



KOSOVO

COMPROMISE 2007

Your daily-updated analyses, charts and solution plug-ins for the Kosovo crisis.

November 30

Standing by the Dayton Agreement

By Milorad Dodik, The Washington Post

Thursday, November 29, 2007; A24

In his Nov. 25 op-ed, "Back to the Brink in the Balkans," Richard Holbrooke referred to me as someone whom Vladimir Putin has manipulated from a "mildly pro-Western leader" into a "nasty nationalist who began threatening secession." I have been and will be a strong partner to the United States who supports American goals in the region and progress in Republika Srpska and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, I am dedicated to cooperation with all well-intentioned countries in projects that can contribute to the success of Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the entire region.

Mr. Holbrooke also asserted that I am being "egged on by Moscow and Belgrade . . . that if Kosovo declares its independence from Serbia, then the Serb portion of Bosnia will declare its independence." To the contrary, I have said time and again that I would prevent any political or security destabilization in Republika Srpska, regardless of the final status of Kosovo province.

But I must remind the international community -- and Mr. Holbrooke himself -- that when other politicians in Bosnia make repeated calls for the abolition of my government, the Republika Srpska police force and mechanisms to preserve the balance of power between the entities and ethnicities as set out in the Dayton accords, I will stand up for Dayton and the continued existence of the current entity structure.

Contrary to Mr. Holbrooke's recent regrets regarding Dayton, the agreement is widely viewed by my constituents not only as an American policy success but as sacrosanct. Dayton set out a decentralized federal system that ended a terrible war, has ensured stability for 12 years and, with some modernization, will serve as the structure under which Bosnia can join the European Union.

We in Republika Srpska deeply appreciate help from our American and European partners when they respect the role of democratically elected leaders and the need to build on the Dayton successes, and I am truly committed to keeping a complete Republika Srpska and Bosnia on the path toward a bright future of membership in the European Union.

MILORAD DODIK, Prime Minister, Republika Srpska, Banja Luka