

BiH Media Round-up, 5/6/2002

Headlines in print media

Oslobodjenje

- SDP requested Slavko Sikiric (the Director of the BiH Federation Customs Administration) to resign

Dnevni Avaz

- The Chairman of the BiH Presidency for Dnevni Avaz: Why Belkic is angry?
- Lord Ashdown: Young people must show they are angry (with small photo)

Jutarnje Novine

- Besim Mehmedic, the Federation Minister of Transport and Communications: First part of the Zenica-Sarajevo highway to be completed in September
- Members of the BiH Presidency meet with the High Representative – Ashdown: I will deal with the defense issues more than Petritsch
- UN Spokesman Stefo Lehman: Decisions on removals of the Entity's police commissioners must be confirmed by OHR, UNMIBH

Dnevni List

- Situation in the Capljina-based military training center: Life on the edge of dignity

Vecernji List

- Joint BiH Federation Police, Interpol and Croatian Police investigation: 150 million KM laundered

Nezavisne Novine

- More and more difficult life in the villages of the Bratunac municipality: the returnees might face starvation
- Affair related to the regional cigarettes smuggling comes to BiH: Orucevic in the tobacco mafia
- Dragan Mikerevic for Nezavisne: There will be no reconciliation if Serbs are declared aggressors

Glas Srpski

- School fee at the universities in the RS: The Faculty of Medicine not expensive

SDP requested Slavko Sikiric to resign; BiH Federation Government discusses AM Sped case

The BiH Social Democratic Party (SDP) has requested the Director of the BiH Federation Customs Administration, Slavko Sikiric, to resign due to his eventual responsibility for the AM Sped case, Oslobođenje learns from the sources close to the party (front-page story continued on the page 6). According to the newspaper, the BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen has received two separate reports on the case (from the Interior Ministry and Financial Police), and in both of them, Sikiric has been mentioned as a responsible person. Several sources close to the BiH Federation Government told Oslobođenje that, on the other side, Behmen will not raise the issue of possible responsibility of his Deputy, Nikola Grabovac, in the AM Sped case, because this might bring the survival of the Alliance for Change into question.

In another article on the issue (page 7), Oslobođenje reports that, at its session in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the BiH Federation Government discussed the disputed pay-out of a deposit to the AM Sped concluding that all those involved in the possible irregularities related to the transaction must be held responsible. The Interior Ministry's investigation resulted in filling three criminal charges, as the Financial Police filled criminal charges against nine persons.

The first BiH Presidency's working meeting with Paddy Ashdown: BiH should play a leading role in the Balkans; other Ashdown's activities

All Sarajevo dailies (Oslobođenje – page 3 with a photo, Dnevni Avaz – page 2 with a photo, Jutarnje Novine – fourth page with a photo, and Nezavisne Novine) report that the first working meeting of the BiH Presidency members with the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, took place in Sarajevo on Tuesday. The Chairman of the Presidency, Beriz Belkic, told journalists following the session that *“BiH should play a leading role in The Balkans when it is about the resolution of all disputed issues.”* For his part, Ashdown said he would pay *“particular attention”* to the issues of common defense structures in BiH.

Representatives of the young people meet with Ashdown

Oslobođenje (page 3 with a photo) and Dnevni Avaz (page 2 with a photo, mentioned at the front page with a photo) report that the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, hold an informal meeting with the representatives of young people in the Galatasaraj oriental restaurant (cevabdzinica) in the Sarajevo old suburb of Bascarsija. They agreed that an idea on the establishment of a council to deal with the problems of young people in BiH should be considered.

Ashdown: Palic case is extremely important test for BiH, particularly for the RS authorities

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, believes that the case of Esmā Palic, a widow who has been for seven years now asking the RS authorities to tell her the truth about her missing husband, represents an extremely important test for BiH, and particularly for the authorized bodies in the RS. Oslobođenje (eighth page) reports that, on Tuesday, Ashdown responded to Esmā Palic's letter he had read in the newspaper during the weekend.

Dnevni Avaz: Why is Beriz Belkic angry?

