

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

Bosnian Elections:
Representatives of Bosnian Political Parties



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CONTENTS

	Page
Statement of Ljilana Bubic, Member of the Republican Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina	2
Statement of Adnan Jahic, President of the Party for Democratic Action in Tuzla	3
Statement of Hasib Salkic, Secretary General of the Liberal Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina	3
Statement of Zdenko Kubicek, Member of the Executive Board of the Croatian Party of Rights	4
Statement of Mirjana Malic, Member of the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina	5
Statement of Zoran Tomic of the Croatian Democratic Union—Bosnia-Herzegovina	18

BOSNIAN ELECTIONS: REPRESENTATIVES OF BOSNIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

THURSDAY, MAY 30, 1996

Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

Washington, DC

The Commission met, pursuant to adjournment, at 2:03 p.m., in room 2255, Rayburn House Office Building, Robert Hand, Commission staff advisor, presiding.

Mr. *Hand*. I'd like to welcome everybody here to the latest of several briefings that the Helsinki Commission is having on the Bosnian elections, which are scheduled, according to the Dayton Agreement, to be held by mid-September, although it's not news to anybody that that date is being questioned right now.

We have today with us a select group of representatives of political parties from Bosnia-Herzegovina that were brought over to the United States by the Center for Civil Society in Southeastern Europe, whose president is Max Primerac. The representatives of these parties were brought over under a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development.

This is a rather diverse group of individuals, some representing parties that are in power—others, parties that are not—and from various ethnic constituencies. We chose, of this group of about ten, the five of them that speak English, just to facilitate a briefing like this, to briefly make a presentation and describe very quickly what their party is and what it's about, but then focusing more specifically on how they see the Bosnian elections coming about and their thoughts about having them this coming fall.

I should say that some of the other people that are part of this group are in the audience, and I think there are some people who can do some interpreting for them as well. So I don't want to exclude them at all. If you hear anything and feel strongly about saying something, you can feel free to speak as well.

But let me introduce our panelists for today.

We first have Ljilana Bubic, of the Republican Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina. She's based in Sarajevo.

Then we have Adnan Jahic, who's the President of the Party of Democratic Action in Tuzla.

Hasib Salkic of the Liberal Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina; he serves as the Secretary General of that party.

Then we have Zdenko Kubicek of the Croatian Party of Rights of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He's a member of the executive board.

And then, finally, Mirjana Malic of the Social Democracy Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I think we'll go in that order. If each one of you could make a presentation of about 5 minutes so that we'd have plenty of time following for some questions and answers. I think that would be the best way to proceed.

So we'll start with you, Ms. Bubic.

Ms. *Bubic*. First, ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to express my gratitude for everything the United States has already done for multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I'll try to express my viewpoint on the upcoming elections that are to be held by mid-September. Unless the three major conditions are fulfilled, the elections might be premature. The elections themselves are obviously necessary, but not before anything else. For that reason, I could agree with Mr. Morton Abramowitz, who says that the failure to hold the elections in September won't bring the Dayton accords to ruin, but the premature holding of them could.

The free, fair, and democratic elections cannot be conducted while the people suspected of war crimes—such as Karadzic, Mladic, and others—control at least half the territory of the country.

The second condition for free and fair elections is the proper functioning of the federation.

Last, but not least, an important condition is the status of the opposition parties that have to run the election campaign with almost no possibility of fund-raising in a country economically exhausted by war, and with rather limited access to mass media.

I hope that the OSCE will do its best to solve these three major problems by political means, because these problems represent a real burden—not only for all those who live in Bosnia, not only for Bosnian refugees scattered all over the world, not only for the Balkans, not only for Europe, but for the rest of the world as well.

I'll finish with a quotation by Hemingway: "Don't ask for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for you."

Thank you.

Mr. *Hand*. OK, thank you.

Actually, before moving on, would you want to say just a word or two about the Republican Party, its membership, its size?

Ms. *Bubic*. Yes. I would be very glad to say something about the Republican Party, but what I suggest now is let other people talk. I want to explain why. There are other members of other political parties present here who are not able to express themselves because they don't speak English, and we have agreed that it wouldn't be fair to promote our parties. If the audience is interested and asks questions later on, we may honor that. Is it OK?

Mr. *Hand*. Yes, that's fine.

Ms. *Bubic*. OK.

Mr. *Salkic*. Then explain which political parties we have in Bosnia. It will be very useful.

Mr. *Hand*. OK. If you want, you could stand up so that people could talk to you afterwards. We have Ibrahim Mujezinovic of the Union of Bosnian Social Democrats; Izet Zigic, of the Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina, based in Tuzla as well.

Mr. *Salkic*. That is the political party of former Prime Minister Silajdzic.

Mr. *Hand*. Of Prime Minister Silajdzic, yes.

Then we have Ivan Brigic, of the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina; and we have Radoslav Marjanovic of the People's Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina. And then, Petar Jovic of the Citizens Democratic Party.

Is there anybody that I missed from the group?

Mr. *Salkic*. Mr. Zoran Tomic.

Mr. *Hand*. OK. Zoran Tomic of the Croatian Democratic Union—Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. *Jahic*. So we can continue?

Mr. *Hand*. Yes.

Mr. *Jahic*. Well, first of all, I'd like to greet you all and thank you for coming to this briefing.

There are three major things that I want to point out now regarding the issue of Bosnian elections:

First of all, it is of essential significance for the future existence of Bosnia and Herzegovina that the international community, and especially the U.S. administration, should not, under any conditions, accept the eventual reelection of someone from Pale's political structure, someone who is supported by Karadzic, Mladic, and other hard-liner Serbian extremists. Practically speaking, it will be very difficult to prevent those people from participating in the elections. But from my point of view, they have to be totally politically isolated so as to make enough room for the political strengthening of the moderate Serbian garniture from Banja Luka. I think it's very important to mention.

The second thing that I want to emphasize now is that the international community and the U.S. administration mustn't allow these elections to become the means of political legalization of the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In other words, every Bosniac, Croat, or Serb who expresses his wish to vote in the place and for the place—that means for the community where he lived before the aggression—should be allowed, should be enabled to do so. It's very important that, for example, every Bosniac who lived in Zvornik before the aggression now has the right to vote for the new Zvornik municipality, administration, or government, because it's the only way of preventing Zvornik from becoming and staying an exclusively Serbian city. It's one example, and it could be applied in every particular nation, every particular city concerned here.

