

Interview: Hanns H. Schumacher, Senior Deputy HR “We will break the hardliners of the HDZ!”

Hanns Schumacher, the Second Deputy of the High Representative, joined the First Deputy, an American, Jacques Klein, in judging those BiH political structures who are undermining the Peace Agreement. This means the hard-working German diplomat abandoned the stuffy language of diplomacy and began to call things their real names. In a tough interview for Dani Schumacher analyses the effect of Dodik's Government's work in the first three months, informing the public about the amount of money with which the International Community supported the new Serb political-economic course, and with no expected barriers, he praises the two entity prime ministers as a realisation of pragmatism in an environment full of ideologists. In Schumacher's razor-sharp criticisms of the HDZ right wing, it is easy to recognise the announcement of a final settlement between the International Community and a rigid political structure that opposes the changes and uses complicated financial channels to maintain its political and economic power

Mr. Schumacher, where is there more democracy: in the Federation or in Republika Srpska?

I think this question is unacceptable when formulated in such way. Parties' pluralism is developing in both entities. The International Community used democratic means to break the domination of Pale, so the progress of democracy is more concrete in the RS than in the Federation, where two blocks still exist, or rather, two movements that represent two

constitutive nations. We will work on this in the next several months, but there is no measurement unit for democracy, so that we could say – there is less, and there is more democracy.

When you speak about democratic progress in RS, what Milorad Dodik's Government has done so far: are human rights being less violated, has the number of returnees increased, etc....?

This question is justified. But in the three months he has been in power the Prime Minister has composed the Government out of nothing, without any assistance from his predecessor, Mr. Klinkovic. He has made significant changes in the economy, as well as beginning the process of RS media restructuring, and made an administration which justifies the expenditure of its income, especially when it comes to spending the money of the International Community. He agreed with the establishment of the joint railway traffic, so he and Mr. Bicakcic signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Monday. He made the budget of the Government and let the public have an insight into it for the first time. I think that he has really made some significant steps in these three months. When it comes to the most important part of DPA, refugee return, Mr. Dodik made the plan for refugee return to RS, which will be adopted soon?

How much money has Dodik's Government receive in the meantime?

I know that the figure is 20 million DEM. This is partially the money for budget that the EU and USA offered to the RS Government to pay the people, and this has been done. The other part of the money the EU delivered yesterday, and it is earmarked for projects of non-governmental organisations in the RS. The first time, it was part of the EU fund for the RS that was delivered, which is approximately 50 million DEM for 1998.

How do the Federation authorities react to the fact that the RS now has a new leader who co-operates with the International

Community? Is what they do sufficient compared to Dodik?

I am very satisfied with what the Federal Government does. I think that Mr. Bicakcic and Mr. Dodik are comparative pragmatists focused on resolving the problems, and not ideologists. During the three months work of the new RS Government, Bicakcic and Dodik have met more times than entity prime ministers ever met before.

Dodik's Government is not very much like you present it: a CDU BiH representative was beaten in Foca, another CDU representative, Nedžad Sacevic (sic) was banned from coming to Banja Luka, an LBO representative in Doboj was nearly arrested, the RS is a media and financial part of FRY... What is OHR going to do when it comes to this?

Look, the situation may change in three months. The process of changes was started in all municipalities you mentioned. The new Managing Board of SRT was established, led by international director Dragan Gasic, who was named by OHR. When it comes to financial relations between RS and FRY, it will disappear after the joint currency is introduced, and this is in May of this year.

Is the surrender of several war criminals only a way for Dodik to win points with the International Community, not risking losing national trust by arresting some larger figures such as Karadzic and Mladic?

There are no small potatoes amongst war criminals. The international Community welcomed the arrest or surrender of several war criminals. Mr. Dodik knows what are we expecting from the RS Government in regard to this matter...

Do you expect him to deliver Radovan Karadzic?

We expect him to implement the DPA fully.

Would you comment on military operations of SFOR troops in

Pale?

