



*Stalna misija Bosne i Hercegovine pri Uredu Ujedinjenih naroda u Becu,
OSSE i drugim medjunarodnim organizacijama, B E C
Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations
Office at Vienna, OSCE and other International Organizations, V I E N N A*

PC.DEL/724/07
12 July 2007

ENGLISH only

**Statement by
Edin Dilberović, Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the OSCE
in response to the statement by
H.E. Ambassador Douglas Davidson,
Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina**

**to the Permanent Council Meeting
Vienna, 12 July 2007**

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me on behalf of my delegation to welcome Ambassador Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and thank him for his report. Ambassador Davidson draws our attention in his report to the problems that my country is facing and gives the answers to some of these problems and specifies OSCE activities in that direction.

When we are talking about political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, answers of international community representatives in my country are always the same - it is your problems and you need to solve them. But, sorry, when Bosnia and Herzegovina is in question International Community is still not excused from the political processes.

We in Bosnia and Herzegovina are grateful to international community and its involvement and help. Without international community and our friends and neighbors we will not be able to reach this stage of development immediately after the devastating war. We particularly think on the help provided by European Union, the United States of America and other OSCE participating states.

Sometimes I feel like a parrot because I am repeating the same thing on each PC when we talk about my country, and I will repeat it again - High Representative, as defined in Annex 10 of Dayton-Paris Peace Agreement, is a part of Bosnian Constitutional System and we need to find proper replacement. It needs to be done in close cooperation with Governemnt of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Chances for EU integrations are still there, as representative of Portugal said in his statement on behalf of EU, but Bosnia and Herzegovina is loosing a time. And time is precious but "step by step" approach in political circumstances of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only answer. Efforts to strengthen State-level institutions and thereby providing a unified and coherent governmental system need to continue. Last reform of the military was a major accomplishment. A further challenge will be the establishment of a single police structure and needed constitutional reforms. These are organizational and political prerequisites for full integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. There are some political problems in these areas, but we will be able to solve it. OSCE has a role to play especially in constitutional reforms, bringing Bosnia and Herzegovina from Dayton to Brussels phase of development as a normal European state.

Concept of political compromise and consensus are only solution to overcome political differences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will soon return to this concept which was not



*Stalna misija Bosne i Hercegovine pri Uredu Ujedinjenih naroda u Becu,
OSSE i drugim medjunarodnim organizacijama, B E C
Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations
Office at Vienna, OSCE and other International Organizations, V I E N N A*

abounded but for a time been put aside, partly because of our politicians, and definitely, partly because of behavior of international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr Chairman, allow me to continue with different topic which is important to understand my country and which influences daily political life in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it is Srebrenica.

Yesterday was 12 years since Srebrenica massacre happened. Also today is somewhat less than six months since the International Court of Justice rendered verdict and qualify the July 1995 massacre in Srebrenica as genocide. And yesterday was a day of morn and day of frustration.

On July 11, 1995 the UN safe haven Srebrenica has turned into a safe hell and Srebrenica genocide become the largest mass murder in Europe since World War II. From 1996 immediately after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina till today more than 7,800 tracing request had been registered for people missing in Srebrenica. The majority of men were executed and anonymously buried in mass graves. One of the judges from International Criminal Tribunal said that the scenes from Srebrenica were truly scenes from hell written on the darkest pages of human history after the Second World War.

This all happened on the 50th anniversary since, back in 1945, we in Europe said in full confidence - Never Again. Five decades later Srebrenica happened in Europe – all victims were Europeans, the perpetrators were Europeans, the UN Peacekeepers were Europeans. We learn nothing from our common European history.

There is an organization in Srebrenica called “Mothers of Srebrenica”, consisting of women who after and despite all the humiliations and suffering have still being denied the right to know about the destiny of their bellowed ones.

While still serving in Sarajevo I had the privilege and honour to meet and work with these extraordinary ladies. One of them is Hatidža Mehmedović. She lives in Srebrenica, her husband and two sons of 12 and 17 years old are still missing. Every single day Mrs. Mehmedovic, walks around hills of Srebrenica and still today she collects human bones. And every single Friday this grieving mother and wife takes a bus and visits the DNA Identification Centre in Tuzla, carrying a bag full of human bones, in painful hope that one of these bones belongs to one of her sons. Just yesterday 465 people were buried in Srebrenica. Hatidza's two sons and husband were not among identified ones.

