

BiH Media Round up, 15/8/2001

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BiH State-related Issue

BiH Foreign Ministry welcomes Macedonian peace agreement

The BiH Foreign Ministry welcomes the signing of the peace deal in Skopje between the representatives of the legal Macedonian authorities and the representatives of Albanian rebels, but is at the same time concerned over the latest developments and news of the violations of the cease-fire. The peace agreement, designed to end a six-month conflict in Macedonia, was signed on Monday in Skopje.

***Oslobodjenje*: SDP, PDP and Party for BiH must reach a compromise on the election law**

Oslobodjenje journalist Vedrana Zivak analyzes prospects for the adoption of the BiH permanent election law by early September, which is another deadline for fulfilling this most important pre-condition for the country's accession to the Council of Europe. Zivak emphasizes that there is no compromise yet among the main BiH political parties, including the SDP, PDP and Party for BiH on the issue. She concludes that, according to the current position of the BiH political parties, the country will remain out of Europe for a long time.

***Dnevni Avaz*: The Hague investigates into BiH Presidency wartime activities**

The newspaper confirmed that, 21 days ago, the BiH Presidency had been requested by the Hague Tribunal to deliver transcripts from the body's sessions held from December 1990 to January 1993. These documents will, according to the Tribunal, help ongoing investigations into the alleged violations of the international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1995.

Glas Srpski: Economic relations between BiH and FRY

Glas Srpski writes that the establishment of a tax-free trade and payment operations between BiH and FRY would enable a greater exchange of goods between the two countries, as well as much wider economic cooperation, as concluded at the recent meeting between RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic. They agreed that big efforts should be made in order that an agreement on free trade between BiH and FRY is reached as soon as possible. Moreover, according to RS Industry Minister Pero Bukejlovic, "such an agreement would help reviving the production in the RS and certain economic areas in the BiH Federation, such as Tuzla, for which Serbia once was more important economic partner than all other republics in the former Yugoslavia."

Federation

HDZ obstructs appointments of judges and public attorneys in the Canton 10

The current authorities in the Livno Canton have been obstructing for the last eight months the process of the reform of the judiciary, including the appointment of the municipal judges and attorneys. These are moves that the political party in power – the BiH Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) – undertakes to prevent the establishment of a non-partisan and independent judicial system, ONASA was told on Tuesday by Avis Benes, the spokesperson for the OHR Mostar. She added that due to those obstructions, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch on August 3, 2001 had made a decision to impose the amendments to the BiH Federation law stipulating this issue.

No hearing of HNS leaders took place before Sarajevo Court on Tuesday

No hearing of Croat National Assembly (HNS) leaders took place on Tuesday as scheduled, because no one appeared before the Sarajevo Canton Court. One of the summoned Croat politicians, former BiH Federation defense Minister Miroslav Prce, has informed the presiding judge through his lawyer that he was on leave, and could not therefore attend the hearing. Scheduled to attend a hearing on Wednesday are Ivo Andric Luzanski, Zdravko Batinic and Dragan Curcic, while Petar Milic did not accept the summons at all.

Republika Srpska

Construction of house in Kotorsko not stopped for a single day

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz quote Bosniak returnees to Kotorsko as saying that the construction of the houses for displaced Serbs, who do not want to return to the Federation, on their private land in the village has not been stopped for a single day, although they had received firm guarantees from the OHR that the construction works would be halted. According to the Bosniak representatives, these works have been even intensified, so that the houses are now being constructed also during night hours.

The first medicines factory to be opened in Banja Luka

Both Republika Srpska dailies report on the meeting of RS Industry Minister Pero Bukejlovic with the representatives of the Hemopharm Pharmaceutical Factory from Vrsac, FRY. According the press reports, it was agreed that the first pharmaceutical company in Banja Luka, in which Hemopharm and the Banja Luka-based Cajavec Holding would invest their capital, could start its operations in nine months. The project worth is more than six million KM.

International Community

OHR to sign Memorandum of Understanding with BiH Foreign Ministry on social contributions for its local staff on Wednesday

The Office of the High Representative will sign on Wednesday a Memorandum on Understanding with the BiH Foreign Ministry regarding the calculation and the payment of social contributions and levies for the local staff of the OHR, Spokesman for the OHR Oleg Milisic said on Tuesday. "Although the OHR, having the status of an international organization, is not legally obliged to make these contributions, it regards the inclusion of its local staff into the welfare system of BiH as very important," he told journalists in Sarajevo, news agencies, Oslobođenje, Jutarnje Novine and both Banja Luka dailies reported.

Brcko Supervisor halts privatization activities in the District

Brcko District Supervisor Henry Clarke on Tuesday issued an order halting all privatization activity conducted by the entities in Brcko District and declaring all entity actions undertaken so far with regard to privatization in the area of the District to be without legal effect, the news agencies and Sarajevo dailies reported.

***Oslobođenje*: Stiglmayer most sincerely respect "the Balkan" politicians**

In a front page article (continued on the 4th page, and signed by R.I. which is in the newspaper used as a general editorial staff signature), Oslobođenje says that OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer has these days sent a letter of excuse to the BiH Council of Ministers, at its request, explaining that she had no intention to insult the local politicians describing them as the "Balkan ones." Stiglmayer emphasized in the letter that she had not criticized the Council of Ministers before journalists, adding that what she wanted to say was that the canceling of the third GSM tender might left an impression that BiH did not represent a serious business partner. The newspaper concludes that, instead of the (expected) apology, Stiglmayer expresses her most sincere respect to the BiH Council of Ministers. The Banja Luka Nezavisne Novine also carried parts of the Stiglmayer's letter to the BiH Council of Ministers.

A Vienna journalist says American and British officers know location of Karadzic's shelter

The SENSE news agency reports, according to Oslobođenje and Jutarnje Novine, that a journalist with the Vienna Die Presse daily quoted a senior SFOR officer as saying that the US and British officers knew exact location of Radovan Karadzic's shelter. He added that the special units were prepared to undertake an action of his apprehension, but that they were waiting to come into a position to simultaneously arrest Republika Srpska Army wartime commander Ratko Mladic. Nezavisne Novine also carries a story of the Austrian daily saying that the wartime RS President's shelter is located in the border area between BiH and Montenegro, which is the region of the town of Foca. According to the Presse's source, location of the Mladic's residence has still to be confirmed.

Editorials

Oslobođenje*, *Dnevni Avaz* and *Nezavisne Novine

Emir Habul wrote in the Oslobođenje In Focus column about the corruption in BiH in light of the recently presented World Bank's study on the issue, as Dnevni Avaz's Faruk Cardzic comments on the work of the BiH State Border Service. Branko Peric is the author of editorial in Wednesday's issue of Nezavisne Novine. He comments on self-styled "healers" and their growing business often supported by media.