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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Presidency supports formation of the State Information and Protection Agency

At the session held in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the BiH Presidency supported the drafting of the law on the State Information and Protection Agency. The Presidency will propose the law to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly. Dnevni Avaz quoted Bosniak member of the Presidency Beriz Belkic as saying following the session that the Agency would be authorized to provide security for the diplomatic-consular representation offices, state institutions and state officials. It will also deal with a part of intelligence activities the entity intelligence services will delegate to it. This is, according to Belkic, a way towards the establishment of a single BiH intelligence service, which will be completely under the parliamentary control.

SCMM announces further reduction of the military effective

Dnevni Avaz reports that the BiH Standing Committee for Military Matters (SCMM) held its regular session in Sarajevo on Wednesday. Enes Becirbasic, the military adviser at the BiH Presidency, announced following the session further reduction

of the armed forces, but he did not specify soldiers from which units would be demobilized.

BiH House of Peoples rejects Tokic's initiative for removal of Prlic

At the session held in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the BiH House of Peoples rejected an initiative made by the House Speaker, Sejfudin Tokic, for the removal of the BiH Deputy Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Minister, Jadranko Prlic. According to Dnevni Avaz, only Tokic voted for the initiative he had launched due to the irregularities in the BiH Foreign Ministry during the Prlic's ministerial mandate, which were determined by the Office for the Audit of the BiH Institutions Financial Operations.

Federation

Slavisa Sucur says will request opening of the intelligence services' archives

Slavisa Sucur, a deputy to the BiH Federation House of Peoples, was by a decision of the entity President and Vice-president appointed member of the commission for the reorganization and unification of the intelligence services in the entity. Sucur told Dnevni Avaz that the possible abuses of the office inside the two services would be in focus of the commission's interest. "I will also propose that the archives of the services are opened so that each citizen who possibly has a dossier in these archives may look into it and decide whether he will destroy it or make it public," Sucur said.

Dnevni Avaz: Owners of the BiH passports found in Kabul lived in Bocinja

Persons who possessed two BiH passports recently found in a destroyed house in Kabul were identified as Ibrahim Hosni and

Morsi Rokaja, both from Egypt. According to the newspaper, they are currently not in the BiH's territory. The two were for some time residents of Bocinja. Before coming to the village, they both lived in the Sarajevo municipality of Center.

BiH Federation House of Representatives to continue its session on Thursday

Dnevni Avaz reports that the BiH Federation House of Representatives will continue its session on Thursday to discuss the rebalance of the entity Budget for this year. The document foresees the payment of another backlog pension by the end of the year. At its Wednesday session, the House confirmed appointment of Ramo Maslesa as the new BiH Federation Interior Minister.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Current Director of Federation Television strongly criticized the TV restructuring three years ago

Written by Milo Jukic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija says Jasmin Durakovic wrote the following for the Dani magazine back in 1998: "RTV BiH has recently become an easy target for the bureaucratized structures of the International Community that take pleasure, in the manner of classical protectors, in the final abolishment of what is one of the few remaining symbols of Bosnian state identity and dignity and a powerful weapon for the defense of Bosnian national interests. (...) A new big illusion formed in the public in the recent days is that the RTV problem can be solved if the upset Westendorp bangs his fist against the table in the crucial moment, points at one of the solutions offered and says: That is it and basta!."

The daily carries a few more quotes of his article for Dani titled 'Disgrace of Bosniaks at the end of the century' and comments: "Everything, apart from the (slight) difference

between TV BiH and FTV, has been done in the way Durakovic called impossible. The only difference is that the protector's name is not Westendorp, but Petritsch."

Jukic says that people call the Federation TV "Fetva" (**NB:** a religious decree imposed by Islamic senior priests) and mentions that the program, as of lately, is interrupted on a daily basis for the Ramadan evening meal, regardless of what is on at that time. The Croat issue on the FTV remains pending, says the daily, and Zvonko Maric, whose name before the war used to be Bajram Demic, is still the most prominent Croat journalist on the Federation TV. The major journalistic achievement of Marija Topic-Crnoja, the Informative Program Editor-in-Chief, is the fact that Dr. Franjo Topic, the President of the Croat Cultural Society "Napredak" is her uncle, and Sandra Bagaric, owing to her national background, only needed seven months of experience in journalism to become one of the famous "TV-faces" in BiH. There would be no use to talk of other non-journalistic Croats on "Fetva," says the paper, simply because there are none, says the paper.