Of course, we have to observe these upcoming elections as the new phase in the Bosnian political process. But it is of extreme importance for the international political factors to understand that they only have to support the forces of reintegration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and not the forces of destruction of the country which still, to a significant extent, depend on the political, economical, and military support of the international community.

Thank you.

Mr. *Salkic*. I'm Hasib Salkic from the Liberal Party.

In Bosnia we are aware that we have peace due to the Dayton Agreement. Really the war is over in that area, and I'm very thankful to the American people for support

and to your government for leadership in that process. But we are in the beginning of that process because, as you know, just a few days ago, the Serbs expelled 150 Muslims from Teslic; and you must take it into account.

I would like to emphasize that we are satisfied with the military part of the Dayton Agreement, but with the civilian part we have many problems, especially relating to the upcoming election. Among other conditions, I would like to add three of them.

First is the necessity of immediate economic assistance of the international community to the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, but without blackmailing. Is that correct? Blackmailing money.

The second one is the politicization of the army's structure and other professional groups like journalists, lawyers, and, of course, police and the legal system. Army generals, high-ranking policemen, and the other professionals can't be involved in the political life of Bosnia.

A third one is a suggestion that war criminals are not to participate in upcoming elections. As you know, they have a very strong influence in Bosnia. Under those circumstances, we are not going to have free and fair elections.

I was in a position in the past 2 or 3 weeks to be in the Republika Srpska. I would like to say that the political atmosphere is much better at this moment than, let's say, 1 or 2 months ago.

Mr. *Hand*. OK, thank you.

Mr. Kubicek?

Mr. *Kubicek*. To open, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to give our opinion—although 5 minutes is not too much, but better to have 5 minutes here than a lot of time in other, less important places.

I would like to emphasize two of the key issues regarding the long-term prospects of the Bosnians now.

The first one is that now peace is really in our country. We all hope that this peace is not a temporary one. One of the basic factors in keeping this peace in our country is involvement—the new way of the international community involvement. In this case, I think definitely that it was under the UNPROFOR, under the United Nations peacekeeping forces. I can tell you that your American boys are doing a great job in Bosnia, and they are doing it with a lot of decisiveness as this job should be done. Their engagement in this case—in Bosnia-Herzegovina—is giving us a basic background for a normal life, and I mean a normal economic and political life, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The second point I'd like to emphasize here is the Dayton Agreement—again, a long-term prospect—and the election process in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I'm sure that there are two things that should be emphasized where the Dayton Agreement is concerned. The first one, according to the Dayton Agreement, is that we have peace now. That's the most important issue now in Bosnia-Herzegovina. But at the same time we have separate, distinctive parts of the Dayton Agreement. There are a lot of the seeds of future conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina. I'm not going to say it because of the percentage of the territories that is devoted to one or the other side. But I think that a great deal of the Dayton Agreement is rewarding aggression, and there is no doubt about that. In that respect, I suppose there are the seeds of future conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Thank you very much.

Mr. *Hand*. OK, thank you.

And last, Ms. *Malic*?

Ms. *Malic*. Ladies and gentlemen, it's my honor to address all of you today. As a member of the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina, allow me to say a few sentences.

Our program guidelines are in accordance with the Dayton Peace Agreement, strongly advocating the respect and implementation of human rights and freedom in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, sovereign, and democratic state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is our opinion that fair and free elections will mark the beginning, not the end, of the development of democracy in Bosnia. For Bosnians to fulfill that role, several conditions will have to be met:

First of all, there must be freedom of speech and public expression, meaning more independent media.

Then there must be freedom of movement and the return of all exiled people to their homes. That would give all citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina equal chance to make their choice clearly.

Of course, our party strongly supports the principle that the initiators of the war, the advocates of the war, and the war criminal should not be allowed to take part in the elections.

We hope that international engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina—primarily run by the United States—will contribute to the creation of the conditions of free and fair elections. Such elections, properly conducted, would mark the end of disintegration of Bosnia and the beginning of its development as a multi-national, secular and democratic state in Europe.

Thank you.

Mr. *Hand*. OK, thank you.

If I could, before turning to the audience for questions, I'd like to ask the first question myself. It's for anybody on the panel who would like to answer it. I'd like to hear in a little bit more detail what the situation is for independent media in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in either one of the entities. What is missing? What is it specifically that the international community can do in this area?

Ms. *Bubic*. I was the first one who mentioned that problem, so I think I'm supposed to answer it first.

Mr. *Hand*. It's up to you.

Ms. *Bubic*. First of all, most of us don't have a lot of information about how things are going on the territory of the so-called Republika Srpska. We don't have information whether the opposition parties are there. We have some information, and there are some signs that there are some opposition parties over there, but we don't know what is their access to mass media. We are not able to hear or to listen to them through the mass media on the territory of the so-called Republika Srpska.

As for information, the status of the political parties on the territory of the federation, the oppositional parties don't have much of a chance to have everyday access to mass media. Three or 5 minutes a day, or 1 hour per week, was the norm before my leaving Bosnia-Herzegovina and coming here. Why? The parties that are in power have much more opportunity to get to the mass media, and much more opportunity to inform people

about their activities. The problem is that the opposition political parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina don't have money. You are all fully aware how money is really needed when you want to advertise your program, if you want to advertise your political platform, or your party.

So that is the problem I put as one of the conditions that have to be solved. I do hope that Mr. Bildt, Mr. Frowick, and some others, will do their best to solve that problem as soon as possible. That's my explanation.

Mr. *Hand*. Anybody else like to comment at all? I thought maybe Mr. Kubicek—

Mr. *Kubicek*. I'm going to try to summarize this. As far as I know, in the territory under the Bosnian Federation, there's no official pressure against the freedom of the media. The problem is of a financial nature: media assets are not supported by the official governing rules, and parties do not have the opportunities they could if they were supported financially. In the territory of the Serbs, controlled by the Serbs, I'm going to tell you short: There is no free media.

Mr. *Jahic*. I just want to say some things. As far as these major media are concerned—the state television and state radio station—from my point of view, there are no indications of favoritism of some parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The only fact that we have to accept is that the representatives of the states—actually, the major politicians of Bosnia-Herzegovina—also belong to certain parties. So if they are on the media as the representatives of the state, some can't accept that perhaps they are representing also their own parties, which is not true.

