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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Foreign Minister visits France, discusses fight against terrorism, civil service

BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdzija met on Tuesday with French Interior Minister Daniel Vaillant and discussed with him the activities of France and BiH taken in the framework of the international anti-terrorist alliance, BiH Foreign Ministry said in a press release. The two officials stressed that both countries are facing similar problems, especially as they relate to the presence of foreign nationals and groups suspected of links with terrorist groups worldwide.

The two Foreign Ministers agreed on the necessity of establishing direct contacts between the Interior Ministries of France and both BiH Entities, as well as with the expanded coordinating team tasked to fight against terrorism, set up by the BiH Council of Ministers.

Lagumdzija also met yesterday with French Minister for Civil Service and State Administration Michel Sapin, and visited one of the most famous education centers for the training of the civil servants.

Federation media report that Lagumdzija also met with his French counterpart, Hubert Vedrin, and the country's Defense Minister, Alain Richard, as well as with a number of business representatives.

If admitted to the Council of Europe, BiH will have additional obligations

The head of the BiH Parliamentary delegation to the Council of Europe, Sejfudin Tokic, said that after it is admitted to the Council of Europe, BiH will have to undertake a number of additional measures. He explained that authorities

in the country will have to further strengthen the state institutions, change provisions in the Election Law which are contrary to European standards, adopt a Criminal Law, sign a convention against terrorism and increase cooperation between entity armed forces on the basis of the common defense policy. Tokic said that the CoE Political Committee will soon define all responsibilities of BiH after it is admitted to the oldest European integration.

Coordination Team for the fight against terrorism: State Border Service taking over airports in Banja Luka, Mostar

A member of the BiH Coordination Team for the fight against terrorism, Rasim Kadic, said on Tuesday that the BiH State Border Service (SBS) will take full control over international airports in Banja Luka and Mostar by January 18, 2002. Kadic also said that the chairman of the Council of Ministers, Zlatko Lagumdzija, will sign, in November, the new convention on the fight against terrorism.

Federation

HRT and Fed TV sign contract on transmission assets purchase

ONASA news agency reports that the HRT (Croatian Radio Television) and the FTV (BiH Federation Television) signed on Tuesday in Zagreb the HRT transmission assets purchase contract for the transmitters set up in on the territory of the Federation. HRT director Mirko Galic said that the cost of transmitters will be covered through compensation transactions, such as rental of premises and providing of expert services and technical assistance to HRT. He also stressed that the HRT and FTV will share some of the programming in order to secure the "presence of Croatian language on the FTV."

Dnevni List: Resignations of former officials to be adopted and new Mayor and Municipal Council President to be elected in Stolac today

Following a four-month break, Kemal Isakovic, who is still the official President of the Municipal Council in Stolac, in spite of his ministerial seat, has finally convened a Council session for today, Wednesday. Stjepan Boskovic, the Council Vice President, tried to convene a session on two occasions this September, but only the Croat officials of the HDZ and HSP responded, says Dnevni List.

One of the agenda points is adoption of the resignation of Stolac Mayor Zdravko Kuzman, who resigned almost six months ago and adoption of Isakovic's resignation since he, the paper says, "sat in the chair for Stolac some time ago." Hence, these two Stolac officials have "sailed away" to Mostar, reads the daily.

The candidate for the position of Stolac Mayor is Zeljko Obradovic and it remains to be seen as to who the Bosniak candidate for Municipal Council President is. The mandates of new members of the Stolac Municipal Council will be verified and they will be informed about the OHR instructions on the allocation of real estate in the state ownership, including socially owned property, reports Dnevni List.

Republika Srpska

RS National Assembly Ended Extraordinary Session Dedicated to Work of RS Representatives in the BiH State bodies and Document “Defense Policy of BiH”

At an extraordinary session, the RS National Assembly concluded that it opposes “one-sided and unconstitutional redistribution of authorities between the BiH state and entity institutions, and expects RS representatives in the joint bodies to launch an initiative for the protection of RS interests.” Insofar as the controversial Defense Policy document is concerned, the Assembly accused Serb member of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic of failing to inform the RS public about the document.

Kotorsko residents to hold new protests in front of the OHR today

Zijad Zecevic of the Association of Kotorsko returnees told Dnevni Avaz that association members will hold a peaceful protest in front of the OHR building in Sarajevo today (Wednesday) objecting to the failure of Dobož authorities to comply with the OHR decision to stop all construction on socially-owned land. OHR spokesman Oleg Milisic told the daily that the OHR is aware of all activities of Serbs now lining in Kotorsko area and stressed that the lack of compliance with High Representative’s decision is unacceptable. “OHR has contacted the head of the Dobož municipality, Nikola Gavric, and further moves are not excluded,” said Milisic.

RS National Assembly Adopted Report on Execution of RS Budget

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the RS National Assembly adopted the Report on execution of the RS budget for period between 1st of January and 30th September this year. RS NA sent recommendation to the RS Government aiming to improve economic and financial situation in the RS, including better execution of the RS budget till the end of this year. RS NA also passed the Draft Law on Sport.

