

TRANSCRIPT
A/S DAN FRIED'S PRESS AVAIL
Government Building – Outside the President's Office
Pristina, Kosovo
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Broadcast live by RTK, Kosovo's national television station – 16:30

Participants:

President Fatmir Sejdiu, Prime Minister Hashim Thachi, A/S for Europe, Dan Fried

A/S FRIED: Mr President, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you. We had a good discussion today. We discussed, and agreed upon, our common support for EULEX's deployment throughout all of Kosovo. We agreed that we need to find a way forward which takes into account the position of the Government of Kosovo with respect to the six-points, and takes into account Kosovo's desire for EULEX deployment according to its mandate from February -- and takes into account Kosovo's desire to work closely with the European Union.

The United States has worked closely with the people of Kosovo for many years. We've seen some tough situations together. The United States has always kept its word to the people of Kosovo and will keep it in the future. And, I must say, although I don't represent the European Government, Europe has also kept its word. EULEX is prepared to deploy, I know, and the President and the Prime Minister made it very clear to me the problems that their Government has with the six-points. But, we had a good discussion, we had some ideas, shared some ideas about the way ahead, and I'll be discussing those ideas with my European colleagues. And I'll be discussing them with the President and the Prime Minister. So, this was a good and productive discussion, Kosovo's future is with Europe -- hopefully, some day as a member of the European Union. And so, Kosovo needs to find a way forward with Europe. I believe that despite the questions and concerns, and even disagreements, about the six-points that a way forward can be found that allows EULEX to deploy promptly and throughout all of Kosovo. So, I had a good day's discussion. I'm satisfied with our talks -- satisfied that we can find a way forward and that's my intention.

Final point: I didn't come here alone. I came accompanied by General Paul Schaefer of the U.S. European Command, and that should remind you that the U.S., through KFOR, has a history of carrying out its promises, and we will do so in the future. I remember when I was here in July 2007, and we talked about a 120 day delay and there were a lot of doubts, many Kosovars thought: "Ah, it will be a trick, we won't get independence, they'll cheat us, something will happen." But the U.S. kept its word and Europe kept its word and we moved ahead. So, my request to all those who have concerns: Remember that we've kept our word in the past and we will keep our word in the future. Work with us and we will continue to move forward. I am glad to be back in the Republic of Kosovo, happy to work with the President and the Prime Minister on a way forward.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOLLOW

Q: (*Arber Vllahia from BBC.*) Sir, Pristina is rejecting the six-point plan - the United Nations Plan. Belgrade is standing firmly in its position. You say that you had very good discussions with the leadership of Kosovo. Where do you see the exit? What is the exit for the deployment of EULEX in Kosovo, bearing in mind both positions?

A/S DAN FRIED: Sure. Well the Government of Kosovo has always embraced the EULEX deployment, and it has always embraced as the mandate of the EULEX deployment, the February decision of the European Union. Now, the six-points have been worked out with Belgrade. The six-points are, after all, not permanent. It is an interim arrangement. It will pass. There are some parts of the six-points that have raised - let me be diplomatic - some concerns. There are other points, in the six-points that would really be quite an improvement over the current situation. But the way forward, is to deploy EULEX, and to have EULEX consult with the Government of Kosovo, at each and every phase. Because, this is, after all, Kosovo we are talking about. It is one country, the United States has recognized it. 52 countries around the world have recognized Kosovo, and it's the job of diplomats to find a way forward, recognizing various positions and I think we can do that. That's our job.

Q: (*name inaudible from Reuters.*) Does the United States still support the deployment of EULEX on the 2nd of December, even if there is no agreement on the six- point plan?

A/S DAN FRIED: We support the deployment of EULEX as soon as possible. I think the 2nd of December is a good target date. Time is not going to make this better. We need to make some decisions, move quickly and move ahead. EULEX is prepared, its people know what they're doing, they're quite capable, so we need to find a way that lets us move ahead and then to go and do it.

Q: Mr. Fried, do you expect further destabilization in Kosovo keeping in mind the recent explosions in front of the ICO?

A/S DAN FRIED: That was a terrible, terrible development. Kosovo is a sovereign and independent country, and every citizen of Kosovo needs to remember that. Kosovo's future is with Europe. It will not achieve that future by giving any space or any credence to radicals who are not the friends of Kosovo but, in fact, do damage to the cause of Kosovo.

Q: (*Nebi Qena, Associated Press*) – Do you feel that there is an agreement that the UN will agree and that EULEX will, or the EU will, take over in terms of Rule of Law, and if so, when?

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A/S DAN FRIED: Well, as soon as possible, it is to be hoped. The EULEX mission is the most ambitious mission of its kind that the EU has ever put on – and by the way – the United States is part of that mission. We're in. We have formally signed an agreement with the EU, we're contributing police. So this isn't just Europe, *we* are a part of this. But, I have great confidence in the European Union's commitment, and the sooner we get it on the ground – the better; the sooner it takes over its mandate – the better. And in the end, if we do our job right, in another two years no one will even remember this fight about six points, because EULEX will be on the ground everywhere in Kosovo and we will have moved ahead, recognitions will be coming in, investments will be coming in. There is a good future for Kosovo. I understand the doubts. There is free press. There is an opposition, they're doing their job; but the Kosovo leadership, I am convinced, is committed to working with the EU and with EULEX.

Q: (*Shkumbin Ahmetxhekaj, Radio Television of Kosovo*). What is the promise you gave today to Kosovo's leaders? To what extent can changes be made to the plan (inaudible)?

A/S DAN FRIED: If I had thought that this problem could be solved by reopening the six-points, I might want to reopen the six-points, but I don't think that's the case. I think that the best way forward is to deploy EULEX. To recognize that EULEX has to consult with the Kosovo Government, which is the sovereign Government of this country in the view of the United States, and in the view of 2/3 of the European Union. It is important that EULEX deploy through all, in all of Kosovo, in all of Kosovo – this is one country. So, let's proceed on that basis. That's at least the view of my Government.

Q: (*Fatmire Aliu from Koha Ditore*) I have a very 'yes or no' question – does the United States of America support the six-points plan? Madame Ambassador has said that it is good.

A/S DAN FRIED: Ambassador Kaidanow is absolutely right. The six-points do a lot for Kosovo, but, we also recognize that the Kosovo Government has a position. The Kosovo Government is a sovereign Government they don't...they listen to other governments, but they make their own decisions and the fact is we have to respect them. Now, I read a lot of charges in the Kosovo press and the media about what the six-points do, and they're, these are...not all of them are true, in fact many of them are just wrong. But, we are going to work with the Government of Kosovo. It's a sovereign Government, and so we think that the six points, which are, after all, temporary, interim, not permanent, we think that the six points do a lot of good and do no harm. But, we respect the fact that the Kosovo Government has a different view. So we are going to move ahead on the basis of our friendship and support with the Kosovo government, but our basis finally, of our agreement, our agreement that EULEX should deploy. And on the basis of that agreement, we think we can find a way forward but we will continue our discussions. Anyway, thank you very much.

Prime Minister Thaci: (in Albanian) Thank you.