

BiH Media Round-up, 2/5/2002

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BiH State-related Issues

May 1 in one state: Croats rest one day, Bosniaks two and Serbs a whole week!

Slobodna Dalmacija reports that the May 1 will be marked differently not only in the two BiH entities but also within entities themselves, cantons and municipalities. The daily notes that the Federation authorities passed a decision according to which May 1 and 2 are non-working days. However, the cantons and municipalities with Croat majority did not accept the decision and pronounced May 1 as a non-working day only, while Bosniaks will take a rest on May 2 as well. The other part of the "integrated and internationally recognised BiH", in the words of SD, the RS, will be on holiday between May 1 and May 7. The Labour Day will be connected to the Orthodox Easter so the working people will have a full week to recover from work (idleness) as SD puts it.

Ivo Komsic: SDA, HDZ and SDS want to divide BiH

Slobodna Dalmacija reports that the Speaker of the Federation Parliament's House of Peoples and a member of SDP Presidency Ivo Komsic took part in a public forum in Novi Travnik and commented on the imposed constitutional amendments in the entities. "The true intentions of the SDA were finally revealed – its aim is to divide BiH, and this is the ultimate task also endorsed by the HDZ and the SDS. Komsic said that the three parties were against the (Mrakovica-Sarajevo) Agreement not because it harms the three constituent peoples, as they claim, but because the SDS wants a separate Serb state within BiH, the HDZ wants a third entity and the SDA favours stances of the SDS and HDZ thus seizing exclusive rights to the Bosniak part of BiH. Explaining the essence of the imposed changes, Komsic said that interpretations of the national parties that there is no symmetry in the Federation and RS are incorrect. "The only confusing part is the fact that there are cantons in the Federations, which is not the case in the RS," he said, adding that the issue has been resolved in a way that all RS municipalities will have to harmonise its authorities to the 1991 census.

Federation

After first hearing in the Federation Supreme Court, former intelligence officers detained

Following the first hearing before the Federation Supreme Court on May 1, Bakir Alispahic, Irfan Ljevakovic and Enver Mujezinovic, former AID (Bosniak intelligence agency) officials, were put in 30-day detention in the Sarajevo prison. The three were charged with setting up a terrorist training camp in Pogorelica and planning/organizing a number of assassinations of "unwanted" politicians in BiH. (This was the top story in all Federation media)

Croat Christian Democrats change leadership, comply with High Representative's Decision

Oslobodjenje reports that the Croat Christian Democrats have changed the party leadership thereby complying with the Decision by the High Representative on eligibility of candidates. According to the daily, the thus far president, Petar Milic, who was earlier removed from the list of the elections candidates by the Provisional Election Commission (PEC), was replaced by Dragan Soldo. Following this move, the party re-registered in the Cantonal Court in Mostar and ensured that it will be able to run in the upcoming elections in BiH.

On the eve of the HDZ Presidency session: Attempt of reconciliation of HDZ members failed

(provided by OHR Mostar)

HDZ announced that the session of the HDZ Presidency has been scheduled for Friday in Mostar. During the session, the members will analyze the events from the last session of the HDZ Central Board which was abruptly interrupted when Ante Jelavic, the unrecognized HDZ President, left the session submitting an unofficial resignation. In order to bring closer their stands or to overcome differences, representatives of two obviously diametrically opposing HDZ fractions met on Tuesday in one Mostar restaurant. Ante Jelavic, Dragan Covic, Josip Merdzo, Marko Tokic, Barisa Colak, Niko Lozancic, Rade Bosnjak and Ivan Bacak participated at this meeting, however, their attempt of reconciliation failed. The article says that for this reason it has been expected that this session will be a very long and an emotional one. While the representatives of a fraction allegedly led by Covic claim that the HDZ Presidency cannot make the analysis of the events which took place at the HDZ Central Board, the other ones, represented by Jelavic and Tokic, say that all decisions of the HDZ Central Board were survey questions and formally they are not decisions taken by the party. Both fractions agree that, after the session of the

HDZ Presidency takes place, the continuation of the HDZ Central Board session should be convened. At the same time, the question whether the operative HDZ leadership will propose at all a candidate for the position of an acting HDZ President on Friday remains open, reads Vecernji List.

