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Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

Foreign Ministry rejects allegations that BiH is “shelter for terrorists”

The BiH Foreign Ministry labelled on Wednesday as unfounded the allegations of a member of the Israeli Knesset that there are “Talebans, who are being prepared for terrorist actions in BiH and who are a threat to Croatia.” Earlier in the week, a member of the Israeli Parliament, Joseph Tommy Lapid, told the Zagreb-based Jutarnji List that “there are hundreds of sleeping Talebans in BiH, who can be a danger for Croatia”.

“The relations between BiH and Israel are good and the statements of irresponsible individuals cannot bring them into the question,” spokesperson for the BiH Foreign Ministry Amer Kapetanovic said on Wednesday. According to Kapetanovic, BiH has joined the global alliance for the fight against terrorism and consequently, the allegations about BiH as a shelter for terrorist are completely unfounded and irresponsible.

Obstacles removed for extradition of former BiH minister from Yugoslavia

Deputy Yugoslav Justice Minister Nebojsa Sarkic told SRNA agency there are no longer any obstacles for the former BiH Interior Minister, Alija Delimustafic, to be handed over to the judicial authorities in BiH. Sarkic could not specify whether and when the extradition would take place. Delimustafic's lawyer Momcilo Bulatovic announced that his client could be extradited already on Thursday, but no such information was confirmed by the federal MUP. Oslobodjenje reports that Delimustafic could arrive in the BiH capital by Friday the latest.

Branch of foreign investment agency opens in Banja Luka

BiH Radio 1 reported that an office of the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA) was inaugurated in Banja Luka on Wednesday. The office, together with the Sarajevo headquarters, will be involved in promoting the BiH market to foreign investors. The Radio noted that the opening of the Banja Luka office of FIPA is in line with the conclusions of the RS National Assembly and is very important for the realisation of the so-called BAT loan of the World Bank for harmonising the business environment in BiH.

Federation

New Croat party created from a splinter HDZ group

A splinter HDZ group of the party representatives in the BiH Parliament led by Miro Grabovac Titan officially withdrew from the HDZ and formed on Wednesday a new political party with a similar name – Croat Democratic Union, or HDU. According to Grabovac, the new party will try to improve the status of Croats in BiH, which is a result of a bad HDZ policy, try to

foster their return, rather than immigration and to do all this through the legal institutions of power in the country. He also said that HDU should be properly registered in time to take part in the October elections. Fena agency reports that Stojan Vrljic, Zdenko Vukic, Jozo Tomic and Ivo Nujic were elected yesterday deputy chairmen of the party. HDZ welcomed the formation of the new party, saying that political pluralism is a good thing for BiH.

Collapse of HDZ avoided in last minute

Vecernji list reports that the branch of HDZ in Posavina was ready to take certain steps in case the Presidency of the party decided not to run for the upcoming elections, what Ante Jelavic and some other party officials were advocating in the beginning. According to VL, officials of HDZ in Posavina Canton were ready to separate completely from the main HDZ in Mostar. President of Cantonal Board HDZ in Posavina Slavko Matic stated that certain steps were prepared to be taken in case that party decided not to run for the elections, but now that everything is over, he does not wish to comment further on this issue. The article says that there are members of Cantonal Board of HDZ in Posavina who thought that it would be better not to take part in the elections, but they were in minority. President of Cantonal Government Ivo Vincetic, who allegedly was very passionate about the idea of secession, said that some people were ready to take certain steps, but not revealing what they would be. The article mentioned that other cantonal branches of the party were ready for secession, indicating Central Bosnia branch of HDZ.

Croatian ambassador Vrbosic commends the HDZ

Slobodna Dalmacija carries a report on the meeting between the newly-elected acting President of the HDZ BiH, Barisa Colak, and Croatian Ambassador in BiH, Josip Vrbosic, which was held on Wednesday. According to the daily, both Colak and Vrbosic were pleased with the two-hour talks. Vrbosic welcomed the HDZ

decision to meet all the pre-requisites for registration for the upcoming elections, stressing that this is a sign of political maturity. Colak said that the only issue the two did not agree upon was the constitutional changes in the entities and the Amendments imposed by the High Representative. He reiterated that the HDZ BiH would use all democratic means to change the imposed constitutional solutions, which are, according to Colak, detrimental to Croats.

Answering a question about three HDZ MPs leaving the party, Colak assessed that it did not represent a serious threat to the party and its electorate. "Stronger names left the HDZ but it did not create major problems", says Colak.

