

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 4/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: UN mandate still uncertain

Jutarnje Novine: Solana – Ashdown: EU ready to take over the police mission in BiH

Dnevni Avaz: Government discussing about Financial Police

Vecernji List: Candidates for October elections in BiH, Ashdown accuses UN

Dnevni List: Misuse of money earmarked for education in Mostar

Nezavisne Novine: Ashdown-Solana – EU police to arrive on October 1?

Glas Srpski: Prnjavor water supply polluted with chemical substances

Blic: Zivko Radisic: Bosnia still needs the support of the world; Ivanic took over the finances; SFOR started distributing pamphlets

UN mission's mandate in BiH

UN Security Council decided early this morning to keep alive the UN mission in BiH after Washington backed away from a threat to close it down unless the SC provided a blank immunity to US peacekeepers from the new International Criminal Court. According to news agencies, Washington joined other 14 Council members in extending the UN mandate in BiH through July 15. *"No one has really slammed the door shut on our proposal, and it was on that basis that we came to the conclusion that we should allow the opportunity for these discussions to continue next week,"* the US ambassador to the UN, **John Negroponte**, said this morning. (**The New York Times, Washington Post, Guardian, The Times, BBC, Reuters, AFP**)

BiH Foreign Ministry welcomed the UN Security Council's decision to extend its peacekeeping mission in BiH for next 12 days and said it hoped it would lead to the preparation of a subsequent international police mission in the country. *"This decision is a positive step in solving disputes and it also postpones the unnecessary halt of planned police activities. These 12 days will be used for intensified preparations for the follow-up mission, possibly the EU one,"* Foreign Ministry said in a statement today carries by all news agencies.

During his meeting in Brussels with the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, **Javier Solana**, the High Representative in BiH, **Paddy Ashdown**, said that the possible veto on renewing the UN peacekeeping mission would be a set back but not a disaster for the country. *"It would be serious but not catastrophic if these talks fail. It will make a tough job tougher. It will put success a little farther away and I would rather that did not happen,"* Ashdown told reporters after the meeting. Commenting on the possibility of EU taking over the UN mission in BiH, Ashdown said that it is very important that there is no gap in the mandate between the end of the UN missions and the start of the EU mission, *"that there is no legal daylight"*. **Solana** said that in the case of the negative outcome, the EU would do "its utmost" to avoid leaving a power vacuum in BiH, and would bring forward the date for the sending of European police force. *"I think we are in a position to accelerate the procedures if necessary, however we hope that it will not be necessary and that the mission will continue as normal."*

(Front pages in **Jutarnje Novine, Nezavisne Novine, Vecernji List, SENSE** report – first item on **BHTV 1** and **FTV. Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Dnevni List** p. 4, **Vjesnik** p. 11, **Slobodna Dalmacija** p. 7, **BBC, Reuters, AFP, The Independent, Guardian**)

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2), OHR Chief Spokesman, **Julian Braithwaite**, said that the people in BiH should not be concerned about the ongoing dispute between the US and Europe over the ICC. *"It is clear that the*

EU will be in the Balkans forever and that the destiny of the Balkans is in the European integration processes. The meetings Ashdown had in Brussels clearly demonstrated the commitment of the EU to help BiH and keep the peacekeeping mission going.” (In the same article, Sead Numanovic writes about the outcome of the series of meetings between Ashdown and senior British officials. According to **Braithwaite**, who is quoted in the piece, Great Britain supported priorities set by the High Representative and what has been accomplished in the past month. *“They believe this was a very strong start by the High Representative and that is why they are supporting him,”* Braithwaite said.)

BiH Foreign Minister, **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, seconded the view of the High Representative that the possible withdrawal of US from the peacekeeping mission in BiH would be difficult, but not catastrophic. In an interview with **FENA** news agency, Lagumdžija said that whatever the final decision of the UN Security Council may be, *“it will not put in peril the stability in BiH.”* *“BiH authorities are ready to face every decision of the UN Security Council and adequately respond to all challenges stemming from it...The new situation can in no way bring in question the overall positive developments in the country. On the contrary, this situation should be an impetus for BiH authorities to assume responsibly and take the fate of their country and its citizens in their hands.”* (**Oslobodjenje**, p. 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2 carry FENA's interview)

Vecernji list (front page) notes that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, is cautious not to accuse the US, and in his editorial published in **The Times**, he is, *“in an opportunistic way, accusing UN diplomats for the current crisis.”* According to the daily, the British PM, **Tony Blair**, with Ashdown in BiH, wanted to become the main European player in the Balkans, but Washington still has the crucial influence in BiH.

