

# BiH Media Round-up 19/12/2001

## BiH State-related Issues

- An inaugural session of the BiH/FRY inter-state cooperation council held in Sarajevo
- BiH Council of Ministers fails to agree draft state law on the electricity

## Federation

- Federation police raided facilities of two Islamic humanitarian organizations in BiH
- Sefer Halilovic has not been Federation Minister since October 23?
- BiH Federation Government hold session in Sarajevo
- The Alliance for Change leaders to meet with Petritsch on Wednesday
- Mehmedagic says state attorneys will be authorized to review repossessed occupancy rights
- Dnevni List: If House of Peoples is abolished HDZ to proclaim third entity
- Dnevni List: **An investigation against a controversial HVO General and former Head of Monitor has been launched**
- Vecernji List: Buljubasic testified, Anic did not
- Vecernji List: **Buljubasic claims Anic's visit to Israel damaging BiH's relations with Arab countries**
- Vecernji List: **The Hague indictees at state functions**

## Republika Srpska

- Vinko Pandurevic working with RS Government Bureau in Belgrade
- SNSD General Secretary says Sarovic, Cavic and Kalinic arranged elimination of the RS
- RS President says RS to resist any change through blackmails
- Prnjavor Police arrest four persons suspected of

desecrating Bosniak graves

### International Community

- CRA Chief Executive Officer leaves BiH
- OHR accepts CRA Torngren's resignation
- US requests big cut in NATO troops in BiH
- Petritsch to visit Banja Luka on Thursday
- OHR and OSCE disappointed with non-adoption of the Federation Defamation Law
- German Chancellor to visit BiH on Friday
- Vecernji List: **Mistakes by international organizations strengthen HDZ, SDA and SDS positions**
- Vjesnik: Croatia's agreement with BiH on Ploce Port and Neum still in parliamentary procedure

### Editorials

- Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine
- Dnevni List: Does Croatia finances BiH Croats or do they finance Croatia
- Dnevni List: **Whose chair is shaking**
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Why are Croats prepared to even beg Petritsch to stop "helping" them?

## BiH State-related Issues

### **An inaugural session of the BiH/FRY inter-state cooperation council held in Sarajevo**

BiH media report that an inaugural session of the BiH/FRY Inter-state Cooperation Council was held on Tuesday in Sarajevo. The delegations of the two countries headed by the BiH Presidency members and FRY President Vojislav Kostunica expressed satisfaction with the results of the first meeting, saying that the issue of a possible withdrawal of the BiH aggression and genocide charges against FRY had not been discussed. BiH and FRY signed two agreements on the occasion,

which is the agreement on the improvement and protection of investments and another on the customs cooperation and mutual assistance. According to Oslobodjenje, at a separate meeting, BiH Foreign Minister Zlatko Lagumdžija and his Yugoslav counterpart Goran Svilanović agreed to start talks about consular issues in January next year, which means that all discriminations towards the BiH citizens at the border crossings with Yugoslavia will be prevented. Jutarnje Novine carries SRNA news agency report, according to which, High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch said that he had discussed in detail the interstate relations between BiH and FRY during his meeting with Kostunica. "President Kostunica emphasized that FRY supported an integrated BiH, which is very important for further relations in the region," Petritsch said. (see attachment for the [Reuters article](#) on the event)

## **BiH Council of Ministers fails to agree draft state law on the electricity**

Oslobodjenje reports that the BiH Council of Ministers failed at its session in Sarajevo on Tuesday to agree on the BiH draft law on the electric power, as well as the draft law on the conflict of interests in the state institutions. The continuation of the discussion on the issues is scheduled for Thursday.

## **Federation**

### **Federation police raided facilities of two Islamic humanitarian organizations in BiH**

According to Oslobodjenje, UNMIBH Spokesman Stefo Lehmann told journalists in Sarajevo on Tuesday that, while raiding into the facilities of the two Islamic humanitarian organizations at the end of the last week, the BiH Federation Interior Ministry members had apprehended three Egyptians, two Sudanians and two Algerians. They also seized documentation

related to the operation of the Taibah International and Global Relief Foundation aid groups. Lehmann added that the apprehended persons had been released immediately due to a lack of evidence. A Ministry's public relations officer told the newspaper that the action had been taken on the basis of the BiH Federation Supreme Court's order.

