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BiH State-related Issues

Belkic says arrest of war criminals biggest priority

The chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic told journalists in Banja Luka on Friday that his own priority and a priority for the entire Bosnia-Herzegovina was the arrest of Radovan Karadzic, former Bosnian Serb leader and Ratko Mladic, Bosnian Serb war-time army commander. For Bosnia and Herzegovina their arrest would mean getting rid of an enormous burden, Belkic said, according to Saturday's Dnevni Avaz. After a meeting with the president and the vice-president of the Republika Srpska, Mirko Sarovic and Dragan Cavic respectively, Belkic said that the Presidency, which was informed about SFOR's attempts to arrest Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic only after the event, believed that the use of force had been inappropriate. However the Presidency still believes that if the two men got arrested BiH would cease to be a hostage (of the international community), Belkic said. He added that "the Presidency lacks mechanisms and institutions under its direct supervision which would enable it to achieve this aim in practice but it can still appeal to the governments of the two entities to do this job in concerted efforts with the international community."

Lagumdzija visits Iran

Sunday's Oslobodjenje reports that the BiH Council of Ministers Chairman and the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, who went to Iran on Friday for a two-day official visit, on Saturday met with the Iranian Foreign Minister, Kamal Kharrazi, to discuss further development of the bilateral cooperation particularly in the field of economy, culture and education. The two officials signed a Memorandum on the Cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries. On Sunday, Lagumdzija met with the Iranian President, Seyed Mohammad Khatami. Khatami expressed his support to the concept of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious BiH emphasizing that it had to serve as an example to the rest of the world.

AFP: BiH asked to extradite nine suspects to Egypt

Egypt has formally asked BiH to extradite nine suspected members of banned underground movements, a BiH Council of Ministers official said Sunday. However, Ivica Misic, who is in charge of the government's anti-terrorist unit, told AFP that the wanted men were no longer in BiH. Citing a police report, the daily Oslobodjenje said the suspects had obtained BiH citizenship at one point but it was later withdrawn. One of the men was said to be living in Germany and another in Kosovo, the paper added. The whereabouts of the other men named in the extradition request were not known. BiH has so far extradited three Egyptian nationals in a bid to shed a reputation for harboring Islamic terrorists. The country also handed over six Arabs — five Algerians and one man with dual Algerian and Yemeni citizenship — to US authorities for allegedly planning attacks against US interests in the country. The six are suspected of links to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda network and are being held at the US naval base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, along with suspected al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters captured in Afghanistan.

AFP: BiH to ban three Islamic charities for financial misconduct

The BiH authorities are to shut down three Islamic charities active in the country after an investigation showed they were engaged in suspicious financial dealings, Federation TV reported Friday. The US-based charities Benevolence International Foundation (BIF) and Global Release Foundation (GRF), as well as the Saudi-based Alharamain, are to be banned, the television said. Police in the BiH federation had found "obvious violations" of financial rules by the Bosnian offices of the BIF and Alharamain, an official told AFP earlier Friday, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We don't have evidence on their links to terrorism, but given the previous action in the US we must not exclude such a possibility," the BiH official said, quoting a preliminary report by the financial police. The Federation police searched local offices of the GRF, a charity which has its European headquarters in Brussels, last December, seizing documents and questioning a number of employees. The BIF's and GRF's funds were frozen

by the US authorities last December amid allegations that both groups had funnelled money to Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda terrorist network. The Bosnian police said they had documented suspicious withdrawals of large amounts of cash from the BIF's bank accounts. At one occasion around one million Bosnian convertible marks (511,000 euros, 447,000 dollars) had been withdrawn from the BIF's bank account for unknown reasons, the official said. The authorities are still considering whether to press criminal charges against the agencies' officials. The decision will be made once the final report is completed.

