



WEEKLY NEWS

A WEEKLY BULLETIN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
YEAR 2/ NUMBER 80

August 17, 2009

PM Berisha attends ceremony for change of NATO Headquarters command in Tirana

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PM Berisha attends the ceremony of dispatching additional peacekeepers to Afghanistan

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PM Berisha receives a high-level delegation of the Democratic League of Kosova

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PM Berisha attends ceremony for change of NATO Headquarters command in Tirana

PM attended today the ceremony for change of NATO Headquarters command in Albania. Following 18 months in the office of Commander of NATO Headquarters in Tirana, the Brigadier-General Vasily Kirilov



Dimitrov, in the presence of Admiral Mark P. Fitzgerald, Minister of Defense Gazmend Oketa, Chief of General Staff of AF, Brigadier General Maksim Malaj and representatives of the diplomatic representation offices accredited in Tirana, handed over the office to Brigadier-General Dincho Ivanov Karamunchev.

In his greeting message, Premier Berisha said:

"Honorable Mr. Minister, Admiral Fitzgerald, Brigadier-General Dimitrov, and Brigadier-General Karamunchev, your Excellencies ambassadors, honored generals, military attaches and other guests!

First of all I would like to express deep gratitude to Brigadier-General Dimitrov for the successful completion of his Tirana mission while he is being promoted in a rather important office to his home country. General Dimitrov has a brilliant military career, high qualities and I expect he has a promising future in his own country and the NATO structures as well. But, I also assure you that your contribution in Albania will shine brilliantly in your CV. 18 months ago you were appointed at the head of the NATO Headquarters command in Tirana while Albania was aspiring to become a NATO member country. And you were not just a witness, but acted as a catalyst and major contributor for the future developments in Albania. Albania NATO membership, the most important event in the history of the Albanian nation following Independence, is also a marked event in my life. NATO membership, the most powerful Alliance of freedom of all times, is the most major event for every free nation. But, for the small nations experiencing major security problems in their history, this is the most extraordinary achievement. Hence, I thank you and the team you were heading; you will remain in the memory of our armed forces and the country's efforts for full membership in the North Atlantic Alliance.

This is a day to bid farewell, but even the day of a new beginning, because Brigadier-General Karamunchev takes over in the office of Mail-T Tirana and I would like to wish him welcome. I would also like to assure him that we shall continue even further the great tradition of cooperation with Brigadier-General

Dimitrov. You will head your team in a NATO member country. Yesterday, in fulfillment of our obligations and support for the strategy of President Obama on Afghanistan, we dispatched a new military unit to Herat, thus doubling our presence in that country. We shall send again a new team of doctors and nurses to Kabul and we shall take an active part in building of this country within our possibilities. These are the first steps we take like a NATO member country, but we are aware of the fact that the reforms should be "perpetuum mobile" for our Armed Forces and country as a whole.

We count a lot on your assistance and contribution in pushing forward the reform in our armed forces. We are determined that within 2010 our army is completely upgraded into a professional army. We are more and more interested in the further increase of the capability of our army under peace conditions, like it should be capable of responding to the requirements of the alliance where the need arises. Therefore, I also call today a new beginning of your mission. And I hope and am certain you will achieve success.

Honorable Admiral Fitzgerald! You have come several times in my country and now you come to a NATO member country. Deep gratitude to you and Joint Force Command Naples which has strongly supported our NATO membership aspirations. NATO Headquarters has constantly been inspiring for Albania and the Albanians on their way toward membership. Joint Force Command Naples has been the closest and most powerful supporter of our efforts. It is a pleasure to have you here and I assure you that Albania like a NATO member will increase full cooperation with Joint Force Command Naples, under your leadership, to the best interest of peace, security in our region.

I am still grateful to General Dimitrov, Admiral Fitzgerald and all those who made a contribution for a great dream of my nation becoming a reality, i.e. Albania NATO membership. And best wishes for General Karamunchev in the new office."

PM Berisha attends the ceremony of dispatching additional peacekeepers to Afghanistan

PM Berisha attended today afternoon the ceremony of dispatching the first additional batch of troops in Herat, west of Afghanistan. The additional unit,



consisting of 110 soldiers is part of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), under the command of Italian army and is dispatched following government of Albania decision to increase its contribution to the allied forces in Afghanistan on the eve of the upcoming elections on 20 August, 2009. Attending the ceremony was Minister of Defense Gazmend Oketa, Chief of the General Staff of the Army Maksim Malaj, Italy ambassador to Albania Saba D'Elia and relations of the soldiers with whom Premier Berisha talked warmly at the end of the ceremony.

