

BiH Media Round-up, 27/11/2001

BiH State-related Issues

- The BiH 2001 Budget increased by 54.8 million KM
- Some BiH citizens also trained in the Al-Qaeda military camps
- The Alliance for Change Coordination Body supports work of the State and Federation Governments
- Restitution in a natural form proposed to the BiH Council of Ministers

Federation

- *Dnevni List*: Small parties belonging to the Alliance-demanding new solutions related to the appointment of officials
- *Vecernji List*: HDZ BiH delegates return to the Federation Parliament
- *Dnevni List*: Stolac Primary School Director says computers at disposal of all students
- *Vecernji List*: Sarajevo Cantonal Court Judge Idriz Kamenica confirms that investigation against Jelavic has been officially launched

Republika Srpska

- Abandoned apartments in the RS to be privatized under the new instructions
- RS National Assembly to hold its 11th session on Wednesday
- A group of RS National Assembly deputies to lodge complain against a BiH Election Law provision to BiH Constitutional Court
- The RS Government to be reshuffled on Wednesday?
- Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons from Bijeljina, Ugljevik, Lopare and Janja asks for urgent meeting with the High Representative
- Sarovic says Bosnia impossible without RS
- SDA says RS result of aggression, genocide

International Community

- Petritsch says Karadzic is not key player at the RS political scene any

more

- US President Bush congratulates the BiH Statehood Day to Krizanovic
- US Administration welcomes new indictment against Slobodan Milosevic
- The Hague asks for the United Nations intervention
- *Vecernji List*: What stands behind the visit of five ICTY judges to Sarajevo
- Petritsch says the RS authorities must arrest Karadzic and Mladic
- Croatia reportedly issues international arrest warrants for 314 Serb refugees
- Government accused of exaggerating Serb refugee property claims
- Djindjic says Milosevic indictment has "individualised" guilt

Editorials

- *Dnevni List*: Speech of His Majesty
- *Vecernji List*: BiH – state with only three holidays

BiH State-related Issues

The BiH 2001 Budget to be increased by 54.8 million KM

The BiH Coordination Team for the Economic Development proposed, at its session in Sarajevo started on Sunday and ended early on Monday, that the 2001 State Budget is increased by 54.8 million KM. Oslobođenje reports that the Team also make a proposal how to spend a total of 281 million KM from the succession. According to the proposal, approximately 74 percent of this amount should be spent in the BiH economic development, as a total of 51 million KM will end in the pockets of the BiH pensioners by the end of this year, as the state contribution to the promised payment of the backlog pensions.

Some BiH citizens also trained in the Al-Qaeda military camps

Oslobodjenje carries the allegations from an article published on Monday in the USA Today daily that the documents had been found in the Al-Qaeda military camps in Afghanistan, which confirmed that the citizens from at least 21 country including BiH and FRY's province of Kosovo had been trained in these camps.

The Alliance for Change Coordination Body supports work of the State and Federation Governments

At its regular meeting in Sarajevo on Monday, the Coordination Body of the Alliance for Change fully supported the work of the BiH Council of Ministers and the Federation Government. "There is no need for any reshuffle of the Governments either at the state or at the Federation level," an Alliance leader told Dnevni Avaz following the meeting.

Restitution in a natural form proposed to the BiH Council of Ministers

BiH Deputy Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications Jusuf Halilagic told Dnevni Avaz that a framework draft law on the restitution might be put on the agenda of the next BiH Council of Ministers session scheduled for Thursday. Halilagic added that the Ministry's working group had proposed the return of the illegally expropriated property in the both entities in a natural form. The Governments of the Federation and Republika Srpska will more precisely define ways of the restitution law implementation.

Federation

Dnevni List: Small parties belonging to the

Alliance-demanding new solutions related to the appointment of officials

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

All parties, members of the Alliance, will have to hand over to the Coordination body the names of their candidates for the filling in of vacant positions in the Executive authority, at all levels. Also, removals might take place in numerous Steering Boards of companies, Agencies, Bureaus etc. The whole action was started because of an inefficient engagement of some leaders. However, according to back-corridors talks, apart from their inefficient engagement, another reason is that many people were not removed when the Alliance came to power. Also, some removals might take place in the Federation Government. Suada Hadzovic, a current Minister for Defenders' Issues, might be removed, as well as, Dobrica Jonjic, her Deputy, Sejfidin Tokic, the Chairman of the BiH Parliament House of Peoples, and Behija Hadzihajdarevic, the Minister of Agriculture. According to some statements, the Alliance officials are not satisfied with the work of Mijo Anic, the Minister of Defense, and Ferid Buljubasic, his Deputy. According to all indications, exactly this Ministry might be the first one in which the removals will take place. The Alliance sent the message that they came as a pair to these positions, and if they do not realize the Alliance goals they have to resign or they will be recalled together.