"The announcements of building a program center in Mostar (in the Central Zone) fit this story perfectly and a quite logical consequence of it all is the fact that the number of cards for the HTV program sold in BiH equals the number of gas masks sold in New York, although the HTV cannot give ordinary Croats what they need the most. What use does it make to an ordinary Croat to know what happens in Pula, Zabok or Virovitica; he/she should be interested in what happens in Tuzla, Zenica, Sarajevo, Mostar... (...) With the *journalistic* bigwigs such as Chris Riley and John Shearer, who, owing to the 'ideas of journalism' of the BiH protectors, think that the words *editing* and *censorship* are synonyms, and who are the *real* editors, committing a suicide seems easier to do than producing a good program in the 'gray building'," says the paper.

The article concludes if this goes on, instead of asking for

the subscription money, Durakovic could expect his television to have viewers only if he pays them well for the torment of watching it.

Slobodna Dalmacija: In investigation of Hercegovacka Banka charges are being piled up but without arguments

Written by Dino Mikulandra (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija carries an editorial, written by Dino Mikulandra, about the whole Croherc, Hercegovina holding and Hercegovacka Banka story. The author starts the article by saying that Patrik Volf, an OHR spokesman, announced that Ante Jelavic could be charged with criminal acts which resulted in public funds being damaged by 100 million DEM adding that this was a verdict without material evidence, witnesses or courts. "Although the OHR is not yet authorised to deal with criminal charges and run processes, the Petritsch's office are adamant in saying that the leads point to companies within Hercegovina Holding", reads Slobodna Dalmacija. The article then goes on about the 27 million KMs that the Croherc reportedly failed to pay (tax evasion) and that the OHR estimated that the grand total of damages amassed to some 100 million KMs. The article also mentions the 44 fictitious companies that the Croherc used for its deals. All 44 companies had accounts in the Hercegovacka Banka, reads Slobodna Dalmacija adding that that's the only unquestionable thing in the case. Those were the first "breaking news" used by the OHR to criminally prosecute insolent thugs from the Croherc and demonize Ante Jelavic as the "usual suspect" of the OHR. The following day the OHR invites the only "honest" media in the shape of Dnevni Avaz and unitary FTV. The author then goes on about a TV appearance of an official of the OHR Anti-Corruption team who reiterated the old story about the Croherc.

"Petritsch's masked agent, who is obviously more scared of the Herzegovinian 'mafia' than of the Bosnian branch of the Al-

Qaeda, says that close associates and friends of Ante Jelavic's are behind the Croherc. He refuted, perhaps he was scared, his colleague Patrik Volf by saying that 'it does not mean that Jelavic or anyone of them are guilty'," writes Mikulandra.

In case somebody has forgotten, it has been some 6 months since the HR ordered the violent occupation of the Hercegovacka Banka saying that the bank was the source of every criminal activity. The IC employees sacked 170 employees of the bank. But that's not the only "collateral" damage. More than 4500 companies and 90000 small depositors are left without their money. Despite the financial collapse of the bank and the overtime put in by the Toby Robinson's receivership not a single piece of evidence that can be used for a criminal charge was found. What do the main culprits in the IC eyes say? Ante Jelavic does not want to talk about the Croherc because he has nothing to do with the company. Marinko Planinic, the CEO of the Croherc, says that the only thing the OHR anti-corruption team got right was the name of the company. Independent sources say that the Croherc did not commit a felony – it was not detected that it imported more oil than it reported and did not sell heating oil for diesel. Croherc honoured all the obligations by paying customs and excise taxes and according to Josip Muselimovic, the Croherc's lawyer, several criminal charges were filed against Croherc's consignors, but that's not Croherc's, Planinic's or Jelavic's problem.

Unfortunately the Petritsch's office must break more sweat, find more arguments and less phantom witnesses to justify "writing off" of a million DEM that the US, according to the Washington Post, donated to unveil the crime within the Hercegovacka Banka. Will Petritsch take "a tumble" if it is proven that Jelavic was accused without a reason and if it turns out that he personally participated in the rigged process against the leader of the HDZ BiH? Perhaps he will,

but only when he has left Sarajevo. As long as he is the BiH Governor he is always right, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Vecernji List: Public opinion poll on Hercegovacka Banka

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The Mostar TV HTV Oscar C organized a public opinion poll on the question: 'Do you believe that the removed Management of Hercegovacka Banka committed criminal acts before the raid into the bank on April 6, 2001?

502 persons were questioned. 138 questioned persons or 27% of them stated that they believe that the Management committed criminal acts. 348 questioned persons, or 70% of them, gave the negative response, while 16 viewers, or 3% of them, did not have an attitude on this issue.

