

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 23/10/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Haris Silajdzic – a the chairman-designate of the Council of Ministers?; Ashdown – citizens will fail without reforms; Alibabic – Ashdown has not offered any evidence

Dnevni Avaz: Carla Del Ponte in Sarajevo – Karadzic and Karajisnik to be tried together?; Halilovic – S BiH does not want to enter into any coalitions; Alibabic's removal expected;

Nezavisne Novine: Carla Del Ponte dissatisfied with operations of Multinational forces in BiH: SFOR steer clear of Radovan Karadzic; Representatives of political parties meet in OHR: VAT divided parties from RS and BiH Federation; US Government delivers evidences to BiH authorities: "Orao" exported military equipment to Iraq through "Jugoimport"

Glas Srpski: Tax obligations of farmers: Low response to the call of Tax Administration; Banja Luka: As much money, that much work

Vecernji List: "Donald Hays, Principle Deputy High Representative announced: Acceptable authority is one that that implements reforms"

Dnevni List: Investigation against Nikola and Smuk goes under competence of Travnik Court

Slobodna Dalmacija: Munir Alibabic, removed Head of FOSS accuses Ashdown: OHR uses secret Police for political showdowns!

Nacional: The West discovers connections of FRY and RS with Iraq; Mladic does not think about surrendering to the Hague

Vecernje Novosti: Orao violates the resolution

Blic: Ashdown: There will be no political police; Bond and Hays: The RS Government needs to investigate Orao affair thoroughly; Harmonisation of petroleum's prices in BiH; Journalists seek protection

Post-elections coalition making

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that at yesterday's meeting in the OHR between PDHR **Donald Hays** and 15 political parties (or in closed meetings with Ashdown), there was no final agreement on the future authorities and/or coalitions. The daily writes that SDA and SDP were ready to offer Haris Silajdzic the post of the chairman (designate) of the Council of Ministers, in exchange for his party – S BiH – forming a coalition with one of them at the state level. On the other hand, the daily notes, S BiH offered to SDP the formation of a representative government, or the government of unity, which would also include the SDA and HDZ. *"SDP rejected this, saying that it will under no circumstances work on the formation of expert government with nationalist parties,"* SDP source told **Oslobodjenje**.

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2), leader of the Party for BiH Safet Halilovic said that the S BiH decided not to enter into coalition with any political party, *"as it is already in coalition with BiH."* "Formation of authority will be very difficult, so we are appealing to all political parties to actively engage in the formation of expert government...If parties fail to respond to this, I am afraid that participation of S BiH in authorities will be brought into question," said Halilovic, adding that in this case his party would go into constructive opposition.

Dnevni Avaz (p. 2) reports that **SDP's Zlatko Lagumdžija**, **PDP's Mladen Ivanic** and **SDS's Dragan Kalinic** had a joint lunch yesterday in Sarajevo restaurant La Famiglia. The contents of their talks was not revealed.

PDHR Donald Hays held a meeting yesterday with representatives of 15 political parties with the aim of creating three different working groups which will focus on reform of the Council of Ministers, the customs service and introduction of VAT. At a press conference held after the meeting, Hays said that BiH was facing a great opportunity which it could not miss at any cost. BHTV 1 quotes Hays as saying that the OHR cannot accept initiatives of some political parties that VAT is collected at the level of entities. *"The unanimous position of the*

International Community is that introduction of VAT at the entity level will not succeed.” (Dnevni Avaz p. 3, Oslobođenje p. 8, Nezavisne Novine, p. 2, Glas Srpski, p.4, Vecernji List front page, Dnevni List p.4, Blic p. 3, BHTV 1, FTV, RTRS)

Participants at the meeting made following comments (for **Nezavisne Novine**):

Sefik Dzaferovic, SDA Secretary General: *“SDA supports reform plan presented by the High Representative, but we believe that it is not enough – even bigger moves should be made. We believe that BiH should get a government immediately, with no rotation in chairmanship.”*

