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12.34	SRNA Review of News (I) – January 17, 2012	BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA



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<p>Interview by Danijela Dzeletovic</p> <p>LONDON, January 17 (SRNA) – Republika Srpska still has a very real existence, and represents a fundamental stabilising pillar for the Bosnian state. It is crucial to the maintenance of peace and security in Bosnia, just as was the case with the Bosnian republic within the former Yugoslavia, says David Chandler, a professor of international relations at the Centre for the Study of Democracy, Westminster University, London.</p> <p>He told SRNA that Srpska ensures peace and prevents too much power going to the numerically dominant ethnic group.</p> <p>“Since the signing of the Dayton Agreement, many international politicians and regional ones have questioned the right of Republika Srpska to exist, and have argued that it is a ‘genocidal creation’ or a barrier to the normalisation of peace, security and statehood in Bosnia,” Chandler says on the occasion of RS’ 20th anniversary.</p> <p>According to him, Republika Srpska has been under pressure since its founding 20 years ago during the turbulent break-up of the former Yugoslavia, and this pressure has not dissipated during the seventeen years since the signing of the Dayton peace agreement in 1995.</p> <p>He says that while at present Bosnia is a de facto protectorate under the rule of the international High Representative, the process of EU integration is imposing a new set of pressures and constrictions. “Rule from Brussels is imposing external frameworks of legislation in all areas of Bosnian life, but this is rule from the ‘inside’ of Bosnian state institutions rather than clearly externally imposed from the ‘outside’,” Chandler says.</p> <p>“As we all know, from watching the unfolding of the Euro crisis and the harsh neoliberal financial constrictions being imposed by the EU on member states such as Greece, the line to be drawn between being an independent state and a protectorate, can sometimes appear to be a thin one. In the case of Bosnia, however, it is clear that the state lacks independence in all but the formal sense of being independently recognised as a member of the UN,” he says.</p> <p>Chandler warns that the politicisation of Islam in Bosnia seems to be one of the most controversial and problematic questions facing the country. “I think that the presence of some Wahabbi extremists and the visible Saudi influence in the establishment and financing of mosques and madrasses has become a lightning rod for the tensions and difficulties which politicians on all sides face at present,” he said.</p> <p>He explains that Muslim political groups have been happy to gain funding and external support and to play the radicals off against the international community, arguing that they need support to moderate these dangers, while Bosnian Serbs have naturally felt threatened and insecure by the rise in radicalism and this has been reflected in the statements made by politicians like President Dodik.</p> <p>Chandler feels it is embarrassing for the West to confront the threat of radicalised Islamic groups in Bosnia, as their existence casts doubt on their whole policy of intervention in the region. “It is for this reason that they would rather either ignore Islamic radicalism or deal with the problem covertly and indirectly,” he explains.</p> <p>Chandler says that Bosnia’s Muslim community became a cause célèbre in much of the outside world during the Bosnian war, and that the western actors adopted them for self-serving reasons, keen to demonstrate their ‘ethical’ reasons for intervention.</p> <p>“Their cause was also adopted by many Islamic radicals in the Middle East, particularly the Wahhabi militants funded by the oil-rich Saudi Arabian state,” Chandler told SRNA, and concluded that this support first took the form of volunteer militias and the export of arms (with US support) but today it consists mainly of money that supports the building of mosques and madrassas, especially in rural municipalities.</p> <p>/end/sg</p>		
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<p>SARAJEVO – Lazar Prodanovic, an SNSD member of the BiH House of Representatives, expects now that the six political party leaders have reached agreement on a parliamentary majority at the BiH level, the BiH Parliament will start adopting important reform laws.</p> <p>BANJALUKA – The head of the EUPM in BiH, Stefan Feller, said that the various agencies should be capable and efficient in the fight against organised crime, corruption and terrorism, should closely cooperate and work in full synchronisation, warning that this has no alternative and that without such cooperation “everything will fall.” “The chain is as strong as its weakest link,” he said.</p> <p>SARAJEVO – The president of the BiH Central Electoral Commission, Branko Petric, has warned that the holding of local elections in October might be called into question for the failure to pass the BiH budget for this year.</p> <p>SARAJEVO – At a meeting of the collegium of prosecutors of the BiH Prosecution, prosecutor Jud Romano asked that the investigation into the Dobrovoljacka Street case be halted, but such a decision was not brought, reports Glas Srpske, citing sources in the BiH Prosecution.</p> <p>SARAJEVO – The BiH Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA) asked FTV to provide it with a recording of the News Hour and the “60</p>		



Minutes – Special” programme and asked it to comment on complaints that national, racial and religious hatred and intolerance was instigated and spread by these programmes.

SARAJEVO – The head of the World Bank’s Office for BiH, Anabela Abreu, has warned the BiH authorities and citizens that 2012 is full of challenges, and urged for reforms which would prepare the country as best as possible to face the consequences of the economic crisis.

#### REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

TEL AVIV – On his first day of an official visit to Israel, RS president Milorad Dodik was received by the Israeli minister of tourism, Stas Misezhnykov, and they reviewed the possibility for cooperation between Republika Srpska (RS) and Israel in tourism by way of connecting tour operators and participation in tourism fairs.

BANJALUKA – The RS Cabinet is still interested in establishing a regular air route between Banjaluka and Vienna, in cooperation with Jat Airways, said the RS minister of transportation and telecommunications, Nedeljko Cubrilovic.

BANJALUKA – The RS minister of administration and local governance, Lejla Resic, and the assistant minister for local governance, Milanka Sopin, will visit Han Pijesak Municipality.

BANJALUKA – In the event of the dissolution of BiH, it is better for Republika Srpska to be an independent state than to unite with Serbia, feel scientists and politicians in RS who commented on the statements of intellectuals in Serbia on this subject.

BANJALUKA – Bozidar Stanisljevic (aged 61), who is suspected of terrorism, was transferred on January 14 from Sarajevo to the Tunjice prison near Banjaluka, SRNA was told by the director of this prison, Pero Dunjic.

#### SERBIA

PRISTINA – The deputy assistant US secretary of state, Phillip Reeker, met with Kosovo government representatives in Pristina, but no statement to the press was made after the meeting. Journalists were even forbidden to take pictures until this American official had left the meeting.

BELGRADE – The commander of Bondsteel base in Kosovo, Jeffrey J. Liethen, said that this American base will not be closed as people have been saying in the last while, and that US forces will certainly be there in June next year.

#### SE EUROPE

BANJALUKA – The president of the Matica Srpska in Montenegro, Vlado Bozovic, feels that the commentary of the adviser to the speaker of the Montenegrin Parliament, Andrey Nikolaidis, on the occasion of RS Day, undoubtedly represents an instigation to commit a terrorist act, and that Montenegrin institutions should voice their opinion on it, since otherwise, it would mean that they support his position.

BANJALUKA – Unresolved property issues and the lack of respect for basic human rights are the facts the Serbian people in Croatia should not forget when on Sunday, January 22 they will decide on European prospects of this country, say representatives of associations of refugee and expelled Serbs from Croatia.

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