

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 1130 hours on Tuesday 28 May 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Representative's schedule• State budget
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demob of soldiers and booklet
c. UNMIBH	Stefo Lehmann	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• House of People's approval of Law on State Information and Protection Agency• Removal of provisional authorisation for 8 police officers
d. UNHCR	Aida Feraget	No statement
e. IOM	Federico Soda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IOM Transitional Assistance to Former Soldiers in Bosnia and Herzegovina
f. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	No statement
g. UNMIBH / IPTF	Stefo Lehmann Vincent Coeurderoy Fredericksen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Farewell• Greetings

2. Forty members of the media and six television crews attended the conference.
3. A transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

*C Minck
Col (FR A),
Chief Media Operations and Plans*

Kevin Sullivan - OHR

On the off chance that any of you have not heard: the new High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, assumed office at lunchtime yesterday. After addressing the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliament in Sarajevo, the High Representative set off on a tour of the country which will take him to Banja Luka, Mostar, Citluk, Brcko, Bijeljina and Tuzla, before he returns to Sarajevo on Wednesday evening.

This is a listening tour. The High Representative will meet senior figures from political life as well as members of the Office of the High Representative's staff around the country. He will also have a series of meetings with Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens from all walks of life. He is determined to reach out and respond to the grassroots of this society. The High Representative wants to use the meetings he will have during this trip to discover more about the concerns and aspirations of ordinary citizens as well as the various standpoints of politicians.

At breakfast this morning he had a very satisfactory exchange of views with Lidija Zivanovic of the Banja Luka chapter of the Helsinki Citizens Assembly, Milos Stojakovic of the EKO Project, Zdravko Miovcic of the Enterprise

Development Agency, Economist Rajko Tomas, Nada Golubovic of the United Women group, and journalist Dragan Stegic. This was an opportunity to meet activists and opinion formers and hear what they think the High Representative's priorities should be.

The High Representative has just concluded a meeting with students and young people in Banja Luka. This meeting reflects his belief that one of the greatest threats facing Bosnia and Herzegovina is the exodus of young and talented citizens - he will do everything in his power to help create economic, social and political conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina which will encourage young people to build their futures here.

Right now, as we speak, the High Representative is en route to Mostar, where he will meet political and religious leaders as well as people from the world of the arts, NGOs and also human rights activists. He will seek to hear first hand how the communities can be brought together again. He will also be visiting the Old Bridge this afternoon and the European Commission's multi-ethnic housing reconstruction project along the former confrontation line in Mostar.

The High Representative will be visiting the Bobita drinks plant in Citluk this afternoon. This is a successful medium-sized company that started after the war and now employs 85 people. Small and Medium Enterprises will dominate the economic growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina as it moves away from the obsolete rust belt heavy industrial base which used to dominate the economy. The High Representative wants to learn more about the challenges facing companies like Citluk. And I should say also the High Representative recognises the potential contribution of the Bosnian-Croat business community to the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina. There is an entrepreneurial culture in Hercegovina, which is vibrant and successful. It can be more so and from which a great deal can be taken in order to generate an entrepreneurial culture throughout the country, which is something, that Bosnia and Herzegovina desperately needs.

Tomorrow, the High Representative will visit Brcko, Bijeljina and Tuzla. In Brcko the High Representative will visit the technical High School, where he will have an hour-long discussion with students, after which he will visit the Brcko Central Police Station. The Brcko District Police Department is the only municipal police department in the country that has qualified for UNMIBH/IPTF certification. The High Representative will then visit Bijeljina, the object of this visit is to place his full weight behind the refugee return process. As you know Bijeljina was one of the worst cases of ethnic cleansing during the war. There have been considerable returns, sometimes amid difficulties and other times with co-operation from the local authorities. The High Representative wants to place this at the very top of his priorities, he wants to see in Bijeljina exactly what the situation is, what the problems are and what the potential solutions are. He will meet political and religious leaders and visit displaced persons and also returnee families. In Tuzla, the High Representative, will be accompanied by General Sylvester, and he will tour SFOR's Eagle Base.

Some of you will already have copies but I have media advisory of the various press opportunities, which will take place during the course of the visit.

This coming Friday at 1200 hours the High Representative will give a press conference here at CPIC. He will use that occasion to discuss his impressions from his tour of the country and to outline his overall strategy for the coming years.

