BiH Media Round-up, 26/3/2002

BiH State-related Issues

- Tanovic wins Oscar, Petritsch extends his congratulations
- Caucus of Serb delegates to BiH House of Peoples: Council of Ministers usurps the authority

Constitutional reforms

- Petritsch to offer the final document on Tuesday
- OHR says only technical details yet need to be agreed
- British, French Ambassadors to BiH say BiH leaders will prove their political maturity only by successful completion of the talks
- The Coordination of the Alliance for Change: "Small" parties know nothing about talks on constitutional reforms
- Kadic criticizes Petritsch, SDP and Party for BiH
- RS press on the constitutional changes talks
- RS Serb Radical Party says RS political parties can unite only when its is about capitulation
- RS Democratic Patriotic Party: Tihic's tricks
- BiH Social-Democratic Party: Orchestrated attacks
- RS veterans urge RS authorities to organize referendum on constitutional reform
- Dnevni List: **Zubak refused Petritsch's proposals!**
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Ante Jelavic on Sarajevo talks – Nothing has been agreed yet
- Slobodna Dalmacija: HDZ denies that it withdraws Ljubic from the talks

Federation

- Tokic believes Dodik is more acceptable for the Alliance as the partner than Ivanic
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Ilija Simic, President of HSS BiH
- Dnevni List: **FTV was destined in advance to discriminate**
- Vecernji List: Re-registration of HDZ BiH –**Lozancic officially represents HDZ**

Republika Srpska

- RS Tax Administration: Taxpayers owe 400 million KM to the RS

International Community

- Petritsch prepares a decision on the rights of the dismissed politicians
- The US Embassy to BiH reopened

Headlines

BiH State-related Issues

Tanovic wins Oscar, Petritsch extends his congratulations

Bosnia's "No Man's Land," a tragedy laced with black comedy about the devastation and futility of that country's war, was named best foreign language film at the Oscars on Sunday. The film, directed and written by Danis Tanovic, tells of three soldiers – two Bosnian and one Serbian – trapped in an open trench during the Bosnian war, with one of them lying on a mine that will explode if he is removed. "This is for my country, for Bosnia," Tanovic said as he held aloft the golden Oscar statuette. At turns comic and brutal, the film ends on a powerful note of despair. Earlier this year "No Man's Land" had won the Golden Globe for foreign film and last year won an eight-minute standing ovation at the Cannes Film Festival. The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, has extended his congratulations to Tanovic. (Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine carried the Press Release)

Caucus of Serb delegates to BiH House of Peoples: Council of Ministers usurps the authority

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report on yesterday's press conference of the Chairman of the Caucus of Serb delegates to the BiH House of Peoples, Momcilo Novakovic. Novakovic stated that disrespect of the views of the Serb delegates by the delegates of the other two nations was noticeable. He emphasized that Bosniak and Croat delegates were trying to discuss legal project that do not have the support from RS nor the BiH Federation. Novakovic also commented on the work of the BiH Council of Ministers and said that Serb representatives insufficiently represented interests of the Serb people.

Constitutional reforms

Petritsch to offer the final document on Tuesday

Dnevni Avaz reports that the meeting of the representatives of the BiH political parties with the High Representative of the international community, Wolfgang Petritsch, at which days long attempts were continued to define constitutional reforms in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituent peoples, lasted whole day on Monday. The meeting was also attended by the US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, and his Spanish colleague, Rafael Valle Garagorri. "The talks are still ongoing. The leaders of the political parties are very close to a deal. Zlatko Lagumdzija is playing a particularly constructive role, and he proposed a number of things related to the mechanisms of vital national interests protection, which were seriously considered by other participants," OHR Spokesman Patrik Volf told the newspaper at around 6 p.m. He added that a large number of disputed issues had been resolved at the High Representative's home on Sunday night. "The question is now whether the participants will find the courage to resolves the rest of the issues and reach a final agreement," Volf said. "BiH can prosper only on the basis of agreement achieved by the democratically elected leadership," he concluded. Dnevni Avaz learned that the High

Representative had called a new meeting for Tuesday afternoon, at which the final deal is expected to be reached. The final document will be prepared by OHR and it will be offered to the participants in the talks under the principle: take it or leave it!

