

# **Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference at CPIC**

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE - 17 June 2003**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday, 17 June 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Vedran Persic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ashdown Meets Rumsfeld</li><li>• OHR on Canton 7 Govt. Formation</li><li>• Tea and Medicinal Herb Festival BiH</li></ul>
b. OSCE	Zinaida Delic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani visited Mostar</li></ul>
c. EUPM	Jon Oskar Solnes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SFOR raid on BiH police station reveals concealed weapons</li><li>• Progress in fight against Human Trafficking in Ljubuski</li></ul>
d. SFOR	Major James Billings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reducing the Number of Illegal Weapons and Munitions</li><li>• New SFOR Chief of Staff</li></ul>

2. Twenty-seven members of the media including three television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

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## **Vedran Persic - OHR**

### **Ashdown Meets Rumsfeld**

HR met Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, Mark Grossman (State Dept. Undersecretary for Political Affairs), Daniel Fried (National Security Council), and Nancy Lee (Treasury Dept) among others in Washington on Monday.

At all his meetings, he briefed on where things had got to in BiH. He said that he was where he expected to be after one year:

- The State Court was up and running
- The first major case, perhaps the biggest human trafficking case in the Balkans, was now before the court
- The State level government had been restructured, with the Prime Minister in post for 4 years not 8 rotating months
- Security and Justice Ministry established at the State level
- VAT and Customs well on the way
- Bulldozer process removing obstacles to business
- Defense reform commission
- Intelligence reform commission

Long discussion with Rumsfeld on defense reform. The HR explained that BiH could only qualify for membership of PFP if it undertook far-reaching reform and established a single command chain

Also discussed with Rumsfeld the vast networks of organized crime that were beginning to be uncovered by the investigations set up into customs, sales tax, the public utilities, and as a result of Operation Balkan Vice. They discussed the next steps necessary to exploit this information and ensure that these networks were destroyed.

HR also briefed Rumsfeld on the new approach being taken to undermine the networks that support war criminals. We were now actively “shaking the tree”, going after people and the money that had allowed indicted war criminals to evade arrest for all these years.

HR described the enemies as three fold – indicted war criminals, organized crime, and terrorism. He explained that there are five allies deployed in the field – the US and the work they were doing to freeze assets and target supporters; the EU and its visa bans against those who support indictees; SFOR and its operations; the BiH authorities; and the OHR itself. Each had their own contribution to make. And for the first time, all these activities were being coordinated.

Rumsfeld and HR also discussed the lessons that could be learned from Bosnia for Iraq. HR set out some of the themes that he will be expanding on in his speech to the IRC on Thursday:

- First, you need to go in hard. Establish authority, and get the tough tasks done early on
- Second, you need to make the RoL the first priority. Without RoL, democracy and a stable economy are undermined.
- Third, you need to be ready for the long haul. Measured not in months or years, but decades.

HR told Rumsfeld that in 2 ½ years, it would be 10 years after the war and it might be possible to transition to a different type of international mission. But we should only do that once it has become clear that the process of stabilization and progress to Europe is irreversible.

### **OHR on Canton 7 Govt. Formation**

As we have seen, after eight months of wasted time the HNC Government has finally been formed. This is not the time for patting each other on the back, but the time to start getting down to the serious work that lies ahead, too much time has been lost already.

Government formation is an important step but ONLY the first step. It is time for action, as this is the only way that the elected representative of Canton 7 Assembly will be able to restore the trust of the citizens of C7 and BiH in them.

The citizens in C7 suffered because of the irresponsible behavior of their elected officials – now those same officials must show their commitment to resolving the economic and social problems that have accumulated in this Canton.

What we expect now is the Government to start working immediately. The OHR vetting process of the Ministers of Interior, Education and Justice will go ahead and it will be rigorous as ever but the HNC Govt. can start working, as the BiH CoM did, in the interim period.

### **Tea and Medicinal Herb Festival BiH**

Reminder that the Tea and Medicinal Herb Festival will continue through the whole week at the Trg Oslobođenja, Sarajevo, after its opening on Sunday. OHR supports such initiatives because BiH has the potential to raise export possibilities in specific and well-defined market's niches.

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### **Zinaida Delic - OSCE**

The Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani, yesterday visited demobilised soldiers in the Mostar area and was presented with the information on successful integration of demobilized soldiers into the civilian workforce. During his visit Ambassador Zipper de Fabiani joined OSCE Regional Centre Director Ambassador Thomas Young in attending the Hercegovina-Neretva Cantonal Assembly session, where the cantonal government was established after eight months. The OSCE would like to join the OHR statement and to emphasize that citizens of this canton have waited for too long for its government to be formed. Now, it is up to the appointed government to take dynamic action in solving the problems of the citizens. We are also looking forward to seeing clear action taken in all areas, beginning with the education where concrete results are needed for the beginning of the next school year.

