



BiH Dayton Project



Prof. James Ker-Lindsay: OHR “has fostered a dependency syndrome”

📅 July 13, 2026

In a YouTube video, James Ker-Lindsay, a Visiting Professor at the London School of Economics, examines whether the high representative in BiH has “outlived its purpose.”

Ker-Lindsay explains:

Although a career American diplomat, Louis Crishock, has been installed as Acting High Representative solely to keep the office functioning, there have been growing calls to abolish the post entirely. Indeed, two former High Representatives Wolfgang Petrisch and Cal Bildt, the former Swedish Prime Minister, have openly said that international supervision has become obsolete and no longer contributes to Bosnia’s stability.

Ker-Lindsay says that balanced against the arguments for keeping the OHR

is a good argument that it’s time to bring the post to an end. Leaving aside the fact that the Bonn Powers have been called unlawful by some legal scholars and are seen as an affront to Bosnia’s sovereignty, as highlighted by Petritsch

and Bildt, hardly natural critics of the institution, the Bonn Powers have a fundamental flaw. What started out as a temporary measure to oversee post-war stability has fostered a dependency syndrome in which Bosnian politicians, of all ethnicities, have learned that unpopular decisions can simply be pushed upwards to an outside authority. This relieves them of the need to build the coalitions and compromises that a functioning democracy actually requires.

Ker-Lindsay concludes the video by stating that “the uncomfortable reality, as noted by those who once held the post, is that 30 years after its creation, the position of High Representative is now widely seen as part of Bosnia’s wider problems rather than a way to avoid or resolve them.”

Watch the full video [here](#).

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