



March 5, 2009

The Honorable George Voinovich  
The Honorable Melissa Bean and the Honorable Dan Burton  
Washington, DC

Dear Senator Voinovich and Congresswoman Bean:

I am writing to you about a matter of a grave concern to Serb-Americans. There is an apparent drive to overturn the Dayton Accords under the guise of "stopping Bosnia from unraveling."

Its timing is well selected, as the new Administration is nearly overwhelmed by economic and other problems. It is rather apparent that the old public relations campaign pattern of the 1990s is being followed. It includes tools such as disingenuous and flawed political analyses of the current situation, active lobbying and media campaign, visits by Bosnian officials to Washington and Brussels, and a covert campaign by advocates of abrogating the Dayton Accords. Consistent with that pattern, within Bosnia itself, Premier Dodik and his close associates in the Serbian entity are under serious attack with charges of corruption by the Federal government from Sarajevo. Ironically, the most serious corruption in Bosnia since 1995 has been within the federation and the same Federal government (well documented).

In B&H Serbs, Croats and Muslims are each a minority, the Muslims being the largest. The crux of the Bosnian conundrum has never been the issue of whether Bosnia will be a "multi-ethnic" state, but rather whether it will be a unitary state ruled by the Muslim minority out of Sarajevo. And in fact the terrible war was waged for this reason.

Our other previous and ongoing ambitions in the Balkans to create "multi-ethnic states" in Croatia and Kosovo have also failed. If people do not wish to live together, the adage that "only tall fences make good neighbors" makes sense. Forcing people to live separately (apartheid) or forcing people to live together (dictatorship) is unworkable and immoral. The Dayton Accords and subsequent B&H legislation provided mechanisms to protect each of the minorities from majority decisions that could threaten/violate a minority's interests/rights. The autonomy of Republic of Srpska, RS, was one of these protections. Healing Bosnia's deep wounds will probably take a new generation of people and leaders raised in Bosnia as a country in the European Union. And then, those fences may fall by choice and not by outside edicts. Why reopen the Balkan Pandora's box again?

It is also critical that we avoid falling into the old trap of losing focus of the real issue. The campaign against Premier Dodik and the legitimate rights of the Serbian people in Bosnia are two vastly separate issues. This campaign is a strategy to fuse the two issues – discredit Premier Dodik and discredit legitimate rights of the Serbian people and the RS. This type of fusion worked well in the past by establishing the false image of Milosevic and Serbian justifiable interests as being synonymous. Instead of openly contesting the legitimacy of those interests and the fundamental question of abrogating the Dayton Accords, the Bosnian Moslems and their allies are manoeuvring to enmesh the argument in the Dodik matter as a way to achieve the real goal of establishing a unitary state under control from Sarajevo.

Following the Dayton Agreement financial support flowed into B&H from international sources. RS was denied the bulk of this aid for a variety of reasons. In spite of the disproportionate allocation of financial support away from the RS, RS focused on economic policies resulting in a very decent performance and relative economic stability, while the federation cannot account for much of the aid and its economic performance is greatly inferior to that of the RS. We believe that in addition to the political motivations there are also economic factors to the campaign to dilute RS autonomy -- Sarajevo's desire to expand its access to the economic assets of the RS.

We urge you to follow these serious developments and do the utmost to prevent this latest drive which threatens peace and stability in the region from succeeding. We will be glad to assist your staff in this effort, if you wish. We will endeavor to stay in touch with you on this important matter.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mirjana Samardzija". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized initial "M".

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