Is the RS Going to Get Technical Government?

Today’s edition of “Nezavisne novine” reports that the RS NA did not adopt the RS Prime Minister’s report on implementation of the RS NA conclusions. According to the paper, especially SDS deputies criticized work of the RS Government. The paper claims that clashes between the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) reached their peak because of Ivanic’s decision not to dismiss general manager of the Modrica Oil Refinery, Milan Jelic, which is something that the RS NA Speaker, Dragan Kalinic is insisting on. The paper also states that the Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) came out with an open proposal to all political parties, except the SDS, to form an interim technical government that would work till extraordinary elections. The paper quotes SNSD Secretary General, Branko Neskovic, as saying that it would make sense if the interim technical government was formed in the following 30 days. “Any sort of delay would be a procrastination and would lead nowhere. SNSD would support this government even without participating in it and extraordinary elections scheduled for May or June this year would be the best solution for the RS”, said Neskovic and added that the SNSD will try to persuade other political parties to support this initiative”, said Neskovic. He also claims that thus far the SNSD has support of SNS, DNS, DSP and DS. As to PDP and its support to the initiative, Neskovic says that it is up to the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic to say whether he is interested in this offer or not. The paper also carries statement of SDS deputy, Vukasin Vojinovic who disagrees with the SNSD initiative. Vujinovic says that the ruling coalition works very well and there is no need to form a technical government. He dismisses possibility that there is a rift between the coalition partners (SDS and PDP) and described the talk about the rift as a “wishful thinking” of the opposition parties. SDA and SDP would support any government reshuffle that would exclude SDS, whilst the

leader of Democratic National Alliance (DNS), Dragan Kostic thinks that financial interest is the only glue that keeps the ruling coalition together and that is why it is going to be very difficult to form the technical government.

How the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY Is Being Implemented in the RS

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" carries an article which explains how the RS authorities implement the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY. The ICTY Bill was gazetted on October 17th and came into effect on October 25th. The paper quotes RS Justice Minister, Biljana Maric, as saying that the RS Justice Department can work only within its competencies. According to the ICTY Law the Department has the authority to act upon the ICTY requests and to further forward them to the bodies that the requests pertain to. "Cooperation with the ICTY had existed even before the ICTY Law was passed and the RS Justice Department received various requests. The requests mostly pertain to collection of various documentation that relevant bodies keep and we forward the requests to these bodies", said Maric. The paper reminds that the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic told BBC that he will resign if the RS Law on Cooperation with the ICTY is not being implemented.

International Community

High Representative chairing a meeting of the PIC Steering Board political Directors in Brussels

All electronic media in Sarajevo quoted OHR spokesman Oleg Milsisic as saying that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, was in Brussels on Tuesday chairing a meeting of the Steering Board at Political Directors level, which is also attended by representatives from the World Bank, IMF and BiH's Central Bank. The Steering Board was to discuss steps to be taken in the coming year to move economic reform and recovery in BiH forward. Milsisic said that the members were also to discuss the concrete micro and macro-economic steps that need to be taken next year, so the economic situation in BiH improves. For the full text of the Steering Board Communiqué, see the attachment. (The information was the top story in all electronic media in the Federation, while newspapers in both Federation and RS simply mentioned it. No medium carried the PIC Steering Board Communiqué)

Venice Commission of the Council of Europe says parts of the BiH Election Law are contrary to European standards

ONASA news agency reports, quoting the CoE press release, that the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe announced on Monday that the larger portion of the BiH Election Law is following European standards. However, the Commission stressed that the provisions determining the election of the BiH Presidency and the BiH House of Peoples are contrary to all international standards, and should be further discussed with the Council of Europe.

Le Monde: Few graffiti do not make BiH society extremist

Sarajevo Oslobođenje and SENSE news agency carry an article from Monday's Le Monde titled ["Les Bosniaques s'inquiètent pour l'image de leur pays à l'étranger"](#) in which the daily's correspondent from Sarajevo notes that a few pro-Bin Laden graffiti which could be seen in BiH in no way reflect the mood in the "Bosniak-Croat Federation". Le Monde's correspondent argues that Bosnian Muslims not only reject any connection with Osama bin Laden, but openly express their aversion towards Islamic extremism and in particular the terrorism. "The attitude of

population in BiH towards terrorism is in no way different from that in the western European countries," writes Parisian daily.

SFOR Confiscated Weapons Near Han Pijesak - General Simic Is Not Familiar With Weapons Cache

Both Banja Luka dailies quote SFOR Spokesman, Daryl Morell, as saying that the NATO troops found an illegal weapons cache near Han Pijesak and that it expected to find a second cache in a nearby minefield, which must first be cleared. Morell said that the current RS Army leadership, including Commander of the 5th Corps of the RS Army, General Andric and RS Army Chief Commander, General Simic said they knew nothing about the cache but had pledged to cooperate in removing and destroying the weapons. Morell also said that General Simic promised he would order a full investigation and find out if RS Army members were involved in this. Generals Silvester and Bloom also reminded General Simic that existence of illegal weapons cache is violation of the DPA.