Republika Srpska

PDP rejects war crime accusations against BiH deputy foreign minister

The municipal committee of the Party of Democratic Progress [PDP] in Bijeljina on Tuesday strongly condemned and rejected as unfounded the accusations by the chairman of the RS Helsinki Committee, Branko Todorovic, levelled at the BiH Deputy Foreign Minister, Milovan Blagojevic. Todorovic earlier accused Blagojevic of being "responsible for the ethnic cleansing of Bosniaks in Bijeljina". "In 1992 Milovan Blagojevic was the deputy head of the executive committee of Bijeljina municipal assembly, in charge of the municipal administration and social activities. He never had any role in the war events or in any alleged incriminating decisions and activities of which Todorovic is accusing him," the PDP said. In a recent interview with Nezavisne Novine, Todorovic said that Blagojevic, who was one of the leading SDS officials in Bijeljina municipality during the war, was responsible for orchestrating ethnic cleansing and harassment of the town's Bosniak population. (Most media in the Federation and the RS carry excerpts from the Nezavisne Novine interview and reaction by the PDP)

RS Government to earmark funds for reconstruction of Srebrenica

The RS government will adopt a decision on the basis of which the RS will earmark 5 million KM for the reconstruction of Srebrenica in the next three years, Mladen Ivanic, the RS prime minister, said after talks on Tuesday with Jacques Paul Klein, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General. Ivanic said that the RS government had extended full support to the donors' conference on Srebrenica (to be held in New York on May 9) from the start and that it would make a financial contribution of its own. "At the next government session we will adopt a decision under which the RS government will, over the next three years, earmark about 5 million KM for these three municipalities, for all the citizens, regardless of their ethnic affiliation. This may make a very important contribution, and an unexpectedly high one, if I may add. I hope that this will make it possible for other donors also to do their best," Ivanic told the RTRS.

Workers protest low wages in Banja Luka

Some 1,500 angry workers marched in Banja Luka Tuesday warning the RS authorities they were out of patience after being neglected and underpaid for over a decade. The head of the RS trade union Cedo Volas said it was calling on the RS government to pay all late salaries by June. Some workers face years of back pay. Some of the banners that protestors carried read: 'Salary. What is that?', "The rich do not understand how the other half lives", "The people has chosen you (authorities), you should serve the people".

The unions want salaries upped by some 30 percent, regular payment of wages, an increase in production and temporary social programs that will support people out of work because of privatization. Volas hinted at more radical steps if action was not taken within two months, but he did not elaborate.

International Community

FBI arrests a Syrian with a BiH Passport suspected of financing terrorism

American FBI arrested on Wednesday Enam Arnaut, a Syrian-born with a BiH passport, on suspicion that he helped finance terrorist activities. Arnaut is believed to be a "person of trust" to Osama bin Laden. He arrived in BiH in 1992, since when he has been engaged, in his words, in "purely humanitarian work" in Benevolence International Fund (BIF), the organization closed down in March this year on charges of links with terrorism.

High Representative prioritises return of properties to police officers

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issued on Tuesday a Decision prioritising the return of residential properties to returnee police officers in both Entities. Housing bodies, which under the property laws are obliged to resolve claims on the repossession of private and socially owned properties in the chronological order in which they were received, are now legally requested, as an exception, to treat claims by returning police officers as priorities.

"The High Representative has issued this Decision in order to promote the return of so called minority police officers in accordance with the Framework Agreement on Police Restructuring, Reform and Democratisation in Republika Srpska and the Agreement on Restructuring the Police in the Federation, as well as the recent amendments to the Entity Constitutions under which the ethnic composition of the public administration at all levels must reflect the 1991 census. An accelerated return of minority police officers is important for the overall return process as most minority returnees point to the presence of minority police officers on the local police forces as a guarantee of their safety in their pre-war municipalities," said the OHR in a press release, which was carried by most electronic media in BiH.