In his address to the soldiers before they departed toward Afghanistan, Premier Berisha said:

"Honored Mr. Minister, Mr. Ambassador D'Elia, Chief of Staff Malaj, dear officers, subordinate officers, soldiers of commando unit, dear parents, family members of the soldiers that we see off today to Afghanistan!

Today, we have gathered here on a marked event for all the country, our armed forces and the Albanian nation. We are sending you to a great and noble mission in Afghanistan. In the early hours tomorrow, you leave your country, but the national flag will be with you; it makes us proud of; it's the longing and love of your families; it's the will of your country and nation to make a contribution for consolidation of the values of freedom and democracy, peace in Afghanistan. Yours is a difficult mission and noble as well. But, I say it is a great mission because in the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance we also make a contribution for peace, freedom and democracy in Afghanistan. The history has confirmed that Taliban poses a major risk to Afghan peace and nation, but even to the world peace as a whole. And there is no other more efficient way to fight terrorism, so that it doesn't knock at the door of your place, than to uproot it. The friendly Afghan nation faces great developments ahead. The elections are ahead and Afghan people by its free vote will define its destiny and future. The Afghan nation is set to vote in freedom. Taliban and extremism attempt to hamper this great nation to take the appropriate steps in the road of democracy. You go there to make your contribution like peacekeepers in a peaceful and

tranquil electoral process. You go there so that the Afghan people do not speak with the language of the guns, but speak with vote for their future.

Mr. Ambassador, I would like to express you and your armed forces the deepest gratitude. The unit that departs today goes to Herat to join the other company part of the Italian contingent of troops. They have established friendly and fraternal relations there. Together with the command of the Italian contingent, they have fulfilled with dignity all the tasks that stem from their mission.

We are very much grateful to you for your commitment so that the Albanian unit joins the Italian contingent in Herat.

Dear soldiers and officers! Today, you bid farewell to your families. I would like to assure you that the government will stand by you while feeling a great obligation to you in every problem you will encounter. We stand by you the same as if you would be serving in Tirana. We shall stand by you in Afghanistan and the government will do its utmost to support you.

You go there even in the framework of a new obligation of Albania stemming from its membership in the North Atlantic Alliance. In Strasbourg, we got committed to support the new strategy of President Obama and in this context today you go there, i.e. we double our troops there. In this framework, we shall send soon even a medical group composed of 20 doctors and nurses. In the same way, this current year budget will also forecast building of 8 new schools in this friendly country. Like the friendly countries and nations did help us by billions of euros, we shall also help them who try to build democracy, peace and stability.

You are brilliant ambassadors. Thus, our forces number 1920 officers, subordinate officers and soldiers that accomplish their mission. Our soldiers are stationed in Bosnia, Chad and up to Afghanistan, Georgia and other countries. May success attend you in your noble mission! I express my belief that in line with the best tradition of the Albanian Army, you shall confirm yourself to be the most brilliant ambassadors of the nation and country you represent.

Have a good trip and thank you!"

Prime Minister Berisha expresses his condolences to the families of 4 police officers killed on duty

“Every loss causes deep pain to everyone, but their heroism is inspiring for every Albanian.”

“Between being alive and law enforcement, they choose the law because they are heroes. They proved that this is the moral of police forces.”

Prime Minister Sali Berisha visited yesterday afternoon the families of the four senior police officers Fatos Khani, Saimir Duçkollari, Kastriot Feskaj, Altin Dizdari, who lost their lives during a police operation carried out a few days ago in Durrës for elimination of Dritan Dajti criminal gang.

Prime Minister Berisha expressed condolences to the family members for the loss of lives of their beloved ones while appreciating that every loss is a great pain for all of us, but their heroism is inspiring for every Albanian.

Evaluating highly their heroic deed, Prime Minister Berisha said that all the Albanians, like the family members of the victims have felt the same because they gave their lives for what is the dearest thing for all the Albanians, security, tranquility, public order and law. The pain is great, said the Prime Minister, but the criminal gang was eliminated and this is a consolation for their lives.

