

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 25/3/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Protests and road blockade over Mirko Norac's sentencing in Croatia	World news - Iraq	Federal Ministry of Interior fills charges against two Iraqis	Reactions on war in Iraq
World news - Iraq war	President of the German Parliament visits BiH	Two officials of the BiH Court appointed by HR	Cavic meets delegation of war veterans
Association of Croat Refugees holds 5 th Congress	Former Croatian General Mirko Norac sentenced to 13 years in prison	World news - Iraq war	President of German Parliament visits BiH
Trial of former cantonal ministers of interior Dragan Mandic and Dinko Culjic continues	Regional news	Former Croatian General Mirko Norac sentenced to 13 years in prison	SDS opposes possible dismissal of Sarovic over Orao

Oslobodjenje	Cheaper fuel in BiH as of Monday
Dnevni Avaz	Demand of the Consumers Association: Electricity may be cheaper
Dnevni List	What's behind meeting that has (not) been held; BiH pensioners pay most expensive medicines in Europe; Chair Terzic will talk to Prosecutor del Ponte; FBiH Government supports efforts about solution of future organization of Mostar
Vecernji List	Bush and Saddam: War will be long; Roads blocked because of Norac; Grabovica: Three Croat houses burnt down
Slobodna Dalmacija	General Norac gets 12 years imprisonment; Prosecutor hides favourable evidence for seven years; The Hague declares acquitting document - secret
Vecernje Novosti	Gray Audi of death found; Bush expects difficult fights
Blic	Out of 100,000 citizens 58 come down with tuberculosis; Dusan Stojicic: We will not allow Sarovic's replacement; Mikerevic: To improve climate for foreign investors; Iraqi stopped the offensive, crucial battle for Baghdad
Nezavisne Novine	Verdicts pronounced in Rijeka against Norac, Oreskovic and Grandic: Gospic group sentenced to 37 years imprisonment; RS Customs Administration: As of 2 nd April, rigorous controls of vehicles imported on disability privileges
Glas Srpski	New deadline for war reparation

Economic/social issues	
Fuel cheaper in BiH as of Monday	Oslobodjenje front page, pg. 3 'Fuel cheaper in BiH as of Monday' - The distributors and traders with oil and oil derivatives in BiH foresee that, as of Monday, March 31, all oil products will be cheaper for five to six pfenige per litre. "We expect that the fuel prices in the refineries will decrease for five to six pfenige due to the stabilisation of the world oil market," Muhidin Alic, the representative of the FBiH oil distributors announced on Monday.
Consumers request reduction of the power prices	Dnevni Avaz front page, pg. 12 'Electricity may be cheaper' - The BiH Association of Consumers will early next month call on citizens to apply "civic disobedience" if the authorized bodies by the time do not positively respond to the Association's demand that the prices of the utilities including the electricity are reduced by 20 percent.

Mikerevic on business climate	RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic said on Monday that the RS did not have time for delaying the reforms and changes of current unfavourable business climate. During his yesterday's visit to Sarajevo-Romanija region where he opened symposium 'Infotech-Jahorina 2003' on applying telecommunications systems in controlling industrial facilities, Mikerevic said that the region did not have favourable climate for foreign investments. He invited businessmen from that region to get engage in establishing a more favourable business climate in the RS. The RS Prime Minister emphasised that the RS Government was ready to continue with the policy of creating better conditions for foreign investments. According to Mikerevic, the RS is not jeopardised, but it needs to be strengthened economically. (Blic pg. 7 headline 'Do not delay reforms', Glas Srpski, page 2, 'No development without economy'; Nezavisne Novine, page 7, 'Mikerevic calls on businessmen to change business environment')
SD: "Only export of fish is allowed from BiH!"	Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 17, by <u>Miroslav Landeka</u>) carries that BiH market is full of imported products, while domestic agriculture is declining. SD says that on the ground of the agreement in a few months Croatia will be exporting its products to BiH without paying customs, while there are various limits on the Croatian side when this issue is in question. SD says that the situation with Slovenia is even worse.
RS employers' representative Miljevic on Bulldozer initiatives	Glas Srpski, page 4, 'Bulldozer in mire' – Damir Miljevic, President of the RS Association of Employers, responds to GS question as to whether 50 economic reforms, which the HiRep to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, listed as crucial, may remove obstacles on the path of creating more favourable business environment in the BiH in only 40 days. He is of the view that "apart from these 50 obstacles, 500 obstacles more, which obstruct economic development are evident. I support any initiative that will improve the business environment, but such will take years. It is hard to expect that the entire system can be changed in only 40 days." Miljevic said he is bothered with the fact that Bulldozer Commission is consisted of foreign experts, who are not familiarised with the BiH legislation. On this he stressed that: "International organisations should have advisory not the leading role in these reforms. Anyway, it is necessary that a dialogue between authorities of BiH and businessmen is made and that the process of removing legal barriers commences." He is of the opinion that crucial obstacles are of bureaucratic nature, stressing that: "No machine, even bulldozer, is capable of removing obstacles, which have piled for years, in such a short time frame. First, priorities should be set, and then one by one barrier should be removed. Everything cannot be resolved at the same moment, as insisted on by Bulldozer Commission."

