

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 18 June 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	• High Representative meets Croatian President. • High Representative to visit Herzegovina.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• Ambassador Beecroft visiting Mostar. • ODIHR hosting two-day meeting. • President of OSCE Parliamentary Assembly to visit Bosnia and Herzegovina. • International Community reminds voters to register.
c. UNMIBH	Stefo Lehmann	• SRGS Klein to address UN Security Council in New York. • Provisional authorisation removed from Srebrenica police officer. • Livno Canton obstructs re-deployment of minority police officers

d SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	• PIFWC turned over to Hague. • Ross Bridge repairs.
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2. Twenty members of the media and one television crew attended the conference.

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

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

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

Just two points from Office of the High Representative this morning.

The first concerns the High Representatives meeting this morning with President Mesic.

The High Representative called on President Mesic; he congratulated him on the agreement, signed yesterday by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia on the joint fight against corruption, terrorism and organised crime. The High Representative noted that crime and corruption affect the whole region and can only be tackled through regional co-operation and yesterday's agreement is an important building block in developing exactly that kind of co-operation.

The second point, is regarding the High Representative's visit tomorrow and Thursday to Herzegovina. This is a continuation of his citizens' tour of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The politicians often speak in the name of the people, but the High Representative wants to find out for himself what ordinary people in this country are thinking. Herzegovina

obviously is one of the most important areas in the country, and the High Representative wants to hear the views of the people there directly.

Tomorrow he will be travelling to Bugojno to visit Croat returnees, and then he will go on to Livno, where he will meet teachers and take part in a radio phone-in programme. After that he will travel to Siroki Brijeg, where he will hold a Town Hall meeting in the afternoon. The meeting will be open to anyone to attend. The High Representative will give a short speech about his vision for Bosnia and Herzegovina and then he will take questions. He knows that this kind of interactive event is not particularly common in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but he wants to give everybody a chance to hear his views and he wants to hear other people's views. We will be issuing details of the venue and the timing of this event later this afternoon.

The High Representative will overnight in Siroki Brijeg, and on Thursday morning he will visit a local Medical Centre to see conditions there and talk to doctors and nurses. He will also visit a local business on his way back to Mostar. In Mostar at 13.00 at the Hotel Ero he will give a press conference and after that he will visit the Old Bridge. On his way back to Sarajevo in the afternoon, he will visit a Croat return site. We'll be issuing a media advisory later with all details of the press opportunities on this trip

That is it from Office of the High Representative.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning everyone.

The Head of Mission Ambassador Beecroft is visiting Mostar today; it is the last day of his Herzegovina visit. The ambassador has had a broad series of meetings with Bosnia and Herzegovina and International Community officials on internal as well as regional matters. Yesterday, Ambassador Beecroft

had an excellent meeting with a group of students in Siroki Brijeg. He said it was encouraging to meet with such a dedicated group of people that were looking for ways to improve the situation in this country. Today, Beecroft will meet with another group of students and political leaders discussing the future of education in Mostar and there is a media opportunity related to that, for those that are interested.

On a related issue: regional co-operation. The office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, ODIHR, and the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina are hosting a two-day meeting here in Sarajevo on regional co-ordination. A series of meetings will be held to bring together representatives at expert level within the OSCE in South East Europe to discuss and identify strategic approaches to regional and cross-boundary priorities and issues. ODIHR is the principal institution of the OSCE responsible for the human dimension in all OSCE countries, (I remind you Bosnia and Herzegovina is actually a member of the OSCE) related to human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

In light of the problems facing South Eastern Europe, ODIHR has adopted a regional and more comprehensive approach towards South Eastern Europe, to promote a positive democratic development throughout the area. At the two-day meeting, which concludes today, experts from ODIHR together with OSCE in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania will discuss anti-trafficking corruption measures, police, judicial and prison reform, local governance and cross-boundary or border co-operation, elections, and the situation of ethnic minorities.

Thirdly, I want to inform you that the president of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Mr. Adrian Severin, former foreign minister of Romania, will visit Bosnia and Herzegovina tomorrow. He will meet with the Bosnia and Herzegovina presidency as well as entity presidencies. A media advisory

on his visit is on the table outside.

And last... but not least. On behalf of the International Organisations represented here I appeal to you to remind those of your readers, listeners and viewers who have not registered to vote, to do so. The final day for registration is June 20th the day after tomorrow, and there will be no second chance as the president of the Election Commission has made absolutely clear. The registration concerns mainly young voters and returnees, as I mentioned last Thursday. The Election Commission has carried out extensive public information activities to explain to citizens what they have to do in order to register. However, many people appear to be under the impression that when they have registered their return with their municipality they have also placed themselves back on the voters' list. In fact, they must update their voter's registration with the Municipal Election Commission. We would like to take this opportunity to call on returnees to do this immediately. The International Organisations call on the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina not to deprive themselves of the right to vote on October 5th, by not registering. Only by doing so, do people have the opportunity to vote. October 5th may seem far away, but those who are not registered by close-of-business on Thursday are giving away the right to participate in the elections. Thank you very much.

Stefo Lehmann – UNMIBH

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. We have three points for you today.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General Mr. Klein is currently on a working visit to New York. He is scheduled to brief the members of the Security Council tomorrow on the Secretary-General's report on the work of the UN mission here in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On Friday, the Security Council is scheduled to hold a formal meeting to consider the report in

which the Secretary-General proposed to extend the mandate of the UN mission here until 31 December 2002.

