

BiH Media Round-up, 15/5/2002

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BiH State-related Issues

Presidency members, Lagumdzija, Misic to be subpoenaed to testify in Pogorelica case

Members of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, Jozo Krizanovic and Zivko Radisic, as well as the BiH Minister of Foreign Affairs, Zlatko Lagumdzija, and the head of the Anti-terrorist Team, Ivica Misic, will most likely be subpoenaed to testify in the so-called Pogorelica case. According to Oslobodjenje, the defence team representing Bakir Alispahic, Irfan Ljevakovic and Ismet Mujezinovic, who were charged with setting up and running a terrorist training camp in Pogorelica, sent a written request to the investigative judge in charge of this case asking for the testimony of the five senior BiH officials. The defence lawyers are hoping to demonstrate that BiH and Iran have had good relations for years and that the charged former officials had no knowledge that the Iranian intelligence service had links with terrorism, as is claimed by Prosecution.

Premier visits Romania, discusses cooperation with President Iliescu

The chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Dragan Mikerevic, has said in talks with Romanian President Ion Iliescu in Bucharest that the priority for the BiH authorities is a social reform with the view to achieving a speedy economic recovery and a sustainable economy, the BiH Council

of Ministers has announced in a statement. Mikerevic, who on Monday started a two-day visit to Romania, said that this objective was possible to achieve through quick and fair privatization, the fight against corruption and organized crime, development of an independent judiciary, integration in European legal, political and economic set-up and embracing European standards in all the areas.

Mikerevic and Iliescu discussed concrete forms of cooperation between countries of southeastern Europe within the Stability Pact in the domains of the environment, building regional infrastructure and fighting cross-border crime. (All BiH media reported on this item)

Federation

Federation judges declare war on the OHR

The presidency of the Association of Judges in the Federation does not accept the proposed reform of judicial authority in BiH, which is "created by the OHR and being implemented by the Independent Judicial Commission." "What is being envisaged is the general review of judges and prosecutors and the basic criteria have not been set. Whoever believes, be that people in the OHR, that this is the way to create an independent judiciary is very mistaken," Andrija Kolak, the president of the Cantonal court in Livno told Dnevni Avaz. Kolak also said that the entire process and the planning was conducted by "incompetent people who were lacking even basic information about the issue." Vlado Adamovic, the president of the Association of Judges, told the daily that the conclusions from the Presidency meeting will be forwarded to the OHR and the Independent Judicial Commission.

Senka Nozica: Too big engagement of International

Community has made judiciary insane

Senka Nozica, a renown lawyer from Sarajevo, said that the most disturbing aspect of the reform of judiciary is the exceeding engagement of the International Community, especially in terms of review of judges and prosecutors. Nozica said that the re-election and review of the allegedly politically incorrect or corrupted judges made the entire judiciary "nearly insane." She stressed that the reform, as envisaged by the International Community, has to take place, it should do so speedily and in a more efficient manner. Otherwise, she explained, the rule of law suffers consequences of this situation. In an interview with Dnevni List, Nozica said that although it is odd to have the High Representative above the Constitution, this had been set up in the Dayton Peace Accords. "Still, if the High Representative were not here, I would be afraid to drive with Sarajevo license plates in certain areas of BiH," Nozica concluded.

Miro Grabovac Titan and two other HDZ members to form a new party

Oslobodjenje reports that Miro Grabovac Titan, Marko Amidzic, and Zdenko Vukic, HDZ representatives in the BiH Parliament, will form a new political party and definitely withdraw from the HDZ. In a statement for the daily, Grabovac Titan said that the new party will also have a Croat prefix, but it is still not certain what will be its full name.

New HDZ leadership meets with the Croatian ambassador to BiH

Vecernji List reports that the newly elected acting president of the HDZ, Barisa Colak, will meet on Wednesday with the Croatian ambassador, Josip Vrbosic. According to the daily, the two will discuss the present situation in BiH and in the HDZ. This was the first such meeting between HDZ leadership and representatives of Croatia since the proclamation of to

so-called Croat self rule last year.

