

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

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE - 16 January 2003**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 16 January 2003:

| Agency | Spokesperson | Topic |
|---------|---------------------|--|
| a. OHR | Oleg Milisic | • Board of Principles. |
| b. OSCE | Urdur Gunnarsdottir | • Employers Guide distributed. |
| c. EUPM | Jon Oskar Solnes | • Inauguration Ceremony was a day of joy and earnest. • In the last few days there have been a number of incidents. |
| d. SFOR | Major Shawn Mell | • No statement. |

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

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

A. Ollivier

Col. (FR A),

Chief Operations and Plans

Oleg Milisic - OHR

Good morning everybody, I have one item for you today.

This morning, Thursday's as you know, is the regular meeting of the Board of Principles, when the Heads of the main International Organisations gather in the OHR to discuss pertinent issues. The High Representative, will today be briefing the Board of Principles on the two pronged approach to arresting high profile individuals accused of war crimes and indicted by the ICTY that he has been advocating over the last weeks.

The High Representative, will say that whilst the main responsibility lies with the authorities in the Republika Srpska, the International Community should maintain its focus on seeking the opportunity to arrest Radovan Karadzic. At the same time there needs to be a simultaneous effort to apply targeted pressure to the networks and individuals, which more than likely, are based in organised crime, that support him. The High Representative, will say that whilst Radovan Karadzic, can no longer prevent the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, he still has the power to slow it down, a delay that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can ill afford. The High Representative will highlight that by applying political and financial pressure to the networks and individuals that support war criminals will through this continued pressure make their arrest and transfer to The Hague, more likely. Thank you, that is all I have for you this morning.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE

Good morning, there are only two brief points from me today.

We have, 2000 copies of the OHR-OSCE Employers Guide have been distributed to local employers, through their organisations, to authorities and International Organisations. The Employers Guide spells out the policy of fair employment and the law regarding employment. It talks about how to improve personnel management in order to implement equal opportunity principles, introduce impartial criteria and to avoid any form of discrimination during recruitment, training, promotion, payment etc.

This is increasingly important for companies, whose business development and future depend on their management and the skills and knowledge of their employees. The Employment Guide is linked with the Fair Employment Program, that OSCE launched last year, and I have mentioned several times here on the podium.

25 companies are participating in the program, which aims to improve the personnel policies of companies, increase the awareness of existing discrimination at work and to provide professional advice regarding employment of new staff, improving work evaluation, disciplinary and dismissal procedures.

Secondly, a reminder for the launch of the Education Tram, which will take place in spite of the thick and all-surrounding fog and cold, at 12:30 today. All media are invited to attend the launch, at the Sarajevo tram depot, at Aleja Lipa and take an educational ride with us down to the city centre. That is all thank you.

Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM

Good morning everyone, I had better be fast if we are going to catch the tram. Just two points about the Inaugural Ceremony yesterday and the incidents in recent days.

I would like to thank the media for their enthusiasm and professional coverage of the Inauguration Ceremony, yesterday. I have worked as a television reporter myself for ten years and I know it is not easy to cover so many events, especially when protocol and security is involved.

For the EUPM, yesterday's official Inauguration Ceremony was a day of joy and earnest, as we know that we have an important mission task for the next three years. For the European Union, it was an historic moment it was the first mission under the European Security and Defence Policy was officially launched. For Bosnia and Herzegovina yesterday, also marked a historic moment as Dr. Solana, stated that "Bosnia's future lies in Europe. EUPM is here to assist you in your journey to Europe".

In the last few days there have been a number of incidents on Tuesday, in a criminal act of violence, a bomb exploded in Sanski Most, under the front of a car severely injuring the driver, his child who was in the car was uninjured. Criminal investigators of the Bosnia and Herzegovina police secured the scene following the bomb and are investigating the case in close co-operation with EUPM. The EUPM will continue to monitor the case, see how it develops and give its advice and assistance. The EUPM condemns this criminal and cowardly act.

In Trebinje, as we discussed on Tuesday, there have been threats to State Border Service officers. Efforts are under way to counteract these occurrences, with the involvement of Republika Srpska Ministry of Interior, and of course the EUPM is closely monitoring this case.