Affairs/audits	
Orao: SDS against possible Sarovic removal	Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'SDS against possible Sarovic removal' – The SDS (Serb Democratic Party) believes that the eventual sanctions against the former RS President and the current Chairman of the BiH Presidency Mirko Sarovic over a political responsibility related to the Orao affair might cause political destabilisation in BiH, the party's spokesman, Dusan Stojicic, said on Monday. He added that the possible removal of Sarovic by the international representatives would represent a selective political act and a policy of double standards. Dnevni List page 3, "SDS against possible removal of Sarovic", Blic pg. 7 headline 'We will not sit idly by', Nezavisne Novine, page 7, 'SDS will not accept that Sarovic is held responsible for Orao'; Glas Srpski, page 2, 'Director hands dismissals' also carry Stojicic's statement.
Avaz editorial: Sarovic's responsibility	Dnevni Avaz pg. 3 Commentary of the Day by <u>Sead Numanovic</u> 'Sarovic's responsibility' – Numanovic says that Chairman of the BiH Presidency Mirko Sarovic should as the most prominent RS political representative submit the resignation by his own over the Orao affair instead of organising his defence. "He would this way show not only his own political maturity by accepting the democratic principles of the individual responsibility, but he would save BiH (and RS) from the sanctions and criticism of UN and other international organisations and institutions," Numanovic wrote.

Ashdown on Orao in Blic	“Unfortunately, the RS authorities have not been so cooperative in regard to the Orao affair, as it has been case with the Belgrade’s authorities”, High Representative Paddy Ashdown says. Asked what he would recommend to the Peace Implementation Council regarding Orao, Ashdown said that “a lot needs to be done before deciding on it”. (Blic pg. 7 headline ‘I have not decided yet’)
Tuka issue: Zubak writes to Ashdown	Oslobodjenje pg. 8 ‘No one can be above the law, but...’, Dnevni Avaz ‘NHI will not sanction Tuka without solid evidences’ – The President of the NHI (New Croat Initiative) Kresimir Zubak responded on Monday to a letter sent by the High Representative Paddy Ashdown on March 20 with regard to the involvement of NHI official Mijat Tuka in the irregularities in the BiH Federation Ministry for Refugees and DPs. Zubak requested Ashdown to present to the party the audit report claiming that Tuka and his associates had abused the office and embezzled 14.3 million KM. “Without prior consideration of the report and hearing of Tuka, we will not take any measures against him,” wrote Zubak. Vecernji List (page 8, eme , “Tuka has a chance to respond”), Slobodna Dalmacija (page 18, Fena , “We cannot judge Tuka without evidence”) and Dnevni List (page 4, Fena , “Submit the report to us so we can act in accordance to it”) also carry the reaction by Kresimir Zubak to the Ashdown’s letter. The letter also says: “You (referring to the HR) should not demand from us to accuse, condemn or discredit someone if we are not familiar with the facts on the ground of which we should do it. You did not submit the audit report to us but you demand that we act in accordance to it.” The letter also says that the session of the NHI Presidency was scheduled for March 27, and during this session the party will respond to the HR’s demands adhering to the HR’s stands stated in a brochure “Job and Justice”.
OHR says audits continue	Dnevni List (page 2, by FENA) carries an OHR spokesperson, Mario Brkic, a saying that audits, as a part of process of eradication of corruption and inefficiencies in the BiH public sector, will continue. Questioned about possible audit reports that the OHR might present in the future, Brkic could not say anything concretely saying “it is early to discuss about concrete, individual audits”. (Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 ‘Audit of public companies continue’)
Hercegovacka Bank: Trials of Dragan Mandic and Vinko Culjak	Slobodna Dalmacija (back page, by FENA , “Indictees deny guilt for unrest”) carries a report from trials to former Ministers on Interior of Herzegovina-Neretva and West-Herzegovina Cantons, Dragan Mandic and Vinko Culjak, charged with abuse of office and authority regarding the events surrounding the control of Hercegovacka bank. The indictment charges the two with failure to undertake appropriate measures in order to prevent the unrest. The process is being conducted before the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo. Regarding the trials, SD says the trials have re-started because the previous judge was appointed to a new post and another judge was appointed to run the case. Both Mandic and Culjak deny charges saying they did everything to prevent an escalation of unrest and keep the situation under control. Both the prosecution and defense teams moved for hearing of additional witnesses, and in that context, former Deputy Governor of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and current Federation Finance Minister, Dragan Vrankic, and the then Deputy Prime Minister of HNC Government, Josip Merdzo, have been summoned. Next hearing is scheduled for April 23.

