

BiH Media Round-up, 4/12/2001

BiH State-related Issues

- Partnership Forum session: Strengthening of partnership in interest of both sides
- BiH Presidency files charges because of missing war-time transcripts
- Public supports the urgent reforms in the educational system in BiH
- Five SFR Yugoslav states agree on division of diplomatic property
- FRY Ambassador to BiH Says BiH Should Drop Charges Against FRY
- BiH faces bankruptcy?

Federation

- Serious incident takes place in Stolac; town's major condemns the events
- HDZ to be banned from running at next elections?
- Ivic Pasalic, a member of the Croatian Parliament and Vice President of Croatian HDZ : Change of political concept of Dayton needed

Republika Srpska

- Serb general Stanislav Galic goes on trial for orchestrating the siege of Sarajevo during the war in BiH
- Two Bosniaks to Be Tried for War Crimes Before the RS Court
- Where are the two most wanted indicted criminals hiding – Mladic in Serbia, Karadzic in eastern RS

International Community

- OHR dissatisfied with the Federation government instructions on purchase of apartments

Editorials

- Dnevni List: HNS is preparing to withdraw signatures from Dayton Agreement!
- Dnevni List: Everything in its time
- Dnevni List: Will payoff of deposits up to 5.000 KMs to Hercegovacka Banka small depositors begin on December 7: Payoff – just a dead letter

- Slobodna Dalmacija: Army faces reduction – None of dismissed soldiers will be left unprovided for
- Slobodna Dalmacija: Alliance and RS together against Croatia

BiH State-related Issues

Partnership Forum session: Strengthening of partnership in interest of both sides

All Sarajevo dailies, Nezavisne Novine and Slobodna Dalmacija report prominently that the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, and members of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, Jozo Krizanovic, and Zivko Radisic, together with the Federation prime Minister, Alija Behmen, and the RS vice premier, Petar Kunic held on Monday a session of the Partnership Forum to discuss the situation in BiH prior to this week's meeting of the PIC (Peace Implementation Council) Steering Board in Brussels. "The International Community, together with local authorities, has been working for months on the implementation of projects necessary for securing the wellbeing of this country. Our aim is to establish a better partnership with local bodies of authority so as to ensure that they assume greater responsibility in the coming period," said Petritsch following the meeting, adding that issues such as the economic reform and the further engagement of the International Community in BiH were also discussed. Explaining some of the points on his agenda for Brussels, the High Representative said that he will inform the Steering Board political directors about the slow implementation of the Constitutional Court ruling on the constituent status of all peoples in BiH. "That ruling is of crucial importance for BiH and people living in it, but we believe that local bodies need more time to implement it," he said.

Following the session, Jozo Krizanovic said that he is exceptionally satisfied with the cooperation of state institutions and the OHR, and added that this cooperation will be further strengthened in the coming period. Entity leaders also expressed their satisfaction with the talks, and stressed that more needs to be done on strengthening the state institutions.

BiH Presidency files charges because of missing war-time transcripts

Onasa news agency reports that the BiH Presidency filed charges before the Municipal Prosecutor in Sarajevo because of the missing transcripts of its war-time sessions. These transcripts were recently requested by the ICTY Prosecution, but were not handed over to The Hague Tribunal with an excuse that the meetings between 1990 and 1993 were not recorded due to the lack of electricity in the city besieged by the Serb forces. In the charges submitted to the Sarajevo Prosecutor, the BiH Presidency refutes such claims, explaining that even in times of electricity shortage, the Presidency building had an alternative source of energy which would enable its staff to record all sessions.

Public supports the urgent reforms in the educational system in BiH

Following the recent call by the High Representative for an urgent reform in educational system in BiH, Avaz agency poll showed that about 57% of BiH citizens support Petritsch's request. The poll conducted among 300 residents in Sarajvo, Banja Luka and Capljina by the method of random sampling also indicated that only 11% of BiH citizens were against it, while 32% of the polled persons did not have any opinion on the matter.

Five SFR Yugoslav states agree on division of

diplomatic property

AFP news agency reports that representatives of five successor states of the former SFR Yugoslavia agreed on Monday to divide up the ownership of five diplomatic buildings abroad, the first of a total of more than 100 properties to be shared out. BiH, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Yugoslavia agreed in May in Vienna on sharing properties and other assets of the former Yugoslav federation. Croatian interior ministry official Tatjana Kralj Draganic told journalists after the first meeting of the joint committee for the division of diplomatic assets that the buildings will be taken over by the end of the year. Under the agreement, BiH will take the former Yugoslav embassy building in London, Croatia takes the embassy in Paris and Macedonia the former consulate building in the French capital. Slovenia will become the owner of the former Yugoslav federation's embassy building in Washington while Yugoslavia will take its residency in Paris. There are another 103 buildings to be shared out and the committee is to meet again within the next two months in Skopje.