“The BiH Presidency at least does not make damage, if it does not perform well,” said the Chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, at the beginning of an interview with Dnevni Avaz (the interview

announced at the front page, published fully page 5).He denied speculations that SFOR had informed the Presidency about finding the secret grenades in Mostar.

Interview with CoM Chairman Dragan Mikerevic - There is no reconciliation if Serbs are labeled as aggressors

In an interview (page 5) with **Nezavisne novine** the **BiH CoM Chairman Dragan Mikerevic** said that the Schengen visa system couldn't be introduced in BiH if we still have 1,100 citizens who illegally obtained BiH citizenship and BiH Ids. *"That is why we insisted on the CIPS project and new BiH Ids in order to find out who lives in our country. We have to clean up our own backyard"*, said Mikerevic. Commenting on financing of the law suit, which BiH filed against the FRT before the International Court of Justice in The Hague for genocide and aggression, Mikerevic said that BiH equally belongs to Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats. *"We have to build trust among people of BiH, but it cannot be done if Serbs, who have lived in BiH for centuries, are labeled as aggressors"*, said Mikerevic.

Pre-election deals: Joint participation of the Alliance for Change parties just a theoretical option

According to *Oslobodjenje*, (page 3) and *Dnevni Avaz* (page 12), at a meeting in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the Coordination of the Alliance for Change discussed the possible ways of participation in the next elections. There are three possible options. The first is a joint participation of the Alliance party-members. The second option is a proposal that the parties belonging to the Alliance participate in the elections in blocks or individually, as the third possibility foresees that all parties participate in the elections individually.

BiH Federation Parliament adopts Law on the Tax Administration

Oslobodjenje (page 8)and *Dnevni Avaz* (page 4) report that, at an early session in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the BiH Federation House of Representatives adopted the Law on the Federation Tax Administration. *"By this Law, the modernization of the Federation Tax Administration has been continued as had been agreed with the USAID and US Treasury yet in 2000,"* the Federation Deputy Finance Minister, Sefika Hafizovic, told the deputies during the session.

Vecernji List: Cantons without cantonal courts

Vecernji List carries an article about reforms in BiH judiciary saying that the **IJC** (Independent Judicial Commission) plans to reform the judiciary in both BiH entities stressing the reduction of number of courts and judges. IJC's idea, says VL, is to have a more efficient judiciary in which judges would not need as much time to complete proceedings as it is the case now. VL goes on to list the number of courts and judges and the IJC envisaged plan for completion of the reform. BiH currently has 78 municipal/first instance courts (3.757.000 citizens), IJC wants to have between 47 and 58 of these courts.

Vecernji List: Vlado Adamovic welcomes HR's judiciary-related decisions

Vecernji List carries an article in which **Vlado Adamovic**, the President of Association of Judges of Federation of BiH, talks about reforms in judiciary. Adamovic welcomes latest judiciary related decisions of **Wolfgang Petritsch** and creation of High Judicial Council which will, in Adamovic's opinion, contribute to independence of judiciary when the judges would be appointed and relieved by professionals to a high degree. Adamovic goes on to say that judges initiated independence of judiciary when the Law on Judicial and Prosecutorial function was adopted, the law which includes continuity of a judge's mandate and the way judges are being relieved adding that those democratic principles are currently being deviated from because the continuous judge's mandate is being denied with a general removal of judges. Adamovic states that judges are in favour of continuous mandate and that judges be removed pursuant to the law even if it means removal of all 588 judges that currently work in the Federation, but as Adamovic stresses, each removal must have a reason and general removals are not a democratic value. Speaking about OHR methods in the judicial reform, Adamovic says that so far there has been an 18-month period which was not successful primarily because a partnership relation was not established and because opinions of local experts have not been appreciated. He added that a report by **ICG** (International Crisis Group) says that the IC made dreadful omissions when initiating, leading and suggesting the process of transition of judiciary in BiH.

