

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 1130 hours on Thursday 4 July 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrik Volf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extension of UNMIBH mandate.• High Representative addresses OSCE Permanent Council.• Principle Deputy High Representative in Brcko & Banja Luka.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ambassador Beechcroft & Paddy Ashdown address Permanent Council.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Twelve day extension of UNMIBH mandate.• IPTF Commissioner disqualifies former police officer from Zenica-Doboj Canton.• Special Representative of the Secretary General to be on inaugural flight of Air Bosna to Belgrade.
d. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update on search of house owned by Karadzic family.

2. Thirty-nine journalists and five TV camera crews attended today's press conference.
3. A transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

C. Minck

Lt. Col. (FR A),

Chief Operations and Plans

Patrik Volf - OHR

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our press conference today. I am glad we are in full force on this table today.

Regarding tonight's extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The High Representative Paddy Ashdown welcomes this decision to prolong the mandate until to July the 15th. This is particularly important with regard to the planning of the 11th July commemoration in Srebrenica.

The High Representative would certainly prefer a proper extension of UNMIBH's mandate until the end of the year, as he has said on numerous occasions. However, the High Representative, as you know, met European Union officials in Brussels yesterday and he was encouraged by the European Union's commitment to fill any gap left by a possible termination of UNMIBH's mandate. The High Representative is convinced that the European Union will be able to do the job. However, I have already said what our preferred solution would be.

Secondly, today the High Representative Paddy Ashdown is in Vienna, where he is together with the OSCE Head of Mission Ambassador Robert Beecroft, addressing the OSCE Permanent Council. The High Representative in his speech is outlining the crucial role of the OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the field of human rights. He is also speaking about the state of education in Bosnia and Herzegovina and it's central importance in ensuring stability, reconciliation, institution building, sustainable refugee returns and economic recovery in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On a third note, just an announcement, the Principle Deputy High Representative Donald Hays, will visit Brcko on

Monday and Banja Luka on Tuesday of next week. In Brcko on Monday, Ambassador Hays, will be joined by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers Dragon Mikerevic. The Principle Deputy High Representative will meet with district officials, attend a session of the District Assembly and visit the newly opened premises of the District Court. In Banja Luka on Tuesday the he will be meeting with top Entity officials including the Republika Srpska President, Mirko Sarovic and the Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic. Among the issues they will discuss are essential economic reforms. There will be a number of opportunities for the press on both days, both in Brcko and Banja Luka, about which, we will notify you in advance. Thank you that is all from my side.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE

Good morning.

We welcome, as do others, the decision of the UN's Security Council to extend the mandate of the UN mission for twelve days, in order to solve the disagreement that blocked the extension of the mission earlier this week. We sincerely hope that this time will prove sufficient to solve it and to make sure that peace operations, such as the building up of war torn societies are not put at risk in the future.

Secondly, on the appearance of Ambassador Beecroft, and the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown in Vienna today, it is part of continued and regular addresses of Head of Mission and the High Representative to the Permanent Council. They will discuss the OSCE's work in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a part of the International Community, the streamlining process, and current and future tasks. Following their addresses they will hold a press conference at the OSCE in Vienna at 12:30 this afternoon. We will distribute further details from that press conference when we have them.

Thirdly, the OSCE is sponsoring an advanced human resource management course for 12 key government officials and civil servants from the five cantons participating in what we call the Canton Administration Project. They come from, Tuzla, Zenica-Doboj, Posavina, Sarajevo and Central Bosnia.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina lacks a similar institution for in-service training, the School of Public Administration in Ljubljana, Slovenia has developed this tailor-made seminar for Bosnia and Herzegovina Canton Administrations. The seminar curriculum reflects the European Union administrative principles and standards which Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to adopt in order to advance towards the Stabilisation and Association Agreement and finally European Union membership.

