BiH Media Round-up, 30/4/2002

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BiH State-related Issues

Presidency head visits Srebrenica; Serb member fails to attend talks

The chairman of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, visited Srebrenica on Monday and had talks with municipal leaders in this town about the problems facing the municipality's population and ways of overcoming them. Special attention was devoted to preparations for the UN-sponsored international donor conference scheduled for May 13 of this year in New York. Local representatives briefed Belkic on the Srebrenica development priority projects for the coming period and singled out as priorities economic development and the creation of conditions conducive to the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes.

Although he was expected in Srebrenica, the Serb member of the Presidency, Zivko Radisic, did not take part in Monday's talks. After visiting Srebrenica, Belkic also visited Bratunac and Milici for talks with local authorities on implementing a project for the overall development of this part of BiH.

(All Federation media reported on Belkic's visit to Srebrenica)

Council of Ministers agrees on signing the CIPS project

At yesterday's session, the BiH Council of Ministers adopted a number of conclusions which pertain to the implementation of the CIPS (Citizens Identity Protection System) project and formed a task force which will be in charge of the implementation. Svetozar Mihajlovic, the Minister of Civil Affairs and Communications, said that the main printing house for new citizens' identity documents will be located in Banja Luka and added that the RS government is responsible for

providing the space. At a session, the Council of Ministers accepted the contract with German Siemens which will be entrusted with the implementation of the project. The contract is to officially be signed today, report the papers (the contract was actually signed on Monday night). Mihajlovic said that citizens could expect first documents in September and promised that, after the CIPS is fully implemented, they will no longer need visas when traveling to other European countries.(Federation media reported quite prominently on this item)

Federation

Pogorelica case: OHR insisted on Federation Supreme court handling this case

Oslobodjenje reports that on April 26 the OHR forwarded to the Federation Supreme Court its legal opinion in which it stressed that the so-called Pogorelica case should be processed before this institution, rather than before the lower, Cantonal, court. The daily notes that this explains the delay in passing a decision on opening the investigation against Bakir Alispahic, Irfan Ljevakovic and Enver Mujezinovic, all of whom were charged for setting up a terrorist-training camp in Pogorelica. The Federation Supreme Court has not yet scheduled the first hearing, however, media speculate that it could take place already this week.

Federation Finance Minister meets the head of the OHR Economics Department

The Federation Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Minister, Nikola Grabovac, met on Tuesday with the new head of the OHR's Economic Department, Patrice Dreiski, and the economic adviser for tax policy, Mark Campbell, to discuss the current economic situation in the Federation. The officials addressed some of the issues that are very important for BiH,

such as the functioning of the budget, situation in public funds, and relations in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton. They agreed that resolving the economic problems in the country must have precedence over other problems.

OHR representatives supported the economic oreitnation of the Federation Government and promised to continue the cooperation, which has been labeled as very positive so far. (ONASA original reporting)

Republika Srpska

Two dead after school shooting in Vlasenica school

A 17-year-old pupil went on a shooting rampage at a school in Vlasenica, RS, on Monday, killing one teacher and injuring another, before turning the gun on himself, police said. Dragoslav Petkovic shot dead history teacher Stanimir Reljic, 53, in front of the school building before entering a classroom where he shot and injured a mathematics teacher, 51-year-old Saveta Mojsilovic. Police in Vlasenica said they had yet to establish a motive for the shooting.

The incident in Vlasenica comes just three days after a former pupil shot dead 16 people, including 12 teachers, at a school in the German town of Erfurt.

(This was the top story in all media in Federation and the RS)

RS President: School in Serb Sarajevo will be built

The RS President, Mirko Sarovic, informed the RS Minister of Education, Gojko Savanovic, that the OHR withdrew its decision banning the construction of a school in the Serb Sarajevo. Glas Srpski recalls that the Japanese Government allocated 12,5 million KM for the construction of primary schools in Serb Sanski Most, Banja Luka and Serb Sarajevo. One day before

the beginning of the construction works, the RS Education Minster, Gojko Savanovic, was informed that the OHR put a ban on the construction of the school, emphasizing that the children from Serb Sarajevo can go to school in the Federation. Savanovic told the daily that he spoke with a representative of the Japanese embassy in Vienna who also tried to convince him to accept the OHR's view. "That was unacceptable and I have informed the RS President, Mirko Sarovic, the Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, and the Speaker of the RS National Assembly, Dragan Kalinic, about the development, in order to resolve the problem at the highest level. All three schools will be built, or not a single one," said Savanovic. After the talks, the OHR apparently withdrew its decision.

Serb Radical Party: Poplasen one of candidates

The Secretary General of the Serb Radical Party, Ognjen Tadic, said at a press conference in Banja Luka that his party will convene a congress in Bijeljina, on May 2, in order to elect the new party leadership, including the party president. According to Glas Srpski, SRS' current leader, Nikola Poplasen, will again be a candidate for the party president. Tadic also said that the SRS will forward the text of the election law and all additional decisions made by the High Representative to a number of European political parties, in order to obtain their assessment.

International Community

High Representative, SFOR Commander to host a helicopter tour of returnee areas

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, COMSFOR, General John B. Sylvester, and the UNHCR Chief of Mission, Werner Blatter, have invited ambassadors of countries assisting with the return process to visit by helicopter key areas of return

across the country on Tuesday.

The aim of the tour is to view progress in the return of displaced persons and refugees, including the implementation of property legislation, and to hear first hand from returnees about their problems and concerns.

