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Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

Reuters: NATO urges Bosnia to ditch culture of dependence

NATO told the leaders of BiH's three-man presidency on Wednesday to end the war-scarred country's dependence on external assistance through state-building and bridging ethnic divides. "The clear message was that Bosnia and Herzegovina had to take ownership of its own future to break the cycle of dependence and to let the country take its place in the European family of nations," NATO Secretary-General George Robertson said. He was speaking to reporters at the defense alliance's Brussels headquarters after a meeting between NATO ambassadors and BiH's tripartite Presidency. Standing alongside the three leaders, he said: "I'm optimistic that eventually we will have strong enough central institutions so that there would only need to be one president." Robertson said the NATO ambassadors had focused in the meeting on law and order problems and the need for strong central institutions to deal with them. They also stressed the need to reduce the armed forces and build a common command and control system. Robertson said this was "an absolute prerequisite" for

joining the Partnership for Peace, NATO's basis for security cooperation with non-members. Robertson said NATO allies had called for cooperation with the international war crimes tribunal in The Hague.

Lagumdzija visiting Greece

According to Oslobodjenje, the Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers and the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdzija, who is in a two-day official visit to Greece, met on Wednesday with the Greek Foreign Minister, Georgi Papandreu. The two officials agreed that, in compliance with the signed protocol on the cooperation between the Foreign Ministries of the two countries, the consultations should be held on a regular basis even at the highest level to improve both bilateral cooperation and the multilateral cooperation through common projects in the framework of the Stability Pact for the Southeastern Europe.

Mihajlovic meets with the French Ambassador to BiH, discusses the CIPS project

The BiH minister of civil affairs and transportation, Svetozar Mihajlovic, and the French ambassador, Bernard Bajolet, concluded at a meeting in Sarajevo on Wednesday that a compromise solution needs to be found as soon as possible which will guarantee the timely and quality implementation of the CIPS project. A press release from Mihajlovic's office states that he informed the French ambassador of the problems with respect to implementation of CIPS and the position of the RS Cabinet, which finds unacceptable the departure from the initial concept which stipulated 20 locations for the printing of personal documents.

Constitutional reforms

Talks on the constitutional reforms continue

All BiH media report that, at an invitation of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, representatives of the leading political parties in BiH on Wednesday resumed their talks on the constitutional reforms in the OHR building in Sarajevo. During a recess late in the afternoon, Petritsch addressed journalists saying that, although slowly, the talks were moving in right direction. "You must be aware that they (the political leaders of the eight parties) have never before been confronted with such a monumental task," Petritsch emphasized. The High Representative reiterated that the international community expects the BiH politicians to find a solution on the issue. He emphasized that the process "must not be disturbed from the outside." Petritsch announced that the talks would be resumed on Thursday saying he saw "a realistic chance for a good compromise solution."

Oslobodjenje: Ivanic says Croats want to change Dayton?!

The Republika Srpska Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, said late on Wednesday that the representatives of the political parties from the Federation had, during the Wednesday talks with the High Representative on the constitutional reforms, unexpectedly put on the table a proposal demanding a complete re-composition of BiH. In an interview with the Banja Luka Alternative Television, Ivanic emphasized that "the representatives of certain peoples dissatisfied with the Dayton solutions as a whole are now trying to bring everything into question." He said that the talks had been slowed due to the interference of Croatia into the BiH's internal affairs. According to Ivanic, the senior Croatian officials are through the BiH Croat politicians attempting to revise the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Croatia on BiH Constitutional changes: RS result of crime and ethnic cleansing

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament (Sabor) and Chairman of the Board for foreign policy, Zdravko Tomac stated on Wednesday, after the board's session behind closed doors, that Croatia insisted on establishment of the House of Peoples in the RS which is "a result of crime and ethnic cleansing, consequences of which can be consolidated only by such constitutional solution". Nezavisne Novine report that full agreement was reached at the session, with regards to the Croatian policy towards BiH. The Speaker of the RS National Assembly, Dragan Kalinic commented on Tomac's statement that the RS should be cancelled, by saying that it was the most perfidious way to interfere into internal issues of three nations and two entities, verified by the Dayton Peace Agreement. Glas Srpski carries Kalinic's statement, that – at this crucial moment in negotiations of leading BiH political parties, led by the High Representative, such statement given by a high Croatian official showed that Croatia still had the same approach towards BiH as in Tudjman's era. Kalinic stressed out that such policy of official Zagreb, was very dangerous for BiH Croat's position in the negotiations and prevents a sustainable compromise to be reached with other participants. Kalinic added: "SDS and other leading parties in the RS pledge for full normalization of relations between BiH and its neighbors."

