

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

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 24 September 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 24 September 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	• HR post PIC Steering Board Press Conference. • Sokolac Police Chief Killed.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• OSCE to host a reception to bid farewell to the Deputy Head of Mission and welcome successors.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	• Chief of Police of Srpsko Sarajevo murdered. • Appointment of Police Director in Federation Ministry of Interior. • International Peace Day Observance. • Reminder for Thursday's, press conference.
d. ICTY	Rafik Hodzic	• No statement.

e. UNRCO	Geir Ulle	• Call for Submissions for UN Award for Reporting on Poverty issues in BiH.
f. SFOR	Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier	• Update on annual rehearsal of DYNAMIC RESPONSE 2002.

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

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

C. Barraud
Lt. Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans

Oleg Milisic – OHR

Good morning everybody. I just want to say we are sorry about the late start this morning. I have two points for you today.

The first concerning, the High Representative's press conference. The High Representative Paddy Ashdown, will hold a press conference at 14.30 this afternoon, in the Office of the High Representative, on the conclusions of the Peace Implementation Councils Steering Board. Today is the final day of a two-day meeting and the focus is on the reform of the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At his press conference the High Representative, will explain the key aspects of the agreement on reform between the Peace Implementation Council and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Authorities which, is being reached this morning. The High Representative will also be speaking about the measures he believes will be necessary to clean up Bosnia and Herzegovina's Politics following the elections. We did send

out a media advisory yesterday, there are also copies of it on the tables outside.

Secondly, regarding reports that are coming this morning of the murder of the Serb Sarajevo Police Chief Zeljko Markovic, early this morning in Sokolac, this is a brutal reminder of how far this country has to go before the rule of law has been fully established. The Office of the High Representative looks to the police to carry out a thorough investigation. Mr. Markovic had displayed leadership in community policing and the manner of his death represents the worst kind of lawlessness and further underlines the importance of the rule of law reforms the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board is discussing today. That is all I have for you, thank you.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning. Just one brief point from the OSCE today.

The Deputy Head of the OSCE Mission Ambassador Dieter Woltmann is leaving the mission after three years. To bid him farewell and welcome his two successors, Ambassador Victor A. Tkachenko and Henry Zipper de Fabiani, the OSCE will host a reception this evening at Hotel Bosnia, you are all invited to the reception, which starts at 19:00 tonight. That is all.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning. The first item from me today, also relates to the murder of the Chief of Police of Srpsko Sarajevo.

You have heard already, he was murdered last night in the early hours of the morning in front of his house in Sokolovac. UNMIBH strongly condemns this hideous crime and calls on the police to undertake every effort to apprehend the perpetrators and bring them to justice. Local police from Sokolovac station have already deployed very soon after they had been informed of the murder. The investigative judge as well as the public prosecutor from the court in Lukavica went

to the scene of the crime this morning. An intense investigation is already underway, but there is no information at this point as to the perpetrators or the motive of this assassination. The IPTF accompanied local police to the scene and is closely monitoring the investigation.

The second point relates to a press release that we distributed last night. Regarding the appointment of a Police Director in the Federation Ministry of Interior.

UNMIBH is very concerned about the walkout of three members from the Parliamentary Committee for the Selection and Appointment of members of the Independent Selection and Review Board. This move jeopardises the nomination of a Director of Police in the Federation Ministry of Interior and also endangers the accreditation of the ministry.

The appointment of a Director of Police is an important step to ensure the separation of politics and police, as this post is of non-political nature. The Director of Police is the highest-ranking police officer in the ministry with the authority to exercise police powers and he deals primarily with operational issues of police work.

UNMIBH calls on all committee members to assume their responsibilities and make a positive contribution to the selection of the Independent Selection and Review Board.

Lastly, I want to make some remarks on the observance of International Peace Day, yesterday, here in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Five, Bosnian high school students participated in the observance of the International Peace Day, yesterday, afternoon and evening, at the Headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a special interactive video link high school students from New York were joined by high school students from five peacekeeping missions around the world including, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kosovo and Sierra Leone.

It was a moving moment when the students were exchanging their experiences of war in their respective countries. The students also had an active discussion on how their war experiences led them to be more active in pursuing world peace. The observance ended with the ringing of peace bells in New York and the five peacekeeping missions at 12 noon New York time, which was 18:00 our time, in a strong call for peace to prevail in the world.

I would like to repeat my announcement from last week, we will have a special conference after the regular conference, I would like you to stay. The issue is the accreditation of law enforcement agencies, so, please stay on for the special press conference.

A second announcement for Thursday, we will also have a follow on special presentation, on the Police Academies, from here in Sarajevo and Banja Luka, the Directors will be present to make their presentations and you will be able to ask them questions. Thank you.

