

BiH Media Round-up, 7/9/2001

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BiH state-related Issues

BiH Council of Ministers holds a session in Sarajevo

At yesterday's session, the BiH Council of Ministers on Thursday adopted information about activities of the Ministry for European Integration on coordination with the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe and implementation of projects from the Quick-start Packet.

Muhamed Sacirbegovic refuses to return to BiH and comply with investigation

All Federation dailies carry a translation of the Washington Post articles (dated September 6) about the former BiH ambassador to the UN, Muhamed Sacirbegovic accused on major financial fraud.

Zivko Radisic, Member of BiH Presidency Said There Would be No BiH Army

Glas srpski carries statement of BiH Presidency member Zivko Radisic as saying that a Platform on BiH Defense Policy did not necessarily mean, creation of joint BiH Army and added

that all important bodies of the RS were involved in creation of this document. According to Radisic Defense Policy is based on constitutional principles, which mean existence of entities' armies.

"This document foresees existence of military forces in BiH and not BiH's military forces", said Radisic.

RS and FBiH Constitutional Commissions to Meet in Banja Luka Today

Nezavisne novine announce the meeting of the RS and FBiH Constitutional Commissions which is to be held in Banja Luka today. President of the RS Cons.. commission Miroslav Mikes said that amendments to constitutions of the RS and FBiH related to the decision of BiH Constitutional Court would be discussed at the meeting.

Federation

Croat caucus in the BiH House of Peoples protest Del Ponte's statement about lack of co-operation on the part of BiH Croats

In a statement issued yesterday, the Croat caucus in the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples said it supports the work of The Hague Tribunal and its efforts to bring to justice all war crimes suspects irrespective of their nationality. "Because of such a stance, we cannot accept a statement by ICTY's Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte that Bosnian Croats are not cooperating with the Hague Tribunal," says the statement signed by the chairman of the caucus, Ivo Divkovic. Divkovic also said that the BiH public is aware that there are certain Croat political parties in Bosnia-Hercegovina, led by the Croatian Democratic Union [HDZ], which have been avoiding cooperation with The Hague, of which the international community and Mrs Del Ponte in particular are well aware. The caucus believes it important and necessary to establish

everyone's individual responsibility for war crimes and therefore it supports the work of the tribunal," the statement says.

Serb returnee dies of injuries after arson attack in Sarajevo

In Sarajevo's Novi Grad municipality the house belonging to a Serb returnee was set on fire overnight (Wednesday). The owner sustained serious injuries and died of them early in the morning, SRNA was told by the spokesman for the UN mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Stefo Lehmann. He could not reveal the name of the victim, adding that an investigation into the incident was under way and that four suspects had been detained but one was later released. According to unofficial information, the Serb returnee was from Rudo and after receiving threats he had asked for protection from the local police, but this was not granted. The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, strongly condemned this attack on a returnee in Sarajevo canton.

Ambassador Munro on education in Stolac Municipality – Some people are trying to resolve problems, but are subject to threats

The Head of the Regional Office of the High Representative (South), Colin Munro spoke at the press conference in Mostar about education problems in Stolac and the necessity of a more active engagement on the part of the responsible bodies with the purpose of improving the current situation and providing an equal access to education for all children.

He stated that the facilities for children of refugees and displaced persons should be improved radically, and that principals of Stolac schools should contribute to it by implementing the essential steps that the Herzegovina-Neretva Minister of Education and her Deputy, with help from the OHR, instructed them to take, reports Slobodna Dalmacija.

Munro said that they had a productive dialogue with the

authorities which have responsibility for education but that in the case of the Primary School in Stolac, the Acting Principal said that the instructions from the Minister were impractical and that he would not implement them. Munro added that neither the Primary School Acting Principal nor the one in the Secondary School have been confirmed in their position by the Ministry of Education in the view of their lack of qualification.

No facilities were provided for the children of the returnees in the Secondary School, either, said Munro. He added that unqualified individuals there made unilateral decisions, which he called apartheid.

He claimed to have the information that both schools benefited from reconstruction and other assistance from international organisations and the World Bank and that a Norwegian NGO donated computers to the Secondary School but that the Acting Principal will not allow Bosniak and Croat children to use them together.

He said that the Governor, the Deputy Governor, the responsible Minister and her Deputy are all agreed that the situation there should be changed, and added he hopes good sense and a spirit of tolerance will prevail.

He also said the reports are reaching him that people of good will who are trying to resolve those problems are now subject to threats and intimidation.

Munro stated that the conditions in Stolac are not unique and that there are other examples of education apartheid in the Canton, but failed to say which areas he was referring to, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

On page 21, Slobodna Dalmacija carries another article covering Ambassador Munro's statements at the press conference under the headline "Audit 'cleared up' the situation."

As far as the audit in Aluminij is concerned, Ambassador Munro is quoted as saying: "This audit was a legal audit, and the task was to establish the facts. Having read the auditors' report, the situation is a lot clearer to me than it was. The question what to do next is not covered by the auditors, but the responsibility lies with the authorities in this country."