## **Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM**

The EUPM monitored the Sfor raid against the police station in Knezevo municipality this weekend. However, the decision to make the raid was solely Sfor's. The EUPM nevertheless notes, that such raids, not the least intended to harvest illegally stored weapons, squarely fall within Sfor's mandate. Moreover, the raid at the police station revealed weapons stored away, among them hand grenades, rifle propelled grenades and a surprising amount of ammunition rounds. Sfor also searched the homes of some of the police officers of the station and found weapons there as well. The EUPM has no further observations on the search itself which was well within the Sfor mandate. However, the EUPM finds it unacceptable that concealed weapons are found at police premises and in officers accommodations. The EUPM will follow this incident up with vigour and the police managers involved must assist in all aspects of the ensuing investigation into this matter. A number of police officers will face some tough questions in the wake of the raid. Furthermore, in conjunction with the EUPM key programmes on bringing the BiH police forward, a directive on the storage and handling of weapons within the BiH police has been drafted. BiH police managers are expected to observe this directive and the EUPM will monitor them doing so.

In Ljubuski on Sunday, alleged Human Traffickers organised a cynical plan to extort money from three male of Albanian origin whom they had told would be helped to cross the border illegally from BiH into Croatia. Instead of rendering these illegal services, a group of men apparently assembled by a resident of nearby Ljubuski turned on the Albanians and by threat of a firearm robbed them of their belongings. The police of Canton 8 was involved shortly and called in for interrogation the leader of the culprits. Due to good co-operation with the counterparts in the Canton 7 police, the alleged organiser of a Human Trafficking ring, which had been involved in organising this occurrence, was apprehended in Mostar and brought to Ljubuski for interrogation. There are a number of lessons that can be drawn from this incident, the most important one being that organised criminals from both Cantons 7 and 8 work together in this area. As such is the case, the simple matter of fact is that the fight against organised crime requires a close co-operation between the respective Criminal Investigators of these Cantons. The EUPM is confident that through its mentoring capacity it will be able to continue to foster more co-operation between police forces in BiH, which inevitably should lead to better law enforcement results.

## **Major James Billings - SFOR**

Good morning. I have two items to discuss today. The first is SFOR's efforts to reduce the number of illegally held weapons, munitions and warlike material from circulation. Last Friday, near Han Pijesak in the Multinational Brigade (North) area of operations, SFOR forces found and seized a large quantity of munitions, mines and mortars. They are continuing to search for additional weapons or ammunition that may be stored in this area. Additionally, SFOR's efforts to collect and destroy illegal hand grenades are having tremendous results. To date, more than 5,700 grenades have been collected throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina since the operation began on May 22 of this year. We will have more figures to announce after the operation ends on June 22, but I can confirm that we are extremely pleased with the interim results. Both of these operations are examples of SFOR's commitment to working with local authorities, the armed forces of BiH and the international community to improve the safety and well-being of the people of BiH. Every weapon collected and destroyed is a weapon that will not take a human life. In each of these efforts, SFOR has received tremendous co-operation from local authorities, as well as local citizens. We wish to thank all those who have turned in weapons and taken a positive step toward making their country a safer place to live.

Also, the commander of SFOR, Lt. Gen. William E. Ward, would like to take this opportunity to welcome Brig. Gen. Jean-Louis Cazenave as the new SFOR chief of staff. General Cazenave has spent 33 years in the French Army and brings a wide variety of experience to his new appointment, including service in Lebanon, Italy and the Balkans. In 2001, he was second in command of the KFOR Multinational Brigade (North) in Mitrovica, Kosovo. Most recently, he served as chief of staff for Force Headquarters No. 4 in Limoges, France. The SFOR chief of staff is responsible for coordinating and directing all efforts of the multinational Headquarters. Lt. Gen. Ward is pleased to welcome Brig. Gen. Cazenave to the SFOR team.

## **Questions and Answers**

### **Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje**

About the weapons you found at Han Pijesak, can you be more specific? Where did you find the weapons? Was it military storage site or somewhere else?

**A: Major James Billings - SFOR**

It was an illegal storage site. It was not a registered storage site.

**Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje**

So it was a civilian building or was somewhere else, in the woods? Can you be more specific?

**A: Major James Billings - SFOR**

The details of it, no I don't have the details of that.

**Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje**

Can I have it today?

**A: Major James Billings - SFOR**

If you want to call me today I'll see what I can get for you.

**Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje**

There is an emergency command post bunker at Han Pijesak. I would also like to know if the unit that is based there or can be based there, if the communication between that storage site and the bunker is used for the possible unit there. You don't have that information?

**A: Major James Billings - SFOR**

No, I don't. Why don't you see me afterwards and I'll try to clarify that for you.

**Q: Fedad Forto - FENA**

After the Serbia Croatia match there were riots in Brcko and whenever an important match happens between Serbia and Croatia it seems that the same groups prepare for the same. They are threatening other people. Do you have any particular information on what went on and what was the police reaction and are these incidents going to be stopped once and for all?

**A: Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM**

That's a necessary question. The EUPM has seven key programs that address deficiencies in the BiH police. Two of them are the state level as PS and CP but then there are five other key programs. In one of these key programs the intention is to equip the BiH police with material to better control such situations which it does not have at this moment and also to provide training. We would get trainers from abroad to train them in what we call riot control. It's absolutely right that the situation at this moment is not acceptable. We saw that in Mostar the other day and also in Brisko yesterday. Brisko however I must say that the police reacted quite quickly. They tried to disperse the crowd, the crowd didn't want to disperse so they took in nine people, three of them were kept rather longer. They were intoxicated and today a decision will be made I think about criminal charges that could be pressed against them. But there is a lot of room for improvement in the BiH in riot control as we have seen yesterday and also in Mostar the other day.