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BiH State-related Issues

BiH Council of Ministers supports air strikes on selected military targets in Afghanistan

The Sarajevo dailies report that BiH Council of Ministers held an extraordinary session in Sarajevo on Monday and expressed its support to air strikes on selected military targets and terrorist camps in Afghanistan. The Council Chairman, Zlatko Lagumdžija, said following the meeting that, unfortunately, the Taliban authorities had not leave room for any other possibility since they had failed to hand over Osama bin Laden and other terrorists obviously connected to the September 11 attacks on the United States.

Lagumdžija meets with OIC Ambassadors to BiH

The BiH Council of Ministers Chairman, Zlatko Lagumdžija, met on Monday with Ambassadors of the Islamic countries and Turkey to BiH, which are members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference – OIC. He informed them about the measures

undertaken by the BiH authorities within the International Alliance in fight against terrorism. The participants at the meeting concluded that additional efforts had to be made in establishing a multi-ethnic and democratic society in BiH, in which the ethnic and religious differences would be an advantage and not an obstacle.

Vjesnik: Increased security measures in BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Local police and the Stabilization Force (SFOR) have undertaken additional security measures in BiH following the American and British attacks on Afghanistan whilst the initial reactions can be summed up as giving of a full support to the measures which are to punish the perpetrators of the terrorist actions. Member of the BiH Presidency, Beriz Belkic, assessed the American-British action against the Taliban regime as "expected and unavoidable". He expressed a hope that the operation continues the way it has started – by attacks on carefully selected and strategically important targets that would weaken the terrorists' might and avoid killing of innocent civilians. Belkic confirmed that BiH would remain in the anti-terrorist coalition and that BiH would undertake necessary measures within its borders – and, if requested, at the global level. President of the Federation of BiH, Karlo Filipovic, deems that the attacks on Afghanistan show determination of the whole IC, especially the USA, to resolutely fight terrorism. Vice President of the FBiH, Safet Filipovic, is also of the opinion that terrorism must be severely punished. According to first assessments from the Ministry of Interior of Federation of BiH, the situation in BiH is still stable. Deputy Minister of Interior, Tomislav Limov, told the media that the police had already envisaged necessary security measures. Additional security measures are being applied in the Sarajevo area to protect numerous diplomatic and international organizations' facilities. BiH

media are following the military operations in Afghanistan but with less publicity than was the case during the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington on September 11, reads Vjesnik.

Vecernji List: CIA and FBI are conducting an investigation against suspects in BiH

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

After the US air strikes against Afghanistan, the SFOR units deployed in BiH are at the highest state of alert. Each entry into their base is being closely controlled and a few days before the attack they started with a special search of each SFOR vehicle. In the course of last week most of the soldiers were intensively digging trenches surrounding the military bases.

BiH Authorities engaged in the Headquarters for defense from terrorist activities are ready to prevent entering of persons from the so-called high-risk group.

Special activities for the capturing of suspects or organizers of possible terrorist attacks are being taken by FBI and CIA agents, who have been in BiH for almost a month. According to Muhamed Besic, the Federation Minister of Interior, the whole administration and police apparatus of this Ministry, as well as those at the state level, have been put at the disposal of the agents of the American intelligence services. According to the information coming from well-informed sources in the BiH Ministry of Interior, two days after the terrorist attacks on Washington and New York, the American Administration and its intelligence services have become interested in the course of the investigation in BiH. A source of Vecernji List stressed: 'In a letter sent to American President George Bush along with sincere expressions of condolence we stressed that FBI and CIA can conduct their investigation in our territory if there are indications that the terrorist attack was in any way connected

with BiH. On the grounds of this agreement their investigators will have at their disposal all accompanying documents in which persons who have been BiH citizens since 1992 were registered.” This source stressed that the documents of citizenship exist at the state level.

Under the said official letter, the CIA and FBI agents can order the domestic Police to arrest a suspect immediately. Allegedly, on the grounds of the information collected earlier, some agents of the American intelligence services and police have already issued arrest warrants and orders for deportation of some suspects to their mother countries. A special order on undertaking strict security measures was issued to the State Border Services and the Police at border crossings and airports. A group of experts from Great Britain have arrived to BiH, and their mandate includes improvement of the security measures in order to prevent entry of illegal emigrants into BiH, reads Vecernji List.