The second and final point from the Office of the High Representative concerns the passage of the State budget. As you know, the Bosnia and Herzegovina State budget has been held up for almost five months. If it is not passed in the next two weeks, Bosnia and Herzegovina could lose US\$100 million stand-by facility from the IMF. In the long term the loss would be even more severe than that because a large number of bilateral donor programmes depend on this IMF facility. Last night the Principal Deputy High Representative Don Hays and representatives of the IMF met with parliamentary leaders and discussed the procedural arrangements for passage of the budget as soon as possible. The Office of the High Representative continues to work in a very positive way with the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to get the budget passed, and we hope that this will now be done in a matter of days. It is time for the political leadership to demonstrate leadership and for political parties to put their own interests aside so that responsible parliamentarians can act in a manner that puts the legitimate interests of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the top of their priorities.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE

I have two brief points. The OSCE welcomes the new High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. We look forward to working with him and his colleagues and fully support his priorities, introduced in an excellent speech he gave yesterday at the parliamentary assembly.

My second point concerns demobilisation. The demobilisation of soldiers is currently underway of approximately 10,000 soldiers here in the Federation. A number of international organisations are assisting the authorities in demobilisation efforts, the IOM and OSCE being amongst them. IOM will introduce an information campaign that they are launching for demobilised soldiers here in a few minutes.

The OSCE mission is directly assisting Federation Government in putting together a book, which contains useful information for soldiers who are about to leave the military.

It includes the information on available:

- training, employment, housing and credit programmes,
- laws and regulations, for instance on establishing small businesses, and
- information on relevant official institutions.

It is currently being put together and will be launched in the Federation at the end of June. The Republika Srpska version is currently underway as well and will be issued later this year.

Stefo Lehmann - UNMIBH

We have two points for you today but, of course, we would like to begin by also welcoming the arrival of the new High Representative. Of course we look forward to working with him and his new administration.

Moving onto our two points. The first relates to the adoption yesterday or the approval yesterday granted by the House of People's for the Law on the State Information and Protection Agency. The Special Representative of the Secretary General, Jacques Paul Klein, would like to welcome this approval. This law, once adopted by the House of Representatives, will enhance the rule of law throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina while safeguarding the individual rights of the citizens of this country.

The establishment of this agency is the final step that Bosnia and Herzegovina needs in order to fully participate in international co-operation against organised trans-national crime.

Together with the other mechanisms that UNMIBH has created or facilitated, including the establishment of the INTERPOL office in Sarajevo, the inter-entity and inter-cantonal Ministerial Committee Meeting on Police Matters, and the sub-regional ministerial committee between Bosnia and Herzegovina, Yugoslavia, Croatia, plus Hungary - this new agency will fully integrate Bosnia and Herzegovina into international crime fighting mechanisms.

The vision and co-operation demonstrated by the Presidency members and all parties of the House of People's demonstrates that Bosnia and Herzegovina can move forward in enhancing the rule of law and that political differences can be put aside in the best interests of the citizens. The success of this agency will however, depend on the pace of reform of other components of the rule of law, particularly the Judiciary.

Media assertions that were printed today that the agency represents the foundation or the beginning of a state-level intelligence service are entirely inaccurate.

The Law will now be forwarded to the House of Representatives for approval and UN Mission is ready to assist in the establishing this important state-level institution.

Secondly, after conducting a comprehensive review of the acts and omissions of various police officers serving with the police forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the IPTF Commissioner, Vincent Coeurderoy, has decided to withdraw, with immediate effect, the provisional authorisations to exercise police powers from the following police officers for

their wartime background.

Slobodan Nikic, Shift Leader with the Doboje Public Security Sector, (By the way I will not give you all the details in the interests of time, why these people were de-authorised. But if you require these details, please contact me and I can provide you with them.)

Naser Sejdic, police officer from Samac Public Security Centre,

Enes Kazic, Chief of the Trnovo police station,

Mirsad Sabic, Shift leader with the Hadzici police administration, and

Salko Gosto, Assistant to the Commander of the Hadzici police administration.

Based on evidence gathered by the UNMIBH Human Rights Unit, including testimony of witnesses, it can be reasonably concluded that these officers committed, planned, instigated, ordered, or otherwise aided and abetted the planning, preparation or execution of crimes targeting the civilian population in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. Accordingly, it can be reasonably concluded that they bear liability for crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the Geneva conventions, and violations of the laws and customs of war, all of which are punishable under either the Federation or the Republika Srpska Criminal Codes.

Finally, the following three officers have had their provisional authorisations removed for various types of misconduct while serving with the police forces here in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including excessive use of force, neglect of duty, and giving false information during investigations.

Bratislav Poljic, Dobrica Djurdjic, Sinisa Pusara are police officers serving with the Srebrenica Public Security Service.