Wolfgang Petritsch supports candidacy of Sarajevo for the Winter Olympic Games in 2010

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, visited on Monday the Sarajevo mayor, Muhidin Hamamdzic, and discussed with him the overall situation in BiH and the city of Sarajevo. “After being admitted to the Council of Europe and after successful constitutional reform, I believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina is irreversibly set on its way to become a full-fledged member [of Europe]. Now, we have time to tackle the issue of Sarajevo as the capital,” said Petritsch after his meeting with Hamamdzic. He also strongly supported the idea to nominate the city of Sarajevo as the host of the Winter Olympic Games in 2010, saying that this initiative will unite sport, political, and intellectual forces in BiH and help them focus more on the future. (Oslobodjenje, Jutarnje Novine and Dnevni Avaz carry this report)

High Representative: OHR and Council of Europe preparing the BiH Law on Education

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said that the OHR will soon present the Law on primary, secondary and university education at the state level. In a statement for Dnevni Avaz, Petritsch explained that the OHR and the Council of Europe have been working on developing a legal regulative for the BiH education system and added that these laws should be finalized in the near future. “This is what I would like to leave to my successor, Paddy Ashdown, when he takes over the post on May 27. I believe that only radical and profound changes of the educational system could trigger changes in the economic

sphere," said Petritsch, expressing his personal disappointment with the thus far slow progress in the sphere of education in BiH.

Wolfgang Petritsch meets with representatives of the United World Colleges

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, met on Monday with representatives of the United World Colleges to discuss the project of opening an international residential university in Sarajevo. The opening of this college, which has branches in ten Western European countries, is scheduled for the year 2003 and the campus will most likely be located in the Ilidza municipality. Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz carry the reports. Click here for the OHR press release.

George Robertson: NATO is not responsible for arresting Karadzic

The Secretary-General of NATO, George Robertson, said on Monday that the Alliance is not responsible for arresting the former RS president and one of the most wanted war crimes suspects, Radovan Karadzic. "The responsibility for arresting Radovan Karadzic does not lie with the NATO, but with the parties which signed the Dayton Peace Agreement, the UN and the states which established the Criminal Tribunal in The Hague (ICTY). These parties bear the primary responsibility," said Robertson in an interview with BBC's Hard Talk. He emphasized that the NATO forces are required to arrest indicted war criminals only if they "cross their path" in the course of their regular duties. Robertson denied allegations that the last attempt to arrest Karadzic failed due to an information leak on the part of a French officer within the NATO, saying that there is no evidence to support such a claim. He also expressed hope that the SFOR will soon arrest Karadzic. "There are people who are protecting and sheltering him, but they have to understand that the international justice will never give up. He will face justice in The

Hague," said Robertson in the interview with the BBC.

Editorials

Oslobodjenje: Petritsch's Constitution

Today's Oslobodjenje carries an editorial written by Ivan Loverenovic for the Croatian Feral Tribune about the constitutional changes in BiH. Lovrenovic says that the Constitutional Court's ruling on constituent peoples should not have been discussed but simply implemented and criticizes the imposed constitutional changes in the entities, calling them a poor compromise. Full translation to follow.

Dnevni List: SFOR members are getting rich on smuggled goods

By Ivica Glibusic (translation provided by OHR Mostar)

The editorial says that during the war people believed that international military forces came to BiH for human and well-intentioned reasons, however, during the war they were offering transport to some people for large amounts of money, they were selling weapon and oil. The editorial also says that after the war ended they have involved in the organization of prostitution and human trafficking of young girls from East European countries. Glibusic says that according to the presents situation peacemakers have come to this country because of themselves and not because of local people since the most important thing for them is to get rich. Glibusic also mentions a cache of arms found in Mostar East, and he concludes that peacemakers have not reacted so fast, perhaps, because some of their superiors is involved in arms smuggling or if they are not involved in it, perhaps, they received large amounts of money to keep silent.

Dnevni List: Talibans will determine destiny of BiH Croats

By Ilija Sagolj

The editorial says that talibans are reality in BiH and they should be prevented in their intentions, and international forces with the support of healthy forces in BiH can do it. Croat representatives in the Alliance for Changes are offering a strong support to the IC, however, the Croat representatives of the Alliance also need the support of the Croat people. The editorial says that HDZ present the Croats from the Alliance as national traitors, however, by the moves, that they have made so far, they have proved that they are not the traitors. Sagolj says that displaced Croats will not return until they are certain that the last mujahedeen was deported from BiH. According to Sagolj, the true approach to the building of the Authority institutions at all levels in BiH is a chance to oppose terrorism, because in that case talibans would feel a threat and it would be sign that they have to leave this country. Sagolj concludes that on the contrary, talibans will unite Croats, but rather late and at great costs.

Headlines

Vecernji List

- After the incident with the cistern of milk from Tuzla: 'Diary war' with Croatia and Slovenia
- How BiH citizens celebrate May 1: 'Celebration' of record unemployment

Dnevni List

- Erfurt also in BiH: High School student killed professor of history
- Marinko Ivankovic, an independent representative in the Cantonal Assembly of the West Herzegovina Canton: Party Working for Prosperity announces collapse of Cantons

Oslobodjenje

- Robertson: NATO is not responsible for arresting Karadzic

Jutarnje Novine

- May 1 in the shadow of workers' problems

Dnevni Avaz

- Pensions by May 5

Glas srpski

- In Vlasenica High School: A pupil killed professor
- Trebinje: assembly session interrupted
- Petritsch decides

Nezavisne novine

- Branko Todorovic strongly accuses Milovan Blagojevic, Deputy Foreign Minister of BiH: Minister with a label of a war criminal
- Dozens of people injured in a tornado
- Slovenian parliamentary delegation in visit to BiH: laws prevent cooperation