

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Delaware.

IMPORTANT PROGRESS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Mr. BIDEN. Mr. President, I rise today to discuss the important progress that has been made in the difficult post-war political and economic transformation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Some critics of American policy seem inclined to seize on every shred of negative news as alleged arguments for pulling up stakes and disengaging from the Balkans.

I have never belonged to this "cut and run school," and, in fact, the good news I have to report illustrates two fundamental truths: first, that persistence pays; and second, that more than ever, we need to continue to be engaged on the ground in Bosnia.

Since the November 2000 elections—which, I might add, the international news media quickly, and incorrectly, dubbed a major setback for the Dayton Accords—several positive political and economic developments have occurred in Bosnia, at both the national and the entity level, that merit our close attention.

In fact, the situation has progressed to the point where Bosnia and Herzegovina now stands at a critical juncture. For the first time there appears to be a fundamental shift away from the ultra-nationalist parties that have until now dominated Bosnia's post-war political process.

As the Presiding Officer knows, immediately after the war ended, each of the main ethnic groups—the Bosniaks, or Muslims, the Croats, and the Serbs—rallied around ultra-nationalist leaders who had neither the capability nor the intention of bringing about a united Bosnia.

But now there has been a fundamental shift away from these ultra-nationalist parties and toward a government that is more moderate and inclusive and less nationalistic.

But the tide, Mr. President, has not yet definitively turned. Let me try to explain this fairly complex picture.

At the level of both the Muslim-Croat Federation and of the national government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the main agent of this remarkable shift has been a coalition of non-nationalist parties aptly known as the "Alliance for Change."

In the wake of the November elections, these parties found the political courage to put aside their disparate interests and agendas and push together to oust the hardline nationalists.

In early February, the Alliance scored its first major victory at the national level when it closed ranks to defeat the election of nationalist candidate Martin Raguz for Prime Minister.

In the process, in a truly remarkable breakthrough, the ultra-nationalist

Serb presidency member joined the Muslim presidency member from the nationalist Bosniak SDA party in backing a non-nationalist candidate for Prime Minister, Božidar Matić, who was put forward by the Alliance.

I am told that Ante Jelavić, the third presidency member who leads the hardline Bosnian Croat HDZ party, stormed out of the presidency session in a fury. Having met Mr. Jelavić in Bosnia several years ago, I am not surprised at his behavior.

Two weeks ago on February 22—three months after the elections—Matić and his team of ministers were confirmed as the first ever non-nationalist government in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Then, on February 28, came word of a second stunning success, this time at the Federation level. In another political first for Bosnia, two non-nationalist candidates nominated by the Alliance for Change, Karlo Filipović and Safet Halilović, were elected as President and Vice-President of the Federation.

Mr. President, these are momentous changes. These two gentlemen are genuine democrats who have bought into Dayton. I am confident that they and their allies will now push for full implementation, including adopting a new elections law, an effectively functioning Federation legislature, and honest economic reform.

In a promising harbinger of the new political order, Prime Minister Matić gave the nationalist parties a clear indication of his priorities when he told them: "I don't speak Serbian, Croatian, or Bosnian. I speak the language of competitive economic skills, because that's the only language that will help us survive."

That would be an ordinary statement for anybody to make in any other democracy but it is a breathtaking statement in Bosnia.

That, Mr. President, is the language of Bosnia's future.

Unfortunately, Mr. Jelavić and his ultra-nationalist cronies in the HDZ appear unwilling to accept their defeat and leave power gracefully. Last Saturday, at a self-appointed congress held in Mostar, the Bosnian Croat National Assembly announced its intention to form a separate Croat political entity in all but name and to establish temporary self-administration. This move, which would be a clear violation of the Dayton Peace Accords, has been roundly condemned by the international community.

In point of fact, the HDZ's actions reveal just how desperate Jelavić and his ilk have become. With the Alliance for Change poised to solidify its new political gains, Jelavić was forced to play the nationalist card once again by claiming that he alone is defending the interests of Bosnia's Croat community.

This assertion, however, is patently false, for Jelavić does not speak for all Bosnian Croats. People like Krešimir Zubak, the newly appointed national Minister of Refugee and Human Rights,

and Jadranko Prlić, the former foreign minister and currently Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, are both Croat moderates who are committed to Dayton's full implementation.

Zubak called the Croat People's Assembly "an illegitimate institution" that "cannot take lawful decisions."

Yesterday, in response to this illegal behavior, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, an experienced Austrian diplomat, removed Jelavić from his post as Croat Member of Bosnia's collective presidency. Put another way, he said, you are no longer president.

I met with Mr. Petritsch several weeks ago in Sarajevo, and I welcome his resolute action.

I emphasize, Mr. President, that this move by the High Representative was backed by the reformist Mesić/Račan Government of Croatia—which in itself speaks volumes about recent political progress in the Balkans. This is the new leadership in Croatia that came to power in the wake of Franjo Tujman, a man who was almost, in my view, as bad as Slobodan Milosevic. The new Croatian Government said it does not acknowledge or support Mr. Jelavić's attempt to set up a separate entity.

Positive change is afoot even in the Republika Srpska, where the ultra-nationalist SDS, a party with the dubious honor of having been founded by one of the worst war criminals, in my view—but whether you believe me or not, someone who has been indicted for alleged war crimes—Radovan Karadzic, won a clear plurality of votes in the November elections.

