** United Nations Office in Belgrade**

**Daily Media Highlights**

**Wednesday, 26 February 2014**

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**LOCAL PRESS**

**Albanians part of the government in Kosovska Mitrovica? (*Novosti*)**

Following the election of Goran **Rakic** as the Kosovska Mitrovica Mayor there will be a lot of political acrobatics where there is a possibility of Albanians becoming part of the government after two decades. The provincial law on local self-government prescribes that one of the mayor deputies is elected from the ranks of minority communities, so it is not excluded for an Albanian to assume this post. But, everything is in the hands of the Serbs who may appoint a Bosniak or, let’s say, a Roma, to this post. Once he assumes his post officially, for which the deadline is 10 March, Rakic will propose his deputies to the Assembly. According to Vladeta **Kostic**, the leader of the Serbian (Srpska) Civic Initiative, one of them will be a Serb, and the other one must be from a minority community. At the same time, he says: “Most of the Albanian municipalities do not have a Serb as the deputy mayor, they are mostly Ashkalis.” As far as the deputy head of the Assembly for communities is concerned, this person is elected by deputies from their ranks, at the proposal of the assembly speaker. The election here is narrowed to someone from Albanian parties that have five deputies or Bosniak Nezdad **Ugljanin**. “I will consult with everybody, and then I will present my proposal to the deputies,” said Ksenija **Bozovic** of the SDP Civic Initiative who was recently elected the speaker of the Kosovska Mitrovica Assembly. The SDP and Serbian Civic Initiatives signed a coalition agreement and if they would agree on these two posts, their proposal would have a majority since they have 12 out of 19 deputies.

**Kostunica: Harmful road towards the EU (*Tanjug*)**

Serbia will undergo big political and economic damage from EU membership, the leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) Vojislav **Kostunica** said. He said in Krusevac that if Serbia continues EU integration, unemployment will grow, and if it heads towards political neutrality, workers will have jobs. “Serbia will have big political and economic damage from EU membership, which is not guaranteed since negotiations mays last eternally, pointing out that 1,5 billion Euros has been lost since 2008 when the Stabilization and Association Agreement was signed,” said Kostunica at an election rally. He said that the fact there are no customs for agricultural products from the EU as of 1 January this year, marks the end of Serbian agriculture.

He warned that EU membership will leave Serbia without a good agreement on free trade with the Russian Federation. “Do I need to remind you that the EU was the one encouraging separatists in Pristina to first declare independence of Kosovo and Metohija, and then it supported them in this. Is there any other country that is an EU member, and there are 28 of them, that was demanded to first renounce part of the territory and then to become a member,” wondered Kostunica. He pointed out that these elections are important because, as a nation and state, we stand before a major milestone “whether we continue to tap through EU integrations or we stand as a free nation that cooperates with everybody.” Kostunica reiterated the already known position that the DSS advocates cooperation with all states in line with Serbia’s interests and that he is participating in these elections with the proposal of a new state policy that comes down to political neutrality.

**Zukorlic: It is easier with a strong Turkey (*Beta*)**

The main Mufti of the Islamic Community in Serbia Muamer **Zukorlic** has assessed that the strength of Bosniaks and Muslims in Sandzak depends from the strength of Turkey and the Turkish people. “If Turkey and the Turkish people are strong, then it will be easier for both the Bosniaks and Muslims of Sandzak,” Zukorlic said in Rozaje, at a ceremony where Turkish GOs and NGOs delivered gifts to young married Bosniak couples. Zukorlic called the present not to forget Sarajevo and Turkey and for Bosniaks-Muslims to keep together. Podgorica media reports that the donors from Turkey provided for 20 young married Bosniak couples furniture and household items, in the total amount of around 150,000 Euros.

**REGIONAL PRESS**

**Citizens protesting for 20th day on streets throughout B&H; conclusions of Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo accepted (*Beta*)**

Citizens’ protests continue today in several towns in B&H – Zenica, Mostar, and Sarajevo. The residents in Sarajevo blocked today the main road in front of the B&H Presidency building, where they are demanding resignations of all new authorities and the abolishment of ten cantons in the Federation B&H. The requests that were adopted in the Assembly of the Canton of Sarajevo are the establishment of an expert government, revision of salaries and benefits of public officials in the Canton of Sarajevo and their harmonization with the present economic situation, revision of privatization and establishment of an independent commission for establishing facts on the events of 7 February when three public institutions were burned down.

The Presiding of the Assembly of the Canton of Sarajevo Mirjana **Malic** has stated that the Collegium of the cantonal assembly accepted all four conclusions of the Plenum of Citizens of Sarajevo.

