

Interview: Hanns H. Schumacher, Senior Deputy HR “The RS Must Respect the Decisions from Bonn”

We got the best that we could expect from Bonn – If Krajisnik decides that he does not want BiH passports, it is his problem – We will accept the RS Parliament even without the SDS or certain other people – There is no word of a protectorate – Where will the centre of the joint institutions be?

Hanns Heinrich Schumacher, Senior Deputy High Representative, was home alone yesterday. Westendorp and Klein were somewhere abroad, and this German diplomat in charge for the problem of refugee return, the Federation and the joint institutions at the level of BiH, starting another working day, very early, carrying out, one by one, the scheduled items.

Talking about the effects of the Bonn conference, Schumacher stresses that it is not something to threaten with. “If you are going to wave this paper in front of somebody, and tell him that you will use it to replace him, then you weaken him objectively. Instead, you must firstly think about the person you want to replace, and then take steps. This is too valuable a document to be devalued by being waved around without caution,” said Hanns Schumacher in his exclusive interview to “Dnevni Avaz”.

THE TURNING POINT

What is your opinion about the results of the Bonn conference?

Carlos Westendorp said that this assembly might be the turning point in the peace agreement. I am a little more careful when it comes to long-term conclusions, but I think that we got the best that we could expect. It is about authority that can be interpreted very flexibly.

What can we hope for around the ‘post-Bonn’ time?

It is minimum to respect the deadlines agreed, and to regulate the resolution of certain matters, if necessary, with decisions of the High Representative, which will be temporary. The best example is tomorrow’s session of the BiH Parliament. I appeal to representatives to adopt this set of laws. But if that does not happen, I will recommend to Westendorp that he declare these laws passed by the OHR.

What if Serbs refuse to accept these laws? Krajisnik refused to sign the Bonn document.

This document does not have to be signed by anyone, not even Krajisnik. The document represents the unique standpoint of those who are standing for the success of the Peace Agreement, and I hope that the RS will respect that, and implement the agreement from Bonn, and we will oblige them to do that. Neither Krajisnik nor Plavsic had reason to leave the Bonn session, and the situation in Kosovo is not a matter for their concern.

I would not like to speculate on what is going to happen next. But, I may say that, if Krajisnik does not want the BiH passport, it is his problem. I think that the people want to have a passport of this country, and they should finally be given one. They know what they need better than their politicians.

If the Bosnian Serbs left the session without reason, is the International Community going to punish them for that?

I see no reason to punish anybody. As I said before, Kosovo has nothing to do with RS, and in that sense the act of the Serb side was ridiculous. Furthermore, the OHR is in charge of BiH. We will not talk about Kosovo. We will concentrate on the problems in BiH, and the first assignments that lie in front of us. Of course, for me, the priority is the forthcoming session of the BiH Parliament, and I have a meeting with Mrs. Plavsic. I have to discuss with her the establishment of the new Parliament of the RS by the December 23. If this does not happen before this date, we will accept the composition of this body even without the SDS or others.

Do you have any assurance that the SDS representatives will show up at tomorrow’s session of the BiH Parliament?

At this moment I do not have any signal that the SDS representatives will come. After all, the laws that will be discussed tomorrow are the only document on which we have Krajisnik's signature. All three members of the BiH Presidency, including Mr. Krajisnik, promised to use their influence in order to make representatives at the session accept these three laws. It is covered by the Bonn decree.

EXPANDED AUTHORITIES

Simon Haselock said the other day that it is about as large an authority as possible, and that the HR is going to apply it as far and as deeply as he can.

This is completely true. OHR must show that it is effective, and we can no longer excuse ourselves with this or that problem.

How close are you with this to some kind of protectorate or governorship in BiH?

I would like to stress this especially. I do not like this word, nor does anyone from the PIC. There will definitely not be a protectorate! OHR or any other office will not be an imposed governor of BiH. Our job is to find a negotiated compromise on the ground. This is our main assignment and our intention. Only if we cannot reach a compromise will we reach for secondary measures, which will be valid until some of the authorities agree and make the final decision that will be in accordance with DPA. It has nothing to do with a protectorate.

After the Parliament sitting on Monday, what are the next tasks?

That depends from case to case. It seems to me that we will be confronted immediately with the task of establishing temporary customs tariffs, which has to happen by December 20, in other words very quickly. This will be placed before Parliament at the very next sitting ...

Otherwise?

Otherwise? Well, we will decide on them. Further, by the 31 of January, the united registration plates have to be decided on. Otherwise we will decide on them. For such an action, we will have the support of SFOR and IPTF.

IT IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT COAT OF ARMS

How will you decide on a passport if there is to be no shield on it? The Bonn documents predict that there will be a shield on the new passport.

It is correct that Bonn mentions a shield on the passports, for when parliament takes the decision. But there does not have to be a shield on the passport. This is the case with my passport. If the BiH Parliament decides that the passports do not need a shield, there will not be one. If, however, the members cannot agree, then we will decide on the BiH passports, as a temporary solution. We are not a protectorate. And we are not going to impose a passport solution with a shield. That is an issue for Parliament. But, they must pass a final decision and not endlessly discuss the matter.

And the currency?

That is a very difficult question. In this area I am somewhat reserved, but the OHR will exert intensive pressure on all sides to agree about how the money should look. In order to promote the currency, they must attract people's interest and confidence. This will be very difficult if we are faced with the risk that the money can be forged, especially if we impose some temporary solution like a coupon which can be forged. This could really have a very damaging effect on the economic development of this country. Therefore, we will approach this problem very carefully.

Have you thought of problems facing the joint institutions?

Yes. We will have a problem tomorrow or Tuesday, when the Law on the CoM has to be voted on. The Bonn document calls for the CoM to decide quickly where it will be located. The OHR cannot be allowed to become an

institution which imposes all solutions. If everybody agrees that it will be located in one place and will do its job, I do not care where that would be.

DIFFERENT FROM SILAJDZIC

You do not conceal your satisfaction at the results of the Bonn conference. Dr. Silajdzic takes a slightly different position.

I do not understand this interpretation, since it is so clear in which direction the civil implementation of the Peace agreement is headed. At Bonn, the foundations of Dayton were confirmed. The International Community made it clear that there is no political alternative to Dayton, and it became very clear, although this was not stated in the document, that everybody agreed the civil implementation must begin to produce more concrete results, and that military support will be provided where it is necessary. Firm deadlines will be established, and the OHR authorised to take necessary measures to enforce the fulfilment of obligations. All this will all be for the purpose of creating a united BiH, as defined by the Dayton Agreement. I am aware that Mr. Silajdzic is referring to the problem of privatisation, and I can only appeal to him, regardless of legal opinions, to realise that our first intentions are to start privatisation at the lowest level, the level of municipalities. Meanwhile, we can sort out our differences in a constitutional way, which ultimately leads to the constitutional court of BiH.

RETURN TO SARAJEVO

The OHR, in co-operation with the US, devised a plan for the return of refugees to Sarajevo. Now we are preparing to start activities in January, which will lead to the commencement of the return process. I hope that we will be as successful here, on this issue, as in central Bosnia.