

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 24/3/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Alliance armoured vehicle hit by missile – possible death of 10 American soldiers	World news – Iraq war	More deaths in Seljuble village near Kalesija – inhabitants suspect the deaths caused by SFOR's depot	War in Iraq
New explosions in Baghdad	BiH Diplomats in the Iraq region say BiH citizens live normally and not under threat	4 aircrafts fall over Baghdad	Raid into 64 bars and restaurants, 11 persons arrested
British aircraft hit above Baghdad – Iraqis claim two pilots arrested	BiH economy should not be affected by war in Iraq	Division within EU continues	Serbian police confirms assassination of Djindjic was carried out by Zemun Clan
American officials admit Iraqi's defence strong	Negotiations on property, legal issues between BiH and Croatia to continue next week	Terzic to attend EU meeting in Brussels tomorrow	Defence Minister of Serbia and Montenegro claims all connections with RS Army cut

Oslobodjenje	BiH CoM delegation today in Brussels – Adnan Terzic takes a package of new obligations
Dnevni Avaz	Pre-war shares on revision – Trade Union against thieves
Dnevni List	Iraqis captured two British pilots; Passing of FBIH Law on State Service expected; State stole 2,7 billion DM from its citizens
Vecernji List	Search for pilots; 100.000 workers losing jobs by end of year; Dragan Covic: Pope at Petrusevac on June 22
Slobodna Dalmacija	Explosion of bombs and anti-war protests; Croatia related headlines
Glas Srpski	Belgrade investigation into murder of Zoran Djindjic: Tones of cocaine and heroin
Nezavisne Novine	Rockets destroy Baghdad; Cvjetin Nikic, SDS Bijeljina President: PDP sacrifices SDS and all party agreements; Republic of Srpska: One Gram of cocaine found in 84 raids; Bulletin on Bulldozer Initiative
Vecernje Novosti	Wealth of Zemun clan's leaders: Patriots from gambling houses; Iraq prepares traps
Blic	Juveniles in RS; 600 million KM for demining; Offensive on Iraq tomorrow; Boris Tadic: The West should significantly reduce the pressure on Serbia
Ljiljan	Pogorelica – the goal of our neighbours' expansionistic projects

Political developments

CoM delegation to visit Brussels	Oslobodjenje front page, pg. 7 'Adnan Terzic takes a package of new obligations' – A BiH delegation led by the Council of Ministers Chairman, Adnan Terzic, will travel to Brussels on March 25 for a two-day official visit. At the EU Headquarters, Terzic will receive a questionnaire with 300 questions. Whether BiH will be invited to sign the Stabilisation and Accession Agreement with the EU depends on the answers to these questions. "BiH might complete this part of the job until June, so the issue of BiH accession to EU could then be put on the agenda of the June meeting of the EU leaders in Greece, which will anyway be dedicated to the countries of the Western Balkans," said Terzic. Dnevni List, page 4, by D. L., "Arrival for package for new beginning" also reports on the issue.
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Federation HoR to discuss and vote on Law on State Service of FBiH	Dnevni List (front and page 7, by <u>Miso Relota</u> , "Passing of FBiH Law on State Service expected") announces that the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives will discuss the Law on State Service at tomorrow's session of the chamber. The daily says there was a problem because the chamber got two versions of the bill. Speaker of the HoR, Muhamed Ibrahimovic: "The final bill on state service of Federation of BiH has already been distributed to all MPs. We will render it in an urgent procedure at the next session of Federation Parliament's HoR scheduled for tomorrow, March 25. Regarding the problem that occurred these days, it is about a misunderstanding. A version prepared by the OHR was sent, so was a version determined by the Federation Government. There were certain small differences that are removed now."
VL's editorial on SDA-HDZ rapport	Vecernji List (page 15, by <u>Zoran Kresic</u> , "SDA tightens tensions with HDZ") says the constitutional changes have turned Croats into a second-class people in the Federation, a situation which the Bosniak ministers in the Federation Government use to outvote the Croat ministers. As an example, the author cites appointment of former Federation Deputy Minister of Finances, Sefika Hafizovic, as an advisor to the Federation Prime Minister, blaming Hafizovic of "chasing away" Nikola Grabovac and accusing her of being biased towards the Bosniaks. The author goes on to say that the local SDA in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton has stopped the process of establishment of authority and that two HNC SDA leaders, Omer Cevra and Salko Sokolovic, openly told Sulejman Tihic and Adnan Terzic at a meeting held in Sarajevo last week not to support them. "Following months will open the cards and the Mostar case will show what the future of Croat-Bosniak relations will look like - agreement or national domination", says Kresic.
SDS' Nikic on coalition with PDP	Nezavisne Novine, page 2/also cover page, 'PDP sacrifices SDS and all party agreements' - In an interview to Nezavisne Novine, Cvjetin Nikic, President of the Bijeljina SDS Board, severely criticises the SDS coalition partner, PDP, claiming that PDP failed to respect the agreements reached with the SDS. Nikic admits there are certain problems within the SDS. However, he denies that the party may split on regional basis into Semberija and Doboj wing, led by Milan Ninkovic. Regarding the appointment of the new RS minister of finance, Nikic states that Semberija region is deeply convinced that Cvjetin Nikic is the last person, who may be appointed to this position, since the lobby of Milenko Vracar and Mladen Ivanic and their satellites would never allow it happen. He then expressed his doubt that any SDS official might be appointed to this position.

