

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 6/9/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: RS arms Iraq

Dnevni Avaz: Alibabic pressed 14 charges (for involvement in international organized crime); Paddy Ashdown kept his promises

Jutarnje Novine: Donald Hays on the first 100 days of Paddy Ashdown's "rule" – Fight against politicians – criminals to follow; The BiH House of Peoples on the status of foreigners who were members of the BiH armed forces – the citizenships given after Dayton invalid

Dnevni List: Documents that discredit Mostar's 'Beg Goblenovic' – Safet Orucevic decided in privatization of Hotel 'Bristol'

Vecernji List: New discrimination – Herzegovinian mines were also excluded from Federation budget; New incident in Stolac – Monument of Father Ivan Music pulled down

Glas Srpski: 116 million KM laundered through RS banks

Nezavisne Novine: 116 million KM laundered through RS banks; Ashdown made a strategy for Europe

Blic: Petar Djokic – Safety in BiH in the agenda after the elections; Robertson – The Partnership is not like a beauty contest; 116 million KM "laundered" in the RS in the past six months; Request to use the name Foca; Jacques Klein – Revoke the Shengen visas for the citizens of BiH

Slobodna Bosna: Crime in Bugojno – fate of 26 missing Croats from Bugojno

BH DANI: Amor Masovic – It is too late for trying Karadzic

Oslobodjenje: RS arms Iraq

A BiH company has violated the UN Security Council's resolutions and, with regard to this, the US Administration has delivered its protest to the BiH Government. These days, the US Ambassador to BiH, **Clifford Bond**, has informed the BiH Foreign Minister, **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, that the US Government had received the information from the Middle East, according to which, a BiH company had "in a way" abused the Security Council's resolutions. Oslobodjenje (front page, p 3) learns that the RS-based company has been not only supplying Iraq with the military equipment but that it has also been providing a support by technical experts. The delivered equipment is intended for the Iraqi air forces. In regard to the information, Lagumdžija has requested the BiH Presidency to discuss the issue at its session scheduled for Friday. RS President **Mirko Sarovic** has been invited to participate in the discussion.

OHR/international community activities

At a press conference held in Sarajevo on Thursday on the occasion of the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown**'s first hundred days in the office, the Principal Deputy High representative, **Donald Hays**, assessed that not nationalism but crime, corruption and unemployment represented the biggest threat to the BiH security. *"This is an environment in which crime and corruption have no place. It is an environment in which honest citizens will no longer be penalised for being honest, in which ethnic division and nationalist grandstanding will no longer act as a blight on the good fortune of the people of BiH. In the last hundred days the High Representative has kept his promises and started to deliver on them,"* Hays emphasized. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 6, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, announced on the front page: "Paddy Ashdown kept his promises", **Jutarnje Novine**, p 7, announced on the front page, **Dnevni List**, p 2 – **ONASA** report, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 2)

Nezavisne Novine also carries reactions of the BiH House of Peoples Deputy Chairman, Ilija Simic, the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic and the BiH Council of Ministers Chairman, Dragan Mikerevic, who all said that the High Representative's first 100 days in office are very good.

Sead Numanovic wrote in the **Dnevni Avaz** Commentary of the Day that Paddy Ashdown had started his mandate fiercely and in a different way. *"Good intentions are not disputable and the results seem to be positive already. The rest is up to us,"* Numanovic emphasized. He wrote one another article (p 2) summing up Ashdown's results in the first hundred days including the 34 decisions made and several prominent official removed.