## **Sefer Halilovic has not been Federation Minister since October 23?**

According to Dnevni Avaz front-page story, regardless of all the speculations and contradictory statements, Sefer Halilovic officially has not been the BiH Federation Minister of Social Welfare, Refugees and Displaced Persons since October 23 this year, when the entity president, Karlo Filipovic, had signed a decision on the issue. However, Jutarnje Novine sources claim that the decision on the Halilovic's dismissal has never been published in the Official Gazette, which means that he has never officially come into force. Jutarnje Novine also emphasizes that, at a consultative meeting held on Tuesday in Sarajevo, Halilovic and BiH Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen agreed in principle on the Halilovic return to the office. On the other side, according to the OSCE Election Rules and Regulation, which applied for the last year's general elections, persons indicted by The Hague Tribunal cannot hold public offices. Contrary to this rule, The Hague Tribunal Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte said in a letter sent to the BiH federation Government that, concerning her Office, there were no obstacles that Halilovic re-assumes his ministerial duties.

## **BiH Federation Government hold session in Sarajevo**

Dnevni Avaz reports that the BiH Federation Government adopted, at its session held in Sarajevo on Tuesday, the draft amendments to the law on the usage of the entity flag and coat of arms. The Government also considered an information of the Federation Defense Ministry prepared in regard of the decision

made by the BiH Chamber for Human Rights to return the pre-war apartments to the five former Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) officers. Since it is about a complex issue with possible serious implications on other cases, the Government tasked the entity Prime Minister to address the High Representative in order that this situation is overcome.

## **The Alliance for Change leaders to meet with Petritsch on Wednesday**

According to Dnevni Avaz, the Alliance for Change leaders will meet with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Wednesday to discuss constitutional reform including the protection of vital national interests in the both entities. The issue of the representation of the members of all constituent peoples in the executive bodies at all levels will also be discussed, BiH Federation Vice-president Safet Halilovic told the newspaper. At the meeting, the Alliance will be represented by Jozo Krizanovic, Beriz Belkic, Zlatko Lagumdzija, Karlo Filipovic, Safet Halilovic, Alija Behmen, Nikola Grabovac, Kresimir Zubak, Rasim Kadic, Ivo Komsic and Ismet Briga.

## **Mehmedagic says state attorneys will be authorized to review repossessed occupancy rights**

The BiH Federation Minister for Urban Planning, Ramiz Mehmedagic, told Dnevni Avaz that the Ministry would make instructions on the review of the renewed occupancy right contracts, which would oblige the public attorneys to take the responsibility for the process. According to Mehmedagic, the officials of the Ministry will soon meet with OHR legal experts to discuss details of the documents.

## **Dnevni List: If House of Peoples is abolished HDZ to proclaim third entity**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

As written before by the Dnevni List, according to which the current international administration in BiH together with the Bosniak-Muslim parties, foremost the SDP and Party for BiH, will re-route 100.000 Bosniak votes for Kresimir Zubak and the NHI thus introducing the suitable Croat politicians for cooperation with the IC and not ones that are supported by the Croat electorate, reads Dnevni List (...) The second project, aimed at rigging of the election of the Croat member of the BiH Presidency is being conceived by Zlatko Lagumdžija and Haris Silajdžić. According to the daily, the Party for BiH will nominate their candidate for the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency whilst the Lagumdžija's SDP, predominantly Bosniak, will nominate the Croat member of the Presidency. There will be no lack of support for each other so the certain voters will be given instructions from their parties as to how and for whom to vote in order to have the Bosniak electorate electing the Croat member of the Presidency. This project has a price tag attached to it, of course, the price being the post of the Prime Minister. If the deal goes through, Lagumdžija would be supported by the Party for BiH to be elected for the BiH Prime Minister.

