BiH Media Round-up, 4/6/2002

Headlines in print media

Oslobodjenje

- BiH Federation Interior Minister Ramo Maslesa claims: The removal of Dragan Lukac has just been postponed

Dnevni Avaz

- Special Federation police forces blocked Travnik
- Elisabeth Jones in Sarajevo: the American assistance has not been reduced
- Maslesa: I have just postponed decision to remove Lukac
- New dimension of the Eronet case: Kukic and Prlic claim they did not beat up the Director

Jutarnje Novine

- Reactions of the BiH Veterans Party: Powerful people distribute apartments to their relatives

Dnevni List

- Interview with Faruk Balijagic, the lawyer of Jusuf Piralic: the Bosniak political establishment stood behind secret storing of grenades?

Vecernji List

- Jusuf Piralic, an indictee for secret storing of mortar shells in Mostar: There are another 5,000 hidden grenades

Nezavisne Novine

- World Soccer Cup “Korea-Japan 2002”: A referee arranged Brasil’s victory
- Paddy Ashdown for Nezavisne: We must fight crime and and corruption

The BiH Federation Interior Minister claims the decision of the Dragan Lukac's removal has only been postponed

All Sarajevo dailies reported that, at a press conference in Sarajevo on Monday, the BiH Federation Interior Minister, Ramo Maslesa, said that the decision on the removal of the acting Chief of Police, Dragan Lukac, and acting Secretary, Mirsada Zutic-Beganovic, had only been postponed and not revoked. *"I believe this was about misunderstanding related t the interpretation of the Law on the Interior Affairs and following regulations,"* Maslesa said. He, however, reminded that, according to the Law on the Work of the Federation Bodies, temporary duties might be performed only six months, and Lukac and Zutic have been in the office for 14 months already.

Ashdown meets with US Assistant Secretary of State Beth Jones

Sarajevo dailies, Nezavisne Novine, Dnevni List, Vecernji List and Slobodna Dalmacija report that the High Representative for BiH, **Paddy Ashdown**, met in Sarajevo on Monday with the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Asian Affairs, **Beth Jones** and the representatives of the BiH Council of Ministers. After the meeting Ashdown said he and Johns had agreed that the rule of law had to be top priority not only for authorities but also for citizens of BiH. Ashdown said he would work to ensure the functional judiciary in BiH by the end of September. **Glas Srpski** did not report on the event.

Other news related to HR's statements, activities

Paddy Ashdown for Nezavisne Novine: We must fight crime and corruption

Nezavisne Novine quotes High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** as saying that he is not very surprised with the situation in the

judiciary as well as with the rate of crime and corruption, adding that the only thing he is surprised with is the IC which did not understand it in the beginning. *"The same mistake has been made in Kosovo. First you have to establish the rule of law and then start developing democracy"*, said Ashdown in a statement for the newspaper. Ashdown reiterated he would implement all decisions, pertaining to the reform of judiciary, that Ambassador Petritsch imposed regardless of protests of RS politicians. He said the first thing he would as far as the reform of judiciary is concerned is setting up of the High Judicial Council. As far as objections made by RS politicians are concerned – that Petritsch misused his authority-, Ashdown said that the paragraph DPA (paragraph 1, Annex 4) was very clear about this, that is the setting up of the HJC is absolutely in line with the DPA. "Politicians tend to keep the power as long as they can, but this country cannot join Europe without having an absolute independent judiciary. In a meantime I will work to improve the conditions in which ordinary people live. That is in my interest", said Ashdown.

Ashdown supports idea on the FRY and Croatian Presidents' visit to Sarajevo

Dnevni Avaz learned from the Office of the High Representative that theHigh Representative, Paddy Ashdown, welcomed the announced arrival of the FRY President, Vojislav Kostunica, and his Croatian counterpart, Stjepan Mesic, in Sarajevo. *"I will be glad to meet with Kostunica and Mesic,"* Ashdown said in a statement for the newspaper.

BiH Presidency to discuss the current situation in BiH with the High Representative on Tuesday

Sarajevo dailies announced that the BiH Presidency members were expected to host the first working meeting with the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, in Sarajevo on Tuesday. According to a press release from the BiH Presidency, the officials at the meeting will discuss the current political

situation in BiH, as well as the ways of cooperation between the local authorities and the international community in the coming period.