Slobodna Dalmacija and Vecernji List on raid into Travnik-based Saudi humanitarians Al Haramain

In relation to the raid of the **Federation Ministry of Interior** into premises of "**Al Haramain**" humanitarian organization on Monday, **Slobodna Dalmacija** reads that beside certain humanitarian activities such as computer training, certain activities in the premises had been carried out by **Aktivna Islamska Omladina (Active Islamic Youth)**, which is as Slobodna Dalmacija puts it, unofficially linked to murders of two (Croat) Travnik policemen from 1998. Vecernji List carries a similar article.

Interview with RS President Mirko Sarovic: War on corruption will last for years

In an interview with a Belgrade-based daily newspaper "**EuroBlic**", the **RS President Mirko Sarovic** said that the entire case of the electronic monitoring of SFOR by the RS Army is banal and does not deserve such a harsh penalty such as suspension of General Torbica. "*SFOR discovered several weapon caches in Mostar and there have been no precaution measures. I am convinced that after the investigation into this case is finished the things will be sorted out and General Torbica will return to his job*", said Sarovic. Commenting on the RS Customs Administration case and the CAFAO report, Sarovic said that people should know that it is not that all employees of the RS CA are criminals. Sarovic claims that the point of the entire story about the RS Customs Administration and CAFAO is to fill up the BiH Federation budget at the expense of the RS budget and not to arrest 4, 5 or 10 people who misused their positions. As for the package of the Decisions that the High Representative imposed prior to his departure, Sarovic reiterated that the High Representative exceeded his authority. When asked if he believes that Radovan Karadzic will be arrested or maybe voluntarily turn himself in to the ICTY, Sarovic said that it is up to Karadzic to decide. "*It would not be fair of me to deny anything*", said Sarovic. Sarovic said that the Karadzic's destiny, as a person wanted by the ICTY, certainly has an impact on perception of the RS abroad.

DNS chairman claims that "the Brain" of the cartel still runs RS Customs Administration

Nezavisne novine quotes **Chairman of the Democratic People's Alliance (DNS), Dragan Kostic** (page 2) as saying that the investigation into the RS Customs Administration case is going in

wrong direction because the ones responsible are still successfully hiding. *"These people still run the RS Customs Administration. They now are trying to persuade themselves that they are honest. They identified their jobs and titles with their own names and vital national interests"*, said. Also, **Head of the CAFAO mission to BiH Allen Jansen** commented on report which appeared in a Banja Luka-based weekly magazine "Patriot", which states that former High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch initiated and approved investigation into the RS CA case because he wanted to get even with the RS CA for seizing his brother's equipment for mobile telephones. Jansen's only comment was that imagination has no bounds. OHR stated that the report is neither true nor worth commenting. OHR also states that no one contacted it before the article was published.

START's Ozren Kebo about the manner in which Bosnians are awaiting and seeing off the High Representatives in this country

In an opening column ("Petritsch was bashed by all those who once celebrated him most adamantly; Ashdown harmonized his rhetoric with Lagumdžija's") in this week's **Start** magazine, its editor-in-chief, **Ozren Kebo**, writes about the manner in which Bosnians are awaiting and seeing off the High Representatives in this country. *"We are welcoming them as kings and in line with our extreme expectations, and we are seeing them off as swindlers, in line with our even greater disappointments."...* *"It's been less than a year now since the Bosnian public was sending loving appeals to Petritsch, asking him to be a protector and to, in his typical manner, restructure BiH. There was nothing strange in that appeal, since it is evident that local politicians will not be capable for a quite some time to tackle such a great issue."* Kebo sarcastically notes that Petritsch has naively and erroneously believed that he could regard domestic officials as partners. This proved wrong, he argues, largely because the society in BiH is not mature or integrated enough to elect responsible officials to the leading posts. *"Criteria which are being imposed on masses by the media do not insist on responsibility, but on some other wrong and fatal values: blood instead of money, nation instead of integration, territory instead of reforms, past and not the future. The politics whose paradigm is the fathers, and not the sons, cannot be a partner to anyone save itself. This paradigm must be changed."* Commenting on the arrival of the new High Representative, Kebo notes that the removal of the OHR iron gate may also mark the beginning of a new era in the work of this institution. He especially commends one of the Ashdown's statements which remained quite neglected in the BiH public and which is the *"only one which guarantees changes to better."* *"If you can recall, the Lord which does not like to be called that, said that when he will be presented with two different options, he will not try to find the middle between the two extremes, but will try to reach the best solution – best for BiH."* Kebo notes that this statement, which in his words strangely coincides with the recent and similar Lagumdžija's statement ("Don't try to find the middle ground between a good and a bad solution. Chose what is best for BiH") is the basis for any progress in this country. *"Compromise has made an irreparable damage to this country during the war and after it. There is no and there can be any compromise with fascism, and a good portion of influential political forces in this country is of incurably fascist orientation."* Kebo writes that it will be interesting to see if Ashdown will succeed in his intention. He, however, warns that one needs to be concerned about Ashdown's neglect of nationalism as the basic problem which is tearing BiH apart. *"It is true that the independent judiciary, systematic reform, opening of new jobs and developing of the economy are priorities. However, let's not forget that Ante Markovic also believed that the nationalist beast could be confronted with a healthy economy and better standards. We know how that project ended. Let us wish that the new High Representative does not repeat mistakes of the last Yugoslav prime minister. We have enough trauma from the history which repeats itself,"* concludes Kebo.