FRY Ambassador to BiH Says BiH Should Drop Charges Against FRY

Both Banja Luka dailies quote FRY Ambassador to BiH, Stanimir Vukicevic, as saying that BiH should drop charges against the FRY for the sake of good neighborly relations between the two countries. Commenting on the statement of BiH legal agent with the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Kasim Trnka that BiH will file charges for genocide against the FRY, Ambassador Vukicevic said that the charges had no grounds. "Our view is that the charges have no grounds and we appeal to BiH to drop charges against the FRY", said Vukicevic. He also said that there was no consensus in BiH regarding the lawsuit, and added that BiH should decide on further steps that have to be taken in this case.

BiH faces bankruptcy?

Vecernji List reads that BiH records a foreign trade deficit of 1.249.000.000 US\$ in first eight months of this year and that experts warn of the fact that the state is facing bankruptcy. "The State must undertake measures in order to improve export, otherwise everything leads to bankruptcy", said the Deputy Head of the Economic Chamber of the Federation of BiH, Jago Lasic, at a press conference in Mostar. The grand total of BiH foreign trade in the first 8 months amounts to 2,65 billion US\$. Out of that figure 1,956 relates to import whilst the exported goods are estimated at 707 million US\$. The deficit from the year 1998 amounts to 7.465.000.000 US\$. "It is worrying that the import rises all the time", warns Lasic. According to Lasic, BiH has more imported food, drinks and other consumer goods alone than it has exported goods. BiH exports mostly raw material and crude products, mostly the aluminum, wood and electricity mostly to Italy whilst the biggest exporter to the country is Slovenia. Jago Lasic also calls on the BiH authorities to appoint economic attaches in BiH diplomatic offices abroad (...) He also announced that some 600 companies would go into receivership next year, reads Vecernji List.

Federation

Serious incident takes place in Stolac; town's major condemns the events

According to FENA news agency, two serious incidents took place in Stolac, one on the night between Saturday and Sunday and other on the night between Monday and Tuesday, both caused by unknown perpetrators. During the last incident, a group of unknown perpetrators destroyed a part of a fence at a protected site surrounding the Careva mosque.

"I deplore the latest incidents in Stolac and request the

police and judiciary bodies to conduct an investigation. As far as the ones who want to make Stolac a case are concerned I tell them that they will fail because there is enough space for everyone in Stolac", the Head of Stolac Municipality, Zeljko Obradovic told FENA news agency.

"These incidents can only help the ones who want to make Stolac "a case" and present the town in a bad light. A process of strengthening of institutions in Stolac continues and myself, being the Head of Municipality, will do everything to solve all problems through institutions and will stay determined with regards to it", said Obradovic.

He added that the fence around the site, where the mosque is being built at, was built by the Municipality and added that that the politicizing surrounding the construction of the mosque must stop and that everybody should do his job "I believe that all the Stolac residents who have good intentions do not like to have incidents in it, regardless from which side they are coming", said Obradovic.

Fena reports that a group of 15 persons destroyed last night the fence around the Careva mosque in Stolac, which is under construction, and is a protected zone in accordance with the Dayton Agreement. The fence was cut down with chainsaws, on which occasion nationalistic songs were sung and sporadic shots fired, reported BH Radio 1. There were no casualties, and the mosque reconstruction has been resumed. The town is quiet today.

Bosniak representatives in the executive and legislative authorities of Stolac have issued a press release today to request engagement of all BiH institutions, as well as international forces, for stabilization of the complex security situation in Stolac, so as to prevent even more serious incidents from happening. The press release also says that the fence was cut down by a group of well-organized nationalists, says Fena.

HDZ to be banned from running at next elections?

Dnevni Avaz reports today that the Croat nationalist party, HDZ, is very likely to be banned from running at the next elections in BiH because of the re-election of Ante Jelavic, previously removed by the Decision of the High Representative, to the post of the party leader. The daily explains that following every congress or convention, political parties have to register themselves in one of the Cantonal courts, but the HDZ may face difficulties because their old-new president is banned from holding a public office.

Ivic Pasalic, a member of the Croatian Parliament and Vice President of Croatian HDZ : Change of political concept of Dayton needed

In an interview for Dnevni List, Ivic Pasalic, a member of the Croatian Parliament and Vice President of the Croatian HDZ, says building of future in BiH will be possible only with a change of the political concept signed in Dayton. Pasalic believes that there are two possible ways out of the BiH crisis. "The optimal solution, in my opinion, would be that Croats get their own entity, republic or whatever it would be called. RS cannot remain with Croats becoming a national minority, which is the aim of ongoing processes.