The same article also carries a source from the HDZ pinnacle as saying that the HDZ would not accept the abolishment of the House of Peoples, the chamber being the *conditio sine qua non* for the HNS parties. The same source added that if the House of Peoples were abolished, the possibilities of the protection of the Croat people would be abolished too, so they would have to proclaim the Croat federal unit in BiH", reads Dnevni List.

## **Dnevni List: An investigation against a controversial HVO General and former Head of Monitor has been launched**

Written by Marko Markovic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The MoI of the West Herzegovina Canton questioned Ignac Rakic, a former Head of Monitor company, and Ivan Medic, a retired

General and former President of Football Club Brotnjo from Citluk.

The investigation is being conducted at the request of the Croatian Interpol Office, and it is connected because of the suspicion that criminal activities related to the oil import, tax evasion and falsifying of documents were committed through Croherc Company. From source from the Federation level, through which Rakic's and Medic's statements were forwarded to the Croatian Interpol Office, we have learnt that Rakic, as a former Monitor Head, has endangered the position of General Medic with his statement.

Both General Medic and a former Head Rakic responded to the summons and thus the announced arrest, that some circles, yearning for a spectacle, were wishing for, was avoided. Ivan Medic is living in Split at the moment where his wife owns a boutique and formally he cut off all connections with the HVO, Herzegovinian economy and Football Club Brotnjo. During the weekend we failed to establish a contact with him, and from the circles close to him we have learnt 'that he is trying to get money that the Citluk Premier League side owes him'. The investigation on Monitor, that is, on Monitor M, a new company owned by Ljubo Cesic Rojs, could turn into a new scandal related to the HDZ leadership because there is a try to involve Ante Jelavic, the party leadership and some other retired Generals into it.

During the last 6 post-Dayton years Medic and his friends, mostly recruited from the HVO Logistics, have become the financial lords of Herzeg Bosnia. Among the things they were doing, the oil import was the most profitable and the main supplier for the BiH territory was Croherc Company controlled by Medic.

In the context of the investigation on Monitor Company a recent statement of Johan Verheyeden, a Provisional Administration Spokesperson, who stated 'that during the

investigation they concluded that by giving the loans the bank undertook a great risk, is very interesting. Thus, at one moment the bank gave a loan to Monitor M amounting to 50% of its total capital.' From the office of Ante Jelavic it was stated that 'Jelavic does not have anything to do with Monitor and that he and his close family do not own a single share of the aforementioned company.

With regard to the investigation on Hercegovacka Bank and Monitor, in order to check whether there are evidence to press charges against high-ranked officials of the former authority, Radovan Ortynski, a Croatian State Attorney, demanded from his Sarajevo colleagues to check if there are evidence (and if there is no evidence to find them) for the crimes committed by Croatian politicians, who were performing important duties in Croatia and who at the same time had a considerable influence on the Croat policy in BiH. It is about Damir Zoric, a former Croatian Ambassador in Sarajevo, Anto Bakovic, an Assistant to the HIS (Croatian intelligence service) Head and already mentioned Ljubo Cesic Rojs. Analysts of the political events in Croatia tend to believe that the investigation is being conducted for two reasons: In order to make impossible the payment of millions of Marks that the Croatian Government owes Monitor, and in order to reveal possible criminal activities committed by Ivic Pasalic, that many people from the Croatian political top and judiciary would like to see behind the bars.

## **Vecernji List: Buljubasic testified, Anic did not**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reports that Investigative Judge of the Sarajevo Cantonal Court, Idriz Kamenica, has confirmed that the Federation Deputy Minister of Defence, Ferid Buljubasic, testified in the case against the President of the HNS, Ante Jelavic, whilst the Federation Minister of Defence, Mijo Anic, did not show up at the hearing. Judge Kamenica said that Buljubasic was questioned about the circumstances surrounding



the HVO self-disbandment.