During last six years since Potocari Memorial was established 2,907 people have been laid to rest to their long awaited peace. As if the death of their beloved was not enough the agony of many mothers continued, forced to burry whatever is left and found of their family members – a bone of a leg or of an arm of their sons, others burying only skulls. And many of them are considered lucky to have found at list one bone of their husbands, sons and brothers, scattered in the so-called secondary mass graves. That means that remains were taken from primary mass grave and buried in secret locations and remains of one person was later found in at least three different locations very often hundreds kilometres distant from each others.

I would like to use this opportunity and express our deepest gratitude to Senator Robert Dole and courageous and extraordinary people from Institute of Missing Persons who continue to give hope to Mothers of Srebrenica.

Mr. Chairman today is also 4,229 days or 141 months or more than 11 years that indicated war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic are free and at large. There is no real peace



Stalna misija Bosne i Hercegovine pri Uredu Ujedinjenih naroda u Becu,
OSSE i drugim medjunarodnim organizacijama, B E C
Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations
Office at Vienna, OSCE and other International Organizations, V I E N N A

without the justice and no justice in our region while Karadzic and Mladic are far away from prison. No reconciliation before individualisation of guilt from the last war.

Allow me also Mr. Chairman, on the end, to share with you short stories from my country. Those are stories of real Bosnia and Herzegovina, its citizens and its future.

First story is from Trebinje, small town in southern Bosnia and Herzegovina. On January 21, 1993 Serbian nationalists in Trebinje attacked, local citizen of Bosniak origin, Alen Glavovic. His friend, Serb, Srdjan Aleksic died in trying to help him. Srdjan's father Rade Aleksic wrote in local newspaper about his son's death and I quote *"He died in pursuing his human duty because he did not lose his faith in human beings and his neighbours."* Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina has initiated the procedure to erect monument to late Srdjan Aleksic.

Second story is from Trusina – small village inhabited by Croats in Central Bosnia. Haso Halkovic was Bosniak commander of Armed Forces which committed war crimes against Croats in village Trusina. The very next morning after massacre took place, Halkovic's father went to have a coffee with his friends in neighbouring village Trusina, as he was doing ever since as part of his morning routine. He did not know what had happened night before. After he saw dead bodies of his friends and neighbours, he went home, took a gun and committed suicide. He left a note addressed to his son, which said *"What kind of life I will have if there is no my neighbours to have coffee with them."*

The last story is of Mrs Zejneba Hardaga. She is *מְלוּעָה תּוֹמוֹא יִדִּיסָה*, *Hasidei Umot HaOlam*. We are talking a lot about education of youth and holocaust so let as remember this words again - *Hasidei Umot HaOlam*. – which translated into English from Hebrew means *Righteous among the Nations*. Mrs Hardaga, a noble European lady, was able to risk her own life and lives of her bellowed ones to save others. She saved Jews of Bosnia and Herzegovina during Second World War Holocaust. During the last war in Bosnia and Herzegovina she was wounded during shelling of Sarajevo and she lost her leg. In 1994 with the help of her friends from Israel she got evacuated from Sarajevo to Tel Aviv. The State of Israel granted her the Israeli Citizenship and late Prime Minister Rabin presented her, personally, Citizenship certificate. During the ceremony Prime Minister Rabin asked her: *"Madam, why did you as a Muslim help the Jews during Second World War?"* Madam Zejneba Hardaga answered: *"Mr Prime Minister you were not informed well – I did not help the Jews during Second World War. I helped my family members, my friends and my neighbours because with us in Bosnia – it is normal."*

So Mr. Chairman, my country definitely has problems and we are aware of it. But we will solve this kind of problems not because of reform processes, not because of the OSCE or any other mission in my country, not because Brussels requirements or because old or young High Representative in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We will solve our problems at least because of good neighbourhood and good coffee, because with us in Bosnia, as Mrs Hardaga said, it is normal.

And on the end as Harper Lee rightly said – ***Sometimes is better to keep silent than to additionally disgrace yourself.*** So I will be silent. In memory of Srebrenica.
Thank you Ambassador Davidson, and thank you Mr. Chairman.