

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 2/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Dnevni Avaz: Clifford Bond – American veto is not against BiH

Oslobodjenje: Alija Izetbegovic – Silajdzic has charisma, but time of leaders in BiH is over; Ashdown with Srebrenica Mothers

Jutarnje Novine: Clifford Bond – American veto is not against BiH, Ashdown concerned about situation

Glas Srpski: Josip Manolic testified at trial to Gaspic 5: The state covered crimes; Banja Luka: No rodent fever

Nezavisne Novine: Ambassadors of 19 NATO countries confirmed: SFOR stays in BiH; Tribunal interested in Trebinje: Vucurevic not afraid of an arrest; The Hague: Petritsch to testify against Milosevic

Vecernji List: Fear for Peace in BiH

Dnevni List: Muderris: I am not a bloodied hand imam!

US vetoes renewal of UN mission in BiH

At a session held in Brussels on Monday, the NATO's North Atlantic Council concluded that SFOR troops will remain in BiH despite the US threat to pull out of peacekeeping unless its personnel is exempted from prosecution by the new ICC. *"SFOR troops will remain deployed in Bosnia. No delegation, including the US, has indicated desire to leave SFOR...SFOR will continue its work,"* said **Yves Brodeur**, NATO spokesman. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p. 2, **Oslobodjenje**, p. 3, **Jutarnje Novine**, f.p., **Dnevni List**, p. 6, **BHTV 1**, **FTV**, **RTRS**, first items, plus all international media)

At a press conference held yesterday in Sarajevo, the US ambassador to BiH, **Clifford Bond**, said that the US veto on renewal of the UN peacekeeping mission in BiH is not against BiH. *"I understand that there is concern about the veto the US used in the UN Security Council. I want to assure people in BiH that this veto is not directed against them or against peace efforts here,"* Bond said, adding that the move was directly linked with the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court. *"Our strategic commitment towards to Balkans is still strong. The US troops will stay in BiH, and the SFOR mandate is based on the Dayton Peace Agreement and PIC (Peace Implementation Council) decisions. SFOR is responsible to NATO and General John Sylverster will continue providing for a safe environment in BiH...What ever the final outcome of the present negotiations is, it will not affect SFOR, not the OHR..."* (**Dnevni Avaz**, f.p., **Vecernji List** f. p., **Nezavisne Novine**, f.p., **Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Jutarnje Novine** f.p., **Dnevni List** p. 5, **Slobodna Dalmacija**, p. 7, **BHTV**, **FTV** in the first block of news. **Jutarnje Novine** and **Vjesnik** carry reports about US-UN clash under similar headlines "US against the UN and rest of the world.")

US Secretary of State, **Colin Powell**, called late last night the BiH Foreign Minister, **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, in order to discuss the situation ensuing from the failure to fully renew the UN mission's mandate in BiH. *"We will not allow that work we started here remain unfinished,"* said Powell, according to the Ministry's statement for the press carried by all news agencies. *"We are aware of the importance of US presence in BiH and that is why we are encouraged by the decision of the US Administration to continue helping the development of the BiH state,"* said Minister Lagumdžija.

In a short telephone conversation with the US Secretary of State, **Colin Powell**, the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, expressed his concern at the possibility that the mandate of the UN Mission to BiH would not be extended on July 3. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p. 2, **Oslobodjenje**, p. 3, **Jutarnje Novine** f.p., **Nezavisne Novine**, p. 3, **BHTV 1**, **FTV**, first block of news, **AFP**, **Reuters**, **Guardian**, **The Times** –"Ashdown calls on Powell to drop veto"and **Daily Telegraph** extensively quote OHR press release and Julian Braithwaite: *"Ashdown told General Powell that he hoped the US Administration would not do anything that would place at risk the huge progress towards peace and stability that Bosnia has achieved since the war."*).