In an editorial in **Oslobodjenje**, Zija Dizdarevic argues that despite the outcome of the present crisis, BiH should be ready to see the US off by 2005 and move decisively towards European integration processes. *“Only the full European integration of BiH could de-class the powers of political atavism against BiH and within BiH. For the speedy incorporation of BiH into EU we need a strategic and all-European plan. BiH should be regarded as a special case. Europe has a part of the blame for this as well.”*

According to a **poll** conducted by **Dnevni Avaz**, 74% of BiH citizens are concerned about the possible withdrawal of US personnel from the peacekeeping mission in BiH and would not like this to happen. Only 11% said it would be better if the US left, while 15% had no opinion on the matter. The telephone poll was conducted among 300 individuals in Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka using a method of random sampling.

State and Entity-level developments

Oslobodjenje (p. 4) reports that all customs checks points across BiH will, by the end of the month, be brought together in a common computerized system of customs control – the ASYCUD. *“This system should accelerate the customs control by at least three time and significantly increase efficiency of our work,”* said Zelkjo Rebac, the Federation Customs Administration director.

BiH Parliament's House of Representatives adopted yesterday in an urgent procedure and without amendments the nine **laws previously imposed by the High Representative**. The Law on BiH Human Rights Ombudsman, the BiH Civil Service Law, the Law on Changes and Amendments to the BiH Election Law and the Law on Administrative taxes are only some of the laws adopted during Wednesday's session. (All electronic media report prominently, **Oslobodjenje** p. 8, **Dnevni Avaz** p.9)

In a statement for the press, the **RS Government** issues the Opinion proclaiming the amendments to the RS Constitution relating to the judiciary passed by the former High Representative as contrary to the Dayton Peace Agreement and the RS Constitution itself. *“Passing of the mentioned temporary measures represents changing of the constitutional provisions of one entity's Constitution and the High Representative is not authorized to do this.”* (**Glas Srpski** p. 3, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 5, **Blic**, p.3)

Vecernji List (f.p. and p. 2) and **Oslobodjenje** carry some of the findings of the poll presented by the UN Development Program in BiH. According to reports, rebuilding of BiH as a multiethnic state is being undermined by the widespread perception among significant number of Croats and Serbs that their future is connected with the secession from BiH. Among other things, the poll indicates that the Bosniak electorate is still divided among three leading parties, while national homogenization has been strong among Serbs and Croats. In addition, the report

shows that more than one third of Croats support the establishment of the third entity in BiH, while the same percent of residents in the RS supports the agglutination of this BiH entity with the FRY.

Pre-election activities

Dnevni List (p. 3) accuses **Ante Jelavic**, **Dragan Covic** and other senior HDZ members for illegal cutting of wood in Canton 10. According to the daily, in May 1999, Jelavic recommended to the public company *Hercegbosanske sume* from Kupres, to write off the debt of a private company *Finvest* from Croatia that was privileged in purchasing of wood. Dnevni List argues that the Federation Ministry of Finances is conducting the investigation and that Federation and Canton budgets were damaged for at least 3 million KM.

In an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 5), **Dragan Covic**, the HDZ BiH candidate for the BiH Presidency, said that his candidacy was arranged by the party leadership a while ago. Covic, however, denied discussing the issue with **Ante Jelavic** and ruled out the possibility that he will try to take over the office of the HDZ BiH President.