**Radmanovic: Large demonstrations on 1 March (*Beta*)**

Serb member of the B&H Presidency Nebojsa **Radmanovic** has stated that large demosntrations are being prepared for 1 March, whose goal is amendment of the B&H Constitution. “Large demonstrations are being prepared for 1 March, with the goal of returning to the Constitution of the B&H Republic. That is why our task is preservation of the Dayton peace agreement,” said Radmanovic. He assessed that “nothing is accidental” and that the pressure for amending the B&H Constitution is linked to the protests in the Federation B&H. “The main demand of the protests is to abolish the B&H Presidency, cantons,” he said.

The RS President Milorad **Dodik** gave his support to the proposed decision to confirm the statement of Nebojsa Radmanovic in connection with the recall of the B&H Consul-General in Chicago, Brane Pecanac, and said that we must not allow the balance established by the Dayton peace agreement to be disturbed. “This is not an issue of the government or the opposition, but of the RS, where there exist a government and opposition,” Dodik said, adding that the RS must demonstrate unity in defense of its basic interests. “This right and the so-called Entity vote are often under attack by those who want to revise the Dayton Constitution of B&H and install a completely different system of decision making – one of outvoting,” Dodik said. Dodik said that attempts to turn the B&H Council of Ministers into a government of B&H are unacceptable, since in that case the BiH Presidency would be disenfranchised. “The *Sejdic-Finci* issue was raised in order to re-design the B&H Presidency. Some are persistently trying to turn the decision in this case – the right of every person to run for office – into a reason for major constitutional change in B&H,” Dodik said. He said that the joint position which was built by consensus in the RS is of great importance, it being that the method of election of the members of B&H Presidency and the method of decision-making in the B&H Presidency cannot be changed. “The RS will not allow any violation of its rights, and a minimal violation of these rights is sufficient for the RS parliament to raise the issue of vital interest,” Dodik said.

**B&H: They are trying to seize RS jurisdiction (*Novosti*)**

After the situation in the Federation B&H has calmed down, a session of the House of Representatives in the B&H parliament was held in Sarajevo on Tuesday. The Republika Srpska (RS) MPs clearly told the session that they would not allow the seizing of entity jurisdictions and passing of laws on which the RS had not beed consulted. The Chairperson of the Joint Commission for Defense and Security of the B&H Parliamentary Assembly Dusanka **Majkic** said the RS representatives voted against the principles of the law on preventing money laundering and financing terrorist activities. “If the RS representatives don’t have an opportunity to take part in drafting a law that also refers to them, we don’t have the obligation to support them,” said Majkic. The RS government informed the B&H Ministry of Security that it doesn’t agree with the draft law, whose passing is the obligation of B&H based on the report of the Manival Committee that should have been completed by October 2012. The draft law defines the role of the financial-intelligence department of the B&H Agency for investigation and protection, as the central unit that receives, collects, records, analyzes, investigates and forwards results of analysis in this field. She said that one more reason why the RS representatives refused to support the mentioned law in the commission phase was that B&H was represented in the Manival Committee, a body of the Council of Europe that deals with preventing money laundering and financing terrorism, by members who weren’t confirmed by either the B&H Presidency or the Council of Ministers. “The RS finances its members on its own, who are trying to change the state made by the self-elected and incompetent B&H representatives,” said Majkic. According to her, the problem is that the draft law on preventing money laundering and financing terrorist activities doesn’t fulfill the criteria of any convention that it touches upon. She also noted that the B&H Ministry of Security has the smallest number of adopted laws in the Parliamentary Assembly, because it is constantly trying to assume jurisdictions. Noting that she had met with the delegation of the Manival Committee that is visiting B&H, Majkic suggested that representatives of all relevant institutions sit and try to agree by the end of the year, when a new visit of the Manival Committee to B&H has been announced.

**B&H: Associates of terrorists discovered (*Glas Srpske*)**

The B&H security services have discovered several more active associates of the Turkish humanitarian organization Insan Hak Huriet (IHH), which is suspected of supporting terrorists. This organization is also suspected of arms smuggling, writes ***Glas Srpske***. Citing its source, the daily writes that at issue are Aiman **Avadi** and a brother and sister from Saudia Arabia Nidal and Badia **Halil**. “There are indications that the three of them are involved, through the IHH, in arms smuggling and money laundering. Apart from that, they received B&H citizenship in an illegal manner,” an unnamed source told the daily. The source points out that Badia Halil has a very important role in laundering IHH money through a majority owner of one bank in Sarajevo. “This has been particularly intensified since the end of 2012,” said the source, adding that she took eight million dollars in Swiss banks from the account of the wife of her father Abu **Nidal**.