Political developments/appointments	
FOSS Director appointment	Oslobodjenje pg. 2 In Focus column by Mirko Sagolj ‘Vacant seat’ – “It is a high time for the High Representative Paddy Ashdown to stop a political-police circus related to the appointment of the FOSS Director. First he should finally explain why he removed Munir Munja Alibabic and then he should appoint the new Head of the Service. In a few days the meeting of the PIC will be held and that is an opportunity for him to fulfil this task in order for the circus not to be continued,” Sagolj wrote.

Sarovic, other BiH Presidency members separate meetings with HR	<p>Dnevni List (front and page 3, by <u>S. Kuzman</u>, "What's behind meeting that has (not) been held") carries a press release by the BiH Presidency which reads that the previously scheduled meeting between the Chair of the Presidency, Mirko Sarovic, and the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, that was to take place at the building of BiH Presidency yesterday at 1300 hrs was canceled. However, DL says a source from the OHR confirmed the meeting did take place but at the OHR building in Sarajevo. The daily apparently contacted the Chair Sarovic's office where it was told by Sarovic's advisor, Drago Vukovic, that the meeting was held at the OHR due to problems that the High Representative had with his leg. In light of that, DL says it checked on the HR's health with the OHR when the daily was told the HR's health was fine and goes on to raise questions, namely, whether the meeting was held at all, who and why canceled it and what happened to the HR's leg. The daily also says the sources close to the BiH Presidency claim the meeting did not take place because of possible removal of Mirko Sarovic due to his role in the "Orao" affair.</p> <p>On the same issue, Vecernji List (page 8, by <u>D. Ja.</u>, "Presidency at Ashdown's") says HR Ashdown decided to meet all members of the BiH Presidency separately at the OHR building in Sarajevo. "It's hard to grasp reasons behind the protocol gymnastics, but it is certain that the topic of the meeting was the forthcoming meeting of Peace Implementation Council", says VL.</p> <p>Nezavisne Novine, page 5, 'Meeting between Sarovic and Ashdown cancelled' - BiH Presidency announced that the meeting between the HiRep to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, and the Chairperson to the BiH Presidency, Mirko Sarovic, which was to take place yesterday, was cancelled. No reasons as to whether the meeting was cancelled and whether it would take place later on were announced.</p>
Fed. Govt. officials meet Head of OHR South, talks on future of Mostar	<p>Dnevni List (front and page 5, by <u>ONASA</u>, "FBiH Government supports efforts about solution of future organization of Mostar") carries a report from yesterday's meeting between the Federation Prime Minister and his two Deputies, Ahmet Hadzipasic, Dragan Vrankic and Gavriilo Grahovac respectively, and the Head of OHR South, Deputy High Representative Jean-Pierre Bercot, and Head of Political Section of OHR South, Julien Berthoud. A press release by the Federation Government says the Government supports efforts aimed at finding of most suitable solutions regarding the future organization of Mostar and in the perspective, the Government will, within its competence, provide all the necessary help in the process. Ambassador Bercot and Berthoud explained the concept of preparations and work on defining of a comprehensive proposal on future status and organization of Mostar, as it is a necessity and interest of Mostarians to have an efficient, unbiased and modern city organization regardless of national, cultural, educational and social origins. Regarding the establishment of a commission that should work on the future status and organization of City of Mostar, the daily carries Deputy HR Bercot as saying: "Formation of the commission, that should be multi-national and multi-partisan, is expected next month." (Slobodna Dalmacija, back page, by <u>Dinko Pasic</u>, "Commission will decide on status and organization of city on Neretva", Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'Federation Government will assist in finding solutions for Mostar')</p>
Dragan Covic in Washington Times: "Al-Qaeda threat to BiH"	<p>Vecernji List (page 8, by <u>Z. Kresic</u>) carries excerpts of an interview that the Croat member of BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, gave to Washington Times. "Terrorists linked to Al-Qa'ida network are still active and are a threat to BiH and the region. Al-Qa'ida cells are still active in BiH. Bush's administration must act more aggressively regarding that problem. If nothing is undertaken, extreme Islamic terrorist groups could in the future destabilize the whole region (...) I think that our intelligence services, together with American intelligence, have the information and are working on how to solve the problem", said Covic. Apparently, Covic also said the time has come to carry out changes to the DPA and organize BiH according to Swiss or Belgium model.</p>

