

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 11/11/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Following session of Main Board SDP still remains partitioned – Lagumdžija jeopardized yet only by its own silence

Dnevni Avaz: Michael Humphreys, the Head of EC Delegation to BiH – BiH should have VAT and a single Customs Administration

Dnevni List: Nihad Spahalic, General Manager of “Intrade” company: “Federation Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Defence are serving lies”; Rebac: “High officials will not be saved from investigations”

Vecernji List: “Lijanovic dismissed people that were recently employed”

Glas Srpski: Nemanja Cihoric buried in Trebinje: Bullies in detention; Bijeljina: Illegal arrests in “Orao”

Nezavisne Novine: Celebration in Tuzla Canton and District: After ten years, train goes from Tuzla to Brcko; Investigation into “Orao” case continues: Detention extended for Prica, Kecman and Santrac

Blic: Possible removal of General Zec; Dodik is trying to get in touch with the SDS leaders?; Mayor of Glamoc fears for security; Petar Djokic: Negotiations on future government today

International community's activities

Information that BiH annually loses between 300 and 400 million KM in unpaid customs duties, and that a relatively small BiH territory is split on several customs administration, which is being misused by criminals, has made the international officials in BiH and the local authorities start the process of the customs system reform. *“In the Office of the High Representative, a meeting of BiH political parties representatives has been scheduled for Wednesday to discuss the issue,”* OHR Chief Spokesperson **Julian Braithwaite** told **Dnevni Avaz** (p 4, by Sead Numanovic). In the framework of the

preparations for the meeting, among other things, the Principal Deputy High Representative, **Donald Hays**, and the Head of the Customs and Fiscal Assistance Office in BiH, **Allan Jensen**, are planning to visit the Federation Customs Administration headquarters on Monday, and discuss the institution work with its Director **Zelimir Rebac**. (**Dnevni List**, p 3, also reports on the issue)

In an interview to **Dnevni List** (front and page 5), **Zelimir Rebac**, the director of the Federation Customs Administration, talking about ongoing investigations into the case revealed by Dnevni List, according to which the Ministry of Interior and other bodies of authority use illegal cars (cars did not go through customs properly), says: *"For Federation Customs Administration there are not persons or officials who will not come under the investigation. I will endeavor to create pre-requisites that investigators work without obstacles and that, together with other competent services, we go towards the main goal, and the goal is to establish and maintain the rule of law"*. Rebac adds that since he has taken over the Federations Customs, which saw installment of new people in the Mostar Customs, customs revenues in Mostar have gone up by 60%.

Vecernji List (page 3) learned that inspectors of Customs administration, with assistance of special police, three days ago have entered premises of **"GIPI Gagro"** in Citluk, in order to investigate documentation and find confirmation for suspicions of Customs administration related to illegal import of meat.

"Neither do I and my organization nor the EU participate in talks about the post-election coalitions to establish new authorities in BiH. We are prepared to cooperate with the authorities, which have come on power in a democratic way and which are committed to the reforms and BiH building in compliance with the legitimate ambitions of this country to become a part of the European and the international community's family," the Head of the European Commission's Mission to BiH, **Michale Humhreys**, said in an interview with

Dnevni Avaz (front page, p 5: "If it wants to accede to EU, BiH must have one VAT and a single customs administration (at the state level)").

"I clearly stated to authorities of the RS that world's patience is thinner and thinner. I told them that mechanism of support for Karadzic in financing and protection must stop. I think that such support has been provided by authorities of the RS themselves. If that support doesn't end, the RS will pay much higher price than it pays now," the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, said in an interview with Zagreb daily **Vjesnik** on Sunday commenting on the necessity for apprehension of the most wanted war crime suspect **Radovan Karadzic** (Parts of the interview carried by Monday's **Oslobodjenje**, p 7: "Karadzic being protected by the RS authorities", and **Nezavisne Novine**, p 4)