Brcko District

The second anniversary marked of the Brcko District establishment

Saturday's Oslobodjenje reports that the second anniversary of the Brcko District was marked on Friday. The District was established on 8 March 2000 by a Decision of the High Representative in accordance with the Brcko Final Arbitration Award as a single administrative unit beyond the control of the Entities and under the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "We are building a model for the future of BiH. We call on those who are looking at this model with a suspicion to join us," Mirsad Djapo, the President of the District Assembly, told the ceremony. For his part, Brcko Mayor Sinisa Kistic said that, during the past two years, the political stability in the District had been achieved, but this did not mean that all problems had been resolved. On the occasion of the anniversary, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, expressed his satisfaction with recent progress in the District, and optimism for its continued development. (Saturday's Dnevni Avaz carried the [Press Release](#))

Several youths injured in Bosniak-Serb clash in Brcko

Several persons were injured in a fight between groups of Serbs and Bosniaks which took place Friday night in Brcko town center, Srna news agency reported. The clash broke out when a group of Bosniaks, who were celebrating 8 March in Zenski Most cafe, attacked three Serb teenagers who were, according to statements given to the police, singing Red Star and Partizan (Belgrade football clubs) fan songs. One of the teenagers managed to escape to the nearby Fantazi disco club from which a group of Serb youths arrived to confront the Bosniaks. Several shop windows and several cars were damaged during the fight. Brcko police spokesman Tomo Ropcevic said that Deputy District Prosecutor Amela Mustafic was in charge of the investigation...

The police have identified the two Bosniaks who attacked the Serb teenagers and who, according to official statements, called for a final showdown with the Chetniks.

The fight took place on the 2nd anniversary of the establishment of Brcko District.

Constitutional reforms

Petritsch once again meets with BiH political leaders to discuss constitutional reforms

Saturday's Oslobodjenje reports that leaders of the eight leading political parties in BiH (SDP, Party for BiH, NHI, SDA, HDZ, PDP, SDS, SNSD) failed again on Friday, at another meeting with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to reach a final agreement on the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling on the constituency of the peoples. In a statement for the press during one of the recesses of the more than ten hours

long meeting, Petritsch said progress had been made since the leaders agreed on the substance of the issue of the constituency of the peoples in the entire BiH. "We are progressing step by step. We are working on the issues concerning the definition of the vital national interests and the mechanism to protect vital national interests. Another issue which is important for all parties in these talks is the representation of the constituent peoples in the executive, legislative and judicial authorities in the both entities," Petritsch emphasized adding that the positions on these issues had been brought closer comparing to the very beginning of the talks. The High Representative criticized the HDZ BiH, which was represented only at a part of the Friday's meeting. The HDZ representative, Mariofil Ljubic, left the meeting saying he had to go to the party leadership's session in Mostar. "I do not understand that the HDZ cares much more about its own problems than about an issue which is of historic importance for the people it is supposed to represent," Petritsch said. The High Representative added that there were other parties also representing the Croat people in the talks but he expressed his hope the HDZ would realize the seriousness of the situation and return to the negotiating table. "I made it clear to the participants in the talks that the international community expect the local authorities to find a solution regarding the constitutional reforms," the High Representative said. The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, and Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, also attended the meeting. In a statement with Dnevni Avaz following the meeting, Party for BiH's Safet Halilovic, SDA's Sulejman Tihic, and SNSD's Milorad Dodik confirmed certain progress had been made towards the final resolution of the issue. According to Halilovic, encouraged with this progress, the participants had agreed to meet again in the OHR building in Sarajevo on Wednesday and resume the talks.

Dnevni Avaz: The High Representative says progress made in the last Friday's talks

In an interview with Monday's Dnevni Avaz, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch said that the democracy meant serving to the people and not manipulating with them. He added that "he would therefore like to leave such way of thinking as his political heritage once he left the country." Commenting on the last Friday's meeting, which he and his associates had with the leaders of the eight BiH political parties, Petritsch said that significant progress had been made in these talks. "However, as in all negotiations, nothing has been agreed until everything is agreed," he emphasized. Petritsch said that he was expecting and requesting that the (BiH Constitutional Court's) Ruling on the Constituency of the Peoples is fully implemented. "Path towards this goal goes through a political agreement in which it is necessary to reach a compromise," Petritsch said.