So from my point of view, we can't say that we have some kind of favoring some parties against some others.

Mr. *Salkic*. He's from a ruling party.

Mr. *Jahic*. Yes, of course.

Mr. *Hand*. Did you want to make a comment as well?

Mr. *Salkic*. I had a chance to be in the territories in the Republika Srpska, and really, they are in a situation that they don't have any access to media. I'm talking about opposition political parties, individuals and groups.

The last time they had some independent newspapers, and some of newspapers are from, let's say, Serbia and Montenegro, or from Bosnia. They have some of them at this moment. They are waiting for the so-called Channel Two, which will be established by Mr. Bildt and his office. He will install the second channel on state TV. Under those circumstances, all political parties from both sides will have access to the media if we are talking about the whole country.

In a federation, we really have a better situation because, let's say, my political party, we are not in a position to be expelled from that access during the war; and at the same time we have many independent radio and TV stations on a local and regional level. The government is not in a position to control the media in Bosnia and to make absolute pressure. Is it correct? I don't know.

Ms. *Bubic*. May I add something?

Mr. *Hand*. Yes, very quickly.

Ms. *Bubic*. When I said that we are not equal regarding the access to the mass media, I'm going to explain in more detail. For instance, the leader of the Republican Party—I didn't insist because I was presented to you as a member of the Republican

Party, but now I feel that I have to. The leader of the Republican Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Stjepan Kljuic, is a member of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The members of the presidency are equal; they are a collective presidency, represent a collective presidency.

If you want to check my statement, just have a look at the mass media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and see how much time and how many times a week you can see Mr. Kljuic on the TV. I repeat, he's a member of the presidency. How much attention is paid to what he says and to what he asks for or struggles for?

Mr. *Hand*. OK, thank you.

Let me now turn it over to the audience to ask questions. If you are called upon, could you just stand up and present yourself, and state who you are or who you represent? When asking the question, either direct it at one of the panelists, or all, or whoever would want to, but be specific in that regard as well.

Who would like to ask a question?

Yes, sir?

Questioner. I guess I will open this up to everybody. I don't know who might want to respond. My name is Will Bowen.

As far as the Serbs in Bosnia go, they have to be represented in the elections, but since they were so involved in the aggression in the country, how will it be separated out so not to reward those that are thought to be war criminals and yet to allow the democratic process to proceed with those Serbs that are indeed peaceful? How do the parties hope to incorporate the Serbs into the process of the election in Bosnia?

Mr. *Hand*. OK, thank you. Who would like to respond?

Mr. *Jahic*. Well, it's an extremely difficult question because we have two groups of Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have Serbs on the territory of the federation, and we can't say that they represent the majority of the Serbian population in Bosnia, because the majority of the Serbian population in Bosnia is on the territory of the Republika Srpska.

I hope that major factors—the foreign political factors and also these, our Bosnian political factors—will contribute to the differentiation between the Serbs who are Bosnian-oriented and those Serbs who are mostly concentrated around Pale's political structure, who actually started this war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We can't accept just to isolate Karadzic and Mladic, and to say now we have the preconditions for fair and free elections. It simply is not enough.

You can't have Biljana Plasic as the negotiator from the Serbian side, because she, or perhaps Mr. Momcil Krajsnik, actually represent the same state of mind, the same political structure, and there is no essential difference between these politicians. That's why I think that it's very important to support those forces in the Serbian entity, in the Republika Srpska, who are, to some extent, devoted to the principles of Bosnian integrity or Bosnia-reintegration. I think there are some of these forces that are present today in Banja Luka. Perhaps my colleague, Mr. Salkic, can say something more precise regarding that.

Mr. *Salkic*. First you must know the peace agreement. At this moment we have two parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. One is the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the other one is the Republika Srpska. There are not any formal relationships between those two parts. At this moment we haven't a chance for integration. After the election, we will have

gathered—is it correct—a parliament and then the central government. After that we will start with some kind of relationship on a political, economic level, and we will have the same roads. After that we will start with a process of reintegration of Bosnia.

I do believe, I do hope, that we have a chance to do it in the future—not in the near future, but in the future.

Mr. *Kubicek*. If I could tell you something? We made a decision not to overlap in the topics that we are going to cover. Before, we said—everybody tried to point out there is no free election until the war criminals are arrested and in the hands of justice. I think nobody pointed seriously, but we really share the same opinion. There are no pre-elections before the most important points of this Dayton Agreement would be fulfilled. One of the most important is that war criminals have to be detained, have to be responsible for everything they did. That's one of the things.

Another point I would like to emphasize is there has to be a time gap between arresting, eliminating—I don't know, I'm not going to say what kind—but eliminating war criminals in the elections in order to stop the atmosphere of fear in the meanwhile.

The second point is also, if everything will be fulfilled according to the Dayton Agreement, one of the things is that everybody is going to vote where he was according to the census in the year 1991. That means that all the inhabitants, especially the Muslim inhabitants that were in the territories now controlled by the Serbs, would be enabled to cast their vote where they were in 1991.

And also I know the Liberal Party is planning to meet in a pre-election campaign also. The Party for Bosnia-Herzegovina of the former premier, Haris Silajdzic, is also planning to cast a group meeting in Banja Luka. Mr. Zigic is representing this party. You can address him also.

So it means something is moving, but the basic conditions are still not fulfilled. What I try to emphasize is after fulfilling the basic conditions, then you can say something about free elections. This time it will be premature because nothing substantial is fulfilled yet.

Yes, please.

Mr. *Hand*. In the back?

Questioner. Chad Gore. I'm with the Commission staff. There's a tremendous amount, as you can imagine, of pressure in the United States to have these elections go forward on schedule as stated with intent of the Dayton Agreement. If at the time, in September, the beginning of September, OSCE certifies conditions are appropriate and you don't agree, are you prepared to speak out and say we are not ready to have fair elections and the OSCE is in error? Or will you do that?

Mr. *Kubicek*. This is what we're already done in my party.

Mr. *Hand*. Would anybody else like to—

Mr. *Kubicek*. Clearly, my answer is yes, as we already expressed.