On a separate point, the IPTF Commissioner Sven Frederiksen has decided to remove the provisional authorisation to exercise police powers from Mr. Goran Stojanovic, a police officer working in Srebrenica police station. An investigation carried out by the IPTF has determined that Mr. Stojanovic's acts render him unfit for service in the police forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He was found to have assaulted three citizens and discharged his firearm under the influence of alcohol in Srebrenica in of January 2001. The removal of his provisional authorisation as you know prevents him from participating in any in any aspect of police work anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, either now or in the future.

Our third point is that it has come to our attention that the Ministry of Interior in the Livon Canton, Canton 10, is in fact actively obstructing the employment of minority, particularly Serb, officers in that Canton. Two recent graduates of the police refresher course, scheduled to be deployed to their per-war homes in Bosansko Grahovo, have been unable to do so because of unnecessary conditions being imposed by the Ministry of Interior in that Canton. These cases are part of a persistent pattern of obstruction in Canton 10 and UNMIBH demands that it immediately remove all obstacles to minority police deployment. We will follow these cases closely.

Finally, I will become one of the many Spokespeople that you have seen rotate in and out of here. Last week I informed the UN that I would not continue with the mission after the end of this month, after four years in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but I still have two more weeks to bother you. That is all we have.

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

Dobar dan from SFOR. I have two points for you today.

First, the Commander of the Peace Stabilisation Force, Lieutenant General John B. Sylvester, commends the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for its recent apprehension and turnover yesterday of Ranko Cesic to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague, Netherlands.

This marks the first time an indicted war criminal has been apprehended by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia government and presented to The Hague since it passed the Law on co-operation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. SFOR views these actions as strong indications that the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia government will continue to make good on its promises to arrest those who have not willingly surrendered, and to co-operate fully with the International Community.

In doing so, the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is sending a clear message to all indicted war criminals – their days of remaining at large are numbered. Persons indicted for war crimes are quickly running out of places to hide.

The Commander of SFOR calls on the leaders of the Republika Srpska to follow the example of leaders in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and increase their support and efforts to bring all indicted war criminals, especially Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, to justice. Now is the time to be a government committed to a bright and prosperous future for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Active co-operation in the apprehension of all persons indicted for war crimes by the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina will greatly increase the rate at which citizens can continue moving toward full and lasting peace, and economic prosperity.

My second point concerns the Ross Bridge five kilometres south of Knezevo – a bridge that was recently repaired by SFOR engineers and handed over to the Republika Srpska Ministry of Transport and Communication yesterday in a brief ceremony.

The bridge was repaired by SFOR after unknown persons stole aluminium deck plating two months ago, thereby rendering it impassable. The SFOR engineers replaced the aluminium plating with equally durable but less desirable wooden plating and certified the bridge as being safe. While such repairs are the responsibility of the respective Bosnia and Herzegovina governing body, SFOR occasionally assists in repairs in order to ensure its own freedom of movement and that of displaced persons and refugees. In the case of the Ross Bridge, SFOR's primary consideration was to facilitate the timely return of displaced persons and refugees to their homes across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line.

The repair and re-opening of the Ross Bridge is a success, but it and other temporary bridges throughout BiH will need to be replaced by permanent structures. SFOR is pleased to learn a co-operative effort is underway between the Republika Srpska and Federation to secure funding from the World Bank to replace the Ross and Mannic Bridges with permanent structures. SFOR wishes both the Republika Srpska and Federation success in this worthwhile endeavour.

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

I guess we will say some very fulsome things about Stefo, but we will keep those for his last press conference. In the mean time do we have any questions?

Questions and Answers

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic – Reuters:

A question for SFOR, can you tell us more about the measures the Bosnian-Serb

Army promised to take, so that General Sylvester released the ban on movement and training?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

There was a meeting yesterday between General Sylvester and General Novica Simic Commander of the VRS General Staff at the commander's office. It was to do with the lisina case, which is the electronic monitoring that was occurring. What I can tell you is that, as a result of the discussion, essentially the VRS has been allowed to implement its proposed corrective actions and address the issues involving responsible individuals. For specific information on that, you would now have to contact the VRS. I would suggest if you were to contact his headquarters they could probably tell you what those measures were going to be.

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic – Reuters:

What about the suspension of General Milan Torbica?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

That remains in place at this time.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC:

Scott, how do you know that the VRS will keep its promise and not use those planes for spying in the future?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

The Commander would not have agreed to allowing the VRS airforce and air defence to carry on and take whatever measures it sees as required, if he did not think it would have a favourable outcome.

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje:

Does this mean you have finished your investigation of all of the documents and computer files you

took?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

The issue is now something for the VRS to speak on. We have basically come up with our statement. I would suggest you now contact them.

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje:

I cannot call them and ask what about your SFOR investigation?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

That is fair enough. But at this point, there has been an agreement between two General officers and now you will have to find out what the agreement was, by speaking with the VRS chain of command

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje:

It sounds like you do not care what is in the files that you took?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I suggest you contact the VRS at this point.

Comment: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje:

Let's see what they say.

Kevin Sullivan – OHR:

Do you have anymore questions? Thank you very much.