

Dnevni list: Interview with PDHR Roderick Moore

By Antun Mrkonjić

Principal Deputy High Representative Roderick Moore says that the solution for the FBiH is dialogue between political parties and with the FBiH President Živko Budimir. Moore believes that all seats in the FBiH Constitutional Court must be filled immediately. He expressed disappointment that SDA did not attend the plenary meeting, but argued clearly that processes in Mostar cannot be held hostage by a single party. Roderick Moore dismissed speculations that the International Community has a plan for partition of Central Bosnia.

Dnevni list: Enlargement Commissioner Stefan Fule recently visited BiH. He again received promises on the fulfillment of requirements. However, as soon as he left the country, there have been different interpretations and palming off in relation to progress. Do you believe in good intentions and sincere attitude of political leaders regarding the Road Map?

Roderick Moore: As usual, I always judge by results, and I suspect the rest of the international community will as well.

Let's face it – the results over the last six months have been disappointing, something acknowledged by the EU, OHR, PIC, and, most importantly, by a huge number of voters in your recent elections. The EU and NATO have laid out very achievable and straightforward paths to closer integration with them. So now, the only real question is whether elected leaders here are ready to seize the opportunities given to them to follow through on their declared commitment to achieving EU and NATO integration.

Dnevni list: The High Representative recently said that only

“a few grams” are needed to reach an agreement on the Sejdić-Finci case. Does the international community have a proposal or suggestion on this issue?

Roderick Moore: Your country has historic opportunities before it, as well as solemn obligations. Sejdic-Finci is a good example of this. As a member of the CoE, BiH has an obligation to address this. But doing so successfully would also be an enormous boost to your aspirations to move closer to the EU.

This is your country, though, and we want your leaders –not foreigners – to seize these opportunities and meet these obligations. And I must tell you that we in the international community do not consider the bar that has been set to be very high. Admittedly, it will be politically difficult for local parties to adopt amendments to the Constitution of BiH without a broad consensus of the constituent peoples and the parties represented in the Parliamentary Assembly. But few things are simple in democracies. If this country’s leaders really wish to take this country towards the EU, then Sejdic-Finci is a good test of their flexibility, creativeness, and resolve.

Dnevni list: Can you comment the OHR’s relationship with the two HDZs? Does the OHR support Živko Budimir as the Federation President, and do you believe that he works in line with the Constitution. Is it a mistake that the Čović and Lagumdžija do not want to talk with him?

Roderick Moore: I hear all the time speculation that the OHR or the int’l community supports this party or that one, or this leader or that one. That’s not how it works. We do not take sides of political parties or leaders. To be honest, we don’t care who is in government, as long as those parties participating in government are constructive players committed to the Dayton Peace Agreement. This principle applies to all of the gentlemen you mentioned in your question. Our mandate is to see that the peace agreement – and all that it entails –

is upheld.

Dnevni list: HDZ BiH President Dragan Čović asks for the international community to force Budimir to leave. Will you do that?

Roderick Moore: I frequently hear that there are only two ways for the Federation government issue to be resolved – either the High Representative withdraws his decision of March 2011 or President Budimir steps down. It is true that those are two theoretical paths that could result in a government restructuring, although both paths are fraught with possible complications.

Interestingly, I rarely hear talk of a third option, which is the one that makes the most sense to me given the current state-of-play. That would involve all parties talking to each other, and with the President, and agree a way forward. At the end of the day, though, this is a problem for the local politicians to resolve, not us. Provided that the politicians work within constitutional and legal parameters, we do not plan to intervene. I just hope that all politicians ensure that the institutions established by the constitution emerge from this crisis unharmed.

Dnevni list: The crisis in the Federation is dramatic. The Government is blocked, and there is talk about removal even of Deputy Prime Minister. What is the way out – by dissolution of the Parliament, extraordinary elections or there is another way to deal with it?

Roderick Moore: I have already provided my thoughts on this. But let me emphasize again the importance of protecting the Federation's democratic institutions. Too frequently, we have seen too much readiness among the parties to set aside the rule of law in the interest of political expediency. This is damaging to your still young institutions and must stop. Because the decisions politicians take now will set far-

reaching precedents for the future, they must think beyond the short-term. A good example of this involves the absurd situation by which the FBiH Constitutional Court has only 5 of its 9 members, a situation that threatens to paralyze a critical institution at a critical time. When I tell visitors about this situation, they can scarcely believe it. The relevant authorities should fill the Court's vacancies without further delay.

