

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

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 13 March 2003

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 13 March 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Mario Brkic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Press Statement on CPC Meeting• Launch of Education Directory
b. OSCE	Emir Salihovic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• OSCE Mission in Bosnia Condolences for the late Prime Minister Djindjic• Bussing children to mono-ethnic schools• audits of electrical companies
c. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Minority returnees
d. ICTY	Refik Hodzic	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• status conference in the Prosecutor v. Krstic• Prosecutor v. Drago Josipovic• Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brdanin• President of the ICTY condolences
e. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• COMSFOR's condolence to the family of the late Prime Minister Djindjic• Serbian Weapons Destruction

2. Fourteen members of the media including two television crews attended the conference.
 3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.
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Mario Brkic – OHR

PDHR, Donald Hays, met yesterday with the Entity Prime Ministers and the Chairman of the Council of Ministers to discuss public utilities. All participants at the meeting agreed to support the work of the Commission on Public Corporations, which was created under Annex 9 to manage the operation and restructuring of public utilities. This composition will meet on regular basis in future. Utilities can only function competitively and efficiently in the context of a Single Economic Space.

The CPC has already

- Established electricity policy statements as basis of the Power III Agreement;
- Established the CRA;
- Established the Railway Public Corporation; and
- Established the BiH Road Infrastructure Corporation (BRIC).

But untill now, the CPC has received only limited cooperation from the governments. The OHR now expects this to change.

Senior Deputy High Representative Gerhard Enver Schrömbgens and Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina Henry Zipper de Fabiani will take part in an education event tomorrow afternoon, which we hope you will all, be able to come along and cover. At 15.00 the two ambassadors will

present the acting principal of the Teacher's School at Obala Kulina Ban with the first copy of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Education Directory. This will be followed by a short concert.

The Directory lists every educational innovation currently being practised in Bosnia and Herzegovina classrooms. It has taken more than a year to compile. Every school and educational institution in the county was consulted, and the Directory is now being distributed to all Bosnia and Herzegovina schools.

This is an important issue; it may be particularly worth covering because the Directory shows not what Bosnia and Herzegovina schools are going to start doing in the future but what they are already doing, and many of the innovations in the Directory are home-grown – ideas that Bosnia and Herzegovina teachers have come up with that can now be practised elsewhere in the world.

Emir Salihovic – OSCE

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina extends its sincere condolences to the people of Serbia and Montenegro on the sudden and tragic loss of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic.

Prime Minister Djindjic's commitment to reform and western values was a valuable foundation for democracy in Serbia and Montenegro. His co-operation with the International War Crimes Tribunal demonstrated bold initiative, courage, and responsibility for justice, key elements necessary for reconciliation throughout the Balkans. We remain confident that the people of Serbia and Montenegro will remain committed to carrying out the late Prime Minister's reforms.

Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani, acting head of the OSCE mission unequivocally condemns the cowardly act that took Prime Minister Djindjic's life and deeply regrets his untimely passing.

Furthermore, the OSCE Permanent Council honoured the slain Serbian Prime minister with a minute's silence this morning at its meeting in Vienna.

The OSCE Mission calls for the phenomenon of bussing children to mono-ethnic schools to be put to an end, since it hampers sustainable return and creates a financial burden on municipalities.

"There are numerous examples where children are being bussed 15-20 kilometers to schools where they constitute a cultural majority, rather than attending schools that are only meters away from their homes," says Robert M. Beecroft, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

For example, approximately 10 returnee children are being bussed 15 kilometres to the school in Dejcici (Trnovo, FBiH) but live only a few hundred meters from the primary school in Trnovo (Republika Srpska) which was completely reconstructed and equipped in 1996. Or, children from Bukovaca (FBiH) are being bussed to the village of Drinic (Republika Srpska), while the Bukovaca reconstructed school remains empty. These are only two examples, among the many.

Bussing not only hampers sustainable return and reconstruction of the country, but is also a considerable expense that additionally and unnecessarily burdens cantonal and entity budgets. For instance, municipal authorities in Travnik calculated that 35-40,000 KM is being spent monthly on transporting students and that this amount could be reduced by 50% if children attend the school closest to their residence. Reducing bussing will save considerable funds that could be used to more directly support education.

Lastly, I want to point out to you that the three audits of electrical companies are public documents and can be found on the OSCE web page: www.oscebih.org

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

In January 2003 UNHCR recorded 3,890 minority returns bringing the total to 393,228 minority returnees since the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement. The number of returnees recorded in January 2003 is approximately at the same level as those recorded during the same month over the past two years.