OHR says only technical details yet need to be agreed

Head of the OHR Press Office Alexandra Stiglmayer told Oslobodjenje that, at the meeting with the High Representative, the leaders of the leading political parties in BiH had agreed in principle about the definition of the vital national interests, mechanisms to protect vital national interests and the participation (representation of the peoples) in the authorities at the level of Entities in accordance to the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples. Stiglmayer emphasized that the leaders were now attempting to agree on the "final" things such as how many members of a body is needed to raise the issue of the vital national interest or challenge it. "OHR is aware of a fact the pre-election campaign has already started, but the presidents of the political parties must realize that they cannot put their particular interests in the first place, and they are requested to express readiness for a compromise," Stiglmayer added.

British, French Ambassadors to BiH say BiH leaders will prove their political maturity only by successful completion of the talks

British Ambassador to BiH Ian Cliff told Dnevni Avaz that the political leaders in BiH were obliged to reach the agreement and implement the BiH Constitutional Court's decision on the constituency of the peoples. "I welcome efforts made so far in the talks on the issue in order to come to a solution. However, the BiH leaders must take over the responsibility for

a successful end of the talks," Cliff emphasized. Commenting on the two-week talks in the OHR on the constitutional reform, French Ambassador to BiH Bernard Bajolet told the newspaper that, in his opinion, the leading BiH political parties had started negotiation on the issue with lateness. "But, they are committed to the talks. I am not surprised the agreement has not reached yet, since it is about reform important for the near future of the country. Reaching of the agreement takes time," Bajolet said adding that there was no perfect compromise.

The Coordination of the Alliance for Change: "Small" parties know nothing about talks on constitutional reforms

According to Oslobodjenje, "small" political parties belonging to the Alliance for Change are not informed at all on the talks about the constitutional changes taking place in the OHR building in Sarajevo. "Seven out of 10 parties belonging to the Alliance know nothing about what the leaders of the leading political parties are talking with the High representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, about. We therefore believe that we have been neglected in this process," Husein Vojnikovic, the President of the Party of Pensioners, who is chairing the Alliance Coordination, told journalists on Mon day following the regular session of the body.

Kadic criticizes Petritsch, SDP and Party for BiH

Oslobodjenje reports that, at a press conference in Sarajevo on Monday, the leader of the BiH Liberal-Democratic Party (LDS), Rasim Kadic, said that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, was leading the current negotiations on the constitutional reform on the principles set in Karadjordjevo, when Slobodan Milosevic and Franjo Tudjman had been discussing the partition of BiH. According to Kadic, the proposed asymmetry in protecting vital national interests in the two BiH entities is in line with these principles. Kadic

also criticized the BiH SDP and the Party for BiH because they had accepted to negotiate with the SDS and HDZ, which had once attempted to divide BiH by force.

RS press on the constitutional changes talks

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

Both Banja Luka dailies report on yesterday's round of talks over constitutional changes held in OHR in Sarajevo. Glas srpski carries a short piece on its cover page, saying that the negotiations were ceased and quotes the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic as saying: "The negotiations over constitutional changes would not succeed, due to the fact that somebody, and these are first of all Croat parties, want RS to disappear." Ivanic added that not even one proposal of the Serb representatives was supported, despite the fact that they were protecting a minimum of the Serb national interests and interests of the Republic. The Speaker of the RS National Assembly, Dragan Kalinic stated that the negotiations were turned to the beginning, after 100 hours of talks. Nezavisne novine quote the OHR Spokesman, Oleg Milisic as saying that OHR expected talks over constitutional changes to be completed in success. The NN source in OHR says that the negotiations were running in circle, whatever is proposed by one side is refused by the other. Petritsch started yesterday's round of talks by separate meetings with leaders of political parties. The President of the RS Party of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) Milorad Dodik stated that RS representatives came to OHR 'to say that this tormenting over constitutional changes that lasts for two months already, as well as constant attempts to turn to the positions from the beginning of talks, with orchestrated and media attacks from the Federation made RS representatives determined to treat today's meeting as final day for reaching an agreement'. Dodik also said: "We would express our minimum and maximum requests and we hope that what we agree today would not change. We do not want to share frustrations of the politicians from the BiH

Federation.” He confirmed that RS Representatives would pledge for a constitution that would respect all European standards.