Vecernji List: HDZ BiH delegates return to the Federation Parliament

Written by Z. Jurilj (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The HDZ BiH Caucus is returning to the Federation Parliament tomorrow. This decision has been made after a string of consultative meetings at the party presidency and the Caucus President Ivica Marinovic has confirmed it. Since the agenda of the session tomorrow will contain matters of great

importance for the future political and economic organization of the Federation, HDZ delegates have assessed their return is necessary.

“We have never left, in fact, we have been here all the time. Of course, we could not accept the foul policy of a part of the International Community, which they were conducting with the Alliance to disintegrate the party that won around 98% of Croat votes. We cannot allow what is a bad copy of the SANU Memorandum, which was copied by Bosniak intellectuals as far back as 1992, to be implemented in the Federation Parliament. This is about the biggest change of constitution since Dayton,” said Marinovic.

Following a proposal of the Peace Implementation Council and the Director of the International Crisis Group, Gareth Evans, it was said at a conference in Budapest that consultations should start as soon as possible about a revision of the Dayton Agreement. In their opinion, shortages of the Agreement obstruct BiH from developing and the three peoples from establishing inter-ethnic relations.

HDZ BiH delegates, upon returning to the Parliament, will request the Federation Government to finance Croat national institutions from the Budget, as well as Bosniak institutions.

Since the Croat people in BiH participate in the Budget filling, they will demand from the Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen to take specific actions in terms of investing in the Croat-majority cantons.

Slobodna Dalmacija carries an article under the title “**Even Petritsch had to warn the Alliance to take care of Croats.**” Slobodna Dalmacija quotes Ivica Marinovic as saying that their decision of withdrawing from the Federation parliament helped in reaching a number of objectives. “You see, there was an attempt of conducting the constitutional reform in silence, Petritsch was supposed to appoint a sort of commission

consisting of Ivan Brigic, a Brigadier of the Army of the Republic of BiH, Ilija Simic, a man who won 163 votes of the Croat people, Senka Nozica, the woman who ran for the position of Croat Presidency Member at the previous elections, whereas she was known as a member of Others in the Provisional Election Commission, there was also a professor who is a member of the HNZ, originally from Split, who declared his view of the status of Croats in BiH by his choice of place of residence. Therefore, they intended to conduct the constitutional reform in silence, under the pretext of the Constitutional Court decision. (...) Petritsch himself has finally realized that what he is doing, is not good, so that he urged the Alliance, at a session of the PIC Steering Board, to take care of the Croat issue, and he has mentioned in a few of his statements that one should take care of Croats in BiH," said Marinovic.

Dnevni List: Stolac Primary School Director says computers at disposal of all students

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Principle of the Stolac Elementary School, Tomo Markovic, reacted to Stefo Lehmann's statement according to which he prevented Bosniak children from using the donated computers by dismissing Lehmann's claims. Markovic asks Lehmann where he got that information and what are his intentions adding it is not ten computers as Lehmann says but six second-hand computers that are donated by a Norwegian humanitarian organization a year ago or so. Principle Markovic said that the computers had not been used because the school did not have qualified teachers adding that the computers are now available to all students regardless of their nationality. He also demands Lehmann to apologize at a next press conference, reads Dnevni List.

Vecernji List: Sarajevo Cantonal Court Judge Idriz Kamenica confirms that investigation against Jelavic has been officially launched

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Idriz Kamenica, a Judge of the Cantonal Court in Sarajevo, confirmed for Vecernji List that a decision has been made to conduct an investigation against senior officials of the Croat National Assembly, now that the first stage of the proceedings is over.

Judge Kamenica said the decision on whether or not an indictment bill will be issued is to be made once the evidence is collected.

Jelavic's attorney Josip Muselimovic said if the information about investigation launch shows to be true, it will be clear that anything is possible in the BiH judicial system. In that case, he will file an appeal and undertake all other measures available to protect "justified interests of Jelavic and other suspects."

