

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference



OHR, Mario Brkic
EUFOR, Neil Matheison

OHR

Ivan Bušniak Appointed as Head of OHR Banja Luka and Deputy High Representative

The High Representative Miroslav Lajčák has appointed Ivan Bušniak as the new Head of the Office of the High Representative in Banja Luka with effect from 1 September 2007. Until Mr Bušniak takes over his duty, Orlando Fusco, will remain interim Head of the Banja Luka Office.

Mr Bušniak currently acts as Foreign Policy Advisor to the Chairman of the Czech Social Democratic Party.

Between 2004 and 2006, he was a Foreign Policy Advisor to the Czech Prime Minister.

From 2000 to 2004, he was Director of Department for Eastern Europe and Director of Department for Africa in the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Between 1995 and 2000, Ivan Bušniak was based in Belgrade as

Czech Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (later Serbia and Montenegro) and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

He previously served as Director of the Western Europe Department and Director General of the Euro-Atlantic Section at the Czech Foreign Ministry.

Between 1990 and 1992, he directed the Minister's Private Cabinet and the OSCE Department in Czechoslovakian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ivan Bušniak holds a law degree from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. He also studied at the Harvard Center for International Affairs.

Ivan Bušniak is fluent in Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian, English, Russian and French. He is married with three children. He was born on 7 December 1951 in Bratislava, Slovakia.

EUFOR

EXERCISE "TROJAN BUTTRESS" INITIAL PRESS RELEASE

From the 16th to the 20th August 2007, EUFOR will be conducting a major exercise in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will involve both reserve forces from Germany and also members of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A battalion from the 232 Mountain Regiment from Germany began to arrive in Sarajevo yesterday, 13th August. On the 16th August they will deploy to Camp Eagle Base in Tuzla. Exercises will be conducted at Commanche Base.

The EUFOR Multi-National Battalion will simultaneously deploy to the Manjaca training camp near Banja Luka on this day.

Throughout the following four days, both military units will exercise various scenarios. They will show EUFOR's capability to contribute to maintaining a safe and secure in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The exercise will test the activation procedure for EUFOR's reserve forces that are based in Germany, France, Italy and the United Kingdom. It will be the first time since EUFOR transition that this procedure has been rehearsed and as such is the largest deployment of troops in support of EUFOR this year.

A noteworthy aspect of this exercise is the involvement for the first time in a major EUFOR exercise, of an infantry Company of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

COM EUFOR, Rear Admiral Hans-Jochen Witthauer, was delighted that the BiH Ministry of Defence decided to participate in this event. It is hoped that working alongside EUFOR troops will strengthen the already good relations that exist between the two forces.

During this exercise, 2 events will be held to which local media are invited to attend.

1. Rear Admiral Witthauer will be visiting the Manjaca training area on 17 August 07 accompanied by Brigade General Mirko Tepsic, Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces Bosnia and Herzegovina Operational Command. Media should be at this location NO LATER than 1600 hrs.

2. Rear Admiral Witthauer will be visiting Camp Commanche Base on 18 August 07, accompanied by the Deputy High Representative, Raffi Gregorian. Media should be at this location NO LATER than 1430 hrs.

RTQ

TV OBN, Almir Šarenkapa:

Two questions. The first question is for the OHR. It has been approximately 15 days since the beginning of the new round of negotiations on police reform. What progress has been made? Have the standpoints of the local politicians on police reform become any closer now?

The second question is for both EUFOR and the OHR. How do you view media reports about arms sales, claiming that weapons from Bosnia and Herzegovina were sold to Iraqi rebels, and that earlier some even ended up in the hands of the Taliban in Afghanistan?

OHR/EUSR, Mario Brkić:

I will briefly answer the question concerning the police reform talks. Of course the High Representative has already said this, bilateral talks with political officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina are underway. The important thing would be for an agreement on this issue to be reached by September, and sufficient groundwork has been laid for this. It would be good for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and this too has already been said, if the achievement of such an agreement would be a part of the report the European Commission prepares on the progress made in each country. This would be important and would be seen as a positive development. So, bilateral talks are underway and there is nothing in particular and new we can inform you about.

EUFOR, Neil Matheison:

Regarding the arms sales, this story is an old one, which has been inflamed by the loss of weapons in Iraq. Any arms sales from this country that EUFOR are aware of have been bilateral

arrangements between the BiH government and other organizations. EUFOR has absolutely no information to suggest that any of these sales were illegitimate or illegal or that the BiH government did not fulfill its own procedures or international conventions. From our previous experience the BiH government is always scrupulous in assessing these arms sales and that there is no illegality involved in any of them.

Dnevni Avaz, Tarik Lazović:

How many soldiers in total, both BiH and EUFOR, will be participating in this exercise?

EUFOR, Neil Matheison:

Firstly, the international forces – there was nearly 300 German soldiers, arrived yesterday. The Multi-National Battalion of EUFOR is roughly 500 soldiers, and there will be a single infantry company of the BiH Armed Forces involved.