"The Office of the High Representative and the OSCE wish to express their concern that although revalidation commissions reviewing the legality of revalidation's of occupancy rights allocated between 1992 and 1998 have now been formally appointed throughout most of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they have by-and-large not yet begun to function properly. In order to facilitate the process of revalidation review, the OSCE and the Office of the High Representative therefore wish to set out very clearly their expectations of the authorities at all levels of government. The revalidation process is essential because there are still a significant number of illegally allocated unclaimed apartments that need to be made available as alternative accommodation. On 26 July 2002, Ambassador Donald Hays, the Office of the High Representative's Principal Deputy High Representative, and Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, the OSCE's Head of Mission, wrote both Entity Prime Ministers a letter emphasising the urgent issue of legal review of revalidation's," OSCE Spokesperson **Urdur Gunnarsdottir** told journalists in Sarajevo on Thursday. (**Fena**, **Oslobodjenje**, p 4, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 10, **Blic**, p 7, **Glas Srpski**, p 3, **Dnevni List**, p 5)

*"Special Representative of the Secretary General **Jaqes Paul Klein** called on the Schengen Countries to remove visas for Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens as part of a plan to integrate the Balkans into Europe. The initiative was made at a seminar address in Halki, Greece on Wednesday, where Mr. Klein is participating in an international conference on the European Union in the Balkans,"* UNMIBH Spokesperson **Kate Frieson** said at a press conference in Sarajevo on Thursday. According to Frieson, Mr. Klein said: *"The impact on the common citizen to have the ability to travel freely without visa restrictions, would be a strong of show of commitment by the Schengen Countries to integrate Bosnia and Herzegovina into Europe."* (**Oslobodjenje**, p 7, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 12, **ONASA**, **Dnevni List**, p 2, **Blic**, p 7, **Glas Srpski**, p 3)

Glas Srpski carries (p 3) a press statement, issued by the **"Ostanak"** Refugee Association from Doboj, which states that the **High Representative's decision to remove** former acting mayor of Doboj, **Mirko Stojcinovic**, from office, because of his alleged failure to help refugees and DPs to solve their problems, is just another proof that it is the IC representatives who represent the people in power in the RS and not its legally elected representatives. The paper quotes the PDP candidate for the RS NA from Doboj, Veselin Poljasevic, as saying that the statement, made by Mirko Stojcinovic, is inappropriate. Poljasevic also denied any connection between Stojcinovic's removal and the PDP. *"We have been pointing out for a long time that problems in Doboj can be solved in a way different from the one the SDS always follows and the removal of Stojcinovic is just a consequence of the SDS's approach",* said Poljasevic.

Srebrenica report

The **US Embassy to BiH** on Thursday urged the relevant authorities in the RS to withdraw the false **report on Srebrenica** which had been written by the RS office for cooperation with the Hague tribunal. The contents and the conclusion of this report are not correct. The truth is the monstrous crimes committed against civilians, including genocide, in Srebrenica in July 1995. This has been established by the Hague tribunal. An attempt by any office of the RS to claim otherwise is an attempt to manipulate and divide the public in this country, a statement by the US embassy says. (**BH Radio 1**, **Oslobodjenje**, p 2, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Blic**, p 10, **FRY Nacional**, p 11, **Glas Srpski**, p 5)

In an opening editorial in **Slobodna Bosna** titled "Serb fascism as collective irresponsibility", Senad Avdic strongly criticizes the report on Srebrenica published by the RS government's Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY. *"It is awful that such things can still happen in the country like BiH...What is truly terrible is that the International Community installed fascist government on half of Bosnia, whose authorities, completely logically, must be advised by the man [Sinisa Djordjevic] who wrote the book 'Why Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are not war criminals'..."* Avdic argues that the only reason Germany and France could play the first friendly football match - without incidents - already in 1951 is because the then international community did not allow the former nazis to

"participate at OBN or FERN station and discuss the ways of integrating the two parts of the split Germany," and because it did not "entrust the judicial reform to Hitler's pre-war lawyer", nor was Eichman given an opportunity to present the "rock bottom conditions below which the German people will no go when it comes to license plates on their cars..." "The Germans did not undergo a successful de-nazification because they critically evaluated their past, but because they were not offered a different choice...The crime over 200,000 people here has not been punished, so why would someone who claimed that the crime did not even happen be afraid?"