Affairs	
Orucevic: BH Telecom can be proud	Oslobodjenje pg. 6, mentioned on the front page 'BH Telecom can be proud' - The former Mostar Mayor, Safet Orucevic, who is claimed to be a real owner of the Mostar-based NGO Centre for Peace and Multiethnic Cooperation decisively denied such the possibility. Regarding the donation of 50,000 KM to the Centre by the BH telecom, Orucevic said: "If the only sin of the BH Telecom is provision of the financial assistance to the Centre, which the Mostar citizens are working in on a volunteering basis, than the BH Tecom may be proud of such the move."
Dnevni List on ERONET license	Dnevni List (front and page 5, by <u>J. T. K.</u> , "Knezevic: I hope we will get the license soon") reports that the request by HT Mostar (Croat telecommunications Mostar) for issuance of license for third GSM operator and evaluation of ERONET's request for the same license should be resolved this week. The daily notes that a report on evaluation of value of the license that was supposed to be prepared by an independent house from Prague by March 21, is not ready yet, and the daily contacted CRA which said the report would be ready sometime this week. When questioned what happens when the evaluation has been done i.e. what sum ERONET has to pay, CRA says the issue will be forwarded to the BiH Council of Ministers which will decide who gets the license.

SD's editorial on Milan Jovicic issue	<p>Slobodna Dalmacija (page 15, by <u>Petar Milos</u>, "Delegate of trouble") carries an editorial in which the author criticizes a statement by the Deputy President of City Council of Mostar, Milan Jovicic, who called HDZ BiH "a nationalistic-Ustasha-fascist creation". Milos says it matters not that much what the Croats' reactions are like saying it is important that the Bosniaks, for the sake of good Bosniak-Croat relationship, recognize imputations by a trouble-maker in Jovicic's words. "If Bosniaks use Jovicic's words as an argument of their own political position and stances, then everybody in Mostar, as well as in Federation, is at loss. Anyhow, how will Jovicic help the return of Serbs with such statements? Does he believe his fellow compatriots will return to places where 'nationalists, Ustashes and fascist' rule? It seems that's not his goal. He is basically a delegate of trouble and political philosophy whose motto is 'The worse, the better'. Instead of apologizing to the Croats and Bosniaks over the great Serbian policy which created so much evil in these areas, he repeats Radovan Karadzic's thoughts and words", says Milos.</p>
Tax evasion in RS	<p>Nezavisne Novine, page 2, 'One person charged for tax evasion in RS' - Milica Bistic, Director of the RS Tax Administration, stated that only one person in the RS was sentenced for tax evasion, and one person has been detained. She added that Branislav Djurdjevic from Banja Luka, the owner of the fuel station "Kubikas" was sentenced to three years imprisonment for the tax evasion of KM 27,800. Tihomir Babic, (born in Osijek, Croatia and with the then residence in Novi Sad) has been placed in custody. According to RS Tax Administration, Babic was performing "money laundering" for the firm "Dejan komerc", and also possessed three fictitious firms "Koneks veritas", "Nerc company" and "Rebeka".</p>
Cavic's interview for Patriot focusing on Orao affair	<p>Patriot, pages 6, 7 & 8, 'RS senior officials did not know of illegal trades' - Dragan Cavic, RS President, in an interview to Patriot, spoke about a couple of issues with a focus on Orao affair. On Orao affair, Cavic said that RS institutions conducted a thorough investigation into Orao affair which resulted in removals of officials of the Orao Aviation Centre, RS General Staff, etc. According to him, the international community knows very well that Orao affair is one segment of wide-spreading milieu of violation of sanctions across whole of BiH. In his view, the fact is that the sanctions were violated in both, RS and BiH Federation, as well as in Serbia and Montenegro (especially by the firm Jugimport SDPR), Slovenia, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Russian Federation and Germany, and even USA. However, only BiH has the HiRep and SFOR, that are entitled to, within their respective mandates, qualify these violations of UN sanctions as violations of the Dayton Peace Agreement and accordingly it is realistic to expect that HiRep and SFOR would impose certain sanctions within BiH. He further stresses that the Orao affair has launched the process of investigations into arm trades allegations not only in the RS, but also in the BiH Federation. But the fact is that these investigations and public updates on this are not so covered by media in the BiH Federation as it were the case in the RS. Therefore it is logical thing to expect that the BiH Federation authorities maintain the same approach to this issue. He hopes that international community officials regard this issue the same way he does and that they would seek from the BiH Federation authorities to conduct thorough investigations into these facts. He expressed hope that speculations on potential action of HiRep, who is to penalise those politically responsible for the Orao affair, would remain at the level of speculations. According to him, the investigation did not disclose any hard evidence that Mr. Sarovic was aware of these illegal trades, neither were Milorad Dodik or Mladen Ivanic aware of them. He reiterates once more that the investigation conducted did not indicate or bring any evidence that the most senior officials of the RS knew of illegal trades. According to Cavic, the most important dimension and omission, which resulted in the arm trade to state under international sanctions, is not mentioned at all. And that question is: what BiH Council of Ministers was doing! The fact is that nobody wondered why BiH COM has never passed a decree or some other act, which bans exports to states under UN sanctions. It is almost impossible that each official of each small or big firm in BiH knows of every UN Resolution imposing sanctions against this or that state for this or that. On assassination of Zoran Djindjic, Serbian Prime Minister, Cavic says it marks attempted assassination of the democratic rebirth of Serbia.</p>

