

BiH Dayton Project



Bosnia to war, to Dayton, and to its slow peace – Carl Bildt

📅 January 28, 2021

In a lengthy article published by the European Council on Foreign Relations, former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, who served as the first High Representative in BiH, examines the efforts to end the war in BiH, the implementation of the Dayton Accords, and BiH's recent struggles to advance toward EU membership.

Mr. Bildt is critical of the High Representative's claimed Bonn powers, pointing out, "The legal basis for this was questionable in the extreme."

He goes on to describe some of the negative effects of the Bonn powers' use:

Change accelerated, but there was a distinct downside to it. The extensive use of the Bonn powers during the period undoubtedly strengthened the tendency of politicians in the country to evade their own responsibilities and to focus their attention more on influencing the policies of the OHR than on sitting down and hammering out painful compromises.

Mr. Bildt observes, "The pull of Brussels hasn't been as strong as hoped, and the continued existence of the OHR as the custodian of the push of Dayton has often tended to dilute the impact of the EU efforts." He further writes, "The phase of imposed international decisions



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brought some progress but, at the same time, reinforced a destructive trend in the politics of the country.”

Mr. Bildt rejects the criticism that the Dayton Accords did not establish a unitary state:

Those who question the Dayton structure for enshrining ethnic and national identities might be advised to try their hand at getting the Scots to accept total integration with England, or the Catalans or the Basques to accept a completely unitary Spain. Politics in countries like these tend to be based on national identities.

Mr. Bildt also affirms that any constitutional reforms need broad support in order to be enacted, writing, “At the end of the day, the constitution of Bosnia has to be agreed upon by the Bosnians themselves.”

[Read the full article here.](#)

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