Mr. *Hand*. Could I just ask for clarification then? You believe then that it is absolutely impossible by mid-September to have the conditions for the elections?

Mr. *Kubicek*. Yes, I really think so.

Mr. *Salkic*. We have a similar situation with the election in Mostar, as you know. There are no conditions for elections in Mostar, and we said it. There are no chances for

our political parties to run an election in Mostar because there is no freedom of movement.

Mr. *Kubicek*. Let me try to make some clarification. Formally, if you fulfill all the conditions—say, by the end of August—and you say all the conditions for a fair election are fulfilled, do you think it will be fair? There has to be a time gap that people realize the truth, and there has to be one basic condition—free communication of the people, so that people can see what happens.

Mr. *Hand*. OK, another question?

Ms. *Bubic*. I'm a bit—

Mr. *Hand*. Oh, you wanted to say something?

Ms. *Bubic*. I'm just a bit more optimistic than my colleagues. Because I still believe that people who live in Bosnia, no matter what nationality or religion they are or belong to, I realize there will be time—together with the support of the OSCE and international help—there will be time for people in Bosnia to realize what is best for them.

When I say this I mean that I had the chance to get back to Grbavica where I was expelled during the war. When I got back there, I found real disaster, destroyed and burned houses, and Serbs who left their apartments and destroyed them and demolished them. But soon after that, one by one, they were starting back to Sarajevo. Because they have seen, when they arrived in Pale, that they have been misled and fooled. It is not a large number of those who came back to Sarajevo, but one per day means a lot.

And I think if the people who live on the Serb territory would be given a chance to speak freely, it is the condition that has to be fulfilled until the elections. If they would be set free, not put under pressure of the police, of Karadzic, of Mladic, and the rest, they will have a chance to make up their mind and to make a decision. Then we could start. I hope that there will be time until September—if we all work hard, if we all show how much we do care about Bosnia—that the Bosnians, together with the international community, could solve this problem. Because war has never started in Bosnia. Throughout history, war has always been imported into Bosnia, and Bosnia has always been involved in war through the ages.

Mr. *Hand*. Yes?

Questioner. I'm—[inaudible]—from the General Accounting Office, and a variation of the question is, which is the more dangerous alternative and why? To force the country to have elections before it's ready or to go ahead and postpone them until you think the country is more ready? Which is more dangerous, and why?

Mr. *Hand*. Yes, that's actually a question that I was interested in asking as well—whether actually postponing the elections would be destabilizing and cause some setbacks as well. But as the lady had asked the question, who would like to respond?

Mr. *Kubicek*. Let me tell you two things. First of all, I'm afraid that forcing the elections are caused also by some of the internal Americans afraid to let that happen here. That's one point.

The second point, let me remind you that the legislature, the future in a democratic process, everything is based on the result of elections. I'm trying to point out the importance of having a fair election. Everything else really is background, a result of elections. That means that the elections should be really with all the preconditions—that means free movement, it means everything that's written in the Dayton Agreement. I don't have to repeat it. Thank you.

Thank you.

Ms. *Malic*. Maybe I could say something?

Well, I think that we have to ask for more help, because I think that our country needs that free and fair election, and needs it this year. Because we, as the member of our group, Mr. Salkic said, now we are a country divided in two separate paths. Without elections, we couldn't create a government, the central government, the central staff, center offices. Without this election, we couldn't start to create the first steps of reintegration of our country. That's the reason I think we really need elections.

As all of us mentioned in our speeches, some very important conditions must be assured to make these elections free and honest. You know, first of all, we really need the help of the whole world—and the United States first of all—to create the situation, to improve the situation. The situation was worse 3 or 4 months ago than now. We hope that in 3 or 4 months in the future we can, with the support of all democratic parts of the world, to create and to establish the situation, as well as possible free and fair elections. I think we need this election as a first step in the reintegration of our country.

Mr. *Hand*. Would anyone else like to—

Mr. *Salkic*. I believe that it's very dangerous for us to not have elections on time. At this moment, our government and the government of the Republika Srpska don't have legitimacy. I believe that we have enough time—3½ months. At the same time, the OSCE mission is working very hard and they have offices in all towns in Bosnia. They are working very hard. At the same time, Mr. Kornblum and your government are very strongly involved in that process. Mr. Bildt's office also has very strong activities in that field.

And if we are successful in fulfilling the conditions which were mentioned in our discussion, we believe that we have a chance to have an election in September. We also believe that, if we don't have the election in September, we will lose the chance. At the same time, as you know, we have elections again in 2 years. It's very important for us. We are only beginning the political process. After the war we must start with something.

Mr. *Hand*. Could I just follow up on that? Do you mean, therefore, that, with the quote of Morton Abramowitz, who said that a postponement of the elections wouldn't mean the failure of the Dayton Agreement, you think that there's the potential that he could be wrong there, that it could lead to the unraveling of progress made?

Unidentified Speaker. Are you asking Mr. Salkic—

Mr. *Hand*. I'm asking Mr. Salkic, based on what he had said. You see it as potentially dangerous?

Mr. *Salkic*. We have a choice to have or not to have elections. It's a very dangerous question for us—to have it or not. We must start with some kind of legitimacy for our officials—member of presidents of the government. We can start only with an election.

Mr. *Kubicek*. Let me put in another way. Let me say if you have elections and nothing substantially will change now, what's going to happen in the Serbian part of the country?

It means you are going to inaugurate the same policy that caused the war. There will be no possibility to help refugees get back. You are going to make it illegal—the conditions—that is really a state of future war. Because you got a term of 4 years, just something that's unacceptable. People in this part are not—they are still under fear for one option that is a peaceful option in the Serbian part. That's something that you've wit-

nessed already—everybody who's been in this part—and is witnessed by the numerous newspapermen that have been in this part of the country.

Mr. Hand. Becky?

Questioner. Becky Bahar from the National Democratic Institute. I was just wondering if you could follow up—[inaudible]. I think it's true that local elections will be held in addition to the cantonal and the Federal elections, and I'm wondering what are your views, whether it's the position of Bosnia-Herzegovina to hold the local elections at the same time or a week earlier or whether you think they should be held a year later.