Situation in Drvar	<p>Vecernji List (page 62, by <u>F. Matic</u>, “Fire destroys offices and part of roof”) reports that a building of Municipality Drvar was on fire two days ago when a few offices and part of roof burnt down. This is a second incident in a month that the municipal building catches fire and the daily speculates the fire was set on purpose since the offices did not have heaters in them. The daily also says some municipal employees complain that their Serb colleagues want the municipality to transfer to a former HVO barracks which is currently occupied by expelled Croats. In that context, VL says the word is that the fire will result in the current municipal building losing the use permit.</p> <p>Dnevni List (page 8, by <u>Vera Soldo</u>, “Media writing about Croats being endangered are pure fabrications”) carries an interview with the Head of Municipality Drvar, Ratko Sabot, in which he talk about problems the municipality is facing. Regarding some media reports which said the Croats are more and more endangered in Drvar, Sabot says: “I am not happy with those articles and I think they are pure journalists’ manipulations. We are returning to a normal way of life. I am a new Head in this municipality, I have worked for less then a month now and what I gather is that people of all three nationalities are pretty fair, people can work, talk and make a better and happier future.”</p>
Bicakcic’s interview for Ljiljan	<p>Ljiljan ‘Bicakcic: I was not in charge of a single KM in Elektroprivreda for two years’ pg. 19, 20, 21 and 22 by <u>Sejo Omeragic</u> – an interview with Edhem Bicakcic, who was recently banned by HR Ashdown from performing any public post following the BiH Elektroprivreda audit report. Asked about the decision on his removal, Bicakcic stated that it was based on two claims, both totally incorrect. He explained while performing the duty of the Head of the Diversification Team he had no authorities and not a single KM was allocated for the team. As for statements by BiH Elektroprivreda General Director, Enver Kreso, Bicakcic stated that he requested from kreso to publicly specify what kind of finances he was in charge of. Kreso apparently told Bicakcic that he spoke about that with auditors, and thought it was enough on his part. “For me it is not,” said Bicakcic. As for claims that Meho Obradovic is ‘his man’, Bicakcic stated that the story is totally unfounded. He explained that Obradovic realized successfully a project in 1994 and the results of the same led to him becoming the general director. On SDA’s reaction to the latest decision by the HR, Bicakcic said that he thought the party did it for their benefit, and not for his. “If they were serious about it they could have told their ministers not to accept such audit report.” As for the steps he would take to appeal against he decision, Bicakcic said he would appeal to the Court, then go to the BiH Constitutional Court, Human Rights Chamber, BiH Union, Helsinki Committee for human Rights and international institutions.</p>
Ljiljan criticises BiH judiciary focusing on the Pogorelica case	<p>Ljiljan ‘Great inquisitor in BiH’ pg. 23 and 24 by <u>Sejo Omeragic</u> – criticism of the BiH judiciary, with a special attention to the Pogorelica case. “Pogorelica has not been just a court procedure. It is turning more and more into a court affair that someone would be held responsible for.” The article points out to the existence of the Independent Judicial Commission (IJC), which includes international reps. It is not known, reads the article, how the Commission fails to react to staged processes within the alleged fight against terrorism. “Either HR reacts and removes such Commission and then review the obvious unprofessional court-judicial choice, or we will still be forced to witness staged court procedures with the goal of destroying this country.” Recalls that Ashdown announced the rule of law, so remains unclear how he can remain a silent observer. The worst is, claims the daily, that (base don info from the BiH Prosecution) three court processes are in preparation at the BiH Court – ‘Eronet’, ‘Orao’ and of course ‘Pogorelica’. “So the Court is starting to act on the basis of the national key. The key question is whether HR Ashdown would agree to this absurdity like Sonn and Petritsch once did.” (the daily recalled that it was Matthias Sonn, on behalf of Petritsch, derogated a decision imposed by Westendorp and put the ‘Pogorelica’ case under the jurisdiction of the BiH Supreme Court.</p>