Vecernji List: Fear of Schengen border

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Due to the ghosts of the past – the information that BiH was giving home to mujahedeens and Islamic radicals, the current BiH Authorities are afraid of a possible introduction of the Schengen regime for its citizens even with neighboring Croatia. Although Minister of Foreign Affairs Zlatko Lagumdžija has addressed optimistically the BiH public these days, the fear of an additional isolation is well grounded. In the documents that have recently been mentioned in the media, the Schengen border might be moved towards BiH.

BiH Council of Ministers working group agreed Draft Law on Restitution

A working group established by the BiH Ministry for Civil

Affairs and Communications has agreed Draft Framework Law on Restitution, which foresees that the BiH Federation and Republika Srpska must adopt their laws on the issue three months following the adoption of the state law. Sead Hodzic, the coordinator of the working group, told Dnevni Avaz that he expected the BiH Council of Ministers would discuss the draft in this month.

Federation

BiH Federation Government discusses security situation in BiH

Oslobodjenje and Dnevni Avaz report that the BiH Federation Government discussed the security situation in BiH following the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States at a session held in Sarajevo on Monday. BiH Federation Interior Minister Muhamend Besic said after the session the Government had assessed that the terrorism represented a threat to all BiH citizens equally. The fight against terrorism must therefore be a joint effort in the entire country's territory regardless of the shared authorities between the entities and the cantons. The Government also concluded to provide guarantees for temporary release of the wartime BiH Army Generals Mehmed Alagic, Enver Hadzihasanovic and Sefer Halilovic and BiH Army Brigadier Amir Kubura who had been on the basis of the superior responsibility indicted for war crimes by the Hague Tribunal.

Bosnia detains man suspected of bin Laden links

BiH Federation police said they had arrested a man of Yemeni or Algerian origin on Monday suspected of links to Osama bin Laden, the prime suspect behind last month's suicide attacks on the United States. "This individual, based on intelligence

information, is linked to a telephone number of Abu Zabudal, senior officer of Osama bin Laden, in connection with the purchase of a number of passports of different countries," said BiH Federation Interior Minister Muhamed Besic. Besic identified the man arrested in the central Bosnian town of Zenica as Bensayah Belkacem, adding he had been issued a Bosnian passport but his documents gave different ages and places of birth. (All media report on the arrest)

Izetbegovic will not run for the SDA President

Alija Izetbegovic will not re-nominate for the post of the SDA President at the upcoming third party Congress. An Oslobodjenje source close to the SDA leadership said that Izetbegovic had made such decision late last week, primarily having in mind his age. Asked to comment on the Los Angeles Times article about the alleged BiH's links with international terrorists, Izetbegovic said in an interview with Dnevni Avaz that he had never supported neither terrorism nor terrorists.

Vecernji List: On the eve of its Congress the SDA again advocates a Bosnian nation

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The SDA leaders headed by Alija Izetbegovic have recently made public parts of their program orientation and party's activities in future. According to these statements, the SDA will in future fight for a civic BiH and for the change of the party profile from a national party into a civic one. Alija Izetbegovic harshly criticized the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) and announced that his party will fight for a change of the DPA and 'start a process of its gradual adjustment to a new situation because the DPA is not the holy of holies.'

What is especially interesting and what is confusing the BiH public, especially the non-Muslim population, is the

announcement that they will advocate the creation of a so-called Bosnian nation. A step forward in this kind of thoughts was made by Sulejman Tihic, the SDA Vice President, who stated that although we are Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs we have to be Bosnians above all. His chief Alija Izetbegovic also stated that he saw by himself that BiH Croats, Serbs and especially Bosniaks are called Bosnians in Serbia and Croatia.

The Sarajevo public speculates that Haris Silajdzic, a former high-ranked official in the SDA and the state authority bodies, who has recently abandoned the leading position in the Party for BiH, could rejoin his old flock.

Analysts have noticed 'a political re-grouping' within the party, and the departure of some military officials from the line of the Bosniak people to The Hague has additionally introduced suspicious procedures within the party, whose President Alija Izetbegovic himself is held responsible for numerous crimes of the BiH Army, especially the crimes committed against the Croats.

