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BiH State-related Issue

Lagumdžija meets with entity Prime Ministers

According to Sarajevo dailies, BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdžija met with the Republika Srpska and BiH Federation Prime Ministers, Mladen Ivanic and Alija Behmen, on Sunday to discuss current political priorities in the work of the BiH and entity institutions. The officials emphasized a need that particular attention is paid to the adoption of the election law, better cooperation and coordination between the BiH Council of Ministers and entity Governments, and further development of a partnership relations with the international community.

Mikerevic says in next seven days will be known if there is a consensus on the draft election law

Dragan Mikerevic, the BiH Minister for European Integration and member of the PDP Presidency, said in a brief interview with Monday's Oslobodjenje that consultations were underway on the draft election law and it would be known in next seven days whether there was a consensus on the issue. He emphasized that his party was for the draft election law but without proposed amendments, since the law had to be in compliance with the BiH Constitution. This means also, according to Mikerevic, that RS citizens are only authorized to elect BiH Presidency member representing the entity.

Reactions in RS to a document drafted by the BiH Council of Ministers working group

Monday's edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that a BiH Council of Ministers working group drafted a document entitled the "Thesis for discussion," which foresees a distribution of competencies between the state and the entities. The document foresees joint tax and customs policy and that BiH should have its own financial resources. The member of the SDS Executive Board, Mirko Banjac, says that the document is a proof that the Council of Ministers is not capable to run neither economic nor global policy of BiH. "SDPBiH is advocating strengthening of BiH common institutions which is in the best

interest of BiH citizens. It is very important to define competencies of the entities and BiH as a state. This issue can be resolved by reaching consensus in the BiH Parliamentary Assembly”, says vice-president of SDP BiH, Dragi Stanimirovic. PDP Spokesman Igor Crnadak says that PDP will not support any changes that would be detrimental to the position of the RS. Commenting on the document, SNSD Secretary General Branko Neskovic says that a thesis according to which the entire system cannot work if there is no joint army, joint police, joint customs administration and the BiH-own financial resources is just an excuse of some members of the Alliance for their own ineptness. Member of the SPRS Executive Board Tihomir Gligoric condemns the document and calls on the High Representative to sanction all illegal requests and actions. Vice-president of DSP Momir Malic says that a joint BiH global policy has to exist but it must not be detrimental to the entities.

Federation

BiH Federation Supreme Court not participated in a Mostar meeting on HPT Mostar

The BiH Federation Supreme Court denied, in a press release signed by the Court's President Suada Selimovic, it had initiated, organized or through its representatives carried out any meeting of representatives of the judiciary authorities in the BiH Federation, as was mentioned in an ONASA news agency report. According to the report, the meeting was held at the end of last week in Mostar to agree a strategy how to prevent the newly-appointed Mostar HPT (Croat Post Office and Telecommunications), chaired by Slavo Kukic, to assume the duty. ONASA quoted an official of the Mostar-based Canton's Court as saying that the meeting had been attended by Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Court President Castimir Mandaric, the Court's judge in charge with the registry Kata Zovko and

BiH Federation Supreme Court judge Pero Zelic. According to the Oslobodjenje's Saturday issue, Zelic, in a separate press release, also denied it had participated at the meeting.

President of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton's Judges Association says Kukic degrading judge's profession

President of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Association of Judges Nada Dalipagic sent on Friday an open letter to the President of the HPT Mostar Steering Board, Slavo Kukic, accusing him of degrading the judiciary profession. Commenting on a Kukic's statement in which he had said that the Mostar-based Canton's Court was acting under the strong influence of only one political party (HDZ), Dalipagic said that such unfounded statements contributed neither to building the judicial system nor to the legal security of the citizens.

Kukic says Herzegovina-Neretva Canton's Court prevents newly-appointed HPT Mostar Steering Board from assuming the duty

According to the Saturday's Oslobodjenje, President of the newly-appointed HPT Mostar Steering Board Slavo Kukic said that the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Court was obviously obstructing the newly-appointed HPT Mostar Steering Board to assume its duty. He emphasizes that an every-day thinking out of new obstacles to the registration of the newly-appointed HPT Mostar acting director, Stipe Prlic, clearly made founded the doubts about the obstructions. Kukic added that he had addressed the Office of the High Representative and the Independent Commission for the Appointment of Judges requesting them to investigate into the work of the Mostar Canton's Court registry department.