The other model would be abolishing of both the Federation and the RS, but with BiH organized as a de-centralized country with 7, 8 or more cantons, structured in the way that allows Croats to attain their national equality," said Pasalic.

Republika Srpska

Serb general Stanislav Galic goes on trial for orchestrating the siege of Sarajevo during the war

in BiH

Bosnian Serb General Stanislav Galic went on trial on Monday before the ICTY for his alleged role in the 44-month siege of Sarajevo that left thousands of civilians dead during the war in BiH. Galic, who is 58, faces charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes for ordering troops to target civilians and shell public areas including the market during the siege of the BiH capital, terrorizing residents and making everyday life nearly impossible. The trial is the first at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) to deal with the siege of Sarajevo, between April 1992 and December 1995. Galic was commander between September 1992 and August 1994 of the Romanija corps of Sarajevo, a unit of the Bosnian Serb army tasked with laying siege to the BiH capital. He has pleaded not guilty to all counts.

Two Bosniaks to Be Tried for War Crimes Before the RS Court

Today's edition of "Glas srpski" quotes RS Prime Minister's Advisor for cooperation with the ICTY, Sinisa Djordjevic, as saying that the ICTY has given the approval for two Bosniaks to be tried for war crimes committed against Serbs before RS courts. "We have provided the ICTY with certain number of cases that contain the evidence that certain number of persons committed war crimes against Serbs. Two cases have been returned and it has been assessed that there are elements to bring these persons to trial in the RS", said Djordjevic. Djordjevic refused to disclose the names of these two persons because that would make the entire procedure more complicated. He also said that these persons would most probably be called to surrender voluntarily and if they do not do it then arrest warrants will be issued through the Interpol.

Where are the two most wanted indicted criminals

hiding – Mladic in Serbia, Karadzic in eastern RS

Today's edition of "Nezavisne novine" quotes FRY President, Vojislav Kostunica, as saying that he does not believe that Karadzic and Mladic are on the FRY territory. "As far as I know, Mladic is not in the FRY", Kostunica told press after the meeting with the EU officials in Brussels. Kostunica also said that Belgrade will be ready for closer cooperation once the Serbian Parliament passes the Law on cooperation with the ICTY and the EU officials told press that Kostunica promised the Law would be passed in February next year. However, a source close to the FRY Government told "Nezavisne novine" that Ratko Mladic is in Serbia and is protected by the FRY Army. This source could not say whether Mladic exactly is but he added that Mladic has recently left Belgrade. The same source also told "Nezavisne novine" that he is absolutely sure that Karadzic is not in the FRY. The paper quotes professor Bojan Dimitrijevic from the Belgrade-based Institute for contemporary history, as saying that authorities in Belgrade and Banja Luka deflect attention from Karadzic's and Mladic's whereabouts in order to arrest them. "This situation is very similar to the situation before Krajisnik was arrested. According to the information that I have, Karadzic is most probably in the eastern RS. There are many people in Belgrade who saw Mladic a year and a half ago, but after Milosevic was ousted in October last year Mladic left Belgrade", said Dimitrijevic. Dimitrijevic also said he did not believe that the Serbian Interior Ministry would arrest Karadzic and Mladic because they do not want to go through the same sort of crisis as they did when Banovic brothers were arrested.

International Community

OHR dissatisfied with the Federation government

instructions on purchase of apartments

OHR spokesperson Patrik Volf said that the OHR is very surprised with the decision of the Federation government to adopt the instructions on purchase of abandoned apartments, and which were proposed by the Minister of Urban Planning, Ramiz Mehmedagic. In a statement for Dnevni Avaz, Volf explained that the adopted instructions were contrary to the position of the state institutions and international organizations in BiH, and will furthermore, discourage refugees returns to this entity. Volf, however, refused to say whether the OHR will prevent the publication of the new instructions in the Official Gazette in the Federation.

Editorials

(all editorials provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List: HNS is preparing to withdraw signatures from Dayton Agreement!

Written by Leo Plockinic; partial translation

Dnevni List claims to have found out from sources close to the top leaderships of the HDZ and HNS that they will undertake "measures in the interest of the Croat people in BiH in order to stop the process of de-constituting BiH Croats," unless the constitutional reforms to be voted in at the BiH Parliament, are acceptable.

