

Interview with Mladen Ivanic in The Nezavisne novine Daily

WE WILL SUPPORT SDP CANDIDATE FOR BIH PARLIAMENT

Mladen Ivanic about current political situation in BiH by Milkica Milojevic

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Mladen Ivanic, newly nominated RS PM Designate held a press conference in Banja Luka yesterday. He was answering questions to the press with a lot of patience and leaving the most interesting ones without an answer. After that he asked media people to, until he forms the government, leave him alone.

Mr. Ivanic announced that composition of his cabinet could be known by January 12th. He hasn't even hinted a personnel solutions. When answering question on how he will provide international support for SDS which is according to "the international factors" undesirable and the most represented party in the RS NA, Ivanic said that "it would remain his secret". After the press conference, the new RS PM Designate, gave a special interview to Nezavisne novine:

NN: Just after the RS President nominated you for a position of the RS PM Elections in Serbia were held at which DOS won. Do you expect support from Belgrade?

Ivanic: I expect that stabilization in rule of DOS would create conditions for normal cooperation of the RS with Serbia and Yugoslavia, meaning better conditions in the RS as well. But gaining of the international support for the concept of government I argue for is our obligation. No one in Belgrade is in a position to, in that respect, guarantee anything to us nor should we ask for such thing and, by doing that, irritate representatives of the international institutions. Greater involvement of Belgrade in this process wouldn't be good neither for us nor FRY.

NN: You said that one of priorities of the government that you will form is fight against corruption. Does it mean that previous government left you corrupt society and institutions?

Ivanic: I'm not one of those politicians who accuse previous authorities for everything. Corruption is not linked with one government only. We had such problems during the SDS rule as well as during the rule of this government. But what the new authorities and the new government should introduce a constant fight against corruption: for it not to be a mean of political promotion but a constant work. It should be obligation and responsibility not only of government but also of the RS President and Vice President and the RS NA. It should become an obligation of all political options and there shouldn't be political revanchism.

NN: Will there, after all, be some revanchism: Yours or of your partners?

Ivanic: There are going to be attempts but certainly not revanchism.

NN: Do you guarantee it?

Ivanic: To extent to which consider something to be a revanchism - revanchism will not exist.

NN: Will SDS get several ministries in exchange for the support at the RS NA?

Ivanic: That we will see when I go public with concrete composition of the government. I got political room for maneuvers to try and for a government which would be supported by the international institutions and my personal opinion is that the government has to reflect will of people. I hope that there is room for such compromise.

NN: It is difficult to believe that, for two and half weeks only, you'll be able to form a cabinet. Have you already got

any personnel solutions that you do not want to go public with?

Ivanic: I try to have an answer ready for all possible situations. So, I have some solutions on my mind but I'll not go public with them to the last day. I think it is very possible for me to form a cabinet for two and a half weeks only.

NN: You said that there would be room for female Ministers in your cabinet. Is it true, as rumors say, that a woman could be the new Justice Minister?

Ivanic: I haven't considered concrete solutions of that kind, not yet, but I'll certainly try to get some women in to the government.

NN: Do you have some names already?

Ivanic: I have potential female candidates.

NN: A certain softening of positions regarding formation of the new government has been noticed with the most political parties. Any signs of softening within the International Community?

Ivanic: The positions here are very clear: the USA thinks that bringing of even one SDS member in to the RS government would give them enough arguments to stop sending their money into the RS. I do not think that it's realistic to expect change of their position. European countries clearly said that they were ready to accept the government of the RS which would they judge based on moves it makes rather than on personal opinions. I got the impression that they were ready to "put up" with one or two ministers from SDS.

NN: Would SDS go for on or two ministries?

Ivanic: Later we will speak about how many ministries they would get. What I have just said is the position of the IC and I will determine the position of the government. I'll try to find a compromise solution with which all parties involved would be satisfied. I believe that I would succeed in it.

NN: At the press conference you said that there are no miracle-makers in politics. However, you talk about the government which would be: multi-ethnic, in accordance with will of the people, acceptable for both the IC and SDS..Is it possible without a magic bat?

Ivanic: If we managed to gather such a government, it would be extremely significant step. It is not so impossible. The first RS NA session showed that it is possible.

NN: The top official of the International institutions and ambassadors to BiH, although invited, were not present at that session. Did this worry you?

Ivanic: Of course it did. I hope that on the occasion of forming of the government their presence will be more significant. I hope that the RS will come to a phase of normal communication with the International institutions.

NN: You said that foreign donations will start to fade away, regardless of who will be in power in the RS. What with do you plan to move the economy?

Ivanic: Economy has to be moved by opening of the market, and therefore I welcome signing of the agreement with Croatia because by this the market was opened for our products. Similar agreement could be expected with FRY, by which economic isolation of BiH would be eliminated. Boosting of economy has to be done through income of foreign investments and not through credits and donations. One of the tasks of the new government will be review of all regulations which, so far, prevented presence of any serious foreign investment. legal procedures have to be simplified. If the RS, in the next 6 months, manages to attract one serious foreign investor, it would be a good signal to others so the economy could be strengthened on healthy and realistic basis.

NN: Will the RS government have a Minister of Information and if yes what will he do?

Ivanic: Representatives of the IC insist that Ministry of Information is not needed. My opinion is that legislation in that field hasn't been finished and that the international institutions should accept the minister of information, even for limited period of time. Ministry of Information in a classic sense, which gives orders to media outlets on

how to report, should no longer exist.

NN: Will the Minister of Information be dealing with personnel issues: appointments and dismissals of directors and editors-in-chief in state media?

Ivanic: He will act as prescribed by the RS laws. The minister will deal with the state media to extent to which these media are in the domain of the ministry. There is a series of problems and some discussions would have to be opened with the representatives of the international institutions: perspectives of television and prints media, possibilities for the RS to keep its media outlets which are important for preserving of Serb national identity as well as for other citizens of the RS. The RS, as an entity, should have its own public media.

NN: Before the elections you claimed that PDP wouldn't go in coalition with Party for BiH. Now, you found yourselves, in HoR of BiH Parliamentary Assembly, in "parliament majority" with this party. On the other hand, representatives of the Party for BiH haven't categorically denied entering your RS government. Does this mean that you gave up on pre-election positions?

Ivanic: It only means that, in the HoR, we would support SDP candidate for co-presiding. I think that, in conditions given, when alternative to this is support of SDA and HDZ, it is not against what I have been saying during the election campaign. We will not support any other candidate, for a position of co-presiding, except SDP's candidate. Positions of PDP and Party for BiH are not coming closer but, if they give up on some of their extreme approaches, then cooperation would be possible. Parties from the RS have to cooperate with parties from FBiH on BiH level.

Office of the High Representative