Mr. Kubicek. Well, I don't know exactly. We had the first free elections in 1990. These elections actually happened during only 1 day—both elections at the local level and the state level. But, of course, now it's a totally different situation because now we'll be in a position to vote for representatives at local levels, municipality levels, and also for canton levels, at the level of federation, and also for the state parliament and state presidency.

I think it's important to have all these elections at one period of time, not to separate all these, not to divide them. But I think it's essentially connected—both these elections—regarding local levels and canton levels and also these elections regarding the federation and state level.

The quality we want to obtain is the same. We want to obtain a democratic election at every level. Also, it is very connected with elections on the Serbian part of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and also on the territory of the federation. Will all the citizens of Bosnia be able to vote for the municipality, for the political structure, for the municipality administration where they actually lived before the war, up to 1992? I think it's of essential importance for the reintegration of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Salkic. Becky, the answer is very simple. The OSCE mission in Bosnia doesn't have enough money to separate the elections. It's very simple. The international community doesn't want to spend more money on the election. They said this to the political parties and officials in Bosnia.

Mr. Hand. Yes, sir?

Questioner. My name is Patrick Hickey. I'm also with the General Accounting Office. My question is, if the elections are delayed until the end of the year and the withdrawal of the IFOR forces takes place as scheduled in December, do you think you can arrive at the necessary preconditions for a successful election in the absence of the NATO implementation force.

Mr. Salkic. No, we don't think so. [Laughter.]

Mr. Hand. Sounds pretty universal.

Mr. Salkic. No, no, no, no.

Mr. Hand. Could you elaborate?

Mr. Salkic. No. [Laughter.]

Mr. Hand. Would you like to elaborate a little bit?

Ms. Bubic. Yes, I would say something. Absolutely not. [Laughter.]

Mr. Hand. That's an elaboration?

Ms. Bubic. To be succinct, but it's a fact.

Mr. Salkic. Don't give us this kind of democracy. It's not fair. We have concerns—

Ms. *Bubic*. But I believe that you will agree with me, that an old English saying—I'm repeating it day after day—the old English saying which goes like this, "All what you do, do with all your might; things done by halves, are never done right." If you are fully aware of that saying, and I think it is very wise, we all—Bosnians, together with the international community—we must do—not should do, but must do—our best to solve this problem in time.

Questioner. Could I ask a follow-up?

Mr. *Hand*. Sure.

Questioner. If the elections do occur on time, do you think that there's sufficient time before the September 14th elections, and the pullout, the withdrawal date, of the IFOR forces, to establish a functioning federal government, one that has officials in place to take over the needs of basic security in the country?

Ms. *Bubic*. In my opinion, the answer is again no. We need your support.

Mr. *Kubicek*. I suppose there are some basic preconditions that have to be fulfilled before holding elections as stated by the Dayton Agreement. More important indictment of war criminals, eliminating them, free communications, free movement of the people, free media. That's something that everybody knows already. But there has to be a time gap to be fulfilled.

Mr. *Hand*. Chad, you have another question?

Questioner. I'd like to ask Mr. Kubicek, frankly, when do you feel it would be appropriate for IFOR to withdraw? All schedules aside, what do you see evolving the current—

Mr. *Kubicek*. Let me tell you this will be a bit complicated.

First of all, this is the strength of the land, of the state Bosnia-Herzegovina—I mean military and economic strength. That's the basic precondition—to have the withdrawal of the international forces.

I tried to be short. [Laughter.]

Questioner. Well, you can elaborate if you want. I'm really interested what you think would be an appropriate timeframe? I mean, you don't feel that the end of this year is appropriate. What's your general feeling? Frankly, if anybody else would like to answer—

Mr. *Kubicek*. I was pretty frank, you know. My personal opinion—I think everybody else in Bosnia shares the same opinion. First: Some of the basic conditions have to be fulfilled. It's very clearly stated in the Dayton Agreement. There has to be a time gap—I'm not going to tell you how long. I find it might be ridiculous to guess—say, 1 or 3 months. But I don't believe that in the very next future, in the close, in the nearby future, some of the basic preconditions will be fulfilled.

Let me say, if today all the conditions for a free election would be fulfilled, I suppose it might be possible to have a free election on September 1st. That's my point. But you can't expect that you have all the conditions being fulfilled—war indictment, free movement of the people, free communication, free media—in both parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. You know it's not real right now.

But let me be more specific. If this moment, all the preconditions were to be fulfilled, I believe it will be all right to have the election on September 1st.

Questioner. OK, but what I'm really trying to get out is, even if you have a free and fair election, will it still be appropriate for IFOR to withdraw by the end of this year? Or do you feel it will be necessary or better for IFOR to remain past the end of the year?

Mr. Kubicek. I believe it's better for IFOR forces to stay in Bosnia. The language of force is the only one that is understandable in Bosnia.

Mr. Jahic. I think he said the essential thing regarding this question because, from my point of view, the U.S. troops came into Bosnia primarily to stop the war. This military aspect, I think, is the most important, as far as the peace in Bosnia is concerned. The moment we achieve the military balance in Bosnia, I think this is the first and the main condition that is to be fulfilled for the withdrawal of the U.S. troops, from my point of view.

There are also some different conditions that are very important for the presence of the U.S. troops already mentioned—this economic aspect to reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Also the international police forces which are very important regarding the issue of Bosnia.

But this military aspect, at that moment when we reach the military balance on the region in Bosnia, I think then we have actually the first condition for the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Ms. Bubic. May I say something?

Mr. Hand. Sure.

Ms. Bubic. You see—our discussion started and took one direction I am happy about—the latest discussion of my colleague. He mentioned for the first time economic problems.

You see, we are dealing with the problem of elections—premature or not premature, and so on. In the case that we have a chance to hold free and fair and democratic elections on time—let's say, mid-September—there is still a lot of problems, which is why I think the IFOR forces should stay longer in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All those who run for elections should be fully aware of a great number of problems that they will have to solve in case they win. The problems of war veterans, orphans, refugees, displaced persons, the destroyed economy, housing, employment, reconstruction of the economy. It's one of the vital problems, you see.

At the very moment we start reconstructing Bosnia and the Bosnian economy, we are going to solve a lot of political problems. People will be occupied with their profession, with their money-making business, with their jobs, and they will be much more understanding. The relations between various nations and entities and regions would be re-integrated.