The Commissioner's decision to remove the provisional authorisation of the above mentioned police officers is effective immediately and prevents these officers from participating in any aspect of police work anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, either now or in the future.

Aida Feraget - UNHCR

No statement for today but I am available for questions.

Federico Soda - IOM

Working with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Ministry of Defence and SFOR the IOM office in Sarajevo today is launching an information campaign to inform discharged soldiers of their options into civilian society.

In the coming days, public service announcements will be aired on radio stations and television throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Flyers, posters and billboards will also be placed in high visibility areas to inform former soldiers of the programme that IOM is offering. IOM Sarajevo is also operating a telephone hotline to respond to inquiries from interested individuals. The number of the hotline is 033 452 785.

IOM's programme will facilitate the transition of former soldiers in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the armed forces to the civilian workforce.

Former soldiers will be able to receive help and advice on how to find gainful employment. They will also have access to consultants and experts that will help them develop business plans and identify micro-creditors for those seeking self-employment opportunities or start their own business. IOM will also pay for vocational and technical training and will make tools and equipment available to former soldiers.

IOM has already received approximately 1,000 registration forms from soldiers interested in receiving assistance. In the coming weeks these former soldiers will have a one-on-one meeting with an IOM representative to discuss

future career possibilities.

IOM will establish sub-offices in the Federation where former soldiers will be able to meet with IOM staff and consultants who will assist them throughout the process.

Major Scott Lundy - SFOR

I have no points for you today.

Questions and answers

Q - Fedjad Forto / BH Press - If you believe that these police officers committed war crimes, have you contacted The Hague Tribunal?

A - UNMIBH - As I have said on repeated occasions these investigations are conducted in co-operation with investigators from The Hague. So the information that we have, the information that we have based our decision on, The Hague Tribunal has as well. We provide this information to the local law enforcement agencies, obviously. The challenge really is to get the local judicial system to prosecute these people and as I said the crimes are punishable by the Federation and the Republika Srpska criminal codes. There is no reason why they should not be prosecuted locally. That has not been done and we continue to urge them to do so.

Q - Zeljko Tica / FTV - Do you have any information that our local authorities conducted any investigation based on your information about the war crimes?

A - UNMIBH - I can say that in the last six months they have shown more interest in investigating their own police officers. Not necessarily for war crimes but for various types of misconduct, that is a change of attitude compared to what it was like a year or two ago. However, to my knowledge, no they are not involved in gathering evidence implicating their own police officers in war crimes.

Q - Viola Ginger / Cox Newspapers - What specifically is the brief of the new state agency that you were talking about, the Agency for Information Protection?

A - UNMIBH - The concept for the creation of this Agency is to establish an information exchange mechanism at the State level to combat international and regional crime. The State Agency is important because other sovereign States will only deal with a State level agency. Also regional co-operation is based on State to State levels and not State to Entity levels. Therefore this Agency will represent Bosnia and Herzegovina and it is a very important step in solidifying the Rule of Law in this country.

Q - Viola Ginger / Cox Newspapers - What kind of requirements, if any, are there for Entity agencies or other agency departments, at the Entity level or otherwise to co-operate with this particular agency?

A - UNMIBH - That is an interesting question but we should wait for the approval of this law by the House of Representative's and the establishment of the Agency itself, before we discuss the co-operation that will be tried by the different Entity agencies. So I will not get into those details because it is almost impossible to answer.

Q - Viola Ginger / Cox Newspapers - So there is no provision in the law itself that requires other agencies to co-operate?

A - UNMIBH - Entity agencies, absolutely.

Q - Viola Ginger / Cox Newspapers - Which ones?

A - UNMIBH - I do not have that information but I can get that to you. They will have to co-operate with the State level agency, absolutely.

A - OHR - It is probably worth adding that the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina stipulates that Entity agencies are obliged to find ways of co-operating with one another in order to conserve resources and increase

efficiency and this is consistent with that.

Kevin Sullivan - OHR

We have with us this morning the IPTF Commissioner, Vincent Coeurderoy and Commissioner Fredericksen who will now give a press conference. Copies of the Office of the High Representative's statement will be available outside at the end of Commissioner Coeurderoy's press conference. Thank you very much.

Stefo Lehmann - UNMIBH

Thank you for being here today. Before I give the floor to Commissioner Coeurderoy let me just give you a little bit of background. He was appointed as the fifth IPTF Commissioner by the Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. He began his tenure on the 1st April 2000. I would like to say that his effort and inspiration over the past two years has been a driving force in the many achievements of the UN Mission here in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As Special Representative of the Secretary-General Klein has said on many occasions he is a General of the highest order and a gentleman of the highest regard. His professionalism, his intellect and his exceptionally distinguished service reflect great credit on his individual character and on the French Gendarmerie and on the United Nations.