Ashdown: Do not underestimate my decisiveness

In an interview with a Belgrade-based daily **"Blic", the High Representative Paddy Ashdown** said that neither in the RS nor in BiH a single economic space and civic space has been created, but there is a common space for criminal activities regardless of borders. *"This is a regional problem which has to be resolved on a regional level because it is a threat to each of the Balkans countries"*, said Ashdown. Commenting on the package of Decisions that the former High Representative imposed before his departure, Ashdown said that he absolutely supported the Decision of Ambassador Petritsch. *"One should not underestimate my decisiveness, because I will start appointing people very soon. This is the main instrument to make this area successful. Eventual initiation of legal proceedings before the BiH Constitutional Court regarding this matter will not slow down my further activities. By the end of July I shall appoint members of the High Judicial Council which will become operational until September"*, said Ashdown. Commenting on apprehension of Karadzic and Mladic, Ashdown said that the curse of Karadzic and Mladic rests with BiH. *"They are detrimental for the reputation of the IC and BiH but mostly for the future of people of this country. I am convinced in decisiveness of SFOR and NATO to apprehend these people and I wish I were convinced in decisiveness of the RS authorities to apprehend them. I am convinced that Karadzic and Mladic will be apprehended and it is only a matter of time when that is going to happen"*, said Ashdown.

The BiH Federation Government has yet not taken its position on the AM Sped case

Dnevni Avaz reports that a working-consultative session of the BiH Federation Government held in Sarajevo on Monday, which

was supposed to discuss and make position on the AM Sped case, turned into a pretty informal working meeting. Although the ministers had received written reports on the issue prepared by the BiH Federation Interior Ministry and Financial Police, they failed to make any decision on possible removal or suspension of the Federation officials involved in the case.

Commenting for **Ljiljan** on the AM-SPED affair shaking the Federation, the Federation Minister of Finance, **Nikola Grabovac**, said that he is not satisfied with the conclusions enumerated in the Financial Police report on this case, as they "*do not match its findings*."

Ljiljan: The Alliance for Change organizes a media war against Bosniaks

Ljiljan carries a two-page article in which its Investigative Team argues that the Alliance, helped by a number if 'independent' media in the Federation has organized a media war against Bosniak officials with the aim of "*criminalizing the entire Bosniak people*". According to the weekly, despite all the recently revealed financial scandals incriminating Croat officials, such as the Federation Finance Minister, Nikola Grabovac, or the Chief of Police, Dragan Lukac, and others, media in the Federation and Alliance leaders, Ljiljan writes, almost systematically work on incriminating Bosniak officials for nearly all affairs in the Federation. The weekly accuses the Alliance and some independent media, such as Slobodna Bosna, of double standards while treating these issues. "*If a Bosniak is charged with crime, he is a priori labeled as a criminal, while if any of the Croat officials are suspected of committing criminal acts, then the media dismiss this as a mere Bosniak chauvinism.*"

Similar claims could have been heard during last week's "**60 Minutes**" political show at the **FTV**, when the president of the SDA, **Sulejman Tihic**, said that "*Bosniaks are losing a great deal in this Alliance-organized media war, which is aimed at*

compromising Bosniak politicians before the elections." Tihic also reiterated his concern that Croat officials are occupying all the major post in financial ministries, agencies and institutions, thereby taking complete control over the entity's finances. In last night's "60 Minutes", the president of the NHI, **Kresimir Zubak**, dismissed the claims, saying that the only reason Croats are occupying those posts is because of the strict provisions spelled out in the Dayton Peace Agreement and the Entity Constitutions and which leave secondary posts (such as the Finance Minister) to Croats, while Bosniaks are at all other leading positions in the entity. Zubak, on his part, accused "shadow members" of the Party for BiH of orchestrating its campaign against NHI officials (e.g., Am-Sped case, Maslesa-Lukac affair) obviously alluding to the party's founder and the former president, Haris Silajdzic. Zubak, however, refused to speculate about the reasons.

The BiH Federation House of Representatives to discuss draft Law on the Tax Administration on Tuesday

Oslobodjenje reports that, at an early session scheduled for Tuesday in Sarajevo, the BiH Federation House of Representatives will discuss the draft law on the Entity's Tax Administration, which is another pre-condition for reaching the new stand-by arrangement, and should be adopted by June 7 at the latest.