So again I quote your poet Robert Frost: "But I have promises to keep." Each of the political parties will have promises to keep. It's very important to win the elections and to keep the promises. That's why we will need your help.

I am a mother, and I understand all American mothers and all mothers all around the world whose sons are in Bosnia. I understand if I were in their position, I'd wish my son to come back home and to be safe.

I appreciate your help and thank you.

Mr. Hand. OK. Next question. Yes?

Questioner. You are saying, then, that you want your troops trained by IFOR before they leave; that's what you want? Is that what you're saying? I mean, what do you want?

Mr. Kubicek. I didn't hear this. It might be one of the issues, but not the most important one.

Mr. Hand. Any other comment?

Questioner. Can you only make a comment? May I ask a question? You're saying that before IFOR leaves, you want to make sure your country is secure and you want your military trained by IFOR?

Mr. Kubicek. I mean military power and economic power. That's what I said. Balance of power. What you said is very specific: be trained by the IFOR troops.

Questioner. I'd like to ask another question, and the question is on the law enforcement in your country. Could you explain to me a bit more about how you keep law enforcement now within Bosnia-Herzegovina. Can you explain what the local police and the international police should do as far as arresting war criminals? Could you explain that, please?

Mr. Hand. Who would like to try to respond to that?

Ms. Bubic. You see, it's a pretty difficult question at this particular moment because the country is divided. So we can't answer right now what is the law re-enforcement and enforcement. On the territory of the Federation, we have the Federal police and we have international police and we have IFOR.

At the time being, these are three particular parts of law enforcement. At the same time, we have legal jurisdiction on the territory of the federation. What's going on on the territory controlled by Serbs, up till now, we are not informed. We told you at the very beginning and tried to explain our position.

You see, this was my first time going out of Sarajevo, and for the first time, I crossed the territory of Republika Srpska. The IFOR forces were there and, believe me, I was terrified when I met one of my former students. Luckily, I had sunglasses; he didn't recognize me because I completely changed during this war. He didn't recognize me, but I recognized him, and I was terrified. That's what's going on. That's why we insist—but how lucky I was he didn't recognize me and IFOR Forces were there.

Questioner. Crimes like looting or—is your law enforcement in Bosnia—

Ms. Bubic. Sorry, I didn't understand you.

Questioner. Even for just petty crimes like looting or just taking things that belong to other people, is there law enforcement at all? I mean, is the law enforced now?

Ms. Bubic. I will give you an example, and you can interpret it as you wish. I told you I was a resident of Grbavica, a residential area not far from the very center of the town. The IFOR were on the territory; Grbavica was undestroyed, and during that period of 10 days in the presence of IFOR, the Serbs from Grbavica stole property, destroyed the flats, the private houses, and the apartments—burned some of the flats, the flats that didn't belong to them but they lived in them and used them during the war, the flats of those who were deprived of their rights and forced to leave Grbavica. IFOR did nothing.

On March 19th, when I went to Grbavica across the bridge, Grbavica was burning. You can get the answer, I think, using this illustration. My complete apartment was destroyed, devastated, and all things were stolen. Not only mine, all the others.

Mr. Hand. Go ahead; one last question.

Questioner. I just wanted to go back to what I asked about—the training of the troops that they didn't seem to understand. Here in the United States, when it's discussed about training the Bosnian troops to take care of their own country, the alternative that's mentioned very often is disarming everybody in that area. Instead of having arms in Bosnia and everybody having arms, the alternative that's discussed is how can we disarm the people so that it can be a peaceful area, instead of people that are armed against each other. I know that they tried—I know that NATO—I don't have my facts straight—but I know NATO, at one point in the war, had tried to disarm the Serbs, especially of some of their larger weapons, and I guess that didn't work. I was just going to ask you if you wanted to answer this question: do you feel the Serbs and the other countries that are armed could be disarmed? Do you think that's a possibility, that you can—

Mr. Salkic. For a few days, there'll be a signed agreement relating to the training of the Bosnian army. It's a Federation army. It will be finished till November, and we will get the weapons and in that moment we will have military balance in the region, in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

As my colleague said, the first condition for reconstruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina is to have a balance on a military level. After that, we will at the same time have a political reconstruction. We started with an economic reconstruction in Bosnia, and we'll see in a few years what will be.

Mr. Jahic. I just want to say that this is the first time I have heard of this solution of disarming the troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina, disarming the armies and forces in Bosnia. I think that's impossible in every condition, but no one's telling that the Bosnian or Federation forces will be trained by US troops, so it can't be connected actually.

The Bosnian forces or Federation forces, as my colleague has just said, will be trained under special conditions, and this aspect of military balance, I have to repeat, is the first condition of the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

Mr. Hand. Any comment?

Mr. Kubicek. Let me try to put it simply. Everyone else is missing the point. If this is a permanent peace, disarmament is logical, no doubt about it. You have to understand something. We were disarmed and became victims. You can understand our fear to be in state disarmament if there is no permanent peace.

Mr. Hand. OK. Thank you.

Questioner. Steve Bower from Congressman Trent's office. I was wondering to what extent your party can get your political message out—[off mike]—

Ms. Bubic. That was the problem, we started to point out at the very beginning. It depends upon how much we can realize our access to mass media to communicate with the refugee community. It's very important for each of the political parties; that's why I insist upon that from the very beginning.

Mr. Jahic. I don't know if you mentioned the refugees regarding the elections or regarding their coming back to Bosnia.

Questioner. I was thinking primarily in terms of the elections, the potential total population—

Mr. Jahic. We've said that one of the preconditions of free elections in Bosnia is to enable these refugees to vote if they want to vote, in Bosnia and the places where they lived before the war that they had this opportunity to vote. I think that's the main point,

and that's the major obligation of the U.S. troops: to enable these citizens of Bosnia, these people, to come and to vote in the place where they live.

Of course, it's one of the basic points of the Dayton Agreement that everyone is enabled to go back to their homes, to their cities where they live. So that's why I think every party in Bosnia has the same stance regarding the return of the refugees, that they have to be allowed to vote actually where they want.

I think that there is no refugee outside Bosnia and Herzegovina who won't be actually interested in voting in their own homeland, in their country.

Mr. *Hand*. Are the political parties, regardless of which ones they are, forming organizations outside of Bosnia to work with the refugee communities, in terms of campaigning?