Battle against crime, said further the Prime Minister, is vital for the Albanians and that sacrifice is defining for the future of our country. They were the best; they had a brilliant career and fell because they wanted to enforce the law. They didn't want to use gun, but to enforce the law. Their choice between being alive and law enforcement was for the law because they are heroes. This is in the moral and spirit of the police. They wanted to serve to a free country. But, the criminal (Dajti) and his gang, said the Prime Minister, will get the deserved punishment.

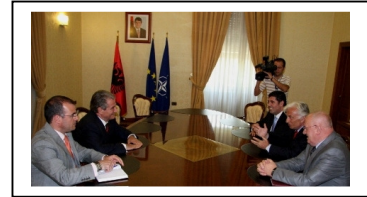
Prime Minister Berisha assured that fight without compromise to dismantle organized crime groups will be at the center of the efforts of the government and of all the structures of the public order in the country. Nothing is more important for us, said the Prime Minister, than fight against organized crime and this is an instance that encourages reviewing the issue of the legal framework of fight against crime.

Expressing the deep pain, but even sympathy for the family members, Prime Minister Berisha promised that the government will stand by them and will also take other decisions on the status of those fallen on duty. I say, said the Prime Minister that except for your

beloved ones, the children and the family members of the fallen will lack nothing, because their sacrifice is worth of every support for you.

Prime Minister Berisha receives a high-level delegation of the Democratic League of Kosova

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today a high-level delegation of the Democratic League of Kosova including Mr. Eqerem Kryeziu, Deputy Chairman, Mr. Lutfi Haziri, Deputy Chairman and Mr. Ramë Manaj, party's Secretary General and at the same time deputy prime minister of Kosova.



The senior officials of the Democratic League of Kosova congratulated Prime Minister Berisha for the victory at the Parliamentary elections. They also expressed condolences on the fall of the four State Police officers combating crime and said that their act conveys the message that fight against organized crime will be waged without any compromise.

On his part, Prime Minister Berisha pointed to the heroic deed and said that the late police officers got killed because they enforced the law.

The Prime Minister emphasized the importance that the two governments should overcome all barriers between the two countries. He emphasized that we are one nation and feel like one. The two governments, - said the Prime Minister- should offer two opportunities and not become barriers to the citizens. He added that concrete measures must be taken for the unification of the customs, finances, education, etc., with the model of the EU countries. The Prime Minister emphasized that the nation ought to feel like one while Kosova independence is observed.

Further on, the talks focused on the cooperation between the two political parties, the Democratic Party of Albania and the Democratic League of Kosova. Prime Minister Berisha expressed his willingness to cooperate with DPA, under the tradition of cooperation among two political parties, and asked understanding for his determination to remain opened for collaboration with Kosova's political forces, as this is the attitude that suits the best interest for the cooperation among the two countries and the national interest.

Prime Minister Berisha receives Mr. Muharrem Mustafa, Chairman of the Interior and Security Affairs Committee of Kosova's Parliament

Prime Minister Berisha received today Mr. Muharrem Mustafa, the Chairman of the Interior and Security Affairs Committee of Kosova Parliament, who was accompanied from Kosova's ambassador in Tirana.



Mr. Mustafa extended his condolences to Prime Minister Berisha for the four late police officers who got killed in the line of duty while fighting crime.

On his part, Prime Minister Berisha considered their death a heroic deed and said that the police officers got killed only because they enforced the law. The Prime Minister described them as excellent officers with a brilliant career in the ranks of the police and that thanks to their act Dajti's criminal band does not exist anymore.

Further on, Mr. Berisha made an expose of Albania achievements in the field of public order and security, but even in other fields and emphasized the need of taking concrete steps in the cooperation between the two countries in all the fields.

The Prime Minister considered extremely important that the two governments ought to overcome barriers between the two countries. He added that we are a single nation and must see one another like two countries, but not like foreign countries. The two governments are expected to serve as two opportunities and not as barriers to the citizens, said further the Prime Minister. He added that concrete steps are needed toward unification of the customs, finance, and education with EU model.

The Prime Minister said that the nation should feel like one while Kosova Independence is observed. He noticed Kosova great progress in the course of a year and a half since its independence and said that he is optimistic of the future. The Prime Minister said that Kosova is being confirmed like a factor of stability.

Prime Minister Berisha positively assessed the achievements of the government of Kosova within the country and in the international arena as well and demanded from Mr. Mustafa to convey to Prime Minister Thaçi his most cordial greetings.

