

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 1/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Tobacco Factory Sarajevo postpones session of its Assembly

Dnevni Avaz: USA vetoes renewal of US mandate in BiH – peace efforts endangered

Jutarnje Novine: Brazil wins the World Cup

Dnevni List: Affair in Soko Factory – Will Federation government interfere?

Vecernji List: Ashdown taking powers away from the entities; Education problems in Gornji Vakuf

Nezavine Novine: Brazil wins the World Cup finals

Blic: Mladen Ivanic- It is clear as to who governs the RS authorities

Glas Srpski: Basic court decision in Kotorsko case: land plots and houses lost; Austria: 13 billion shillings disappeared

US vetoes renewal of US mission in BiH, but grants extra 72 hours

All international media (**The New York Times, The Washington Post, Daily Telegraph, The Times, Guardian, Independent**) report this morning on their front pages that the UN Security Council has voted unanimously to extend the UN mission in BiH for 72 hours to continue urgent negotiations over its renewal. **BBC** reports that the decision was made after the US vetoed the full renewal of the mission which was due to expire at 04,00 GMT on Monday. *"The world cannot afford a situation in which the SC is deeply divided on such an important issue, which may have implications for all UN peace operations,"* UN Secretary General, **Kofi Annan**, said after the meeting. **AFP, Reuters** and **BBC** also report that, although NATO, for its part, has insisted that its peacekeeping mission in BiH will not be jeopardized by the US veto, it is unclear whether some 3,100 Americans within SFOR will be pulled out as well. *"Although SFOR does not need a SC mandate, some of the 19 countries that have contributed to it have indicated they will pull out unless it has continued SC approval,"* **Guardian** and **AFP** report, quoting NATO spokesman **Ives Brodeur**. *"NATO mandate will not be affected by the US veto,"* he said. However, a senior UN lawyer, **Hans Corell**, told the press that he believes that a UN mandate was required for the force to continue.

Meanwhile, NATO's North Atlantic Council is meeting today in Brussels to discuss the future of SFOR in BiH. "It is going to be purely informational. No decisions will be taken here because there are no decision we can make here," NATO spokesman **Yves Brodeur** told **Reuters**.

The US ambassador to the UN, **John Negroponte**, said that he had vetoed the resolution with a great reluctance. *"I, however, want to emphasize that the US would stand by its commitment to pursue peace and stability in Bosnia."*

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (f. p.), an anonymous senior UN diplomat said that it is still not clear how this decision will affect the US personnel in other international organizations in BiH. *"It is not quite clear who could withdraw, but the provisions in the ICC Statute are precise – the ICC has jurisdiction over all staff of other IOs, not only the UN,"* he said. *"The US is trying to find a way to remain included in the US peace process in BiH,"* another US representative to the UN told the daily. (Top story by **Sead Numanovic** in **Dnevni Avaz** – "Peace process endangered", **Oslobodjenje** p. 3) The French ambassador to the UN, **Jean-David Levite**, told **The Washington**

Post that he urged Washington to withdraw a small unit of US citizens, including the UN SRSG, Jacques Paul Klein, and 46 American police officers rather than to shut down the BiH mission. *"What is at stake is the very capacity of the UN to continue peacekeeping operations. For the US the simplest thing is to withdraw the 46 US police...There is simply no need to kill off the UNMIBH,"* he said.

In a statement for **BBC**, the former High Representative, **Carl Bildt**, said that the possible ultimate withdrawal of US forces would have grave consequences not only for BiH, but also for Kosovo. Bildt's statement was seconded by the UNMIBH spokesman, **Stefo Lehman**. *"We would have to liquidate the mission and that is about a six-month period which would leave many of our task unfinished. This includes...generally completing the police reform in the country. There are all important tasks and not finishing them may have a negative impact on the peace process,"* Lehman told **Reuters**. *"It would be a major disaster,"* Reuters quotes **Mark Wheeler**, the head of the ICG project for BiH, as saying.

In a statement for **SRNA**, which was carried by all electronic media in BiH, the chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, **Dragan Mikerevic**, said that in the case of the US veto on the full renewal of US peacekeeping mission in BiH, all other UN efforts in this country would be called into question. *"If this indeed takes place, all forces have to be directed at ensuring the accelerated mandated of EU forces in order to avoid any discontinuity."*

BiH Foreign Ministry spokesman, **Amer Kapetanovic**, also expressed concern about this issue. *"We are concerned about the future security situation in Bosnia. However, we hope that common sense will prevail and the UN mission in BiH will be extended by the end of the year as planned. Unfortunately, we are a small country and we are not able to influence decisions by major states,"* Kapetanovic told **AFP**.