Reforms

RS to propose resolution for VAT	Oslobodjenje pg. 8 'RS to propose resolution for VAT' – The RS Prime Minister, Dragan Mikerevic, said according to ONASA news agency that the RS would permanently insist on the significant level of de-centralisation, because only in this way the relaxing relations in BiH might be secured. "When it is about the organisation of the single Customs Service and introduction of single VAT, I believe we will find forms to reflect such a decentralised structure and ensure fiscal sovereignty of the entities," said Mikerevic.
VL: "100.000 workers losing jobs by end of year"	Vecernji List (front and page 11, by <u>Zdenko Jurilj</u>) says the soon-to-follow implementation of the Law on receivership and liquidation of companies means more than 100.000 workers will lose jobs in the Federation which in turn could provoke mass protests by the workers. The daily carries the President of Independent Union of BiH, Edhem Biber, as saying: "The law, which is being supported by the IC, has positive things, but one must take care of the workers for whom contributions have not been paid so they meet pre-requisites to go into retirement without ending up on the street."
Trade Union against thieves	Dnevni Avaz front page, pg 3 'Trade Union against thieves' – The President of the BiH Trade Unions Association, Edhem Biber, again raise the issue of so called internal shares gained through the pre-war privatizations process during the mandate of then Socialist Yugoslavia Prime Minister Ante Markovic. "Although they are being sold at slightly higher prices, a tendency is obvious of some directors to become major owners of the companies by selling the shares for a fourth of their nominal value," Biber said.
'Privatization's robbery of the workers'	Dnevni Avaz pg. 3 Commentary of the Day by <u>Enes Plecic</u> 'Privatization's robbery of the workers' – Plecic claims that the factories and the enterprises were first being purchased for worthless certificates (vouchers) and then sold for large sums of money. In this way, through games with accounting value, transferable certificates and internal shares many people have in the post war period become millionaires without investing a mark of their own capital. "A proposal to review privatization contracts in general seems therefore to be very justified," Plecic concludes.
Director of Federation Customs, Zelimir Rebac, on number of customs offices	Dnevni List (page 2, by <u>FENA</u> , "Reduction of number of customs offices only after adoption of single law") carries the Director of Federation Customs Administration, Zelimir Rebac, as saying that the issue of closing down of some customs offices can be considered only when a law on unified customs service of BiH has been adopted. DL notes there are 19 offices nowadays, 10 in the Federation and 9 in the RS. According to Rebac's information, the IC representatives will suggest four customs centre in BiH. In that context, Rebac says the entities will in due course decide about the number of customs offices, the number which will be higher than the one proposed by the IC. "I am sure that the number of 19 customs offices in BiH will be reduced by at least 10 offices", says Rebac.
HJPC decides on number of judges in RS basic, district courts	Glas Srpski, page 2, 'Number of judges reduced' – RS High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council passed decree on final number of judges at basic and district courts across RS. According to this decree, 61 judges are to be appointed at five district courts (five more than so far), while 154 judges in total (current 220 employees) will be elected and appointed to 18 basic courts.