BiH Republican Party appeals on Petritsch to impose amendments to the entities' Constitutions

According to Saturday's Oslobođenje, the BiH Republican Party on Friday appealed on the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to use his authorities and impose the amendments to the Entities' Constitutions in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling on the constituency of the peoples. "It would be a gesture of honor made by you as the governor in this country. Do this in order that BiH citizens remember you by this fundamental decision. Do not miss this opportunity," the appeal read. The general secretary of the party, Nedim Sarija, told journalists in Sarajevo that, in a normal state, there would be no any discussion about the Constitutional Court's ruling, but it would just be implemented.

Halilovic says a modern European resolution regarding the constituency of peoples proposed in the Federation

In an interview with the Saturday's Oslobođenje Pogled (The View) supplement, BiH Federation President Safet Halilovic said he regretted the two entities' constitutional commissions established by the High Representatives had not adopted single criteria thereby a basis for a harmonized resolution of the issue of constitutional reforms. He said that while the BiH Federation had offered an appropriate concept of the Court's decision implementation, almost all political parties in the Republika Srpska were intending to preserve status quo, meaning that the entity maintains as many state characteristics as possible.

SNSD's Dodik: Vital national interests in the RS will not be protected by the House of Peoples

According to Monday's *Oslobodjenje* and *Dnevni Avaz*, the RS SNSD (Party of the Independent Social Democrats) President, Milorad Dodik, said at a press conference in Banja Luka that, at the last Friday's meeting of the representatives of the eight leading political parties in BiH with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, the definition of the vital national interests and the mechanisms for their protection had been agreed. Dodik said that the issue had also been verified by OHR, which means that the request of the political parties from the Federation for the formation of the House of Peoples in the RS had been definitely rejected. "The vital national interests (in the RS) will be protected by a body, the name of which has still not been agreed, but it will probably be the council for the protection of the peoples," Dodik said.

Dodik believes that the most difficult issue to agree will be the issue of the representation of the peoples in the authorities in the both entities.

Schwartz-Schilling dissatisfied with the insistence of some political forces that Petritsch imposes amendments to the Entities' Constitutions

Sunday's *Oslobodjenje* reports that the International Mediator for the BiH Federation and the Republika Srpska, Christian Schwartz-Schilling, who had during the past days visited Mostar, Stolac, Capljina, Teslic and Sarajevo, on Saturday told a press conference in Sarajevo he was encouraged by positive changes, but that the poor economy and the unemployment were still negatively influencing the sustainability of the return process. "Although the progress is visible, I am not satisfied with the situation until all human rights are fully ensured. The alternative accommodation, for example, must be provided in Teslic, as the property repossession must be a continued process in Stolac," Schwartz-Schilling said. He also expressed his dissatisfaction with the certain BiH political forces insisting on the imposition on the amendments to the entities' Constitutions by the High Representative. He said that he strongly believed this job should be done by the local political leaders.

Vecernji List: Interview with Mariofil Ljubic, a Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives of the BiH Parliament

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The last meeting of the parties from the BiH Federation and the RS, which took place under the OHR supervision, has obviously brought closer some stands regarding the resolving of the issues of the constitutional changes. Mariofil Ljubic stated some proposals that drew big attention within political circles. Ljubic stated: 'Institutional mechanisms for the protection of interests of all three constituent peoples should be introduced in both entities. These are the principle on which the Dayton Peace Agreement was based.'

With regard to the definition of a vital national interest, Ljubic stated: 'If, by majority of votes, representatives of national Caucuses decide that something is a vital national interest then the voting procedure follows. Who can know better as to what is the national interest of one people than the representatives of that people? Why does the protection of vital national interests suit some people at the state's level while at the entities' level it does not? It is an important issue, which surrounds the whole deal. '

Asked about the deadline, within which the negotiations on the constitutional changes should be completed, and whether consequences of the constitutional changes might reflect on the results of the elections, Ljubic stated: 'I do not know as to when the deadline will expire, however, I know that some results should be known until the next negotiations. I believe that the basic issue is whether we want a consistent implementation of the Constitutional Court decision. Most of the parties is more concerned about the elections than about the constitutional changes'

Asked whether his stand is slightly opposite to some stands from the HDZ leadership, Ljubic answered: 'These are

normal principles and stands and I am ready to fight for them. It is important for the Croats in BiH at this moment, and we have to demand a support of representatives of other states that are interested in the constitutional changes. Also, it has to have the support of some mentors of the Dayton Peace Agreement, and I will demand the support of Croatia since it is a signatory of the DPA. Croatia must not turn a deaf ear to our demands. We have already had talks with Ambassadors of some countries. The things that we demand are not illegal. We do not demand some sort of a special, exclusive status. This is something that other two peoples demand too.'

