

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 13/8/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: American military assistance to BiH is not under question; Ashdown with grandchildren on Bascarsija

Dnevni Avaz: US Ambassador Bond – We do not have elections favorites; Ashdown with grandchildren feed pigeons

Jutarnje Novine: Interview with Anto Domazet, the BiH Treasury Minister – There will be money for the lawsuit against FRY

Dnevni List: Assassination attempt against Lagumdžija?

Vecernji List: Banks services used by only one third of the citizens; Traffic accident fixed to Lagumdžija

Glas Srpski: Big damage in the Republika Srpska agriculture – Storms took away millions

Nezavisne Novine: Croatia started constructing border crossing in Kostajnica

FRY Nacional: Slobodan Milosevic from the Hague: Seselj to be the Serbian president: The Hague Tribunal: Greeks revealed confidential military plans of NATO to General Madic and Radovan Karadzic

Vecernje Novosti: FRY President on the ICC: A court or a toy

Euro Blic: Milutin Pejic: Bank lobby gets ready for the elections; The Government sells Razvojna Banka; The SDS: We will deprive Ivanic of our trust

US/BiH relations, ICC

BiH will not be a country at which the US President **George Bush** will test his alleged threat of cutting the military assistance to those joining the International Criminal Court without providing guarantees they will not on any occasion had

over any US citizen to the Court, reads an **Oslobodjenje** front page story (continued on p 6). The newspaper goes on to say that, however, two months ago, BiH came under Washington pressures to sign a bilateral agreement providing such guarantees. *"But, it seems that this was just about ad hoc demands from the lower diplomatic levels, which were withdrawn later on,"* the newspaper claims.

In the two articles on the same issue, **Dnevni Avaz** (p 3) suggests that the discussions on the bilateral agreement are still under way (title 1: Washington has already started talks with the Government in Sarajevo; title 2: Milovan Blagojevic, the BiH Deputy Foreign Minister – The agreement has been mentioned as a need and the US special interest), and that BiH might face consequences if it fails to sign such the document.

"Acceptance of the American offer of a bilateral refraining from extraditing US citizens to the International Criminal Court (ICC) would seriously undermine the international legal order and legal order of states which ratified the Rome Statute under which the ICC is formed", Yugoslav President **Vojislav Kostunica** said. With this offer the FRY has been put in a very delicate situation: whether to accept the offer or not and in that way favour the European Union that opposes it. According to Kostunica, this court will either try everyone and be a real court or try just some and then we will have another too expensive toy of the international bureaucracy. *"The Americans are an indispensable nation, but it does not mean they are the only one",* Kostunica said. (**Blic** p 2, **Vecernje Novosti** p 2)

The sacking of two employees of the KPMG company and their departure from BiH has been solely a result of the US government's policy which is absolutely against prostitution and similar activities, a statement by the US embassy to BiH says. The statement says that an investigation conducted by the local authorities has not resulted in filing any charges, *"but an internal investigation by the US embassy which started a year ago was sufficient to insist that two persons, who were contractors of the KPMG and worked on an USAID project, should*

be sacked". (**Oslobodjenje**, p 4, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2)

Dnevni List (front page and 5, by Sven Brucic) carries a big article about a decision of US Ambassador in BiH **Clifford Bond** to expel two US citizens **Steven Williams** and **Mike Gigen** for trafficking people and organising international chain of prostitution. The author says: " *In their country, they would be imprisoned for decades for the crimes they committed, while in BiH, the American Ambassador, acting as a big litigant, actually saved them from the punishment they deserved and should be tried by domestic judiciary for these serious crimes*". The author also says that with this move Bond also obstructed a possible investigation of the Federation Police, for the two Americans are not the only ones who have profited from prostitution, and the question arises – "*Who were their accomplices and their bosses?*"

The **US Government** will donate 1m dollars for the erection of a memorial centre and Muslim cemetery in Potocari, near Srebrenica. The donation will help to finance work on designing and building the memorial centre and cemetery for thousands of people who were killed and massacred during [a Serb attack] and after the fall of Srebrenica in July 1995. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 3)

In an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (front page, p 5), the US Ambassador to BiH, **Clifford Bond**, said that the intentions of the US Administration were to create a wide basis of generous donors, which will help construction of the Potocari memorial center. Speaking about the upcoming elections, Bond said that the United States did not have his particular favorites among the political parties.

BiH approved starting of the Kostajnica border crossing construction

The BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs and Communications on Monday sent a letter to the BiH Foreign Ministry and the State Border

Service informing them that the BiH and Croatian side had agreed the construction of a temporary border crossing in Kostajnica might start in accordance to the signed Annex to the interstate contract on the issue. The BiH Foreign Ministry is requested to accordingly send a diplomatic note to Croatia. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2)

Nezavisne Novine (p 2) and **Glas Srpski** (p 3) report that Croatian team yesterday started with construction of a provisional joint border crossing in Kostajnica. Nezavisne novine quotes Deputy Minister for Civil Affairs and Communication, Milan Lovric, as saying that the Council of Ministers (CoE) gave instructions to the State Border Service (SBS) to let construction workers and machines to come to the location where the joint border crossing will be built. Both papers report on some minor incidents, which occurred yesterday when the construction works started. According to both papers, the main reason was that the Croatian team started the construction works 10-m away from the agreed location. However, the Kostajnica municipal authorities informed the SBS Deputy Director, Tomislav Mihalj, and Croatia team withdrew on the agreed location. **FRY Nacional**, p 11, also reported on the Kostajnica issue.