NHI's Kresimir Zubak: Constitutional amendments guarantee equality of Croats

The leader of the NHI, Kresimir Zubak, said that the Mrakovica-Sarajevo Agreement and the constitutional changes in the entities imposed by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, will benefit Croats living in BiH. Speaking at a lecture about the constitutional reform in Sarajevo, Zubak said that all peoples in BiH are guaranteed equal status and fair representation by the imposed Amendments. "What Croats and Bosniaks won in the RS Constitution is the guarantee that they will be equal to Serbs living there. In the Federation, the rights of Bosniaks and Croats are somewhat reduced for the simple reason that Serbs are now introduced as a constituent people in this entity," said Zubak, adding that the constitutional Amendments imposed by the High Representative were "a first step towards the reintegration of BiH." Tuesday's lecture was organised in the Sarajevo Army Hall and targeted especially the Croat component in the Federation Defence Ministry and the Federation Army.

Defense officers Handzar and Redzic were preparing new war, secret ammunition cache leads to top Bosniak officials

Slobodna Dalmacija learns from an anonymous military source that Adnan Handzar and Zlatan Redzic, Federation officers in charge of planning, the production and distribution of weapons on behalf of military security, were conducting secret operation of hiding weapons and ammunition, without the knowledge of SFOR. The daily notes that Serif Spago and Selim Isic, both high-ranking officers in the Federation Army are subjects of the ongoing investigations on the discovered ammunition cache in the eastern part of Mostar. Other Croatian newspapers carry similar stories, claiming that the very top of the "Bosniak authority", including Haris Silajdzic and

Safet Orucevic, are also involved into this affair which is shaking Herzegovina and the entire Federation.

Three policemen sacked for wartime atrocities

The UN mission in BiH has sacked three policemen for their involvement in atrocities committed against Serbs in the early stages of the 1992-95 war in BiH, a UN spokesman said on Tuesday. Two Bosniak one Serb policemen – Meho Kulic, Hajrudin Dedic and Goran Jankovic – all serving at the time with BiH government troops, were found to have been involved in the execution and expulsion of Serb civilians in the region of Breza, central Bosnia, Kirsten Haupt told a press conference. “Serb-owned property was searched and destroyed, some Serbs were killed (and) others were arrested and taken to one of the detention facilities established in various buildings,” Haupt said. In the detention facilities, “Serb men and women were subjected to severe maltreatment consisting of killings, beatings, threats of killing, rape, forced labor and deprivation of food,” she added. (Nearly all media in the Federation reported on this item)

Silajdzic's Ministers took over control of Behmen's Government

Vecernji List carries another article about an alleged crisis within the Federation Government saying that cases of AM Sped, Mostar's Aluminij and the draft Law on Restitution are just a tip of the iceberg. According to the daily, the source of the problems in the government is the behavior of Party for BiH's Ministers. “Alija Behmen is only formally at the helm of the Government, which is in reality controlled by Ministers from the Party for BiH. They have assumed all the positions in the Government that are directly linked with finances”, an anonymous source in the Federation government told the daily. The same source said that the relations have never been as bad as they are now and the only thing that prevents an open conflicts and the collapse of the government is the

forthcoming elections. According to the same source, this especially the case with the Minister of Traffic and Communications, Besim Mehmedic, and the Minister of Urban Planning and Environment, Ramiz Mehmedagic, who dis-empowered their Deputies (both Croats, one from SDP, one from NHI) and jeopardized the national balance within the respective Ministries hiring Party for BiH cadres.