Nebojsa Radmanovic, SNSD Main Board: *“The purpose of this meeting was not to reach an agreement, the purpose was the exchange of views between political parties on the reforms suggested by the High Representative. Most of the parties support the reforms program, however, views are different when it comes to the expansion of the Council of Ministers and introduction of VAT on the state level. Representatives of RS political parties, including SNSD are of the view that VAT cannot be introduced on the BiH level but on the entities level.”*

Sahbaz Dzihanovic, member of S BiH Presidency: *“As far as S BiH is concerned, we support the plan of reforms suggested by the High Representative.”*

Petar Djokic, SP RS: *“There are good things in the proposed plan of reforms. Also, there are things that are unclear and these should be discussed.”*

Niko Lozancic, HDZ: *“The discussion was too wide and we cannot draw any concrete conclusions from it.”*

In an editorial in **Oslobođenje**, Senka Kurtovic said it is *“pathetic that BiH politicians need an international official to tell them what their priorities should be in the coming days.”*

Nezavisne Novine reports (p.5) that the **RS Vice-President, Dragan Cavic**, yesterday told Russian Ambassador to BiH Alexander Grischenko that it would be the best for the RS if the three strongest parties in the RS, that is, SDS, SNSD and PDP, formed a coalition at both entity and state level. Cavic said that this coalition should be acceptable for people and the IC.

Nacional (p. 11) reports that after the Election Commission announced the election results, the attention of political public in the RS is focused on who will make coalition with whom, in order to create a new executive authority. An additional tension was created thanks to the compensatory mandates, when some parties managed to enter into the parliament, although they did not win enough votes (3%). According to some political analysts, the Electoral Commission made such a decision because of the pressure from the international circles which are trying to remove nationalistic parties from the authority and create a coalition in the RS lead by the SNSD of Milorad Dodik. *“Such a policy of the international circles is lead by the USA which wants to bring Dodik into power in the RS, because he has promised a lot: joint customs, VAT on the state level, joint ministry of defence, finance and joint BiH government,”* a well-informed source told Nacional.

IC on elections results/new authorities

Vecernji List (page 15, by Robert Bubalo) notes that post-election statements given by **Paddy Ashdown**, the High Representative, and **Clifford Bond**, the American Ambassador in BiH, hint that there are a bit different stands of the USA and European Union on elections results. The daily notes *“the HR expected the reality and announced cooperation with national parties, while Bond stated directly that his country does not want to accept the results of the BiH elections”*. VL refers to Bond’s interview given to Nezavisne Novine yesterday and says that he does not hide that he is still trying to form the executive authority in BiH. VL says that, perhaps, this way of thinking hides an answer as to the question why we have compensatory mandates. *“It seems that the HR succeeded to locate the problem much better than the other international officials and that he is a bit aware that the national issue in BiH has not been resolved at all, although the HR has never stressed it in public.”* VL concludes that Bond’s intolerance towards rightists is a bit strange, since Republicans, that is, the rightists, are also in power in the USA. VL says that Ashdown, as a Liberal, expresses considerably softer stand towards the rightists.

Vjesnik (page 11) also comments on the interview that Bond gave to Nezavisne Novine and the article says that *“the process of establishment of the BiH authorities will be very complicated not only because of a dispute related*

to the distribution of compensatory mandates. The international Community, and the statement of the American Ambassador confirms it, will strongly try to limit the influence of the national parties, that received the biggest number of votes at the elections...The BiH citizens have shown a wish for changes at the last elections, but also confirmed that they do not like when somebody else instead of them decides what is good and what is wrong. .” **Vjesnik** says that a special problem is the fact that ‘moderate’ parties only partly deserve this name. (**Oslobodjenje** also carries excerpts of Bond’s interview)