RS Serb Radical Party says RS political parties can unite only when its is about capitulation

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

At a press conference held yesterday in Banja Luka, the Secretary General of the Serb Radical Party (SRS) Ognjen Tadic, stated that RS parliamentary parties were able to unite only when it comes to capitulation. Glas srpski quotes Tadic as saying that letter sent by seven RS political parties to the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch was a “solicitation”.

RS Democratic Patriotic Party: Tihic’s tricks

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The RS is exposed to tremendous pressure of the Bosniak and Croat politicians, as well as attacks from the Republic of Croatia, the aim of which is to abolish RS, defined by the DPA. The above was stated by the President of the RS Democratic Patriotic Party, Predrag Radic, at a press conference held yesterday in Banja Luka. Radic also stated that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch made only one mistake and that is to start negotiations over a sensitive topic, before the elections and just before the expiration of his mandate. “By doing so, he exposed himself to an unpleasant situation and delivered a valuable pre-electoral instrument, called protection of vital national interests in the hands of the politicians from BiH Federation and Croatia.” – said Radic. Glas srpski also quotes Radic as saying: “The House of Peoples in RS is only a trick of the SDA President, Sulejman Tihic coming out from a wish to achieve a dream of BiH politicians.”

BiH Social-Democratic Party: Orchestrated attacks

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

The Vice President of SDP BiH, Slobodan Popovic stated at a press conference held yesterday in Banja Luka that an orchestrated political campaign against his party was ongoing, coming from all the sides. According to the Glas srpski report, Popovic commented on the statement of RS Vice President Dragan Cavic who said that, if concept of SDP President Zlatko Lagumdzija is accepted, Serbs would be reduced to a national minority, when it comes to the protection of vital national interests. "Cavic ignores the fact that all SDS leaders are either already in The Hague or are indicted by the Tribunal for war crimes." – said Popovic.

RS veterans urge RS authorities to organize referendum on constitutional reform

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

President of the RS Organization of families of killed and missing soldiers Djoko Pajic called the RS authority and parliamentary parties to stop all negotiations with political parties from the BiH Federation, over constitutional changes. "It is obvious that parties from F BiH are asking for the disappearance of RS and we request that RS NA organize referendum at which RS citizens would decide about their fate and fate of RS, since we have created it, defended it in the civil war, which has been imposed on us."- said Pajic at a press conference in Bijeljina.

Dnevni List: Zubak refused Petritsch's proposals!

Written by Marko Markovic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries that yesterday the talks on the constitutional changes lasted the whole day. The article says that until 9 o'clock last night, the leaderships of political parties did not reach an agreement. Also, negotiators were

waiting all day long for the HR who yesterday afternoon offered to the participants a proposal, for which he said that he had agreed upon it with the parties belonging to the Alliance. Afterwards, it turned out that there are many objections to the text of this proposal. To put it more precisely, the crucial attitude was the attitude of Kresimir Zubak from NHI, who did not agree with Petritsch's attitudes and attitudes of the Alliance.

Niko Lozancic from HDZ stated that they discussed the document, which was not agreed upon by the parties belonging to the Alliance and added: 'The document is not acceptable because by this proposal the House of Peoples is useless and does not have significance, which was defined by the Constitution. HDZ negotiators and other negotiators from the line of the Croat people cannot accept that by these decisions the Constitutional Court turns into a political body.'

The talks will continue today at 5 o'clock when the HR will offer a final text of the decision to all participants of the negotiations. It has been expected that his offer might be a 'take it or leave it' offer. Kresimir Zubak from NHI stated that in spite of opposite stands on some issue there is still a hope that the agreement can be reached and added: 'The HR will not accept or support any proposal in which we (?) are not involved.' Zubak said that yesterday's talks mainly focused on the protection of vital national interests and added that participants did not fully agree on this issue.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Ante Jelavic on Sarajevo talks – Nothing has been agreed yet

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija carries (unrecognized) President of the HDZ BiH Ante Jelavic who said at a session of Ljubuski HDZ that the claims of the OHR that amendments in talks on constitutional reforms have been agreed upon in excess of

70-80% are not true i.e. sheer misinformation. Jelavic said that almost nothing was agreed upon. He also reiterated previous claims that the meeting between the High Representative and HDZ representatives that was held in Mostar, which was to render issues on constitutional changes, had turned into the HR threatening the HDZ reps if they did not show cooperation.