"I do not have that information and I cannot check it, but if it proves to be true, then it is a most flagrant violation of the provisions of the Law on Criminal Procedure, legal practice, BiH Constitution, and, most tragically of all, the European Convention of Human Rights and Freedoms," said Muselimovic.

Republika Srpska

Abandoned apartments in the RS to be privatized under the new instructions

According to Dnevni Avaz, the High Representative might in this week impose amendments to the BiH Federation and

Republika Srpska property laws. It is about the amendments, which will, among other things, restrict allocation of the alternative accommodation and define terms for legalization of the contracts on the exchange of properties. The OHR has also during the past months attempted to agree with the entity Governments the instructions for the application of the High Representative's last property-related decision, which had abolished the two-year ban on the privatization of apartments in the BiH Federation and imposed discount to the price of the apartments in the RS. The RS instructions have been agreed as the agreement on the issue has still not been reached with Federation Urban Planning Minister Ramiz Mehmedagic. Assistant RS Minister for Refugees and Displaced Persons Drago Vuleta told Dnevni Avaz that the privatization of the apartments under the new instructions would start as soon as they are published in the entity's Official Gazette.

RS National Assembly to hold its 11th session on Wednesday

Republika Srpska dailies announce that the 11th session of the RS National Assembly is to take place in Banja Luka on Wednesday, November 28. The deputies will discuss the draft RS Budget for the year of 2002, as well as the draft law on the execution of the budget for that year.

A group of RS National Assembly deputies to lodge complain against a BiH Election Law provision to BiH Constitutional Court

A group of the deputies to the Republika Srpska National Assembly will request the BiH Constitutional Court to annul a provision in the State Election Law according to which the refugees and displaced persons occupying someone else's property do not have a right to vote at the current addresses. The deputies challenging this provision think that it is not in accordance to the BiH Constitution.

The RS Government to be reshuffled on Wednesday?

Nezavisne Novine writes that, according to a source close to the Republika Srpska Government, the re-shuffle of the RS Government will take place at the Wednesday's session of the RS National Assembly if the consensus inside the ruling coalition is reached on the issue. According to the same source, RS prime Minister Mladen Ivanic is likely to withdraw some draft laws from the procedure and put the re-shuffle of the government on the agenda.

Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons from Bijeljina, Ugljevik, Lopare and Janja asks for urgent meeting with the High Representative

Glas Srpski reports, on the cover page, that the Regional Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons from Bijeljina, Ugljevik, Lopare and Janja asked for an urgent meeting with the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and his associates. The press release issued by this association reads that a reason for such request is the destruction of the Serb property in the BiH Federation and obstructions of the Federation authorities to the return of Serbs to their pre-war homes in the entity.

Sarovic says Bosnia impossible without RS

The Republika Srpska President, Mirko Sarovic, told the Banja Luka-based Alternative TV on Monday evening that he did not understand why the ICTY indictment against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was being linked to the existence and survival of the Serb Republic. "My response to the malicious comments regarding the genocide indictment against Slobodan Milosevic is that the survival of BiH is directly linked to the survival of the RS," Sarovic said.

SDA says RS result of aggression, genocide

SRNA News Agency reports that the SDA welcomed the indictment

against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic for war crimes in BiH, because it “makes the people hope again that justice can be achieved.” According to a statement issued by the SDA, the indictment undoubtedly confirms the fact that aggression was carried out by the FRY against BiH and that genocide was directed against the non-Serb ethnic groups, which among other things resulted in the establishment of the RS. “This entity cannot survive in its present form because it would represent a monument to the greatest criminals of the last part of the 20th century,” the statement said.

International Community

Petritsch says Karadzic is not key player at the RS political scene any more

“I have been using my influence constantly but since I am authorized only for the civil part of the peace agreement implementation, I do not have military or police means available to the other organizations and agencies,” the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said on Monday in the popular BBC Hard Talk TV program. Petritsch emphasized that the same was when it came to the need for apprehension of war crime suspects sheltering in the Republika Srpska including Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. “I am not stopping to influence this process, but I do not have police forces and, apart from this, I believe that the problem should be resolved by the local authorities,” Petritsch emphasized. He denied allegations that Karadzic was still a key player at the RS political scene. (The SENSE report on the Talk was carried by Oslobodjenje and Jutarnje Novine as parts of the original BBC Hard Talk were broadcast in the Monday’s Fed TV news program Pogledi)

US President Bush congratulates the BiH Statehood

Day to Krizanovic

In regard of the November 25 – the BiH Statehood Day, US President George Bush sent a letter of congratulations to BiH Presidency Chairman Jozo Krizanovic. “The United States remain committed to working with you as a partner in building a stable and prosperous BiH, which will be able to take its place in Europe and participate as a full member in the Euro-Atlantic integration,” Bush emphasized in the letter.