## **Vecernji List: Buljubasic claims Anic's visit to Israel damaging BiH's relations with Arab countries**

(provided by OHR Mostar)

Federation Deputy Minister of Defence, Ferid Buljubasic, is of opinion that the Federation Minister of Defence Mijo Anic's visit to Israel could have a negative effect on the BiH-Arab countries rapport saying that Israel is still at war with the Arab world and that BiH still gets the biggest aid from Arab countries including the aid to the armed forces, reads Vecernji List. Buljubasic added that the visit will result in certain repercussions believing that if the people were explained about the purpose of the visit that the dilemmas would be removed. Regarding the visit itself, Buljubasic says that he found out about it just prior to Anic's departure adding that he was thinking about the commercial side of the visit at the time and not about the possible political repercussions. "I do not know whether Anic sought an opinion from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Federation PM about it", says Buljubasic. Buljubasic refused to comment some BiH officials' remarks that timing of the visit to Israel was bad which culminated in raising of the issue of responsibility. "I am in favour of analyzing the whole thing with cool head, starting with the reasons behind the visit, was the procedure observed and finally, did the visit result in BiH gaining positive or negative points", says Buljubasic adding that the downside lies in the fact that the Bosniak side was not informed about the visit in time, reads Vecernji List.

## **Vecernji List: The Hague indictees at state functions**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reads that the ruling Alliance for changes and the Federation Government have yesterday discussed the possibility whether to re-instate Sefer Halilovic and Amir Kubura to their respective duties in the Federation Government and the Federation Army. The article reads that the Croat politicians within the Alliance are opposing the re-instatement but keeping it to themselves not wanting to go public on the issue. The NHI, the biggest Croat party within the Alliance, fears that they would lose the already small support from the Croat electorate in case the two are back in their offices. On the other hand, Bosniak parties in the Alliance would like to have them back because that would be a sign to the disappointed Bosniak electorate that the Alliance has not forgotten the war heroes. The daily also carries Alexandra Stiglmyer, with regards to the issue, as saying that the DPA envisages that only the convicted persons or fugitives cannot perform public duties thus there are no legal obstacles for their re-instatement. She added that the OHR would not suggest the Federation authorities how to act in the case, which can be considered as the green light to have them re-instated. If Halilovic and Kubura are back in the Federation Government and the Federation Army, the greatest losers in the process would be the Croat representatives in the Alliance because it would be difficult to explain to the Croats, especially the ones in Central Bosnia, how the Federation is run by the people who had prevented the existence of the multi-national state in these areas, reads Vecernji list.

## **Republika Srpska**

### **Vinko Pandurevic working with RS Government Bureau in Belgrade**

Nezavisne Novine reports that General Vinko Pandurevic, indicted for war crimes by the ICTY, is currently employed as

a RS President's advisor for military issues and works in the RS Government's Bureau in Belgrade. The paper quotes Deputy Head of the Bureau Svetozar Stanic as saying that he has not seen Pandurevic in the premises of Bureau since the last summer. He said he did not know where Pandurevic is.

## **SNSD General Secretary says Sarovic, Cavic and Kalinic arranged elimination of the RS**

Nezavisne Novine quotes RS SNSD (the Republika Srpska Party of Independent Social Democrats) General Secretary Branko Neskovic as saying that the SNSD will not support the RS Government when it comes to vote on amendments to the RS Constitution. Neskovic told a news conference held in Banja Luka that the SNSD's view regarding this issue was different and that it would be presented at the meeting of the RS National Assembly's Constitutional Commission, as well as the next RS Parliament's session, scheduled for December 26. Neskovic also said that, in last December, RS President Mirko Sarovic, RS Vice president, Dragan Cavic and RS National Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic signed a document that leads to elimination of the RS. He emphasised that the proposed amendments to the RS Constitution were the best illustration of this statement. "SDS arranged everything and now they are making noise. At the end everything will be as Petritsch wishes and the SDS has no concerns about the RS", said Neskovic.