As for the construction of Careva Mosque in Stolac, Ambassador Munro is quoted as saying: "The Islamic Community has not yet solved a planning permission for the reconstruction of the mosque. In my contacts with the Reis and with the Mufti, I have emphasised the need for the proper procedures to be followed and that in particular it is important to ensure that the plans for reconstruction are plans for the reconstruction of the mosque that was destroyed. I have been assured that these plans do exist, but personally I have not seen them yet." The daily also carries the statement that the OHR has no objection to cleaning and tidying up the site where the mosque used to be, but that there can be no question of reconstruction until the planning permission has been secured.

Vjesnik carries a very short article on the press conference under the title "Education apartheid in Stolac," which reads that Ambassador Munro pointed to education apartheid in Stolac. Vjesnik also reads as follows: "He (Ambassador Munro) threatened that, unless the problems in the education of children of the returnees in Stolac are resolved in the next few days, 'some drastic measures will be contemplated'."

Vecernji List: Munro points to education apartheid in Stolac

Written by Zdenko Jurilj

Croatian flag hoisted on the building, Tadjman's photograph with a mourning band across it on the entrance door and a big banner with "Since the 7th Century" written on it in the school hall, are parts of the iconography in the Secondary School in Stolac, reads Vecernji List.

While Croat professors see "nothing problematic" about the national symbols in this school facility, their Bosniak colleagues consider such an iconography to be "extremely offensive" and "education apartheid." This expression, as far as Stolac education is concerned, is used by representatives of the International Community in BiH more and more often. The Head of the Regional Office of the High Representative in Mostar, Colin Munro, used it when announcing that the International Community would "contemplate some drastic measures" unless the problem of facilities for secondary school students, children of the Bosniak returnees, is resolved.

Bosniaks made up the majority population in the Municipality of Stolac before the war, and they were expelled during the conflict between Croats and Bosniaks. In the meantime, Croats expelled from Central Bosnia have moved into their houses.

The problem arose when the Bosniak returnees in Stolac requested the authorities of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton to urgently secure the facilities for conducting classes by the Bosniak curriculum in this school year. Since there are 140 Bosniak students that require education, the request, as the reporter was told at the Secondary School in Stolac, could not be met because they were unable to find either the proper facilities or teachers.

According to Mirjana Dujmovic, the Minister for Education, Culture and Sports in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, it has been agreed that equal rules be applied for both Bosniak and Croat students in this school year, and this includes the possibility of using halls, classrooms and all other facilities pending the resolution of the request put forward by the Association of Bosniak Returnees in Stolac.

"School is a subtle problem and cannot be resolved in that way. It is a fact that Bosniaks have used education problem in Stolac for political skirmishing, and unfortunately, the

International Community got involved in it, too. I am unhappy to hear the expression 'education apartheid' mentioned by international officials more and more often. Our Ministry is prepared to do everything to remove all the offensive details and all that Bosniak teachers and parents have a problem with."

The Minister also said there is a readiness to have the classes organised in both the Bosniak and Croatian languages, but this requires financial and political willingness. Besides, the classes in the Croatian language are attended by 26 Bosniak and 15 Serb students, said Mirjana Dujmovic. The Principal of the Secondary School in Stolac, Ivo Raguz, says he is not authorised to comment on the case, reads Vecernji List.

Slobodna Dalmacija: Uskoplje Agreement is not being implemented

Slobodna Dalmacija reads, although the Mayors of the former municipalities of Uskoplje and Gornji Vakuf, Nikola Milic and Dzevad Agic signed with the Central Bosnia Canton officials an agreement on the temporary funding of the existing administrations, the agreement is not being implemented because of the irresponsible behaviour of Dzevad Agic in particular.

The daily reports that the Canton endorsed a little over 190,000 KM, which the municipalities were supposed to distribute in the proportion of 57% for Gornji Vakuf and 43% for Uskoplje. However, instead of 82,000 KM that Uskoplje was entitled to, Agic "generously" allocated 24,000 KM to this Municipality, and spent the rest of the money on the salaries for employees in the Municipality Gornji Vakuf, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

Cantonal Board of the HDZ about the appointment of a police commissioner in the Ministry of Interior – Most blatant form

of protectorate

Slobodna Dalmacija reports that Hasan Delic, a former Assistant to the Minister of Interior in the Central Bosnia Canton, has been appointed as the police commissioner in the Central Bosnia Canton Ministry of Interior. The daily says the position of police commissioner is a novelty in the cantonal structures of internal affairs and is a "deed" of the IPTF. The Croat side in this special regime canton put forward a list of 8 candidates for the commissioner's position, but none of them "passed" and the very way of selection (imposition) of the police commissioner prompted the Cantonal Board of the HDZ to issue a press release on Wednesday, reads Slobodna Dalmacija.

The HDZ of Canton 8 says they see this "illegal act by the IPTF Commissioner in BiH, Vincent Couerderoy, as an act of imposing the most blatant form of protectorate in the Canton and as an attempt of eliminating parity from the Central Bosnia Canton Government."

