

BiH Media Round-up, 5/4/2002

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BiH State-related Issues

Council of Ministers discusses implementation of the CIPS project

At a session held yesterday in Sarajevo, the BiH Council of Ministers discussed the future implementation of the CIPS (Citizens Identity Protection System) project and the difficulties arising from the fact that the state budget for 2002 has not been adopted. The Minister of Treasury, Ante Domazet, told the press that this fact complicates the closing of contract with Siemens, which has been entrusted with implementing the project. He, however, stressed that the problem is not impossible to resolve, and added that the CoM will ask several commercial banks and telecommunications companies to give their guarantees to Siemens until the budget is passed. Domazet expressed hope that the problem will be resolved until the beginning of the next week. (All electronic media and news agencies carried the item)

Eligibility Decision to be included in the Election Law

The decision on eligibility of candidates to run for elected office, made recently by the High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, will be included in the BiH Election Law through regular procedure. The Council of Ministers on Thursday accepted the Information about this Decision which changed Article 18.9 of Chapter 18 of the Election Law. The amendments to the BiH Election Law issued by the High Representative stipulate that no person who has been removed by him, COMSFOR, the IPTF Commissioner or the Provisional Election Commission or the Election Appeals Sub-Commission, for having personally obstructed the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement or violated the PEC Rules and Regulations, shall be permitted to be a candidate in the elections or hold an elected mandate or an appointed office. The Decision further stipulates that parties that keep persons dismissed by the High Representative

or the Provisional Election Commission or the Election Appeals Sub-Commission in central party positions are barred from certification for participation in elections. (ONASA report)

Constitutional Reform

RS National Assembly adopts constitutional changes proposed by Serb national parties

The RS National Assembly adopted late last night 24 amendments to the RS Constitution proposed by 68 RS NA deputies belonging to Serb national parties earlier in the day. The amendments were supported by all Serb parties in the Assembly (68 votes in favor), while SDP, SDA, Party for BiH and NHI representatives (13) voted against the proposal.

Although some RS officials say that this package of constitutional changes accounts for 95% of the Agreement reached in Sarajevo last week, Federation TV commentator from Banja Luka noted last night that the adopted version significantly falls short of a genuine protection and fair representation of peoples in the RS.

After the session, the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, said that the adopted amendments guaranteed that the interests of all three peoples would be protected, while ensuring Serb majority in the entity institutions. RS National Assembly speaker, Dragan Kalinic, echoed Ivanic's statement, adding that the adopted constitutional changes respected the spirit of the Sarajevo agreement. However, OHR's spokesman Oleg Milisic, said earlier on Thursday that "nothing short of the full agreement, regardless of the two reservations by the RS representatives...will be acceptable."

RS Prime Minister: Europe cannot deny adopted constitutional amendments

Speaking late last night for the press, RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic said that the adopted constitutional amendments

guarantee the protection of national interests of all peoples living in the RS and stressed that "no one from Europe can deny the adopted changes." "All reasons for denying the existence of the RS now disappear. Although the amendments contain a number of difficult solutions, history will prove that this was a good move and a right decision of all political parties and deputies," said Ivanic, commending the "unity of Serb parties on this issue". Ivanic also stressed that the High Representative will "find no argument to deny the adopted amendments."

SDP and SDA representatives in the RS National Assembly, Zekerijah Osmic and Sulejman Tihic, strongly criticized the decision of the Serb deputies, saying that the adopted constitutional changes do not provide for symmetrical solutions in both entities in BiH. Both, however, noted that even this move is a step forward, as the RS stops being exclusively the Serb entity.

NHI asks International Community to intervene in constitutional reform

The New Croatian Initiative (NHI) expects that international community representatives will undertake activities on a consistent implementation of all provisions of the Agreement on Constitutional Amendments, recently signed in Sarajevo, notes NHI in a statement for the press issued today. This, the party argues, would be enable BiH to make the first crucial step towards the equality of all peoples, and the creation of conditions for the return of thousands of refugees of Croat and Bosniac nationality to the RS. The latest consideration of the constitutional amendments of the RS by the RS National Assembly proved right our demands for involvement of the international community in the process of harmonizing the entity constitutions and the CC ruling on constituent peoples in BiH. (HABENA reports the item)

US, French ambassadors say no sanctions for RS if it fails to adopt constitutional changes

U.S. Ambassador to BiH Clifford Bond said on Thursday that his country would not impose sanctions against the Republika Srpska in case the RS Assembly fails to adopt constitutional amendments symmetrical to the agreement signed on March 27 in Sarajevo. Bond said that this was a fully local political issues and that sanctions were out of question," he said.