After the first two days, feedback from the seminar participants has been very positive. In particular, Bosnia and Herzegovina officials particularly appreciated that Slovenia, being a European Union accession candidate, is a good role model for public administration reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Commonality in pre-war administrative legacies between Slovenia and Bosnia and Herzegovina means that transition problems are identified faster than otherwise and that there is an understanding of possible steps forward. Participants gained greater insight into the specific steps, which Slovenia has taken in aligning its public administration with European Union standards and the European Union requirements. Thank you very much.

Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH

Hello and good morning,

As you have heard already from my colleagues we have had another extension of our mandate for twelve days that was voted for yesterday at the UN Security Council unanimously and the mandate is now extended until the 15 July 2002. This extension, it is a technical extension again and it follows intensive consultations at the UN Security Council in New York. Now, this time the framework is the possibility to continue these consultations on the issue of the International Criminal Court and to try and find a solution to this dispute. In the meantime UNMIBH here on the ground will continue with mandate implementation and business as usual.

Secondly, the IPTF Commissioner Sven Fredriksen has disqualified Mr. Nihad Vejzovic from participation in any aspect of police work. This disqualification follows a comprehensive review conducted by IPTF of the acts and omissions of Mr. Vejzovic while serving as an operative duty officer in Zenica-Doboj Canton. Mr. Vejzovic was dismissed from service, and criminal procedures are pending against him for forging documents. In 1999, Mr. Vejzovic obtained a forged diploma to obtain a new post for which higher education was required. The disqualification comes into effect immediately and prevents Mr. Vejzovic from working in any aspect of police work

anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina now or in the future.

And the last item I have for you is an announcement. The UN Special Representative of the Secretary General Jacques Paul Klein, will be one of the first passengers on the inaugural flight of Air Bosna (from Sarajevo) to Belgrade tomorrow the 5 July. The Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein played a key role in advancing this initiative, of establishing the flight connection. The IPTF Commissioner Sven Fredriksen will also be on this flight.

Air Bosna plans to run return flights to Belgrade four times a week. The start of a regular flight connection between Sarajevo and Belgrade is considered to greatly promote communication between the populations in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia and contributes to the overall normalisation of relations in the wider region. That is all I have for you today. Thank you.

Major Scott Lundy - SFOR

Dobar dan from SFOR.

I have an update for you concerning SFOR's search of a house owned by the Karadzic family on Tuesday.

Based on a preliminary review of the information SFOR removed in this search, I can confirm that there is a strong link between illegal activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the continued protection and harbouring of Radovan Karadzic, an indicted war criminal and a fugitive from justice.

This hunt for Karadzic involves tracking down his illegal support network and diminishing his remaining influence through illegal activities. SFOR does not limit its operations to just detention attempts as Tuesday's operation clearly showed. That operation demonstrated that people and places associated with Karadzic and other persons indicted for war crimes would also be pursued.

Among the items SFOR collected during its search were a pair of forged passports that are clearly related to members of the Karadzic family, I will repeat that – clearly related to members of the Karadzic family. This reinforces the fact the Karadzic family is wilfully and intentionally deceiving the International Community.

Until Karadzic turns himself in, SFOR will continue to work tirelessly to bring him to justice. The Commander of SFOR, Lieutenant General John B. Sylvester, has said that government officials must put pressure on Karadzic and those who support him, and must work to bring him to The Hague. SFOR's operations will continue not only to end illegal activities but also to limit Karadzic's freedom of movement.

The ring is tightening around Karadzic and his support network. Karadzic will have to concentrate on avoiding arrest, thereby minimising any influence he might think he has.

Karadzic will be caught.

Patrik Volf - OHR

Thanks very much from all of you, can I ask if you for your questions, please?