Editorials

In an editorials for Wednesday' s issue of ***Oslobodjenje***, **Slavo Kukic (also the president of the Federation TV Council) comments that BiH still does not have a public broadcasting service, the fact which could be a great detriment to the process of media, political and social integration of BiH. Kukic notes that but a few factors in the country made a conscious effort to bring about the creation of a genuinely public medium. Political elite, he argues, has worked more on its personal promotion than on the creation of a diverse and quality program. Kukic particularly blames the Federation Parliament for wanting to directly subsidize the Federation Television in order to ensure that the level of political control of programming is retained.**

Kukic stresses that the launching of the Federation TV is indeed a big success , however, he concedes that this country needs a public broadcasting service on the level of the state, rather than entities. He notes that the country first needs an integrated legal system and only then could the integrated television provide a necessary impetus or encouragement for social and national integration. For, an integrated television such as the pre-war JUTEL could not alone prevent the centrifugal forces....

Croatian press today is also full of commentaries about the Federation Television. Most Croatian dailies quote "unhappy Croat citizens in BiH" who can no longer watch the HRT programming. Most say they are extremely dissatisfied with the FTV offer and complain about the absence of Croatian language and Croat reporters in both news and entertainment programs. Some even say that this is a part of the broader strategy to further isolate Croats in BiH.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Alliance breaking up along national stitches: Zubak and Jelavic stand united in defending Zepce

Written by Milo Jukic, partial translation

As time goes by there are more and more indications that the Alliance for Changes, created by the IC's project, will not live to see the next elections in the current composition. It all started with "small disagreements" in the Ministry of Defense. After the Minister of Defense, Mijo Anic, following the wonder he had achieved with sorting out of the self-disbanded and politicized Croat component of the Federation Army, was resting after the job well done, his colleague Ferid Buljubasic, Deputy Minister of Defense, signed a press release on Anic's behalf which Anic

refrained from a few days after. Then there was the privatization of the "Aluminij" case with the NHI and Party for BiH having completely different standpoints on the issue (...) The indictments against senior HVO officers of Zepce seem to be the drop that spilled the glass. The Zepce case convinced even the hard-core advocates of the Alliance that all the problems have the same prefix - the national prefix. Croat representatives have suddenly found themselves in a position the HDZ has been in for the past few years: regardless of their efforts in the areas of economic and similar problems, suddenly they had to struggle to defend the remaining vital national interests (...) Then there was a string of secret meetings, the one organized by Adil Zulfikarpasic that summoned Bosniak leaders including Zlatko Lagumdžija, then the meeting between Jozo Krizanovic and Ivo Komsic and finally the meeting the other day when Kresimir Zubak met Ante Jelavic in Kresevo. Reliable sources close to Slobodna Dalmacija say that the main topic, apart from the aforementioned issues, was the Zepce case. Zubak requested Jelavic's support for the NHI protests with regards to the Zepce case, and although some of the indictees played a negative role in dethroning of the HDZ, the HDZ did give them its support which was evident from its press releases and their joint appearance at the Saturday's protest rally in Zepce. The NHI stood behind the banner which read: "Zepce is the wall at which the Alliance will tumble" that shocked its coalition partners, but that is obviously part of the Kresevo deal, "my hand scratches your back..." Two of the Zepce indictees, Ivo Lozancic and Drago Dragicevic, played an important role in gathering of the "lost sheep" of the Croat component of the Federation Army.

General Lozancic was initially, despite justified protest from the HDZ on incompatibility of political and military functions, in charge of the Croat component, but Petritsch and others gave them a blind eye because of their own interests, and general Dragicevic was re-commissioned and became one of the most senior officers just because he disagreed with the HDZ methods of activities. Both of them, say reliable sources, were promised by Petritsch that they would not be tried for war crimes by the Zenica Court. What actually happened was, following the job well done by Lozancic and Dragicevic, that Petritsch "forgot to pay the bill" and the Zenica Court did not waste time to issue arrest warrants.

If the Alliance does break up along the national stitches, which could easily happen if Petritsch continues to be "forgetful", its creators could be in trouble. Wolfgang Petritsch is still trying to solve the problems without "committing fouls" but it seems that he will not succeed. In other words, the NHI threatens that they would not support the guarantees for senior Bosniak officers in The Hague, if the "case is not resolved" the way they would like to have it and furthermore they would reconsider their future participation in the authority. On the other hand, if the Government does not give the guarantees for the Bosniak generals, the Party for BiH will leave the Alliance. That's how we now have the vicious circle. It is either the NHI hands over its Vice President or Petritsch gets involved in the work of the "independent" judiciary and eventually all the players involved finally admit that their desire to stay in power is more important than their ethnic origins, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.