The brother and sister are the children of the once most wanted terrorist in the world Abu Nidal.

Badia Halil is married to B&H citizen Adnan **Buzar**, who is one the leaders of the Wahhabi movement in Austria and who is financing Wahhabis in B&H with the money originating from Saudia Arabia. Born in Riad, based on the decision of 6 May 1997 signed by the head of the Cantonal Interior Ministry of Sarajevo Ismet **Dahic**, she was approved birth registration in the Centar Municipality. Based on this she received B&H citizenship. She has residence in the Centar Municipality, but lives in Vienna. She has an apartment in Sarajevo, where she also received an ID card.

**Map without Serb victims in B&H (*Novosti*)**

The latest map of processed war crimes in B&H, composed by the OSCE, unambiguously confirms that the B&H Court and Prosecution have been selectively applying justice, whereby a new crime against Serb victims has been committed, representatives of the RS Association of the Families of Killed and Inmates told ***Novosti***. This map shows that the B&H Court and Prosecution have persistently ignored, from the war to this day, cases of war crimes against the Serbs. This is also supported by the fact that the Serbs have been convicted to a total of 927 years of prison sentence. The map deals with completed war crime cases, but the objection of the Republika Srpska is that OSCE experts have inappropriately and unprofessionally omitted locations of horrible crimes against the Serbs. The President of the RS Inmate Association Branislav **Dukic** tells ***Novosti*** that the OSCE map has in fact verified the political work of the B&H judiciary. “It turns out according to the work of the B&H Court and Prosecution that the Serbs killed themselves in the past war. Such practice is impermissible and it must stop if one wants to face the truth,” said Dukic. More than 1,200 war crimes cases wait to be processed by the B&H judiciary; only 240 have been processed over the past decade. The RS operative team for searching missing composed earlier an electronic map with a total of 1,600 individual and mass graves in B&H. This map clearly shows that the Serbs were brutally killed throughout B&H. Only in Sarajevo, they registered 333 individual and nine mass graves in which they discovered the bodies of 394 Serbs. The OSCE map of completed cases doesn’t contain Sijekovac, where the first war crime was committed in March 1992. There is not one single sentenced for the tortures and killings of Serbs in 126 Sarajevo camps, and for 3,200 killed Serbs of Podrinje. There are no sentenced for the brutal liquidation of immature soldiers of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) at the beginning of May1992 in Sarajevo or in Tuzla. Despite this, the Head of the OSCE Mission in B&H Fleeer **Barton** claims that the map is “comprehensive and objective.” The map shows that there are more than 120 cases in seven towns in which only Serbs were convicted. In the remaining 120 completed court proceedings, judgments were mostly for the Serbs. By March 2013, 235 people were sentenced to 2,262 years in prison. Data on national structure was not published. The President of the B&H Court Medzida **Kreso** says that judges do not decide what cases they will take, but that this depends mostly on the prosecutors. She complains that judges lack several court rooms so they can work better. The President of the B&H High Court and Prosecution Council Milorad **Novkovic** opines that the most complex and high-priority cases will not be processed most probably within two years, the time left for implementing the B&H Strategy for processing war crimes. Apparently, the families of Serb victims will wait for justice for a long time if they live to see it at all.

**INTERNATIONAL PRESS**

**Serbia and the EU: an uphill struggle (*European Voice*, by Alan Riley, 26 February 2014)**

*Brussels needs the courage and determination to push for effective changes in Serbia during the accession negotiations, writes Alan Riley, professor of law at the City University London*

The European Union opened membership negotiations with Serbia on 21 January. The EU had agreed to formal negotiations on EU membership as a reward for Serbia's agreement to normalise its trade and border relations with Kosovo. From a membership perspective, the ex-Yugoslav states are a much tougher prospect to bring into the Union than previous applicants.

The fundamental difficulty with all the ex-Yugoslav states (save for Slovenia, which escaped rapidly and lightly from the Yugoslav Federation in 1991) is that for them the end of communism meant war and disaster. The fall of the wall in the Baltic states, central and eastern Europe meant a positive shift toward the European liberal democratic values, assisted by EU transition projects, support from the United States, the returning diaspora, reformed communists and dissidents. By contrast, for the ex-Yugoslav states the fall of the wall meant collapse of the Federation, war, enlargement of criminal mafias and their penetration of state institutions. Serbia, which was at the core of the Balkans conflict, has made some progress in the 13 years since the fall of Slobodan Miloševic. Major war criminals including Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadžic have been handed over to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and relations with Kosovo have been normalised. Nevertheless, some of the dysfunctional behaviours from the time of the Balkan wars have continued and have become entrenched.