'Croats to be treated differently'

"The International Community is not sure as to what attitude to take towards Croats in BiH, and this was best reflected in a statement by the High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch in a symposium, when he requested 'constitutional definition of Croats in BiH,' and it is a fact that the ambassadors of most of the European countries have been instructed to 'treat

Croats differently.’ In case the constitutional status of Croats in BiH turns out to be unsatisfactory, the Croat National Assembly has prepared a ‘Draft Material of Croat Republic,’ which would be either a separate entity or an autonomous region with an inviolable administrative organization, completely independent from the Federation Constitution. An official of the top leadership of the HDZ who wanted to remain anonymous, stated for Dnevni List: ‘Most of the officials of the HDZ and the HNS Presidency who have received the Draft Material of the Croat Republic Constitution have coordinated their views regarding the answer to the Croat issue.’

Croat Republic Constitution

International secret services are trying to get hold of the ‘Draft Constitution’ in order to allow the International Community to take a stand in advance and plan their future actions. We have found out that the HNS Presidency, in their next session, will vote on the withdrawal of signatures from the Dayton Peace Agreement in the name of the Croat people in BiH, which, Croat officials think, is the only way to save Croats after a political wreck of the Federation. (...)

Croats – national minority!?

Unless the Croat national status is regulated by constitution, unless they have ‘constitutional protection’ within their own entity or republic, and when the percentage of Croats drops under 17% of the total population, the High Representative could simply impose a decision to declare Croats in BiH – a national minority, which is the easiest way for him to extinguish the ‘Croat separatism,’ which has become a standing threat to the peace and stability in the region of Southeast Europe. However, this move would kill two birds with one stone. It would extinguish the Islamic fundamentalism, which is present in BiH to the extent that Bosniaks declare their open support to bin Laden and terrorism during public events.

The most recent public event of this sort was the soccer match between Zrinjski and Velez, during which the Bosniak supporters were shouting slogans of support to the Taliban in Afghanistan. The International Community have realized that they could use assimilation of Bosniaks-Muslims and the few Croats, whose leadership has been politically indecisive so far, to quickly 'Europeanize' Muslims in BiH and to bring them closer and make them more acceptable to the European Community.

Strong parrying to Petritsch

This unrewarding task of assimilation has been assigned to Petritsch, who now knows that he, as the ultimate 'referee in this political match,' has the political assignment to make a 'reasonable decision' that would be 'in the interest of the implementation of the Dayton Agreement.' HNS leaders seem to have taken advice from some European parties of the Christian Democratic orientation on how to deal with Petritsch, who, with his recent actions and after the scandal in the Hercegovacka Banka case, has not shown himself in a good light in the eyes of the Western European media, which is a big spot on his future political career.

Support from European Christian Democratic parties

It is exactly from some Austrian and German politicians, such as Karl Schimpf, that the HNS officials have received strongest support and political advice, and those paid a visit to the five Croat-majority cantons outside of his knowledge and ignored him on that occasion. It is a clear message in the circles of senior European politicians who are letting Petritsch know that he must work quickly and efficiently. It is quite certain that major political turns will happen in the following period because, on the one hand, the Alliance's mandate is expiring, and on the other, the incumbent mediator will hand his mandate over to another High Representative of the International Community in BiH. Our source told us that

the dissatisfaction among the highly-ranked officials of the HDZ has grown after the self-admission of the failure of the political project of Croat self-rule during the party congress, and that they are becoming louder and louder in urging for more severe political moves.

Strong pressure on the HDZ

A few independent and reliable sources confirmed that the HDZ officials who are also in charge of the Croat National Assembly, after the failure of the self-rule, have been exposed to a strong political pressure to reinforce the constitutional status of Croats in BiH. Under the pressure of the membership of the HDZ and memberships of the other member parties of the HNS, they are requested to take stronger political actions and engage in a strong resistance to both the Alliance in Sarajevo and the International Community, but without the political compromises, which have hitherto been happening before the eyes of the Croat public in BiH. The Croat public is dissatisfied with the HDZ policy to the extent that the HDZ could lose the next elections, due to abstinence of the constituency, and experience a complete political debacle, despite being the most influential Croat party in BiH. Many of the senior officials, being aware this is a possible scenario, are trying to influence the policy of the party whose future moves will determine the destiny of Croats in BiH, as well as their constituent status," says Dnevni List.

Dnevni List: Everything in its time

Written by Marko Tokic

Marko Tokic, in his regular commentary for Dnevni List, says: "Why are they calling the HDZ back? To legitimize them, to admit that they won the last elections. And they did. According to Barry's theorem, that is. Or is it for the HDZ to share the blame for the fact that everything will be whatever the Ones That They Obey predetermined it to be. Without Houses

of Peoples and with governments of alleged civic majorities. So it happens that the country with three constituent peoples will have two, Serb and Muslim-Bosniak civic majorities.

