BiH Media Round-up: 26/12/2001

BiH State-related Issues

- BiH House of Peoples adopts State Budget rebalance for this year, fails to pass law on the share of the succession money
- BiH Council of Ministers to urgently amend draft law on the use of the succession money and return it into the parliamentary procedure
- Petritsch concerned over the obstructions by Serb delegates to the BiH House of Peoples
- RS Pensioners condemn irresponsible behavior of Nikola Spiric
- President of the SDS Caucus in the BiH House of Representatives Mirko Banjac received a letter of threat

Federation

- Rasim Kadic say Petritsch should be prevented from managing with BiH
- SDA initiates change of the BiH Constitution
- Public echo of the Saturday's session of the SDP BiH Main Board – tightening of the intra-partisan discipline

Republika Srpska

- Ivanic announces establishment of a multi-ethnic RS Government
- Negotiations on the RS Government reshuffle blocked by Ivanic
- RS National Assembly holds session on Wednesday
- RS National Assembly to discuss amendments to the entity Constitution on Wednesday?
- BiH Federation Constitutional Commission supports

imposition of the House of Peoples in the RS
- Sarovic says RS has a high level of statehood
- SDS Congress adopts new statute preventing The Hague indictees to be members of the party
- The Palics versus RS: Esma Palic announces new lawsuit
- Privatization of apartments in the RS
- Bijeljina TV SIM to cease broadcasting according to a decision made by the Radio-Television of Republika Srpska's Steering Board

Editorials

- Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

BiH State-related Issues

BiH House of Peoples adopts State Budget rebalance for this year, fails to pass law on the share of the succession money

The members of the Serb caucus in the BiH House of Peoples voted on Monday against the draft law on the purpose and use of the money, which BiH had obtained from the process of succession to the former Yugoslavia. According to Tuesday's Dnevni Avaz, the Collegium of the House failed to agree on the draft before the session. The Serb delegates voted against the proposed law because the House did not accept their amendments including the one proposing the establishment of a full parliamentary control over the use of the funds. However, the Collegium agreed on the texts of the draft laws on the statistics and de-mining, as the House adopted the rebalance state Budget for this year, as well as the law on its execution.

BiH Council of Ministers to urgently amend draft law on the use of the succession money and return it into the parliamentary procedure

BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija said on Monday it was bad the law on the purpose and the use of the succession money had not been passed, but that "it would be a disaster if the rebalance state Budget for this year was not adopted as well." According to Tuesday's Oslobodjenje, Lagumdzija told an extraordinary press conference in Sarajevo that an eventual non-adoption of the rebalance "would totally block the BiH state institutions." However, he emphasized, such the danger had been temporary removed, as well as a danger of blocking a new stand-by arrangement with the International Monetary Fund. Lagumdzija said that the Council of Ministers would re-send draft law on the use of the succession funds into the parliamentary procedure in two days. The text, according to Lagumdzija, will be essentially unchanged, but it will contain an amendment stipulating the Council of Ministers' obligation to semi-annually inform the state parliament on the use of the succession funds. "We cannot accept the amendment, which authorizes the parliament to decide on the use of the money, because, in such a way, it would take over the executive powers of the BiH Council of Ministers," Lagumdzija said.

Petritsch concerned over the obstructions by Serb delegates to the BiH House of Peoples

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, expressed his concern over the repeated obstructions by the delegates of the Serb nationality in the BiH House of peoples and his refusal to pass the law on the use of the succession funds. (Tuesday's Dnevni Avaz and Wednesday's Nezavisne Novine carried the Press Release)

RS Pensioners condemn irresponsible behavior of Nikola Spiric

The Association of the Republika Srpska Pensioners on Tuesday expressed its protest against obstruction of the entity delegates to the BiH House of Peoples to the adoption of the law on using funds received from the succession. “WE fiercely condemn behavior of a delegate, Nikola Spiric, which is not in the interest both of the pensioners and RS,” the Association said in a press release, according to Wednesday’s Oslobodjenje.

President of the SDS Caucus in the BiH House of Representatives Mirko Banjac received a letter of threat

Glas Srpski and Nezavisne Novine carry a statement of Mirko Banjac, in which he said that he had received a letter with death threat. Banjac assessed that, at the moment, it was very dangerous to fight for the Dayton Peace Agreement and BiH Constitution in its current form.