"The international community must remain engaged in the Balkans for years if it does not want that a chaos is again created in the region," **Ginter Altenbourg**, a senior German official at NATO, said in the debate on the issue organized in Berlin. The Head of the UN Mission to BiH, **Jacques Paul Klein**, said for his part that one of the main goals of the international engagement in the Balkans had to be a fast integration of the Balkan countries into Europe. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 4)

Ivan Lovrenovic (**Feral Tribune**, page 30-32) offers his analysis of "Ashdown's sudden enthusiasm regarding having ethnic-national parties to be carriers of reforms which will turn BiH into a state free of corruption and crime". "There are two possible solutions to the riddle: either Ashdown does not know the nature of nationalism (in general and our nationalism in particular) or he knows it but minimises it for some reason", says Lovrenovic in the same time ruling out the first option, given the Ashdown's background in (Northern) Ireland. Lovrenovic continues: "There is the other (option) and if it is true and not just a fruit of an excessive

thinking, than it freezes my bones. Because it can mean nothing else but the Ashdown's real mandate is somewhere in correspondence with those reappearing voices in the International Community who suggest that the IC should finally admit that the project of restitution of BiH was a mistake and that the nationalists should be let to complete what they, but not to the end, have already completed to a good extent".

Prior to the aforementioned comment, Lovrenovic also says that Ashdown *"practices protectorate everyday by enacting laws, decrees, introducing new ministries, removing senior politicians and police officers without a convincing explanation, all in an attempt to convince the public into necessity of reforms and that the domestic authorities have to be devoted to the reforms"*.

Decertified policemen case

The Deputy Head of the UN Mission to BiH, **Souren Seraydarian**, addressed journalists in Sarajevo on Sunday following, as he said, a confusion created by media regarding the process of the issuance of certificates to the police officers in BiH including the dispute over the de-certification of the 19 Sarajevo Canton Special Police Unit members. *"For me, the opinions of the political parties are absolutely irrelevant. They (the police officers) are either professional policemen, or they are not. Those policemen were beating people in the course of the operation and a legal proceeding has been launched against them,"* Seraydarian emphasized.

"The Office of the High Representative fully supports IPTF in carrying out a difficult but important task of police de-politicization and cleaning from crime. OHR has not participated in the decision-making process but it has a full confidence in the procedures carried out by IPTF and UN Mission to BiH," said OHR Chief Spokesman **Julian Braithwaite** commenting on the issue. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Oslobodjenje**, p 6)

Investigation into "Orao" case continues

Bijeljina Prosecutor submitted a request for investigation against the Director of the "Orao" Institute, **Milan Prica**, Technical Director, **Teodosije Kecman** and the Head of the Marketing Department, **Gordan Santrac (Glas Srpski**, cover page, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 2). According to the Bijeljina Deputy Prosecutor, **Dusanka Racanovic**, the prosecutor's office also requested extension of detention for the three men in question and the investigative judge should decide on that today. Commenting on the statement given by the lawyer who represents all three "Orao" officials, **Milos Peric**, that it is "unusual" that the investigative judge is to decide on detention, instead of the Prosecutor, Racanovic stated that the procedure was not breached. Milos Peric claims that his clients were illegally detained. It is interesting to mention that his statement is used as a headline in **Glas Srpski** (*Illegal arrests in "Orao"*), while **Nezavisne Novine** have a headline which says that detention was extended for Prica, Kecman and Santrac. (**Blic** p 7, **Nacional** p 11) Families of the three Orao officials think this is a political process. (**Vecernje Novosti** p 5)

Blic reports that during the investigation process three arrested leaders of Orao said that Orao had not directly worked with Iraq but through Yugoimport's branch office in Hong Kong. They also said that they did not responsible for violating of the UN embargo and that competent authorities in the RS had been informed about Orao business / operations.

