

Nezavisne novine: Interview with HR Valentin Inzko



Interviewer: Dejan Šajinović

There are some ideas that the OHR should intervene in relation to the Election Law, said Valentin Inzko, High Representative in BiH.

Still, as he emphasized in his interview to the “Nezavisne”, the international community expects local leaders to identify a solution.

“There are some efforts underway to resolve the Ljubic case. In that case, we will not even think about the Bonn powers. Domestic solutions are the most lasting ones”, stated the High Representative.

The High Representative underlined that there is a wrong perception that Valentin Inzko and the international community want the OHR to remain in the country.

“However, this is the truth: there are conditions and objectives known as the “5+2” Agenda, which clearly states what things have to be done in order to close down the OHR”, Inzko said.

Nezavisne novine: Russia did not join the Communiqué adopted by the PIC Steering Board. Why?

Valentin Inzko: When we wanted to state that the NATO members and Japan support the Action Plan for BiH’s NATO membership,

they opposed the idea of having that statement in the Communiqué. There were some other issues too, a paragraph on war criminals etc.

Nezavisne novine: In your opinion, is the NATO reference in the Communiqué justified?

Valentin Inzko: The Communiqué does not state anything outside of what BiH wants itself. In our previous discussion, we referred to the document signed by Komšić, Radmanović and Izetbegović, that is the Presidency of BiH, related to the BiH's aspirations to get the Membership Action Plan. Of course, it does not mean that BiH will become a NATO member; that is up to you. In my opinion, there is nothing disputable there.

Nezavisne novine: Is the PIC's message now weakened, considering that it has not been unanimous?

Valentin Inzko: Some would say that it is, but I believe one should view the Russian policy in global terms. I would like to remind you that Russia endorsed the UN Resolution on BiH at the UN Security Council on November 7. OK, the Russian representative criticized me but he endorsed the relevant Resolution, including its part on the EUFOR mission.

Nezavisne novine: In your opinion, what is the most important message of the PIC?

Valentin Inzko: One of the most important messages is related to the Election law in the context of the decision of the BiH Constitutional Court on the Ljubic case. The message is that we do not want to see "Mostarization" of BiH. This decision must be implemented. The decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH are final and binding. In addition, I took the opportunity to mention some other decisions of the Constitutional Court of BiH, especially those related to the constituent status of Serbs in some Cantons in the Federation of BiH. The fact that Serbs are a non-constituent people in

some Cantons is unacceptable discrimination. It is also unacceptable that we are waiting for the implementation of the decision on the equality of Serbs in some Cantons for 15 years now!

Nezavisne novine: The Communique emphasizes that political demands should not be combined with a solution for the Election Law issue. What do you mean by that?

Valentin Inzko: We wanted to say that various non-related political issues should not be linked together when such linkages are not necessary.

Nezavisne novine: What is the PIC's position: Is BiH a sovereign country or a UN protectorate? For example, the RS and Russia believe that the international community interferes in BiH way too much.

Valentin Inzko: There is influence of the international community; however it has its legal foundation. I remind you that Germany did not have full sovereignty for 45 years, and they did not mind. My own country, Austria, did not have full sovereignty for 10 years, until 1955. If things were as you implied in your question, then the local actors could have agreed in 1992, and the international community must not have intervened to end the war and establish the post-war framework... So, yes, there is influence, but it has its legal and historical foundation.

Nezavisne novine: Yet, there were some fierce reactions from the RS to the PIC statement, saying the opposite – that you interfere too much.

Valentin Inzko: I think they got it wrong. We want to interfere as little as possible. When there are problems, international mediation can sometimes help. But if you ask us, we would prefer to see you reach your own agreements, as was recently the case among politicians in Macedonia, without needing our mediation.

Nezavisne novine: When will the OHR close?

Valentin Inzko: There is a wrong opinion that Valentin Inzko and international community want the OHR to stay. However, the truth is the following: there are conditions and objectives, the so-called 5+2 agenda, and it is clearly stated what is required for OHR closure. There are the issues of state and defence property, Brčko, fiscal stability, rule of law, etc. As soon as those issues are resolved, we will close the OHR. You have to do your part of work. The end goal is for BiH to be a stable country. Single, but very decentralized, with two entities. And functional! The representative one big western country said at the PIC session that the international community could say that success was achieved when young people stop leaving the country *en masse*. That is our biggest challenge. The RS is the size of Israel, and it has barely one million inhabitants. I want the RS to be successful, prosperous, for people to want to live in it. And for the RS and FBiH to want to compete economically, in who open more companies, who built more highways, where it is nicer to study, where people like to have medical treatment, which police works better, and so on.

Nezavisne novine: Is there anything that you would point out as being better in the RS?

Valentin Inzko: Yes. For example, police is more efficient here. When your police meets with my entourage, it is always fantastic. Banja Luka is one of the cleanest cities. And it should be like that in all fields, that is positive friendly competition. One of the problems is the judiciary. It must be more efficient. Once it is, people will no longer want to leave the RS and BiH. Now even the people that have jobs and are well off are leaving because they see that there is no justice, that some institutions work poorly and not enough in the service of ordinary people.

Nezavisne novine: Who is to “blame” that the OHR has still not

been closed? You once said that it was Dodik himself, of all people, that was helping the OHR stay. How?

Valentin Inzko: I did not say that Dodik directly was helping us stay, but that his statements are helping those that are making decisions. Like for example when they see that in BiH there are tensions, be it in the RS or FBiH. For example, like we just said, whether there will be changes to the Election Law. There are already people saying that they might need the OHR to resolve that issue. And it is always the best to reach an agreement and not to have the technical use of the Bonn powers.

Nezavisne novine: So it is not ruled out that Bonn powers could be used with regard to the Election Law?

Valentin Inzko: They should be avoided. But they exist.

Nezavisne novine: But you are not ruling them out?

Valentin Inzko: It is early to talk about that. I see you want a nice headline, but it is still early. There is still one year left to elections. There are certain efforts to resolve the Ljubić case. In that case we will not even think about the Bonn powers. After all, good local solutions are the most lasting solutions.