At the last meeting on the constitutional changes Wolfgang Petritsch stated that it is sad the some people from HDZ are more interested in the party than in the people. Your comment please?

'As a representative of the Croat people and HDZ, I cannot accept that the result of these constitutional changes is the destruction of rights of that people. I cannot accept cosmetic changes of any kind, as some people propose. '

Asked to comment on Jelavic's statement that he will demand the establishment of the third entity if the constitutional changes do not protect the rights of the Croats in BiH, Ljubic stated: 'It is hard for me to interpret someone's statements. At the Central HDZ Board, I said that this is the platform that I will stand for and which will ensure equality of the Croat people in BiH. All other ideas and initiatives are legitimate for me. I only demand that all those, who propose something else find the instruments and ways to implement the things that they demand. They have to find the way to implement it and they also have to suffer consequences of it. At this moment, we cannot go against the interests and needs of the Croat people. We believe that we have to be realistic and sensible and we have to demand that other states support our stands. I do not see the reason because of which we should have the situation in which everybody is turned against us.'

Asked whether due to these stands he is in an awkward situation in his party, Ljubic stated: 'I do not know whether someone in the party does not like my stands. I wish that someone told me at least one argument to oppose these stands.'

Asked to comment on the speculations that he will be ousted from the party or leave party voluntarily, Ljubic said: 'Some of them did not allow me to join the party, and I do not know in which way they could oust me from the party. This is not the issue of a party but the issue of one people. Neither the leadership nor the party should attempt to score political points at the expense of this issue. I want that the votes of the Croat people are valid. This is the difference between my opinion and the opinion of some colleagues in the party. '

Asked whether he has a true support of the party as a negotiator in the talks on the constitutional changes, Ljubic said: 'I believe that each man who is dealing with this issue seriously has to have the support. This time, arguments are on our side and they show that we respect the DPA. With these arguments we have to resolve our position.'

Federation

Tomic claims his resignation not linked with political calculations

In an interview with the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, Mostar Mayor Neven Tomic said that the resignation he had offered two days earlier was not related to any political calculations. He emphasized that his resignation and the stoppage of the construction works at the disputed location in the town (which were the direct reason for the resignation) were creating pre-conditions for the resolution of the dispute within the legal framework, which was the main goal of his move.

Jelavic says same leadership to resume heading the HDZ BiH

According to Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, at a session in Mostar on Friday, the HDZ BiH Central Board discussed the draft amendments to the party Statute, which would ensure the appointment of a person to officially represent HDZ in the future in place of its unrecognized leader Ante Jelavic, and which is a pre-condition for the regular

party's registration in the court. According to the adopted amendments, the person to represent the party will be appointed by the HDZ Presidency. Three names are in game: Barisa Colak, Niko Lozancic and Josip Merdzo. Jelavic told journalists that, however, the party would continue to be headed by him and the current leadership. Commenting on Jelavic's statement, OHR spokesman Mario Brkic told Federation TV on Saturday that persons removed by the High Representative could not perform any duties in the party.

OHR investigates Jelavic's maneuver

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The HDZ Presidency should respect the decision of the Cantonal Court in Mostar and, by the end of this month, nominate a new candidate for the party leader. Even though many expected that the name of the new leader would be known after the latest session of the HDZ Main Board, that did not happen. The OHR will not make any decisions or conclusions, before they receive a full report from the session of the HDZ Main Board. The OHR Spokesperson, Alexandra Stiglmayer did not want to comment on Jelavic's statement given to Nezavisne Novine that same leadership and same policy will remain in HDZ. However, she reiterated that those individuals dismissed by the High Representative cannot keep their party functions. Stiglmayer said: "We have not yet received any official information on what was really agreed on Friday. It would not be appropriate to base our decisions on media reports, that were completely contradictory. Since we never get any official reports from the HDZ, we would have to use our sources to find out what was concluded. Some newspapers reported that Jelavic would keep the title of a dismissed president. If, and I repeat, if the HDZ Presidency again nominates Jelavic for the President, that would be a wrong move. That would be a classic maneuver that would take HDZ to political margin. In that case, the party would not be able to register nor participate in the forthcoming elections."