SD concludes the article saying that the HDZ BiH expects Miro Grabovac Titan, Zdenko Vukic and Marko Amidzic to return the mandates to the party.

Vecernji List carries a similar report.

SFOR says more mortars hidden in Mostar area

Commander of the SFOR Multi-National Division South-East (MNDSE) General Maurice Amarger said on Wednesday that the SFOR has information on 4,000 more mortars hidden in the Mostar area. In the past three weeks, SFOR has found 9,000 mortars (120 mm calibre) and three tones of gun powder in secret warehouses in the eastern parts of Mostar. The warehouses were found in the former textile combine Djuro Salaj in Vrapcici settlement, and the premises of the Mostar's tobacco factory and UNIS company, located in the city downtown. Amarger said that if the warehouse in the tobacco factory had exploded for some reason, the consequences would be worse than those caused during the entire war in the city. He added it was very irresponsible to allow the people to live under such a threat. The Head of the OHR regional office in Mostar, Jean-Pierre Bercot, also expressed his concern over the fact that weapons were found six and a half years after

the war. "I support the investigation and punishment of those responsible for this case," he said. (Nearly all media in the Federation and Croatia carried this report)

Federation Prime Minister: Situation in the government is not dramatic

In an interview with Dnevni Avaz, the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, denied allegations that the situation in the Federation government is dramatic because of the rift between the Alliance parties over the Draft Restitution law, Aluminij Mostar, the AM Sped affair and other issues. Commenting on the controversial audit in the Aluminij company in Mostar, Behmen said that the Federation government did not use all its powers to ensure that the audit is fully and properly conducted because this would most likely stop the production in this factory and have negative consequences for the entire Federation.

Party for BiH: Pirates in Aluminij

Slobodna Dalmacija carries a report from a meeting between representatives of BiH Union and Party for BiH held in Sarajevo at which they talked about privatization-related problems, social issues and labor laws. Commenting on the Mostar-based "Aluminij" Company, President of Party for BiH, Safet Halilovic, said that there is "pirate-like privatization with elements of national segregation" taking place in the company. Halilovic added that the Contact group suggests an international arbitration although it would remain unclear who would implement decisions of the arbitration.

Fra Marko Orsolc: Many would like to tear apart the BiH state because they do not want to recognise that it is a historical creation

Jutarnje Novine carries an interview with Marko Orsolc, a BiH Franciscan and a "true friend of the Bosnian state," in which he comments on the internal structure of BiH. "The Entities

are not a solution for BiH. She is a small country, but it represents a historical creation, where all peoples, Serbs, Bosniaks, Croats, Jews and others have been living together for centuries," said Orsolich, adding that every partition of the country was very painful for its citizens. Talking about the Amendments to the Entity constitutions imposed by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, Orsolich said that they represent a great step forward in terms of the country's reintegration. "This was politically a wise move," he said, concluding that in this process, BiH has to reform itself step-by-step.

Jadranko Prlic: We have many thousands of young, educated and successful people of all nationalities in our party

(provided by OHR Mostar)

In an interview with Dnevni List, Jadranko Prlic, the leader of the BiH Pro-European People's Party, stated that members of this party are, first of all, young and successful people, engineers, professors, workers, doctors, lawyers and people from other professions, those who were not compromised. Prlic says that they have already formed Initiative Boards in Mostar, Trebinje, Konjic, Tomislavgrad and Stolac and in June they will form Cantonal Boards in Mostar, Siroki Brijeg, Livno and the regional Board in Trebinje. Asked about their Coalition partners, Prlic said that he expects that in the next few weeks some minor parties will join them, and two parties have already announced it. Asked about his judgment on the current situation in HDZ, Prlic said that he does not follow the situation in HDZ due to lack of interest and lack time. Prlic added that what he stated before the last elections has been confirmed, that is, that HDZ will become a regional party, which will not participate in the authority at the Federation and state level. Prlic says that the destruction of HDZ will continue. According to Prlic, his party will win more votes than HDZ. With regard to the

constitutional changes, Prlic said that they are a step ahead, however, his biggest objection is that they made possible that any people can have majority in any BiH entity.

Republika Srpska

US lifts sanctions on Prijedor

The US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, stated yesterday in Prijedor that the US Administration has officially lifted sanctions against this municipality. Glas Srpski recalls that the sanctions, banning foreign investments in the municipalities Prijedor, Srbinje and Pale were introduced in 1997, due to the war history of the mentioned municipalities. Lifting of the sanctions means that the municipality will get involved in certain assistance programs, especially those related to the economic development.