French Ambassador Bernard Bajolet concurred with his US colleague, saying that if there was going to be any penalty, it would be the "self-imposed penalty for the RS, since the Sarajevo packet is good for the RS." Bond rejected press allegations that the Sarajevo agreement was virtually imposed by the High Representative. "The document signed in Sarajevo is a local product of agreement between eight parties, which was finalized in a private meeting of four representatives, one of whom was from the RS, without presence of international officials."

Bond had earlier in the day met with RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and SNSD leader Milorad Dodik, while Bajolet attended the session of the RS Assembly. (ONASA report was carried by most media in the RS and Federation.)

Federation government defines draft amendments to the Federation Constitution

The FBiH Government defined at its last night's session the Draft Amendments to the FBiH Constitution, which were forwarded to both houses of the Federation Parliament, Constitutional Commission of the House of Representatives as well as to the OHR. The draft reflects the essence of the Constituent Peoples' Decision and it has been brought in line with the Agreement recently signed in the OHR, report media in the Federation.

Federation

Federation Parliament approves dismissal of 10.000 soldiers: National armies remain

Vecernji List reads that the House of Representatives of the Federation Parliament has given the green light for dismissal of 10.000 soldiers of the Federation Army and that the soldiers will receive severance pays after loans from commercial banks have been taken. VL says that the soldiers should receive their severance pays by June 30 and in the case this does not happen, the Federation MoD would still have to pay the soldiers their regular salaries. The daily reports that the Federation HoR also discussed the Draft Law on changes and amendments to the Law on Defense and that the Federation Minister of Defense Mijo Anic explained that the Draft envisions a shorter military service, from 12 to 6 months, which can be reduced by additional 60 days. This proposal was welcomed by the MPs, but on the other hand they, especially the SDA ones, were worried over a fact that abolishment of Bosniak and Croat components is not envisioned in the Draft. Anic said that it was not the right time to discuss that issue yet, claiming that one has to wait for implementation of the Decision on constituent status of peoples.

There are no results even one year after introduction of Provisional Administration in Hercegovacka Banka

Slobodna Dalmacija carries an article about the Hercegovacka Banka (HB) story saying that the spokesman for the Provisional Administration (PA) for the HB Johan Verheyden informed the public about the course of the investigation and about what has been detected so far. He also stated that the situation of the HB is more stable now than it was the case prior to

introduction of the PA as well as that the bank's deposit with the Central Bank of BiH is stable, amounting to some 20 million KMs. According to Verheyden, in the months that preceded the introduction of the PA, 22 million DEM had been withdrawn from the bank with 6 million DEM remaining in the bank's vault. SD reads that after the abolishment of the Payment Bureau, the HB made 1 billion DEM worth of transactions. The daily says that Verheyden's statement that the HR could not introduce provisional administrations into other banks that were founded under the same principle as the HB is somewhat funny saying that Verheyden compared the situation from one year ago to a situation in the USA where a bank of black people was shut down by the local banking agency. SD says that there no names were disclosed and carries OHR spokesman Mario Brkic who said that the High Representative, exercising the powers vested in him, had taken a decision to introduce a Provisional Administration in the HB on April 5, 2001. Brkic stressed that Petritsch was concerned with business operations of the bank and its non-transparent operations which were not in the interest of public, especially the Croats. SD comments Brkic's words saying that they are too naive for a state in which not a single company has been fairly privatised and where the privatisation process carries a label of robbery of the century. "It would appear that the reasons had political background, introduction of PA and the Provisional Administrator Toby Robinson represented blockade of an attempt of creation of autonomous financial system in Herzegovina, virtually breaking the spine of a possible Croat self-rule", reads SD.