Slobodna Dalmacija: CDBiH Caucus in the Municipal Council Mostar South requests exchange of apartments to be stopped (provided by OHR Mostar)

Ibro Kodro, Ibrahim Rahimic, Meliha Salkic, Himzo Repesa and Alija Vila, Councilors of the Coalition for Integrated and

Democratic BiH in the Municipal Council of the Municipality Mostar South, have sent an open letter to all political parties in Mostar, Heads of the City and six Municipalities and representatives of International Organizations requesting sanctions against all exchanges of flats and private properties in the Mostar area and to put an end to this practice. Ibrahim Rahimic, the Head of the CDBiH Caucus in the Municipal Council South, says that they have been triggered to undertake such a move because they have been under great pressure of the public and the returnees who have finally realized that they have been cheated by the ones who they had voted for. "It hurts us to see that the so-called advocates of the unified Mostar are among ones who exchange flats and therefore contribute to legalization of the ethnic cleansing in Mostar", says Rahimic. Mr. Rahimic did not want to disclose any names for time being saying that his list contains around 20 names, reads Slobodna Dalmacija(...)

Vecernji List: HVO soldiers who did not renew professional contracts to hold protest rally

Vecernji list in its Sunday edition also carries that 262 HVO soldiers, who did not renew their contracts with the Ministry of Defense, announced that they will organize a protest rally in front of the building in which the Croat National Assembly is located at the end of this week. Dissatisfied soldiers want to draw attention to their difficult social situation. They demand from the HNS to pay them 2000 Marks for the last 4 months. The Federation Ministry of Defense also owes them nine salaries.

Vecernji List: Arrival of Carla Del Ponte not to be pleasant for the wartime Commanders of all three peoples (provided by OHR Mostar)

In the circles, close to The Hague and the BiH Judiciary, it has been speculated that because of persecution and war crimes new arrests will take place this autumn.

According to Graham Blewitt, the Deputy of Carla Del Ponte, persons who are members of all three peoples in BiH are charged with war crimes. It has been speculated that persons, who were Heads of some Croat Municipalities during the war, will be hold responsible for some things as well as Commanders of the units and we shall learn something more about their names during the next few days.

The bill of indictment against Dzevad Mlaco, who was the Head of Bugojno Municipality, has already been prepared as well as the bills of indictment against some other Heads of Municipalities from the lines of the Croat and Serb peoples. The Hague is also interested in the role of Safet Cibo, the War President of the Municipalities Jablanica, Konjic and Prozor, and some other persons from the line of the Bosniak people charged with persecution and violation of Law and customs of war.

As far as the war Commanders are concerned, the name of Serif Patakovic, a former Commander of the 7th Brigade of the BiH Army and the current Minister for the Issues of Soldiers in the Zenica-Doboj Canton, has been mentioned. Although Sefer Halilovic denied it, the Croat Associations in BiH connect him with the crimes committed in Grabovica and Uzdol in September 1993, when Halilovic was the Commander of the BiH Army. However, it is not very probable that he will stand a trail for this crime.

It was mentioned that an invitation to The Hague is waiting for General Rasim Delic and Atif Dudakovic, a former Commander of the 5th Bihac Corps.

The names of two Bosniak Generals have been mentioned within the context of the crimes committed over Croats and Serbs. Some Commanders as well as political officials from the line of the Croat people in BiH will be faced with the new Hague indictments.

SRNA: Serb cemetery defaced in the area of Ilijas

A Serb cemetery in the village of Sabanci, near Ilijas (central town in the Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation), has been defaced by unknown perpetrators, who have destroyed around 20 crosses and smashed plaques and tombstones. The village, which before the war was populated by Serbs, has been deserted since the signing of the Dayton accord. Although all of the 40 or so pre-war houses and around 150 other facilities had been completely destroyed and the building material taken away, the cemetery was left untouched until August. Around 150 pre-war residents, or some 40 families currently living in the Serb Republic, applied at the end of May to return to this village since access to aid had been denied to them until a substantial number of refugees applied to return. Having discovered the defaced cemetery, they now see this act of vandalism as a warning by extremists not to return to this village, which before the war was populated exclusively by ethnic Serbs, and they believe that their safety cannot be guaranteed...