RS Government adopted draft election law – constitutional changes incorporated

Both Banja Luka dailies quote the Head of the RS Government Press Bureau, Cvijeta Kovacevic, as saying that the RS Government, at its session held yesterday in Banja Luka, adopted the draft election law, with incorporated constitutional changes referring to the election of the RS President and Vice Presidents and members of the Council of Peoples.

Authorities in Srebrenica satisfied with results of donor's conference

The municipal officials in Srebrenica, Milici and Bratunac are satisfied with the outcome of the donor's conference held in New York and they expect accelerated development of the region to take place. Nezavisne Novine quote the Mayor of Srebrenica, Sefik Hafizovic as saying that now, after the conference, he

expected the Chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, and representatives of the UNDP to visit Srebrenica, in order to define priorities.

A Poll shows increasing support for opposition parties in the RS

Nezavisne Novine carries the excerpts from the opinion poll conducted by the Partner Marketing agency which indicates an increasing support for more moderate parties in the RS. According to the poll, 27,2 % supports the SDS, 12,4 % supports the PDP (Party of Democratic Progress) and 11,3 % supports the SNSD (Union of Independent Social Democrats). The results of the opinion poll were presented at a press conference yesterday by the agency director, Miroslav Sutic, who also said that, according to the results and compared to the previous opinion polls, the current RS President, Mirko Sarovic, seems to loose the support of the citizens. He also said that, in spite of the criminal charges, the SNSD leader, Milorad Dodik, has the best starting position. Results of the poll describe the current RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic as the most promising politician.

Brcko District

The elections in Brcko will be held after the implementation of the Final Award

“The elections in the Brcko District will be held separately from the elections in the entities Arbitration and the State of BiH. I will decide on the date of the elections, but the elections will not be held before the Final Decision on Brcko is implemented. The entities will need to give their assent in order to hold the elections”, Ambassador Henry Clarke, the Supervisor of the Brcko District, said on Wednesday. During the press conference held on Wednesday, Clarke announced that the US Government – upon his request – has granted one million

US\$ for de-mining within the Brcko District, especially in the area of Brka and Tinja rivers.

International Community

Wolfgang Petritsch: BiH must fulfil all conditions before visa requirements are abolished

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that BiH has still not fulfilled all requirements which would allow for the abolishment of visa requirements for its citizens traveling abroad. In an article written exclusively for Dnevni Avaz, Petritsch said that he would like to be able to propose to the Peace Implementation Council, as some political parties suggested, to scrap visa regime for BiH citizens. However, he stressed, BiH still has shortcomings in the areas which should be strictly regulated and which, if properly organized, could lead to a visa-free regime. The High Representative said that BiH authorities are working closely with the International Community on those issues and have already achieved significant progress. Most importantly, Petritsch explained, the government has signed the CIPS project, which will introduce order in the messy field of personal documents in BiH and prevent any person to illegally obtain the BiH passport. In addition, the State Border Service has assumed control of nearly all border crossings in BiH, which will help curb illegal immigration and make borders less fluid and less susceptible to the international crime. Once the CIPS project is fully implemented, the State Border Service has been almost fully deployed and the Law on Asylum and Immigration is passed, BiH will be able to make the case for the abolition of the visa regime, explained the High Representative in his [article](#).

Principal Deputy High Representative Hays meets

with the Federation Prime Minister Behmen to discuss returns

Oslobodjenje reports that the Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, met on Wednesday with the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, to discuss the pace of return in this Entity and BiH in general. Hays informed Behmen that the funds earmarked for refugee return are decreasing and that this process needs to get a new impetus in order to continue. According to the daily, the two officials discussed the formation of a new body at the level of BiH which would co-ordinate all activities related to return. This body would include representatives from both Entities, the State as well as the International Community.

Petritsch to pay a farewell visit to Banja Luka

Banja Luka OHR spokesperson, Sonja Pastuovic, announced at a press conference held yesterday in Banja Luka that the High Representative to BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, will pay a farewell visit to Banja Luka on May 22. Nezavisne Novine quote Pastuovic as saying that the High Representative will, during his stay, meet with the RS political leaders and representatives of religious communities in this entity.

