

Schiller Institute visits Sarajevo on eve of Bosnian elections

by Elke Fimmen

From Aug. 25 to Aug. 28, a German-French delegation visited the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, for a fact-finding tour organized by the Schiller Institute. Its purpose was to assess the economic and political situation on the eve of the scheduled elections on Sept. 14.

The members of the delegation included German Gen. Hanno Count von Kielmannsegg (ret.); former French Presidential candidate Jacques Cheminade; Michael Liebig, executive director of *EIR*'s European headquarters; and Elke Fimmen of the Schiller Institute. General von Kielmannsegg was, until 1993, Chief of NATO Northern Command of Europe, and had called already in 1992 for NATO air strikes against Greater Serbian targets. After his retirement in early 1993, he spent a week in Sarajevo during heavy fighting, mobilizing public opinion in Germany thereafter to support NATO military action against the Serbian aggression. Cheminade had been an outspoken critic of the treacherous policies of the late President of France François Mitterrand, and of President Jacques Chirac and the new Franco-British Entente Cordiale, on the Balkans.

The delegation met with the religious leadership of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cardinal Vinko Puljic and Reis Uleima Dr. Mustafa Effendi Cerić; Bosnian General Commander Gen. Rasim Delić; and Hasan Čengić, vice-defense minister. The delegation received extensive briefings on the status of the reconstruction effort by the leadership of the Bosnian railway system, the electric utilities company Elektroprivreda, and the water management system company Vodoprivreda. Edhem Bicakčić, vice chairman of the ruling SDA party and president of the foreign relations committee of the Bosnian parliament, received the delegation. Prof. Abdullah Konjicija, president of the lower house of the parliament of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, provided the opportunity to meet with several parliamentarians from both the ruling SDA party and the Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The most pressing issue at this point, which was stressed during the talks in Sarajevo by everybody, was that of extreme concern about the upcoming elections, and the consequences, if elections are held under present circumstances. The government of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the parliament in Sarajevo have demanded that federal elections can only take place, once the Serb vote-fraud mechanism has been eliminated. In fact, none of the conditions put forward in Dayton have been

met, such as freedom of movement, safe return to homes by refugees, or freedom of the press, not to mention the arrest of war criminals such as Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic.

The 'P-2' formula

On top of this came the allowance by the election preparation council of the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe (OSCE, known as the "Helsinki Group") for the widespread use of the so-called P-2 formula. This formula, which was supposed to be the exception, became the rule, under which more than 220,000 Serbs, as well as a large number of Croats, registered to vote. These are voters who did not live in these areas before the outbreak of war in 1991, and who have now just moved in to cement the ethnic composition resulting from deaths and "ethnic cleansing." Most disturbing are the cases of Srebrenica and the Brčko area.

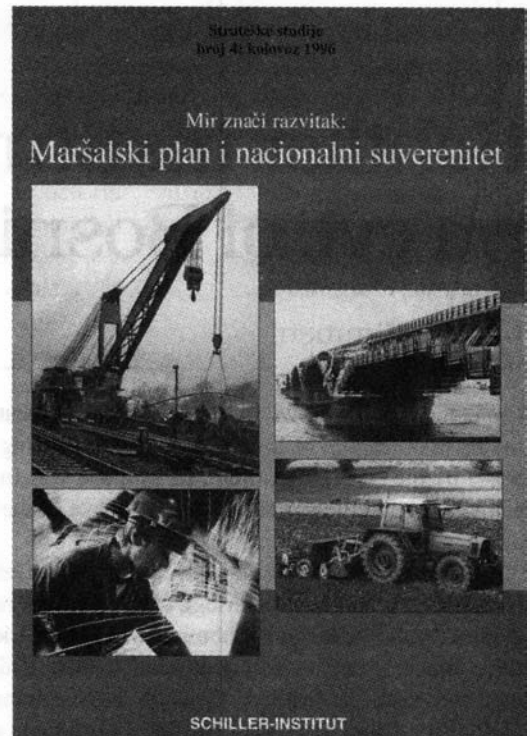
In Srebrenica, 24,394 Serbians are now "living" there, whereas, before 1991, there were fewer than 4,000. Some 20,000 Serbian refugees living in Serbia have been forced to register in Srebrenica by proxy. Just 14 months ago, in July 1995, the Bosnian-Serb army conquered the "UN safe zone" of Srebrenica, killing some 8,000 inhabitants and expelling some 10,000. In the area of Brčko, which had a Croat-Muslim majority before 1991, 42,763 Serbian "residents" have registered.