Attempt of assassination on Lagumdzija?

All Croatian dailies carry stories about alleged attempt of assassination on **Zlatko Lagumdzija**, Minister of Foreign Affairs of BiH and President of SDP. Dailies say that during recent trip of Lagumdzija to Tuzla at the beginning of August one front wheel almost became released because it was fixed only with two out of five screws. The dailies say that the possible sabotage could have happened only in the parking place in front of the building of the Ministry that is under constant police supervision. The police say that this case was very suspicious because something similar happened during Lagumdzija's visit to Herzegovina in July. The fact that all vehicles of the Ministry are serviced in company "Quattro" in ownership of **Bakir Alispahic**, who is detained in prison because of investigation in case Pogorelica, for terrorism and

espionage. Director of "Quattro" company **Mirsad Siljak** denied any responsibility for this case. Dailies say that it is the assumption that Lagumdzija could be target of attacks as the person who was directly engaged in bringing Alispahic to prison. (**Vecernji List** p 15, **Dnevni List** front and p 3, **Jutarnji List** p 6, **Slobodna Dalmacija** front and p 13, **Vjesnik** p 7).

Federation affairs

Vecernji List (page 2 and front page, by Zoran Kresic) carries that since the removal of **Nikola Grabovac**, a former Federation Minister of Finances, the Federation Government has held five sessions during which they allocated 13 million Marks to Bosniak companies and institutions and only one million Marks to the Croat ones. VL says that having in mind these facts it is clear as to why Alliance for Changes, which rejected NHI from authority, did not accept an NHI's new candidate for the position of the Federation Minister of Finances. In addition VL carries that according to unofficial information money from the Deputy Prime Minister's reserve was transferred in form of assistance (80, 000 Marks for resolving of urgent problems) to Mostar Municipality Stari Grad in which **Alija Behmen**, the Federation Prime Minister, was born. VL says that in case that this information is correct it will be a real scandal because only the Minister of Finances, who is at the same time a Deputy Prime Minister, can have this money at his disposal. The BiH Federation Government and the authorized Ministry are preparing the order on the revision of the lists of war invalids, but they do not consult at all the War Invalid Association, neither, according to its President, **Zahid Crnkic**, the Association knows how the proceeding will be carried out. In principle, the Association is not against the revision, but under condition that its goal will not be a forcible and unjustified reduction of the number of war invalids. *"If this is going to be the revision's goal, we will fiercely protest,"* Crnkic told **Oslobodjenje** (p 3).

Dnevni List (page 5) carries report about the Investigation Commission of the BiH Parliamentary House of Representatives, which has been formed for the conduction of investigation

related to the illegal weapons found in Mostar, which received before its session the answers on additional questions from Chairman of the BiH Presidency **Beriz Belkic** and BiH Federation Deputy Defense Minister **Ferid Buljubasic**, but not from the SFOR Command. Therefore, the Commission members called SFOR representative to be present on the next session of the commission. Member of the commission **Miro Grabovac Titan** stated that *"Presidency of BiH obviously does not control armed forces, as the Constitution defines"*.

Vecernji List (page 3) carries that the main hearing regarding the illegally stored mortar rounds revealed in Mostar has been scheduled for next Friday. According to **Faruk Balijagic**, a lawyer of **Jusuf Piralic**, a person who has been also accused of being involved in this case, **Hasan Cengic** and his son **Halid** announced that they will show up before the Mostar court. Balijagic said that **Ante Jelavic** and **Miroslav Prce**, former Federation Ministers of Defense, should also explain as to why they did not know about illegally stored mortar rounds, since the Cengics were their subordinates. VL says that judging by the statements of Jelavic and Prce it is not very likely that they will show up before the court. VL says that those who are familiar with this case claim that due to parallelism within the Federation Ministry of Defense at that time, Prce and Jelavic probably did not know about the mortar rounds.

RS-related issues

Glas Srpski reports (p 2) that the RS Defense Minister, **Slobodan Bilic**, requested that the High Representative for BiH, **Paddy Ashdown**, takes appropriate and just steps regarding the failure of the BiH Federation authorities to implement the BiH Human Rights Chamber on reinstatement of military apartments in the BiH Federation. According to the paper, the deadline for implementation of the Human Rights Chamber decision expired two months ago and the BiH Federation authorities do not even think about implementing the decision and returning 900 flats to their pre-war occupants. Bilic said that even 2 months after the deadline expired, the BiH

Federation authorities are not showing political will to implement the decision, but they rather trying to retain a disputed provision from the article 3a, which the Chamber has already discussed.