US Administration welcomes new indictment against Slobodan Milosevic

Nezavisne Novine writes that the US Administration welcomed the completion of the indictments against former Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic and repeated that all persons indicted for war crimes in Croatia, Bosnia and Kosovo should be brought to justice.

The Hague asks for the United Nations intervention

The Hague Tribunal President, Claude Jorda, said in a report presented to the United Nations General Assembly that the Tribunal had launched proceedings against 50 persons indicted for war crimes committed in Croatia, BiH and Kosovo. In this way, it has become an important factor in the international community's efforts to stimulate the process of the reconciliation in the Balkans through the establishment of the individual responsibility for war atrocities. However, according to Oslobodjenje, the main debate on the current Tribunal's problems and its future tasks will take place on Tuesday at the session of the UN Security Council. The report of the Tribunal's work in the past six months will be presented by Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte. She is expected to fiercely criticize Governments in Zagreb, Banja Luka and Belgrade for a lack of cooperation with the Tribunal. Dnevni Avaz reports that five judges from the Tribunal headed by Richard May are visiting BiH. On Monday, they met with the Senior Deputy High Representative, Matthias Sonn, to discuss

war crime cases being processed not by the Tribunal but by the local courts.

Vecernji List: What stands behind the visit of five ICTY judges to Sarajevo

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The process of establishing a sort of “mini” Hague Tribunal officially started with the visit of five ICTY judges to Sarajevo yesterday. The tribunal will stand for prosecution of perpetrators of several thousand crimes committed in the territory of BiH. Carla Del Ponte raised the initiative of establishing this tribunal, which should be more efficient in prosecuting war crime perpetrators, due to time and financial limits. She addressed open criticism to the work of domestic courts and told all legal and political officials during her September visit that the ICTY was planning to set up its own “mini” tribunal in BiH, reads Vecernji List.

By establishing this tribunal, the ICTY will distance itself from prosecuting low-ranking commanders and crime perpetrators in BiH and will be dealing with their order-issuing authorities, i.e. high-ranking commanders and political ideologists.

Mini tribunal, based in Sarajevo, which would include domestic judges and prosecutors as well as international legal experts, is supposed to prosecute 15,000 to 20,000 cases. The main part of the legal work will be directed from the Hague Tribunal, which will be securing a part of the money for the work of the mini tribunal in Sarajevo via its financier, the UN Security Council.

Cantonal Prosecutor in Sarajevo, Mustafa Bisic, did not want to reveal details of the future work of the BiH-based tribunal before he finishes discussions with the Tribunal judges. He said it is too early to talk about when the tribunal will start functioning, and added one should not hasten to the

detriment of its efficiency.

Vecernji List also says that the five judges met with representatives of the judicial authorities in BiH and that, instead of talking with the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, they talked with his Senior Deputy Matthias Sonn.

Petritsch says the RS authorities must arrest Karadzic and Mladic

In an interview with Belgrade newspaper Blic, the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that the Republika Srpska authorities had to be engaged in the apprehension of the most wanted war crime suspects Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, bearing in mind their obligations from the Dayton Agreement. Petritsch expressed his conviction Karadzic and Mladic would face trial before The Hague Tribunal saying that this would represent a big relief for the RS. (the parts of the interview were carried by Fena news agency on Monday and by Tuesday's Jutarnje Novine)

Croatia reportedly issues international arrest warrants for 314 Serb refugees

Fena News Agency quotes director of the Belgrade-based Veritas documentation and information centre, Savo Strbac, as saying that up to 24 November the Republic of Croatia had issued 314 arrest warrants for Croatian Serb refugees via Interpol. Strbac said that the only hope for the Serbs wanted by Croatia was to apply for Yugoslav citizenship because, under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Belgrade cannot extradite its citizens.