Republika Srpska

Serbs protest OHR decision temporary stopping construction of houses in Kotorsko

The Serb refugees and displaced persons who had started building their houses on the land claimed by Bosniaks in Kotorsko said at a protest rally held on Saturday that they would not at all accept the OHR decision on temporary stoppage of the construction works. Quite opposite, according to Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz's Sunday editions, they requested both the Republika Srpska Government and the international community to provide adequate donations allowing them to continue building the houses, otherwise they will thwart delivery of the assistance for construction of houses for the Bosniak returnees. Asked to comment on the Serbs protest, Mujo

Isic, a member of the Board for the Return to Kotorsko, told Monday's Oslobodjenje that the returnees had no time to deal with other issues but with the issue of the return and reconstruction of their village. OHR Spokesperson Alexandra Stiglmayer told Monday's Dnevni Avaz that OHR had nothing against peaceful protests of Serbs in Kotorsko, but that this did not change a fact the review into the documentation on the allocation of land to the Serbs would be continued.

SDA Central Podrinje Regional Board says nearly 6,000 parcels illegally allocated to Serbs

According to the Jutarnje Novine weekend edition, the journalists were told at a Friday press conference of the SDS Central Podrinje Regional Board that the OHR decision banning illegal allocation of the socially-owned land was not being respected at all in the area. The local authorities have contrary to the will of Bosniaks allocated approximately 6,000 parcels for the construction of houses exclusively to the persons of the Serb nationality. The parcels have been allocated in the municipalities of Zvornik (2,600), Bratunac (600), Vlasenica (450), Osmaci (150), Koraj (150), and Bijeljina (1,500).

RS must define the issue of cooperation with the Hague Tribunal

Republika Srpska Deputy Justice Minister Mladjen Mandic said at a public debate on the entity's law about the cooperation with the Hague Tribunal that the RS had to define this cooperation in order to avoid existence of sealed indictments and protect its citizens from a brutal way of apprehension. The debate prepared by the RS Government was held on Friday in Banja Luka. It gathered representatives of the RS judicial institutions, Banja Luka University and international organizations.

A Montenegrin daily speculates on preparations for

apprehension of Karadzic

Oslobodjenje reports on Saturday that the Podgorica daily Dan (the Day) speculates in its Friday edition about the alleged preparations for the apprehension of the most wanted war crime suspect Radovan Karadzic. According to the newspaper, the BiH police forces have been even patrolling in the Montenegrin territory around the town of Niksic, as certain activities are also underway at several border crossings between BiH and Montenegro in the area of Crkvica. These allegations were denied by Fadil Jaganjac, the BiH State Border Service Chief of Staff (Saturday's Dnevni Avaz) and by senior Montenegrin police and military officials (Sunday's Oslobodjenje).

RS Defence Minister says RS Army does not protect Karadzic and Mladic

Weekend editions of the both Banja Luka dailies quote RS Defence Minister Slobodan Bilic as saying that the RS Army does not protect Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic neither it knows anything about their whereabouts. "This is why I cannot comment on the information launched by some media that the SFOR troops are clustering in some areas in the RS in order to arrest Karadzic and Mladic. Commenting on the meeting, dedicated to the RS-FRY Military Agreement, that the RS Defence Ministry had with its FRY counterparts and the representatives of the OHR on Thursday, Bilic says that the meeting was very successful. "We managed to explain our views, goals and intentions to the OHR representatives and they do not have major objections except that the procedure, when the Agreement was signed, was not transparent enough because the OHR representatives were not involved in it", says Bilic. He also says he expects that members of the 30th Cadre Centre of the RS Army will have become a part of the RS Army by the end of the year. Commenting on the financial situation in the RS Army, Bilic says that a big problem is position of the IMF according to which the budget of the RS Defence Ministry amounts to 75,9 million KM, which is not enough. "The plan on

establishment of BiH joint army basically means a killing of the RS Army, but we are also aware that denial of funds to the RS Army presents a silent killing by euthanasia, which is something we cannot allow", says Bilic.