It is true that Serbia has sought to adopt some EU standards. However, the result of some of these reforms remains questionable. For instance, a reform of the judiciary in 2009 was supposed to result in a more professional and independent judiciary. However, rather than just introducing robust, transparent and objective criteria for the appointment of new judges the opportunity was taken to re-appoint the entire judiciary. Usually in democratic states, holders of judicial office are protected from dismissal save for grave cause and can be dismissed only via special procedures. The Serbian ‘reform' resulted in the dismissal of several hundred judges in one go with no objective or transparent criteria being applied. Rather than real reform in accordance with EU standards and liberal democratic values, ‘reform' was adopted in order to undertake what appeared to be a purge. There are, not surprisingly, very high levels of public concern over the integrity of the judiciary. A TNS Medium Gallup poll in June 2012 found that 87% believed that the judiciary had a valuable role to play in dealing with corruption, but also that the Serbian judiciary were too corrupt to play that role.

The saga of Article 359 of the Criminal Code is another telling example. Article 359's original legal purpose stems from communist times, to stop the looting of state assets by public officials when almost all businesses were owned by the state. It therefore imposed a duty on officials running these businesses not to benefit from running these businesses. This provision remained on the statute book after the end of communism and the liberalisation of the economy. As a business is supposed to be run for benefit and profit, Article 359 provided whoever controlled the state with a wonderfully broad provision to seize assets and remove opponents.

When the EU objected to Article 359, Serbia did reform the provision. However, it then introduced a new article – Article 234 of the Criminal Code – that had a similar effect. There are now a long list of business executives subject to criminal prosecution who face significant assets seizures, ranging from Miodrag Kostic of MK Group, Milija Babovic of Victoria Group and Vuk Hamovic of EFT Group to Serbia's richest man Miroslav Miškovic and his company Delta Holding. Although many of these executives were originally charged under Article 359, when the provision was amended their prosecutions were not withdrawn; instead, they were charged under Article 234.

In other words, EU pressure to reform Article 359 resulted not only in the provision's re-enactment as Article 234, but also resulted in the Serbian government further violating fundamental rights. Since Roman times, retroactive criminal charges have been considered to be a core breach of the rule of law.

Article 359 and its successor Article 234 are likely to make any foreign investor wary of doing deals in Serbia. Levels of foreign direct investment remain resolutely low, and are not likely to improve unless genuine reform of the civil justice system is undertaken. For negotiators in Brussels, the judicial dismissals and Article 359/234 sagas illustrate the nature of the battles they face in ensuring genuine compliance with EU rules and standards. It can only be hoped that Brussels has the courage and determination to use the accession negotiations to foster effective change and not merely accept formalist compliance with the EU's acquis communautaire. This is in the interest of both Serbia and the EU.

*Alan Riley is a professor of law at the City University London.*

**Female Bosnian Croat Fighter Accused of Death Cover-Up (*BIRN*, 26 February 2014)**

*The first witness at the trial of former Bosnian Croat fighter Indira Kameric for the abuse and rape of prisoners said she told him to give false evidence about a man who was beaten to death*

Witness Zeljko Dujanic testified at Kameric’s trial in Sarajevo on Tuesday that while he was detained at the police station in Bosanski Brod in August 1992, he was ordered to make a false statement about the killing of a fellow prisoner who died after being beaten up by police.

“In the morning we reported the death and then took him out. Someone from the police ordered us to take him out,” he said.

He explained he was one of several prisoners chosen at random by police to make a statement, and that a woman called Indira Vrbanjac (the defendant’s maiden name) came into the room and told them: “That man died of natural causes, right?”

“I understand it to mean [that I should] write as I was told,” said Dujanic, adding that he did so.

However he could not recognise the accused in court. He also said that she did not abuse him physically or mentally.

Kameric, a wartime member of the 101st Bosanski Brod Brigade of the Croatian Defence Council, is accused of participating in the physical and mental abuse of Serb and Bosniak civilians and prisoners of war who were unlawfully detained at the police station and the FK Polet football stadium in Bosanski Brod from April to October 1992.

She is also charged with having participated and assisted in the rape and sexual abuse of detainees.

The trial resumes on March 13.

**Bosnia-Herzegovina is a failed utopian experiment (*Journal Pioneer*, by Henry Srebrnik, 23 February 2014)**

A former Yugoslav republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina (usually called Bosnia-Herzegovina) has hobbled along as a failed state since it declared its independence in 1992.

It had been an area of mixed population within Communist Yugoslavia, comprising Muslim Bosniaks, almost half the population; Orthodox Serbs, at 37 per cent; and Catholic Croats, at 14 per cent. Many lived together in mixed cities such as the capital, Sarajevo, and even ethnic intermarriages were not uncommon.

