OBN News Review, 18 August 1999

Headlines

- Turkey- unfortunately fears of the possible number killed in the earthquake confirmed
- Corruption is a crime that will not be toleratated, declares the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Wolfgang Petritsch
- Reactions to The New York Times article in Brussels, Washington. What people of BH think of it
- Delegation of the Council of Europe visiting Sarajevo
- The meeting of both entities' Ministries of Health in Banja Luka
- A policeman took part in robbing tourists in Herzegovina

Turkey

In the terrible earthquake that hit the wider region of the Sea of Marmar, 3,500 people were killed and over 12,000 wounded, Unfortunately, these are not final numbers.

Sarajevo

At a press conference in Sarajevo, the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Wolfgang Petritsch, could not confirm information in the New York Times article that money stolen from public funds and international aid, amounted to a billion dollars. He declared, there is no collective 4,000 page report on corruption in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but there are several reports on various cases of corruption. He said, there are indications that some leaders are involved, but did not want to give the details. Mirza Hajric, Adviser of Joint Presidency member Alija Izetbegovic, said the Presidency was waiting for OHR to submit proof of the accusation and announced the possibility of further activities for the final explanation of

the matter.

Brussels, Washington-reactions

Europeans are amazed at the amount of corruption and theft in Bosnia and Herzegovina. European Commission officials are pleased that among the examples cited none relate to European tax payers' money used in rebuilding projects in Bosnia. The director of the section for West Balkans Gerhard Sabathil wonders if the sum of one billion dollars may be exagerated. European Commission has its own anti-coruption team and control procedure. Accusations of galloping corruption in Bosnia could cause widespread repercusions for the whole region. Growing caution amongst donors is evident. This could especially reflect on American investments in Bosnia. In Washington, the accusations were the topic of all leading media. It was officially confirmed that USA believed long ago that the corruption reached right to the top level of Bosnian officials. Bosnian officials deny the accusations. The prime minister Bicakcic thought that the article is a political diversion bringing great damage to Bosnia and Herzegovina and invited OHR to present proof to the public.

Sarajevo, visit of the Council of Europe

The goal of the visit is to check whether BH fulfills the conditions for admission to this European institution. As the key elements of the state do not function as they should, the gates of the Council of Europe still remain closed for BH. The members of the delegation talked to top members of the Coucil of Ministers of BH. The European officials declared they would like people here to realize that they live in one country, functioning properly.Speaking of returns, she said it should be a reality, not only written on a paper. They also commented on the non functioning of the state Parliament and non-removal of disputable parts from textbooks.

The European delegation stated that certain progress in Bosnia

is visible, but still not sufficient for admission to this significant European institution.

Comments on the New York Times Article

OHR spokesman in Mostar Chris Riley thinks that it is very dangerous related world donors. In Mostar, the financial support of donors was not embezzled, maybe the tax payers money was used for the wrong purposes.He also denied the presence of a report by the anti corruption team.

Corruption, public opinion poll

Citizens of BH, when asked about this matter, said they believed there was corruption and theft in BH government in both entities.

World news

Kosovo, happenings in Serbia

Three Serb people were wounded in the American sector in Kosovo, last night. Russia accuses the West of neglecting the fact of ethnic cleansing which Albanians practise upon remaining Serbs. Moscow demands urgent disarmament of the local guerilla fighters.

Belgrade tensely awaits the meeting tomorrow of the oposition. Vuk Draskovic will not speak at the meeting.Zoran Đindic, the leader of the democrat party announced the participation of Kosovo Serb leaders in the Belgrade meeting. After recent statements that Serbia could face the Rumanian scenario, Vesna Pesic, from the Citizens Union of Serbia could be indicted to stand trial.

Dagestan

Russian offensive is in progress.Yesterday Russians carried out 24 air raids, destroyed radio and tv relay station. Moscow states that guerilla bases will be destroyed in a few days. To

motivate Russian soldiers for such a war, the Government adopted a decree on raising soldiers salaries.

Brcko, Press conference of Robert Farrand

At a Press Conference in Brcko, the supervisor Robert Farrand published the final version of the annex on the decision about Brcko. It marked the end of the four year arbital procedure on this very complex issue. Robert Farrand stated that the urgent task now is the constitution of the Statute of the District, and also announced the creation of the transitory district government.

Ejup Ganic, the Federation vice premier thinks that this solution is acceptable for all citizens who want to have their future in this state. This will be a region of prosperity.

Banja Luka

The Ministry of Health donated 70,000 DM to the Muslim charity association MERHAMET in Banja Luka.

The Ministries of Health of both BH entities may sign a protocol next month, which would solve the problems of health care and health insuarance of BH citizens, especially those who are returning to both entities.

Other news

White slaves

Non-government organisations in cooperation with several womens associations are trying to fight the problem of human traffic. Jacques Klein said that one of the problems in BH is the fact that the police and court administration give the same treatment to both criminals and victims.Representatives of the womens association for human rights declared that changes were necessary in the approach to this problem. The issue is about buying women at the border and transporting them throughout the country, forcing them into illegal

prostitution, without any legal protection.

Policeman robbing tourists

Three Turkish tourists were robbed by three men, one of them a policeman, while travelling from Mostar to Sarajevo.

Sport

31. traditional International football tournament started in Doboj.Eight teams from six countries took part in the tournament.

In seven days the last seasonal Grand Slam tournament, the US open, will start. Two ATP tournaments will take place this week. Lake Mason tournament in Washington, no surprises in the first round. Evgenij Kafelnikov Van Black,score 2:1. Tod Martin, with a score of 2:0 entered the second round together with Christian Pless. ITP tournament in Indiana. The third round entered Gustavo Puete, Carlos Moja

The Second Word Chess Championship produced the first finalist, Akopian.