Edhem Bicakcic: Processes against me and against Jelavic are staged

In interview with Vecernji List, the former Vice President of SDA, Edhem Bicakcic, said that the High Representative was given very high authorities by the Dayton Accord, so that with political leaders, company managers and pressure by public officials and various forms of manipulation, what is left are the self-censorship and fear. Bicakcic added that, since BiH and the Federation do not provide any basis for the protection of his rights, he decided to protect his position before an international institution in Geneva (SIC). Stressing that he had good relations with the International Community, Bicakcic stressed that problems appeared with the arrival of Wolfgang Petritsch, who, in his words, perceives the "installment of the Alliance on power as his greatest success." Bicakcic said that "Petritsch's homework was aggressive involvement in the political life of BiH, and harming legitimate national interests." Indicating that "OHR's policy of clean hands" is to force victim to harm him, Bicakcic said that OHR orders are an attack on principles that the state is based upon. He said that the Alliance is only a technical service of the OHR, adding that it is not clear what the destiny of Croats in BiH is, for what they have now is "certainly not the state that Vatican recognized in 1992."

Republika Srpska

Matanovic case: hearing held in Banja Luka

The OHR welcomes the beginning of the process by the Banja Luka Prosecutor's Office against five former RS Policemen, indicted for the disappearance of Tomislav Matanovic and his parents. This was stated yesterday by the OHR Spokesman Kevin Sullivan in Sarajevo. Nezavisne Novine recalls that five former RS Policemen were arrested on 8th May in Prijedor.

RS Government short 326 million KMs

The delegates to the RS National Assembly will discuss the execution of the budget for the last year and as announced by the opposition, it could happen that the budgetary deficit initiates a discussion on the confidence to Mladen Ivanic's Government. SNSD delegate, Branko Neskovic stated that the opposition is aware that it does not have the majority in the assembly necessary to vote on the confidence to the Government, but that the number of delegates who do not trust the Government is increasing.

International Community

Total of 5.2m dollars raised in first appeal for Srebrenica victims

At the UN donor conference in New York for the reconstruction of Srebrenica aimed at raising 12.5 million US\$ in total, 5.2 million have been raised in the first round of discussions. The Chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, who attended the conference in New York, voiced his conviction that all the necessary funds would be raised by October 1 when the three-year programme [which was drawn up by the UN mission and the UN Development Programme -UNDP] is scheduled to begin. Chairman Belkic said that the programme for the reconstruction

of Srebrenica was the last opportunity to save this town from oblivion and that the world and the authorities in BiH have a moral obligation to give the region a chance to become a multiethnic and sustainable community. (This was the top story in all BiH media, including the RS)

High Representative Delivers Final Report to UN, Addresses Srebrenica Donors' Conference

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in the course of a two-day working visit to New York, has presented his final [report](#) to the United Nations, addressed a Donors' Conference on Srebrenica, and held talks with senior UN officials.

On Monday, the High Representative delivered a report to the Secretary General of the UN outlining the progress which has been achieved during his nearly three years in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also had extensive talks with UN Under-Secretary for Peacekeeping Operations Jean-Marie Guehenno. (Dnevni Avaz carries the [press release](#) and excerpts of the [speech](#))

Ian Cliff, British Ambassador in BiH: Lord Paddy Ashdown is big friend of all peoples in BiH

In an interview with Dnevni List, the British ambassador to BiH, Ian Cliff, outlined the highlights of his recent visit to several successful companies in Herzegovina, including Lijanovici. Talking about the constitutional changes in the entities, Cliff said that they are results of negotiations held in Mrakovica and Sarajevo. "This is an Agreement between political parties in BiH and not a solution imposed from aside," Cliff said, dismissing the interviewer's allusion that the Amendments were not supported locally. He stressed that only after the Fall elections will Bosniaks and Croats in the RS and Serbs in the Federation have their representatives at all levels of authority. "This is a great change from the state we had in the past," Cliff said. Asked whether the

constitutional changes legalized Karadzic's invasion, Cliff said that a reply to this question is negative because Karadzic and his hard-liners were fighting for ethnically cleansed RS, and something like that does not exist anywhere in Europe. Cliff also said that the constitutional changes are based on the Dayton Peace Agreement. Asked to comment on the Croat demand for the third entity and conclusion that the Croats negatively reacted to the constitutional changes, Ambassador Cliff said that they want that people, who live in this country, pass decisions regarding BiH and that he believes that BiH will not be highly centralized state but that it will function better in future.