Dnevni List: Niko Lozancic says Sarajevo negotiations in stalemate

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an interview given to Dnevni List, Niko Lozancic, member of the HDZ BiH Presidency, stated that it was very interesting that Sulejman Tihic from SDA is ready to accept much less than

Kalinic from the RS offered him, concluding that it can be interpreted that there is a wish to ensure the Bosniak domination in the Federation and the position of the second people in the RS. With regards to the meeting itself, Lozancic said that the meeting was exhausting and going into two directions: one to ensure true changes and harmonization of entity Constitutions and the other to ensure cosmetic changes which would cement division of BiH into Bosniak and Serb parts. Lozancic stated that in case that the Croats were left out of game they would not abandon negotiations since it is not productive. Asked whether Petritsch exerts pressure on any of the sides involved in the negotiations, Lozancic stated that Petritsch organized the meeting and that he was leading it and added that, at this moment, he would not comment on Petritsch's orientation. When questioned to comment on the Republic of Croatia's attitude towards problems of BiH Croats, Lozancic said that once Croats' request for equality and protection of interests has been secured there would not be a need for anyone's tutorship over the Croats including the tutorship from the Republic of Croatia adding that until that moment arrives Croatia still needs to be involved in the process.

Zubak calls on Petritsch to impose the amendments to the Entity's Constitutions

In a statement with Dnevni Avaz late on Wednesday, NHI President Kresimir Zubak, a participant in the Wednesday talks on the constitutional reforms in the OHR building in Sarajevo, said that he doubted the BiH politicians would succeed to reach agreement on the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples. Zubak added that, of course, he was referring to the amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution. He therefore called the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, to use his authorities and impose the amendment to the RS Constitution strictly following the principles on which the Dayton

Agreement was based. ON the other side, the Party for BiH President told the newspaper that the Wednesday talks had been much more concrete than the previous ones.

The BiH Federation House of Representatives supports first version of the Government-proposed amendments to the Constitution

At a session of the BiH Federation House of Representatives in Sarajevo on Wednesday, majority of the deputies in principle supported the initial version of the draft amendments to the Entity Constitution proposed by the Government, but assessed them as incomplete. According to Oslobodjenje, the House therefore tasked the Government to prepare the final version of the draft amendments by March 30 this year taking into account suggestions made by the deputies during the two-day discussion. The majority of those taking part in the discussion also requested that symmetric solutions for the constitutional reforms are found in the both BiH entities.

Federation

Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Sulejman Tihic, the President of Party of Democratic Action (SDA)

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The SDA Presidency recently presented its position on the arrangement of BiH in case the Constitutional Court's Decision is not consistently implemented. What is it about?

The entities are a current constitutional solution the changes of which are being negotiated. If full equality of all the three constituent peoples is ensured, then the issue of a different organization of BiH will not be this necessary. However, in a long-term perspective, and that is what the SDA

aim is, BiH should be a state of multi-ethnic regions without entities and should be absolutely decentralized.

Is such a position not symmetric with the one proposed by some politicians from the Republic of Croatia also, such as Zdravko Tomac, Drazen Budisa, even the HDZ BiH?

You are right, the solutions are almost identical. The difference is that we from the SDA advocate an evolution path as we are aware of the current image of BiH with its entities. Priority is to implement the Constitutional Court's Decision and then, in the second phase, to carry out the re-organization of the state.

Considerable reduction of military forces is due in April. How do you see the process?