Mr. *Jahic*. Well I can say, as far as my party, SDA, is concerned, that my party has branches everywhere where Bosnians live, also in Germany, Switzerland and USA and Canada, and so on. They are connected with these people. They will communicate with them. They actually represent one unit.

Mr. *Hand*. Are other parties doing the same thing?

Mr. *Salkic*. The Liberal Party is poor, and we haven't the chance to work with our refugees.

Ms. *Malic*. The same situation with our party. We have some plans, but we have no money.

Ms. *Bubic*. We have a problem with money; the money problem to pay the transportation of our activists, of the people who went to Zenica Region and to the Tuzla Region to organize Republican Party branches in these territories. It was too expensive for us. That explains the two leading parties in power. They've got the money, but we don't. The rest, the opposition, hasn't got.

Mr. *Jahic*. That's your own problem.

Ms. *Bubic*. Yes, it is our own problem, but someday maybe you will have it. [Laughter.]

Ms. *Bubic*. Now learn how to solve it.

Mr. *Kubicek*. Mr. Tomic from the AGZ would like to point something out.

Mr. *Hand*. You'd like to say something?

MR. *Tomic*: [In native language.]

Mr. *Kubicek*. He'd like to point out that his party does very intense work with the other refugees all over the world in all five continents, but because of the legislation in some specific countries, they are more oriented toward humanitarian work.

Mr. *Salkic*. It's a great problem because, as you know, we have about one million people who are refugees. Many of them are voters, and in the country we have only 1.5 million. It's a very important question for all political parties, but some of them have money, some of them not.

It's also a very important condition for a fair election—to have a normal situation for a campaign, to have money for a campaign. In this moment, we have activities in Bosnia in order to qualify our political parties before elections. We must collect 10,000 signatures of support and under that circumstance will be in the position to run elections.

Under those circumstances, we will also have some financial support from the OSCE mission, from the international community, \$200,000 per party. Under those circumstances, we'll be in a position to do something with our refugees who are abroad.

Mr. Hand. OK. Other questions? In back?

Questioner. I'd like to know what the panelists think about the problem of voter fraud during the elections.

Mr. Hand. The problem of voter fraud during the election? Do you want to elaborate a little bit on—

Questioner. What's the best way to guard against it?

Mr. Hand. How do you guard against voter fraud, things like double voting or people who are not supposed to vote where they are, nonetheless doing so—

Ms. Bubic. That's why we are here. We learned a lot of things during this seminar. We were taught very good lessons, given good instructions regarding what to do when we get back.

Mr. Salkic. The OSCE mission will have a very strong structure on the field. They'll have many observers in election places, and the political parties will also have many people on the polls. I think that we will have conditions for fair elections at the polls.

Mr. Hand. OK. If I could just ask a quick question, putting aside some of the general things we talked about and looking at some of the practical efforts that the OSCE mission has undertaken by its linkage with the Provisional Election Commission—are you fairly satisfied with how they are actually preparing the election infrastructure and some of the guidelines they have established for the election?

Mr. Kubicek. If you'll allow me, I'm going to be short again. Can't blame people from the OSCE for the basic preconditions by the Dayton Agreement that I just pointed out. I can say that job is fair.

Mr. Hand. In other words, the problems are really these larger problems?

Mr. Kubicek. At a much higher level.

Mr. Hand. There's no difficulties, in terms of the practical arrangements that are being made?

Mr. Kubicek. Can't blame these people for—

Mr. Hand. Other questions? Yes?

Questioner. There's a question about a very small region in Bosnia.

Mr. Hand. Could you identify yourself?

Questioner. Andrew Eiva, with the Bosnian support group here in Washington, the Bosnian Task Force International. The Posavina Region where 140,000 Croats have been driven out of their homes—is there any expectation as to how many of them will be able to vote in this election, or what is happening in the elections in Posavina Corridor? From what we understand, the Posavina Croats are the most multi-ethnically oriented Croats of Bosnia, and they are a very important part of a future Bosnia.

Ms. Bubic. I think it's a good and interesting question and nobody, until now, pointed to that point. Many multinational political parties in opposition insisted upon that point—what is going to be with people who have been sacrificed? The answer to that question might lead to the real conclusion that the people from particular regions, after Dayton, will realize that they have been betrayed.

I think that Mr. Tudjman together with Mr. Milosevic—or the opposite order, Mr. Milosevic together with Mr. Tudjman—when they tried and made a definite plan how to divide Bosnia, didn't know and didn't pay attention that they would sacrifice some people in these regions.

In Bosnia, Croats in Posavina, who are multinationally oriented and very wealthy people, as well, hardworking people—the same thing happened in Krajina with the Serbs, which were sacrificed for the ideals of the leaders, of the masters of the war. That's my answer.

Mr. *Kubicek*. Let me tell you something, because I'm personally involved many times in Posavina and I suppose that I know the situation there.

This is one of the things you can't blame anybody or anything, except the war. The great portion of Posavina is devastated. There are wrecks instead of houses and people are scattered. You can't blame anybody that people are not going to be able to vote in Posavina, because it's a—I suppose one of the part that the war atrocities to be most faced is in Posavina, and some of the worst fighting has taken place in Posavina.

The most critical region is a corridor, Serbian corridor, and I know for a fact that a lot of the Croats—at least the majority of the Croats—are leaving Posavina. I don't know how many. That's a very good question.

Questioner. Can I have one quick follow-up?

Mr. *Hand*. Sure.

Questioner. From what I understand and what I hear from Posavina Croats or about Posavina Croats in Zagreb or in Germany, they really want to go back. Whether there's waste there or not, they want to go back to their homes. Is that going to be possible for them in Republika Srpska?

Mr. *Kubicek*. I don't believe it. Let me try to be short. Mr. Tomic is also going to talk.

Mr. *Tomic*. [Through interpreter.] Regarding the fact that I'm a member of a party which was formed in Posavina, the Croatian Democratic Union, I can emphatically state that we were very unhappy with the part of the Dayton Agreement which awarded the Serbian aggressors that part of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Certain information is coming that they are announcing that there is not going to be a proper repatriation of refugees to that region. For example, in Odja, which was to be returned, under the Dayton peace agreement, to the Bosnian authorities, not many people are returning there.