Commenting on the future High Representative in BiH, Cliff said that Paddy Ashdown will be a representative of the International Community and not a representative of the British Government. For this reason, explained Cliff, he will not be in a position to advise Ashdown on any issue. He added that Ashdown has demonstrated at many occasions that he is a big friend of BiH, of all peoples in BiH, and thus also a friend of the Croats. Cliff said that Ashdown's priorities will be struggle against crime and the establishing of the rule of law in BiH. Asked as to why Ashdown did not invite Croat representatives at the preparatory meeting in Kent, Ambassador Cliff explained that only representatives of the state and the entities were invited at the meeting in New Castle, because of the duties they perform and not because of their nationality. Cliff stressed that BiH has to distance itself from ethnic affiliation, if it wants to join Europe.

Israel criticises BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs for supporting Arafat's release from detention

A member of the Israeli Knesset, Jozef Tomi Lapid, once again accused BiH of "keeping ties with terrorists and Muslim extremists". In a statement for Zagreb's Jutarnji List, Lapid said that "BiH is a Muslim country in the heart of Europe which has close connections with Muslim fanatics from all over

the world.” “It (BiH) presents a great threat to you,” he warned the Croatian public, adding that Israel is well-aware that there are hundreds of Taliban living in BiH married to local women. Lapid’s statement comes only two months after the March interview with another Zagreb daily in which he warned Croatia about the Islamic threat from BiH. This earlier statement caused a minor crisis in diplomatic relations between BiH and Israel. Unofficial sources note, writes Oslobodjenje, that the real reason for Lapid’s visit to the Balkans is to publicly scorn BiH and its Ministry of Foreign Affairs for supporting earlier Jasser Arafat’s release from home detention.

Editorials

Slobodna Dalmacija: Pyrrhic Petritsch’s Victory after change of HDZ’s leadership

Written by Hrvoje Maric (provided by OHR Mostar)

The author of this editorial in Slobodna Dalmacija writes about the fact that new leadership of HDZ BiH was positioned and they have submitted registration for this party to run the October general elections. However, the registration itself doesn’t mean a lot, because Jelavic’s call to new leadership to continue fighting for equal position of Croats in BiH should be understood in light of choice of Convention of the party (to be held this summer) to make final decision on taking (or not) part in the elections. The fact that national issue of Croats in BiH has not been solved, intensified with new constitutional solutions that jeopardize interests and position of Croats in BiH, will only homogenize Croat electoral body, which will again result with full success of HDZ in the elections, says the editorial.

Headlines

Dnevni List

- Interview: Ian Cliff, British Ambassador in BiH: Lord Paddy Ashdown is great friend of all peoples in BiH
- Dnevni List brings: Names of persons involved in affair 'Mortar Rounds'
- Interview with Senka Nozica on reorganization of judicial system in BiH: Too big engagement of International Community disoriented judiciary

Vecernji List

- Croatian Prime Minister apologizes for all victims of Bleiburg tragedy: Racan falls upon his knees in Bleiburg
- Conflict in Federation executive authority: Silajdzic's Ministers supervise Behmen's Government
- Return of Fikret Abdic: Babo runs for BiH Presidency
- After removal of sanctioned officials: Ambassador Vrbosic visits HDZ today
- Edhem Bicakcic, former Vice President of SDA: Process is being rigged against Jelavic and myself

Glas Srpski

- By the decision of Vincent Courderoy: Three BiH policemen fired
- Property Laws: Half the task will be completed by summer

Nezavisne Novine

- What is the role of the RS Customs Administration in illegal trade between companies which exist only on paper, in Zagreb and Sabac? Customs officials from RS – associates of the alcohol smugglers
- Weapons in Mostar were hidden upon the order of Cengic, Silajdzic and Orucevic
- Teslic Chief of Police detained

Oslobodjenje

- Top state authorities to testify in Pogorelica case

Dnevni Avaz

- Silajdzic rejects allegations: Loan from Pakistan was needed for defense of BiH

Jutarnje Novine

- Scandals in the Ministry of Interior in the Sarajevo Canton