

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

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE - 8 April 2003**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday, 8 April 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southeast Europe Co-operation Process Summit• Strengthening the rule of law
b. ICTY	Refik Hodic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No Statement Received
c. EUPM		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Positive dialogue between Municipal and Police authorities• Good police work and few incidents
d. OSCE	Emir Salihovic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• International Roma Day• Internal Audit Function in the cantons workshop• Education Forum meeting
e. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• February 2003 / Total refugee return figures
f. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planned visit of the North Atlantic Council of NATO• 10 Apr press conference cancelled

2. Twenty-one members of the media including one television crew attended the conference.

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

Oleg Milisic - OHR

Today and tomorrow, the High Representative is in Belgrade, where he will attend the Southeast Europe Co-operation Process Summit on Wednesday morning. The High Representative will be joining Bosnia and Herzegovina representatives Dragan Covic and Mladen Ivanic at the conference — after which Bosnia and Herzegovina will take over the SEECP Chairmanship. During his visit to Belgrade, the High Representative will be meeting with the new Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Zivkovic, the Serbia and Montenegro Foreign Minister, Goran Svilanovic and the Serbian Minister of Interior, Dusan Mihajlovic. The High Representative will use these meetings to brief on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly regarding efforts to combat organized crime. There is a growing recognition that organized-crime figures and war criminals are intermingled and that both groups present a real threat to the future of the region as a whole. Encouraging greater regional co-operation in this field is an essential element in tackling this criminal scourge effectively. The High Representative will also be discussing preparations for the European Union summit in June in Thessaloniki, with regional leaders and with George Papandreou, the Greek Foreign Minister, who will also be in Belgrade. The battle against organized crime is scheduled to be a major agenda item at the Thessaloniki Summit on 21 June. The Thessaloniki meeting is also expected to see the unveiling of a new European Union approach to the Balkans. Ahead of the Summit, the High Representative will be lobbying European Union and regional representatives to formulate clear European Union-entry strategies – taking into account the experience of other states in entering into the European Union, establishing clear targets for visa-free access to European Union countries for citizens from the region, and making matching European Union funds available to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) so as to encourage growth in the SME sector, which will among other things make economies in the region compatible with those in the European Union.

The High Representative will seek the adoption of a number of very practical steps that will strengthen the rule of law across the region and encourage economic development including; regular meetings among regional Ministers of Justice; information exchange among law enforcement agencies to facilitate the fight against human trafficking,

the drug trade, money laundering and financial crime; and regional working groups which will develop economic legislation that will facilitate intra-regional trade. Bulldozer Legislation update The Bulldozer Process is now approaching its final stage. It is expected that the 50 reforms drawn up by Bosnia and Herzegovina business people with a view to stimulating investment and creating more jobs will be on the statute books soon. All the parliaments will shortly be asked to debate the reforms, forwarded to them by their governments. You can find a comprehensive list of Bulldozer Committee's original proposals on the table outside. Working groups, in which Bulldozer Committee members have participated, have been formed in all of the relevant government ministries to scrutinize individual reforms and formulate responses, either accepting the reforms as they stand or proposing modifications that do not undermine the original intent of the proposal. This process has been detailed and thorough, and there have been instances where the Working Groups have actually gone further than the Bulldozer proposals. The Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers are expected to have adopted a total of 13 reforms by Thursday's regular CoM Session. As of yesterday's extraordinary session of the Federation Government, 25 out of 28 reforms had been adopted. OHR anticipates that the remaining three reforms (second-hand vehicle trade, and two on transport) will be adopted soon. The Republika Srpska government is expected to adopt 15 out of 19 reforms at its extraordinary session today. Discussions are still underway regarding the remaining four reforms (double-corporate tax, bomb shelter and two on chambers), which will be dealt with at a later session. The Brcko District Assembly has already debated and passed six reforms. Parliamentary debate on the Bulldozer Proposals will start this week. The 150-day target which the Bulldozer Committee set itself to implement the reforms expires on the 12 April. However, there was a ten-day delay – due to the mass of clerical work that had to be completed – in providing the relevant ministers with final drafts of the Committee's proposals last month, so the deadline to which those engaged in the process are working is 22 April.