This crude election manipulation will assure a Serb majority of over 90% in areas which, before 1992, had sizable Muslim-Croat minorities or outright Muslim-Croat majorities. Above all, in the elections for the parliament of "Republika Srpska," which are part of the general elections to be held on Sept. 14, this means that almost 90% of the parliament will be Serbian party delegates, whereas the ethnic composition in 1991 was 60% Serb. It has been announced already by Serbian representatives of the Karadzic-Mladic party SDS, that after the elections, a referendum to split the area from Bosnia-Herzegovina should immediately be held, which would easily be won by such an overwhelming majority.

There is a clear intent to obstruct the functioning of the central government authorities in Sarajevo. According to information provided to the delegation, those international forces which have worked for the break-up of the country, such as France and Great Britain, are preparing a conference in Paris in support of such efforts.



Left: A damaged electrical transmission line in Zavidovici, Bosnia. The Serbs made a point of destroying Bosnia's electrical grid. Right: The Schiller Institute's pamphlet calls for an international effort for the reconstruction of Bosnia. The headline reads, "Peace Means Development: Marshall Plan and National Sovereignty."



The OSCE, which was responsible for the preparation of the elections, did not fulfill its task at all. Apart from allowing P-2 to be used as the rule and not as the exception, because of poor preparations, only about 62% of all voters abroad have been registered, which many see as intentional. Also, voting started long before Sept. 14 in Turkey and Hungary, contrary to initial plans, which were to hold elections simultaneously everywhere, in order to minimize vote fraud.

Municipal elections have been postponed, because of gross irregularities. However, the general elections are scheduled to take place anyway, despite the official acknowledgment by virtually everybody responsible, that these elections are going to be anything but "fair, free, and democratic." As one discussion partner put it, "If elections are held under these circumstances, they will not be the crowning of the Dayton process, but the end of Dayton."

U.S. special envoy John Cornblum, during his visit to Sarajevo at the end of August, assured the Bosnian government that no split-off would occur by "Republika Srpska" after the elections, and that no obstruction of central government functions in Sarajevo would be allowed by the Serbian leadership in the country. Thus, the ruling SDA party ended its boycott of the elections. However, the situation remains extremely fragile. It is now up to the U.S. government to follow through on its promises.

Marshall Plan-style reconstruction needed

Whether or not elections are held, there will be no durable peace if real economic reconstruction is not started right away, and on a large scale. Winter is coming, and nothing really has

gotten under way. Social and political unrest are pre-programmed in the Croat-Bosniak federation, under these circumstances, if people who have endured for so long under horrible circumstances, see their hopes now again disappointed. But, it is also mandatory to undertake a Marshall Plan-type approach, to be able to provide a perspective for those impoverished people living in "Republika Srpska." In driving through the so-called Brcko corridor, the delegation members witnessed the scenes of women standing along the main street, trying to sell cigarettes in order to earn a little bit of money.

Many conferences have been held, and many promises given, but very little money has actually come in. The crucial role in slowing down even small programs, is being played by the World Bank. While the re-opening of the rail line from Sarajevo to the Croatian coast, which was celebrated in August, was very important, out of \$75 million needed to fully reconstruct this line, only about \$10 million came in, allowing for speeds of only 40-50 kilometers per hour, with no signals or other necessary equipment having been set up. No other funds have been provided, while about \$1 billion is needed to reconstruct the rail lines.