We perceive the entire process of reduction of military forces in a negative context. I believe that reduction of the military can only happen if the neighboring countries, the Republic of Croatia and FR Yugoslavia, do the same. Bosniaks cannot rely on the international forces as a peace guarantee in BiH. Croats and Serbs can look at the issue differently as always have Croatia and FRY behind them. In case of any demilitarization, they will always receive help from the neighborhood and Bosniaks do not have such help. We will never again allow to find ourselves in the situation we were in back in 1990.

What are your positions on the special relations with BiH, i.e. of the Republika Srpska with the FRY?

It is known that we were against the special relations between the RS and FRY. We even started a procedure with the Constitutional Court. When it comes to the relations of the neighboring countries with BiH, they must be made on equal foot. Unfortunately, FRY never ratified the Dayton Agreement, but it did ratify Agreement on Special Relations with the RS.

As a Vice-president of the RS, I tried to dispute the Agreement in any way possible, yet, then the High Representative stated that the Agreement was in harmony with the Constitution and that there were no obstacles for signing it.

Are the SDA, Party for BiH and SDP in a tacit coalition since they gather the biggest number of Bosniaks?

Certain representatives of Croat political parties in BiH often speculate that there is no difference between the three parties. However, if you analyze things in a more detailed way, it is obvious that we from the SDA are in a continuous political struggle against these parties, not only because they are in power at the moment, but also because of many different political positions. This is most evident on the example of the reduction of armed forces in FBiH and demilitarization in BiH.

Republika Srpska

RS leadership met with OSCE Chairman, Jaime Gama

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies reported that the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, Vice President, Dragan Cavic and the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic met on Wednesday in Serb Sarajevo with the OSCE Chairman and the Portuguese Foreign Minister, Jaime Gama, and Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, Robert Beecroft. Glas Srpski quotes the statement, given by the RS President Sarovic, after the meeting: "The RS is ready and determined to implement decisions of the BiH Constitutional Court, to pass amendments on the RS Constitution and it will be done during this month." Other topics discussed were: forthcoming general elections and restructuring of the BiH armed forces.

RS to process 6 and BiH Federation 60 cases of war crimes

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The RS Prime Minister Advisor for relations with The Hague Tribunal, Sinisa Djordjevic stated to Nezavisne Novine that, so far, the ICTY approved RS judiciary to process 6 cases of war crimes indictees. According to Djordjevic, these cases are under the authority of the Trebinje District Court and added that the beginning of the trials is a problem, due to the fact that those 6 indictees were not in the RS territory. Djordjevic sees RS judiciary as capable to process these cases. He added that some 60 cases were to be processed by the courts in BiH Federation.

AFP: Bosnian Serb war crimes suspect to be tried on Friday

The UN war crimes tribunal in the Hague will hand down its verdict Friday against Milorad Krnojelac, a Bosnian Serb prison camp commander accused of torture and "countless killings" of non-Serb detainees. Krnojelac, 61, faces up to 25 years in prison on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes for atrocities carried out from April 1992 to August 1993 in the KP Dom prison camp in the southeastern Bosnian town of Foca. Krnojeleac's lawyers argued that their client was not the prison camp commander but only head of its economic department and should therefore be acquitted. From April 1992 KP Dom, one of the biggest prisons of the former Yugoslavia, was used by Serb authorities to detain Bosniaks and other non-Serbs. In 1992 the prison camp held approximately 600 detainees, almost all of them civilians according to the prosecution. "Milorad Krnojelac persecuted the Bosniak and other non-Serb males by subjecting them to prolonged and routine imprisonment and confinement, repeated torture and beatings, countless killings, prolonged and frequent forced labor and inhumane conditions within the KP

Dom detention facility,” according to his indictment. During Krnojelac’s trial, prosecutor Peggy Kuo said: “It was his work and he did it extremely well. There is not the least indication that he ever took into account the detainees’ rights.” The prosecutor described Krnojelac as “a typical bureaucrat” who was never present at the terrible treatment meted out by his subordinates. A teacher before the war, Krnojelac rose to captain in the Yugoslav army. He was arrested in Foca in June 1998.