Our best hope is to believe that the democratization of the parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina is going to be a reality—and that is the one good reason for the repatriation of the refugees in that region.

What we would like to see done is to try to make a kind of request from American authorities for Brcko, which is not already in that framework of the Federation, to become a part of the Federation, because of all these people. This is very significant. It is of very much importance for all those who are already out of Bosnia-Herzegovina, especially in Croatia and those Posavina people in Germany to return back to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

I would not agree with my colleague about trading between President Milosevic and President Tudjman regarding Posavina Corridor. Simply, the geographic position of Posavina was the main reason for that war that happened there.

What I can state in behalf of the people of Posavina, because I somehow feel what they feel and how they think regarding the Dayton peace agreement, is they do believe that Dayton peace agreement, in the beginning of the political process, who will help them to return back to their home. That's what the people of Posavina do believe, really.

Ms. Bubic. I would suggest you give a chance at the end, maybe, of this meeting, so the other members, other representatives of political parties, may say something. That would be correct——

Mr. Hand. That's my intention. I'd like to see whether there's other questions, and then as a wrapping up, allowing everybody a chance to say something. But yes, I think that's a good idea. Yes, sir?

Questioner. I'm not clear. Are the Serbs represented in any of the parties here?

Ms. Bubic. Yes, they are.

Mr. Jahic. They are not representing the Serbs; they are members—they are Serbs in the multi-ethnic Bosnian parties inside the federation.

Ms. Bubic. But there are people who are of Serb nationality.

Mr. Jahic. They are of Serb nationality, three of them.

Questioner. But the moderate Serbs, are they forming political parties of their own to be involved in this electoral process according to Dayton, and if so, is there some coalition building around those moderate Serbs of parties to try to maybe empower them and the hard-liners stay away?

Mr. Hand. Does anybody want to——

Ms. Bubic. Yes, of course—empower them——

Mr. Hand. OK, you'd like to answer it? OK

Mr. Jahic. Here is Mr. Rugoslac.

Mr. Rugoslac. I suppose the gentleman has to translate the question first for me.

Ms. Bubic. It was translated.

Mr. Rugoslac. [Through interpreter.] I am here as a member of the Serbian National Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I was the secretary of the Bosnian People's Party. I am already 3 years a member of the Serbian National Council of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and I am very much involved in the process of preparing general assembly of Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Serbian National Council, as a movement, has the intention not to be a political party, but a non-governmental organization, to do everything to do their best for the restoration of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When we formed the organization, we were going to fight for the peaceful coexistence of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the tolerance of the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We put all our financial resources which we gathered as the prize award from Stockholm for our people. We would like to see other people as the winners of some same kind of prize or award from our foundation, and we are going to share that money with them, giving them a prize as well as a money award to those individuals who are fighting for the Serbians with the same aims.

We are convinced living together in Bosnia and Herzegovina is possible, and we do believe firmly in that. That's what I stated 2 days ago on the Voice of America. As Serbians we're full of passion. We do have contact with some other parties in the Banja Luka region and other Serbian entities. We are going to invite all other representatives of these

forces from other entities and from the Federation entities to these assemblies which are planned for next time.

But I can honestly say that we need our best and we need the best part of the people who are involved in law enforcing for the returning of people to their homeland in the Bosnian part of our country. We do believe that the Serbian National Council, together with the Croatian National Council and some other non-governmental organizations, will be capable of solving their—to emphasize their positions and to change their position in all the ruling parties and could be a real future in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I think I'm afraid that there are also some other intentions for creating some other Serbian parties which are going to be nationally symbolic in their organization.

Mr. Hand. Thank you. Any other questions from the audience? OK, one.

Questioner. Can I ask one thing about the Presidential conference? Is everybody in every ethnic group represented equally, or is it according to how many people of that ethnic group live in a certain area. How are they represented in the Presidential conference?

Mr. Hand. You mean, the collective presidency of Bosnia?

Questioner. How are they represented? What exactly is the conference?

Mr. Hand. I don't know what body you are asking about.

Questioner. There are supposed to be eight persons that will take the Presidential—

Mr. Hand. The official presidency of Bosnia, what its actual make-up is. I know during the 1990 elections, it was two from each of the main national groups, the Muslims, the Serbs, and the Croats. Then, there was one other for people who declared themselves to be Yugoslav or of Jewish background or Ukrainian, whatever.

Questioner. So there was seven? There was seven, you mean?

Mr. Hand. Yes.

Questioner. Oh, I thought there were eight.

Mr. Hand. Is it going to be changing according to Dayton? Would somebody like to describe—

Mr. Salkic. After the election, we'll have three members of the presidency. One of them will be Serb; one of them will be Croat; and the third will be Bosnian Muslim.

Ms. Bubic. Are you asking after the elections or now, the situation what is now?

Questioner. Well, I guess I don't completely understand what you call the Presidential council or what—

Mr. Jahic. It is the presidency. Today's presidency consists of seven members; two of them are Bosniacs—that means Muslim; two of them are Croats; two of them are Serbs; and one is from other nationalities from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

It was represented by a Yugoslav before, but as far as this new presidency is concerned, this presidency is to consist of three members, and each member will represent three main nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

But the biggest weakness of this concept of this presidency is that Serbs can be represented only by a representative from the Republika Srpska from the Serbian entity, which means that Serbs from the Federation cannot vote for a Serb who lives on the territory of Federation and vice versa, regarding the Croats and regarding the Bosniacs who live on the territory of the Republika Srpska. So that's the main weakness of this presidency concept.

Questioner. So how often would you want to—[inaudible]——

Mr. Hand. It'll be three persons——

Mr. Jahic. Now it'll be only three persons in the presidency.

Mr. Hand. I understand they would run for re-election, I think, in 2 years' time, as opposed to the other ones which would be for a longer period of time under the Dayton Agreement!

OK. Well, just to conclude, I would just ask my panelists if they would have any closing remarks they would like to make but then, also, to re-open it to any of the members of the group who might like to say just a few brief words on what was said today or any comments that they would have to make. So if anybody would like to say anything further?

No? OK. Well I'd like to thank everybody, then, for coming to this briefing and to thank all of our panelists, as well as the Center for Civil Society in Southeastern Europe and AID for bringing them here. So thank you all very much.

[Whereupon at 3:45 p.m., the Commission adjourned.]

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