State-level legislation

Both Banja Luka dailies (**Glas Srpski** p. 4, **Nezavisne Novine**, p. 5, **Vecernje Novosti**, p. 4) carry the press release issued by the RS Government on Saturday, which says that RS government and OHR agreed that the RS name will be kept in the new design of ID cards.

RS National Assembly Speaker, **Dragan Kalinic**, said on Sunday he expected RS political parties to adopt a common stand with regards to the Decision by the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, to remove entity symbols from new ID cards. *"The presence of the name of the RS and Federation on ID cards was one of the conditions for adoption of this Law [on ID cards],"* Kalinic said. *"The International Community and the High Representative should stop pushing us into a BiH we do not want to be a part of."* (**Glas Srpski**, **RTRS morning news**)

In a statement for **Nezavisne Novine**, OHR spokesman **Oleg Milisic** said that the name of the entities will remain displayed in the new BiH identity cards, however it will be included in the Ministry of Interior section. *"Nothing has changed since the changes and amendments to the CIPS system which was imposed by the High Representative. The section indicating which authority issued the card will display the name of the entities,"* Milisic said.

Vecernji List (f.p., p. 3 under title "Ashdown takes away entity powers") reports on the Thursday Decision by the High Representative to amend the Law on BiH ID cards. In the article, Davor Ivankovic argues that this pragmatic move by Ashdown clearly indicates international plans for BiH – preparations for European integration processes. *"Dayton Peace Agreement is anti-European and non-democratic and his strict implementation would never lead to the creation of a self-sustainable BiH and its integration into Europe. That is why Asdown will not hesitate making decisions which are not in line with the DPA and will risk not being liked by everyone. Entity powers will be the first ones which will be transferred to the state, and the entities will in time become a mere form without any contents. The IDs are only the first indicator of this tendency."*

Preparations for October Elections

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2), OHR spokesman **Oleg Milsic** said that the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, does not want to comment on the pre-election or elections campaigning or any political party in BiH. *"What the High Representative primarily expects and would like to see is the implementation of necessary reforms which will create conditions for the economic development and opening of new jobs,"* said Milisic.

Dnevni List (f.p., p. 7) carries a one page analysis of pre-election campaigning by the SDP, Party for BiH and the SDA under title "Ashdown: Silajdzic is lying, he is not my election favorite", in which the author, **Marko Markovic** (also, editor-in-chief) recaps on last week's writing by a number of papers which quoted Ashdown as stressing that he does not have any election favorites. Markovic also evaluates the potential success of individual political parties, saying that Party for BiH may not be as successful as many anticipate.

Vecernji List (f.p., p.2 by Robert Bubalo) also renders the issue of candidates for BiH Presidency saying that the hardest fight will be in the run for the Bosniak member of the Presidency. The daily carries SDP's **Zlatko Lagumdžija** as saying that one should not forget that the election of members of the BiH Presidency is often wrongly identified as the election of the *first among Bosniaks, Croats or Serbs*. *"As a leader of a multi- ethnic party I could not agree to that dangerous reduction"*, says Lagumdžija.

Dnevni Avaz (p. 3) reports that the current vice -president of the NHI and the Defense Minister in the Federation, Mijo Anic, will be this party's candidate for the post of the Croat member of the BiH Presidency. *"I cannot confirm or deny this information, however I can tell you that we will decide on this candidacy, if at all, at the NHI presidency meeting on Monday,"* said Kresimir Zubak, the NHI president.

Dino Mikulandrain an editorial in **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p. 15) is commenting on the agreement of HDZ and NHI on not targeting each other in the pre-election period. The author says that Zubak's message came too late: *"Removal of Grabovac was harsh message of Ashdown's analysts that the International Community simply does not think of NHI as of attractive enough, nor sufficiently progressive, not sufficiently useful 'Trojan Horse' in the heart of Croat election plebes... Maybe Zubak would change something in his political slalom. Maybe he would make less pressure on HDZ, and more "fight" Petritsch over constitutional changes, but it is over now anyway. Road to hell is paved with good intentions, and NHI can be happy if on the October 'jumps' over the election threshold."*

Social issues/Refugee return

Glas Srpski (cover page) reports that by decision of the Primary Court in Doboj, Serb refugees settled in Kotorsko, have lost land plots allocated to them by Doboj municipality. According to the court's decision, Serb refugees have also lost houses they built in Kotorsko, prior to the court proceedings. **Asim Djuheric** and 27 Bosniaks pressed the charges against Doboj municipality, "Bosnacoop" company and Serb refugees settled in Kotorsko.