At a session of the RS Supreme Defence Council that will be held this week acting chief of the RS Army Headquarters General **Momir Zec** should be removed – Blic learns from a source close to the RS authorities. The source claims that the RS authorities accuse General Zec of being responsible for the 13th September report of the Government Commission which reads that Orao has not been violating the UN embargo. But the source says that the role of General Zec in that is not quite clear since that he was a member of the Commission that was lead by Assistant Minister of Defence **Nikola Delic**. (**Blic** p 7)

Vecernje Novosti (p 5) reports that after the weekend break,

the police will continue today the control of Orao. Apart from the police, Orao has been checked by the Tax Administration officials, the RS Auditor and representatives of the RS Ministry of Defence. Article further reads that before the arrest, **Teodosije Kecman** told Vecernje Novosti *that "it is not disputable that we have been in Iraq"*. According to Kecman the aim of visiting to Iraq in 1997, 1999 and 2000 was to demand outstanding debts of 7 million US\$ dated from 1991.

Reforms at level of BiH

The RS politicians rejected the idea of the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, on creation of a **single BiH Army**, while the politicians in BiH Federation supported it (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 4).

The SDS believes that creation of a single BiH Army is unacceptable as it would endanger the position of the RS Army envisaged by the Dayton. The SDS Spokesman, **Dusan Stojicic**, stated that such ideas of the High Representative are not very clear and that SDS does not want to take part in any action that would lead to the establishment of joint BiH armed forces.

The SNSD Spokesman, **Rajko Vasic**, stated that his party is against the establishment of a single BiH Army. The daily quotes Vasic as saying: *"Giving the statements about the joint army and the arrest of **Radovan Karadzic**, the High Representative and some low rank officials of the international community are only inflaming nationalism. One should restrain from giving such serious statements, which practically have no meaning – the solution for which the BiH politicians will be responsible should be found."*

The member of the PDP Main Board, **Nevenka Trifkovic**, stated that the issue of joint BiH Army can be resolved only as it is foreseen by the Constitutions of RS and BiH.

Member of the DNS Main Board, **Mirko Pavic**, stated that his

party is against the establishment of a single army in BiH and that it was not envisaged by the Dayton Agreement.

The Secretary General of the Serb Radical Party, **Ognjen Tadic**, said that he believes that RS will have enough strength and persistence to defend itself from ideas like this one in order not to endanger the identity of the entity.

The following parties from the BiH Federation support the idea of the High Representative: SDA, SDP BiH and DNZ.

Vecernji List (page 2, by E. Medunjanin) carries article which says that High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** is the last hope for hundreds of thousands of BiH citizens who don't live in BiH, in saving their right to **BiH citizenship**. Saying that it is very likely that the state parliament of BiH will not change current law on citizenship, the author says that it is only the High Representative who could impose changes of the law, what have asked associations of BiH citizens who live in the United States in a letter recently addressed to Ashdown. The article says that it is possible that those who have dual citizenship of BiH and Croatia could also have problems after 1 January 2003, because the agreement between these two countries has not been signed yet.

Dnevni List (page 8) carries commentary of S. Kuzman on introduction of PDV (**VAT**) in BiH. *"In opinion of some experts, introduction of PDV could be counterproductive process, because huge energy will be spent on this project. (...) Its real value ODV has in strengthening, unification and better organisation of BiH as a state. People say that its real importance is of political, rather than economic nature"*, wrote the author.

Post-election developments

Oslobodjenje (front page, pages 4-5) suggests that even following long discussion at the Saturday's session of its Main Board the SDP BiH still remains a political party deeply

partitioned inside. *"It is even bigger disaster to have two parties inside the one, than having a situation in which those who have a different political concept would leave the party,"* a senior SDP official told the newspaper on Sunday. *"There are no big gaps in the party, but it is definitely clear that there are different concepts,"* the source added. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 8, also addresses the issue)

"The political idea of social-democracy was not defeated at the rent elections in BiH. The defeated was one political party (SDP BiH), its leadership, and particularly its president," Ibrahim Prohic wrote in the **Oslobodjenje** In Focus column. He concluded that not only SDP but some other parties including the SNSD, which was a relative election winner, might be considered carriers of the social-democracy in BiH.

