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Dayton Anniversary

On 21 November, the High Representative, Mr. Carl Bildt, held a press conference in Sarajevo's Holiday Inn at which he recalled the significance of the initialling of the Peace Agreement signed in Dayton, Ohio, exactly one year ago. Recalling his statement made on that occasion, Mr. Bildt said that the remarks made at that time were as valid today as they were then – *"There is no such thing as instant peace. War can be started in a day but peace takes a long time to implement"*. Implementation, not the Agreement itself, was the key to sustained peace in BH, he said. Emphasising that Bosnia's future depended on creating all of the joint institutions, Mr. Bildt called upon the BH Presidency Members to urgently move forward with the establishment of the Council of Ministers. Details were less important than the actual establishment, he said. The delays so far were only hampering further progress in other aspects of full implementation of the Peace Agreement. He invited the Presidency Members to move towards the future rather than the past, and to display the statesmanship which was now required.

Mr. Bildt explained that the Peace Implementation Council meetings scheduled to take place in Bonn and London in the next few weeks would focus on working out an action plan based on last week's Paris meeting. *"The aim of the consolidation period is to create a self-sustaining peace process"*, he said. In order to achieve this, Mr. Bildt emphasised that it was imperative to realise the importance of all elements in the peace package. The return of refugees and DPs, economic reform and social and economic reconstruction, freedom of movement, cooperation with ICTY, development of independent media, stronger support to the Human Rights institutions and the forthcoming local elections were all part of that package, he said. If you neglected one, you were in danger of losing the whole thing.

Dismissing the suggestion that unless NATO provided protection

to returning refugees and DPs there could be no returns and that the Dayton Agreement would therefore fail, Mr. Bildt said that *"solutions to questions of security can never be achieved long-term by force"*. Only political change could provide the conditions necessary for long-term peace.

Responding to a question concerning the ability of the international community, and in particular the OHR, to coerce the Parties into cooperating with each other, Mr. Bildt said that the primary function of his office was to coordinate international efforts to assist the Parties with their own efforts. *"It is not up to us to run their country, nor should it be. It is not our peace. It is not our future. They signed the Agreement and we witnessed it – and this is rather fundamental"* he said. The international community would help, but not forever, he said. Increasingly, the international community would need to devote their tax-payers money to the other critical problems facing people in the world today. This week the crisis was in the Great Lakes region of Africa. No-one could tell where it would be next.

NATO

On 18 November NATO Ambassadors from the North Atlantic Council met to discuss the future of the NATO forces in BH following the withdrawal of the Implementation Force (IFOR) troops, whose mandate ends officially on 20 December. At the meeting, contingency planning for a likely multi-national follow-on Stabilisation Force was undertaken. If endorsed, the force would be smaller and would focus on both stabilising the peace and acting as a deterrent against the possibility of fresh outbreaks of fighting. It would also be expected to take a more enhanced role in supporting civilian implementation, particularly with regard to elections in 1997. In principle the force would consist of about 30,000 troops from over 30 countries and would be commanded by General Crouch. Discussions on the details of the force structure, strength

and mandate will take place in the coming weeks, with a final decision being made in Brussels on 10 December.

The High Representative, Carl Bildt, welcomed a statement on 15 November by US President Clinton, announcing that the US would participate up to 8,500 troops in a follow-up force as "good news for Bosnia". "It means that all efforts to realise the promise of the Peace Agreement and achieve political progress and setting up the joint institutions can take place in an atmosphere of security and confidence", he said.

Republica Srpska

The RS Army began on 20 November destroying several pieces of military hardware, as stipulated under Article V of the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control. A press release issued by the OSCE reported that 13 T-34 tanks, 2 OTM-60 ACV's and 30 MB-82 mortars would be destroyed at the RS Army Barracks in Banja Luka. Inspection Teams from the Republic of Croatia, the BH Federation and FRY, as well as two Joint Arms Control Implementation Group officers are verifying the beginning and end of the reduction period, which ends on 20 December.

