

Republika Srpska Briefing

Bosnia and Herzegovina is located in the Balkans Region in Southeast Europe. In a unique political model, the country is comprised of two political subdivisions: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska (RS).

The Dayton Agreement

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Agreement or the Dayton Accords is the peace agreement reached at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio and formally signed in Paris, on 14 December 1995. These accords put an end to the three-and-a-half-year-long Bosnian War was part of the much larger Yugoslav War.

The warring parties agreed to peace and to a single sovereign state known as Bosnia and Herzegovina, composed of two political subdivisions, the largely Christian Serb-populated Republika Srpska and the mainly Muslim Croat-Bosniak-populated Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Agreement preserved the international borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina and established the formation of a central government with a rotating presidency. The United States had outsized influence in the formation of the Agreement, under Pres. Bill Clinton and his Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke.

The agreement has been widely and roundly criticized for creating ineffective and unwieldy political structures and entrenching the ethnic cleansing of the previous war.

The High Representative

The High Representative, an office created by the Dayton Agreement to oversee peace process implementation, is currently held by German politician Christian Schmidt. He possesses virtually unbridled authority to enact laws and remove officials unilaterally in a supposedly free and democratic nation.

His actions, perceived by many as intensifying ethnic tensions, have altered significantly the original terms of the Dayton Agreement, leading to significant political and legal disputes, and debates regarding his appointment.

Republika Srpska

Republika Srpska (RS) is an autonomous entity with its own government, parliament, and police force, though it is not recognized as an independent nation.

Milorad Dodik is the democratically elected RS President. His party, SNSD, received 32.87% of the votes in the most recent 2024 municipal elections - the highest percentage in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Targeting of Republika Srpska

RS has been targeted by international sanctions and actions from the unelected High Representative. Notably, RS politicians, including President Dodik, who have shown consistent support for President Trump and embraced a pro-MAGA, Christian, nationalist stance, have been targeted.

Sanctions began after Dodik was denied entry into the U.S. for President Trump's 2017 inauguration, were initially connected to Republika Srpska Day celebrations, but subsequently extended over trumped-up corruption allegations.

Celebrations of Republika Srpska Day

- The Serbian community in RS celebrates its national identity, a tradition deeply embedded in Serbian history and culture, with widespread support.
- Previous U.S. administrations, including those under Presidents Clinton and Bush, did not challenge these celebrations; indeed, U.S. officials often attended these events.
- The Dayton Agreement does not restrict such national remembrances and celebrations.

The Allegations of Corruption are False

- RS officials, including President Dodik, were lawfully and peacefully elected, without any claim whatsoever of election fraud or any other unlawful activity.
- There is a lack of substantial evidence directly connecting these officials to corruption, raising questions about the sanctions' foundation.

Political Bias and Underlying Motivations

- Courts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily composed of ethnic Bosniaks, alongside actions by the High Representative, disproportionately target RS's democratically elected officials.
- The sanctions specifically target political figures who align with conservative, Judeo-Christian values akin to the MAGA ideology.
- There is an orchestrated effort through sanctions and laws imposed by the unelected German High Representative to suppress conservative, nationalist, and Judeo-Christian sentiments in RS.

Deleterious Effect of the Sanctions

- **Economic Impact:** The sanctions have detrimentally impacted the RS economy, exacerbating existing challenges.

- **Leadership Targeting:** The extensive nature of the sanctions against RS's leadership suggests a broader attempt to alter political dynamics within the entity.
- **Cultural Alienation:** The sanctions risk alienating the Serbian populace, potentially damaging long-standing cultural and ideological alliances with the U.S.
- **Selective Enforcement:** The focus on ethnic Christian Serbs raises concerns about potential religious and ethnic biases in U.S. and European foreign policy applications.

Republika Srpska's Requests

- RS advocates for the election of the High Representative according to the original terms of the Dayton Agreement.
- RS seeks the freedom to celebrate their cultural, religious, and national identity within their region.
- RS calls for adherence to the original Dayton Agreement wording, opposing interpretations imposed by the unelected European High Representative.

This material is distributed by Stokes Strategies on behalf of Republic Srpska. Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.