Republika Srpska

Sarovic receives BiH Presidency members

According to Saturday's Oslobođenje, the Republika Srpska President, Mirko Sarovic, on Friday in Banja Luka met with the BiH Presidency members to discuss the ongoing constitutional reforms, the upcoming departure of a BiH delegation to Brussels for talks with NATO representatives, work of the BiH Constitutional Court, the document on the defense policy and the process of return of the refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes. Sarovic told journalists following the meeting that, in 15 days, the issue of the constitutional changes would be resolved in the RS National Assembly. The entity will thereby, according to Sarovic, implement the ruling on the issue made by the BiH Constitutional Court. "There is a readiness in the RS that the amendments to the RS Constitution are passed in a constitutional way," Sarovic emphasized.

Hartmann on Sarovic's statement

Florence Hartmann, the spokesperson for The Hague Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte, was quoted by Sunday's Dnevni Avaz as saying that a recent statement of Republik Srpska President Mirko Sarovic (made in the Thursday's TV OBN Telering talk show), according to which the most wanted war crime suspect Radovan Karadzic was a symbol of liberty, showed that the RS continued not to fulfill its obligations towards the ICTY. "At this moment, the RS does not cooperate with the ICTY. They are not fulfilling their obligations and they continue making such statements," Hartmann said.

Illegal construction resumed in Kotorako despite OHR ban

According to Saturday's Oslobođenje (Fena, ONASA), at a meeting in Doboj on Friday, the representatives of the State and Entities' Refugee Ministries, Doboj Municipality and OHR discussed the illegal construction of houses in

Kotorsko and agreed they would wait for a final ruling on the issue to be made by the BiH Human Rights Chamber. Representatives of the Bosniak refugees from Kotorsko gathered in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo on Thursday protesting against the continuation of the construction of houses for displaced Serbs in the village in spite of the OHR ban. Saturday's Dnevni Avaz reports that BiH Minister for Human Rights and Refugees Kresimir Zubak, who met with the protesters on Thursday, requested Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic to prevent the continuation of the construction works.

Dnevni Avaz: Desnica Radivojevic on the Srebrenica special treatment resolution

In a statement with Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, the Chairman of the Srebrenica Municipal Assembly, Desnica Radivojevic, said that the recently adopted resolution on the special treatment of Srebrenica was not in opposition to the Republika Srpska constitutional and legal system, but that it was just aimed at the revival of the town. According to Radivojevic, those criticizing the resolution were not even mentioning a fact the employees in the Srebrenica administration had not received salaries for five months. "According to their assessments, I am not a good Serb, because I have chosen to build life and coexistence in the town in which this was recently unthinkable," Radivojevic said.

RTRS - is it to be absorbed by PBS or destroyed by itself?