Biljana Plavsic, RS President and Supreme Commander of the RS Forces, held discussions on 18 and 20 November with General Ratko Mladic and other top-ranking RS Army delegates who had expressed their loyalty to General Mladic. The meetings were an attempt to solve the impasse which has resulted from the recent dismissal of General Mladic by Mrs. Plavsic, and the subsequent appointment of a new RS HQ Commander, General Pero Colic. Statements in the RS media suggest that the problem has been resolved, though independent observers say there are as yet no definite signs that the deadlock has been broken.

Federation

The US Envoy for Military Stabilisation in the Balkans, Mr. James Pardew, said on 20 November that the US freighter

carrying an arms shipment worth 100 million US$, for the BH Federation military, would arrive on 21 November at the Croatian port of Ploce. The shipment, which initially arrived last month but was postponed due to the failure of the Federation to meet certain US demands, is part of an arms package of the US sponsored “Train and Equip” Programme for the Federation Army.

IFOR

Lieutenant-General Sir Michael Walker, Commander ARRC, left the mission on 20 November. In his farewell interview, in which he summed up his thoughts on the past 11 months as IFOR Ground Forces Commander in BH, Lt.Gen Walker noted the improvement of the situation in BH since December ’95. “If you look at what IFOR has done, from the beginning, it did supervise the separation of the armies, it did cause people to stop fighting, it did bring the absence of war. It has begun the process of stitching this country back together again in a way that could not have happened without IFOR in its current position”, he said. Emphasising that it was important for the people “to recognise that much of what could be achieved [in BH] has got to be achieved by the leadership in this country”, Walker pointed out the need for the Parties to cooperate with ICTY for arrest of war criminals, since it was their responsibility and not a military task. The right of refugees to return to their homes, he said, was something that was also necessary but he stressed that there was a need for procedures to be adhered to for this to occur safely and legitimately.

Right To Return

International organisations report that the Stolac pilot project resumed on 14 November as a result of an agreement between Croat and Bosniak officials for the reconstruction of approximately 10 Bosniak-owned houses in the area. Both sides had suspended their cooperation with the project at the end of

October following a series of incidents in which Bosniak displaced persons were harassed by Croat reserve police, who also prevented them from moving freely around the town. Local Bosniak and Croat representatives had also disagreed as to whether the return of 100 Bosniaks to Stolac would represent the beginning or the ceiling on minority returns to the area.

UN IPTF monitors witnessed eight explosions in the village of Hajvazi located in the Zone of Separation (ZOS) in the Sapna area on 18 November and heard 12 more explosions one hour later. Upon visiting the scene IFOR personnel discovered that three uninhabited houses had been destroyed. UN IPTF had received information on 16 November that a large number of Bosniak displaced persons were planning to cross the IEBL into Hajvazi in the coming days and were allegedly “threatening” RS police and villagers in the area. RS police informed UN IPTF that they had developed a security plan for the area, which included the use of arms to “prevent a situation like Jusici” from occurring. International agencies have expressed concern about these statements and are monitoring the situation.

UN IPTF reported that several explosions occurred in Domanovici (Capljina municipality) on 17 and 18 November. Explosions have damaged a number of uninhabited Bosniak-owned houses in the area over the past few weeks, and buses transporting Bosniak displaced persons to visit their homes have been stoned by local residents in Domanovici on several occasions.

Human Rights

Intimidation of minorities continues to be a problem throughout BH with UN IPTF regularly receiving complaints of threats and abuse. Most recent reports have come from Ilidza, Doboj, Capljina, Cazin, Brcko, Livno, Prnjavor, Bihac, Trebinje, Teslic, Pecigrad and Bugojno. The complaints range from direct physical attacks and destruction of property to

serious verbal threats. UN IPTF is continuing to follow up on all cases brought to them and monitoring the response of the local police to these charges.