Sinisa Djordjevic says RS will in a few days submitted to the ICTY material evidences against Izetbegovic

Weekend editions of both Banja Luka dailies as well as weekend editions of Belgrade-based dailies, Politika, Danas and Vecernje Novosti quote RS Prime Minister's Advisor for Co-operation with the ICTY Sinisa Djordjevic as saying that the RS will deliver the indictment against Alija Izetbegovic to the ICTY in a few days. Djordjevic says that the indictment will be further amended and will include strong evidences against Izetbegovic. "The RS Public Prosecutor will take over the indictment from the Banja Luka District Court and forward it to the ICTY", says Djordjevic. He also says that the ICTY did not deliver more sealed indictments apart from the one against Dragan Jokic. Weekend edition of Glas Srpski carries article with the headline "Mujahedeens – Alija's Pets" in which author explains why is Izetbegovic complaining about command responsibility of the three officers of the BiH Federation Army, recently indicted for crimes committed against Croats and Serbs in the Central Bosnia. "This is the first time after the war that Bosniaks are transferred to The Hague and this will certainly shed more light on the Bosnian conflict," says the author.

Alija Izetbegovic says prepared to share fate of his generals

The Belgrade-based daily Danas quotes SDA President Alija Izetbegovic as saying that it is not possible that the ICTY will indict him and other members of the war-time Presidency for the command responsibility for crimes committed against Serbs and Croats during the Bosnian war. "I think that something like that is not possible given that the Presidency and I personally were preventing crimes as much as we could

and I think that we succeeded in it. However, I am not running away from sharing the fate of my generals with whom I was defending BiH", says Izetbegovic.

Twenty five illegal immigrants from Tunis detained at the Banja Luka airport

The Republika Srpska police officers detained 25 illegal immigrants from Tunis at the Banja Luka Mahovljani airport late on Friday. The immigrants arrived in Banja Luka by a regular airline linking the Yugoslav capital of Belgrade with the town.

Dodik supports Djindjic's Government

Weekend edition of Nezavisne Novine reports that SNSD President Milorad Dodik met with Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic in Belgrade on Friday. The paper reports that Djindjic and Dodik discussed strengthening of economic co-operation between the RS and the FRY. According to a press release, issued by SNSD, the party politically supports Djindjic's Government. The press release further reads that Djindjic was interested in political and economic situation in the RS. Djindjic also said that the information he got from Dodik would help him to get an overall picture of the situation in BiH.

Branislav Ribar to be appointed General Manager of the SRNA News Agency?

Weekend edition of Nezavisne Novine learns from a source close to the RS Government that the newly appointed Board of Directors of the Srna News Agency will take over responsibility for this agency from Dragan Davidovic on Monday. According to the source, the appointment of the new acting general manager will be discussed at a SRNA Board of Directors session, scheduled for Tuesday. Nezavisne Novine speculates that Branislav Ribar (the correspondent of Oslobodjenje from Brcko) will be appointed new general manager

of the Srna. In the meantime, the Board of Directors, chaired by Milos Solaja, will run the agency.

SRNA: Bosnian Serb Socialist Party leader predicts autumn of social unrest

Bosnia-Hercegovina Presidency member Zivko Radisic told SRNA agency on Saturday that certain negative economic trends were evident in the Serb Republic, thus justifying claims that the Serb Republic was heading towards a "hot autumn" and that some social unrest was possible. Radisic, leader of the Serb Republic Socialist Party added that his party would fight to stop the negative trends on the social and economic level, and if it should fail to do so, Radisic said, his party would withdraw from the system of government.

