

STATEMENT
by
H.E. Mr. Dejan Šahović, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
to the United Nations
on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina
10 July 2002

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of July. I would also like to thank you for convening this meeting at which we discuss extremely important issues that transcend the item on the Council's agenda – "The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina".

Mr. President,

The distinguished speakers that took the floor before me, both Council and non-Council members, described very eloquently the problem that has preoccupied the Council, and the Organization as a whole, in the last few weeks. Indeed, the question is whether a solution can be found that would avoid jeopardizing the role of the newly established International Criminal Court before it even started its work as well as of the United Nations peacekeeping concept.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is among the first 60 countries that ratified the Rome Statute, which brought into being the ICC. We share the belief that the Court is the cornerstone of the international legal system. Everything should be done to enable this institution to perform its envisaged role.

Mr. President,

Every month I come to this table to discuss the performance of the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo and Metohija. Now, of course, this debate is immediately connected to the United Nations presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a few days the Council is scheduled to review and extend the mandate of the UN Observer Mission in Prevlaka. Somewhat later this month, the President of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is scheduled to address the Council and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, Mr. Steiner, will submit again his periodic report to the Council.

This, of course, is a consequence of the decade-long tragic conflicts in my country and in its surroundings. At the same time, this is also a manifestation of the continuous involvement of the international community and the United Nations in particular, in our region. True, important progress has been made in stabilizing the Balkans and in re-building our post-conflict societies. All

countries involved have been contributing to the achievement of the region's lasting peace and stability. In fact, next Monday, the same day the fate of UNMIBH is to be decided, the Presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia will meet in Sarajevo, demonstrating their determination to work towards that goal. However, while this positive process is irreversible, it is not yet complete.

The presence of the international community is still very much needed. The European Union, through its stabilization and association process, is playing the pivotal role. At the same time, the United Nations, through the Security Council and its peacekeeping capabilities, is an irreplaceable actor in this equation.

Mr. President,

While, as I mentioned, the process towards peace and stability is underway, there are still forces in our area that would like to see the process fail. These forces are politically defeated, but not yet definitely buried in history. They would certainly look forward, and try to take advantage of, the withdrawal of the United Nations from our region and the failure of the ICC to stand on its feet. There is no need to elaborate on the serious consequences that such developments may entail.

Of course, it is not only the peacekeeping in the Balkans that is at stake but elsewhere as well. As already emphasized here today, Africa and its newly-born Union, which we warmly welcome, rely for their future significantly on the United Nations peacekeeping effort.

Mr. President,

Although the topic of the debate is extremely complex, the thrust of my message today is very simple. I appeal to the members of the Council to find a way out of the present stalemate. We understand that there are divergent legitimate concerns. However, we would like to believe that the understanding of the overall context of the topic we are debating will prevail and solutions acceptable to all will be found. Those solutions would ensure that the credibility of the Council is preserved, that the international rule of law is maintained and that we all, in particular we from the troubled parts of the world, will be able to continue to rely on the United Nations peacekeeping in our striving to achieve genuine peace and security.

Thank you.