The Chairman of the Interior and Security Affairs Committee of Kosova's Parliament, Mr. Mustafa asked the Prime Minister for assistance with expertise for the public order and security reform, a request which was welcomed from Prime Minister Berisha.

Premier Berisha receives Dr Mehmet Tatlici, President of Turkish TAT Group-Devel.Center

Prime Minister Sali Berisha held a meeting today with Dr Mehmet Tatlici, President of Turkish TAT Group-Devel.Center.

Mr. Tatlici presented the draft project on investments in the field of renewable energy, road transport and tourism.

Turkish investors expect to invest in Tepelenë-Sarandë region on renewable energy projects. Meanwhile, they are looking for the concession granted on building of Arbri road as well as Tiranë-Elbasan road. Also the Turkish company expects to build a tourist resort in Vlora.

Premier Berisha welcomed the Turkish group taking an interest in investments in Albania in these fields of priority and where the government of Albania has concentrated a good part of the financial resources. Likewise, Premier Berisha expressed to the representative of the Turkish company the government of Albania full support as well as the favorable legislation on the foreign investments.

Premier Berisha receives H.E. Suphan Erkula, outgoing Turkish ambassador in Tirana

Prime Minister Sali Berisha received today the outgoing ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Turkey to Albania, H.E. Suphan Erkula, at the end of his mission in Tirana.



After some words of welcome, Premier Berisha expressed his special pleasure to meet today ambassador Erkula on occasion of him successfully completing his mission to Albania like a real friend of the country and the Albanians as well as a personal friend of his.

On his part, Turkish ambassador Erkula thanked Premier Berisha for the hospitality. And he said he was leaving Albania with the best impressions on the very good relations between the two peoples, countries and governments; which he confirmed during all his stay in Tirana and an extremely friendly atmosphere and hospitality that all Turkish diplomats enjoy in Albania.

In this context, the Turkish ambassador pointed to the very good cooperation with the government of Albania and especially with Premier Berisha in the course of all these years and as a result of which the Turkish investments in

Albania got increased from 130 million USD in 2005 into 860 million USD by the end of this mandate. Likewise, the Albanian exports are boosted and have recorded a 35% increase this current year, said the Turkish ambassador.

While positively assessing the reforms the government of Albania has implemented, the Turkish ambassador emphasized that under the leadership of Premier Berisha, Albania has made a substantial progress toward the further development and modernization as well as the Euro-Atlantic integration of the country.

The Turkish ambassador praised especially the great achievements of the government of Albania in building modern infrastructure works countrywide, like Durrës-Kukës-Morinë highway. It has been impressive the government of Albania performance in the course of all these years, said ambassador Erkula while wishing Premier Berisha success in the efforts for the further progress of the country and its EU integration.

Also the Turkish ambassador promised he would keep on being a real friend, a supporter and promoter of Albania and the Albanians even after the completion of his diplomatic mission in Tirana and in wherever office he will be in the future.

Further on, the two dignitaries appreciated the very good bilateral relations between the two countries and governments which are based on the traditional friendship, close historical links between the Albanian and Turkish peoples and which have developed further through the great cooperation the Albanian and Turkish governments have promoted in all the fields.

In this context, Premier Berisha evaluated the contribution the Turkish ambassador Erkula made for the development of this cooperation during the recent four years and which is displayed in a crystal clear way even by the indicators of the economic-trade exchanges between the two countries in such high levels like never before.

The interlocutors reiterated the commitment of the governments of the two countries to develop further the cooperation in all the fields and to strengthen the close and friendly links between the two countries and peoples.

Following their meeting, Premier Berisha put on a dinner in honor of the Turkish ambassador. Other representatives of the diplomatic corps accredited in Tirana were also attending.

Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Ambassador Robert Bosch offers condolences to Premier Berisha for loss of lives of 4 State Police officers

Ambassador Robert Bosch expressed condolences to Prime Minister Sali Berisha and the government of Albania on behalf of the OSCE Presence in Albania for the loss of lives of four police officers of the State Police Fatos Xhani, Kastriot Feskaj, Saimir Duçkollari and Altin Dizdari while in the line of duty during a police operation in Durrës on Friday.

"OSCE Presence in Albania expresses strong support to the government of Albania for the decisive actions taken against all forms of organized crime. We highly appreciate the results achieved thanks to faithfulness, capability and devotion of the valiant woman and men in the police, writes Ambassador Bosch."