OHR activities/decisions and reactions

Removal of Alibabic

The removed director of the Federation intelligence service (**FOSS**), **Munir Alibabic**, dismissed on Tuesday claims that he had allowed documents at his disposal to reach the media and be used for political showdowns, as argued by the **High Representative**. Alibabic explains in a press release that the only true fact is that one intelligence service document actually made its way to a weekly, “*Ljiljan*”, but he claims the file, forwarded only to legal users, was stolen. The document is a FOSS report citing the names of some 40 former senior Bosniak officials who are suspected of having embezzled wartime donations intended for the defence of Bosnia. Alibabic said that he was removed from office for political reasons, that is, because the OHR has been attempting “to turn people involved with organised crime, war crimes and terrorism into moderate democrats who will lead BiH towards division and isolation”. He notes that he opposed attempts by circles close to Ashdown to make Bosnia their own “intelligence colony”. In a separate press release sent to **ONASA** news agency, Alibabic said that his removal was politically motivated and added that the “OHR asked for his help in satanizing one moderate official who has been a victim of media terrorists wanting to install Ashdown’s favourites in power.” (**Oslobodjenje** p. 6, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 4 **Slobodna Dalmacija** front page, **Dnevni List** front page, **Vecernji List** page 5, **Jutarnji List** p. 7, **Nezavisne Novine**, p. 6)

In an interview with **Oslobodjenje** (front page and pp. 4-5), the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, said that he regrets very much for having to remove **Alibabic**, who, in his words, have been doing a great job in making the service more professional and fighting against organised crime and terrorism. “However, let me be clear. This country can make it only if we follow high standards, especially in services such as FOSS. During the pre-election campaign, it happened more than once that information leaked...I warned Alibabic twice about this. Unfortunately, he continued with it. His removal should be a clear signal to the future government that this service must be independent.”

Oslobodjenje (front page and p. 6 by Vedrana Zivak) reports that BiH Foreign Minister **Zlatko Lagumdžija** and Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** asked Paddy Ashdown on Tuesday to provide concrete evidence that **Munir Alibabic** is directly responsible for the leaks in the FOSS. According to the daily, during yesterday’s meeting, Lagumdžija tried to pressure Ashdown to explain “why would Alibabic leak information that is detrimental to him” or why is Alibabic being the only official who is penalised in this affair, when it is known that a number of political officials are also responsible for guarding the same information. **Oslobodjenje** also reports that Lagumdžija, irritated by Ashdown’s silence, asked the High Representative why hasn’t he removed the head of the RS Intelligence Service “who doesn’t know for years now where is Radovan Karadzic.”

In a statement for the same daily, editor in chief of **Slobodna Bosna** **Senad Avdic** said he was told by OHR Chief Spokesman **Julian Braithwaite** that the OHR did not remove Alibabic because of the FOSS information published in this weekly, as previously argued by **Dnevni Avaz**. “Braithwaite told me that this was not an OHR position,...however, he refused to publicly say this, which makes only stronger my belief that Avaz’s lies are very useful for the political goals of the High Representative. This makes me conclude that that all the lies, fabrications and offences published in Avaz have an actual purpose of preparing grounds for Ashdown’s uncontrollable, superficial, destructive and feeble-minded obstinacy.”

Avaz (p. 4) quotes an unnamed source of the international community who said that international organisations in BiH were not satisfied with Alibabic’s behaviour because he appeared to have privatised the FOSS and used it to settle his personal affairs. The same source said that Alibabic fabricated the information that unidentified persons are preparing an assassination of Vojislav Kostunica on the occasion of his first visit to Sarjevo, which caused a great deal of fuss among SFOR troops.

