

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference at CPIC

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 24 December 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 24 December 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	• Citizenship Law • Canton Seven Pension System
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• Wishes for a happy Christmas
c. UNMIBH	Alun Roberts	• No electronic copy available
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	• No statements
f. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	• Civil-Military Co-operation efforts (CIMIC operations)

2. Thirty members of the media including five television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

*A. Ollivier
Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans*

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

OK. Good Morning everybody. We'll be join very shortly by Alun Roberts, it is extremely cold in here, I'm begin to shiver, Urdur has a cold so, she is already immune, Alun is just join this, our apologizes for starting late, thanks all of you for coming on time. When I forgot my glasses, so I have squint a little bit as I read this.

There are two items from OHR this morning, I believe as far as I can see in the paper in front of me.

The first related to the Citizenship Law. The BiH House of Representative's successful passage yesterday of the Law on Citizenship yesterday, which the OHR views as an encouraging sign that delegates to the new parliament plan to replace gridlock with pragmatism. By passing this law, the delegates put the people's business before short-term party political considerations, and they are to be congratulated for doing so. The law is necessary, and it is the job of parliament to pass necessary legislation. Currently, European Union countries apply operating standards on citizenship which are more flexible than those required by the BiH citizenship law passed yesterday. Some countries allow dual citizenship without requiring specific bilateral agreements on this. The High Representative believes that, over the long term – consistent with its overall strategy of entering the European mainstream – Bosnia and Herzegovina should aim for citizenship legislation of the flexible kind, but the High Representative recognizes that the legislation passed yesterday fulfills basic requirements and will effectively replace the law which expires on 1 January.

The second item concerns the implementation of the plan to unify the pensions system in Canton Seven. The OHR is pleased

that the Herzegovina Neretva Canton government has acted in a timely way on implementing the plan presented by PDHR Donald Hays to the Canton Prime Minister, along with officials of the HNC Health Insurance Fund and the Federation Ministry of Health, this plan lays out the steps which are required in order to unify the Canton Seven Health Insurance System. As you know, until now the Canton has operated a divisive – and consequently a hugely wasteful – health insurance system. This has left citizens facing discrimination and has generally lowered the standard of health services available in the Canton. The Canton government yesterday appointed the 9th member of Canton Seven Health Insurance Fund Management Board and formally committed itself to granting equal access to medical services throughout the Canton to all insured HNC patients. We expect the Canton Seven authorities to keep up the momentum and implement in full Ambassador Hays' plan for the unification of the Health Insurance System.

That's the main point from OHR this morning. I only have to add that the High Representative and all his staff extend their greetings to those citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina who are celebrating Christmas tomorrow. With that I pass you over to the capable hands of OSCE.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Thank you very much. I want to do be a little faster and only wish you, all of you a very Merry and Happy Christmas from the mission and especially from us press people, and to say that the holiday season symbolizes peace, tolerance and respect. We really hope that these values will guide all not only towards the end of this year, but also through the next one. Thank you.

Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

No electronic copy available

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

Thank you. Good Morning, I have no statements for you today.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I have one point to make today and it deals with Civil-Military Co-operation efforts. These efforts, known as CIMIC operations, are designed to assist the local population in its efforts to rebuild infrastructure, stimulate their economy and assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in its return to prosperity and peace.

For 2002, SFOR had more than 350 separate CIMIC projects. Of these 157 are completed, 105 are on-going and 83 are planned. The total value of these projects is estimated to be more than 36 million Euros.

In 2002, Multinational Division North completed 46 projects, Multinational Division Southwest completed 29 projects and Multinational Division Southeast completed 59 projects. In addition to these projects, several SFOR nations are conducting their own civil-military co-operation efforts under SFOR's supervision. Of note the Italian CIMIC teams completed 13 projects while the German teams finished 10 projects.

As these figures clearly demonstrate, SFOR continues to play a strong supporting role to the local authorities, sustainable industries and businesses and entrepreneurs across Bosnia and Herzegovina. SFOR will continue in 2003 its CIMIC efforts but stresses that these types of activities are tasks for the entities. Together, we are helping to keep this country moving toward long-term economic stability and peace.