International Community

CRA offers four broadcasters a license with strict conditions

At its session on Tuesday in Sarajevo, the CRA Council met for its regular quarterly session to discuss the Appeals of 38 broadcasters, previously denied a long-term license under the CRA’s Phase Two licensing process. In a significant move, the Council offered four broadcasters a license with strict conditions. The four broadcasters are HRTV Mostar, HTV Mostar, NRTV Studio 99 and Radio Srpsko Sarajevo. These stations are offered a license on the strict condition that no further offence is committed within a period of one calendar year beginning from the date of the Council decision. (Dnevni Avaz carried [CRA Press Release](#))

Reuters: Milosevic slams evidence on Kosovo killings

Slobodan Milosevic slammed evidence at his war crimes trial in The Hague on Wednesday that systematic killing by Serb forces in Kosovo in 1999 sparked a mass exodus of ethnic Albanians from the province. Albanians were forced to flee the war-torn province due to a Serb crackdown and not because of NATO bombing and a separatist guerrilla campaign by the Kosovo

Liberation Army (KLA), U.S. statistician Patrick Ball told the Hague war crimes court. Click [here](#) for Reuters article.

The Economist on the situation in BiH: Petritsch has done well as the High Representative in BiH

“Wolfgang Petritsch, an Austrian with useful Slovene roots, has done well as “high representative” in Bosnia. And Paddy Ashdown-a peer who once led Britain’s Liberal Democrats and who, it was formally announced last week, takes over from Mr Petritsch in May-has good credentials for pushing Bosnia further in the right direction. It will be a “dream team”, says one of NATO’s leading Balkan-watchers,” reads the article on the situation in BiH and the Balkans published in [The Economist](#) magazine of March 9 this year.

Dnevni Avaz: Asdown requests a decisive fight against organized crime

Paddy Ashdown, the next High Representative of the international community in BiH, has during his seven-day tour across the region and meetings with all key politicians in BiH, Croatia and FRY heard a large number of suggestions and tested some of its own ideas. Sources close to Ashdown claim that the readiness of the local authorities to combat organized crime has been in the focus of his interest.

US Ambassador to BiH meets with the SDA leaders

Dnevni Avaz learned that, in a Sarajevo restaurant two days ago, the US Ambassador to BiH Clifford Bond met with the SDA President, Sulejman Tihic, Vice-president Mirsad Kebo and the Bosniak National Institute Director, Adil Zulfikarpasic. The officials discussed the current political situation in the country, reforms inside the SDA, next general elections, possibility of the establishment of a SDA’s coalition with other political parties, and the post-election positioning of the party. Bond welcomed the SDA decision to remove individuals connected to illegal financial transactions in the

past period.

Reuters: Serbia and Montenegro sign deal to reshape federation

Serbia and Montenegro signed a deal on Thursday to reshape their Yugoslav federation in a move the West hopes will head off Montenegrin independence and any more violent disintegration of the Balkan bloc. Reporters saw Yugoslav President Vojislav Kostunica, Serbian President Zoran Djindjic, Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic and European Union (EU) foreign policy chief Javier Solana sign what an official called an "agreement in principle". Late on Wednesday Serbian President Zoran Djindjic said Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic had agreed to shelve independence plans for his small coastal republic "for now". The West fears Montenegrin independence would signal to ethnic Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia and to Serbs in Bosnia that borders in the region can be redrawn, tempting them to seek separation by violent or other means. Djukanovic is eager not to endanger rapprochement with the West and economic aid but he still needs to sell the deal to voters and a staunchly pro-independence party on whose support his minority government depends. It has demanded a referendum.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje and Jutarnje Novine