Federation

Rasim Kadic say Petritsch should be prevented from managing with BiH

According to Tuesday’s Oslobodjenje, Rasim Kadic, the president of the BiH Liberal-Democratic Party (LDS) and one of the Alliance for Change leaders, accused on Monday the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, of working together with SDS on the partition of the country. Petritsch should therefore be prevented, in Kadic’s opinion, from further managing with BiH and making arrangements inside it. Kadic told journalists in Sarajevo that Petritsch had actually helped nationalists to prevent adoption of the amendments to the entity Constitutions. Kadic particularly criticized the

High Representative because of his, as he said, nebulous recommendation to Lagumdzija and Ivanic to sit and agree on the passage of the amendments. “How can the adoption of the amendments to the Constitution be a subject of agreement between the two politicians in BiH no matter who they are, since it is about fundamental civilization achievements and pre-conditions for the equality among citizens and return of their property,” Kadic emphasized.

SDA initiates change of the BiH Constitution

Wednesday Oslobodjenje reports that, in accordance with the principles defined in the SDA program declaration, the party’s Presidency decided at its session held behind close doors in Sarajevo on Tuesday to launch an initiative for the change of the BiH Constitution. “We will request that the state regains the name Republic of BiH. We will also request that the authorities of the state are widened, and that the powers of the entities are reduced,” SDS President Sulejman Tihic told the newspaper following the session.

Public echo of the Saturday’s session of the SDP BiH Main Board – tightening of the intra-partisan discipline

Tuesday’s and Wednesday’s editions of Oslobodjenje published long articles about the public echo of a session of the SDP BiH Main Board held behind close door in Sarajevo last Saturday. The Board allegedly decided to tighten intra-partisan discipline, prevent its officials from giving public statements before intra-partisan consultations and extend its pressures on media through launching proceeding before the Press Council against those media house and journalists who, in SDP’s view, inadequately report on the party’s activities. SDP President Zlatko Lagumdzija tld the newspaper following the session that the decisions of the Main Board were like the decisions of the Constitutional Court and they could not be

commented, but just implemented. However, the majority of SDP officials interviewed by Oslobodjenje denied the existence of any sort of a split-up inside the party.

Republika Srpska

Ivanic announces establishment of a multi-ethnic RS Government

At a press conference in Banja Luka on Monday, Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic said that, in the next year, the entity Government should be made more multiethnic than it was now, and that a number of ministries should be reduced from the current 21 to 15. Speaking about the priorities for the coming year, Ivanic said that they primarily included the adoption of the amendments to the RS Constitution in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the equal status of all three peoples in the entire country. He emphasized that, early in January, he would initiate a meeting of key BiH politicians, who should agree on the issue without any mediation of the international community. "Otherwise the solution will probably be imposed by the international institutions, which would mean that BiH is not capable to come to it by its own, and that would be a tragic message," Ivanic said, according to Tuesday's Oslobodjenje. Tuesday's Dnevni Avaz reports that Ivanic mentioned yet two priorities for the next year including the RS obligation to fully implement property laws in a next year or two, and to show its readiness to cooperate with The Hague Tribunal through concrete actions.

Negotiations on the RS Government reshuffle blocked by Ivanic

Nezavisne Novine writes that the latest rumors on the re-shuffle at the political scene in the Republika Srpska, which was supposed to happen by the end of the year, were denied by

the latest statement of the RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic. Ivanic said that “after the internal SDS elections he will assess if preconditions are met in this party for the continuation of his cooperation and working with them or that it may be the right time to consider something else as an option”. Internal SDS election should be finalized in February 2002.

RS National Assembly holds session on Wednesday

Glas Srpski announces session of the Republika Srpska National Assembly, which is being held in Banja Luka on Wednesday. The deputies are to discuss the re-balance of the RS budget for 2001, and the draft Budget for the next year. The RS Constitutional Commission will meet just before the RS National Assembly session after which it will be clear if the RS Parliament will discuss proposed amendments to the RS Constitution, according to the newspaper.

RS National Assembly to discuss amendments to the entity Constitution on Wednesday?