I will outline a few of the accomplishments that UNMIBH has been able to achieve under Commissioner Coeurderoy because I know he will not mention them himself.

First of all, among many things, over 700 minority police recruits have been deployed through the Academies that have been established by the UN in Sarajevo and Banja Luka. Also to increase minority representation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we have been able to deploy over 170, as part of our voluntary re-deployment programme, police officers to their pre-war homes. More than 400 women have graduated or are in training at the country's police academies. So we have successfully increased the percentage of women serving. Thanks to Commissioner Coeurderoy we have had a successful S.T.O.P programme with over 400 raids on bars, brothels and other institutions that have been suspects of being engaged in trafficking. We discovered 216, I believe, of which 113 have been closed. Much more successful than we ever anticipated. Also Commissioner Coeurderoy has certainly contributed to the creation of the State Border Service, the Interpol office and to the State Information and Protection Agency, which was approved as I mentioned.

Finally Commissioner Coeurderoy has, in fact, de-authorized more police officers in a single year than all of the previous Commissioners combined and as a result has made the police forces more professional and hopefully increased the confidence of local citizens in their police forces.

Having said that I would like to give the floor to Commissioner Coeurderoy who will also introduce the next Commissioner, Commissioner Fredericksen.

Vincent Coeurderoy - Outgoing IPTF Commissioner

As I am leaving Bosnia and Herzegovina soon my wish is to introduce my successor, Sven Fredericksen, who is a Danish Police Commander with a lot of experience regarding the Balkans but probably you can ask some questions afterwards. My second wish is to advise our colleagues in the local police.

After 26 months here I may comment on the progress as completed by the police. Bosnian police officers may be proud of that because it is their success too. Regardless of the ethnicity's and beliefs they are more professional, closer to the citizens and the slogan "Your police serving you" has become a reality.

Let me give you some more examples:

- multi-ethnicity of police has improved to reflect on the society they serve;
- State Border Service is to be completed and has already shown its efficiency;
- Bosniac police officers are serving in Srebrenica;

- Serb police officer are serving in Dvar;
- Mostar has one police force;
- Police academies are training minority representatives;
- Interpol is working; and
- Disciplinary action are done by local police authorities.

Nothing is perfect, a lot remains to be done and that is the reason why we are here. We know the difficulties:

- Lack of judiciary, but it, we understood yesterday, that it will be the new High Representative's priority;
- Insufficient salaries for certain administrations, and irregular payments;
- Housing difficulties;
- Lack of equipment and
- Insufficient budgets.

It is clear that UNMIBH and after it the European Union Police Mission will take care of these deficiencies.

Before concluding I want to comment on another issue. We got information this morning from the Federation Minister of Internal Affairs. This morning the Minister decided to fire the Director of Police, Dragan Lukac, and the Secretary General of Administration, Mrs. Mirsada Zutic. He cannot do this without UNMIBH's consent. Moreover, as these persons were appointed as Acting Director of Police and Secretary General of Administration they must keep their positions until the necessary amendments to the Law of Internal Affairs of the Federation are passed. It has not been done yet.

When it is done the Independent Selection Review Board, provisioned by the law, will do this job. Democratisation of police will be a reality. So we cannot agree with the decision taken by the Minister today. I think it is time for politicians in this country, some politicians in this country, to understand that the Rule of Law must run this country.

I am ready to answer your questions. Mr. Frederiksen will introduce himself first.

Mr. Sven Fredericksen - incoming IPTF Commissioner

Well, first of all I do not have any strategic statements to make today. The only thing I would like to say is that I am very happy to be in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be appointed as the IPTF Commissioner, succeeding Vincent Coeurderoy, it is a great honour for me.

I am 55 years old. I served in the Danish Police Force for 31 years. I am a Police Commander; I have served with the United Nations before. My first mission was in '92/'93, nine months as a Regional Commander in Sector North, one of the UN protected areas in Croatia. After that I served for 16 months as UNPROFOR Police Commissioner, residing in Zagreb but also having people here in Sarajevo, even in Macedonia at that time. In '99 July until the end of 2000, I served as the UNMIK Police Commissioner in Kosovo, building up that mission. Also I served 9 months in Albania in '97 after the collapse of the pyramids.

I have some experience in the Balkans. That has not convinced me that I know everything. This mission is complicated; I will have to take a lot of advice from skilled people in the mission and advisers in order to continue the good work which has been done through IPTF and UNMIBH.