Slobodna Dalmacija: We are Allah's army, sang mujahedeens to their commander Izetbegovic

Written by Milo Jukic (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Slobodna Dalmacija is in possession of a tape that covers the visit of Alija Izetbegovic to the 7th Muslim Brigade on the occasion of the Brigade's second anniversary in April of 1994 when Captain Kasim Hodzic reported to him and said that they liberated Central Bosnia. Most of the Brigade soldiers shown on the tape had beards and were wearing white uniforms with traditional Arab hoods on their heads with Arabic inscriptions on them.

Slobodna Dalmacija reads if there is anyone who still does not know who was in command of the 7th Muslim Brigade that killed

hundreds of innocent Croats and Serbs, 'liberated' territories from all those who do not greet others with 'Allahu egber!' and raised new generations of fighters for Islam, they should watch the tape and see a number of army and political officials standing cheerful next to the Honorable Commander of the 7th Muslim Brigade Alija Izetbegovic.

Jelavic appeared before the Sarajevo Canton Court for the third time

Ante Jelavic appeared for the third time before the Cantonal Court in

Sarajevo on Monday, and his attorney Josip Muselimovic asked the Trial Chamber to declare the Court incompetent for the case, reports Dnevni List. "If the Court abides by current laws it will declare itself incompetent. Otherwise, it would confirm that the BiH judiciary is hopeless", said Jelavic's attorney Josip Muselimovic.

Ante Jelavic says HDZ could be a partner with the Alliance

Nezavisne Novine carries a short interview with Ante Jelavic, the President of HDZ, in which he explains his reasons for accepting this position in the party again.

"I did not think about reactions of the International Community representatives after the second session of Croat National Assembly. One could have seen, in my introductory speech, that I somehow tried to find a way out from this "one-way street" and it is almost certain that HDZ will make some moves in that direction. Our first moves would be to attend sessions of BiH Federation Parliament, ahead of the upcoming constitutional reform. On the other hand, I think that, as a citizen of this country, I should enjoy basic rights and freedoms, as well as basic human rights to organize political parties, work

publicly and vote. I believe that we would try to get out from this situation because, in my opinion, we should establish a kind of partnership a leave a kind of protectorate, not only with the Alliance for Changes but also with nationalist parties in BiH", said Jelavic.

Lagumdzija says has no need to talk to Jelavic

Oslobodjenje quoted BiH Council of Ministers Chairman Zlatko Lagumdzija as saying that he had no need to open a dialogue with the newly-elected HDZ BiH President Ante Jelavic since High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch had banned him to hold any public office. In addition, Lagumdzija added, some Jelavic's speeches and assessments concerning the Croat officials not belonging to the HDZ were not guarantees for any serious dialogue. The newspaper concluded that Lagumdzija was obviously not impressed by Jelavic's invitation for a dialogue addressed to the Lagumdzija's SDP.

Dnevni List: Not a single HDZ BiH Vice President comes from Posavina

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

The 7th Congress of the HDZ BiH has brought almost no changes in terms of personnel combinations. This would be the initial assessment that could be read in various commentaries published in the media. People from the Posavina Canton do not agree with this because the Canton was left without the expected number of their representatives in the strongest Croat party in BiH.

For the first time, none of the HDZ Vice Presidents comes from the Posavina Canton and the Canton does not have a single representative in the party's Central Board either. The public in Posavina thinks Ante Jelavic holds the major responsibility for that. Having that in mind, the Congress has brought about

a novelty after all – unbalanced territorial representation in the HDZ, reads Dnevni List.

Mijo Matanovic, the Governor of the Posavina Canton, a member of the HNS Presidency and a former Vice President of the HDZ, says such a personnel policy is alarming because the Canton cannot even rest content with one Vice President's post.

According to Matanovic, if one takes into account the most recent election results in BiH, people from Posavina Canton should be represented in the entire infrastructure of the HDZ BiH.

Dnevni List: The Hum cross sheds light on everyone again!