In an exclusive Op-Ed piece for **The New York Times**, the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, warns that the failure to fully renew the mandate of the UN police mission in BiH may have negative effects on peace-building efforts in BiH and the normalization of situation in the country. *"[The UN mission in BiH] is a vital part of bringing law and order back to a war-torn country and giving refugees the confidence to return to the houses they were forced out of by paramilitary thugs."* *"A successful and prosperous country, increasingly integrated into Europe: That is the future for BiH. But it will only arrive if we in the International Community seed the job through."*

Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in BiH, **Jacques Paul Klein**, warned on Monday that scrapping the UN mission in BiH would weaken peace efforts and send the wrong signal to nationalists who remain a force to be reckoned in the Balkans. *"If on Wednesday we do not have a mandate then we close the mission...it undermines the overall work of the International Community on peace building in BiH. What message do you send to the nationalists...with an unexpected and early departure of this mission?"* asked Klein. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **AFP, Reuters** quote Klein).

In an interview with **French La Chaine Info TV**, the EU representative for the Common and Security Policy, **Javier Solana**, said that Europe is under obligation to continue the police mission in BiH if a compromise with the US over the jurisdiction of the new ICC cannot be found by July 3. *"We have already decided to take over the police mission in BiH from January 1, but I think, I hope, that if need be we shall be able to accelerate the process a little bit and take charge a little earlier. In any case, I think that the European cannot abandon Bosnia at this moment. So we are doing everything we can to maintain the situation and to maintain the mission."*

"In consultations with the Foreign Ministry, we have concluded that this[veto on renewal of UN police mission in BiH] is a serious decision demanding rational moves and sensible conduct, but it will not push BiH into an emergency situation," **Beriz Belkic**, member of the BiH Presidency told reporters yesterday in Sarajevo. *"It is important to reassure the citizens that these are not developments which could bring into question certain processes and seriously threaten the country's stability and the safety of its citizens."* (**Dnevni Avaz**, p. 3, **Oslobodjenje**, p. 3, **FTV** carry the item)

The RS President, **Mirko Sarovic**, stated for **Glas Srpski** (p.3) that the situation related to the extension of the UN mandate is getting complicated but that, for the time being, it is not alarming. *"I am convinced that the peace process and establishment of self-sustainable BiH, with assistance of various international organizations, will in no way be jeopardized."* On the same page, Glas Srpski carries a statement of the RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, who said that even if the UN Mission withdraws from BiH, security situation will not be endangered as local political forces are sufficient to preserve security. Ivanic said that he is not too concerned over the whole affair but that he would prefer SFOR to remain in the same composition, with US soldiers.

In an editorial in **Dnevni Avaz**, Sead Numanovic writes about the clash between the US and the United Nations and argues that this episode has not only demonstrated the realist nature of international relations but also BiH dependency on the International Community, the UN in particular. Mirko Sagolj points out to the same in his editorial in **Oslobodjenje**.

Justin Huggler in **The Independent** writes that *"one positive effect on the whole row could be a wake-up call to Bosnians that it is time to take charge of their own destiny. Six and a half years after the end of the war, the country is going nowhere. Its economy is virtually non-existent, and an international presence is still needed to keep the three communities from each other's throats."*

In a commentary, **Washington Post** ("On the Backs on Bosnians") condemns the US insistence to be excluded from prosecution of the new ICC and argues that this is only a back-door strategy to get the country out of the peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and world-wide. Richard Beeston in **The Times** seconds this opinion, quoting a British diplomat: *"For some ideologues opposed to the ICC and UN peacekeeping operations, this is a win-win situation, Either the ICC is smashed or peacekeeping is wrecked. They would be happy with either outcome."*

While the US dailies are somewhat more reserved about the issue, British papers (front page story in nearly all int'l media) almost unanimously label the behavior of the US "arrogant and irresponsible."

