BiH Media Round-up 18/12/2001

BiH State-related Issues

- Croatia and BiH parliamentary delegations meet in Zagreb
- BiH Presidency agrees platform for the inaugural session of the BiH/FRY inter-sate cooperation council
- Dnevni List: **Bosniak parallel formations act within BiH Presidency**

Federation

- Bosniak indictees welcomed home from Hague
- Vecernji List: No one knows if and when Halilovic will resume his ministerial duties
- Vecernji List: Interview with Jasmin Durakovic, the Director of the Federation Television
- Hercegovacka Banka provisional Administration says HPT and Monitor M violated Law on Banking
- Dnevni List: **World Bank denies allegations of Minister Suada Hadzovic**
- Dnevni List: Present time of Croats in Stolac
- Slobodna Dalmacija: **OSCE organized an informal meeting of young people with Mostar Deputy Mayor Hamdija Jahic, called Two-way Street**
- Slobodna Dalmacija: **Vitez / Zenica-based refugees, displaced persons and war prisoners associations sent letter to The Hague and Petritsch**
- Vecernji List: Anic says will not testify against Jelavic as scheduled

Republika Srpska

- RS Prime Minister says RS Government will soon become multi-ethnic
- RS Interior Ministry checking on Pandurevic's address
- DNS requests resignation of RS Government
- RS Public Prosecutor's Office filed charges against six managers of the Oil Refinery in Brod

International Community

- The European police to replace IPTF in BiH?
- EU continues financially supporting BiH
- A State Department source says Karadzic and Mladic will not be arrested

soon

- OHR spokesman reiterates RS needs reforms

Editorials

- Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine
- Dnevni List: Jelavic's popularity

BiH State-related Issues

Croatia and BiH parliamentary delegations meet in Zagreb

The talks of the parliamentary delegations of BiH and Croatia held in Zagreb on Monday were open, and it was agreed that these kinds of meetings be held four times per year. Croatia's parliamentarians said their country was interested in strengthening the cooperation with BiH as the state and reducing the cooperation with the entities. During its visit to Croatia, the delegation of both houses of the BiH Parliament, led by Chairman of the BiH Parliamentary House of Representatives Zeljko Mirjanic and Chairman of the BiH Parliamentary House of Peoples Sejfudin Tokic, also met with Croatian Prime Minister Ivica Racan and Croatian Deputy Foreign Minister Vesna Cvjetkovic-Kurelec. After the meeting of the two parliamentary delegations, Mirjanic said that the great interest had been expressed for signing bilateral agreements on the prevention of double taxation and on the traffic in the local border areas. "We believe the time has came for the economic cooperation between BiH and Croatia to be put in the focus," Mirjanic added. According to Mirjanic, both sides support the full implementation of the recently signed agreement on the refugee return. Tokic said that the ratification of the Ploce Port agreement had also been discussed at the meeting. "BiH understands that the amendments

to that agreement might be proposed, but we want that Croatia ratifies it first as soon as possible, in order that its implementation could start," Tokic said. Speaker of the Croatian Parliament Zlatko Tomcic said that this agreement was signed in special circumstances, adding that the best solution was that the two governments agree disputed parts of the agreement, after which the Parliament would ratify the agreement in the next month or two. "Croatia wants to develop good neighboring and friendly relations with BiH as the state, and to abolish the cooperation with the particular entities, since we are interested in the creation of an atmosphere in the neighborhood which will be appropriate for the further steps in the process of joining the European Union (EU) and other integration," Tomcic said.

BiH Presidency agrees platform for the inaugural session of the BiH/FRY inter-sate cooperation council

The inter-state council for cooperation between BiH and Yugoslavia is expected to meet in Sarajevo on Tuesday and discuss the cooperation in the fields of transport, protection of human rights, development of economy, and implementation of the significant infrastructure projects important for both countries. The BiH Presidency concluded on Monday that an agreement should be reached with Yugoslavia as soon as possible on the return of refugees and displaced persons and that discrimination of BIH Federation citizens on borders with Yugoslavia should be abolished. According to Oslobodjenje, Presidency Spokesman Boris Kujundzic said after a session that the Presidency members had agreed a platform for the talks with the Yugoslav delegation. Jutarnje Novine reports that the Yugoslav delegation headed by President Vojislav Kostunica is also scheduled to meet with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in the course of the day.