There are more mortar rounds hidden in area of Jablanica and Zenica

Vecernji List carries that according to a high-ranked Federation official, 5,000 mortar rounds are hidden in the area of Jablanica and Zenica and SFOR determined their location. According to the same source, the order for production and storing of weapon was issued by Hasan Cengic, a former BiH Minister of Defense, Haris Silajdzic, a former BiH

Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Safet Orucevic, a former Mayor of Mostar. The article says that SFOR informed Beriz Belkic, the President of the BiH Presidency, about secret arms cache in Mostar 15 days before the SFOR action, during which the mortar rounds were found, and IC representatives were shocked that Belkic did not do anything about it. According to Faruk Balijagic, a lawyer of detained Jusuf Piralic, a former coordinator of the military production in Jablanica, the investigation should turn towards the persons, who were in the Ministry of Defense in Sarajevo at that time, because Piralic informed them about the mortar rounds and the Ministry of Defense had to inform IFOR. Balijagic says that the fact that Mehmed Bajgoric, a former Manager of the military production, was said to be mentally incompetent after he stated that he and Piralic walled in the mortar rounds, indicate that this is a politically staged process. Balijagic said that during the hearing he stated that he is suspicious about Prosecutor of the Mostar Court. **Dnevni List** says that 10,000 mortar rounds were hidden in Zenica and Jablanica and that behind secret storing of the mortar rounds stood the Bosniak political establishment, including Haris Silajdzic, Hasan Cengic, Safet Orucevic and Alija Izetbegovic. The daily says that SFOR had this arms cache under control for three years. Piralic's lawyer Faruk Balijagic stated for Dnevni List that all that was a perfect circle created in order to hide true culprits. Balijagic highlighted that Bajgoric's defender was Damir Sadovic, a lawyer of Hasan Cengic. Balijagic says that Cengic must have had known about the mortar rounds because Piralic informed him at least two times about it. Dnevni List says that Cengic was a wartime head of logistic center in Zenica and was in charge of allocation of material needed for production of the mortar rounds.

The Special BiH Federation police forces raid Travnik premises of the El-Haramejn humanitarian

organization

Dnevni Avaz and Nezavisne Novine report that the special BiH Federation police forces on Monday raided Travnik premises of the El-Haramejn humanitarian organization. At a press conference in Sarajevo, the BiH Federation Interior Minister, Ramo Maslesa, confirmed the operation was taking place saying it had been ordered by the Entity's Supreme Court and represented a part of regular activities in preventing terrorism.

Dnevni List and Vecernji List: Former HVO General allegedly involved in regional cigarettes smuggling

Dnevni List carries an article from Nezavisne Novine which reads that the former HVO general turned owner of Capljina Tobacco Factory **Slobodan Praljak** will be subjected to investigation in relation to regional smuggling of cigarettes. Nezavisne Novine claim that it learned the information from a senior source close to the IC. Furthermore Nezavisne Novine/Dnevni List read that Italian financial authorities claim that the region of Herzegovina is the key link of illegal route of cigarettes for European Union. On the same issue Vecernji List reads that it is **Safet Orucevic**, a former Mostar Mayor, who is the main suspect in production and smuggling of illegal cigarettes adding that some persons from former and current authorities of BiH and Monte Negro knew about the scheme. Furthermore, VL carries the Head of legal Department of Mostar Tobacco Factory (FDM) **Jasmin Sapuh** as saying that FDM had a good and legal business with an Italian team whose identity he did not want to reveal. Sapuh added that it was not a case of illegal deals because there is documentation on paid taxes and tariffs on high-tariff goods. VL goes one better saying that Safet Orucevic and few of his associates used the unknown Italian company to smuggle not only the fake "Marlboro" but armament too which were recently discovered by SFOR troops in Mostar.

A special BiH Federation police team involved in the investigation into the transnational crime

Oslobodjenje learned from the sources in the BiH Federation Interior Ministry that more than 150 million KM had been laundered through the Ljubusko-based Tiffany chain of private enterprises and several Herzegovina banks. Several persons from the Czech Republic, Croatian and Republika Srpska were also involved in the illegal operation. A special BiH Federation Interior Ministry team left on Monday for Mostar to start investigation into this transnational crime case.

Vecernji List: Eronet shareholders are ready to sell their shares to Telecom RS

The article says that during the first negotiations between Eronet shareholders and leading people of Telecom RS, Telecom RS expressed willingness to buy shares of Eronet. Vecernji List says that if they manage to make a financial transfer, along with Banja Luka, Telecom RS would also have its seat in Grude. The newspaper could not find out whether the Provisional Administrator of Hercegovacka Banka, who represents Eronet' shareholders, Hercegovina Osiguranje and Croherc, participated in the negotiations. According to the article, it is quite certain that Toby Robinson will not give up 'the golden goose', through which it can fill in financial doubtfulness emerged after forced shutting down of Hercegovacka Banka took place. If the sale of the shares takes place than their price will be a bit higher than the current nominal value.