BH DANI calls "hypocritical" the report on Srebrenica issued by the RS government's Bureau for cooperation with the ICTY. *"If an influential politician in today's Germany would deny that Holocaust ever happened...he would be ostracized by domestic and international public and called a fascist pig, and in line with German laws, he would end up in prison. Unfortunately, today's Bosnia is far from democratic Germany. The one who would be called a fascist pig there is here the RS Prime Minister, 'a moderate leader of pro-European orientation.'"*

116 million KM laundered through commercial banks in RS

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas Srpski** (front page) and **Nezavisne Novine** (front page, p 3), quotes the **RS Assistant Finance Minister, Ostoja Travar**, as saying that the Money Laundering Department within the RS Finance Ministry discovered that 34 enterprises from both entities have carried out suspicious money transactions through commercial banks in the RS and that for the past six months the overall sum amounts to 116 million KM. Both papers give the list of the enterprises, which were involved in these money transactions, e.g., money laundering. According to Travar, the bank accounts of these enterprises are blocked. The RS Finance Ministry ordered the RS Tax Administration to check the books of the enterprises and also ordered the RS Police to check persons who requested the transactions. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 9, and **Dnevni Avaz**, p 5, **FRY Nacional**, p 11, **Blic**, p 7, also report on the issue)

Nezavisne Novine reports (p 2) that on June 8th, 3,5 million KM was laundered in the **Zepter Bank** in Banja Luka. **Nezavisne novine** reports that the RS Vice-President, Dragan Cavic, warned that RS banks are involved in money laundering and that banks do business with non-existing enterprises, which basically means that the enterprises do not pay taxes. According to the paper, the former RS finance minister, Milenko Vracar, was involved in this, whilst the RS Prime Minister, knew about it. According to the paper, Ivanic was told at a meeting with his friends, who are bankers, that banks in the RS are involved in money laundering and he reacted as he did not know anything about it. He promised he would do something about it, but according to the paper, he has never contacted his friends (bankers) again.

BiH-related news

At a session in Sarajevo on Thursday, the **BiH House of Peoples** supported the position of the House's Constitutional-Legal Commission, according to which all the citizenships given after the December 15, 1995 (Dayton Agreement's signing) were invalid. Only the SDA deputies were against such a proposal. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 7, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 4, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 6, announced on the front page)

Federation affairs: FOSS Director filed 14 criminal charges for involvement in international organized crime

According to **Dnevni Avaz** front page story (continued on p 9), the BiH Federation Intelligence-Security Service (FOSS) Director, **Munir Alibabic**, sent some ten days ago an official information to the Federation and Sarajevo Canton Prosecution Offices and Interior Ministries saying that there was a suspicion Hasan Cengic, Senad Sahimpasic, Bakir Alispahic, Fatih el-Hasanein, Fikret Abdic, Edhem Bicakcic, Alija Dfelimustafic, Nadzisa Tabakovic, Senahid Memic, Ahmed Music, Fadil Sunj, Muhamed Catic, Husein Zivalj and Dervis Djurdjevic had been involved in the international organized crime.

Dnevni List (page 2, by F.G.) reads that the Federation Government, in the capacity of an appeal body, considered appeals submitted by Federation Assistant Finance Minister for Treasury, **Krunoslav Jelic**, and Federation Assistant Finance Minister for Legal Issues, **Tihomir Curak**, to a first-degree decision in the AM Sped case. After listening to what Jelic, Curak and their legal representatives had to say, the Government held a session and decided that the case is to be returned to the first degree because of an incomplete factual report.