IC activities in BiH

At Monday's press conference in Sarajevo, **Johannes Dahl-Hansen**, the ambassador of Denmark, the country presiding over the EU in the next mandate, said that EU priorities in BiH have already been outlined: moving BiH closer to integration processes, ensuring peace and stability, fight against terrorism and inter-state crime. *"Our priorities are the priorities of the High Representative. More justice, more jobs. Naturally, we include here the creation of conditions for refugee return."* (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **BHTV 1, FTV**)

In his talks with representatives of the Mothers of Srebrenica association, the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, expressed his support for their activities and informed them about the latest developments in construction of the Memorial Center in Potocari. *"The finale deadline for construction is the Fall of this year. I issued the deadline and I will do my best to ensure that they are respected,"* said Ashdown. "This memorial is something most important for the families Srebrenica victims," said **Munira Subasic** of the Association and stressed that the issue which obstructs the refugee return to Srebrenica is the fact that numerous war criminals are still at large. *"Living together is practice, not ideology. How can we now go back and live with those who slaughtered our families?,"* asked Subasic. (front page of **Oslobodjenje**). **Oslobodjenje** (p. 7) also reports that the organizers of the Donors Conference for Srebrenica have collected 1,3 million KM which will be used to ensure sustainable return to this town.

At an anti-poverty seminar held on Monday in Sarajevo, the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, said that the current levels of economic growth are too small to make significant inroads on poverty. "In addition, the existing legislation hinders the ability of companies to create new jobs – the principal means by which tens of thousands of BiH citizens will break out of the poverty trap. Poverty affects you even if you are not poor. It creates instability and instability in BiH will end any prospect of economic recovery," said Ashdown in his address before 120 students, workers and the unemployed youth between 18 and 22. (reported by all news agencies, very prominently by the **RTRS** prime time news, last item in domestic block of news at **BHTV 1** and **FTV, Dnevni Avaz**, p. 9.)

Glas Srpski (p. 5) reports on High Representative's first visit to Srebrenica. The author, **K. Cirkovic**, quotes **Ashdown** as saying that an investigation will be carried out with regards to misuse of donor's funds allocated for Srebrenica. The report follows Ashdown's visit in detail and the author concludes: *"It is not known whether Ashdown visited any of 80 Serb villages in Srebrenica municipality, but it is known that none of those villages were reconstructed from the funds of international donor's organizations. The time will show why the first visit of Paddy Ashdown to Srebrenica was organized on St. Vitus Day – Serbs believe that everything comes out and that everything can be seen on that day."*

Banja Luka based **Reporter** magazine carries an interview with the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown** (p. 13, 14, 15, 16). Ashdown told Reporter's journalist **Igor Gajic** that he came to BiH because he believes in it and stressed that he does not think he would be an unsuccessful High Representative if **Radovan Karadzic** and **Ratko Mladic** do not end up in The Hague during his mandate. *"There is no peace without justice and if they are transferred to The Hague, that would be justice. As far as I am concerned, they [Karadzic and Mladic] cannot stop us, they can only slow us down."* **Srna** and **Fena** news agencies carry excerpts from the interview.

Dnevni List (p. 12) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p. 18) carry reports on the SDHR **Matthias Sonn** paying a farewell visit to Mostar where he held talks with the Mostar Mayor and Deputy Mayor **Hamdija Jahic** and **Neven Tomic** respectively. Talking to the journalists after the meeting, Ambassador Sonn said that a lot of things have been accomplished in Mostar stressing that the City Administration of Mostar is leading the city forward in the also adding that a lot more needs to be done to create a joint Mostar identity. (**Oslobodjenje** also carries report)

In a column published in **The Washington Post** today, the former High Representative, **Wolfgang Petritsch**, argues that the International Community should not work on devising an exit strategy for leaving BiH, but rather 'stick' to a more open-ended commitment to this country. *"Rather than simply being an exit strategy, our approach has been to develop an entry strategy : BiH's entry into Europe."*

Social affairs/problems

The famous Sarajevo mall "**Sarajka**" was finally sold on Monday after four years of failed attempts to privatize this once largest shopping center in the city. According to media, the new owner is Bosnia Bank International which paid 10 million KM for the building promising to invest additional ten million

to reconstruct the building. The agreement signed yesterday between the two parties also stipulated that Sarajka workers, who will be laid off, will receive all late salaries as well as the severance pay. (FTV, Dnevni Avaz, p. 10, Oslobođenje p, 9.)