In an effort to strengthen domestic human rights institutions, the OSCE is producing a field guide describing the mandates and activities of the Federation Ombudsmen, the BH Ombudsperson, the Human Rights Chamber and the Commission for Real Property Claims. A first edition of the guide will soon be distributed to field offices of international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to inform them about mechanisms of redress for individuals with human rights concerns. The guide forms part of a broader plan to increase international support of domestic institutions and local NGOs working in the human rights field.

Humanitarian Affairs

The RS Government has appointed Jovo Rosic as new President of the Commission for Missing Persons and Exchange of POWs. Former President, Dragan Bulajic, was replaced following a series of peaceful protests by members of the Association of Missing and Captured who requested the appointment of a new Commission president, as well as changes to certain procedures. In a statement to the press, Mr. Bulajic said that the former members of the Commission fully supported the decision of the RS Government and that all information from their work so far would be made available to the new Commission unconditionally. The statement asked for support from the international community, and particularly for the High Representative, Mr. Carl Bildt and his Deputy, Ambassador Michael Steiner, to help the Commission with its work in solving the problems of the missing and detained persons. The statement also called upon the other Parties to assist with the registering of POWs as well as access to mass graves for purposes of exhumation.

OSCE has been helping a mixed marriages association in Zenica involved in reconciliation initiatives to participate in an interview program being produced by the independent television station Studio 99. OSCE's democratization staff, in collaboration with the World Health Organization, have also been working with local NGOs in the Bihac area to plan monthly seminars on overcoming trauma for victims of human rights abuses.

Economic Assistance

Chairman of the BH Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, officially opened a newly restored generator at the hydro-electric power plant in Salakovac on 16 November. The 12 million DEM World Bank funded reconstruction project was carried out with the assistance of the Austrian companies Siemens and Andric, as well as contractors form Croatia and Norway. The second generator is expected to be launched next month, with a third following the repair of the Mostar hydro-electric plant.

UNHCR in cooperation with World Vision International provided 130,000US$ for the reconstruction of a school and clinic in Sibosnica, near Celic which were formally reopened on 17 November. The repair of over 380 houses in the region, 259 of which have already completed, are also included in the 1,200,000 US$ reconstruction programme.

On 18 November IFOR's Multi-National Division North (MND-North) Joint Information Bureau provided information in a series of press releases concerning the status of a number of important reconstruction projects being undertaken in their area of responsibility. The projects, twenty nine of which have been completed to date, represent just a few of the 125 Community Infrastructure Rehabilitation Programme (CIRP) projects currently in progress, which are funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). CIRP is a series of work programmes aimed at rebuilding key areas of the

local infrastucture, and helping to provide temporary employment for demobilised military personnel in BH. It is also intended to demonstrate the return of Displaced persons throughout the region, and to demonstrate the positive benefits of the peace process to the civilian community. Recently completed projects include:

- Restoration of medical centres in Maoca (near Brcko) and Vitinica (near Zvornik) at a cost of 28,712 US$ and 36,276 US$ respectively
- Zenica road repairs at a cost of 33,000 US$.
- Repair of electrical power lines in Pelagicevo at a cost of 48,000 US$
- Repair to school in Vukosavlje at a cost of 47,106 US$

Looking Ahead

22 November:
Eighth Session of BH Presidency, Sarajevo
23-24 November:
Coalition for Return Meeting, Mostar
26-27 November:
PIC Steering Board Meeting, Bonn
04-05 December:
Full Meeting of the PIC, London

See our Chronology for a full list of activities
The OHR Bulletin is produced by the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo and aims to give an overview of what is happening on the ground in the civilian implementation of the Dayton Agreement. Suggestions and contributions are welcome and should be addressed to the Public Affairs Department of the Office of the High Representative in Sarajevo (387-71) 447 275 ext. 562, Fax (387-71) 447 420. Callers from outside BH dial via Brussels switchboard: Tel. (32-2) 737 7500 & Fax (32-2) 737 7501