That's all from SFOR this morning.

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

Just before we go to questions, there will be no CPIC Press Conference on Thursday the next press conference will be next Tuesday, the thirty-first, which will allow us to finish the

year with an experience all together. So Thursday no press conference, next Tuesday the next press conference.

Now, Do you have any questions?

Questions and Answers

Senad Slatina – SLOBODNA BOSNA

Kevin, Can you clarify something about this TV show that happened on Thursday? Can you confirm that Paddy Ashdown did not want to be in the same show with the ICG Director and if this is so, why?

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

Absolutely not the case, the issue was that the High Representative wasn't able to stay for the whole show, and we proposed that the High Representative do half an hour, and Mark Wheeler from the ICG do the other half hour, and that we both had an ample amount of time, and the High Representative didn't then detract from Mark Wheeler's appearance time wise, and it was entirely to do with scheduling, and the High Representative had been double booked for that evening and didn't want to cancel his appearance and he chatted with Mark Wheeler before the show and there was absolutely no problem with his appearance on the show with Mark Wheeler, it was purely a question of time, and if anybody who saw the show would see they both had ample time in the hour that was available.

Senad Slatina – SLOBODNA BOSNA

It was rather weird, it's not the usual concept of that TV show, and that TV show was advertised several days in advance, as having both representatives for the full time so if for any

reason OHR Chief couldn't stay for full hour, Why they were not together for the first half an hour?

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

Basically because of the format of the show, as you saw the journalist panel put questions to Paddy for the first half hour and put questions to Mark Wheeler for the second half hour, and that was that was the optimum way of organising it and the show was advertised, and the High Representative was unable to be there for the full hour because of a round of meetings, and that was the solution that was arrived at, and the end result was by no means an unhappy one in terms the quality or the substantial discussion on the programme.

Senad Slatina – SLOBODNA BOSNA

As you may have noticed during that show Paddy did a comparison the anger of a lot of people, comparing nineteen police officers with the Radovan Karadzic. Did you guys consider discussed that issue?

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

I mean the High Representative did not may that direct comparison, and taking that out of context distorts the nature of his remarks. The comparison wish not made and the High Representative certainly did not intend any such comparison

Filipovic Zana – RADIO FREE EUROPE

Kevin, Could you tell us, will the High Representative, by the end of the year, impose the Law on Citizenship, since the House of People will not be able to pass such a law, because it has not been constituted yet?

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

Since it's unlikely that the House of People will be constituted, if the High Representative received the request

from the House of Representatives to act in this regard, he will look on that favourably, he hasn't received the request yet, but I imagine when he does he'll act accordingly.

Zeljko Tica – RTV F BiH

Question for you Alun in Bosnian, please.

What will be your comment on the issue of the Labour Association Union Director?

I would like to hear your comment on the initiative of the Trade Union Director, and his initiative is to declare the IPTF Commissioner a "Persona Non Grata" in BiH, because of the violation of the rights of certain groups, to be precise, rights of the nineteen policemen, violation of the constitution and some other court decisions; judicial decisions?

Alun Roberts – UNMIBH

I want to comment since the comment in the newspapers, in the media, on this declaration of the thing yesterday, we got no comments to make in terms of this statement. The IPTF Commissioner continues the functions as the IPTF Commissioner and that's the state of affairs. We'll see what'll follow in terms of their declarations, but the Commissioner has full support of UNMIBH on continues to function on his duties.

Antonio Prelenda – OSLOBODENJE

Kevin, just to elaborate the procedure, Why has the High Representative needs a request to do that thing like that Law on Citizenship?

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

He doesn't need the request. He hasn't received one yet, should they receive one he'll act accordingly. It's not really a question of procedure, but of practice. The High

Representative will response appropriately in the absence of the House of People ratifying, being constituted first of all, and ratifying this bill second of all.

Amra Hadziosmanovic – AFP

Any news on Fiuljanin?

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

No, there is to report since the last press conference. I have not been provide with additional information on this subject

Amra Hadziosmanovic – AFP

OK

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

Are there any more questions? OK I'll see you on next Tuesday. Thank you very much.