Refik Hodic - ICTY

No Statement Received

Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM

Last Thursday, the second of a series of meetings with Municipal and Police authorities in the Sarajevo region took place in Tito barracks, as you were informed at the last press conference. These meetings can be seen as a platform for improving the dialogue between local authorities and the respective Police Commissioners. As a first result of last week's meetings, where a number of Police Commissioners in the Sarajevo region took part, yesterday a follow up meeting between the Mayor of Stari Grad and the Cantonal Police Commissioner was facilitated by the EUPM. In that meeting, the two principals initiated a closer co-operation on preventive police measures. As a result, we will shortly see an intensified effort on drug education issues and an increased focus on preventive measures especially at local schools. Other positive steps will be undertaken of an operational nature to foster confidence of citizens in the local Police. The EUPM welcomes the increased information sharing between Municipal and Police authorities and notes that further meetings like this are being scheduled in the Sarajevo region.

For the EUPM spokesperson, not having important incidents to report is good news, thus only a short statement today. We continue to see, however, a number of positive law enforcement cases in all of Bosnia and Herzegovina showing good and improving police work. Again, it is interesting for the EUPM to note that in the Trebinje region, with short intervals, reports on seized smuggled goods are coming in, indicating that the fight against border criminality is improving.

Emir Salihovic - OSCE

On the occasion of International Roma Day, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina would like once again to draw the attention on the need to improve the situation of Roma as the largest minority in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Issues of concern to Romani communities are diverse, ranging from discrimination in education and employment, to housing and the revival of Romani culture and language. Romani children are commonly excluded from educational opportunities afforded to other citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The presence of Roma is sporadic at best and they are nearly absent in the later grades of primary school and in secondary school. For example, despite the fact that parents want to send their children to school, many parents are unable to do so due to extremely poor living conditions, lack of proper clothing and inability to purchase the necessary schoolbooks. Another pressing issue is housing and property. Before the war, between fifty and seventy percent of Roma lived

in informal settlements. In many cases, they had no recognized rights to reside on the property, despite having lived on it for decades or longer. Their inability to legally register their residence has resulted in additional problems regarding reconstruction assistance, education, health care and the right to vote. Many Roma communities also live with the constant threat of forcible eviction from such property. The obstacles facing the exercise of basic rights by the Roma community will remain a focus of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. To address these obstacles, OSCE will continue to support and co-operate with the Council of Roma and the National Advisory Board on Roma, that was established in 2002 under the Council of Ministers as the body to resolve these issues. Today, on the occasion of International Roma Day, a roundtable will also be organized at Hasan Kikić Primary School in Sarajevo, about the good practices of school enrolment and inclusion of Romani children, and barriers to school enrolment and inclusion. Opening remarks to this roundtable will be given by Deputy Head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Henry Zipper de Fabiani, as well as by the Sarajevo Canton Minister of Education, the Municipal Head of the Education Department, the Co-ordinator of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Roma and the Director of Hasan Kikić School. Following the roundtable, an art program will be held by Roma children from the school. Hasan Kikić school was chosen as it is, as Ambassador Fabiani says, "a model school". "In this school, there is no distinction between children – all children are treated equally and given the same opportunities", Ambassador Fabiani says. "It is due to the openness and willingness of Hasan Kikić School, and the eagerness of Romani parents to enrol their children, that the number of Romani children in Hasan Kikić School is one of the highest in the country."

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is holding a four-day workshop in Neum, on 7-11 April, aimed at developing a draft regulatory framework for the establishment of an Internal Audit Function in the cantons of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Senior staff responsible for inspection of the budget and Internal Auditors from all FBiH cantons are participating. The workshop is the result of an initiative started by the OSCE under its Cantonal Administration Project (CAP) in September 2002, which cantons have fully embraced and taken ownership of. The draft regulatory framework, which is expected to result from the workshop, will be in line with existing legislation and will be implemented in all Cantons in a consistent and harmonised way. OSCE staff, representatives of the Swedish Audit Office and the FBiH Supreme Auditors will assist the work of the cantonal representatives.