We at the EUPM think, that the recent incidents show us how important it is to further strengthen the law enforcement capabilities of the Bosnia and Herzegovina police, that is what we are here for, this is the common goal of Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, police and EUPM.

We heard this yesterday, from the Chairman of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, where he reiterated that the inauguration of the EUPM, is very important inauguration. Because, it will contribute to full capability of police forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is of course a prerequisite for further integration into Europe.

Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

Good morning, SFOR has no statement this morning, however I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce myself. I am Major Shawn Mell from Multinational Brigade-North. I will be filling in for Yves over the next two weeks, while he is away on leave. There will be no changes in the method for contacting the SFOR spokesperson during this time. Thank you.

Oleg Milisic - OHR

Are there any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q:Nedim Dervisbegovic - Reuters

Oleg, could be you more specific about these sanctions who are they against, who are these people, who is the network supporting Radovan Karadzic, are these people officials, is it his security. And what kind of sanctions, against the whole of the Republika Srpska or barring individuals from leaving the country or placing them under house arrest, what will they be?

A:Oleg Milisic - OHR

First of all let me tell you, what we are talking about here are targeted activities. As you know, the High Representative has been advocating this two pronged approach, which would focus on arresting Radovan Karadzic and others or enabling the arrest of Radovan Karadzic and others. Basically, it is various kinds of pressure; financial and political being brought to bear on these networks that obviously do exist. I will not go into details here, as the High Representative has said, it is not wise to advocate too your enemy what you intend to do. But, suffice to say, that even the authorities in the Republika Srpska, have reports indication of where this support may come from. Certainly as I said, they are the primary ones responsible for taking action and we certainly want to see this issue resolved from whichever quarter. I know you want me to be more specific on the kind of actions that will taken, but as I said, right now is not the time.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic - AFP

The report by the working group on customs reforms, said that the profits gained through customs fraud are being used to finance criminal networks, including war criminals networks, is Karadzic part of that?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

I would suggest that he well maybe. Although for a comment, I would have to say, could you speak to the working group, it's the working groups document not the OHR's.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic - AFP

But, they made that report for you?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

You have used the right words yourself "they made it". For comment please, please speak to them.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic - AFP

Could you please elaborate, in what way can Karadzic, still influence or slow down the peace process in Bosnia?

A:Oleg Milisic - OHR

There are various ways, from trying to slow down the process of return to various contacts he still may or may not have. I am not going to guess at the ways that he could do it. I know, the High Representative, is certainly of the opinion that he does not have the influence to prevent Dayton implementation anymore, he may well be able to slow it down and...

Interruption - Amra Hadiosmanovic - AFP

Through the institutions of the Republika Srpska, right?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

I am not going to guess or speculate right now, about how he may do it. It would be unwise of me to do that. Like I said, we do not think he can prevent Dayton implementation and that is the important thing.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

Oleg and Jon, at last weeks conference at the Holiday Inn, did Lord Ashdown and Commissioner Frederiksen, discuss the issue with the Chiefs of local police?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

I was not there. Do you mean the arresting of war criminals, I do not think that was the intention of the conference, but I will hand you over to Jon, who was there.

A: Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM

No, it was not discussed. You are talking about the conference at the Holiday last Friday?

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

Yes.

A: Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM

That conference was to bring together the senior Bosnia and Herzegovina police and introduce them to the programs, our long-term strategies, how we want to go about them and how we can assist the Bosnia and Herzegovina police. I am not aware of this being discussed at this meeting.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

Because, at the end we got statements that there will be now strategies concerning the protection of the return of refugees. Did you discuss the issue of the protection of the return of refugees more deeply?

A: Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM

That issue was discussed. As the EUPM Commissioner Sven Frederiksen, has said in almost every official statement he has made since the commencement of the mission, he has always highlighted two key issues, that is the safety of returnees and that we are very much focused on how to battle organised crime here.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

I will just ask again, in discussing the return of refugees you did not put this in the context of indicted war criminals?