High Representative, donor-countries' ambassadors visit sites of return

Upon the invitation by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, the SFOR commander in BiH, General John B. Sylvester, and the UNHCR Chief of Mission, Werner Blatter, ambassadors of some 20 countries assisting with the return process visited on Tuesday by helicopter a number of sites of return across the country. The purpose of this visit, note media in BiH, was to help the ambassadors better evaluate the possibilities for the most effective assistance. All electronic media and Oslobođenje carry reports from the helicopter tour. Dnevni Avaz also quotes Petritsch as saying that he is very disturbed by the problem of unemployment which prevents sustainable return in some areas. He also said that he would ask his successor to tackle this problem.

OHR welcomes the signing of the CIPS project, urges speedy implementation

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, welcomed the Monday's signing of the CIPS project and called for its urgent implementation, OHR spokesman, Kevin Sullivan, said at a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday. "The CIPS project represents a major breakthrough in administering residency registration and personal-identity documents in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The project will also provide the BiH authorities with important tools in the fight against international terrorism, organised crime, and illegal migration – each of which threatens Bosnia and Herzegovina's place in a secure and modern Europe," said Sullivan, adding that the OHR would like to commend the leadership and teamwork shown by the Council of Ministers' CIPS Project Team in bringing this project to the implementation stage.

Sullivan also said that the High Representative has called for the speedy and effective implementation of the project, which is likely to encourage foreign governments to ease visa requirements for BiH citizens. (All news

agencies quote Sullivan. Also, see [OHR press release](#)).

Paddy Ashdown went to Washington for support

Paddy Ashdown, the future High Representative of the International Community in BiH, who is to officially take office on May 27 in Sarajevo, left on Wednesday to Washington.

Before coming to Sarajevo, where he will succeed Wolfgang Petritsch, Ashdown wants to make a tour of the politically most significant world's capitals in order to get support for his mandate and the goals he wishes to achieve, writes Slobodna Dalmacija. According to the report, Ashdown will ask for Washington's support for the creation of an international coalition that will support processes in BiH, as the future High Representative considers that the real threat to BiH is not nationalism, but crime and corruption which he intends to square accounts with during his mandate.

In the US, Ashdown will hold talks with the American Secretary of State, Colin Powell, with the Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld, with the White House National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice, and will request support for his plan of activities in BiH, i.e. the persistence of the US policy towards BiH.

Carla Del Ponte: Mladic in Belgrade, Karadzic in RS

"Former war leader of Bosnian Serbs, Ratko Mladic, is in Belgrade" – stated the ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla del Ponte. In a statement to the daily *La Tribune de Geneve*, Del Ponte said that Serbian authorities have conceded that Mladic is in Belgrade and emphasized that the law passed by the Yugoslav Parliament, binds Yugoslav and Serbian authorities to arrest him. The fact that Yugoslav Army no longer guards Mladic, as it did for quite some time, is a good sign – said Del Ponte. She also said that the former political leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Radovan Karadzic is hiding in the Banja Luka region. "Local authorities hesitate to arrest Karadzic in the Banja Luka region, because of his numerous armed guards. I am convinced that the current SFOR Commander, American General, John Sylvester is determined to arrest Karadzic." – said Del Ponte.

Editorials

(All editorials are provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List: Small parties are gathering around HDZ, SDP and SDA

Vecernji List carries an article about possible coalitions at the next elections. People from HDZ say that they have not discussed the issue of possible coalitions yet, however, it is very possible that Croat Christian Democrats, HSP, HKDU and HKDP will form a coalition with them. According to an anonymous senior HDZ source, HDZ believes that due to the imposed amendments they have no chance at all to participate in the Executive Authority and for this reason they do not think about the coalition with the SDA, their old partner.

The article says that, for the time being, it is certain that HSS, NHI and People's Party Working for Prosperity will also form a coalition, while SDP believes that they should run for the elections alone, however, some people within this party believe that they should form a coalition with similar parties. Party for BiH has started to gather civic and regional parties, while LDS and BOSS believe that they do not need a pre-election coalition. The article says that, for the time being, the only serious threat to the alliance similar to the Alliance for Changes is exactly a coalition of national parties not only at the Federation but also at the state level.