In what had to have been a delicate political dance, the non-nationalist Bosnian Serb Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, has succeeded in building a government in which the influence of the SDS has been formally neutralized, although some SDS-leaning individuals have been included in the Cabinet. I met with him for hours when I was recently in Sarajevo.

It took great courage for him to do what he did. After all, the party of Karadzic had won. And what was said at the time by the Muslims, as well as the Croats in attendance, was if, in fact, you do not exclude all those who are active members of the SDS, we will not cooperate, but if you do, we will form a government with you.

Incidentally, Mr. President, much of the credit for these success stories should go to our talented and hard-working Ambassador in Sarajevo, Tom Miller.

In addition, two other dedicated Americans—Ambassador Jacques Klein, the head of the U.N. Mission in Bosnia, and General Michael Dodson, the Commander of SFOR, have greatly improved the cooperation between their respective organizations, which had been sorely wanting for some time after Dayton.

An illustration of this fruitful cooperation is the fact that refugees are returning in record numbers to their

pre-war homes. The 2000 total was 65 percent higher than the 1999 total. And the 1999 total was 100 percent higher than 1998. This development is due in large part to the atmosphere of security made possible by the presence of SFOR and the International Police Task Force, run by the United Nations Mission.

Returns are up even in areas where some of the worst ethnic cleansing took place, and even in Srebrenica—the site of Europe's worst massacre since World War II, people are returning.

The other link in the international chain is the United Nations' Office of the High Representative, whose head, Mr. Petritsch, acted so swiftly against the ultra-nationalist Bosnian Croat leader. Had he not, I believe the Dayton accords would be in shambles, and we would be back on the verge of chaos.

This action followed a move in February in which he removed one of the most corrupt Bosnian officials, former Prime Minister Adhem Bićakčić, from his post at the head of the country's largest electric utility, which he was using as his own private little till for his party, and banned him from holding future public office. It is estimated that Bićakčić diverted hundreds of thousands of dollars in public funds to the Party of Democratic Action, the country's largest Muslim political party, and to private bank accounts.

He is a fitting poster-boy for the kind of behavior that can no longer be tolerated in Bosnia if Bosnia is ever going to turn its economy around.

There is more to cheer about on the economic front. Large-scale privatization is finally underway, and the communist-era payment bureaus, long a source of petty corruption, were shut down in early January, a move which should pave the way for a viable banking system to take hold.

Let me again stress that I do not believe by any stretch of the imagination we have definitively turned the corner in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But thanks

to the strikingly positive developments that have occurred in the last few months, Bosnia finds itself at an important crossroads, which makes our continued, active engagement there all the more urgent.

As I have said many times, we have come too far and accomplished too much to simply abandon the people of this region to the purveyors of ultra-nationalism and ethnic division who are waiting and hoping that our resolve will dissipate over time.

We need to support those forces—embodied in the Alliance for Change—that are struggling to end the post-war status quo of nationalist party dominance and to implement Dayton's political structures in a meaningful and durable way.

They represent the best hope for Bosnia's full integration into Europe's political and economic structures.

When that day comes, with mission accomplished we and our allies can close up shop and head home secure in the knowledge that we have helped extend the zone of European stability to include another Balkan country.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alabama, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

Without objection, it is so ordered.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 10 A.M.
TOMORROW

Mr. SESSIONS. In my capacity as a Senator from the State of Alabama, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate now stand in adjournment under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 5:52 p.m., adjourned until Friday, March 9, 2001, at 10 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate March 8, 2001:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

MICHAEL P. JACKSON, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE MORTIMER L. DOWNEY, RESIGNED.

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

KENNETH W. DAM, OF ILLINOIS, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY, VICE STUART E. EIZENSTAT, RESIGNED.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICERS FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADES INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES ARMY AND FOR REGULAR APPOINTMENT IN THE JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL CORPS (IDENTIFIED BY AN ASTERISK (*)) UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTIONS 531, 624, AND 3064:

To be lieutenant colonel

JAY M. WEBB, 0000 MS

To be major

*EDWARD K. LAWSON, 0000 JA
SIMUEL L. JAMISON, 0000 DE

IN THE NAVY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be commander

JAMES G. LIDDY, 0000

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE GRADE INDICATED IN THE UNITED STATES NAVY UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 624:

To be lieutenant commander

ANTHONY W. MAYBRIER, 0000

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

MARC ISAAH GROSSMAN, OF VIRGINIA, A CAREER MEMBER OF THE SENIOR FOREIGN SERVICE, CLASS OF CAREER MINISTER, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (POLITICAL AFFAIRS), VICE THOMAS R. PICKERING.

RICHARD LEE ARMITAGE, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE, VICE STROBE TALBOTT.

JOHN ROBERT BOLTON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR ARMS CONTROL AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY, VICE JOHN DAVID HOLUM, RESIGNED.

GRANT S. GREEN, JR., OF VIRGINIA, TO BE AN UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE (MANAGEMENT), VICE BONNIE R. COHEN.

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, IV, OF VIRGINIA, TO BE LEGAL ADVISER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, VICE DAVID ANDREWS.

IN THE ARMY

THE FOLLOWING NAMED OFFICER FOR APPOINTMENT IN THE RESERVE OF THE ARMY TO THE GRADE INDICATED UNDER TITLE 10, U.S.C., SECTION 12203:

To be brigadier general

COL. ROBERT G.F. LEE, 0000