SRNA: Bosnian Serb Socialists set out future party strategy

After Saturday's session of the Serb Republic Socialist Party main committee, held in Derventa, its chairman Zivko Radisic said that his party had decided on two main strategic directions for the future. One of them, according to Radisic, was the internal consolidation and strengthening of the party on all levels. With this in mind, the strengthening of regional, county and local branches was set out as one of the aims. "The second direction is the positioning of the Serb Republic Socialist Party within the system. Both the Serb Republic and the Federation are facing new challenges, new difficulties and visions. These visions are reflected in the competition between political parties. The Socialist Party will enter this competition with great optimism," said Radisic. He said that the ideas on which the Serb Republic Socialist Party was founded and its programme "are a real chance both for the Serb Republic and Bosnia-Herzegovina". The Socialists' leader added that in future he expected the Serb Republic Socialist Party to be an even more significant political factor in all spheres of life in the Serb Republic and Bosnia-Herzegovina. "The enforcement and further

implementation of the Dayton agreement, the strengthening of legality and the constitution, care for the working classes and the socially disadvantaged population, will be at the forefront of the Socialist Party's endeavours in the forthcoming period," said Radisic. He informed journalists that a decision about when the Socialist Party conference was to be held will be made at the next session of the main committee in September. He added that a working group for the preparation of the party conference, headed by Krsto Jandric, was also formed at today's session.

International Community

PDHR Hays says there are many parameters showing BiH is progressing

The Principal Deputy High Representative, Donald Hays, said in an interview with Dnevni Avaz (published on Saturday) that there were many parameters showing a progress currently being made in BiH. Hays added that he was an optimist, and that he believed, with a strengthened engagement both of the Government and the public, a crucial progress could be made in next 12 months. "Simply, with free media, open economy, and democratically elected Government, the things will be changed in a positive direction," Hays emphasized. Speaking on a major problem, the problem of corruption, Hays said that the international community was trying to train the professionals, who would be able to fight the corruption. As an example, he underlined the tobacco products smuggling being carried out over the BiH border crossings. Asked who are the main BiH tobacco bosses, Hays said that there was no doubt the appropriate police bodies knew who those persons were. But, according to Hays, the police and the State Border Service officers were currently catching small fishes. "It is always harder to come to those on the top, but their turn will come as well," Hays emphasized. Asked to comment on the recently

signed agreement between OHR and the BiH Council of Ministers on the payment of social contributions for the local OHR staff, Hays said he believed the other international organizations would follow the example, which was one of the reasons OHR had made this move. The Principal Deputy High Representative emphasized the OHR officials were represented their countries, which requested them to act accordingly to the respective Government's political will. "We are also responsible to the Peace Implementation Council. It is a group of countries gathered to promote the state of BiH. They are requesting us to cooperate with those in power," Hays said answering a question about recent allegations of BiH Transparency International on certain mistakes of the international community in BiH.

Pecanac says there are no untouchable criminals for the Sarajevo police

The Sarajevo Canton Interior Minister commented on the allegation of Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays that the police bodies knew who were the main tobacco bosses but that they were currently catching small fishes. Nermin Pecanac told Dnevni Avaz that the Sarajevo police could not be criticized that it was protecting someone, regardless of a sort of the crime and name of its actors. "What concerns myself, I do not divide fishes on small and big ones, an all acting against the law will be under strike of the police," he emphasized. Pecanac called on Hays to tell the police structures who were those persons. "We do our best together with the BiH Federation Interior Ministry and other authorized institutions to reduce number of crimes, and for us, there are no the untouchable persons," Pecanac concluded.

OHR's Stiglmeier says entity Ministries of Urban Planning should prepare instructions for the implementation of property laws

According to the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz, the Office of the BiH

Federation Attorney General has requested OHR to make instructions for the implementation of the latest High Representative's property decision annulling a two-year ban on purchasing abandoned apartments. The Attorney General will not be approving apartments privatization contracts, all until it receives official interpretation of the new provisions. Ramiz Mehmedagic, the BiH Federation Minister of Urban Planning, told Dnevni Avaz that he had directed the Attorney General's Office to OHR, since he had not been authorized to interpret the High Representative's decision. However, Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer said that OHR was a wrong address. "The usual practice is that the Ministry of Urban Planning issues instructions for the implementation of property laws. OHR, of course, participates in the process when it is about laws imposed by the High Representative," Stiglmayer told the newspaper. She added that an OHR official would meet with Mehmedagic early next week to discuss the issue. Stiglmayer emphasized that the authorized Federation Ministry was due to make the necessary instructions concerning the implementation of the latest property decision of the High Representative, as was the authorized body of Republika Srpska, and the OHR would assist in that. Mehmedagic told Sunday's Dnevni Avaz that he would reiterate his proposal that the rest of not privatized apartments in the Federation is sold for cash at the next session of the entity Government scheduled for August 28.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje: Petritsch's achievements and failures