Other issues

Two-day BiH Bishops' Conference session ended	Dnevni list (p 11, "Appeal for prayers for peace throughout the world", by <u>KTA</u>) and Vecernji list (p 11, "Bishops shocked with the attacks", by <u>Zoran Kresic</u>) carry that, following their 2-day session in Mostar, the BiH Bishops expressed their shock with the attack of the US and its allies on Iraq and they also expressed their solidarity with the innocent victims and concern for the consequences the attack may have on international relations. During the session, the Bishops considered the programme of the Pope's visit to Banja Luka, due the end of June, and the framework preparations programme. Members to the Coordination Board for the preparation of the Pope's visit were proposed from each Diocese. On behalf of the Croatian Bishops' Conference, the session was attended by the Archbishops of Split and Makarska region. DL adds that the BiH Bishops noted a need for continuous mutual communication and readiness for cooperation and encouraged all the Catholics in realization of fundamental human rights.
General collective contract in RS	Nezavisne Novine, 'Lowest salary in RS harmonised'; Glas Srpski, page 3, 'Text of contract agreed on' - Both dailies report on the announcement by Cedo Volas, President of the RS Syndicate Union, that Changes and Addenda to the General collective contract should be signed sometime next week. RS Government and the RS Syndicate Union agreed that the lowest salary in the RS should equate with 45% of the average salary.
Police raids in RS	Nezavisne Novine, page 12/also cover page, 'One gram of cocaine found in 84 raids' - On the night between Saturday to Sunday, the RS Interior Ministry personnel carried raids at 84 caterer and other objects across RS. 11 persons were arrested, while 30 persons were detained. During raids, police confiscated some weapons and ammunition, one gram of cocaine and 34 grams of marijuana. During the raid at the Restaurant "Klasnik", police arrested its owner Dragan Vujinovic, because two Moldavian female citizens without proper visas were found at this location. Vujinovic has been detained on the grounded suspicion of committing the criminal act of trafficking in people for prostitution.
Fatnicko Polje project	Glas Srpski, page 3, 'Fatnicko polje according to the plan' - Dragan Kalinic, RS Parliament Speaker, stated on Saturday in Bileca that project Fatnicko Polje is of major importance for the RS and commitment of the RS Parliament to complete this project according to the plan. Kalinic announced that during the course of next week,. He will meet the officials of the RS Elektroprivreda in Trebinje and discuss the issue of Fatnicko Polje.
Potocari	Nezavisne Novine, page 5, '7000 will attend the funeral' - On 31 March, 582 bodies of the victims from Srebrenica identified so far will be buried in Potocari, Srebrenica. According to the organisor of the service, around 7000 Srebrenica population from BiH and abroad will attend the funeral. According to Abdurahman Malkic, Srebrenica Mayor, further 400 victims will be buried until 11 July.
Brcko reconstruction projects	Nezavisne Novine, page 5, 'EURO 1.5 million for overhaul of housing fund' - European Commission has assigned the amount of EURO 1.5 million for the overhauling of the housing fund of the refugees from Brcko District, currently residing in Republic of Croatia. The project will be implemented via the non-governmental organisation "Mercy Corps". The project will include the rebuilding of 120 objects and repairs at 72 objects. According to the Head of Mercy Corps in Brcko, Nenad Miric, the aimed groups of this projects are returnees from Croatia, who want to return to their homes in Brcko community centres Markovic Polje, Gorica, Krepsic and Gredice. The second aimed group are Serbs, who have been occupying other people's property in Brcko.
FBiH Police problems	Nezavisne Novine, page 5, 'Authorities turn deaf ear to police appeal' - Zlatko Miletic, BiH Federation Police Director, has not still received any response from the federal and state institutions, in regard to the harmonisation of the salaries of all police officers in the state. According to Miletic, "I have not received any response. But I do know that my counterpart in the RS, Radomir Njegus, received a response from the RS Government, on whose content would not be correct to comment." According to Miletic, "some Serb politicians view the potential harmonisation of police salaries as an integral part of the attempted centralisation, which is not the case." He said that the EUPM Commissioner, Sven Frederiksen, expressed full support to their requests, because he is aware of the fact that there is no efficient police without proper salaries.

Director of SIPA Sredoje Novic on its tasks	<p>Dnevni List (page 4, by FENA, "Agency for Information and Protection is not a new intelligence service") carries the Director of SIPA, Sredoje Novic, as saying the SIPA has not a permanent address even after five months of its establishment. Talking to the Federation Radio, Novic said the SIPA has 45 square metres at its disposal occupied by 10 employees. He also says the agency has just issued vacancies for 20 posts adding the plan is to hire additional 130 people during this spring. "It is not an intelligence service at the State level, but a protector of establishment and security of BiH. The processed information will be primarily sent to Prosecutors' offices, which does not rule out a possibility that it (SIPA) informs the Council of Minister and BiH Parliament about some aspects of its work", says Novic. (Sarajevo dailies also report on the issue)</p>
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