Slobodna Dalmacija: SFOR MND South East Commander says up to 4,000 mortar shells still remain hidden in Mostar region

"Two big caches and a smaller one have been discovered in Mostar region since three weeks. In Vrapcici "Tekstilni Kombinat" on Wednesday 24th April, in "Mostar Tobacco Factory" on Friday 10th May and in "UNIS Telekom" compound on Saturday 11th May 2002. In these three hidden illegal dumps, more than 9.000 x 120mm mortar shells, 3 tons of powder bags, two booby traps and many other types of ammunition have been found in a few days. All these ammunition have been or will be destroyed

by SFOR in the days to come,” the SFOR Multinational Division South East Commander, Major General Maurice Amarger, said in a [press releases](#) issued on Wednesday. He added that, according to SFOR sources, up to 4000 other 120mm mortar shells still remained hidden in Mostar region.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje editorial : Petritsch's Retirees

In a leading editorial in Oslobodjenje, Gojko Beric writes about the former BiH and Federation officials, Ante Jelavic and Edhem Bicakcic, who were first removed by Decisions of the High Representative and then charged with undermining defence capabilities of the state and embezzlement of large sums of funds. The two refused to succumb and voluntarily resign from their senior posts in their respective parties and continued using nationalist rhetoric, supported by HDZ and SDA, to start the pre-election campaign. Beric notes that there is a great danger that the BiH public feels nostalgic for the past times of nationalist parties and supports them at the upcoming elections.

Dnevni List: Marathon runners have run their lap of honor

By Ivica Glibusic (provided by Ljubisa Markic)

Referring to the fact that Miro Grabovac Titan left HDZ and formed his own party, Glibusic says that everything is fine with all politicians and especially the Croat ones as long as they are members of the party and as long as they hold leading positions. However, when they feel that they cannot advance in their careers or that their positions have been endangered they form their own parties. Glibusic wonders whether such people have moral responsibility because it took them ten years to realize that they had to give more to the people who

elected them. Apart from Titan, Glibusic also names Jadranko Prlic and Kresimir Zubak and says that HDZ gave them everything and wonders as to what the three of them gave to the Croat people. Glibusic concludes that now when the Croat people has been brought to the situation that nobody represents them actually, new parties with the same cadre are being formed. Glibusic says that the fact that they left HDZ after ten years and said that everything is wrong in this party is more than hypocritical.

Dnevni List: Sinless

By Miro Nikolic (provided by OHR Mostar)

In his editorial Miro Nikolic says that he 'apologizes' because he wrote about the mortar rounds found in Vrapcici although Kirsten Haupt, a UN Spokesperson, recommended journalists not to deal with 'the Vrapcici case'. He criticizes the International Community saying that very often they behave towards BiH's peoples as towards tribes and that the behavior of Kirsten Haupt is an example of it. Nikolic says that very often they resort to undemocratic methods and 'imposing' of democracy and that they are infallible in their decisions, charges and verdicts. He names the HR, Jacques Paul Klein, the Head of the UN Mission in BiH, IPTF Commissioners etc. Nikolic mentions that articles on the involvement of IC representatives in some criminal activities appeared in the foreign press, however, 'the investigation showed that these claims are not correct'. He wonders whether we have ever heard that some member of IC has made a mistake. Nikolic concludes that many members of IPTF come from the countries in which basic human rights are being violated.

Headlines

Glas Srpski

- Yet another arms storage discovered in Mostar: Lots of weapons, a little bit of dust
- Prijedor: America lifted sanctions

Nezavisne Novine

- SFOR on the trace of another illegal arms storage: Another 4000 mortars in Mostar
- In the year 2001, the RS Customs Administration achieved only 83 % of the projected revenues: 72,5 % of the RS citizens aware of corruption in the RS Customs Administration
- RS Tax Administration: Sarovic's suite sealed

Dnevni List

- Mortar rounds and general security situation in Mostar: Another 4000 mortar rounds hidden in Mostar region
- New political party established in Sarajevo: Titan is head of Croat Democratic Union (CDU)
- Interview: Jadranko Prlic, one of the founders of Pro-European People's Party

Vecernji List

- Posavina branch planned secession: Collapse of HDZ avoided in the last minute
- After on month of silence about the infection in the Mostar hospital: Surgery closed because of infection

Oslobodjenje

- Alija Delimustafic to be extradited by Friday

Juarnje Novine

- 4,000 shells still hiding in Mostar

Dnevni Avaz

- Alija Behmen: Situation in the government is not dramatic