
BOSNIA DENIES PRESSING SERBIA TO ARREST DODIK

- 24.01.2018

Balkan Insight (24 January 2018)

Bosnia's Security Minister has denied that Sarajevo ever asked Serbia to arrest Milorad Dodik, President of the Republika Srpska, in connection with an investigation being conducted against him.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Monday that Bosnia had asked Serbia to detain Dodik over, he said, "some villa".

"It was an official request for the arrest of the President of the RS a year ago. Imagine that Serbia seizes the President of the Republika Srpska! Are you normal? What do you want us to do? ... not to allow people to enter Serbia; not to allow our people who want to go to Srpska and BiH to cross the border? Such a thing will never happen", Vucic told a Serbian television show on Monday.

Dodik has confirmed that he also knew that Serbia had been asked to arrest him.

I spoke to Vucic about our inter-relationships, and he was there when I got that information, so he knew that, too," Dodik said on Tuesday.

"I'm grateful to Vucic that he went public with this information. It was not up to me to talk about it, but I've known about it for a year, Dodik told the Bosnian media.

He accused the RS opposition parties, who are part of the ruling coalition in Bosnia's state institutions, of being behind the request for his arrest.

They not only sent this request to Serbia but to some other countries as well, Dodik said.

The villa that Vucic mentioned is connected to a criminal complaint filed against Dodik by opposition parties.

In January 2016, the Serbian Democratic Party, SDS, the largest opposition party in the RS, accused Dodik of buying a villa in Belgrade after obtaining a fictitious loan from the since failed Pavlovic Bank, which served as a cover for the transaction.

However, Dragan Mektic, Bosnia's security minister, insists that Vucic was wrongly informed.

Where he got that information from I do not know but I know that a request for Dodik's arrest has never sent from Sarajevo to Belgrade because it would be meaningless and unenforceable," he said.

"He [Dodik] has Serbian citizenship, and there is no extradition agreement between the two countries, Mektic told the Bosnian media on Tuesday.

He added that Bosnia's only request to Serbia was to check Dodik's financial transactions from the Pavlovic Bank to the Commercial Bank in Belgrade and nothing more.

The Pavlovic Bank's owner, Slobodan Pavlovic, and several of his employees were arrested as part of an investigation into its affairs, but Bosnia's state court, the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, freed them pending the outcome of investigative procedures.

Pavlovic, a US-based businessman, told the media then that investigators were looking for evidence related to a loan that the bank gave to Dodik for 1.5 million Bosnian marks [750,000 euros] for the purchase of the villa in Belgrade in 2007.

Bosnia's chief prosecutor confirmed in April 2016 that his office was investigating Dodik in connection with the Pavlovic Bank.

In November 2017, Bosnia's state court confirmed that Dodik was wiretapped for the investigation into him in the bank case. But the investigation was suspended.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/bosnian-security-minister-denies-vucic-01-23-2018>

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