Dnevni List: Bosniak parallel formations act within BiH Presidency

Written by Vladimir Bujic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

On the November 1, 2001, an application was sent to PTT BiH asking them 'to approve a repair of BMW, license plates 185-A-287'. According to the title of the document, the application was sent by the company for the protection of the BiH Presidency, called 'Biser', which is a part of the Special Unit of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of BiH. The application was signed by Osman Mehmedagic, the Chief of Staff. According to the document that Dnevni List exclusively publishes, it seems that there are 7 and not 6 Ministries, that act at the level of BiH. The seventh Ministry is the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of BiH. In spite of exerted efforts, we did not succeed to revel as to who is the Minister of this Ministry and whether he recognizes Zlatko Lagumdzija as his Head. On the other hand, it is obvious and very intriguing that PTT BiH, a powerful and state company, recognizes the legitimacy and, probably, legality of this, by all accounts, secret Ministry. At this moment, it is hard to reveal in which way are connected one public company, the parallel special unit and the special company for the protection of BiH Presidency called 'Biser'. The document was signed by 'the Chief of Staff' and afterwards, on October 1, 2001 it was forwarded to PTT BiH, that is, to the same company that SFOR turned upside down last year when they were looking for evidence on anti-Dayton acting of this company, which was at that time run by Alija Izetbegovic's son-in-law. Mehmedagic called 'Osmica', 'the Chief of Staff' himself, is the most loyal member of the security team of Alija Izetbegovic, a former member of a war and

post-war BiH Presidency, who is now an honorable SDA President.

Federation

Bosniak indictees welcomed home from Hague

Hundreds of family members, friends and former soldiers on Monday welcomed home three Bosniak wartime army officers provisionally released by the U.N. war crimes tribunal. Retired generals Mehmed Alagic and Enver Hadzihasanovic and Brigadier Amir Kubura were arrested in August, charged with responsibility for war crimes against Croats committed mainly by foreign Islamic "Mujahedeen" fighters in 1993-4. The U.N. court in The Hague decided last Thursday to release the trio pending their trial, after the government of the BiH Federation guaranteed they would return to the tribunal whenever requested to do so. Hadzihasanovic and Alagic were the main commanders in the central Bosnia area, where the Mujahedeen, who flocked from Islamic countries to help Bosnia's Muslims defend themselves, largely operated and participated in fighting. Kubura was the commander of the central Bosnian 7th Muslim brigade, which was known for its explicitly religious ideology, Islamic insignia and soldiers saying prayers before battle. Dozens of ex-soldiers from the 7th Muslim brigade welcomed their ex-commander in front of the Sarajevo airport building, waving an Islamic flag and reciting prayers. "We in Bosnia and Herzegovina know well that justice may be slow but it will show its face eventually," Kubura said. Alagic and Hadzihasanovic expressed gratitude to their supporters and the Federation Government.

Vecernji List: No one knows if and when Halilovic will resume his ministerial duties

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List says the Federation Government still has no information as to whether and when Sefer Halilovic will resume his regular duties at the Ministry for Refugees and Welfare, although there were announcements that he could do it as soon

as he returned from The Hague.

Public Information Office of the Federation Government told the daily that Halilovic did not come to work yesterday and they did not know if he would be present in the Government session scheduled for today.

In a short telephone conversation, Halilovic told the reporters that he could not talk about whether he was intending to return to work or when.

Government members expect to receive information about Halilovic's plans from Prime Minister Behmen at the Government session today.

Vecernji List: Interview with Jasmin Durakovic, the Director of the Federation Television

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an interview for Vecernji List, Jasmin Durakovic, the Director of the Federation Television, says that the FTV launch was marked with three major problems. Firstly, the situation was not brilliant and required substantial changes, so that the entire staff structure, from the persons involved in the programming to those dealing with the finances, have been replaced in the last month and a half.

"Secondly, the FTV launch was marked with the shutdown of the HRT signal and I do not think it was a wisest decision of the Regulatory Agency. Of course, I am in favor of having the electronic media space legally regulated in this country, but this way the public accent has been shifted on the FTV. It caused a shock in one part of the public because the HRT is stronger and more comprehensive in program terms.

Finally, some of the persons involved in the politics here have seen my appointment and the appointments of some other people as breaking away from their political control. I do

realize that the FTV must have coordinated relations with the Government and the Parliament, but I think those relations should be established on the principles applied in Western Europe. That caused a shock in some of the politicians because they are not used to having such relations with the Television," says Durakovic.

To the interviewer's remark that the FTV teletext is in the Bosniak language alone, Durakovic says that should not be a problem and admitted they were not paying much attention to that. "However, by the end of the year we shall come up with an analysis of the program contents in the first two months of the FTV. It will surely show that Croat programs are indeed represented and that there have been more exclusively Croat programs than Bosniak ones. Informative and political program is indeed an exception. There we have objective problems emanating from the fact that we have not managed to complete it so as to meet the professional standards and have the required national balance. In that aspect, I do accept criticism as the Director," says Durakovic.