Slobodna Dalmacija: HDZ denies that it withdraws Ljubic from the talks

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

HDZ BiH denies claims of yesterday's Dnevni Avaz that Ante Jelavic had recalled Mariofil Ljubic as the HDZ negotiator in the constitutional talks saying that Ljubic has the party's full support and that he would stay in talks until they have finished, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Federation

Tokic believes Dodik is more acceptable for the Alliance as the partner than Ivanic

In an interview with Dnevni Avaz, Sejfudin Tokic, the Vice-president of the BiH SDP Main Board, said that the governing Alliance for Change should not enter a crisis due to pre-election time, although some parties belonging to the Alliance 'have started the campaign too early." Tokic believes that the positions linking the political parties in the Alliance are much stronger than the differences between them, and that the Alliance will therefore survive until the next elections. Asked whether the Alliance it would be possible to establish a sort of old-new alliance after elections, Tokic said that the SDP concept would try to create an atmosphere and pre-conditions for the re-establishment of an alliance of the

democratic political parties. He concluded that, because of his clearer political views concerning the survival of the state of BiH, and his clearer distancing from the SDS nationalistic political option and Milosevic's policy in the past, SNSD leader Milorad Dodik was more acceptable as the partner to the Alliance and Republika Srpska Prime Minister and PDP President Mladen Ivanic. Tokic said he believed this would be official SDP's position in the upcoming pre-election campaign.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Interview with Ilija Simic, President of HSS BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

SD carries an interview with the President of HSS BiH, Ilija Simic, in which he talks about constitutional changes and other topical issues.

- One cannot talk about constituency of peoples the way Serb politicians do, solutions in RS and Federations must be identical, protection of vital interests and mechanisms of protection must be the same i.e. establishment of two-chamber Parliament in RS with a HoP in it.
- HSS against solutions which do not envision two-chamber Parliaments in both entities, only those kind of Parliaments with HoP that can pass decisions acceptable to HSS.
- Holds RS politicians responsible if those solutions are not agreed upon and calls on HR Wolfgang Petritsch to take a decision on equality of constituent peoples and adds that if such decision is not taken BiH would have bleak future.
- On talks between Croat parties with Croatian PM Racan: Aim was to inform Croatian authorities about position of BiH Croats, general feeling is that Croatian authorities avoid to mention problems related to position of Croat

in BiH being afraid that they would be accused of meddling into BiH affairs

- Unhappy with the Alliance's work adding that one could not expect much because of circumstances. Commends Alliance for distancing from criminal and corruption to a great extent and establishing a partnership with the IC
- On Croat coalition: Time is right for Croat parties to discuss such options, HSS interested in coalition with NHI, HKDU, HNZ and People's Party Working for Prosperity
- On HDZ: They still have biggest support of Croat electorate but statistically losing votes. Believes that HDZ will lose its electorate because electorate does not support "third entity" and because of HDZ's assessment that the IC "is against interests of Croat people".
- HSS happy with its position within Alliance pursuant to election results, believes that all parties within the Alliance are equal regardless of size and election results.

Dnevni List: FTV was destined in advance to discriminate

Written by Tihomir Begic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Tihomir Begic writes about the Federation TV, which according to him 'was established by imposed decisions of High Representatives Carlos Westendorp and Wolfgang Petritsch'. Begic says that the FTV is a personification of an entity, which in the announced application of a civic majority principle can become for the Croats in BiH an even darker dungeon from the Yugoslav one. Also, according to Begic, only a few things changed in the (F)TV program, language tolerance and national balance of employees and concludes that those, who do not have information that the FTV started with its work, would say that they watch the Bosniak BiH TV. Begic says that the concept of reorganization of media is totally opposite to the General Declaration on Human Rights and in

Begic's opinion it should be secured that all constituent peoples in BiH have a basic human right to have a TV program in their own mother tongue. He says that such Radio Television, which wants to impose itself as a Bosniak and Croat TV in the Federation simply does not have chances not to be a discriminatory television. According to Begic, the Federation RTV is a result of violation of the BiH Constitution by the HR, PBS Foundation Board and RTV Federation Council, which served to the Administrations of the International Community as a democratic décor in the whole process, and which, in reality, was led by foreigners. Begic concludes that according to the current practice and plans among which 'The Roman Defense Plan' is being especially mentioned, the destiny of the Croatian language is even darker. He says that there is an attempt to create a small Yogoslavia by assimilation of the Croats and then also Serbs into a Bosniak super-nation with the blessing of the international autocrats, who either do not understand, or because of political reasons, do not want to understand the complexity of BiH.