Oslobodjenje columnist Emir Habul commented in the Oslobodjenje's In Focus column on Saturday on the High Representative's two years in office. According to Habul, Wolfgang Petritsch's speech on the occasion contains mainly known assessments on good and bad things, but it lacks deeper

commentaries about the failures, which may directly be assigned to the OHR mission. "These failures are situated in a wider context of local situation, although there are things to be said about the work of the Petritsch's office itself. This spring, the High Representative received several fierce blows into his face. Even three months after the incidents in Trebinje and Banja Luka, the investigation is still underway, as the initiators are still unknown. The tender for the selection of the third GSM operator, behind which the OHR was firmly standing, was ended in a not so glorious way. This list should be amended with an unsuccessful transformation of the public broadcasting services. Moreover, the construction of houses on the land claimed by Bosniaks in Kotorsko has been continued these days, in spite of an OHR decree to stop the construction works. 'This is your country and you are responsible,' represents a phrase often repeated by diplomats. Former Head of the ICG in BiH James Lyon warned on an occasion that the international community in BiH had a real power, but had no responsibility, which is being covered by the aforementioned phrase. In such way, BiH is not officially under the protectorate, but practically it is, when there is a need for that. However, the biggest problem represents BiH to itself. The best evidence for such allegation is a fact that Petritsch has during the past two years made 128 decisions and 66 staff interventions at all levels, which is a more efficient achievement than the one made by all state institutions together. Without a direct intervention of the High Representatives, from Bildt to Petritsch, BiH could not function as a state. Petritsch, meaning the international community, deserves tributes for maintaining the country as a whole, and it represents the most prominent symbol of its reintegration, which is a direct consequence of the Bon agreement. Here, only a small, but important detail is missing: given that the international community is assigning successes to itself, it should also accept the responsibility for failures, all until BiH is under the patronage."

Dnevni Avaz: Petritsch's two years

Edina Sarac wrote in the Saturday's Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day about the work of the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, in the past two years. According to Sarac, it is visible that a significant progress has been made in all fields in which the Office of the High Representative has been engaged in the period, if a long Petritsch's report presented to the public is compared with what had been done by his predecessors. These positive achievements include the return of refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes in spite of the obstructions, particularly in the Republika Srpska, the resolved issues of Brcko, Dobrinja and Zepce, a large number of imposed laws, as well as a more regular payment of pensions. However, certain crucial issues have remained unsolved. They include, for example, poor results in the return of Bosniaks to Srebrenica, and slow implementation of the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent status of all three peoples in the entire country's territory. One more year of his mandate in BiH is before Wolfgang Petritsch. In the next 12 months, the High Representative will have an opportunity to implement on the ground all to date not implemented resolutions, Sarac concludes in her commentary.

Jutarnje Novine: Commentaries of certain BiH Federation political parties on Petritsch's priorities

Jutarnje Novine (weekend edition) asked certain BiH Federation political parties, including the New Croat Initiative (NHI), Croat peasant's Party (HSS), Liberal- Democratic Party (LDS), and Civic Democratic Party (GDS) to comment on future political priorities set by High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch. According to the commentaries, the process of return, economic reform and strengthening the state institutions are the priorities for the aforementioned political parties as well. The NHI will therefore support these priorities not only in a declarative way, but will order its representatives in the legislative and executive bodies at

all levels to work on their full implementation. Ilija Simic, the HSS president and chairman of the BiH House of Peoples, said he regret more had not been done in implementing these priorities so far. According to LDS leader Rasim Kadic, the economy should be in the first place on the list of priorities for the future, as GDS President Ibrahim Spahic emphasized that BiH lacked a consistent economic policy.