Dnevni list: Are you following developments with respect to the FBiH Development Bank? Do you have a precise position on this ugly situation which led to a nasty blockade of the Government?

Roderick Moore: The High Representative met with President Budimir and Prime Minister Niksic last week, and the message was the same in both meetings. All institutions and individuals must comply with the law and the Constitution on all issues. If there are worries that the rule of law has not been upheld, there are relevant domestic institutions that should deal with such allegations. There is no justification for using these issues to block the work of the FBiH government. We expect all concerned parties to talk to each others and agree a way forward, so as to ensure the full functioning of all FBiH institutions.

Dnevni list: Milorad Dodik has accused the OHR and the PIC of being the chief generators of the crisis in BiH? How do you respond to such allegations?

Roderick Moore: I think it would be very hard to find an international official who agrees with such an odd assertion. I would bet that the international community gets involved with a tiny fraction of decisions – certainly well, well below 1 percent – made by politicians at all levels in this country. And that's the way it should be, of course – as I said earlier, this is your country. While it might be a popular way to gain votes, it just doesn't make any sense

therefore to blame the country's troubled economic situation or its failure to effectively fight corruption, for instance, on foreigners who have been investing huge amounts of money and expertise to help local leaders address those very challenges.

Dnevni list: When it comes to Mostar, the SDA is accusing you that you act to the benefit of Croats. They have announced their withdrawal from the negotiations?

Roderick Moore: Such allegations are entirely unfounded, of course. What my goal is – and the entire PIC told me that they fully share this view – is to see if we can help the parties find a broadly-supported solution that is in line with the Constitutional Court's ruling. The fact is that I don't have positive or negative views toward any of the ideas I've seen or heard about– including those put forth by the SDA, HDZs, or others. However, I think it is highly unrealistic to think that any one of the proposals we've seen so far could attract broad support in this political environment. Therefore, the only logical solution remaining is a compromise that respects the rulings of the Court. Such a compromise will only be attainable if all parties accept that they must be flexible and that they must make concessions. This is a point emphatically supported by the PIC. I truly believe that there are reasonable compromises around which reasonable leaders can agree. It's time for reason to supplant the ongoing political trench warfare and unhelpful, inflammatory rhetoric. Fortunately, some parties have already begun demonstrating a refreshing level of flexibility. Only when others start following this lead will we have a breakthrough.

Dnevni list: Will talks continue despite SDA's boycott?

Roderick Moore: We are disappointed that the SDA alone chose not to participate in the first plenary meeting last week, which was a very useful session in my opinion. We have stressed that the doors of our political process will always

be open to the SDA, of course. After all, the SDA is a significant political factor in Mostar, and I expect it will remain one. At the end of the day, though, the political process cannot be held hostage by one party, and it must move ahead. The Decision of the Constitutional Court needs to be implemented, elections need to be held, and the business of the City must be carried out.

I don't fully understand why the SDA would abandon the opportunity to help shape the future compromise that will emerge, but I do hope they will reconsider their position. We will warmly welcome them back, if they do so.

Dnevni list: Will the OHR impose a solution if the current negotiations fail?

Roderick Moore: I can assure you that the international community is absolutely united in its desire that the Mostar issue be resolved in the end by local parties in local institutions. That is a crystal clear message that was strongly reaffirmed at the PIC last week.

Dnevni list: Can you please comment speculations that the international community allegedly has a plan to join Cantons in the Federation together, that is, to annex one part of Central Bosnia Canton to Zenica and the other part to Sarajevo?

Roderick Moore: I am not aware of any such concrete ideas, nor do I believe that any such plan exists. More generally, let me say that I am surprised by the amount of wild speculations appearing in the media regarding the initiative for a public debate on making governance in the Federation more effective. There is nothing sinister at all about this theme. On the contrary, such a debate could potentially be very constructive. After all, people all over the Federation have told me themselves that they would like to see their entity function less bureaucratically and more effectively.