What about Croats? Some of them find it important to get the HDZ blessing for their agreement to perform official duties without having been elected by the people, and the majority of Croats, 90% of them, are becoming a people without a homeland."

Tokic says if there were any sincerity in the positions of "Croat puppets," they would have already resigned. He concludes his commentary by saying: "Some people are telling me it is never too late for a revolution. The Bible says it quite differently: "Everything in its time."

Dnevni List: Will payoff of deposits up to 5.000 KMs to Hercegovacka Banka small depositors begin on December 7: Payoff – just a dead letter

Provisional Administrator for the Hercegovacka Banka, Toby Robinson, announced that a payoff of deposits up to 5000 KMs would start on December 5. Sarajevo-based media carry Ms. Robinson as saying that the payoffs would be carried out in the bank's branches in Kupres, Rama and Zepce. The depositors could get more information on the phone number: 033/204-669. Dnevni List rang the number where a person, who wanted to stay anonymous, said that the announced payoff would be a no-show. She said that the procedures that were supposed to be carried out before the payoff process had not been carried out. She added that the procedure has not been yet established and that they do not have detailed information on that. It would appear that the depositors would have to swallow yet another lie and be patient and trust the ones who would be held accountable in any other normal country, reads Dnevni List.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Army faces reduction – None of

dismissed soldiers will be left unprovided for

Written by Milo Jukic

Slobodna Dalmacija says the OSCE Mission started the promotional campaign for army reduction a month and a half ago and comments there is hardly anyone in BiH who is not aware of the fact that "the army's JOB is to spend money."

The daily quotes the Federation Minister for Defense, Mijo Anic, as saying during a recent visit to Vitez that none of the dismissed soldiers will be left unprovided for.

"However, very few will believe him! Figures are exact and facts are facts. And the facts say the following: the World Bank and the Norwegian and Dutch Governments have allocated 23 million DEM for the employment of demobilized soldiers in the last two years. Still, according to the statistics of the Federation Government, of the total of 7,360 demobilized soldiers, only 576, i.e. a little over 8% of them have been employed during that period."

The daily comments everyone who wants to see the situation in its real light, will find it clear that the armies in BiH are not armies, but are, in fact, social institutions that the former authorities were using to buy social peace, and the current authorities have only followed in their footsteps.

A special problem, according to the daily, are the blackmails coming from the Bosniak politics and the International Community regarding a full integration of all army units in BiH, which stands as one of the important prerequisites for a possible admission to the Partnership for Peace and NATO. The promoters of this policy, says the daily, are using the argument that the integration would provide for a significant reduction of military expenses.

"It remains to be seen for how long the 'Croat representatives,' imposed by Wolfgang Petritsch, will be able

and willing to resist such efforts, but it resembles a wartime message from a wife in exile somewhere on the Croatian coast to a husband who stayed in a Central Bosnia enclave: Our women here have taken to cheating their husbands, and I am resisting as much as I can!" concludes Slobodna Dalmacija.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Alliance and RS together against Croatia

Written by Dino Mikulandra

The Inter-State Agreement on Property Relations between Croatia and BiH should be signed on December 14. It should be, however, it is quite certain that it will not be signed. Mladen Ivanic, the President of the RS Government is determined in this intention. This Agreement will be 'initialed' only under the condition that Racan signs a decision by which he will return 50 000 tenancy rights to the Serbs, who left Croatia.

Zlatko Lagumdžija, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, who usually cannot agree with the RS leaders as to many fingers they have and not to mention the arrest warrant issued against Alija Izetbegovic in order to try him before the ICTY, immediately joined this boiled up harangue against Law, ethics and justice. However, whenever the Croat rights and interests, or official Zagreb are in question some pathological repulsion stirs up in the veins of Bosniak politicians, no matter whether they are green or red inside.

If there is a need to spit on Croatia, 'a citizen' Lagumdžija will be faithful to the devil, Karadzic and Bin Laden, and he will not be only their ally, but their crusade leader as well.

The fact that Sarajevo, OHR, OSCE and SFOR have never set any ultimatum to Milosevic's genocide branch office in Banja Luka in order to make possible an immediate return to the Croats and Bosniaks to their homes is much more painful. Obviously, it would be terribly stupid politics.

No, we shall rather think in 'a peaceful way': Milosevic is in The Hague, Tudjman is dead, let Croatia pay war 'expenses', and then we, brothers and sisters of all nations and national minorities in BiH shall gather watching Federation TV and ask each other a concise question: 'Who has set us against each other?'