In the Oslobodjenje in Focus column, Zija Dizdarevic wrote that, after Wolfgang Petritsch had criticized the HDZ BiH due to leaving the last week's talks on the constitutional reforms assessing that the party did not represent the interests of the Croat people properly, the Mostar daily Dnevni list as an exponent of the BiH Croat hardliners launched a media campaign against Petritsch. On the whole page dedicated to the attack

on Petritsch, the newspaper published in full a pamphlet in the form of the HDZ Vice-president Niko Lozancic's open letter to Petritsch together with a column written by Marko Tokic. Dizdarevic wonders whether a fear of the solution to be reached by the BiH politicians or imposed by Petritsch stands behind this attacks? Dizdarevic concludes that these attacks and "HDZ's own searching for the satisfactory solutions concerning the constitutional reforms" together with the Sarajevo's HDZ branch initiative for calling the referendum on the issue, Ante Jelavic's statement he would remain leader of the Croat people in spite of the Petritsch decision removing him from the political life, and naming the Capljina bridge by the late Croatian President Franjo Tudjman means that the spirit of NDH (the Independent State of Croatia from the Second World War which includes major part of BiH, and which collaborated with than German fascists) is slowly "coming out of the bottle."

Almir Sarenkapa wrote in the Jutarnje Novine The Seal editorial that the World Bank had decided to conduct another audit of the Mostar Aluminum re-capitalization and financial operations. This time, according to Sarenkapa, the Bank has offered to the BiH Federation Government and the Aluminum management a list of the most prominent audit house in the world requesting them to agree on which house will conduct the audit and sign they will implement the conclusions of the audit. Such a move, Sarenkapa concludes, will finally make the future audit different from any one conducted in the past, and what is most important, it will make the audit feasible.

Vecernji List: Determinedly, perhaps!

Written by Zdenko Cosic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

With regard to the Vrhbosna HDZ press release in which they advocated holding of another referendum Zdenko Cosic ironically concludes that immediately after they counted ballot papers of one referendum they are inviting to another

and says: 'Immediately after the public was informed about alleged consensus reached among the Croat parties with regard to the constitutional changes we are witnesses of completely contrary views of this problem. Apart from a phrase on equality and constitutionality on the whole BiH territory that none disputes any longer, people from HDZ simply do not know which are the mechanisms that would ensure optimal protection of national interests and rights. The situation is same with Zubak's NHI which simultaneously demands harmonizing of entities' Constitutions and abolishment of the entities. Ante Jelavic, an unrecognized HDZ President, every day elaborates some new solutions groping in the dark. It is only an illusion that leading Croat politicians in BiH have a response to each possible solution. The truth is that they do not have a consensus reached on basic goals and by their indecisiveness they have paralyzed their own political parties. The situation reminds me on indecisiveness of Buridan's monkey. Do we have to remind you at all, that unfortunate donkey starved to death because it could not decide which haystack is closer to him.'

Vecernji List: Openly on Thursdays – A guest commentator: Avis Benes, the OHR Mostar Spokesperson

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The commentary deals with two views of the situation in Mostar, the optimistic and pessimistic one. It also discusses issue of Mostar as the capital of the BiH Federation and the need for Mostar to have critical mass of people with vision. Click [here](#) for the full translation.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- Film Director Veljko Bulajic to sue Izetbegovic and Bicakcic (due to failure of the Sarajevo motion picture project)

Dnevni Avaz

- Investigation of Federation police, AID and SNS: HDZ establishing a paramilitary formation?

Jutarnje Novine

- BiH political-military delegation visiting Brussels: NATO's Robertson – A single President and common military command

Glas Srpski

- From SFOR helicopters: warrants over Srbinje
- Adventures of Radovan Karadzic's look-alike: Where are you, brother Radovan!

Nezavisne Novine

- Srbinje/Foca: SFOR asked Karadzic to surrender
- Delegation of BiH Presidency in NATO HQ in Brussels: Joint command – condition for NATO
- Unbelievable mistake by US immigration authorities: visas granted to terrorists

Dnevni List

- According to CRA decision: HTV Mostar and Croat Radio Mostar received long-term broadcasting license
- Niko Lozancic: Negotiations in Sarajevo in deadlock
- Miroslav Tudjman's book titled 'Stories about Paddy Ashdown and Tudjman's napkin' was presented: Is the position of the HR a reward for 'Tudjman's napkin'?

Vecernji List

- Federation Ministry of Defense is preparing new decision: Military service will be abolished temporarily
- Warehousemen prevented poisoning of recruits in Capljina barracks: Bad

milk to soldiers