## **RS President says RS to resist any change through blackmails**

SRNA news agency reports that the Republika Srpska President, Mirko Sarovic has most energetically dismissed recent pressures on the entity, which was also exerted by one part of the international community, saying that "they want to achieve certain aims by means of blackmail and undemocratic methods, particularly through the forthcoming constitutional changes". "These are anti-Dayton pressures and as such we energetically

dismiss them,” said Sarovic on Monday in Banja Luka after a meeting with representatives of the RS War Veterans’ Association, which was also attended by Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and RS Assembly Speaker Dragan Kalinic. Sarovic added that it was concluded at the meeting that “the RS was not given as a gift, which is why everyone concerned, including international representatives, have the obligation to protect the Dayton Agreement and not to undermine it”. He said that “the RS supports the implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court’s decision on the constituent status of peoples, and in that respect it will continue to search for the best solutions. It is not, however, willing to accept solutions which have been dictated to it (RS) as the best.” Sarovic added that the representatives of the RS War Veterans’ Organisation demanded that the character of the war in BiH be defined, adding that this subject deserved to be discussed in the RS National Assembly.

## **Prnjavor Police arrest four persons suspected of desecrating Bosniak graves**

Fena news agency reports that the Prnjavor Police arrested four adolescents on suspicion of desecrating and damaging 17 Bosniak graves in Prnjavor cemetery in the night between 16 and 17 December. The police also identified one of the four persons who threw an explosive device in front of the house of Bosniak returnee Muhidin Mehic in Bratunac on 11 December, the chief of the Criminal Police Department of the RS Interior Ministry, Milorad Jelisavac, said. “The motive behind this act does not have a political or ethnic background, because the damaged graves were the graves of the Bosniaks who served in the RS Army,” Jelisavac said. He added that charges were filed against the perpetrators of the criminal act.

## **International Community**

### **CRA Chief Executive Officer leaves BiH**

According to all BiH media, Jerker Torngren, Chief Executive Officer of the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), has contacted the High Representative with the request that his contract not be [renewed](#). Torngren has headed the CRA since its establishment on 2 March 2001. As his contract expires at the end of this year, he observes that his leaving is undertaken with much sadness and regret. In his letter to the High Representative, he stresses that the tasks he had a mandate to complete have been fully concluded. However, the issues that still remain unresolved are pending political decisions which he can not control. Therefore, Mr. Torngren hopes that his departure will provide an opening of the deadlock and improve the possibilities to have much needed reform of the telecoms market put back on track, which is vitally important for the development of BiH.

### **OHR accepts CRA Torngren's resignation**

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Monday accepted the resignation of the Chief Executive Officer of the Communications Regulatory Agency (CRA), Jerker Torngren, as of the end of the year. (All Sarajevo and Banja Luka dailies, as well as Split Slobodna Dalmacija carried the [Press Release](#) )

### **US requests big cut in NATO troops in BiH**

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld called on Tuesday for a reduction of the 18,000 NATO peacekeeping troops in BiH by at least 6,000 by next year. Washington, which is fielding some 3,100 troops in a peacekeeping force dominated by Europeans, has reiterated recently its Balkan mantra of "we went in together, we shall come out together". But diplomats said Rumsfeld appeared to be pushing the pace of a wind-down to help release military resources for the U.S.-led campaign against international terrorism. Rumsfeld said there was a

time when military forces would declare victory and go home after accomplishing missions. "Today, however, it often seems that when it comes to such missions success means never having to say goodbye," he said in a statement prepared for delivery at a meeting of NATO defence ministers. "I would think that troop levels (in Bosnia) could and should be reduced by at least 6,000 from the current 18,000 – and perhaps more," he said. However, BiH said on Tuesday it was not alarmed by a U.S. push to slash its NATO-led peacekeeping force by a third – as long as the Balkan state continues to move toward stability. Reacting to Rumsfeld's suggesting the Stabilisation Force be cut next year by 6,000 soldiers from the current 18,000, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said it was logical SFOR would shrink as peace took root. But he stressed that downsizing SFOR – which keeps the peace between Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats and backs international officials trying to get the communities to work together – had to reflect realities on the ground. (See more from [Reuters](#))

## **Petritsch to visit Banja Luka on Thursday**

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, will visit Banja Luka on Thursday to meet with Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and the SDS leadership Dragan Kalinic, Mirko Sarovic and Dragan Cavic, Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmeier told journalists on Tuesday in Sarajevo, according to the Sarajevo dailies. "The topics of the meetings will include support for the State institutions, co-operation with ICTY, economic reform, return, property law implementation, implementation of Human Rights Chamber decisions and amendments to the Republika Srpska Constitution in line with the Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent status of all three Bosnia and Herzegovina peoples in both Entities," Stiglmeier said. "The High Representative will also hold a third Civic Forum session in Banja Luka as part of his dedication to hearing the voices of the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina and helping the civic sector gain more

influence in the political discourse of Bosnia and Herzegovina," she added.