Returns continue to take place throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, in spite of adverse weather conditions, numerous bureaucratic obstacles and serious security incidents and attacks against the lives and the property of individuals that occurred during the previous months. UNHCR urges local authorities to make every effort in removing any obstacles for return, and in particular the police authorities to take all appropriate measures to prevent crimes against returnees and to ensure a safe and secure environment for return throughout the country.

UNHCR, together with other international organizations and respective Bosnia and Herzegovina Ministries will continue to support the return process towards the full implementation of Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Since 1996, a total of 935,161 refugees and displaced persons have returned to their homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Out of this total 583,020 are Bosniak (62%), 222,310 are Serb (24%), 122,464 are Croat (13%), and 7,367 (1%) are others.

Retif Hodzic – ICTY

There will be a status conference in the Prosecutor v. Krstic at 2.30 p.m. on 19 March. On 2 August 2001, Radislav Krstic has been found guilty of genocide and sentenced to 46 years of imprisonment. His case is currently under appeal.

On 7 March, in the case the Prosecutor v. Drago Josipovic, the Appeals Chamber (Judge Pocar, presiding, Judge Liu, Judge Guney, Judge Gunarwardana and Judge Meron) dismissed Josipovic's Motion for Review and Motion for Urgent Consideration. On 14 January 2000, Drago Josipovic was

sentenced to 15 years of imprisonment for crimes against humanity and breaches of rules and customs of war in relation to crimes committed against Bosniak civilians in the village of Ahmici and Lasva Valley in central Bosnia. On 23 October 2001, Appeals Chamber upheld this judgement but reduced to sentence to 12 years. On 9 April 2002, Josipovic was transferred to Spain to serve his sentence.

On 10 March, in the Prosecutor v. Radoslav Brdanin, Trial Chamber II issued a Decision ordering that proceedings be adjourned as of 14 March until 14 April. This follows the absence of Brdanin's Lead Counsel during that time for medical reasons.

In a statement issued today, the President of the ICTY, Judge Theodor Meron, expressed his shock and horror at the tragic events in Belgrade, namely the despicable assassination of the Prime Minister of Serbia, Zoran Djindjic.

Mr. Djindjic's cooperation with the Tribunal brought international justice closer to a region which saw terrible atrocities. His death is a heavy blow to individual accountability for violations of International Humanitarian Law and to the rule of law.

President Meron conveyed formal condolences on behalf of the whole Tribunal to the Embassy of Serbia and Montenegro in a letter sent yesterday.

Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

Good morning, I have two points for you today.

First of all, on behalf of the Commander of SFOR, Lieutenant General William E. Ward, I would like to express SFOR's most sincere condolences to the family of the late Prime Minister Djindjic and to the people of Serbia. Furthermore, I would like to express SFOR's unequivocal condemnation of this cowardly act of violence. Those who attempt to effect change

through violent means will ultimately fail.

My second point pertains to the destruction of a large number of small arms. On the 3rd, 4th and 10th of March, a total of 3123 obsolete sub machine guns belonging to the Federation Army were destroyed at the smelting plant in Zenica. This is a significant success and should be recognized as such. Destruction by smelting ensures that obsolete weapons can no longer be used, and is preferable to the military sales process or any other method of disposal. It is another step in the journey towards making Bosnia and Herzegovina a safer and more secure environment. However, there is still much work to be done in the area of obsolete weapons and SFOR is determined to continue helping the armed forces of both entities in this process.

Thank you.

Questions and Answers

Q: Sarajlic Eldar – FTV

What could be the potential consequences of Serbian Prime Minister's death to security situation in Bosnia?

A: Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

The assassination of the Prime Minister is very tragic and as I've already said, SFOR condemns this terrible act of violence. However, with respect to SFOR and how it will affect us in our operations, it will not. As part of our standard operating procedure, SFOR maintains a constant vigilant watch over the state of security within Bosnia and Herzegovina and then we react accordingly to what we see. We will carry on doing this in much the same way we have to date.

Q: Sarajlic Eldar – FTV

The same question for the OHR.

A: Mario Brkic – OHR

What I would like to say is maybe that this tragic event could cause additional tensions or concerns with people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. But having in mind of reforms carried out so far and also taking in account the presence of SFOR and the International Community strengthening of the structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I'm sure that it will not have any significant impact on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.