Vecernji List: The Flood

By Zdenko Cosic

Although, until recently, it seemed that the Croat politicians in BiH had overcome personal and narrow party skirmishes and mutual accusations, it is clear today that the line of division between them is thicker than ever. That division line is reflected in their positions towards the amendments to the entity constitutions imposed by the OHR thanks to the power of its mandate. Some in all of this see legalization of injustice and the definite end of sovereignty of a people, others see a positive step forward towards realization of guaranteed national rights. Some do not accept the constitutional solutions as they are concerned about the future of their people, others accept those solutions as they believe that they guarantee a better future to their people. The advocates of both confronted political positions are equally convincing the public that they are motivated by national interests. Should one accept that it is the national prosperity which is the basic motive in the political parties positioning with regards to the constitutional amendments, one cannot but note one fact: the parties that support such constitutional amendments (NHI, HSS and Working for Prosperity) participate in the ruling Alliance, and the ones which oppose the amendments make the opposition. This very fact justifiably brings into question the motives so it could be said that the division line between the Croat parties has a flavour of being in power.

The only rational motive for the support to such an imposed Constitution can be gratitude to the international protector for installing the election losers into power and the hope that the cooperation will be awarded with yet another mandate. It is already clear that the IC, embodied in the person of the High Representative for BiH, will do all it can so that the strongest Croat party does not get to power again, irrespective of the election results. There is no doubt that the High Representative will, like so many times before, use all the available methods of pressure, threats, bans and court proceeding of the politically incorrect ones. In such an unbalanced struggle, the question of the sense of the forthcoming elections is inevitable! That is why the HDZ is seriously considering boycotting the elections and calling Croat voters to abstain. The existing discriminating Constitution and arrogance of the international administration have in advance determined the unequal position of a sovereign (?) people. Unless an all-national consensus on the elections is reached, the HDZ could swim up the stream for some time – until it finally sinks!

Slobodna Dalmacija: How will Pasalic's defeat reflect on relations within HDZ BiH

By Tomislav Zoric

Slobodna Dalmacija carries a hefty article on what's to become of the HDZ BiH taking into account all the events that have taken place recently such as victory of Ivo Sanader at HDZ of Croatia elections and the situation with the HDZ BiH (re)registration. SD says that the OHR has sent a warning to the party saying that it must replace removed leaders otherwise it would be banned from taking part in October elections. The daily goes on to say that political analysts think that even personnel changes to the HDZ BiH would not change it and that the party requires thorough changes to become a modern party. SD says that the next few months will offer an answer which fraction within the HDZ BiH, the daily says there are three fractions, led by Marko Tokic, Ante Jelavic and Dragan Covic respectively, will prevail. According to SD, Marko Tokic's fraction has lost ground and logistics when Ivic Pasalic lost to Ivo Sanader at HDZ of Croatia elections thus diminishing his chances to take the party over; Ante Jelavic's fraction, "generals' lobby" as SD puts it, which mostly advocates for the *status quo*, is according to SD completely disallowed to take part in the politics because of "valid decisions of the High Representative"; third fraction within the HDZ BiH, a group of techno-managers led by Dragan Covic, is not very interested in politics but in profit and personal well-being. The paper says that they are ready for all sorts of deals just to keep their privileges and businesses.

SD goes on to say that the politicians who should lead the transformation of the HDZ BiH are the so-called moderates, foremost Mariofil and Bozo Ljubic, Josip Merdzo and Miro Grabovac Titan, the latter being, according to SD, the leader of this fraction and a man whose readiness to co-operation was stressed by the High Representative on numerous occasions adding that the internationals expect much from the Croatian HDZ and Ivo Sanader who can steer the HDZ BiH to a different direction. The article is concluded with a thought that one cannot rule out that the situation within the HDZ BiH will change in the next few weeks, that is, that the party will transform and that

the rightists will form a new party.

Headlines

Vecernji List

- May 1: Labor Day marked with strikes
- After arms cache was disclosed in Mostar East: Mortars for Palestinians and Kosovo?
- The Helsinki Board of RS: What was Minister Halilovic doing during the war?

Dnevni Avaz

- Alispahic, Ljevakovic and Mujezinovic placed in 30-day custody

Oslobodjenje

- Alispahic, Ljevakovic and Mujezinovic detained

Jutarnje Novine

- Internal conflicts in the SDP: Lagumdzija vs. Durakovic