problems it has been reasonably successful, but it has also underlined all of the tasks that are yet to be solved. The peace process is not yet self-sustaining, and the goal of the consolidation period during the next two years till the September 1998 elections will be to create conditions for a peace process that is truly self-sustaining. We believe that is achievable. It requires this double commitment, that we have sought and achieved in Paris here today: the commitment by the elected authorities of Bosnia-Herzegovina to go forward with implementation of all aspects of the Peace Agreement, and the commitment by the international community to continue to help and assist. And you know that the international community is now entering a series of international meetings in that respect, be that NATO, OSCE, London Conference, or NATO, they are all part of this. We have agreed on the guiding principles of the Civilian Consolidation Plan. Thirteen different points. None of them particularly easy. We spent, I think, nine hours yesterday negotiating this particular text in all of its detail. You will see we have thirteen different tasks that we should accomplish during this two year period. In order to do that, it reinforces the role of the High Representative or the Office of the High Representative – that is not a person, it's a function... and also of course it emphasises the responsibility of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina. And if there is one particular message that was given very clear to the members of the presidency, it was the necessity of moving forward fast, urgently, with the setting up of the Council of Ministers, so that that can become operational and that that can clear the way for a Donors' Conference, a new one that we hope to be able to organise with the World Bank and the European Commission at the beginning of next year.

Mesdames, Messieurs, si vous souhaitez poser des questions...

Q: (Agence Reuter) Vous avez tous les deux aujourd'hui et dans ces derniers jours souligné la nécessité de maintenir une force, une présence militaire internationale en Bosnie pour les deux années às; venir, pour les deux années de la période de stabilisation. Hors, nous avons entendu Mr. Kinkel ce matin dire: "une année, et pas un jour de plus", et divers autres alliés apparemment aussi veulent se limiter às; un an. Quel est l'enjeu, às; votre avis, et quel est le risque si on ne s'engage que pour un an?

Hervé de Charette: Alors, d'abord, comme vous le savez, aujourd'hui nous n'avons pas traité de la question du dispositif militaire, appelé às; faire suite às; l'IFOR. Je crois qu'il est d'hors et déjàs; assez clair, que de la part des pays présents sur le terrain, la part des pays présents sur le terrain, il y a un mouvement assez large. D'accord, pour poursuivre dans des conditions, et selon les effectifs et selon des rès;gles qui restent às; déterminer et qui font l'object às; l'heure actuelle de consultation, entre nous. Ce sera bien entendu às; l'Alliance Atlantique d'en débattre. Que d'ici làs;, chacun donne son point de vue, ne me surprend pas.

Q (NBC News): This is a question for Mr Bildt. What needs to be done as of now to fully implement the Dayton Accords?

Carl Bildt: Do you want us to spend the entire afternoon here? There are a number of things. I mean, this has been the most bitter and brutal war in the post-war history of Europe. It was ended less than one year ago. It's a massive task ahead to reconstruct, to a certain extent to build from the ground up, civil society, to complete the arms control posts where there are difficulties, to bring a million refugees and displaced persons back to their homes, to achieve justice within the entire procedures with the War Crimes Tribunal, that is going to go on for quite a number of years, to build the common institutions of the country, based on true power sharing. That is what was not possible prior to the outbreak of the war and was a major cause for the outbreak of the war, and of course the war was fought over power. And power-sharing has to be achieved. So one year is a starting point. And the starting period has been reasonably good. There are problems, but there are also solutions, we are moving ahead, but it will take years to come, to a certain extent generations, to heal the wounds of the war.

Q: And do we think the NATO forces are going to be out by Christmas?

Carl Bildt: By?

Q:Christmas, this year.

Carl Bildt:No, I don't think anyone has said that. For the IFOR mandate, the present IFOR mandate, it is some time around that time. But even if the decision was taken to take them out, you know that for logistical reasons and other reasons, that is going to take some time. It says now in the paper, which is Civilian Aspects of Implementation, it says that: "... recognising the fundamental importance of a secure environment to the task of civilian implementation, the participants welcome the ongoing study by NATO members in co-operation with other states participating in IFOR, of options dealing with the evolving situation." We stress the fundamental importance for everything we do on the civilian side of a secure environment. Then I would agree with Mr Kinkel, in the sense that the military force should not be there for one day longer than it is needed. But I would not put my money, if I had it, on giving a very specific date, when it is possible to say that they are no longer needed, because there are so many things at stake here and it could still go very wrong; and we have invested so much and the dangers associated with things breaking down are so great, that we should stay not a day longer than needed. But I would hesitate to name today exactly when that day is. It is not next week, that's for certain.