Written by Darko Juka (Provided by OHR Mostar)

Dnevni List reads that residents of the east part of Mostar (and few residents in the west part) did not like the idea of the cross on the hill of Hum.

“However hard we try to avoid it, this question suggests itself: does that resistance means disagreement with the long expected peace, does it mean an even more passionate hatred or a wish for something else? The explanation they offered is that the cross on the hill of Hum is sowing dissension and division in our city, that it is a symbol of Christianity and Muslims-Bosniaks feel threatened by the Christ's sign overlooking Mostar. Incoherent insinuations such as this one speak of ignorance and unjustified fear of another religion. If they were to make but a single step out of the confined frames of Islamic fundamentalism, they could learn to appreciate the cross and see its meaning as a holy, instead of threatening thing that they consider it to be. The petition that was out for signing calls for its removal. At the same time, new minarets ‘spring up’ higher than the roofs in the east part of Mostar and no one, and especially not the Croat

Catholic people have stood up against it. How is one to explain this?

After they failed in their politicized efforts for removing the cross, they tried to do it by devastating the cross. The searchlights at the bottom of the cross were shattered and small Catholic symbols at the stations of the Way of the Cross were broken. Could these incidents be connected with the global Islamic terrorism and the presence of mujahedeen units in our country that we all know about?

Unfortunately, those questions remain unanswered. Still, in everyone's spite and in spite of everything, the cross is shedding light on the faces of Mostarians at night again, just as it has for the last 2000 years," reads Dnevni List.

Dnevni List: Apartments for displaced Croats in Drvar

(Provided by OHR Mostar)

Following the OHR's approval of the allocation of a socially owned plot of land for the construction of two residential buildings for displaced Croats in Drvar, the construction of 64 apartments is supposed to start by the end of October. The Municipal Council of Drvar allocated the plot for displaced Croats who are illegally occupying the houses of Serb returnees and have decided to stay in Drvar.

According to the information from the Office of the Federation Ombudspersons in Livno, the OHR granted their approval for the allocation of land for the construction of these two buildings and a Catholic Church on 9 July this year, based on the documentation delivered by the Municipal Council of Drvar.

Protest of Serbs in Bocinja near Maglaj

Glas Srpski reports on the protest of Serb returnees to

Bocinja and Krsno Polje, BiH federation, over a decision of Maglaj municipal assembly to establish an independent local community office (mjesna zajednica) Bakotic-Krsno Polje and to dismiss office for refugees. President of Association of Serb Refugees in the Maglaj municipality Ljubo Djurkovic said that such decisions were against interests of Serb returnees and represented a direct attack on the return of Serbs to this area.

Republika Srpska

RS Government supports international community's efforts in combating terrorism

Dnevni Avaz reports that the Republika Srpska Government fully support measures undertaken by the international community in fight against increasing worldwide terrorism. The Government's Public Relations Office said in a press release that the RS Government had itself made a series of concrete steps contributing to these international efforts.

RS Government holds session to discuss situation in the health-care sector

The Republika Srpska dailies report on Monday's session of the RS Government at which the situation in health-care sector was discussed. After the session, the RS Health Minister, Milorad Balaban, said that the RS health-care workers should be paid one out of four outstanding salaries. The Government also concluded that the Health Ministry should come up with a plan to improve the sector in next seven days.

Privatization of socially owned apartments in the

RS

Glas Srpski reports on an advisory seminar (title "Who can privatize an apartment in the Republika Srpska") which was held in Banja Luka. "The aim of this seminar was training of persons who, under the Law on Privatization of Socially-owned Apartments in the RS, take part in the process of calculation of the price for an apartment and work on contract for purchase or rent of an apartment", said the RS Minister for Urban Planning, Nedjo Djuric. He added that the first apartments in the RS could be privatized at the end of this month.

International Community

Petritsch says danger of terrorism in BiH overestimated

The High Representative, Wolfgang Petritsch, said in an interview with the Belgrade daily Danas, published on Monday, that a danger of possible involvement of BiH, as a country with a Moslem majority, in the international terrorism was overestimated. Petritsch added that the Bosnian variant of Islam is the European one. He said that he could not therefore say that there was a big danger of the Islamic fundamentalism development in the country. On the other side, Petritsch emphasized, the economic and social problems, as well as a lack of perspective were leading towards a radicalization. He believed that this radicalization could be prevented through the BiH's integration into Europe and its values.