Rafik Hodzic – ICTY

Dobar Jutro. No statement from ICTY today.

Geir Ulle – UN Resident Co-ordinators Office

Good morning. My name is, Geir Ulle, I am from the, United Nations Office of the Resident Co-ordinator for Development Activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We are issuing a call for submissions for the, United Nations award, for reporting on poverty issues in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This message is directly to you, the journalists.

The United Nations Development Agencies, together with the World Bank and IOM, continue to work towards poverty alleviation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In recognition of the

International Poverty Alleviation week, 17 to 24 October, we are launching an award for excellence in reporting on poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through this prize, the United Nations Agencies expect to highlight the issue of poverty in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and illustrate possible solutions. This year preference will be given to stories and photographs, which emphasise the environment and sustainability issues.

Two prizes will be awarded, one award of, 2,500 KM, will be granted to the best journalistic accomplishment, all media's, preference will be placed on features and one award of, 1,000 KM, will be granted to a photographic submission, which should include three photos; at least two of the photos must have been published.

The awards are funded by the, United Nations Resident Coordinators Office, with a special contribution from, UNICEF. This prize is only open to Bosnia and Herzegovina nationals who are freelancing or working in Bosnia and Herzegovina media. The submissions must have appeared in Bosnia and Herzegovina media between, 1 January 2002 and 10 October 2002, the submission must indicate where and when it was published. By entering into competition, the contestants in both categories accept that their submissions may be reprinted in, United Nations Publications, until, 31 December 2002.

The Deadline is, 10 October, this still gives you a good two weeks to publish articles under the above mentioned topics and the winner will be announced on, United Nations day, Thursday, 24 October. Thank you.

Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Good morning. I have one point for you today related to the annual rehearsal of DYNAMIC RESPONSE 2002.

For the last 10 days troops from The Netherlands, Romania and

Poland have been taking part in the annual rehearsal of DYNAMIC RESPONSE 2002 in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tomorrow will mark the end of this highly successful exercise.

NATO and Partner nation forces practised real world Peace Support Operations and validated operational concepts while familiarising themselves with the terrain and the environment. Their presence sent a clear message of NATO's and the International Community's resolve and commitment to maintain peace and stability in the Balkans region.

During the next few days, troops who took part in DYNAMIC RESPONSE 2002 will depart various exercise areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and return to their home countries. This completes my statement.

Questions and Answers

Q: Julie Poucher-Harbin – IWPR

Kirsten, I was just wondering if you had any update on last weeks mosque explosion, has anyone been detained or are there any suspects?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

I checked before coming to the briefing, but there is nothing yet.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC

Yves, there were some reports in the local media over the weekend, that SFOR bases, I think in Tuzla, could be used for logistical purposes if the United States, launches an attack on Iraq is there any credibility in these reports?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

That is not really for SFOR to comment on. I recommend that you contact the United States Forces European Command, for a comment on that issue. It is definitely not an SFOR issue.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

Kirsten, if you leave aside all returnee and ethnic related incidents like the murder of the Police Chief, there have been several cases in the past several years. Like Knezevic, if I remember the name correctly, the Deputy Police Chief in the same police station, then Zeljko Kopanja, then the insurance company Director in Pale, last year. How many of these have been solved and do you have a clue, who is doing this. Have any of the investigations brought results, who stands behind these attacks?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

I am not aware of any outcomes of investigations at this point. I would have to check that, because some of those cases lay some years back, as you said yourself. So, I would have to look into that. It is easy to make quick connections here, but I think, only once we have firm results of investigations can we move to make such connections, everything before that would be speculation.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters

So, none of these murders has been solved?

A: Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

I did not say that. I said, that I was not aware of the outcome of the investigations. Again I repeat myself, as some of these cases are lying back a few years, I will have to look into that, to give you a good answer.

Q: Nicholas Hawton – BBC

Is the American base at Tuzla, apart of SFOR?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

Excuse me.

Q: Nicholas Hawton – BBC

Is the American base at Tuzla, apart of the SFOR Operation?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

It is part of the SFOR Operation. It's where the American Forces are mostly based, in Tuzla.

Q: Nicholas Hawton – BBC

So, would it not relevant to SFOR if American planes were taking off from an SFOR base to bomb Iraq?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

As I said to answer that question at this time, I recommend you contact EUCOM for their comment on this issue.

Q: Nicholas Hawton – BBC

Would SFOR have an opinion if America used one SFOR's...

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

It is speculation at this time, as to what will happen in the future.

Q: Nicholas Hawton – BBC

So, no comment about the potential of an SFOR base being used to bomb Iraq?

A: Lieutenant Commander Yves Vanier – SFOR

I am referring you to EUCOM.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

If there is nothing further? Thank you all very much.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

For those who want to stay on, I will put the statement outside on the table.