Headlines in electronic media

BHTV (June 4, 1900)

- BiH Presidency's members and High Representative to BiH Paddy Ashdown announced on Tuesday a possibility for holding of a meeting of BiH, Croatia and Yugoslavia dedicated to the issues of regional cooperation. It was estimated at the first working meeting of BiH Presidency's members and the High Representative that BiH should take over a role of the leader concerning the regional initiatives and cooperation in the field of economy, stability of the region, its own development, as well as development of the entire region. (1.5)
- The BiH Federation Parliamentary House of Representatives passed on Tuesday the law on the BiH Federation Tax Administration in the same version in which the BiH Federation Parliamentary House of Peoples adopted it several days ago. (1.5)
- RS government has decided to postpone the deadline for purchase of socially-owned apartments for another year.

FTV (1930)

- Interior Minister of the Central Bosnian Canton Midhat Zubaca said on Tuesday that the search carried out in the premises of the humanitarian organization "Al Haramain" in Travnik was only a way of control. "The search of premises and confiscation of document have been just a way of control so far. We do not have the information about indicators, which cast into doubt a close connection of this organization with some of the terrorist organizations in the world," Zubaca told the Radio-Television Travnik. (3)
- The BiH Federation Parliamentary House of Representatives passed on Tuesday the law on the BiH Federation Tax Administration in the same version in which the BiH Federation Parliamentary House of Peoples adopted it several days ago. (1.5)
- FBiH House of Representatives, in the continuation of its 15th session, adopted the Proposal law on concessions, but with amendments which must be agreed upon by the FBiH House of Peoples. (.45)
- RS government has decided to postpone the deadline for purchase of apartments for another year. (1.5)
- BiH Presidency's members and High Representative to BiH Paddy Ashdown announced on Tuesday a possibility for holding of a meeting of BiH, Croatia and Yugoslavia dedicated to the issues of regional cooperation. (1.5)

RTRS (1930)

- One of the priorities of BiH foreign policy is cooperation with the countries of the region. BiH Presidency today had its first working meeting with the High Representative P. Ashdown. They have agreed on the solving of problems preventing development of BiH. (3)
- A roundtable on economic stability of BiH was held today in Sarajevo. Representatives of entity authorities and common organs discussed the problems of paying off internal and foreign debts. (3)
- RS government has decided to postpone the deadline for purchase of apartments for another year. This decision was brought at the government's session on Monday. The new deadline is July 28th next year. (2)

FTV1, Pogledi News at 2315

- The Federation Government debates the conclusions related to return of deposits to AM Sped firm from Orasje (1.45 min)
- The Federation Interior Ministry issued a statement following a raid in humanitarian organization El Haremein. Seven premises of the organization were raided and documentation confiscated. (3.10 min)

- Dragan Dragicevic, due to suspicion of committing war crimes over civilians in Srebrenica, arrested in Belgrade and will be tried before domestic court (1.35 min)