But it all quickly came undone – mainly because only the republic’s Bosniaks wanted a sovereign state. Croats wished to join Croatia while Serb nationalists, who wanted to bring Serbian-majority areas into a greater Serbia, began to engage in ethnic cleansing.

The fierce rivalries between the three groups led to a savage three and a half year war in which about 100,000 people were killed. A majority of the dead were Muslim Bosniaks; this included the massacre of some 8,000 Bosniak men and boys massacred by Serb forces at Srebrenica in July 1995. At least a million more Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs were driven from their homes, while much of the country’s infrastructure was destroyed.

Under intense American and European pressure, including a bombing campaign against Serb Bosnian forces, the Dayton Peace Accords were signed in November 1995, finally ending the fighting.

A few days later, President Bill Clinton hailed the agreement, declaring that the people of Bosnia now “have a chance to remind the world that just a few short years ago the mosques and churches of Sarajevo were a shining symbol of multiethnic tolerance, that Bosnia once found unity in its diversity.”

As well, NATO deployed an Implementation Force (IFOR) of nearly 60,000 troops to Bosnia. Later, a smaller Stabilization Force (SFOR) took on the task.

But the decentralized political system that the agreement engineered has entrenched rather than healed ethnic divisions.

The peace agreement retained Bosnia-Herzegovina’s international boundaries but created two distinct geographic entities within the country, a joint Croat-Bosniak-run Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, itself subdivided into 10 separate Croat and Bosniak cantons; and a Republika Srpska adjoining Serbia itself. The Brcko district in the northeast became a separate self-governing administrative unit.

The result was a bizarre political system, since in effect this was in all but name a partition.

The central government’s power is highly limited, as the country is largely decentralized. On the national level, there is a bicameral parliament and a three-person presidency, made up of a Bosniak, a Serb and a Croat; the chair rotates every eight months. The current incumbent is Zeljko Komsic, a Croat.

However, the country’s two parts have their own presidents and parliaments, and these are responsible for most administrative functions, including policing, education, health, and judicial courts.

Sarajevo is the capital of the entire country and of the Bosniak-Croat entity. The government of the Serb republic is based in Banja Luka.

The entire political structure is supervised by the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, selected from a European country by an international Peace Implementation Council. Valentin Inzko, an Austrian diplomat, is the current incumbent. He has the power to “compel the entity governments to comply with the terms of the peace agreement,” including the dismissal of elected and non-elected officials.

In effect, he is the final authority, and so the country is in reality a European protectorate.

Political scientists Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western in their September-October 2009 Foreign Affairs article “The Death of Dayton” noted that Bosnia was “once the poster child for international reconstruction efforts” and was considered “proof that under the right conditions the international community could successfully rebuild conflict-ridden countries.”

It didn’t work out that way. Bosnian Croat and Serb nationalists continued to block the emergence of a unified Bosnian state. Nationalist parties gained sweeping control of state-run enterprises, government jobs and the issuing of lucrative state contracts.

The multiple layers of government have led to corruption and economic stagnation, and today the country of 3.9 million people stands on the brink of collapse, despite having received billions of dollars in aid.

With unemployment at 44 percent and one in five people living below the poverty line, Bosnians have recently taken to the streets in a number of cities to vent their anger.

In 2004, NATO handed over peace stabilization duties to a European Union force (EUFOR), now numbering some 600 troops, but backed up by “over-the-horizon” reserves, allowing a rapid surge in numbers if needed. Renewed warfare is only avoided thanks to their presence.

Even Lewis Carroll couldn’t have created this Alice-in-Wonderland state.

*Henry Srebrnik is a professor of political science at the University of Prince Edward Island*

**Bosnia: The European unrest we should be talking about (*Salon*, by Natasha Lennard, 24 February 2014)**

*Fierce anti-government protests this month have a class consciousness lacking in Ukrainian revolt narratives*

While the U.S. media focuses on ongoing turmoil in the Ukraine, with an uptick in Cold War-style geopoliticking, another Eastern European nation has been aflame with protest this month. Anti-government protests in Bosnia, involving tens of thousands of people, have focused on the fierce inequality and neoliberalism marking the postwar Balkan state. As anarchist writer B. Traven noted for CrimethInc, “Unlike the recent conflicts in Ukraine, this movement has eschewed nationalistic strife to focus on class issues. In a region infamous for ethnic bloodshed, this offers a more promising direction for the Eastern European uprisings to come.”