Vecernji List: Re-registration of HDZ BiH – Lozancic officially represents HDZ

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Vecernji List reads that the HDZ BiH has submitted to the Mostar Cantonal Court a decision of the HDZ Presidency that Niko Lozancic is to represent the party in the Court's register instead of Ante Jelavic. On top of that the HDZ BiH has filled in the forms for re-registration of the party which is a normal practice after a Convention of a party is held. VL also reads that the Court's Panel of Judges received changes to the HDZ's Statute. The source also carries the Secretary General of HDZ BiH Josip Merdzo who told the daily that the party has submitted every document which was required by the Mostar Cantonal Court and that the HDZ expects a solution

which would confirm the re-registration. “As far as the HDZ is concerned, it is a technicality”, says Merdzo.

The article carries a commentary of the situation that by this re-registration, the HDZ BiH will not escape the new pressures, since Petritsch recently said that HDZ BiH with Jelavic leading it would not be able to take part in the forthcoming elections. “We have fulfilled legal pre-requisites, but one cannot rule-out political pressures”, says Merdzo adding that the IC and Election Commission could make it hard for the HDZ to take part in the elections.

Republika Srpska

RS Tax Administration: Taxpayers owe 400 million KM to the RS

(Provided by OHR Banja Luka)

In a short interview for Nezavisne novine, the Director of the RS Tax Administration, Milica Bisic stated that the list of those who have not paid taxes was quite long and that, since 1995, the taxpayers owe 400 million KM to the Republic. Bisic also commented on suspensions of the Tax Administration employees and said that suspensions followed findings of the internal control. Bisic said that the final decision will be made by the disciplinary commission.

International Community

Petritsch prepares a decision on the rights of the dismissed politicians

According to Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, is preparing to in a next few days make a decision by which persons once removed from

their offices by OHR, as well as the Election Appeal Sub-commission (EASC) will be banned from participating in the next BiH elections scheduled from October this year. These persons will include Ante Jelavic, Ivo Andric Luzanski, Zdravko Batinic (HDZ) and Nikola Poplasen (RS Serb radical Party).

The US Embassy to BiH reopened

The U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo reopened on Monday after closing for five days due to a security alert, the second time the mission has shut its doors since the September 11 attacks, a spokeswoman said. “We have decided to reopen and we are working as normal, but we constantly assess the security situation,” Karen Williams told Reuters.

An unspecified security threat prompted the embassy to close last Wednesday, a day after Bosnian police raided offices linked to a U.S.-based Islamic charity that Washington suspects of terrorist links. The Sarajevo daily Dnevni Avaz reported on Saturday that the embassy was closed because of an intelligence report that Saudi-born fugitive Osama bin Laden’s al Qaeda organization was planning attacks in Sarajevo. The daily quoted an unnamed government official as saying members of the group met in the Bulgarian capital of Sofia to discuss European targets. Williams said she was unaware of a specific al Qaeda threat in Bosnia. The Bulgarian government said it had no knowledge of the alleged meeting but promised a thorough investigation after U.S. authorities gave it a list of wanted al Qaeda members.

Headlines

Oslobodjenje

- Bozo Misura (former MIO Mostar Director) accused of office abuse by his former driver

- Tanovic: this is for my BiH

Dnevni Avaz

- Tanovic: this is Oscar for my BiH

Jutarnje Novine

- Tanovic: Oscar is for my country, for Bosnia

Nezavisne Novine

- Danis Tanovic’s triumph at the Academy Awards ceremony: An Oscar for “No man’s land”
- Slobodan Popovic for Nezavisne: SDP is not for abolishment of RS
- Milica Bisic, Director of RS Tax Administration: Tax payers in RS owe 400 million KM taxes

Glas Srpski

- After decision of General John Sylvester on weapon’s categorization: SFOR confiscates “Tetejci”
- After the search of Parish House in Serb Gorazde: Snitches failed

Vecernji List

- 3 million viewers in BiH were watching presenting of Oscar awards: Triumph of ‘No man’s land” Franjo Topic, President of HKD ‘Napredak’” Three entities or none
- According to HDZ Presidency decision: Lozancic represents HDZ