Chair of Steering Board of Pension and Disability Fund of Federation BiH Ismet Rizamulic on missing 31 million Marks

Chair of Steering Board of Pension and Disability Fund of Federation BiH Ismet Rizamulic stated in **Slobodna Dalmacija** that their administration is tracking down 31 million KM that

were collected through process of privatisation at the Federation level. According to the daily, Manager of Pension and Disability Fund of Federation BiH Bozo Misura and his Deputy Svjetlana Hasanagic will inform Federation Government and Financial Police, which should deal with this problem.

Vecernji List: Jelavic denies media allegations on his cooperation with the Yugoslav intelligence services

In a statement for the Federation TV, former Croat member of the BiH Presidency **Ante Jelavic**, who was removed from the office by the High Representative in March 2001, refuted allegations of the Federation TV and Banja Luka-based Nezavisne Novine that he co-operated with the JNA (former Yugoslav People's Army) and never stopped working for the Yugoslav Intelligence Service. Nezavisne Novine published on Saturday "the key evidence" that Jelavic was a "mole" saying that Jelavic did his master degree in Belgrade during JNA attacks on Dubrovnik. On the other hand Jelavic says that he never had anything with those intelligence services and that he never went to school in Belgrade.

Stolac Municipal Assembly President criticizes Petritsch's decision referring to the decision-making process in the municipality

In an interview with **Ljiljan**, the president of the **Municipal Assembly in Stolac**, Zoran Turkovic, criticized the May Decision by the then High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, abolishing the provision requiring the necessary two-thirds majority for decision-making on a number of important issues in the Assembly. Turkovic argues that this Decision is detrimental to the interests of Bosniaks living in this municipality and legalizes ethnic cleansing. *"This provision needs to be revoked, because it is unreasonable and it does not stimulate the development of neighborly relations,"* says Turkovic.

RS Government extends deadline for the privatization of socially-owned apartments for another year

Fena news reported that RS Government decided on the last night's session to amend the RS Law on Privatization of Socially-owned Apartments extending the deadline for privatization of socially-owned apartments for another year.

Banja Luka based weekly magazine claims Wolfgang Petritsch launched and approved investigation into RS Customs Administration case

The June 3 edition of the Banja Luka based weekly magazine "Patriot" reports that the investigation into the RS Customs Administration (RS CA) case was launched and approved by the former High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch who did it because he wanted to get even with the RS CA. The magazine quotes an anonymous source as saying that 2 years ago the RS CA seized dozen million worth equipment for mobile telephones, which belonged to a company "Korador", and that the owner never showed up. According to the magazine, the real owner is Petritsch's brother. The paper further states that the AID (Bosniak Intelligence Service) is responsible for the whole scenario with the RS CA case. AID forced several persons who participated in so-called 'shopping tours' to confirm that a cartel within the RS CA exists.

Banja Luka Patriot claims that promotion of Radovan Karadzic's book did not take place in Srpsko Sarajevo

This week's edition of a Banja Luka-based weekly magazine **"Patriot"** reports that the promotion of **Radovan Karadzic's book "Sitovacija"** did not take place in Srpsko Sarajevo on 21 May. The weekly claimed that on that date three books were promoted – Rajko Petrov Nogo's "Book of Poetry" and two books by Miroslav Toholj, "The Black Book" and "Pavlovic's House".

Toholj's "The Black Book" talks about the suffering of Serbs during the war and the main reason why Ljiljana Zelen-Karadzic was present at the book promotion is because she is a chairwoman of the RS Red Cross. The RS Red Cross helped many people during the war and registered their testimonies about crimes committed during the war of which many are included in the Toholj's "Black Book". The "Patriot" concludes that the Nezavisne novine journalist, who published the article about this event in the 24 May edition of Nezavisne, heard from some people, who were at the book promotion, what was going on but that she herself did not attend the event. Therefore, some parts of her report are true and also some of them are made up. The magazine quotes Srpsko Sarajevo University (SSU) rector Borisa Starovic as saying that the reaction from OHR representatives was very strong. Starovic said OHR threatened to exclude SSU from the Higher Education Coordination Board, a joint body for higher education made up of representatives of BiH's 7 universities. He also said OHR threatened to deprive SSU of 200,000 KM that the World Bank planned to allocate to SSU.