According to Tuesday’s Dnevni Avaz, President of the Republika Srpska Constitutional Commission Miroslav Mikes confirmed on Monday that the representatives of the parliamentary political parties had submitted draft amendments to the entity Constitution. The amendments, including different proposals for the resolution of the most disputed issue, which is the representation of all constituent peoples in the entity authorities at all levels, should be considered at the next session of the RS National Assembly scheduled for Wednesday, December 26. Mikes told journalists in Banja Luka that the draft amendments had to gain the two-third majority in order to become valid.

BiH Federation Constitutional Commission supports imposition of the House of Peoples in the RS

Wednesday’s Oslobodjenje reports that, following informal

consultations with OHR officials, the BiH Federation Constitutional Commission supported an initiative made by the Bosniak members of the Republika Srpska Constitutional Commission on the establishment of a Council of Peoples in the RS as an instrument to protect vital national interests. “Such the Council would be a modified version of a constitutional commission as was proposed by the international working group, and it would, at the same time, be an alternative to the imposition of the House of Peoples in the RS. The Council would not have legislative authorities,” Secretary of the BiH Federation Constitutional Commission Sead Dizdarevic told Oslobodjenje.

Sarovic says RS has a high level of statehood

According to Wednesday’s Oslobodjenje, Republika Srpska President Mirko Sarovic told Banja Luka Alternative Television on Monday that the entity had preserved key elements of the autonomy during the past six years since the Dayton agreement’s signing. “The RS has a high level of statehood and I do not believe it had lost too much in the past period,” Sarovic said. Commenting on the OHR proposal that the RS executive authorities are established on the basis of the 1991 census, Sarovic said he was understanding equality in a bit different way. He added that, in his opinion, the authorities at all levels should be formed on the basis of election results.

SDS Congress adopts new statute preventing The Hague indictees to be members of the party

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz (Tuesday’s editions) report that the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) held its convention in Banja Luka on Monday. The delegates adopted the report on the party’s work in the period from the previous convention, as well as a platform for the SDS engagement in the next four years. They also adopted the amendment to the SDS Statute,

according to which the persons indicted for war crimes by The Hague Tribunal, including the SDS founders Radovan Karadzic and Momcilo Krajisnik, are prevented from being members of the party.

The Palics versus RS: Esma Palic announces new lawsuit

Esma Palic told Wednesday's Oslobodjenje he would again launch a legal proceeding before the BiH Chamber for Human Rights against the Republika Srpska because it had paid to her compensation of only 15 out of determined 65,000 KM. The RS was due to pay the compensation to the Palic family due to unknown destiny of Esma's husband Avdo, who was as the Zepa-based BiH Army commander apprehended by the RS Army members in 1995. Last, week, the OHR reiterated that the RS had to pay the entire amount of the compensation.

Privatization of apartments in the RS

Glas Srpski, on the cover page, reports that the Republika Srpska Housing Fund has opened an account at the Agency for Information and Financial services for privatization of apartments with old foreign currency savings, by which up to 60% of an apartment's price could be paid. The daily adds that the Fund has also recently opened an account at the Razvojna Banka in Banja Luka for cash payment of the apartments to be privatized. "By opening of these accounts, all conditions for continuation of the process of socially-owned apartments privatization have been met", said the press release from the RS Government, according to the newspaper.

Bijeljina TV SIM to cease broadcasting according to a decision made by the Radio-Television of Republika Srpska's Steering Board

Nezavisne Novine reports that RT RS Board of Directors reached a decision to cease broadcasting of TV SIM program because this television, having been a RT RS's Informative Technical

Center in Bijeljina, has violated CRA's codex several times due to which RT RS had been fined. Also the issuance of long-term broadcasting license to RT RS was jeopardized by such actions of the local television.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine

Emir Habul wrote in the Wednesday's Oslobodjenje In Focus editorial that nothing like a good salary might move on people, who would than reconstruct their house by their own just like they had once built them up. Such an approach requires, according to Habul, formulation of a strategy at the state level, as well as an interest for the development destiny of BiH as a whole. In the Dnevni Avaz Commentary of the Day, Fadil Mandal commented on the last Saturday's session of the SDP BiH main Board and its conclusions. He believed that the public should be concerned with a part of these conclusions, which ordered making an analysis of media attacks on the party and some of its officials and launching the proceeding before the Press Council. Nermin Butkovic wondered in the Jutranje Novine The Seal editorial whether the SDS would distance itself from the policy of Radovan Karadzic and Momcilo Krajisnik following the official act of their exclusion from the party.