A: Jon Oskar Solnes - EUPM

I was not in the room all of the time and I am not aware of them discussing that issue, they discussed the long-term strategy and the programs.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

SFOR, do you have any comments on media reports that the villagers from Donja Maoca, are moving out because they have been harassed by SFOR so much, what is going there?

A: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

What I can tell you about Maoca, is that the patrolling activities that have occurred in Maoca are consistent with the patrolling activities that take place throughout the Area of Responsibility. There has been no increase in the number of patrols or the activity in that area.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

Is there anything unusual going on in that village, which could be defined as out of the ordinary?

A: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

Not that I am aware of, I would have to check to see if there is anything out of the ordinary happening there. The

last information I had was there is no increased activity in that area from SFOR.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

Are you saying that the villagers are actually making up everything that they saying?

A: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

I am not saying that at all. There have been no allegations made to SFOR at this time, which if there were we would investigate, at this point there has been no complaint made to us.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

Also, is there any particular reason why the investigation into the Fijuljanin, case is so slow, why does it take you so long to end it?

A: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

With regards to Mr. Fijuljanin, the questions regarding him will have to be referred up to NATO Headquarters. We have been directed to refer all questions to them.

Merdijana Sadovic - ABC

That is rather strange, but thanks.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic - Reuters

Who are the people involved in this network is it politicians, elected officials, policemen, military?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

As I said, these networks are probably related to organised crime and as I also said, I am not going to speculate right now, who they are, what actions or what kind of pressure could and should be brought to bear on them. As I said, the competent authorities in the Republika Srpska, who have the primary responsibility to take action against them have indications and reports of where to start and what to start doing, that would be it for now.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic - Reuters

It has been seven years since the end of the war, why did you choose to impose sanctions or to start thinking about sanctions now. You have had seven years to force authorities to arrest Radovan Karadzic and other war crime suspects, when there was a lot of aid coming in and you could do it in a matter of weeks?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

You keep saying sanctions, I would suggest that this is a targeted approach. The word sanctions seems to have been hijacked by various other meanings. Like I said, this is a targeted approach to tackling the support networks. The reason the High Representative, is highlighting this issue right now is exactly as you said, because seven years have gone by and obviously planning to just arrest Radovan Karadzic, has not borne fruit within those seven years. Which, is why the High Representative is advocating this two pronged approach, which if carried through will weaken the network surrounding him and if it does not lead to his arrest it will certainly make the one-off mission, if you like, of arresting Radovan Karadzic easier.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic - Reuters

This is coming after SFOR's failed attempts to arrest Radovan Karadzic. Does this mean the International Community, has given up on doing it with SFOR and NATO troops and is instead focusing on the local authorities?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

No. I would say, quite the opposite the two pronged approach, should work one will work in harmony with the other. I do not think, there is any lose of focus from the International Community to arresting war criminals at all.

Q: Amra Hadosmanovic - AFP

You said, it is a targeted effort, does that mean you know the names of the people who are members of Karadzic's support network?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

Like I said, I am not going to speculate on who these networks are or what they are.

Q: Amra Hadosmanovic - AFP

I did not ask you to tell me who they are. You know who these people are?

A: Oleg Milisic - OHR

Again, I would not speculate. Like I said, the Republika Srpska authorities have received indications and reports as to where to start looking for this, so we are certainly expecting action on it.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

A question about SFOR's patrols at Donja Maoca, do your soldiers have any contact with the local population there, do you talk to the local people or just go on patrols without contact?

Q: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

I am not sure I understand the question. Are you asking do they talk to the residents in the villages and so on? Yes. They will do mounted and dismounted patrols and they will talk to people during the course of their dismounted patrols.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

So, they did not do this so far, I know from time to time your patrols have pretty close relations with the local residents, sometimes even going into the houses for a talk and to drink coffee. I wonder if that happened in the village of Donja Maoca?

Q: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

I do not know if that is taking place there or not, that is something that I would have find out from MNB North. But, it is normal practice for them to talk to the residents to find out what is happening.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - Oslobodenje

Do you have direct complaints from the residents to SFOR?

Q: Major Shawn Mell - SFOR

We have no direct complaints from anyone in the Maoca area about SFOR activity.

Oleg Milisic - OHR

Is that it, then thank you very much.