RS President on the RS and Djindjic's assassination	<p>RS President Dragan Cavic has stated that it is high time that RS institutions declared war on criminals of all kinds. "It is high time we cleaned up our own house; we have the right to declare war on criminals of all kinds," Cavic said in an interview for the Banja Luka's magazine Patriot. He said that the police ought to tackle the branches of Serbian criminal gangs in the RS, as well as all forms of domestic and international organised crime. He added that the RS "must prevent an exodus of Serbian criminal groups to our cities". The RS president said that the assassination of Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic "was an attempt at killing Serbia's democratic revival", and that the murder would have grave consequences for Serbia, as well as for the entire region. "Now that the evil happened, there is no room for scheming any more; a showdown has become a priority task and inevitable," Cavic said. Cavic said that the investigation into the Orao affair had not produced any evidence indicating that RS officials knew that the Bijeljina-based Orao had been violating the UN resolution banning the export of weapons and military equipment to Iraq. "Neither former RS President Mirko Sarovic nor former RS Prime Ministers Milorad Dodik or Mladen Ivanic were aware of these dealings," Cavic pointed out. According to him, establishing responsibility and punishing only the RS because of the violation of the UN sanctions without punishing the BiH Federation at the same time, even though their firms had been involved in trade with Iraq as well, "would be seen as deliberate selectivity motivated by other reasons". (Vecerenje Novosti pg. 2 headline 'To declare war on crime')</p>
DL editorial on HNC and Mostar	<p>Dnevni List (page 2, by <u>Ivica Glibusic</u>, "Crisis of authority - fight for ministerial seats") notes that the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton has not got a Government even six months after the elections and in that perspective says the first speculation said the problems were within HDZ that could not reach an agreement among its ranks on distribution of ministerial seats. The author goes on to say the time showed the reasons behind the failure to appoint the HNC Government are much deeper, the problems being the relations between SDA and HDZ. The author notes that similar problems were in Central Bosnia Canton too, the canton which got a Government owing it to concessions made by both SDA and HDZ. Glibusic says the resistance of Bosniaks to abolishment of special regime cantons reflects on establishment of authority in the HNC, which becomes a problem that could lead to HDZ and SDA going their separate ways. DL also says one could expect obstructions in Mostar too, especially with regards to establishment of unified Mostar. However Glibusic says that "tensions will rise more and more because, slowly but surely, the day of unification of Mostar approaches." DL says such a political situation reflects on the economic situation in the HNC especially when it comes to payment of salaries to cantonal budget beneficiaries. Regarding the last visit by the High Representative for BiH to Mostar, Glibusic says the visit certainly carries a weight. In that context, DL unofficially learns the IC will not tolerate the current situation in the HNC too much.</p>

Other issues	
Potocari	<p>Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'All 600 bodies identified' - All works have been completed related to digging and preparation of 600 graves in Potocari for the funeral of the Srebrenica victims, which is scheduled to take place on March 31, according to the Director of the Visoko City Cemeteries, Asmir Hodzic. The enterprise has been hired to perform the job. He added that all the bodies had been identified as well and the remains would be prepared for the funeral on Sunday.</p> <p>Oslobodjenje, same page 'Security plan prepared' - The RS Interior Ministry has prepared the security plan and the police officers have already been sent to Potocari to complete preparations on the ground for the funeral of 600 Srebrenica victims scheduled to take place next Monday, according to the Ministry's Spokesman, Zoran Glusac. He added that the Ministry would in coming days make the additional efforts to secure the funeral, which was assessed as the high-risk event in terms of security.</p>