Questions and Answers

Q: Aleksandar Dragicevic - AP:

Kirsten, do you have any contingency plans at the moment? And what is going on on the ground? Are there any changes?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH:

First of all, as I said, the decision on the future of the regular mandate on the extension of UNMIBH is still outstanding. We have a technical extension right now of twelve days. So, we will really have to see what the outcome of the discussions and consultations will be in New York. In the meantime, we just continue with our job on the ground, so there will not be any changes. Maybe there will be changes in the way that we look at

intensifying some of our projects, regarding contingency planning at the end of December. We would have left anyway. So, what would happen if the UNMIBH mandate now closes down? That would be normal; what we call a liquidation phase setting in over several months, during which, personnel will be withdrawn and assets will be liquidated.

Q: Gregor Mayer - PROFIL:

Major Lundy, can you elaborate with more detail which persons' forged passports did you stumble on, and what are the consequences for these persons? Because somebody that forges passports should somehow get legal procedures.

Miss Haupt, in the case the European Union has to take over or fill the gap as it is now called, what would it be with the nationals of non-European Union nations in that mission, could they continue under that flag?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

As far as the passports are concerned, we are not in a position to provide you the specific details of the people whose names may have appeared, or photographs that may have appeared, because this is very central to our effort to bring him to justice. So, I will not be able to provide that to you.

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH:

On the second question, the European Union mission clearly would entail the countries of the European Union. Monitors or officers who do not come from these countries will not be participating in this mission. You can get more details from the European Union on this, as there are some countries including the United States, which are planning to take part in this mission and are not members of the European Union. In general, non-European Union countries will not be part of that.

Q: Sabina Arslanagic - AFP:

Scott, if you have evidence of criminal activity are you expecting the Republika Srpska authorities to take some action, or is just going to stay with you guys?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

The Commander of SFOR has been saying for a long-time that there are three ways that Persons Indicted For War Crimes will end up in The Hague.

The first way one is if they voluntarily give themselves up. That has not happened in the case of Mr. Karadzic.

The second way is for the governments that control the places where these people live can work to actively bring Persons Indicted For War Crimes to justice. That has not happened yet.

So, we are left with SFOR tirelessly searching and trying to bring these people in. We have had some success, as you know, and we are continuing on with this effort.

Q: Antonio Prlenda - AFP:

Can you tell us, in what sense was this criminal activity helping the Karadzic protection? Is it financially? Would some criminal activity gain money for the bodyguards, or is it some other way?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

I do not have details for you, and again, given the fact that this information will be very useful in our further efforts, I do not think it is likely you will get that anytime soon.

Q: Sabina Arslanagic - AFP:

Just to go back to that question, I am talking in terms of getting him to The Hague. Just in terms of punishing the members of the criminal network. So, if you have evidence of crime are you going to tell them, "Okay guys, this is what we have. Go and prosecute these people"?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

We hope that they will do that. SFOR works with the governments in the Republika Srpska as well as in the Federation on these matters. So, we will have to wait and see. It is a good question, that maybe you would like to raise with them.

Q: Nicholas Hawton - BBC:

Just going back the question of the UN, to what extent is it difficult for the UN to operate under this uncertainty at the moment, and to what extent are other organisations impacted by this uncertainty?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH:

For the daily work right now, we do not have any problems to just continue. Basically, we have been in a waiting mode, if you want, over the last couple of days and we will continue to be in a waiting mode over the next twelve days, I am afraid. In the meantime, there will not be any additional problems in the continuation of carrying out what we are supposed to do here implementing our mandate. I do not see any additional problems there. Again, we will have to see what happens in twelve days and we will see what the decision brings and act accordingly.

Q: Nicholas Hawton - BBC:

And the other organisations...are you impacted in anyway by this uncertainty?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

One has to see that the job of the International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina is already a tough one, and being confronted with the situation where you have to draw up contingency plans is certainly making a tough job tougher. That is no secret, but at the end of the day, we have live with it.