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski carries an extensive piece on RTRS with the headline: "We control, you answer". The piece is very critical on OHR involvement over RTRS issue and says that the High Representative got an opportunity to decide on RTRS on the basis of the so called "interim arrangements", which were agreed between the former RS Government, led by Milorad Dodik and OHR. After that, the RS lost an opportunity to influence the RTRS, but it kept an obligation to take care of its material situation. The OHR is of the opinion that the Government is responsible for the situation in RTRS and solving of it, but – when the RS Government wanted to do something about it, an opinion, shaped as an instruction came from the OHR, according to which the Draft law on the RTRS should not be discussed at the session of RS National Assembly. However, that did not prevent the RS Government from starting the procedure of legal definition of the status of the biggest RS media, if for nothing else, at least to inform the RS public on the issue which is disputable between the Government and the OHR. And they argue on who is going to control RTRS and its property. Chris Riley, member of the RTRS Steering board and Head of the OHR Media development see the RS Government as responsible for difficult situation in RTRS. After one of the recent sessions of the RTRS Steering Board, Riley stated that the problem is the Government insisting that a provision on the RTRS founder should be incorporated in the law, and that is a characteristic of communist systems. Who is going to control RTRS and its establisher are the issues of dispute between the OHR and RS Government. The RS Prime Minister emphasized that nobody should control RTRS, including the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, through his supervisors in RTRS who, for a huge amount of money and under a mask of democracy and professionalism, carry out the role of censors. Yet another fact shows the attitude of OHR towards the RTRS and that is, the fact that – according to the OHR Spokesperson, Sonja Pastuovic, OHR member to the Steering board is the one who has enough time to attend the session. The High Representative sees the proposal of the RS Government to have the RS National Assembly as the RTRS establisher, as non-democratic. However, he forgot that he imposed such non-democratic solution for the Law on Federal TV. According to Ivanic, there is no reason why the RTRS cannot have the same solution. To be honest, Petritsch said that he would change that provision and that all solutions for entity televisions should be same. However, he failed to mention that all this is being done in order to impose the so-called PBS – a TV that does not even have a proper name but has a function to be dominant in the whole BiH.

Karadzic is safe - says wartime Mayor of Trebinje, Bozidar Vucurevic

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Glas Srpski carries the statement of the wartime Mayor of Trebinje, Bozidar Vucurevic, given to the Podgorica (Montenegro) based newspaper Dan, who said that: "At the moment, Karadzic is in a safe country that would never extradite him to The Hague. All SFOR attempts to arrest him at the territory where they are looking for him, will remain fruitless." According to Vucurevic, thanks to the Montenegro police, Radovan Karadzic managed to escape from the area where SFOR tried to arrest him.

ICG deputy director Michael Doyle says the reforms the SDS claims to have made are purely cosmetic

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Weekend edition of Nezavisne Novine carries an interview with deputy ICG director, Michael Doyle in which he explains his views on SDS, new high representative for BiH Paddy Ashdown, arrest of former RS leader Radovan Karadzic etc., etc.. Doyle said that he is not in favour of banning the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) from political life but he believes that the SDS has a very bad influence on the future of the RS. According to him, the SDS has not undergone radical reforms as it claims but rather cosmetic changes aimed to whitewash the international community and electorate in the RS. When asked whether he thinks that current RS NA Speaker Dragan Kalinic will be re-elected SDS president at the forthcoming SDS election assembly and if Kalinic is a IC's pet, Doyle said that after the elections the IC wants to see a coalition that will exclude the SDS and that nationalistic parties will get a significant support but that support will be less compared to the previous period. As for Kalinic being an IC's per, Doyle said that Kalinic talks what the IC wants to hear but it cannot be said that Kalinic is an IC's pet. Doyle also said that SFOR troops do more on arrest of Radovan Karadzic and that the last SFOR's attempt was very serious. "I personally do not believe that the RS Government will turn Karadzic in, but it is also a question whether SFOR will be able to arrest Karadzic before Paddy Ashdown assumes post of the high representative for BiH. IC deeply believes that the arrest of Karadzic before Ashdown arrives will be a good thing because BiH peoples and particularly Serbs would get rid of one more burden. Commenting on the appointment of Paddy Ashdown, Doyle said that the pressure on authorities in BiH would be increased with Ashdown's arrival particularly pressure concerning the economic reform and reform of judiciary and human rights.