Dnevni List (front and page 5, by Zoran Vidic) claims that the papers has been receiving documents that deeply compromise a former Mayor of Mostar, **Safet Orucevic**, '*Mostar's Little Tudjman*', as Dnevni List claims that IC's anti-corruption teams call Orucevic in its files. The latest documents that DL received are pertaining to the privatisation of Mostar's Hotel "Bristol" and Orucevic's role in it. DL claims that it has received a letter from the buyers of the hotel (bought at public auction) in which the buyers claim/accuse Orucevic that he is personally responsible for the stoppage of the completion of the deal. The buyers claim that they have paid the amount of money stipulated in the contract and that the problem arose in the land registry because Hotel "Bristol" cannot be registered in the land registry. Namely, the hotel cannot be registered without a consent of the City Administration and in that context, DL learns from its sources that it is Safet Orucevic who is stopping the deal through **Edita Avdic**, the Head of City Administration's (of Mostar) Finance Department and the Chair of the Hotel "Bristol's" Steering Board. The papers also claims that she has been installed to both offices by Orucevic and that the current Mayor of Mostar, **Hamdija Jahic**, tried to remove her from the City Administration on several occasions over her behavior but in vain.

Dnevni List (page 3, by K.Z.) learns from an anonymous source within the Federation Ministry of Interior that a former Mayor of Mostar, **Safet Orucevic**, issued orders in the case of secret ammunition caches in Mostar. The same source claims that the further course of investigation will be conducted in direction of Orucevic's accountability although the public will be fed with information that the main culprits are **Hasan and Halid Cengic**. The source also claims that Orucevic has strong protectors at high levels that decide on the course of the investigation adding that it would not be enough to get Orucevic *off the hook*. The source adds that Orucevic's partners and superiors are aware that if Orucevic was to *go down* that he might draw many people along.

Vecernji List (page 3 and front page, by P. Crnogorac) carries that this year the Federation Government allocated 5,5 million Marks as Stimulus in Industry and Production, however, although according to the amendments of three Boards of the Federation Government Herzegovinian mines of bauxite were supposed to get their part of funds it has not happened because all the money was allocated to collieries. **Jeronim Maric** and **Marijan Grbesic**, Managers of the Posusje and Siroki Brijeg mines of bauxite, stated that '*during the session of the Federation Government, which was held at the end of the last year, it was decided to approve 500 000 Marks for each of Herzegovinan mines, however, former Minister of Finances Nikola Grabovac stopped it*'.

Dnevni List (page 7), **Vecernji List** (page 4 and front page) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 15) carry that monument of Father Ivan Music, erected in front of a Primary School in **Stolac** was pulled down on Thursday night by unidentified perpetrators. Father Music was a leader of Herzegovinian Croats in an uprising against Turks between 1875 and 1878. The article in SD stresses that the school is located near Careva Mosque, whose reconstruction has been underway. VL says that this incident has aggravated again a political situation and inter-ethnic relations in this city. VL says that some people connect this incident with the letter that the Stolac Medzlis of the Islamic Community sent to **Zeljko Obradovic**, the Head of the Stolac Municipality, which says that '*stones from the destroyed Crave mosque were built in the monument erected in honour of Ivan Music, a cehtnik's criminal*'. Also, some people connect this incident with the coming October elections.

Vecernji List (page 5) carries the Governor of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC), **Dragan Vrankic**, in which he talks about the financial crisis the HNC is faced with. Speaking about the reasons behind reduced cantonal budget, Vrankic stresses insufficient collection of public revenues and decisions by the Federation Government by which the Federation Government damaged cantonal budgets between 20 and 30% when compared to previous times. Governor Vrankic reminds that the HNC has adopted a unified budget and that the Federation Government promised to help the HNC budget. "*However, there is no help although the FBiH Government has so far helped all the other cantons (...) I got a negative answer from the PM Behmen that the (Federation) Government is not ready to help explaining it with facts that do not carry arguments*", says Vrankic adding that the main reason the Fed. Govt. is by-passing the HNC has political background to create negative tensions in the pre-election campaign that would in turn reflect on the outcome of the elections.