Vecernji List: Quick development of Mostar starts

Written by Z. Kresic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

The Mostar City Council adopted yesterday 'Quick-Start Plan for Implementing Mostar's Economic Development Strategy in 2002'. Apart from Councilors, the conference gathered a large number of foreign guests. The adopted document is an indicator of goals, which have been realized. 14 Councilors supported it while HDZ Councilors were against it.

Among the other things, the establishment of the Agency for Mostar Economic Development, one of the crucial city institutions, which should be a Service for foreign investors and domestic partners, has been envisaged. City leaders see Mostar in five years as a center of regional importance and the center of future infrastructure projects of V Corridor from Budapest to Ploce, but also of the connection with European highways from Dubrovnik to Zagreb.

The document of the Mostar City Administration says that they

have already started to work on the plans for the modernization of the railway system from Dubrovnik to Zagreb via Split and Ploce and from there new services can go to Sarajevo via Mostar. The City Government expects a lot from the privatization of Aluminij, Hepok and Tobacco Factory Mostar. It has been estimated that up to 1500 new places of work might be opened. Mayor Neven Tomic called on all institutions to build Mostar together. Tomic believes that the City Administration was not wrong when, at the beginning of the year, it organized the Conference about Mostar, which opened up the way to the strategy for the development of Mostar.

Hans Jorg Kretschmer, the Head of the EU Commission, called on the overcoming of ideological, national and religious divisions in Mostar. He concluded that during the last year a significant progress was marked in Mostar as far as the creation of a normal environment is concerned. However, at the same time during the last 6 years an insignificant progress has been achieved in BiH. He also opened two buildings in the Mostar settlement Vrapcici, which were reconstructed by the EU funds.

They do not want Interinvest clones

Ivan Musa, the President of the HDZ Caucus with the Mostar City Council, stated during the session, which was held within the conference, that this party cannot support the document, demanding again to put the item on the removal of Neven Tomic on the agenda. Musa warned those present of a few suspicious activities, stating that it would be unreasonable to erect cloned facilities of Interinvest company in the destroyed center of Mostar, where one square meter of a flat would be sold for 3000 Marks.

Republika Srpska

RS National Assembly in session

Both Republika Srpska dailies report on the session of the RS National Assembly, which commenced in Banja Luka on Wednesday. The deputies discussed the draft budget for the next year. RS Finance Minister Milenko Vracar stated that there would be no increases in earnings of the budget beneficiaries in the next year unless a number of employees at the state administration and public sector is reduced. The budget income for the year should be 886 million KM or 7% higher than in this year. 775,9 million is expected to come from domestic sources and the greatest part of it is expected from taxes and fees. Law on execution of criminal and offense charges was adopted. The Law on Seal was amended in an urgent procedure – BiH was added to the already existing RS name on the RS seal.

RS Prime Minister postponed re-shuffle of the Government

Nezavisne Novine writes that the Republika Srpska Prime Minister gave up proposing the re-shuffle of his Cabinet to the RS National Assembly deputies due to a great disagreement on the issue among the SDS (Serb Democratic Party) representatives. "As the opposition to the idea was huge by some members of the SDS and as they even threatened by splitting of the party, Mladen Ivanic decided to prolong reorganization and re-shuffle of the Cabinet until the SDS's Congress, which is to be held at the beginning of December", the newspaper quotes its source close to Ivanic..

RS President and Vice President met with OSCE Head of the Mission Robert Beecroft

Glas Srpski reports on the meeting of the Republika Srpska President and Vice President, Mirko Sarovic and Dragan Cavic, with the OSCE Head of the Mission to BiH in Banja Luka late on Wednesday. Role of the OSCE in the next year elections was the

issue discussed during the working dinner, the daily writes, adding that the success of these elections would strengthen the position of BiH, which is getting ready to enter the Council of Europe. The issues related to the return of refugees, especially obstacles in this process were also discussed.

International Community

Petritsch requests full implementation of the property laws

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, on Wednesday met with Kresimir Zubak, the BiH Minister for Human Rights and Refugees, Ramiz Mehmedagic, the BiH Federation Minister for Urban Planning, and Fikret Ferhatovic, the acting BiH Federation Minister for Social Affairs, Refugees and Displaced Persons, to discuss the implementation of the property laws. (Dnevni Avaz and Jutarnje Novine carried the [Press Release](#) prominently)

US Ambassador to BiH Clifford Bond gives interview to Nezavisne Novine

In a one-page interview to Nezavisne Novine, the US Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, stressed that the “future of BiH is with political forces who wish to get closer to Europe.” Bond warned that SDS should carry out a reform and change its leadership. According to the Oslobodjenje front-page article, Bond said he would not meet with any SDS officials until these changes are made. Bond was in Banja Luka in the official visit during which he met with the RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and leader of SNSD (Party of Independent Social-democrats) Milorad Dodik.