Hercegovacka Banka provisional Administration says HPT and Monitor M violated Law on Banking

According to Oslobodjenje, the Hercegovacka Banka Provisional Administration has explained that the Mostar-based Croat Post Offices and Telecommunications (HPT) and Monitor M Company, as well as their authorized managers are on the list of depositors who are currently not allowed to withdraw their money from the Bank. Both companies have overstepped the legal limits in amounts of credits taken from the Bank.

Dnevni List: World Bank denies allegations of Minister Suada Hadzovic

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

In an attempt to justify the restrictive material of the Law on the Basic Rights of Invalids and Families of Killed and

Missing Soldiers, which the Homeland War Association members marked as unacceptable, the Federation Minister for Soldiers, Suada Hadzovic, said that the Law was produced following the request and under the pressure of the World Bank.

Ivan Pekic, the Secretary General of the Association of the Families of Killed and Missing Croat Soldiers of the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosnia, on behalf of the Croat side, and Ismet Serak and Avdo Hebib on behalf of the Bosniak side, met with World Bank representatives.

Pekic says that the World Bank told them that they had nothing to do with the Law and said that it was up to them and their Government, The World Bank was willing to help it the Government would ask them to. “Therefore, they will not be making pressure, but only respond if the Government asks them for help,” says Pekic. While the World Bank representatives were explaining this to them, Minister Hadzovic, who was present in the meeting, kept silent.

Having learned this, Presidents of all Cantonal Associations of Killed and Missing Soldiers and HVIDRA met in Posusje and decided to hold meetings in cantons in order to make arrangements for the actions they plan to undertake. Pekic says these actions, which include road and border blocks, will be conducted in coordination with the Bosniak associations.

Dnevni List: Present time of Croats in Stolac

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Where are we now, when it is obvious that ‘Protestant-Islam Coalition’, which in ‘a democratic tone’ crushes to powder everything that does not belong to it, is on the political scene? A high-ranked IC official, who is Protestant and who is not inclined to the Croats (luckily, he is leaving soon), shows up in Stolac on a regular basis with two interpreters of the Bosniak nationality, where in order to make a balance one sits on his left and the other one on his right side. Those

who know English better, and who heard their translations, say that their interpreting is not of a high-quality. What else could you expect but that some Aida (a female Bosniak name) works for AID! However, in spite of everything the Croats from this area will stay here and survive.

Slobodna Dalmacija: OSCE organized an informal meeting of young people with Mostar Deputy Mayor Hamdija Jahic, called Two-way Street

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Asked by the attendants of the meeting about the transfer of the students from Gymnasium Aleksa Santic, that Bosniak children attend, to Old Gymnasium, that children from Mostar West attend at the moment, the Deputy Mayor was assuring them that he will demand that they attend the Old Gymnasium together. Next week he will have meetings with IC representatives and he will demand from them that the Old Gymnasium becomes 'a joint elite educational institution'. He stated that the construction of two smaller sports halls have been planned, as well as, the establishment of the joint Sport Association for the whole town. The Municipality Southwest stated that they cannot maintain the stadium, however, everybody turned a deaf ear to the offer of the City Administration. He hopes that the stadium will become the city one. He expressed the stand of the City Administration that neither Velez nor Zrinjski will get a financial assistance, that they have been receiving so far, if they do not join the Sport Association, which should be established soon.

Asked to comment on the attack on a student of the Croat nationality, which took place in Mostar East last week, he stressed that that in the line of both peoples there are fools, who are ready to do something like it. Until the Police arrest and sentence perpetrators of all similar crimes, regardless of the fact who they are and what they are doing, such attacks will be taking place. For this reason the Rule of

Law should be introduced. The efficiency of the Police and protection of the citizens should be improved, because then, according to Jahic, BiH will become a part of Europe.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Vitez / Zenica-based refugees, displaced persons and war prisoners associations sent letter to The Hague and the High Representative

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The letter says that these Associations were stunned and afraid when they received the information that three Generals and one Brigadier of the BiH Army are on a pre-trial release. The letter also says that from now on they believe that The Hague and International Community, led by the HR, are responsible for the prevention of return of the Croats to Zenica and for a change of demographic situation on this territory.

Vecernji List: Anic says will not testify against Jelavic as scheduled

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Federation Defense Minister Mijo Anic stated for Vecernji List yesterday that he was not going to testify against Ante Jelavic today. He says he received summons while he was away on a trip, so that it was returned from the Federation Ministry. He claims not to be a witness and not to know in what capacity he was summoned.