US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires, Christopher Hoh – Government to blame for isolation

Christopher J. Hoh, the US Embassy Chargé d'Affaires paid a visit to Livno on Wednesday. On that occasion, he only met with representatives of the opposition parties that are intending to form alternative government in the Canton soon.

After the meeting, Hoh said that the Canton 10, owing to its Government, has been in a sort of isolation for a long time now. The forming of the Government had been awaited for a long time and now that it has been formed, it is doing almost nothing, stated Hoh.

In answer to the question as to whether he supports the establishing of alternative government in the Canton, he said the US Embassy supports all those who want to see progress in BiH, regardless of who those people are, reports Slobodna

Dalmacija.

Federation House of Representatives passes a law on BiH Federation Railways

At yesterday's session held in Sarajevo, the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives, passed the Law on the BiH Federation Railways, providing for the establishment of the Public utility called "BiH Federation Railways". When the law comes into effect, it will discontinue the public utility BiH Railways and Railways of Herzeg-Bosnia. The House also passed the Law on employment bureaus and social security of the employed persons, which was imposed last year by the High Representative in BiH.

Republika Srpska

Biljana Plavsic arrives in Belgrade after being granted temporary release from The Hague

Former president of the Republika Srpska Biljana Plavsic, who was temporarily released from the jail at The Hague tribunal, arrived in Belgrade yesterday afternoon. On August 29th, the ICTY granted Biljana Plavsic, who voluntarily surrendered in January, a permit to stay in Serbia until the beginning of her trial early next year. Plavsic was welcomed at the Belgrade airport by members of her family, Serbia's minister of justice Vladan Batic, former RS prime minister Milorad Dodik, as well as the leader of the Serb National Union (SNS) Svetozar Mihajlovic.

RS government determines a law on cooperation with The Hague

The Republika Srpska government on Thursday determined the draft law on cooperation with The Hague Tribunal, which, in comparison to the draft law passed one month ago by the RS Assembly, does not have any major changes. RS Justice Minister

Strahinja Curkovic said that changes in the law, which came after public discussions, were of legal-technical nature. The law more precisely defines means of cooperation and arrest of war crime indictees, as well as their extradition.

Carla Del Ponte to ask UN Security Council to impose sanctions on RS because of its lack of cooperation with the ICTY

Dnevni Avaz reports today that the Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, Carla Del Ponte, may ask the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on the RS because of the lack of cooperation with The Hague Tribunal. An anonymous source told the daily that a special unit formed by the ICTY may participate in the arrest and transfer of indicted war criminals residing in areas in BiH whose authorities refuse to cooperate with The Hague.

The same source also said that, during her visit to BiH capital, Del Ponte insisted that local Public Prosecutors try cases of individual responsibility for war crimes, while the ICTY will specifically process cases of persons charged with command responsibility for committed atrocities during the war in BiH.

Privatization of Socially Owned Apartments in the RS

"First socially owned apartment in the RS should be privatized in the second half of October", stated the RS Urbanism Minister Nedjo Djuric, and Banja Luka dailies carry.

At the press conference he held in Banja Luka, Djuric reminded that the contract was signed with Glas Srpski for printing of around 70 000 privatization forms which are to be distributed to municipalities by October 1st.

Set of forms for privatization of apartments will cost 10 KM and available at book stores. For submission of the forms citizens would have to pay additional 50 KM, for filling in of forms and value assessment of the apartment.

Djuric also reminded that the privatization process has to be finished by July 28, 2002, or within the year from entering the apartment for returnees. The Minister announced media information campaign and training of the people who would be working in the process.

OHR's Letter to the RS Judiciary

Glas srpski writes about the letter from the OHR addressed to the RS judiciary which reminds that judiciary officers could not be using somebody else's property. Deputy Public Prosecutor Dusko Medic confirmed to Glas that the letter arrived to the RS prosecutor's office and that there were no such violations in this office.

Glas also reports that Banja Luka's Basic and District Courts received such letter from the OHR but, according to Nikola Kovacevic, Advisor to the RS Justice Minister, the Ministry was not familiar with this information.

International Community

OHR representative discusses construction in Kotorako with local authorities

OHR RRTF (Reconstruction and Return Task Force) representative Jayson Taylor discussed on Thursday in Doboj with representatives of the municipal authorities, Association of displaced persons "Ostanak", and the Kotorako Serbs, the suspension of the December 2000 waiver concerning construction of houses at Kotorako. Following the meeting, Taylor told reporters that in reviewing the approval for distribution of building plots, issued under the December 2000 waiver concerning construction of houses at Kotorako, the OHR discovered that Doboj Municipality's original application had misstated a number of facts. "We now ask the Municipality to correct those misstatements and to define, through a joint

effort, the precise limits of the plots that are identified as private property in the land-ownership records. As long as that process lasts, the Municipality must ensure the suspension of the construction on all plots," Taylor said. He also expressed hope that the municipal authorities in Doboj will soon settle all the contentious issues concerning Kotorско so that the approval for the continuation of construction can be issued.