OHR pressures Sarajevo government to give permanent concession to Eronet without international tender

Jutarnji list carries that Provisional Administrator of Hercegovacka banka, Toby Robinson, and OHR, in order to cover the costs of raid in the Bank, are putting pressure on BiH

authorities for Herzegovinian mobile operator ERONET, so that they could gain permanent concession without international tender. Slavo Kukic, the head of HPT Steering Board says that Toby Robinson wants to give the HPT 100.000 KM worth shares in order to increase the value of the companies Provisional Administration owns, due to the cowboy-like raid in the bank last year. If all 51% are not given back to the HPT, Kukic announced that HPT will ask for GSM concession from the state and in that way preserve several hundreds of working places and the huge profit.

Republika Srpska

RS Justice Ministry demands local police arrest ICTY indictees

Dejan Miletic, head of the RS government office for relations with The Hague tribunal has said that in late March the office had forwarded to district courts the demand of the Ministry of Justice that the local police be given orders for the arrest of persons publicly indicted by The Hague, including Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. Miletic also said that the government office for relations with The Hague would, within the next two or three days, forward to the tribunal's prosecution some 10 indictments and complete evidence against Bosniaks for war crimes committed against Serbs in the area of Gorazde, as well as two indictments against Croats for crimes committed against Serbs in the Derventa area. The indictments and the complete evidence material have been prepared by the prosecutors' offices in Serb Sarajevo and Doboij, reports the RTRS.

Representatives of Croatian Serbs in visit to Banja Luka

Glas srpski reports that the RS President Mirko Sarovic and Vice President, Dragan Cavic met yesterday in Banja Luka with

the representatives of Serb Peoples Party (SNS) from Zagreb. It was concluded at the meeting that the RS would implement the decision of the Constitutional Court on the constituency of peoples in RS and BiH Federation and that the same principle should be applied in Croatia in the process of solving the problems of the Serb community. The SNS President, Milan Djukic informed the RS officials on the current situation in Croatia, and with the problems that Serbs are facing in that country.

International Community

High Representative suspends all judicial and prosecutorial appointments in BiH

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, issued on Thursday a Decision suspending all judicial and prosecutorial appointments in Bosnia and Herzegovina, pending the restructuring of the judicial system. "Under the terms of the Decision, any appointment processes now being dealt with by the domestic commissions/councils or pending before an appointing authority or other body are to cease. No appointment to a judicial or prosecutorial post is to be made until after the judicial and prosecutorial systems have been restructured. All relevant provisions governing the appointment of judges and prosecutors are hereby suspended," reads the decision issued by the OHR. The decision, however, does not refer to the appointment of judges to the BiH State Court, Constitutional and Supreme courts in BiH and the entities.

All electronic and print media carried the [OHR press release](#).

Headlines

Vecernji List

- Prosecutors from The Hague questioned Croatian General: Praljak faced with Tudjman's transcripts
- Series of terrorist attacks are spreading fear among citizens: Bombs in Herzegovina again (In ten years Police haven't discovered a single perpetrator)
- In Banja Luka gathering against Constitutional changes failed: On Serb protest ten citizens gathered
- Federation Parliament approved dismissal of 10.000 soldiers: Croat army stays

Dnevni List

- Interview with Dragan Jovanovic Ujo, invalid and volunteer of Homeland war, facing eviction: I was expelled by Serbs, and then Muslims, and now my Croats want to do the same!
- Herzegovina-Neretva Canton's Deputy Prime Minister Miroslav Coric warns: Condition in HNC is critical
- Explosive planted under two automobiles in Siroki Brijeg
- Interview with Slavica Josipovic, wife of Drago Josipovic, condemned on 12 years prison in The Hague: My husband started hunger strike on our younger son's 18th birthday!

Glas srpski

- Extra ordinary session of the RS National Assembly: Serb delegates in unison
- Latest news: Constitutional amendments passed: according to the will of majority

Nezavisne novine

- Compulsory collection of revenues begun in RS: Revenue collectors seal debtors
- High Representative made new decision: Disagreement on President, Government, Constitutional Court and language
- US and French Ambassadors in Banja Luka: US will not impose sanctions

against RS

Oslobodjenje

- Mandzic accused of war crimes against Serbs in Srebernica

Dnenvi Avaz

- Alija Behmen approves arrests of crime suspects

Jutarnje Novine

- Sarajevo awaiting its first Oscar