Education Forum, a meeting of all education stakeholders to discuss education reform implementation, is taking place today in Sarajevo, at the Mechanical Engineering Faculty. The meeting is focusing on issues like the importance and urgency of the state level law on primary and secondary education, the challenges of common core curriculum and the multi-cultural classrooms, education access and non-discrimination, and higher education reform. All media are cordially invited to join the press conference, which will take place following the meeting, at 14:40 today at the Mechanical Engineering Faculty, Vilsonovo setaliste 9, room 101.

Bakir Jalovcic - UNHCR

UNHCR today released its return figures for the month of February 2003 during which the organization recorded 3,327 minority returns. While this figure represents only about half of the returns recorded last year for the same month, it is too early to identify reasons for this rather slow start of returns in 2003. The figure does not include returns recorded in Brcko District which are reported on a quarterly basis only.

Since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement, a total of 938,735 refugees and displaced persons have thus returned to their pre-war municipalities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of this total 690,958 refugees and displaced persons have returned to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 228,355 to the Republika Srpska and 19,442 to Brcko District.

The total recorded minority returns to date amount to some 396,000 persons.

Captain Dale MacEachern - SFOR

Good morning, I have two points today. My first point concerns the planned visit of the North Atlantic Council of NATO. Members of the North Atlantic Council, including the NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson, are scheduled to visit Sarajevo this Thursday, 10 Apr 03 from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The North Atlantic Council regularly meets to co-ordinate the operations of NATO. These meetings are frequently held in different locations and often in areas where NATO is conducting Peace Support Operations. Such trips provide the council with greater insight into NATO operations. This particular occasion will provide the members of the council with the opportunity to gain a better understanding of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the overall situation here. During their visit, the members of the North Atlantic Council will receive briefings from the Commander of SFOR, Lieutenant General

William Ward, and conduct familiarization tours. Towards the end of the day, Lord Robertson will also meet with the Tri-Presidency and the Secretary General of the Standing Committee on Military Matters. Lord Robertson will make a brief statement upon his arrival at the airport. There will be a photo opportunity when he visits the experimental primary school Jovan Ducic located in Kasindo, Serb Sarajevo at 1:45 p.m. To finish the day, Lord Robertson will make a statement and take questions at 5 p.m. at the Konak Residency. Interested media should arrive at all locations with sufficient time to pass through security checks and must clearly display their SFOR media accreditation. A press statement confirming the details of Thursday's activities will be released tomorrow afternoon.

My second point pertains to the regularly scheduled Thursday press conference. Please be advised that it will not be held this week but will resume next week.

Thank You.

Questions and Answers

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic - Reuters

When can we expect the results of investigation into this spying affair?

A: Captain Dale MacEachern - SFOR

As I've mentioned before, the analysis of the information gathered from the operations of the 7th of March is still ongoing. I can't say when the analysis will be complete because what we want to do is make sure we do a most thorough and accurate analysis of the information. I can't even confirm if we'll be able to share that information once we have completed our analysis. It all depends on how that would affect our operations from an intelligence perspective.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic - AFP

Any details on operations carried out in Pale? Could we have any details on these two successive operations in Pale?

A: Captain Dale MacEachern - SFOR

Other than to say as I've mentioned before the operation that we conducted in Pale were within our normal framework of operations. There was a specific intent behind those operations and that intent was based on some specific intelligence that we received. But I cannot get into either the intent or the actual intelligence because I can't compromise the effectiveness of our future operations. But what I can say is with respect to any of our operations that we conduct, we try to ensure that they're concluded as quickly as possible and that any disruption to the average citizen's in Bosnia and Herzegovina is minimised to the best of our ability.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

I know you cannot tell us at this point much about these operations in Pale, but can you tell us whether or not they were successful?

A: Captain Dale MacEachern - SFOR

No, at this point I cannot get into that. I'm sorry but again our effectiveness hinges upon matters of intelligence and at this point I can't reveal that information.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

Will you be able to tell us more about that at any point in the future?

A: Captain Dale MacEachern - SFOR

Hopefully, I can't say at this point.