## **OHR and OSCE disappointed with non-adoption of the Federation Defamation Law**

The OSCE and OHR expressed on Tuesday in Sarajevo their disappointment with a fact the draft Defamation Law had not passed the Federation Parliament last week, *Oslobodjenje* reports. "The Defamation was passed in the Republika Srpska last July as drafted, and now there is an inconsistent situation in the Federation. We understand that there were no new arguments made against its passage, but that crucial members were not present at the time the vote took place. This situation will create a further backlog of cases," OSCE Spokesperson Urdur Gunnarsdottir told a press conference in Sarajevo. Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer added that OHR urged the Federation Parliament to hurry up with the adoption of this law.

## **German Chancellor to visit BiH on Friday**

German Chancellor Gerhard Shroeder is expected to arrive in BiH on Friday accompanied with German Defense Minister Rudolf Sharping, *Dnevni Avaz* learned from a source in the BiH Foreign Ministry. Shroeder will visit the German SFOR contingent but he is also scheduled to meet with the BiH Presidency members and Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Zlatko Lagumdzija.

## **Vecernji List: Mistakes by international organizations strengthen HDZ, SDA and SDS positions**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

European Stability Initiative (ESI), in the document entitled "The New Role of the International Community in BiH" has deemed the approach of the international organizations in BiH

towards solving political and economic problems as inefficient and wrong. The extensive analysis minds the OHR, SFOR, IPTF and UN for making wrong assessment which contributed to the strengthening of the position of the national parties. "A series of confrontation between the IC and HDZ during 2001 helped the party to maintain its unity and regain the popular support despite the obvious failure (of the HDZ) with regards to the economic and social issues in Herzegovina. SDA and HDZ have recently reelected persons removed by the HR. If the OHR and OSCE continue working as they have in the past, they will prevent these parties from participating in the next elections until they surrender to international authority. It would be more constructive to reconsider the use of authority with regards to removals in the election process, including the past decisions. It would not be constructive to use the HR's authorities to achieve political efficiency", reads the ESI document. Despite the criticism, the ESI is of opinion that the presence of the IC in BiH is still required and that the presence must be used to the benefit of the political and economic life in BiH applying caution and non-discrimination. "The IC in BiH still has a role of a judge of a constitutional court. It is requested to act as the ultimate guarantor of the constitutional order, ensuring that the political power be used according to the rules and that the DPA stays intact (...) Despite eliminating the SDS from the political life and from the Government in November 2000 and despite its strong position in the Parliament, it has left a window of opportunity for controlling the Government without any responsibility", say the members of the ESI. The ESI minds the IC for trying to instate their people to the power whilst in the same time the position of the national parties is getting stronger. Even the parties that are in power, owing that to the IC authority, are often inefficient in the practice because they often await for a respond from their superiors, reads Vecernji List.



## **Vjesnik: Croatia's agreement with BiH on Ploce Port and Neum still in parliamentary procedure**

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Although the agreement between Croatia and BiH on the Ploce Port and Neum has been forwarded into the parliamentary procedure (in the Republic of Croatia), it appears that it won't be ratified without additional talks and annexes. Even the Chair of the Croatia Parliament's statement that he made during his visit to Sarajevo points to that, Zlatko Tomcic saying that "it would be good that the pending issues be agreed upon at the level of Governments, so the Croatian Parliament can ratify both the agreement and annex". Although he did not reveal details of the aforementioned annex to the agreement, one can assume that it recommends the change of the proposed administrative model for the Ploce Port. The agreement, ratified by BiH three years ago, would introduce, albeit through the back door, a clear international protectorate over this Croatian port (...), reads Vjesnik.