Verdicts proclaimed on crimes committed over Serb civilians in Gospic, Croatia	Vecernji List (front and pages 18 and 19, "Roads blocked because of Norac,"), Dnevni List (front and page 16, "Mirko Norac sentenced to 12 years imprisonment"), Slobodna Dalmacija (front and pages 2 and 3, " Oreskovic got 15, Norac 12 and Grandic 10 years of prison"), Vjesnik (page 2, "Oreskovic got 15, Norac 12 and Grandic 10 years of prison while Rozic was acquitted") and Jutarnji List (front and page2, "12 years to Norac") carry that Croatian senior military officers, namely Tihomir Oreskovic, Mirko Norac and Stjepan Grandic were found guilty for the war crimes committed over Serb civilians in Gospic, Croatia in October 1992, while Ivica Rozic, who was also one of the indictees, was acquitted. Oreskovic was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, Norac to 12 and Grandic to 10 years imprisonment. Reacting against this decision, about 500 citizens from Sinj, Croatia, blocked the Split-Zagreb road and said they would not move until General Norac is acquitted. They say that this verdict is also condemnation of the Croatian Homeland War. (Vecernje Novosti pg. 15 headline '12 years to Norac')
Doctors write to the RS Government	The RS Trade Union of doctors has sent an open letter to the Government, Minister of Health, the RS Constitution Court and OHR asking the Government to put out of force the Law on Health Chamber, review so-far work and financial dealings of the Chamber and identify mistakes and illegalities. The Trade Union claims that the Chamber has not been formed in line with the law and that doctors have been damaged. (Blic pg. 7)
Education	Thanks to OHR, OSCE and Council of Europe in BiH parts that refer to alleged aggression of Serbia and Montenegro on BiH have been removed from history textbook. According to the words of Federation Education Minister Zijad Pasic, with assistance of OHR, OSCE and the Council of Europe a steering board that would help removing of unacceptable texts from the textbooks is formed, and in that way a part of the Education Law would be implemented. "By this a unique and complete education system will be formed in the whole BiH which is in the interest of children' education", Pasic says. (Vecernje Novosti pg. 2 headline 'Serbian aggression to be removed from textbooks')
Editorial: "Bahtijar's movement - signpost to hell"	Dnevni List (page 6, by <u>Slavo Kukic</u>) carries an editorial harshly criticizing Amer Bahtijar and his Student's Movement for Normal BiH. The editorial says that all their attempts to raise various issues showed that the Bahtijar's revolution is only interested in mono-ethnic issues and it failed. The editorial says: "It has become obvious that this revolution is an SDA instrument whose purpose is to impose on the BiH scene the values for which SDA did not stand any chances at the beginning of the nineties due to different constellation of forces. However, this time SDA had to take care of new social reality. There was no the High Representative and his authorities at the beginning of the nineties. And his authorities are such that he can move individuals and the whole parties if it is necessary." The editorial says that Bahtijar benefited from the whole situation and we can see him now wearing suit and a tie and with a car that "the fighters for the national issue deserve".
Three Croat houses burnt down in Grabovica	Slobodna Dalmacija (last page, by Fena, "Three houses of Croat refugees were burning") and Vecernji List (front and page 46, "Three houses burnt down") carry that one house was completely destroyed and two houses partially in the fire that broke out in place Gornja Grabovica, near Jablanica, on Monday morning. According to the Ministry of Interior of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, these are the houses owned by Croat refugees, which have not been reconstructed yet. The dailies carry that it has not been revealed yet what caused the fire and the investigation on this case is underway.
RS Police and Customs increase controls	Nezavisne Novine, page 2/also cover page, 'As of 2 nd April, rigorous controls of vehicles imported on disability privileges' - RS Customs Administration has called on all owners of vehicles in RS, who imported vehicles on somebody else's disability privilege to pay their customs fees as soon as possible, or they would face with large financial penalties. Police announced that as of 2 nd April, it would launch the action of increased vehicle controls. If police comes across vehicles imported on disability privilege, those vehicles will be confiscated until the owners pay regular customs fees.
Austria: War reparation claims can be submitted until 31 December	Glas Srpski, cover page story, 'New deadline for war reparation' - Constitutional Board of the Austrian Parliament decided that all those, who were forced to labour at some of nazi camps in Austria during the World War II, will be able to file war reparation claims until 31 December this year.

UNEP depleted uranium report today	Nezavisne Novine, page 4, 'Report on depleted uranium in BiH be released today' – UN EP (United Nations Environment Programme) will today publish the final report on research of expert team into presence of depleted uranium in BiH. As previously announced, presence of DU was recorded in the area of Han Pijesak and Hadzici.
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