In early February, protests — initially organized around solidarity with workers who have for some years mobilized against the privatization of Bosnian companies — took a violent turn when police brutally cracked down on demonstrators. Detailing the February upheavals and their swift escalation, Predrag Kovacevic noted:

[I]n Tuzla (formerly a large industrial centre), the workers of a bankrupt factory joined forces with an organisation of young activists to carry out a protest of relatively minor proportions in the city centre. Unexpectedly, the demonstrators were joined by huge numbers of people sharing their grievances. Some of the messages that were conveyed that first day were: the demand for a revision of privatization throughout the country, an increase of the minimum wage and the prosecution of corrupt politicians. It was clear from that afternoon on that nothing would be the same in Bosnia. Within the next two days, most key government buildings were in flames and protesters had occupied government buildings in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Mostar. Other protests were carried out in a whole range of small towns.

The significance of the Bosnian revolt is multifaceted. Commentators have noted that the escalated unrest marks the failure of the Dayton Peace Agreement (brokered by the U.S. to end the 1992-1995 Bosnian war). “While Dayton helped stop the ‘ethnic cleaning’ and mass murder that drew global media attention, it also created a largely dysfunctional and struggling state,” wrote Georgetown law professor Mark V. Vlasic. Vlasic, writing a HuffPo column, called upon the U.S. to offer bureaucratic intervention, and for a European-style technocracy to be put in place. Vlasic’s assumption — that Bosnia should go the way of its neighbors toward a neoliberal nation state model — does not reflect much of the prevailing sentiment of the current unrest. A liberal or neoliberal reading of the Bosnian protests, however, misses their significance as a class struggle. As Kovacevic put it, “the leftist, proletarian character of the protests in Bosnia asserted itself over and over again”:

The liberal and libertarian currents, of course, saw the protests as a message against the corrupt state bureaucracy, the massive public sector and the meddling of the state with the free market. But although there were some anti-government demands among the protesters, most of them were attacking the government for protecting the wealthy tycoons who emerged from the wars of the early 1990s. With their obscene wealth, they bought factories for peanuts and then sold them to foreign investors for five to ten times the sum, thus multiplying their loot from the war. Of course, no liberal commentator tackled the question of the protesters’ demands for the revision of privatisation – and if they did, it was merely written off as a Utopian idea incapable of yielding any productive results.

The limits of Dayton in maintaining Balkan peace have not been determined by corruption and greed alone. A process of privatization and wealth concentration has left the Bosnian people impoverished and unemployed. The situation carries echoes of recent Greek history. As such, commentators urging the installation of a technocratic government should be wary of lessons from beleaguered Greece. And in Bosnia too (as in Greece, as in Ukraine) a rise in right-wing demagoguery has accompanied the social crisis. Interestingly, though, the Bosnian unrest has been colored by rhizomatic organizing and a revolution in leadership predicated on placing power in the hands of the Bosnian people. As one participant told B.Traven:

Protests are still going on, and people have organized themselves in plenums [assemblies]. Four cantonal governments have been forced to resign. Two of them are negotiating with plenums about forming governments of people who are not active members of any political parties. The authorities are fighting back hard—spreading fear of another civil war, arresting people, beating them, pressing charges for terrorism and attack on constitutional order… The movement is still continuing on a daily basis, the protests as well as the meetings of the plenums. The demands that are being made by the plenums are clearly social: the revision of the privatization process and the like. Politicians are terrified of losing their privileges, their positions, their wealth, and their freedom; this is causing different political parties to unite against their own people. They are using the mainstream media to discredit protests and plenum participants.

While the attacks on government buildings and the street clashes have quieted in the last week, the unrest in Bosnia is far from over and the political situation remains in flux. With media focus squared on the Ukraine — unrest all-too marked by nationalistic fervor — it is worth keeping an eye on Bosnia, where upheaval is opening up new modes of political organization with a fierce class consciousness.

*Natasha Lennard is an assistant news editor at Salon, covering non-electoral politics, general news and rabble-rousing*

**The western Balkans are in danger of sliding backwards (*The Statesman*, by David Clark, 24 February 2014)**

The EU cannot afford a wait and see approach that creates the risk of economic divergence and renewed instability.

Fifteen years after the wars that devastated and divided the former Yugoslavia, the countries of the western Balkans are facing a different kind of challenge: the risk of permanent marginalisation as part of Europe’s “super-periphery”, a zone of stagnation beyond EU’s troubled southern rim. That has been one of the under-reported consequences of an economic crisis that has simultaneously derailed the region’s efforts to catch up with the rest of Europe while sapping the EU’s enthusiasm to admit new member states. It is the reason why all seven Prime Ministers from the region are gathering in London today for an economic development conference hosted by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

A defining feature of transition economies is their ability to achieve growth rates that put them on a convergence path with the highest income countries. That is what the countries of Central and Eastern Europe managed to achieve in the years before and after EU accession. Judged by this measure the economic transition of the western Balkans has stalled with a double-dip recession, inadequate investment flows and unemployment running at around a quarter of the adult population. Growth is just beginning to return, but at levels that effectively amount to stagnation. Without a return to a higher growth path, the countries of the region will remain stuck at less than a third of the EU’s average wealth per capita.