I was here last in 1995 on a fact finding mission trying to set the operational framework for IPTF in November and December '95. If I look at it now a lot of progress has been made.

If you have any questions related to what I have just told you I will be happy to answer them but as said there will be no programmed statements on my running of IPTF.

Thank you.

Questions and answers

Q - Zeljko Tica / FTV - Did you get a reason or explanation from the Federal Minister of Interior?

A - Coeurderoy - Unfortunately not. The Minister was absent for several days, officially hospitalised. He has returned this morning and the decision was made but we are looking at it.

Q - Aida Cerkez-Robinson / AP - I have a question for Mr. Frederiksen, during your term, the UN will be leaving and the European Union will be coming. Are you going to be the bridge between these two organisations and how is the end of the UN mandate going to effect the situation with the police here? Is everything going to be the same or what do we have to expect?

A - Frederiksen - Well the first part of your question, yes I have been appointed by the Secretary General High Representative, Dr. Solana of the European Union a) to be head of the planning team which is here on the ground right now. I am not doing the day to day management I am only doing general supervision and b). Yes, I will take over as European Union Police Commissioner on 1st January at 0000 hours. Yes, there will be differences in the set up of this European Union operation. It is going to be smaller, it is going to have another focus and I will be happy to brief you at a later occasion on that but not today. Today I am here as the IPTF Commissioner. That is where I am going to dedicate my effort.

A - Coeurderoy - To add something. I think it is a sensible decision to have this transition in this country between the two missions and by the same people, run by the same person.

Q - Antonio Prlenda / Oslobodjenje - General, you have de-authorized so many local policemen, what effort did you make in order to make the local Entity Ministers of Interior to conduct their own investigations and to carry out their own de-authorisations of these policemen?

A - Coeurderoy - Yes, I did carry out a lot of de-authorisations, it is clear. I think also that the situation is improving and regarding the behaviour of the ministers, the local authorities, it depends. Some people are not ready to take action and others are ready. To give you an example on the Republika Srpska side, we have followed the Matanovic case, probably it has been mentioned here, and now the local authorities are following the case. I understood that yesterday the Minister of Internal Affairs in Banja Luka decided to suspend several police officials probably involved in this case and are under judicial investigation. So it is clear that all the officials are not ready to do the job but step by step the situation is improving and I think with time the officials will accept and carry out the job by themselves.

Q - Amra Hadziosmanovic / AFP - What is the current figure of the IPTF police officers in the country?

A - Coeurderoy - We have more or less 1,600 police officials coming from 43 countries. This strength will be kept until the elections and as the UN Mission is closing on this number, step by step this number will be decreased to reach the numbers of the European Union Police Mission. Probably the contingents contributed by the next European Union Police Missions will stay and the countries not invited to contribute will leave the country between the end of October and end of November.

Q - Zeljko Tica / FTV - (Questions were posed in Bosnian) Can you comment on the situation in the Zenica-Doboj Canton in which the Minister of Interior has ordered an investigation over the threatening letters he has received recently? Also what about the situation in the Una-Sana Canton where the police officers are on strike?

A - Coeurderoy - I understood two questions. Zenica Canton, the incident to which you are referring is recent and for the moment the Minister has not informed me yet about the investigation but if there is a threat against people, yes it has to be investigated. Regarding Una-Sana Canton, I think you are referring to the situation of Minister Babic. The situation is interesting but if there is a need for a judicial investigation, this investigation has to be carried out, it does not matter who the people are that are involved.

Q - Yasin Rawasdeh / Kuna - Since you are leaving office now, can you tell where your successes lie and where you failed during your mandate?

A - Coeurderoy - Okay, it is difficult because we had a lot of progress, in fact. But I think the most important progress is probably the creation of the State Border Service because this country is a sovereign one and a country

which is a sovereign one needs to have the control of its borders. I think the completion of the State Border Service will be the most important goal of UNMIBH before closing. Where we have failed, I think we have not failed but we had difficulties. The most important difficulty was to get to reach the democratisation of police by the creation and implementation of the Police Commission project. I am referring to this situation, why? Because I think the project started late in 2000, maybe September or October and we waited for more than a year and a half to have finally the imposition of the Police Commissioner project in the Cantons. We are still waiting for Ministries of the Entities, it will be done in any case because it is about the democratisation of the police and also it is a European standard of policing. If this country wants to join Europe it is a part of the task, of the purpose. But I can tell you to change the minds of the older generation of people in this country is a very difficult task.

Q - Amra Hadziosmanovic / AFP - What date has been set to hand over command?

A - UNMIBH - We will announce that, I believe it is on Wednesday. We will send out a media advisory.