Dnevni List (page 2, by Anita Damjanovic) carries an editorial saying that it took more than six months to the

Government of the **Herzegovina-Neretva Canton** to co-ordinate a proposal of the Cantonal budget, which has been recently adopted by the Cantonal Assembly, however, it turned out that the budget is empty. The editorial also says that many strikes have been announced in the Canton, while the HNC Government discusses appointment of the Police Commissioner. According to Damjanovic, the Cantonal Ministers are not responsible because they are in such environment in which their hands are tied. *'This Army of officials, at numerous authority levels, cannot work against themselves, and, they cannot remove themselves either. They can be only removed by one man in the state. Naturally, if he wants to remove them. Somebody broadcast a cartoon in which officials outwit each others, and it seems, at the moments, that they are having fun, or it is all about a great conspiracy.'*

Pre-elections news/commentaries

In a two-page commentary on the upcoming elections in **BH DANI**, Ivan Lovrenovic argues that the voters will have two options on October 5: to vote for parties of ethnic restoration (nationalist parties) or for political parties which premise reform, i.e., moderate parties such as the SDP, the Party for BiH, the NHI, etc. While he concedes that the first option would be catastrophic, the second one would be difficult to achieve, mostly because of the ongoing media wars between the two strongest candidates in the Federation – SDP and S BiH. In addition, Lovrenovic argues that, this time around, the International Community and the HR Paddy Ashdown will not be in a position to interfere in any significant way in post-election coalition-making. *"All things aside, the hand which gives a vote to a party of restoration will make the worst mistake. With nationalist parties, all chances are lost,"* concludes Lovrenovic.

In a separate article in the same issue of **DANI**, Ermin Cengic writes about the political parties (nationalist parties) which ruled in BiH seven years ago. *"I offer this short summary of those people and parties in hope that it will refresh the memory of BiH people and help them not to make a wrong choice."*

Slobodna Dalmacija (page 17) carries the President of NSRZB and a candidate for BiH Presidency, **Mladen Ivankovic**, as commenting on accusations coming from other political parties that his party is spending too much money during the election campaign: *"I thank all the parties who noticed my actions (...) I would be happy if other parties and their candidates would do such actions using the their private money and not the budget money which was the case until now (...) I will continue to do it and share with people only what's mine".*

Same papers on page 16 under title *"No continuation of reforms without SDP"* reads that the SDP BiH held a session of its Presidency (chaired by **Zlatko Lagumdžija**) in Bihac, something that has not happened outside Sarajevo in the last two years. The session rendered the course of the election campaign so far and the SDP Presidency concluded that the continuation of necessary economic reforms directly depend on realization of SDP's election goals. Talking to the local citizenry in Cazin, Lagumdžija said that it was clear that SDP would win the elections in the Una-Sana Canton.

Slobodna Dalmacija (last page) reads that **Dragan Covic**, a candidate of Coalition HDZ- Croat Christian Democrats (HD) – Croat People's Union (HNZ) for the Croat member of BiH Presidency, presented the Coalition's economic-social program in Mostar on Tuesday. According to Covic, this 150-page document prepared by ten experts in the period between end 2001 and June 2002 is not prepared for election purposes but represents a completely feasible document that is not tied to the IC. The main goals of the document are completion of the privatization process, introduction of one tax system in whole BiH and introduction of VAT that would be set at 20% by end 2003. According to SD, the program is available on the Internet at www.dragancovic.com (**NB:** the site is in construction at the moment).

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Thursday, 1900)

- More than 116 millions of suspicious transactions made through the banks in BiH in the last 6 months
- Government of FBiH proposed constitutional changes in order to ensure equality of all three

constitutional people

- Negotiations in Brcko on international agreement on Sava

FTV 1 (1930)

- Case if abandoned children from Sarajevo found in Zenica; children victims of dispute among parents
- In the last 6 months, through the banks in RS, suspicious money transactions have been made in the amount higher than 116 millions marks
- Serb representatives in the House of People of the state Parliament refused to give their opinion on criminal law of BiH in after the second reading

RTRS (1930)

- 116 million KM laundered during first six months – Education Ministry and Srpske Poste Company broke the law on Public Purchase
- Klein calls for removal of Schengen visas for BiH citizens