Mirmes Isakovic, the president of the Workers Union in Zenica-Doboj Canton, asked on Monday the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, to visit this Canton in the near future in order to see the difficult economic and social position of workers living in this region. (Oslobođenje, 8)

Following the reports that the HPT Mostar failed to divide itself into the Postal services and Telecommunication Company, **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p. 14, by Zlatko Tulic) reads that the statements of the Federation Minister of Traffic and Communication **Besim Mehmedic (SBIH)** that the key to the problem is that the HT (Croatian Telecommunications) returns its share in HPT Mostar to BiH authorities, hint that the SBIH will use the case for its dirty election campaign games. The author concludes the piece saying that despite Mehmedic's announcement that the problem might be addressed at the BiH-Croatia Interstate Council meetings, things could likely be solved by the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown**.

SFOR and BiH authorities sign agreement on Sarajevo airport

Vecernji List (p. 2) reads that BiH authorities and representatives of SFOR have signed an agreement on transfer of authorities (from SFOR to BiH authorities) over the Sarajevo airport. The transfer of authority will have three gradual phases, first phase being the transfer of security, rescue, fire fighting and medical aid services/tasks, phase two includes the reduction of SFOR presence at the airport and the third final phase includes that BiH civil authorities take over the whole aspects of operations at BiH's biggest airport. VL reads that SFOR announced transfer of authorities at other BiH airports. (Dnevni Avaz and Oslobođenje also report on this item)

BiH, FRY, Croatia Summit

The chairman of the BiH Presidency, **Beriz Belkic**, said that the upcoming summit of the presidents from BiH, Croatia and the FRY will not bring about any spectacular results. *"We expect that Sarajevo will relay a clear message that all options about re-drawing the borders in the Balkans are forever dead."* Oslobođenje reports that BiH ambassadors to the FRY and Croatia say that the two country's presidents on their part expect that three neighboring countries agree on a common strategy for refugee return and a common presence on European markets. (Oslobođenje, p. 9)

Islamic leader addresses pilgrims in a controversial speech

Vecernji List (p. 3, by Robert Bubalo & Faruk Vele) carries an article about the controversial speech of *naibu-reis* (Deputy Head of Islamic Community in BiH) **Ismet Spahic** held before thousands of Muslims in Ajvatovica near Donji Vakuf (biggest Muslim shrine in Europe). The daily claims that Sarajevo-based media did not report on Spahic's words that *"Bosniaks stand in queues to report where are the weapons, leaving their people barehanded and unprotected from aggressor who is still here"*. Commenting on the recent removal of Head of Donji Vakuf municipality **Kemal Terzic**, Spahic said: *"Those who terrorise us and attack returnees are not a problem, and Kemals who worship are a problem. Because, it seems that only Bosniaks are thieves and corrupted, they are the only ones that are not good. Is there anyone else immoral in BiH except for Bosniaks"*, asked Spahic. Speaking about the upcoming elections Spahic said that *"a Bosniak believer should be able to recognise flowers that are capable of bringing happiness, that have love. Open your eyes and don't vote for changes"*, said Spahic.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- US-UN dispute over the ICC
- NATO North Atlantic Council decides SFOR stays in BiH
- Bond – US not against BiH

FTV

- ICC starts operating
- NATO North Atlantic Council decides SFOR stays in BiH
- Ashdown tell Powel he is concerned about the possibility of UN mandate not being renewed
- Bond – US veto not against BiH

RTRS

- NATO North Atlantic Council decides SFOR stays in BiH
- ICC starts operating
- Srebrenica Donors' Conference secures 2 million KM
- Ashdown at antipoverty conference in Sarajevo