Actions in Pale are led by SFOR and I do not have the authority to comment on it.

Recently you discussed the initiative for the constitutional status of all three nations in BiH with representatives of the Croatian National Council, Circle 99 and Congress of Bosniak Intellectuals. What do you think about that?

It is necessary for this proposal to be implemented, because it is fully in agreement with the IC standpoint to accord both entities' constitutions with the Dayton Agreement and to make all nations in BiH equal, and not only those three.

Do you think that Bosnia can still exist on Dayton foundations?

Well, I see no alternative. The International Community said that the Dayton framework was the only way for this country to remain peaceful and stable. I think that proposal of constitutional status of all three nations is not in discord with the DPA, because the BiH Constitution is our guideline.

Is there a conflict between USA and the EU when it comes to Bosnia?

There is not the slightest conflict when it comes to that.

Hence, USA and the EU have the same approach to the solution of the Bosnian problem?

Definitely.

So why did you then say in an interview for a German paper that Europe would never allow an American to be OHR chief?

No, I did not say that. I was asked a question about the relations of USA and the EU. The point of my answer is that neither USA nor the EU can solve the Bosnian problem by

themselves, but only together. There is a mutual dependence between Europeans and Americans.

How do you get along with Mr. Klein?

I do not have any problems with him.

Do you agree with Mr. Klein when it comes to the approach to the HDZ hard liners?

I agree with him, but he had to say there is a conflict in this party, and that there is a hard block that obstructs the DPA implementation. This is best shown in Mostar: the authorities are still divided, there is no Canton budget, refugees do not return... Nor is Stolac peaceful, although refugees started to come back after replacement of the Mayor and Police chief. I think that continuing bombing of houses is disgusting. There is no difference between America and Europe, Klein and Schumacher, Gelbard and Westendorp: resistance of the obstructing block in the HDZ will be broken!

How?

With permanent readiness to impose sanctions if our demands are not fulfilled. I think there has been a little progress since the Bonn meeting. Namely, after the incident in Vojnic, the Croatian Ambassador called me and said he agrees with me and that the Croatian police were not tolerant. He said Croatia would allow continuing of visits when the procedure is followed.

To what extent does Tudjman's prevention of Serb return to Croatia make things in BiH difficult?

We are on a good course now, there is a return plan that has to be verified in May, at the conference for return to Banja Luka. Mr. Kinkel and Vedrine presented a bilateral demarche, and I think the Republic of Croatia knows what we are expecting from it.

Do you think that Bosnian Croats wish to live in the Federation? Do they have an interest for Federation with Bosniaks?

At least they should. The IC knows that any political concept except for Federation has no chance. We will not let the two nations create a political vacuum in BiH, by joining the neighbouring countries.

Which of the Croat politicians do not want the Federation?

I don't care! I am simply not interested who does not want the Federation: this is a concept that we will implement, despite the resistance on the field, which undoubtedly exists!

Does the Bosniak side obstruct the Federation?

We dictate what will be done! Therefore, this is a concept that will be implemented jointly and we simply do not pay attention to those who obstruct! I think we have already proved that we can use the authorities that Dayton gives us and all those who resist will have to face the consequences.

There are a lot of talks about institutions of Herceg Bosna that still exist. Does the also non-existent Republic of BiH have institutions that are still functioning?

It is clear that there are still structures of HB and RBiH. All those structures must be abolished urgently, and this will be the subject of the next Federation Forum that will be chaired by Robert Gelbard and Carlos Westendorp and will be held in Mostar. We held a preparatory meeting with the Federal Government and we are very glad that Prime Minister Bicakcic and deputy Bilandzija agreed to make a joint report where they will name these institutions and abolish them immediately.

Which institutions are those?

I would firstly like to hear it from the interested sides. The use of a stamp or Coat of Arms is not the problem, but very

complicated financial channels that exist especially in Herzegovina. In Neretva Canton, Croats have their own financial system. But Bosniaks also have their institutions.