Blewitt confirmed FRY Army's Chief of Staff Nebojsa Pavkovic and FRY Police General Sreten Lukic were under investigation

Glas Srpski carries a statement of The Hague's Deputy Chief Prosecutor Graham Blewitt in which he confirmed that Pavkovic and Lukic were under investigation. The daily also quotes Blewitt as saying that the two might but not necessarily have to be indicted, which depends on the outcome of the investigation. The investigation is conducted in relation with war crimes committed in Kosovo.

Vecernji List: Interview with Christian Schwartz-Schilling, the International Mediator for the BiH Federation and the RS

(Partial translation provided by OHR Mostar)

A lot of things in this country are a result of the High Representative's will and not of the agreement of the peoples who live here. For this reason, quite frequently terms such as a half-protectorate, protectorate, as well as dictatorship are related to BiH. What do you think about it?

There are many politicians on both sides, who did not respect the will of the people. For instance, isn't it disgraceful that politicians of both entities could not secure joint registration plates so that people can travel. (...) In the light of this, it is shameful that the High Representative has to implement the things that people want. The fact that the High Representative got more involved in the implementation of the people's will has for its consequence that the speed by which local politicians resolve problems has been reduced and not increased. The consequence of such a situation is that he has to increasingly use his powers and this has caused the creation of a sort of protectorate. I believe that it would have been better that the protectorate was introduced in BiH

since the very beginning and after two or three years extremists would have been removed and democracy would have had a real chance. Actually, at the moment, we are wasting a lot of time trying to neutralize the power of nationalists and extremists. Take a look at Livno, for instance. As the time goes by, the situation is getting worse for the people there. I have heard that the financial and legal situation is also getting worse. The real protectorate introduced at the very beginning would have given much better results and the process of democratization would have marked more significant progress.

Why have you taken the example of Livno?

Because, lately, I have heard a lot about the situation in Livno. During my next visit I am planning to visit this city, because I have received a few invitations to go there.(...)

To what extent the present political organization is an obstacle for the return? We can frequently hear that we are all equal, however, only one people have its own Republic within this state?

As far as I know the BiH Constitutional Court has corrected all these things and by its decision it was concluded that all three peoples have to be constitutive in both entities. It is a mistake of politics that this kind of implementation goes very slowly. Also the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement is very slow. (...)

You have stated at the beginning that when there was money there was no return, and now when people want to return there is no money. Who is responsible for this situation?

Both sides. During each of my press conferences two or three years ago I was warning the politicians not to wait too long and I was telling them to accelerate the process of return because the money was there at that time.(...) Also, I was telling the IC that it is an illusion to believe that they

would be able to withdraw from this country in two years because the problems will not be solved.(...)

Since you frequently visit BiH, is there any person, perhaps, someone like Nelson Mandela, who would succeed to unify this country, with so many diversities, on the way to Europe? Certainly, Wolfgang Petritsch is not that person?

A new Nelson Mandela might be only someone from BiH, because Mandela was a man who was living in his own country and he experienced all kinds of discrimination on his own skin. (...) Here you have diplomats from the International Community who complete their job in three or five years and then they leave to another country. I would like to see a BiH citizen, who would be dealing with this issue. At the moment, I do not see such a person. However, he can appear when we a large number of people who support him appear. I do not know yet whether the time for it has come.

Editorials

Dnevni Avaz: Fadil Mandal commented in the Commentary of the Day on the Carla Del Ponte's address to the UN Security Council. He emphasized that any further postponement of the apprehension of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic was undermining the authority of The Hague Tribunal, as well as the credibility of the international community.

Dnevni List: – HDZ makes a good move

Written by Alenko Zornija (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List comments on the return of the HDZ delegates to the Parliament and says the HDZ BiH has finally responded to numerous appeals for the party to fight for the interest of its voters within the institutions of the system.

The author mentions the criminal charges that the HDZ BiH filed against the Federation Prime Minister Alija Behmen and comments it is very unlikely this process will go any further than that, criminal charges alone. Behmen could become subject to an investigation similar to that conducted against Edhem Bicakcic only if his party loses the next elections, says Dnevni List.

“It has been a long time since the HDZ made a move as good as this one. Everyone, from the High Representative Petritsch to the Alliance parties, said the institutions of the system are where the HDZ should fight for and protect the interests of their voters. However, if the Prosecutor’s Office, by the principle of automatism and due to a lack of serious approach, dismisses the criminal charges against Behmen, the ‘falcons’ within the HDZ will use it as an important argument in proving their claim that one has nothing to do within the system in our country.”