It should be acknowledged that the nations of the western Balkans face significant economic difficulties that are not of their own making. Their relative distance from the EU’s largest and wealthiest markets and their proximity to Greece mean that they have felt the impact of Europe’s economic crisis more than most. But as a paper published by the London School of Economics last year found, there is a specific “western Balkans effect” that inhibits inward investment and retards economic development. This is the result of serious deficiencies in politics and governance that the leaders meeting in London need to address.

The first aim should be to reduce the political risk factors involved in doing business in the region. The Balkan wars are a fading memory, but there has been little in the way of real reconciliation. The different ethnic communities of Bosnia-Herzegovina continue to live separate lives. Serbia has normalised relations with Kosovo, but refuses to recognise it. Even Greece’s unresolved objection to the description of FYROM as Macedonia disfigures the politics of the region. As long these dividing lines and enmities remain frozen, investment will look like a risk.

One legacy of this political division has been to limit the scope of regional economic integration, raising costs and reducing opportunities for potential investors. Despite laudable initiatives like the Regional Co-operation Council and the Central European Free Trade Agreement, good intentions are not always matched by delivery and trade between countries in the region is far lower than it should be. Efforts to promote reconciliation and deeper economic linkages should go hand in hand, helping to convince investors that renewed conflict is unlikely.

The second issue that needs to be addressed is the absence of strong, market supporting institutions, like clean government and independent courts, needed to uphold the rule of law and protect property rights. Problems like corruption and the lack of judicial independence are responsible for a business climate that, according to international indices, falls far short of European standards. The political elites are viewed as predatory, using legal and administrative tools to intimidate businesses and secure financial and political favours.

Some efforts have been made to address these problems. But too often reform is superficial, introducing new laws and procedures without any change of underlying behaviour. For example, the European Parliament expressed concern about provisions in Serbia’s criminal code that give the authorities broad scope to criminalise commercial activities that are considered perfectly normal in any functioning market economy. Serbia revised its code and then reopened all of its existing cases under the new Article 234. An estimated 1,500 business people are currently under investigation (including Serbia’s second wealthiest entrepreneur, Miroslav Miskovic) often for doing little more than making a profit.

This creates real policy problems for the EU. Faced with its own internal pressures and economic difficulties, it needs to export the European model of governance, rather than import more problems from the western Balkans. Further enlargement will not therefore happen quickly or easily to a region with mass unemployment and limited economic prospects. But the EU cannot afford a wait and see approach that creates the risk of economic divergence and renewed instability across the western Balkans. It needs to redouble efforts to promote lasting change and real economic convergence

The traditional legalistic process in which the terms of accession are laid out and the member states are expected to demonstrate compliance on their own initiative won’t work any more. Getting countries of the region up to European standards will require a much more intensive form of supervision and a willingness by the EU to be firmer and more interventionist in dealing with the most serious deficiencies. But the political will to do that unless the region’s leaders first show that they mean business. That should be the message coming out of today’s meeting.

*David Clark is the founder and editor of Shifting Grounds, and served as special adviser to Robin Cook at the Foreign Office from 1997 to 2001*

**Montenegro Government Faces No-Confidence Motion (*BIRN*, by Dusica Tomovic, 26 February 2014)**

*The opposition Socialist People's Party is collecting MPs' signatures in a bid to gather enough votes to oust Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic's government and spark new elections*

Montenegro's opposition Socialists on Monday announced plans to submit a no-confidence motion to parliament in an attempt to get rid of Djukanovic's government, which it said could not ensure economic growth.

The Socialists cited the failure to introduce electoral reform and the fiasco surrounding the bankrupt aluminium plant KAP, one of the country’s most important industrial concerns, which is now being sold off.

Djukanovic said however that he does not see any reason for a no-confidence vote.

"At this point, first of all we should be committed to the upcoming local elections [which have not yet been scheduled] and our obligations regarding the upcoming NATO summit [in September]," he said on Tuesday, although he also insisted that his government was ready for the possibility of such a vote.

Velizar Kaludjerovic of the Socialists meanwhile challenged parliamentary speaker Ranko Krivokapic to support the no-confidence vote.

Krivokapic’s Social Democratic Party has often criticised decisions made by Djukanovic's cabinet in recent months, blaming the government for the poor state of the economy and slow legislative reform.