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE:

I have very little to add to that, but I think that I speak on behalf of myself, OHR and probably others when I say this does not have a direct impact our work. Of course, it has an indirect impact because this is a very clear sign that is being sent. That is why we are following this very closely. That is why we are putting pressure on those that take those final decisions to keep that in mind.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic - Reuters:

Scott, in previous similar situations, like when SFOR arrested people who were suspected of terrorist activities, you co-operated closely with local authorities. You even detained some people and submitted evidence to local authorities so they could continue with the processing of the case. So, why this time do you want us to ask Bosnian-Serb authorities if they have something to say about it? Are you going to give this evidence to them? Are you maybe going to arrest some of these people?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

As we move along with this we will be speaking with the government officials, and we will see how willing they are to pursue it. Certainly, that would be in our interest. As I said to an earlier question, that is what we would like to see happen here; that the government officials take an active role in dealing with this whole issue.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic - Reuters:

Could it be maybe the government itself is involved? Can you elaborate on this, or maybe you are not willing to share this with the government? Because there have been a lot of voices saying the government itself is involved in shielding Mr. Karadzic. For example, the Chief Prosecutor Carla del Ponte

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

SFOR is going to continue working with all the officials in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the numerous issues that we deal with. So, you will have to watch and see what happens. In terms of this particular incident we will see. We will attempt to share the information with them and see where we end up.

Q: Nicholas Hawton - BBC:

Just one specific question on the situation of the European Union police. If they do come into Bosnia, is there a feeling that they will be able to carry out the same work as the UN? There has been a suggestion that maybe the capacity for them to perhaps carry out the certification program would not be what it is for the UN?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH:

First of all, I cannot fully speak on behalf of the European Union. You will understand that. What we know by now is that the mandate will be different; it will not be a mandate with the same level of intervention that the UN mandate has. As you know, we are here to train, equip and restructure the police, reform the police and advise them in this process. The European Union mandate, as far as we see right now, is a monitoring mandate with a few very serious and important aspects towards looking into the problem of organised crime and other problems. How this maybe changed or effected by this situation as we have it now, I can really not say at this point. We will have to look at that when we know what comes out after twelve days from that decision. I always have to come back to that answer, but at this point we just do not know.

Q: Nicholas Hawton - BBC:

I understood there was a feeling within the OSCE, for instance, that the European Union police, should they come in, would not have the same capacity to carry out the certification program? Is that true or...?

A: Patrik Volf - OHR

I think one has to see that we are talking about two different mandates. That was clear from the outset. So, when it was clear that UNMIBH's mandate would end and the European Union finally decided that they were going to take over the police mission, it was clear that they were not going to take over in full force and with the same mandate as the UN has. This is one thing that has to be kept in mind and this is certainly going to effect some aspects of UNMIBH's work at the moment. This would have happened by the end of the year anyway.

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH:

Just coming back on that issue of certification, that is a very important aspect of the work we are doing right now. As you know, all police officers have been vetted. They have all been checked regarding war crimes back ground, criminal records, housing situation and so forth. We are currently on the way to checking the educational diplomas and certificates of police officers and at the end of that process, the plan was to basically move to the certification of police officers. Now, whether we will be able to do that really depends on the decision that we are expecting in twelve days. Whether someone else will have to continue a project that we will not be able complete in the case we will not be here any longer, that is also subject to discussions in the meantime. At this point, I do not think anybody can really say how this is going to look.

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir - OSCE:

Can I just add, because you mentioned our organisation, we are not involved in any policing or checking on policemen. So, I do not see why we should have a view on this and as I said this does not effect us directly.

Q: Matthew Price - BBC:

Presumably, on the certification issue. If the certification of all the members of the police force cannot be completed, then that brings into the whole question, that the idea of creating a fully democratic police force for Bosnia?

A: Kirsten Haupt - UNMIBH:

Definitely, that is a very serious issue. I believe that when it comes down to this problem on deciding whether the UN will continue to stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina, these kind of problems will have to be taken into account. As you rightly say, the certification process is a very important aspect towards the integrity of a police officer as a police officer in this country. And it will just have to be taken into account that this is a very important and has to be brought to completion. I am sure these issues will have to be discussed how to complete this particular project as well as others.

Q: Partick Volf - OHR

No more questions? Thank you very much for your time.