Dnevni Avaz (p. 4) notes that most officials agree that Alibabic’s removal was more than expected and long

overdue. *"That was expected and it is a great decision. This should be a clear signal to future authorities that intelligence service should not interfere with politics,"* said **Sacir Filandra**, the president of the Bosniak Cultural Association Preporod. Vice president of the SDP **Sejfudin Tokic** seconded this view, saying that he personally warned Alibabic about the leaks. **Kresimir Zubak**, the president of the NHI did not want to comment on Alibabic per se, but noted that he has always insisted on high standards and professional behaviour and strongly believed that members of the former Yugoslav intelligence service should not be leading the newly established one. Miro Lazovic of the SDP Presidency said that, although Alibabic is a *"professional that any intelligence service in the world would want to have on board,"* it is clear that most important standard should be to have a de-politicised service. **Gavrilo Grahovac** of the Party for BiH said that this is a natural consequence of Alibabic's actions. **Safik Dzaferovic** of **SDA** said that SDA's **Sulejman Tihic** already said that *"those who violated basic human rights should not be one of the leading officials in intelligence services."*

In an OP-Ed in **Dnevni Avaz**, Fadil Mandal welcomes Alibabic's removal, noting that this move of the High Representative put an end to the existence of police state in BiH.

Vecernji List carries an article on page 5 by Eldina Medunjanin entitled *"Media 'sources' remain in FOSS"*, in which the author says that the Alibabic removal will not change much in the behavior of FOSS employees because they cannot get rid of some old habits, namely they cannot stop feeding individuals with intelligence. Medunjanin goes on to say that some circles close to SDA claim that the HR did a great favor to the party with the removal because SDA did not hide that it was unhappy with a fact the FOSS was being run by something who held a position in a former authority. The author says that the HR's decision does not come as a surprise given the frequent leaks.

In the same paper, Zvonimir Jurcevic argues that Ashdown consciously or unconsciously neglected the fact that the current officials have been appointed along the line of political suitability and that the same was done before year 2000 when the Alliance came to power, when the Alliance too made a clean sweep of "professionals" regardless of their credits. Jurcevic says that Ashdown basically gave in to the public pressure by removing Alibabic in the late evening hours.

Prior to embarking the plane for the US, High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** said he will lobby for continued support of the West to progress in BiH. *"Although this is a routine trip in order to present a report to the Security Council, its main purpose is to get support for BiH among leading world countries. We have a serious problem, the world's focus is on Iraq and I want to make sure that BiH maintains the international political will as well as the international financial aid that needs to continue. That's the purpose of my trip, more than anything else".* (**Dnevni List** front page)

Economic Laws

In a statement for the press before leaving for the US, **Paddy Ashdown** rejected the criticism that his most recent decisions turned BiH into protectorate. *"This is not about the protectorate. I will never allow that this country to become a protectorate. Dayton would be an obstacle in this, even if I wanted it. This is about partnership with people in BiH, but politicians in BiH have to oblige themselves to reforms and highest standards and only if we do both these things, we can ensure that aid keeps coming to this country the way it has been arriving so far".* (**Dnevni List** front page)

In an editorial in **Vecernji List** (page 2), Dejan Jazvic argues that ,by enacting 12 economic laws, Ashdown clearly turned back on his idea about partnership between the IC and BiH authorities.

"This is nothing more, nothing less but a protectorate. What Wolfgang Petritsch did gradually, Ashdown did in one move by enacting a whole package of new laws. So, it is only the methodology that's changed. In a country where an international administrator can enact 12 laws in a day, one can talk about protectorate only. Ashdown, off course, is not ready to admit that, but facts are undeniable", says Jazvic.

In an editorial in **Oslobodjenje**, Amra Kebo writes that BiH indeed needs a High Representative such as **Paddy Ashdown**. *"He is our prime reformer. His moves are a clear indication that he will do what he has planned regardless of the price he must pay...Despite the cries of those sovereignty- and integrity-loving critics, we need precisely a protector,"* Kebo notes, adding that Ashdown has made several big mistakes, especially when he claims

that BiH does not have a national problem or when he bashes some of the most reputable journalists. "However, as long as he talks nonsense but works well, things are fine," concludes Kebo.