"Launching the proceedings for a no-confidence motion, we will provide a concrete opportunity for Ranko Krivokapic to confirm his ratings [in opinion polls] and vote for the recall of the government," Kaludjerovic said on Monday.

The opposition Positive party announced on Monday that it will support the initiative, but the main opposition Democratic Front has not announced its position yet because it is boycotting parliament over the failure to adopt EU-backed electoral reform.

In 2012, the opposition also initiated a no-confidence motion, in response to the government’s decision to repay part of the KAP plant’s debt, but the proposal did not pass in parliament.

**Montenegro: Mafia as Guarantor of Euro-Atlantic Integration (*Global Research*, by Boris Aleksic, 25 February 2014)**

On April 30, 1999 NATO aviation delivered two strikes against the township Murino, a small resort in eastern Montenegro. Civilians died, including three children who went to grade school. Fifteen years have passed. Milo Djukanovic, the Montenegrin dictator, said that joining NATO is a political priority for his country. It is emphasized that 2014 is a decisive year because Montenegro must be ready for the NATO’s September summit to be held in the United Kingdom. The expansion of the Alliance to the East will be an issue on the agenda.

The authorities affirm that the country has completely changed during in the last 15 years. Podgorica has recognized the secession of Kosovo and forgotten those who lost their lives during the NATO aggression. With German funds it is ready to erect a memorial to Hitler’s fascists, who occupied Montenegro during World War II. It is planned to reconstruct the German Nazi soldiers’ cemetery near the Golubovci airport, which was bombed by NATO in 1999.

The old and new fascists have one thing in common – they share the feeling of hatred towards the Russian people. Hitler eliminated the League of Nations. The NATO’s aggression against Yugoslavia has drastically diminished the role of the United Nations on the world arena, as well as the influence of United Nations Charter on international law. It’s not an occasion the US intelligence services during the Second World War were created with the help of German generals: Heinrich Müller, Reinhard Gehlen, Baron Otto von Bolschwing and Emil Augsburg.

Montenegro has really changed during the last dozen of years, but Milo Djukanovic is still the same. In his time he was assigned the role an ideal partner of NATO. There is a very important historic aspect to be remembered here. During WWII, the United States resorted to the help of mafia while liberating Italy. According to Swiss professor Daniele Ganser, the alliance between Italian mafia and the United States, as well as mafia and NATO still exists. For instance, Washington uses criminal structures to eliminate its opponents – independent politicians and journalists in Europe. The United States and NATO rely on mafia in the Balkans.

They have brought terrorists, drug dealers and illegal traders of human organs to power in Pristina on the territory of occupied Kosovo and Metohija.

According to documents in the possession of Italy’s prosecutor’s office and inquiries of independent journalists, Milo Djukanovic has had close ties with Italian and American mafia since a long time. A 409 – page report is added to the indictment brought by Italian prosecution.

Prosecutor Giuseppe Scelsi has formally stated that Milo Djukanovic is the top boss of Montenegrin mafia.

In the 1980s well-known mafiosi Della Torre organized large heroin supplies from Italy to the US East Coast. There was solid evidence that Della Torre was involved in money laundering. He got profit from heroin trade through Swiss banks, but Americans never brought charges against him with a string attached – he had to cooperate with the US special services. In 1996 the Italian mafiosi started to run his own chain involved in counterfeit cigarettes business. As sources confirm, he worked with Milo Djukanovic. The counterfeit cigarettes trade brought millions of dollars into the pockets of US intelligence. Many of truth pursuers, who stood in the way of the CIA and mafia alliance, paid with their lives, including two journalists: Dusko Jovanovic, the Editor of Montenegrin newspaper Dan, and Ivo Pukanic, Editor-in-Chief of Croatian weekly magazine National. Pukanic has published facts providing ample evidence of the Djukanovic and Subotiæ involvement in illegal cigarette trade.

In March 2011 US Senator Richard Lugar formally proposed to make Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia and Montenegro full-fledged NATO members. According to him, the expansion is of crucial importance for security and democracy in the Balkans. At the beginning of October 2013 Lugar met Djukanovic and said that «Montenegro is the number one candidate for membership in NATO». At the very same time Italian prosecutor Giuseppe Scelsi, who possessed irrefutable evidence of the fact that Djukanovic was involved in criminal activities, was charged in October 2013 with abuse of office. Today Washington lets Djukanovic know that if he makes Montenegro a NATO member, then all the accusations related to criminal activities will be lifted…

In 1999 NATO started its expansion to the Balkans by committing a grave crime – an aggression against Yugoslavia. Nowadays the creation of criminal regimes on the territory of former Yugoslavia is a logical continuation of its policy.

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