High Representative's Diary for Dnevni Avaz

Thursday 11 November

I was still a little tired following yesterday's long flight back from Washington via Munich, but the Office of the High Representative never sleeps. There was a three-hour meeting with representatives from the Council of Europe. Everybody, it seems, is anxious for BiH to join the CoE, the ante-room to the club of nations known as the European Union. But the list of conditions for CoE membership is long, and it is evident that a great deal more progress must be made before BiH can join, particularly when it comes to the functioning of the State institutions. But all in all I am quite confident.

Then in the evening I met with the ambassadors of the UN Security Council countries. This was a meeting to follow up on my address to the UNSC in New York on Monday – and to prepare the UNSC for the visit of the tri-Presidency next Monday. The failure of the Presidents to agree on the draft State Border Service has been a severe disappointment: something I mentioned specifically in New York and Washington to Richard Holbrooke and Madeleine Albright at the beginning of the week.

I suggested to the ambassadors that the co-Presidents should come up with some kind of statement while in New York. Later, I telephoned the Slovene ambassador to the UN, the current President of the Security Council, and Richard Holbrooke, to underscore the need to put pressure on the Presidents to come to an agreement on the Border Service issue.

Friday 12 November

Met with the PIC Steering Board ambassadors, as I do every Friday morning. It's a diary fixture made necessary by Dayton,

but it is also a useful opportunity to review the issues of the week, and to lay the ground for the next. Again, there was much talk about the Presidents' upcoming visit to the UNSC, as well as the conference at Dayton.

In the afternoon I had yet another meeting with the new COMSFOR, Ron Adams. Co-operation between the military and civil executors of peace implementation continues to run at an encouragingly high level. Again the talk centred on the big issues, like the draft election law discussed by the State Parliamentary Assembly this week, and the refugee returns process. We also considered the tent-demonstration at Kopaci. I outlined our efforts to resolve this stand-off, and the effect that the deteriorating weather will inevitably have on it.

I spent the evening at home having dinner with an old High School friend, Willi Butollo. Willi is now a Professor of Clinical Psychology at the University of Munich. He is running a series of fascinating programs designed to assist the development in BiH of theoretical and practical expertise in psychology, especially clinical and trauma psychology, in cooperation with the Universities of Sarajevo and Banja Luka.

Saturday 13 November

I took the morning off, although I made a point of keeping abreast of the ongoing negotiations in Kopaci, through my tireless Returns and Reconstruction Task Force staff. I found time to go for a 10km run, however – down the old Pale road towards the Goat's Bridge, over it and up into the hills. I try to run at least once a week – mens sana, in corpore sano – although this is the first time I have found the time for it in a fortnight. It is an excellent place to go running: the gorges are beautiful, and up above the views over Sarajevo are spectacular. It really does help to clear the mind.

Sunday 14 November

I took a tour of the eastern RS by car with my wife. It is taking a while, but little by little I am getting to see as much of the country as I possibly can. I went via Foca, and stopped for lunch in Gorazde: I was particularly keen to put the Kopaci affair into context. In the afternoon we travelled on eastwards to Visegrad. I have always loved the Ivo Andric classic. In the event, the famous Bridge over the Drina struck me as being strangely small. I can only think that this was because it has loomed so large in my imagination for so long. In general, my wife and I returned from the eastern RS profoundly shocked by the evidence of suffering and destruction we saw there (and, indeed, everywhere in BiH). There has been much reconstruction, of course – but there is still so much that remains to be done. At least the bridge at Visegrad was unharmed by the war. Its arches are wonderful, stretching serenely across the centuries and the glorious River Drina. Perhaps it is a symbol of a better future.

Monday 15 November

The Presidents were at the UNSC in New York. Again, for me, meetings all day, many of them internal ones with staff members – I insist on an "open door" policy, meaning that I am readily accessible to anyone who wants to come and talk to me. There was also a meeting at SFOR Head Quarters, for liaison work and discussion of relevant issues.

Later, there was a " Principals' Meeting," a regular gathering of the heads of the main peace implementation agencies in BiH. The agenda was characteristically broad. The tent demonstration at Kopaci. RTRS and the apparent challenge to the principle of an independent media. Erotel. The State Border Service again. The visit of the Council of Europe rapporteurs, and the upcoming fourth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords.

Also, the UN issued its report on Srebrenica today. I salute the UN for its candid and self-critical report on one of the

greatest tragedies since 1945. Only by openly addressing the dramatic failure of the IC, and its inability to prevent this heinous crime, will those affected by the tragedy be able to come to terms with their own present and future.

The day ended with a reception at the Belgian embassy to mark "Dynasty Day," the Belgian National Day. It was salutary to reflect that BiH is not the only country in Europe with a history of division.

Tuesday 16 November

At breakfast I read in Dnevni Avaz and Oslobodenje the reports from New York concerning the Presidents' Declaration with great interest. The commitments they signed up to there are really good news, especially the agreement over the State Border Service. It seems the days of pressure and lobbying have paid off. Time will tell, however, if the Presidents' fine words will be turned into actions. I will be doing my utmost to try to ensure that they will.

Later I was interviewed by ORF, the Austrian radio station. This was supposed to be about my new book, which is about Kosovo and the Rambouillet negotiations (in which I took part), but in the end most of it was about the situation in BiH. Continued International Community support, we concluded, was essential not just for BiH but for the whole region.

I met with the UN agency heads, and wrote letters to Richard Holbrooke and Madeleine Albright – all further follow-ups to developments at the Security Council in New York.

Later, I signed a Decision cancelling the RSNA Conclusion that sought to halt evictions over the winter months. There must be no blockage of the returns process. The property legislation ensures that no-one should be thrown out on to the street. It is clear to me that the returns process must be accelerated, not halted, even if the halt is temporary. That is clearly to the advantage of the people; and it is the people that matter

the most.

Wednesday 17 November

Many internal meetings, and an important working lunch with the ambassadors from the Organisation of Islamic Countries. Much of the rest of the day was taken up with internal meetings, with briefings on the returns process and the state of the economy.

I am increasingly concerned about the procrastination and apparent resistance on both sides of the IEBL to media reform, and the programme to establish a genuine Public Broadcast Service. The politicians don’t seem to understand that a true PBS can only be of benefit to the people.

In between meetings there were frequent telephone consultations with my wife, who is busy orchestrating a team of builders at our new house. This is on the hills in the old town, with wonderful views over the city. I’m certain we will be comfortable there, which is as it should be since it is to be our main family home for some time to come, I am sure. After more than two months in my job, one thing is clear to me: there is so much work to be done here in BiH. I still feel as though I am just getting started!