## **Editorials**

### **Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine**

In the Oslobodjenje In Focus editorial, Emir Habul commented on the disputes over the guarantees provided by the BiH Federation Government for the temporary release of the four BiH Army wartime officers and alleged policy of double standards when it is about Bosniak, Croat or Serb indictees. Habul concluded that, unfortunately, there was not even a minimum common state strategy concerning the issue. Slavo Kukic wrote about the corruption in the post-communist countries including BiH in the Oslobodjenje Personal Opinion column. He expresses his belief that the intensity and the form of corruption largely depend on several factors including

the relations in general in the particular society, strength of the internal conflicts, and reached level of the legal system functioning. In the Avaz Commentary of the Day, Enes Plecic concluded that a wave of strikes in BiH was caused rather by the worker's general dissatisfaction with the authorities' failure to create proper ambient for business than by their dissatisfaction with the situation in the particular company. Mirsad Brkic commented in the Jutarnje Novine The Seal editorial on the findings of the audit of the BiH state ministries operations. He concluded that the financial irregularities had been found in the Foreign Ministry, Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Ministry, Ministry for Civil Affairs and Communications and finally in the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees.

## **Dnevni List: Does Croatia finances BiH Croats or do they finance Croatia**

Written by Prof. Dr. Stijepo Andrijic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Andrijic says since the current authorities in Croatia keep talking about a huge and incorrect financial support to Croats in BiH, he decided to write a few theses about it. According to him, by the principles of creator and ownership, that money belongs to Croats in BiH, and anything more than that would be "gymnastics" of financial transactions. He substantiates it by saying that around 3,000 Croats emigrated from BiH every year for decades and most of them would stop in Croatia, so their taxes and other contributions ended up in the State Budget. In addition, all donations for homeland defense from Croat emigrants abroad ended up in Zagreb and only a small part was transferred to Herzeg-Bosnia. Andrijic suggests that an expert research study be made on the balance of mutual presentation between the Republic of Croatia and Croats in BiH. In this context, he mentions Hercegovacka Banka as something that distorted this balance of presentation.

He says the Bank experienced an armed raid at the moment when

its market price reached over 300 million Marks.

"One can expect, and this I concluded from the methods used so far by the 'democratic' West, that the unnecessary audit will be stalled and the Provisional Administrator's mandate prolonged with the aim of reducing the Bank's value and then selling it at a trivial price, probably less than 30 million.

The decision-maker, his aide and the Administrator will appear as co-owners during the purchase process, not directly of course. After that, the Bank will suddenly recover because it will have owners and management of good "quality."

What could be said about the aide? It is enough to say that both the airspace and the territory of the Republic of Croatia were used for the execution of the armed robbery and that the day after this, the decision-maker and the executor of this 'democratic' act, received abundant, full and unquestioned support from the Croatian leaders, instead of a diplomatic note. By this act, they put themselves on the list of accomplices in this act," says Andrijic.

## **Dnevni List: Whose chair is shaking**

Written by Ivica Simunovic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries an editorial on Stolac with the headline, which, in fact, is a pun: 'Whose chair (*stolac is Croatian for 'a chair'*) is shaking.'

The author first comments on the HTV talk show Latinica which was dedicated to Stolac and says the author was wrong to treat Stolac as an isolated phenomenon although it is just a part of the overall events in BiH.

The article reads that the international officials, deliberately or not, contributed to the media presentation of Stolac as a place where incidents keep occurring. With absolute support from the international community, the

“weaker” ones realize they can do whatever they please, so they provoke the other side and thus initiate a cycle of recurrent retaliation.

Simunovic says the events in Mostar only add to the fact that the international community, instead of intervening only when it is inevitable, is interfering too much by not allowing the protagonists of misunderstandings to find a modus vivendi and a way out of crisis by themselves. In their haste to discipline the disobedient Croats in the west part of Mostar, the international community has set the pace for apartment repossession and evictions that not even Sarajevo or any other city could follow. However, apartment repossessions have caused an enormous increase of national segregation because Bosniaks who repossessed their apartments in the west or Croats who repossessed theirs in the east part of the city, need only ten days after purchasing those apartments to exchange them and go to their respective sides.