He says he personally has nothing against Jelavic, but there are certain matters that need to be cleared up, such as a part of the documentation that has been unavailable to them ever since the times of Ante Jelavic and Miroslav Prce (former Defense Ministers). He thinks that must be why he was summoned, but does not think he is the one to talk about that because he is just a person informed by others of the problem

of the lack of documentation in the Ministry.

Anic does not think the trial against Jelavic and others is a rigged one, but since the indictment focused on the undermining of the system, one could say that it happens in all places and that a million people could be put on trial for that. “If Jelavic is taken as the first experiment, it will only be in his favour,” said Anic.

Republika Srpska

RS Prime Minister says RS Government will soon become multi-ethnic

Nezavisne Novine quotes Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic as saying that the RS Government should become multi-ethnic but not in line with the 1991 Census. “Insisting on the 1991 Census would only create an unrealistic image and would also remind people of the system that existed before the war when only a formal representation of peoples was in place in BiH,” said Ivanic. He pointed out that it was very important to set up an efficient system of protection of national interests and ensure its functioning that will give results, all in order to make sure that the RS would become a stabile entity next year.

RS Interior Ministry checking on Pandurevic’s address

Nezavisne Novine quotes Republika Srpska Deputy Justice Minister Mladjan Mandic as saying that the ICTY has delivered the indictment against General Pandurevic to the RS authorities. “RS Justice Ministry received the indictment and it issued a “location warrant”, said Mandic. Note: location warrant means that the RS authorities are checking the address and whereabouts of General Pandurevic. Mandic also says that if Pandurevic is an active member of the RS armed forces then

the RS Police cannot arrest him. On the other side, the press office at the RS Defense Ministry states that Pandurevic is not an active member of the RS Army and that he has been retired. The paper also states that General Pandurevic currently works as the RS President's advisor for military issues in the RS Government's Bureau in Belgrade. The paper quotes FRY Interior Minister Zoran Zivkovic as saying that he does not know anything about Pandurevic's whereabouts. He says he does not have the information that Pandurevic is on the FRY territory nor that he is employed with the RS Government's Bureau in Belgrade. When asked whether the FRY Interior Ministry was going to arrest Pandurevic, Zivkovic said that the FRY Interior Ministry is not in charge of carrying out that task. The paper also quotes ICTY Spokeswoman Florence Hartman as saying that the ICTY knows where Pandurevic is not specifying details. Hartman also rejected to comment on the information according to which Pandurevic is in Belgrade.

DNS requests resignation of RS Government

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the Democratic National Alliance (DNS) requested the resignation of the RS Government and accused the RS Prime Minister of having known about the High Representative's request to form RS executive authorities in line with the 1991 Census. DNS President Dragan Kostic told a news conference that by filing charges against former Director of the RS Public Revenues Administration Dragan Veselinovic, the current RS authorities were continuing with a witch-hunt against the opposition.

RS Public Prosecutor's Office filed charges against six managers of the Oil Refinery in Brod

Both Banja Luka dailies report that the Regional Public Prosecutor's Office from Doboj pressed charges against 6 managers of the Oil Refinery from Brod. These six managers are indicted for misuse of position thus causing the potential damage to the budget that amounts to 12 million KM. The six

managers are: Vojin Mujicic (General Manager of the Oil Refinery), Milenko Pantic (Director of the Economic Sector), Obren Trifkovic (Manger of the Commercial Sector), Zeljko Savic (Manager of the Production Sector), Milan Vukasinovic (Manager of the Sales Department) and Nada Pantic (Manager of the Refinery Lab).

International Community

The European police to replace IPTF in BiH?

Oslobodjenje reports that all until holding the European Union summit during the past weekend in Laken, it had been presumed that the UN mandate under which the IPTF carries out its operations in BiH would be replaced with the similar OSCE mandate. Such the resolution was also included in a document on the international organizations restructuring proposed by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, at the session of the Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board in Brussels last month. However, the EU leaders declared in Laken that the common European defense system including the police forces with its initial up to 5,000 members could start its operations. If the decision is made that the current international police forces in BiH continue their operations under the EU mandate, it would mean that the EU has decided to be fully effective in creating its own defense identity separately from the United States.