Social/Political/Financial Affairs

Dnevni Avaz (front page) reports that, unexpectedly, the Federation government will discuss today the proposal of the former Federation Finance Minister, **Nikola Grabovac**, to remove the Chief Inspector of the Federation Financial Police, Zufer Dervisevic, and his deputy, Miroslav Vidovic. According to the daily, the discussion was vehemently demanded by the Federation Defense Minister, Mijo Anic (who is also Grabovac's party colleague from NHI). Avaz claims, however, that the BiH Foreign Minister and the SDP leader, Zlatko Lagumdžija, is behind this move. *"After the failed attempts to gain control over the Cantonal Prosecutor's office in Sarajevo, Lagumdžija wants to strengthen his power over the Financial Police. As the operation is very delicate, because of the international support to Vidovic and Dervisevic, the move is being conducted behind the curtains called the NHI,"* argues Adi Hadžiarapovic in his piece in **Avaz**.

Dnevni List (p. 2), **Vecernji List** (p. 4) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p. 18) quote OHR Mostar spokesperson **Avis Benes** as confirming that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, received a letter sent by 7 Croat officials from cantons 2, 6, 7, 8 and 10 in which the officials ask him to initiate the procedure against the Federation Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources Management and Forestry, **Behija Hadžihajdarevic**. According to the letter, Hadžihajdarevic is suspected of abuse of office and national discrimination. *"The High Representative replied to the officials calling the issue very important and decided to submit the letter to the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen."* Benes said that Ashdown expects the Prime Minister to investigate the allegations in the coming week. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Dnevni avaz** p. 8 also carry this item)

Dnevni List (f.p. and p.3), **Vecernji List** (f.p. and p. 4) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p. 17) report extensively on the Leutar case. All the dailies argue that the controversial case will most likely be untangled the moment when **Merim Galijatovic**, a protected witness in the case, takes the stand. The papers also reiterate their previous reports on the alleged involvement of High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** into the case, adding that Ashdown has a great interest in the said case. In that context Dnevni List argues that Ashdown did not need much time to realize that the process is in fact a police-political-judicial conspiracy of circles in Sarajevo whilst Slobodna Dalmacija says that Ashdown promised at a forum at Siroki Brijeg that he would personally get involved in this.

Economy

In his piece for the **BBC News**, Mike Sergeant argues that investing in BiH is still very risky. He notes several examples of generally successful companies, such as Coca Cola and Norfish, whose business in BiH is *fraught with numerous problems because of the unfriendly business culture and "institutional paralysis" in the country.* *"Everyone agrees that that the economy needs to be weaned off its addiction to aid and international hand-outs...Soon Bosnia will have to find its own way, without the*

guiding hand of the International Community. Success depends on persuading its young talent to stay and play part in rebuilding the economy."

Srebrenica commemoration

Oslobodjenje (p. 4) reports that commemoration days for Srebrenica tragedy will begin on July 5 and will last for the next eight days – until July 13. According to Sefket Hafizovic, the president of the Organization board of the manifestation, the central event will be held on July 11 in Potocari, when the models of *nisans* (Muslim tombstones) to be used in the future Memorial Center will be promoted. "We are expecting some 5,000 people to participate in the ceremony. I expect the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and other International Community officials to be there as well," Hafizovic told the press on Wednesday. (**FTV's Federation Today** show also reported on the item)

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Ashdown -Solana: EU preparing for taking over the role of UN police mission in BiH
- Croatian Prime Minister Ivica Racan confirms he will resign
- BiH Council of Ministers, Reiffeisen Bank and Direction of CIPS project sign the Agreement on opening credentials for financing the first phase of the CIPS project
- BiH Parliament's House of Representatives passes urgently nine laws imposed by the High Representative

FTV

- Final decision on the continuation of the UN mission in BiH still unknown
- Ashdown-Solana: EU is the most important factor of stability in the Balkans
- BiH and Turkey sign trade agreements on customs cooperation
- BiH Parliament's House of Representatives passes urgently nine laws imposed by the High Representative

RTRS

- RS National Assembly adopts proposed law on amendments and addenda to the Law on Interior Affairs
- RS government says the amendments imposed by the former High Representative to the law on appointment of judicial officials are not in line with the RS constitution
- SFOR throwing flyers on Karadic over towns in eastern BiH
- Javier Solana: EU ready to take over from the UN