Blic (p 3) learns from a source close to the SNSD, that leader of this party **Milorad Dodik** has been trying for several days now to get in touch with the SDS in order to provide participation of his party in a new RS authority. Thus far Dodik has been rejecting any idea of forming a coalition with the SDS. According to the source, Dodik accepts a variant which will give him post in the Council of Ministers if the SDS accepts that members of SNSD enter a new RS Government. *"Besides, Dodik is asking for at least a hint that newly elected RS President Dragan Cavic will abolish two criminal charges filled against him because of the misuse of office during his mandate as RS Prime Minister",* the source claims. On the other side, Dodik is under pressure of groups and individuals around him who are dissatisfied with his choice of candidates for certain posts and who are aware that means invested in the pre-election campaign of the SNSD could only be returned by entering the authority, which leads to the cooperation with the SDS. The source says that therefore the only real possibility is that two strongest parties in the RS form a coalition, because together they have 45 delegates.

The SNSD leader, **Milorad Dodik**, denied information publicized by the news agencies BETA and TANJUG, that he wants to talk

with SDS about the establishment of the future RS authorities. Dodik once again reiterated that his party will not enter a coalition with SDS and that SNSD wants to establish coalition with moderate parties or to be in opposition if that idea fails (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 5). **Glas Srpski** on p 2 carries the news item publicized by BETA news agency.

The PDP leader, **Mladen Ivanic**, will today brief the main board of the party on the negotiations he had so far with other political parties with regards to the establishment of RS authorities. Most presumably, the PDP will decide during the course of this week with whom it will establish a coalition (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 5).

The DNS decided to establish a Caucus in the future RS National Assembly with the Alliance of People's Revival, SNS and other small parties. According to DNS Vice President, **Jovan Mitrovic**, DNS expects RS Democratic Party and Democratic-Patriotic Party to join the Caucus (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 5).

"The SPRS has not received an answer on offered platform for forming legislative and executive authority, but we expect that negotiations will be intensified today and tomorrow, after which we will have concrete results," president of the Socialist, **Petar Djokic**, said. He said the negotiations would be conducted with all parties. *"Our platform is basically an answer to what the SNSD has offered and it does not oppose to their idea to form a block of parties that would form an authority. But we think that discussions should continue in order to see which parties may enter that block,"* Djokic said. (**Blic** p 3)

Vecernji List (page 3, by D. Jazvic) reads that president of People's Party Working for Prosperity **Mladen Ivankovic-Lijanovic** addressed a letter on October 15 to all cantonal and municipal boards of the party in which he informed them that all contracts of employment are not valid after October 18.

The daily says that Lijanovic with this letter informed 80 people that they will lose their jobs. *"We were told that new contracts will be signed at the beginning of next year ... It is absurd that the party that promised to employ 340,000 people, just briefly after the elections dismissed those who were employed"*, says one of sacked workers of "Working for Prosperity". The article says that costs of work of cantonal and municipal offices of the party will be paid from headquarters, but employees should engage themselves in finding sponsors for their salaries. *"They told us that we will have to find money for salaries ourselves, ...they are ready to help us in a way to open a fast-food in which we would be selling their sausages"*, says former employee of the party.

Trials

In light of new situation with documents and archive materials that have drastically changed situation of trial to **Tihomir Blaskic** in The Hague, **Dnevni List** (page 5, by Petar Radic) reminds that former members of BiH Presidency, Belkic, Krizanovic and Radisic, have submitted criminal report to Municipal Court in Sarajevo against "unknown person/s/" for destruction of transcripts and audio recordings from sessions of BiH Presidency in period 1990-1993. The author of the article finds these transcripts very important, because within them are the most important conversations of then highest officials about wartime events that could be incriminating for some persons from then pinnacle of state authority. Unofficial sources that have dealt with the issue of missing transcripts stated that they are still trying to find them.

Dnevni List (front and page 7) announces that a verdict against six suspects charged with murder of the late Federation Deputy Minister of Interior, **Jozo Leutar**, will be passed by Judge **Salem Miso** tomorrow, November 12, 2002.

Headlines in Electronic Media

RTRS (Sunday, 1930)

- Rail traffic between Tuzla and Brcko has been established after 10 years
- Presidential and local elections in Slovenia
- Putin hosted group of pro-Russian Chechens