Government accused of exaggerating Serb refugee property claims

Independent Belgrade-based news agency "Fo-Net reports that the Croatian Helsinki Committee has joined a debate on the tenancy rights of Croatian Serbs after the OSCE condemned

Croatia for preventing the Serb refugees from buying their apartments (before the war these apartments were state-owned but the occupiers had full tenancy rights). Deputy Prime Minister Zeljka Antunovic has rejected the OSCE criticism out of hand by claiming that the Serbs had left Croatia "voluntarily"... In order to spread fear she claimed that the problem was a serious one and that Serbs could demand the return of as many as 50,000 flats in Croatia which she said was equivalent to a town of 150,000 to 200,000 inhabitants – in addition to Zagreb, there are only another three towns in Croatia of that size! The Croatian Helsinki Committee has supported the right of Serbs to purchase their previous apartments and has urged the government to postpone the deadline for submitting requests by those who were not in the position to do so when the initial deadline expired in 1996. This demand has been explained by the fact that most of the Serbs were forcibly expelled from their homes, which can be proven by documents compiled by EU monitors and Croatian NGOs. The Croatian Helsinki Committee experts say that 15,000 flats at the most are in question and that their return to legal tenants should represent no problem because they are now occupied by people who used force to move in, which is why they cannot be considered legal tenants. Many of them possess other flats which they rent out and "any law-governed state would expel them from other people's property". However, this is exactly what the government is afraid of. For almost two years, the authorities have not even tried to prosecute the criminals and corrupt officials who lost the elections in January 2000... Instead of trying to deal with the sad legacy of the 10-year-long rule by force, the Croatian government prefers to be tough with the helpless victims of ethnic cleansing.

Djindjic says Milosevic indictment has "individualised" guilt

Tanjug news agency quotes Serbian Prime Minister, Zoran

Djindjic, as saying that by indicting Slobodan Milosevic "the responsibility had been individualised and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Serbia and the Republika Srpska exonerated, because by voting for someone we did not give them the licence to commit war crimes, but to tackle the affairs of the state". There are several levels of co-operation with the Hague tribunal, and the most important one is the gathering of evidence, because it is on this basis that most people will be released. The court has recommended that people from the state and public security should give evidence, but they will not be forced to do so, said Djindjic.

Editorials

Dnevni List: Speech of His Majesty

Written by Marko Tokic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List carries an editorial by Marko Tokic, Vice President of the HDZ BiH in which talks about the sixth anniversary of the DPA by saying that His Majesty, Wolfgang Petritsch, made his usual speech on the occasion: citizens being fed up with nationalists, authority consisting of people who were not in power during and after the war etc. adding that there were sparks of sincerity. "How did Wolfgang talk?", asks Tokic. " He encouraged the RS to integrate into BiH more and concede some competence to the State level because they would join Europe through the State. He did not mention the Muslims-Bosniaks because their policy is identical to the IC's one. The centralization that would diminish the role of the entities and the process of introduction of the civic majority in the entities. The HR speaks to us, the Croats, because we are an important factor in BiH, offering us a consolatory prize. The Serbs and Bosniaks will be protected by the entity-state, whilst the Croats will be protected by – the Constitution. Furthermore (check out the rhetoric) "we must

find our place in BiH by using advantages of the constitutional framework". Whilst we get outvoted by civic majorities, we'll flip out – the Constitution. In the future if the HR decides to send tanks on a private company or Croat institution, we'll take it to the streets and instead of eggs and tomatoes, we will use the Constitution. We will not chuck it at them, God forbid, we are protected by it. We would grab it and charge, ending up under the tanks (...), says Marko Tokic, reads Dnevni List.

Vecernji List: BiH – state with only three holidays

Written by Radoslav Dodig (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The commentary reads that the BiH Statehood Day was marked modestly and almost unnoticeably, but only in the Federation of BiH.

The House of Peoples early this September declared the New Year's Day, 1 May and 25 November the state holidays, but the holidays are holidays only on paper and in the drawers of expert services of the State Parliament, reads the commentary.

One should commend the proposal of such a minimalist concept in which the state only has three non-working days, unlike the Republic of Croatia, which has 11. The High Representative will probably impose the law eventually, says Dodig.

"I think that another holiday should be added to these three proposed ones – DA VI ME PRE (Dan visokih medjunarodnih predstavnika), the Day of High International Representatives," reads Dodig's commentary.