International Community

Ashdown visits Belgrade

Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica and the High Representative designate, Paddy Ashdown, agreed in Belgrade on Friday that the Balkans needed a "stable and functional" BiH, AFP reported (the report was carried by Fena news agency and Saturday's Oslobođenje). "The construction of a stable and functional Bosnia, in accordance with the Dayton accords, respected and intact borders, the rule of law and the eradication of all forms of crime and corruption will be Mr Ashdown's priorities," a government statement said after a meeting between the two. Kostunica agreed that respect of the principles set out by Mr Ashdown was important and "underlined that terror and terrorism represent a threat to the region," the statement added. The statement also stressed that Kostunica "underlined the importance of compliance with the Dayton accords as part of the reform process in Bosnia." Ashdown, who will take over from Austrian Wolfgang Petritsch's three-year mandate, will be responsible for overseeing civilian implementation of the Dayton peace agreement. Leader of Britain's opposition Liberal Democrats between 1988 and 1999, he was named Bosnia's high representative in February, but will not take up his functions until May. Saturday's Dnevni Avaz unofficially learned from the diplomatic sources that, once he assumes duties of the high Representative, Ashdown is planning to organize a meeting in Sarajevo, which will be attended by top BiH officials, Croatian President Stjepan Mesic, Croatian Prime minister Ivica Racan, FRY President Vojislav Kostunica, Fry Foreign Minister Goran Svilanovic and Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. According to the sources, at the conference, which would be a sort of mini Dayton, Ashdown would request top representatives of the BiH neighboring countries to publicly declare that "all problems of Serbs and Croats in BiH will be solved exclusively through the BiH state institutions."

Solana to visit BiH soon

According to Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, Javier Solana, the EU High Representative for the Foreign Affairs and Security, will soon visit BiH in order to present the local authorities with the EU standpoints regarding the bringing BiH closer to the European institutions. "Javier Solana intends to visit BiH, where he has not been for months, in order to inform your politicians about the EU plans related to BiH. The Union is not satisfied with a pace by which the BiH authorities have been meeting the Road Map criteria," Christine Galjak, the spokesperson for Solana, told the newspaper. With the top BiH officials, Solana will also discuss the new EU police mission, which will as of the beginning of next year replace the current IPTF members in the country.

Reuters: Milosevic says FBI paper shows al Qaeda in Kosovo

Slobodan Milosevic brandished what he said was an FBI document showing al Qaeda backed Muslim fighters in Kosovo as he insisted on Friday that Albanian separatists were the true villains in the war-torn province. Sparring with a Kosovo human rights activist who accused Serbs of killing and mutilating ethnic Albanians, the former Yugoslav leader said the document proved al Qaeda and Mujahideen support for Muslim fighters in Kosovo, Bosnia and Chechnya. "This is a Congressional statement of the FBI. That's what this is," Milosevic declared, adding triumphantly that the report was dated last December — "after September 11". "Neither the (Serbian) army nor the police have been implicated in war crimes," Milosevic told The Hague war crimes court in the fourth week of his trial, pointing the finger repeatedly at Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) guerrillas. But witness Sabit Kadriu said he knew nothing of activity by Saudi-born militant Osama bin Laden in Kosovo, where a Serbian crackdown on ethnic Albanians triggered NATO strikes in 1999. "It's not true there were Mujahideen in Kosovo. This is a fiction of your mind," the 41-year-old ethnic Albanian human rights activist and former teacher told the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

In the Saturday's Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Gojko Beric wrote that, if the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, really leaves the resolution of the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling implementation to his successor, Paddy Ashdown, he will return home with the two quite opposite grades: the highest one he got in the New York (by the UN Security Council) and lowest one he is going to get in Sarajevo. Fadil Mandal wrote in the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day that Paddy Ashdown, the future High Representative of the international community in BiH, was being considered as a person with the very good knowledge about the situation in the Balkans. "The BiH public expects much from Ashdown. If Wolfgang Petritsch, by the end of his mandate, succeeds to successfully complete the process of the constitutional reforms in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's ruling on the constituency of the peoples, Ashdown's job will be easier. In that case he will have what his predecessors unfortunately did not have: the firm foundations for the achievement of a plan on a stable and prosperous European state of BiH," Mandal wrote. In the Sunday's Oslobodjenje editorial, Zija Dizdarevic wrote that both Wolfgang Petritsch and the BiH political leaders were assessing their Friday's talks on the constitutional reforms in an optimistic way. However, contrary to this optimism, there is, according to Dizdarevic, an aversion towards BiH, which is dominant in the RS. "SDS is and anti-BiH, anti-state, anti-democratic and criminal element, with which it is not possible to reach genuine democratic progress," Dizdarevic wrote. According to Dizdarevic, a recent Mirko Sarovic's statement that the most wanted war crime suspect Radovan Karadzic is actually a national hero and a fighter for the liberty is quite enough for his prompt removal and the SDS' political sanctioning. In the Monday's Jutarnje Novine The Seal editorial, Mirsad Pehilj wrote that, fully aware of the weight of the problem, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, was decisive to achieve that the constitutional reforms in the both entities are carried out with the consent of the BiH politicians, even if the progress is to be made step by step.