Of the vital water management systems, a similar situation prevails. Out of \$950 million needed, there is a three-year plan to allocate \$380 million, of which half has not even been raised. Above all, the World Bank has demanded as preconditions from those municipalities which want to apply for loans for their water management reconstruction, a plan to enforce payment of utility fees by local citizens in the next two years, and an amortization plan for any investments taken in the course of the next seven years. This, in a situation where

almost nobody has a job, and where 80-90% of industrial production has been shut down!

Under these circumstances, the newly produced Bosnian-language bulletin of the Schiller Institute, which contains a reconstruction program for the country, as well as for the whole region, in the context of the Eurasian development corridors, was greeted enthusiastically in Sarajevo. It is very clear that railways, communication lines, highways, water systems, and energy production will be the real backbone for

any integration of the country.

Bosnia-Herzegovina is now clearly at a point in which everything will depend on the commitment of the United States government to break free of French-British manipulations and establish a real peace for the country, based on economic development—and not a “fast food” solution, as Reis Uleima Cerić put it. Only such an approach can prevent the renewed outbreak of hostilities and a threat to world peace in the immediate future.

Declaration on Bosnia-Herzegovina

The following statement was issued from Washington, D.C. on Sept. 1.

Having been in Sarajevo during April of this year as participants in an international delegation of the Schiller Institute and the Committee to Save the Children in Bosnia-Herzegovina, we are very concerned with present developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina. We are especially concerned about the non-fulfillment of the Dayton preconditions for holding of fair, free, and democratic elections on Sept. 14. Freedom of movement and return of refugees has not been ensured, as envisioned by the Dayton Agreement.

According to our information, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which is responsible for the preparation and execution of election proceedings, did not fulfill its task. Not only did it fail in registering voters abroad, but it allowed the P-2 formula, which was supposed to be the exception for people who moved since 1991 (i.e., before the war) for personal reasons to other areas of the country, to become the rule. More than 220,000 Serbians have registered to vote on this basis in “ethnically cleansed areas.” This completely cements the war results, as most shockingly seen in areas such as Srebrenica and the Brčko corridor.

By accepting the registration of these voters as legitimate, the outcome of elections is clear already, particularly in the so-called “Republika Srpska.” Thus, the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina is de facto legalized. It has been stated by Serbian leaders that they intend to use the overwhelming majority in the parliament of “Republika Srpska” to organize a referendum to split from Bosnia-Herzegovina. International forces sympathetic to a division, such as Great Britain and France, are already preparing a conference in France in the event of such a *fait accompli*.

This is a continuation of war by means of politics,

rewarding genocide and ethnic cleansing. With that, the stated aim of Dayton, to preserve Bosnia-Herzegovina as one country, is in effect destroyed.

We also reaffirm our call for an immediate Marshall Plan type of approach for big infrastructure development, which must be started right away. According to our information, promised money is coming in very slowly or not at all, and lags far behind actual needs. In particular, the World Bank plays the leading role in sabotaging such infrastructure plans. Real help must come quickly, now.

At this point, Bosnians are being told that “after the elections, help will come.” In using this argument, undue pressure is being created to accept elections under any circumstances, while at the same time, the stated policies of the World Bank do not aim for a coherent development plan.

We therefore urgently call on the U.S. government to:

1. Ensure early elections as soon as possible under the conditions set by Dayton, above all by preventing P-2 to be used as an instrument of manipulation of the elections;
2. Go for a crash plan of infrastructural development, without the monetaristic grip of the World Bank conditionalities, which in effect mean the killing of more people.

Only with such a change in approach can there be a perspective for *durable* peace, which will also attract the Serbian population, to really integrate into the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and thus achieve the stated aim of Dayton.

Signed:

Benjamin Swan, state representative, Massachusetts
James Mann, former U.S. congressman, South Carolina
Theo W. Mitchell, former state senator, South Carolina
Dr. Jozef Miklosko, president of the Committee to Save the Children in Bosnia-Herzegovina, former vice prime minister of post-communist Czechoslovakia
Nihad E. Dzinovic, chairman of the Bosnia Relief Organization in California; member, National Advisory Board for Humanitarian Aid
Umberto Pascali, secretary of the International Parliamentarians Against Genocide in Bosnia; member, Schiller Institute