U.N. court denies Krajisnik's provisional release request

Judges at the United Nations' tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) on Monday denied a request for provisional

release by ex-Bosnian Serb senior official Momcilo Krajisnik. "His motion for provisional release has been rejected," The Hague Tribunal spokesman Jim Landale said. Krajisnik, who is facing charges including genocide and crimes against humanity for his role in the 1992-95 conflict in Bosnia, has twice before been denied temporary release to attend his father's funeral and a subsequent memorial service.

ICG recommends essential change in international community's policy towards RS

A new International Crisis Group (ICG) report recommends the international community to essentially change its policy towards Republika Srpska. According to Oslobodjenje and SENSE news agency, the new course would include very fierce political measures and economic sanctions since a failed policy of compromises has not achieved any positive results so far. (See the attachment)

Editorial

Oslobodjenje: New, old, self-styled Ante

Written by Senka Kurtovic, acting Oslobodjenje Editor-in-Chief
(Partial translation)

"New, old, self-styled and by the international community unrecognized President of the BiH Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) Ante Jelavic has once expressed his dissatisfaction to me because I had described his speech delivered last year in Mostar on the occasion of the HDZ's tenth anniversary as a sort of speech no one was delivering any more. Except, maybe, the leaders of the countries in South America. However, I admit that following a speech he delivered at the seventh HDZ Congress held last Saturday in Mostar Jelavic deserves that I am more concrete. He does not any more look to me like an

unnamed south American leader, but I have a concrete example. As soon as he takes the floor, Jelavic transform himself into (Cuban President Fidel) Castro. Only two of them are able to keep the attention of their faithful "partisan servants" having nerves and the time to listen to them for hours. Only two of them dare, I would say, to, without any break and without any sense, speak about already very well-known things. I do not know what happened with Jelavic, but I thought for a second that at least this, extraordinary Congress would be held without phrases, which are even those who are writing speeches for Jelavic sick and tired of. But, we heard that HDZ would come out of this Congress as a refreshed and strengthened party. We heard but we cannot believe. I guess that nothing will be the same in the Croat Democratic Union. Now when it has a new President and his Vice-presidents. Nothing will be as it used to in the party, not when it clearly and loudly said it is leaving its a decade or more old policy. Nothing will be the same now when Jelavic is promising us that Croats in BiH are expecting wise and brave moves from the Seventh Congress. Ante Jelavic's decision to "check in" for the top party position (without any competitors) can be described as such a move. It was the move of a desperate man, loser, frustrated politician and failed leader. Such the move can be made only by a man who does not wish good neither to the party nor to the people, who, faced with pressures, threats, phrases about their jeopardized position and all forms of lobbying, vote for the HDZ in all elections. Such the move can be made only by a man, who is aware that, as the leader, he can avoid the responsibility. We have been listening the same for years: The position of Croats is every day worse. Here is a new assessments: This position is, Jelavic would tell us, unbearable. Particularly in the Federation, which Jelavic returned to (SDA President Alija) Izetbegovic sometime around the sentencing of Dario Kordic (wartime HVO commander indicted and sentenced for war crimes by The Hague Tribunal). Now when there is no Izetbegovic, and when he is not in good relations with (SDP's) Karlo Filipovic

(BiH Federation President), Jelavic is just not strong enough to again return the Federation, so he is, for a change, again mentioning a Bosniak domination in the entity. Not a single word about at least partial domination of Croats in the Federation. And even if these Croats are being mentioned, they are not the right Croats, those belonging to the HDZ," Kurtovic wrote. Continuing in a pretty ironic and sometimes unclear manner, Senka Kurtovic analyzed parts of Jelavic's speech in which he had admitted that so called Croat self-rule was a failed project, as were similar attempts to create at least two entities on the ethnic basis. She quoted Jelavic as saying that the current integration of funds and budgets were the processes damaging Croat interests. Kurtovic expressed hope that, one day, findings from the investigation into the Hercegovacka Banka operation would show who are the Croats suffering negative consequences from the integration processes.