Cetnik Ravna Gora Movement says it is high time to re-examine the past

Both today's **Blic** (Belgrade's daily) and **Nezavisne Novine** (Banja Luka's daily) carries a story about an open letter of **Cetnik Ravna Gora Movement**, in which it protests against the request of Brcko SDP to remove Draza Mihajlovic's monument in Brcko. Mihajlovic, the leader of the Movement during the Second World War, was prosecuted and convicted by the former Yugoslav communist regime for his collaboration with fascists. Among other things the letter says that although it is about a general who is a part of recent history, for the majority of Serbs he is a national symbol. *"The former regime, which values the SDP has rejected, proclaimed Draza Mihajlovic a war criminal at the same time when American President Truman honored him. You are asking for the monument's removal, which,*

as you say, offenses, while Draza Mihajlovic's monuments in the USA are under the state's protection. If America is a symbol of democracy and human freedoms, then something should be learnt from them", the letter reads. Cetnik Ravna Gora Movement thinks it is high time to reexamine the past's recurrences, among which is classification "war criminal" together with name of Cetniks' leader from the World War II, General Draza Mihajovic. "He is a national symbol for us, and, as it is well known, the removal of national symbols is the violation of human and national freedom", the letter concludes", the Movement said.

Zvornik SDA President says the windows on the party's premises broken by stones, and not hand grenade

Fena news agency quotes president of the **SDA (Party of Democratic Action) municipal board in Zvornik**, **Nurudin Muhamedbegovic**, as saying that an explosive device was not thrown at the SDA premises in Zvornik on Saturday night adding that only windows on the SDA building were broken with stones. *"If it happened by chance then all windows would not have been broken but only one and had there been any pressures the attack would be more violent"*, said Muhamedbegovic, and added that this is the first attack on the premises of SDA and Islamic Community in Zvornik since the offices were open a month and half ago.

"I spoke this morning with the representatives of the US Embassy to BiH and I reported the case to the OHR and Police and Police has launched an investigation into this case. We are little upset but we hope that a greater political importance will not be attached to this case", said Muhamedbegovic.

Ljiljan criticizes Petritsch, hopes

marginalization of Bosniaks will stop in Ashdown's mandate

In a lengthy commentary published in **Ljiljan**, **Mustafa Spahic** compares the qualifications of the former and the current High Representatives, Wolfgang Petritsch and Paddy Ashdown, noting that the later has a great deal more chance to work for the benefit of Bosnia and Herzegovina. "*While Petritsch's lack of action in the events in Banja Luka, Trebinje, Bratunac and Mostar demonstrated all his indecisiveness and the lack of principles, Ashdown had, during the aggression against BiH, been a strong advocate of the IC intervention which would end the war*," writes Spahic. "*During the three years of his mandate as the High Representative, Petritsch had turned his administration and his employees with astronomical pays into an untouchable class, the first day of his mandate, Ashdown brought them back to earth, made the walls around the OHR less aggressive and opned the gate for public*." Spahic also notes that the ten items which make the program of the new High Representative should me memorized by all politicians in the country and regarded as Ten Commandments. "*As Ashdown is filling Bosnia with statehood, order, structure, courts and the rule of law, instead with Petritsch's ideology, and as Bosniaks everywhere in the West identify with the state and its rule of law, it is expected that their marginalization, relativization and political desubjectivization should finally stop*."

Headlines in electronic media

BHTV (June 3, 1900)

- Chairman of BIH Presidency B. Belkic today organized in Sarajevo a meting to discuss current issues of FBiH Defense Ministry and FBIH Army, stated the BiH Presidency.
- BiH Federation Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Nikola Grabovac on Monday made official the beginning of work of the Central Office of the BiH Federation Tax Administration in a new building in the Sarajevo's

settlement of Ciglane.

FTV (1930)

- Investigators of the BiH Interior Ministry (MUP) started carrying out a search on Monday morning in the Islamic humanitarian organization “Al Haramain” in Travnik, BiH Federation Interior Minister Ramo Maslesa confirmed.
- BiH Federation Interior Minister Ramo Maslesa stated on Monday that his decision on the dismissal of the acting director of the Police Administration within the BiH Federation Interior Ministry (MUP), Dragan Lukac, is postponed.
- FBIH Tax Administration has in the first four months of this year from taxes and excises collected 30 million KM more than in the same period last year.

RTRS (1930)

- Judicial system in BIH serves those with power and political connections, and all judicial laws imposed by former High Representative will be imposed, said High Representative Paddy Ashdown after meeting with U.S. Assistant State Secretary for European and Euro-Asian Affairs Elisabeth Jones
- High Representative Paddy Ashdown said for RTRS that he completely supports his predecessor’s decision on judicial reforms because the current judicial system does not serve ordinary citizens.
- Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Dragan Mikerevic and Italian Ambassador to BiH Saba D’Elia on Monday held preliminary talks about an initiative of the government of Italy for the award of a credit line in the total amount of 18 million euro.