“You cannot protect the weaker to the extent of making them wish to mistreat the ‘stronger’ because thus you reduce the chances for a final solution of problems. Everyone has the right to live in dignity and the right to their homes, be it a majority or a minority people. If someone prevents them from exercising those rights, the question of whether it is the majority that prevents the minority or vice versa, is completely irrelevant. In that case, Stolac (chair) will be shaky for everyone, including the international community,” reads the editorial in conclusion.

## **Slobodna Dalmacija: Why are Croats prepared to even beg Petritsch to stop “helping” them?**

Written by Zvonimir Cilic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Once the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch leaves BiH, Croats in this country will not miss him, and quite certainly, the vast majority of them will not have good memories of him.

All that he does under the transparent guise of democracy – his violations of human rights (of Croats), the basic democratic (election) principles, as well as a series of other actions and decisions he has taken, have made a deep negative impact on the Croat corpus in BiH.

All this, along with his egotism, was expressed in a recent interview he gave for a Sarajevo daily, and that caused additional negative reactions and comments among Croats here.

In this interview, the “self-denying” Petritsch says: “I have contacts with some senior officials of the HDZ. I spoke to one of them a few days ago and he told me that he had an impression that I was doing more for Croats than that party.”

A modest statement indeed, although it might be true. It was not difficult to “read through” Petritsch’s egotism reinforced by a fact that an HDZ official possibly tried to use this very attribute of his in an attempt to be “realigned” (sold).

It is exactly this sort of chameleons, flatterers, ‘realigners’... that Petritsch has a way of using and awarding, by appointing them to positions and functions for which they do not have the necessary support from their electorate, which is contrary to all democratic principles that Petritsch himself swears on.

Petritsch did not want to tell the journalist which HDZ official it was because, Petritsch said, “it would mean his instant political death.”

This statement by Petritsch reflects all of his cynicism and his game which he has been playing towards Croats ever since he came to BiH and which he will follow through to the achievement of the goal he has set.

How could this alleged HDZ official become politically dead when it is exactly Petritsch who decides about the political life and death of Croat officials by denying the will of

voters.

Is it not he who has caused a political demise of dozens of elected Croat officials, from municipal to state level, thus leaving them without bread only for not being his blind yes-men.

Petritsch is extremely incorrect and even unfair to Croats in BiH (or they may be blind), he treats them as if they were incompetent, politically illiterate and unreasonable. He continues to decide what is good and bad for them.

Croats elect their representatives in the elections organized and supervised by the international community, and Petritsch then says those are not good enough for them and instates to the highest-ranking Federation and State positions the persons who received no votes even from their distant relatives.

Still, he believes, as he says in the interview, that "the HDZ will become a different party one day when they find the strength to elect a democratic leadership." It is, presumably, by his own standards of democracy and not by the standards and will of the Croat voters.

Petritsch blocks (destroys) Hercegovacka Banka because "there is more and more evidence showing that Hercegovacka Banka was founded to rob its depositors." Still, in spite of that, the "robbed" ones are protesting, asking that the Bank be allowed to "continue robbing." How unreasonable those depositors are and what an unreasonable people it is.

After so many years that went by, people still say all the best about the Emperor Franjo Josip, a former ruler of BiH, Petritsch's countryman and predecessor. When they talk about that time, people mention the economic and cultural prosperity, the rule of law and legitimacy, as well as the democratic prosperity that BiH experienced back then. At that time, after several centuries of the Ottoman rule, Croats noted a demographic rise.

Croats are not saying anything like this about the current ruler of BiH Wolfgang Petritsch at present time, and how will it be in eighty or ninety years?

It is exactly for this reason that Croats in BiH send Petritsch the following message: "Stop taking care of us, for God's sake. For, your care makes us even fewer and our situation even worse."