Affairs

Stjepan Pocrnja, secretary general of BiH Standing Committee on Military Matters (**SCMM**),

told **BHTV 1** that Washington had informed the body of illegal activities by Orao aviation institute and its Yugoslav partner Jugoimport. "They (the US) provided us with numerous photos, various materials ... and a contract confirming" illegal sales of weapons parts," Pocrnja said. If confirmed, the sale of weapons parts by Orao to Iraq in violation of UN Security Council's resolutions would "seriously damage the international reputation of BiH," Paddy Ashdown, the High Representative, told **BHTV 1** last night. "I hope the Bosnian people will understand that if that was the case, the most serious actions would need to be taken to protect the reputation of this country," he added. (also one of the leading items in **FTV** and **RTRS** prime time news)

AFP reports that PDHR **Donald Hays**, also confirmed earlier on Tuesday that an investigation by the SFOR had revealed that weapons parts sold by Orao ended up in Iraq via a third party. "The results so far indicate that there were items shipped (by the company) to a second party that ended up in Iraq," Hays told reporters, without elaborating. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 10, **Oslobodjenje** p. 2, **Nezavisne Novine**, p.3, **Glas Srpski**, p.2, **Dnevni List** p. 2, **Nacional** p. 4, **Vecernje Novosti** p. 15, **Blic** p. 17, **Washington Post**, **Associated Press**, **Reuters**)

The US on Tuesday demanded that authorities in **Yugoslavia and BiH** take action against two firms that have been allegedly selling military equipment to Iraq in violation of UN sanctions.

State Department spokesman **Richard Boucher** said the US expected both countries to stop the transfers, investigate the sales and prosecute those found responsible for them. "The US expects the relevant authorities in BiH and Yugoslavia to take the necessary steps to immediately halt any ongoing cooperation with Iraq, to conduct a thorough investigation and to hold accountable those responsible," he told reporters. (**AFP**, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 10)

War Crimes

Chief ICTY Prosecutor **Carla Del Ponte** visited Sarajevo yesterday and held talks with the **PDHR Donald Hays**. At a press conference held after the meeting, Del Ponte said that there is still a chance that Radovan Karadzic and Momcilo Krajisnic stand a trial in The Hague together. (**Dnevni Avaz** front page, **Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Nezavisne Novine**, p.7, **Glas Srpski**, p.3, **Vecernji List** p. 3, **Slobodna Dalmacija** p. 4, **Dnevni List** last page)

Miscellaneous

Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 19, by Zlatko Tulic) reports that, according to official data from the BiH Ministry of Foreign Trade, the Republic of Croatia is the second biggest foreign investor in BiH with 175 million KMs worth of direct investments in the country. Croatia's biggest investors are companies such as **Zagrebacka banka**, **Jamnica**, **Ledo** and **TLM**. "If one was to take into account investments made by the Croatian Telekom, Finvest and investments into the Mostar "Aluminij", it could be said that Croatia is the biggest foreign investor in BiH", said **Dunja Ljevak**, an economic councilor of the Croatian Embassy to BiH. "Republic of Croatia and BiH still have not sorted out property-legal relations and if the relations were regulated, both sides would profit from it and other companies would invest with more courage in BiH".

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- "Orao" from Bijeljina, through "Jugoimport" exports weapons to Iraq

- Carla del Ponte arrives in BiH
- Gerhard Schroeder Bundes Chancellor again
- New victims of sniper shooting in USA

FTV

- Commission for Missing Persons started unearthing the mass grave near Cajnice, and is finishing exhumation of the grave Kamenica
- Carla del Ponte, main prosecutor of the Hague Tribunal arrives in Sarajevo
- Aviation Institute Orao was selling military equipment without knowledge of SFOR

RTRS

- Ashdown in New York. He reports to Security Council on situation in BiH tomorrow.
- Donald Hays introduced international community's conditions to representatives of 15 political parties.
- RS achieved significant progress in return of refugees and displaced persons, says Stability Pact for Southeast Europe
- RS Government Bureau for Relations ICTY submitted indictments against three Croats to the Banja Luka ICTY office.
- Carla del Ponte arrived in Sarajevo. Meetings with international representatives in BiH only.