Headlines

Saturday

Oslobodjenje

- Petritsch, for now, not made the ruling

Dnevni Avaz

- Veterans request 395 million marks

Jutarnje Novine (weekend edition)

- Following criminal proceedings launched against 29 BiH Foreign Ministry officials: Lagumdžija says only Sacirbegovic stole the money

Nezavisne Novine (weekend edition)

- BiH Presidency members met with president and vice-president of the RS – Arrest of Karadzic a priority for the entire BiH;
- Zlatko Lagumdžija claims that only Sacirbegovic was stealing money from the BiH Foreign Ministry;

Glas Srpski (weekend edition)

- BiH coordination team for fight against terrorism – Money disappeared without a trace;
- War veterans association from Modrica comments on rallies organized by refugee association “Ostanak” – Manipulation with people who are in trouble;

Dnevni List (weekend edition)

- Session of Presidency and Central Board of HDZ: Jelavic remains President, party to be represented by Niko Lozancic – Jelavic’s HDZ wins, Only one member of Central Board advocated for HDZ WP (Wolfgang Petritsch’s HDZ), Jelavic: We’ll accept Tomic’s resignation, Jelavic to be holder of HDZ election list
- Plaque with name of bridge finished in Mostar: “Franjo Tudjman” bridge opens on Tuesday
- How is HNC budget being filled: One Mostar Municipality pays more than all six Bosniak ones put together
- Operation Foca continues: 9 SFOR soldiers dies in hunt for Karadzic

Vecernji List

- Ante Jelavic at HDZ BiH’s Central Board: Bosniaks and Serbs about to strike agreement
- Robert Beecroft, Haed of OSCE Mission: Elections are first big test of BiH State
- Slobodna Bosna claims: 10 killed in hunt for Karadzic
- Mijo Anic, Federation Minister of Defence: Discharged soldiers get their money immediately

Sunday

Oslobodjenje

- The Wolrd Bank criticizes BiH Federation Government due to concessions made to veterans: “You made a big step back!”

Dnevni Avaz

- The BiH Federation debts amount up to a billion KM

Vecernji List

- What will BiH-Yugoslavia border look like: Battle for electricity on Drina River
- Despite all participants of meeting on constitutional changes with Petritsch being unanimous saying that agreement has been reached: Serbs still do not want House of Peoples

Monday

Oslobodjenje

- Criminal Charges pressed against Zahid Crnkic (BiH War Invalids Association President) due to office abuse

Dnevni Avaz

- Wolfgang Petritsch for Dnevni Avaz: A progress made last Friday

Jutarnje Novine

- The states loses millions each day due to corruption

Nezavisne Novine

- Strong Israeli answer to two Palestinian attacks: Arafat's HQ destroyed

Glas Srpski

- How did members of the "Egyptian Group" get the BiH Documents? – Citizenship and then to a war
- Refugees are dying faster

Dnevni List

- Soon indictments for war crimes in Trusina: Muslim bloody attacks in Neretvica Valley – Who shot civilians in Trusina?
- From Donja Dreznica: There is no return for Croats: Even the dead are not let be
- Eronet management reacts: Ante Omazic crushes Eronet
- Disgrace surrounding start of TV BiH: Start of state TV questionable
- During weekend in Mostar: Cars with Croatian symbols devastated

Vecernji List

- After a month of investigation Vecernji List journalists gather new findings about motives and killers of Federation Deputy Minister of Interior: Assassin on Leutar bin Laden's associate Talha?
- Mariofil Ljubic, Deputy Chair of House of Representatives: Croats in BiH did not ask for help from Europe