EU continues financially supporting BiH

The European Commission has provided 5,428,422 Euro (nearly 11 million KM) for the rehabilitation of medium and low voltage electricity networks in BiH. The contract on the issue was signed in Sarajevo on Monday by Head of the EC Delegation to BiH Hansjorg Kretschmer and representative of the Dalekovod Company Zeljko Lakic. According to a press release from the EC carried by BiH Federation media, the aim of the project is to

repair the electricity distribution systems destroyed during the war. Some areas of BiH are still without electricity and other areas are supplied through systems repaired by emergency measures. “Therefore these systems need to cover more capacity and reliability to cope with the growing demands of the return of refugees and the expected resurgence of local enterprises,” the press release read. The rehabilitation of medium and low voltage electricity networks covers the following areas: Odzak, Novi Grad, Orasje, Kiseljak, Glamoc, Drvar, Bosansko Grahovo, Kupres (under the responsibility of the Herceg-Bosna Elektroprivreda) and Banja Luka and Bijeljina (under the responsibility of the Republika Srpska Elektroprivreda). The project will facilitate the re-establishment of power supplies to return areas and assist sustainable minority returns.

A State Department source says Karadzic and Mladic will not be arrested soon

Nezavisne Novine quotes an anonymous source close to the US State Department as saying that it will take a lot of time until the ICTY brings Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic to justice. The source told the paper that the exact location of Radovan Karadzic was still unknown except the information that he was hiding in underground caves located between eastern parts of the RS and Monte Negro. “The address of Ratko Mladic is known as well as the fact that the FRY Army units are protecting him. The same thing is with three officers of former JNA, indicted for war crimes committed in Croatia, Veselin Sljivancanin, Mile Mrksic and Mile Radic”, said the source. He added that this had also been told to the representatives of the Croat parties from BiH during their recent visit to the Department of State. The paper further states that regardless of the fact that the international community has been speculating about the arrest of the two most wanted indicted war criminals, there are some rumors in the US that the arrest of Ratko Mladic is not possible because it would cause a strong reaction or coup d’etat in the FRY

Army that would further weaken the fragile position of Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran Djindjic.

OHR spokesman reiterates RS needs reforms

Nezavisne Novine quotes OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic as saying that the High Representative has never said he would eliminate the Republika Srpska, but that he has simply stated the RS would disappear by its own without necessary reforms. “RS citizens want a normal life. However, the unemployment rate is high and those with jobs are striking because they are receiving either low or irregular salaries. The Dayton Peace Accords also includes a number of requirements the Entities must meet including the return of refugees and displaced persons, respect for human rights, cooperation with the ICTY, and respect for the role of the state institutions, as well as a positive support to this role. In all of these areas, the engagement of the RS has not been as required which has a highly detrimental effect on its image abroad”, said Milisic. Milisic also pointed out that the RS is set up by the DPA and that the High Representative has a mandate to ensure it’s implementation.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus column, Mirko Sagolj wrote about the sixth Dayton agreement’s anniversary. He emphasized that even international officials in BiH had started acknowledging the agreement did not provide a sufficient framework for the establishment of a normal state. In addition, as long as Republika Srpska continues supporting a Karadzic and Milosevic-like policy, the peace agreement can be considered an international award for genocide. Edina Sidran concluded in the Avaz Commentary of the Day that the BiH authorities at all levels should do more to improve poor financial situation in

the BiH cinematography. In the Jutarnje Novine The Seal editorial, Miroslav Petrovic criticized BOSS leader Mirnes Ajanovic for his recent open attack on the FTV journalist Rasim Borcak.

Dnevni List: Jelavic's popularity

Written by Alenko Zornija (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The latest research conducted for the OSCE Mission in BiH one year before the elections in the country (if they take place at all) shows that the trends have not considerably changed. Although the voters are more interested in economic issues, one gets an impression that the main battle is still being led in the field of protection of interests of ethnic communities in other words the voters are (still) quite sensitive when it comes to "national issues". It indicates that the aforementioned problem has not been adequately solved. The poll showed that the SDP gained a bit, but it would appear that it is only the case in the Bosniak majority areas (simultaneously, the SDA and Party for BiH, lose popularity). On the other hand, the Serbs and Croats in BiH stay loyal to nationally oriented parties on the right wing. Especially when it comes to the BiH Croats, it shows that, when it comes to their national identity, they can sense fear that they could be endangered, discriminated, outvoted…The issue of them being afraid, regardless of the fact should they be afraid or not, should be more thoroughly analyzed. Aforementioned conclusion is backed by the research according to which Ante Jelavic is together with Zlatko Lagumdzija the most popular politician in the country and he would probably be supported even more nowadays than during the last elections. Despite (or because) the HR, Wolfgang Petritsch, banning his political engagement. Why is Jelavic that popular? There are many possible answers to that. It is obvious that his popularity increasing is quite the opposite to the intensity of the campaign against him, which is used to try and remove him from the BiH political scene together with the HDZ BiH, reads Dnevni List.