Q:Question for the minister, please. Let's talk about the responsibilities for the High Representative, and I wonder what new powers do you plan to give him during the next two years? And when Mr Bildt was appointed one year ago, he said he took the job for one year, and I wonder what plans you have for his replacement, when it will happen, and with whom?

Hervé de Charette:Bon, je vais répondre às; une partie de la question et je passerai às; Monsieur Carl Bildt le soin de répondre às; la deuxiès;me partie. D'abord je voudrais exprimer devant vous tous la reconnaissance de la communauté internationale qui a été exprimée de façon forte ce matin par les différentes délégations às; l'égard de Carl Bildt personnellement. Pour l'engagement qui a été le sien dans une période extrès;mement difficile, pour la détermination et l'efficacité dont il a fait preuve. Alors que dans la situation initiale il était clair que la tâche du Haut Représentant serait extrès;mement difficile, il a réussi às; imposer la fonction au point qu'aujourd'hui nous sommes convenus d'en renforcer le rôle et la mission. Et cet hommage que j'exprime publiquement devant vous, c'est celui que j'ai entendu de la part de mes collès;gues au cours de la réunion que j'ai présidé avec lui às; l'instant. Ensuite, vous avez posé des question sur le contenu du renforcement de ce pouvoir; il est mieux às; mès;me que moi de pouvoir le faire et vous avez lui posé une question personnelle às; laquelle je ne peux naturellement pas répondre.

(Translation):

Carl Bildt:Well, very briefly. Whatever has been achieved, and much more remains to be done, has been possible only due to the fact that I had at my disposal an extremely competent staff supplied by a large number of countries, and I have been very actively supported by all of the governments of the Steering Board. I would like to express my thanks to everyone, not least to the Government of France for that. As to the second aspect of the question, I can only say in all honesty that it has not been addressed these few days.

Other questions?

Q:I'm a journalist from a Norwegian newspaper. It's a question for Mr Bildt because apparently there is a mistake in the Dayton Agreement where one of the articles contains a reference about the Presidency to the wrong article. This mistake was done during the finalisation of the Agreement, and it is a technical mistake and there is work going on in order to correct this mistake, and what happened is that the Presidency is given much more power than the parties actually agreed on in the Dayton Agreement. Can you elaborate a little on this process, what is going on with this, now?

Carl Bildt:Well, I think what you refer to is essentially a typing mistake. You often encounter those in texts like this. Those are corrected afterwards, and that has no significant impact on the process that we are now in.

Q:So you are saying that the text has changed already?

Carl Bildt: I don't know the status of that, that is a technical procedure on how you do that and notify.

Q:(Suisse Newspaper) Monsieur le Ministre Charette, je voudrais demander, quelles sont les possibilités pour obliger la présidence de Bosnie collégiale de former un gouvernement jusqu'au quatre décembre, la prochaine session. Quels sont les moyens, les procédés et les possibilités?

Hervé de Charette: Et bien, nous avons fait expressément figurer dans le texte qui vous a été récemment distribué, que parmi les engagements pris par la présidence collégiale figure la mise en place de l'ensemble des institutions de la Bosnie-Herzégovine, parmi lesquels, et d'abord, le conseil des Ministres. Mais je le répète, ces engagements sont liés de façon conditionnelle à l'exécution de notre part, les décisions que nous avons prises, cela vaut naturellement pour le conseil des Ministres.

Q: (Albanian journalist, from Kosovo): Une question pour Monsieur Bildt. Est-ce que vous avez évoqué le problème de "criminels de guerre" Mladic et Karadzic? Est-ce que vous pensez que ... quand ils seront jugés; peut-on avancer sans que tous ces criminels de guerre soient jugés?

Carl Bildt: No. I mean, the question of those indicted for war crimes is far larger, far more significant than those two personalities. They happen to be of great importance, but they are not the only ones, and there are at the moment 78 persons, if I remember it rightly, indicted by the Tribunal. There are more to come, I would hope. It is not for me to do it, but I could think of a couple. So, this process is going to be with us for quite a number of years. And what I have said today, and have said before, is that when there are blatant cases of non-compliance with the obligation that is there to surrender people to go to the Tribunal, there must be established mechanisms to deal with that particular problem. I am quite confident that that will also happen. But, as I said, the problem is larger than that.

Thank you.