Workers' Unions in five chemical companies in Tuzla (Kox-chemical combine Lukavac, Soda Factory Lukavac, Polihem, TDI, and Vijenac Lukavac) announced on Sunday that they will organize a mass strike on July 4 in front of the building of the Tuzla Canton government. According to **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2), they may be joined with workers of all other companies in this Canton which are also in a difficult financial position. Workers in five chemical factories are asking the Federation government and Tuzla Canton government to, within ten days, initiate the adoption of the Law on Social and Financial Care of Workers and to ensure the timely disbursement of pays.

Oslobodjenje reports on its front page that the Assembly of the Tobacco Factory Sarajevo could hold its session on Sunday because of the lack of quorum, as the representative of the State shareholders failed to appear, as was the chairman of the Supervisory board, Nijaz Durakovic.

Dnevni Avaz (p. 7) reports that the European Youth Movement, together with the Coordinator's Office for the implementation of the Project "Strategy of Fight Against Poverty" and the Foundation Konrad Adenauer, will hold a round-table discussion on the topic "Young people close doors to poverty, create our own future". The event will be attended by a number of senior international and local officials, including the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown.

Paddy Ashdown's activities/commentaries

Jutarnje Novine (p. 7) reports that the last week's visit of the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, to Srebrenica had a very positive effect on the developments in this town. *"Returnees are encouraged by his decisive position on their open demands on return, and municipal authorities with his view that*

Srebrenica indeed deserves a special treatment," notes the daily. "This visit is in fact the true recognition of our efforts to ensure that Srebrenica obtains a special treatment by local and international authorities...[Ashdown] clearly emphasized that the aid earmarked for Srebrenica will be funneled to projects initiated by Srebrenica resident themselves, excluding the possibility of misuse by various mediators," said Sefket Hafizovic, Srebrenica mayor.

In a lengthy editorial in **Oslobodjenje**, Ramo Kolar compares the Paddy Ashdown to a manager of a mediocre football team. *"Ashdown knows what kind of team he has gotten himself into, so he will say : 'I am not a God, I am only a captain.' The captain who spends most of his time redecorating the building he governs from. Removing the gate, planting flowers, bringing new furniture in..." "I am waiting for Ashdown to finally show up in a real game - the one against corruption, against Aluminij, illegal allocation of land...That would be the beginning of our way to the World Cup".*

In **Oslobodjenje** (Saturday), Nermin Bise writes that Herzegovina must be truly an interesting area for the High Representative, as he visited the region four times since assuming the post in BiH. *"Although politicians in Herzegovina are not too thrilled with Paddy Ashdown," writes Bise, "Common mortals have many sympathies for him. They have felt that someone so powerful, well-known and a foreigner is ready to openly and without the unnecessary vagueness discuss all topics...If one could judge by the removal of Nikola Grabovac, then it is politicians with great villas, cars, office spaces and mobile telephones should indeed be concerned. Another positive aspect of Ashdown's visit is that he clearly demonstrated not only that he does not have political favorites, but also that he does not have regional bias, for example Sarajevo over other BiH territories. This is something Herzegovinians point to with a great pleasure."*

NATO could have prevented terrorist acts in BiH

Vecernji List (f. p. ,p. 3,by Zoran Kresic) reads that the NATO-run operation in Mostar under the name "West Star", conducted three years ago when the NATO troops entered offices of SNS (Croat Intelligence Service), was a failure because the American investigators could not recognise the importance of SNS-gathered material on Islamic terrorists. VL quotes an anonymous source from the SNS as saying that the American investigators failed to notice a 100 plus page document which, among other things, contained reports on suspicious activities of the recently raided Benevolencija International Foundation (BIF) that is suspected of funding Al-Qa-ida activities. Instead of that, says VL, NATO was misused to seize videotapes and photos in which representatives of the IC were shot with prostitutes in Sarajevo and Mostar. According to the same source, recently arrested officials of BIF **Ernaam Arnaout** had organised a visit of one of founders of Al Qa-ida **Mamdouh Mahmud Salim** back in 1998, the same year Salim was arrested by American authorities following an attack on an American Embassy in Africa. VL goes on to say that Arnaout was a holder of a BiH passport and would often withdraw a lot of money, up to 100.000 US\$ from a several bank accounts.