Bilic specified that on 9 November 2001 the Human Rights Chamber accepted the appeals of **Andrija Miholjic, Bozo Corapovic, Milorad Djiric, Dusan Ristic** and **Mihajlo Buzic**. The Chamber then ordered the BiH Federation to take all necessary steps until 7 June 2002 at the latest and put out of effect the contracts on purchase and sale of the five aforementioned persons. *"Two months after the expiration of the deadline the BiH Federation does not show political will to implement the Chamber's decision"*, Bilic's letter reads. (**FRY Nacional** p 11)

Both papers, **Glas Srpski** (p 3) and **Nezavisne Novine**(front page, p 3), quote the RS Finance Minister, **Simeun Vilendecic**, as saying that the RS Government decided to sell 80% of the Razvojna banka shares to the Bank for Southeast Europe. However, **Nezavisne novine** reports that the RS Government had better offers from another two banks – Ukio Bank from Lithuania and Balkan Investment Bank from Banja Luka, but still decided to sell the Razvojna Bank to the Bank for Southeast Europe. Representatives of these two banks said they would consider their further steps towards the RS Government because the Government did not accept their offer. However, the RS Finance Minister, Simeun Vilendecic, said the Government rejected their offer because these two banks still have not met all the obligations quoted in the sales contract for the Birac Factory. Vilendecic confirmed that the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, had a meeting with the President of the Bank for Southeast Europe, Michael Djordjevic, and that the RS President, the RS Vice-president and an important businessman attended the meeting. (**Blic**, p 17, also reported on the issue)

Nezavisne Novine(p 5) quotes member of the SDS Main Board and the Head of the Bijeljina SDS, **Cvijetin Nikic**, as saying at a news conference in Bijeljina yesterday that the SDS municipal board from Bijeljina will propose the SDS Caucus in the RS NA

to give non-confidence vote to the government of Mladen Ivanic unless the Government decides to give up on the initiative to pay pensions through commercial banks. SDS insists that pensions be paid through post offices. (**Blic**, p 3)

"If pensions in the RS are paid via commercial banks, the Serb Post Offices will not pay pensions to pensioners living in the rural areas", director of the Serb Post Offices **Milutin Pejic** told a press conference. He said that he had requested a meeting with RS Premier Mladen Ivanic in order to get informed of the RS Government's stance on the PIO Fund's decision to pay pensions via banks. Pejic said that if Premier Ivanic failed to change this decision, he would resign from his position. Without giving any specific names, Pejic accused the bank lobby in the RS of being involved in this and several other decisions on financial transactions via banks, which used to fall under the jurisdiction of the Serb Post Offices. (**Glas Srpski**, p 3, **Vecernje Novosti** p 13, **Blic** p 16)

Ognjen Tadic, Secretary General of the SRS, asks what are the conditions from Nova Banjalucka Banka to the RS Government on the payment of pensions through bank accounts. He said that the SRS would support the previous way of payment of pensions, through the post office. (**Blic** p 16)

Petar Djokic, president of the SPRS, said that the Government's decision to pay pensions via banks *"is not wise one"*. *"I think that should be a pensioners' decision, but I am not sure that anyone asked them for an opinion"*, Djokic said. (**Blic** p 16)

Pre-election news

Nezavisne Novine (p 5) carries excerpts from the UNDP report on popularity of political parties in BiH. According to the report, the popularity of PDP, SDA, BPS, HDZ and Bosnian Party is declining, whilst the SDP, SBiH, SDS and SNSD are becoming more popular.

Slobodna Dalmacija (page 15, by Dino Mikulandra) carries an

editorial on the results of a survey of National Democratic Institute from Washington. Mikulandra says that **Paddy Ashdown**, the HR, as well as other OHR officials, IPTF and **Durakovic**, **Komsic** and **Lagumdzija** with the assistance of **Dnevni Avaz** are trying to save Alliance for Changes, it is the mission impossible. The editorial says that according to the results of the survey nationalistic parties will return to power. The editorial concludes: *'They will return, no matter as to what Ashdown and his diplomatic suite think about this (democratic) choice of BiH citizens.'*

"SRS welcomes the decision of the BiH Election Commission to allow participation of one person from each party in the election committees. This is exactly what the SRS was calling for, and it is one of the preconditions for fair elections", **Ognjen Tadic**, Secretary General of the SRS, told a press conference. **The Serb Radical Party** (SRS) appealed to the UNDP to publicise the results of the recent poll, since the media wrongly present the facts from this poll and manipulate with the electorate. Tadic said he called UNDP office and they told him that the UNDP never publicised their report. (**Blic** p 3, **Nacional** p 11, **Vecernje Novosti** p 13)

The Serbian National Alliance (**SNS**) called upon the electorate to take seriously the statement of RS vice-president Dragan Cavic in connection with dissipation of the Serb vote for the RS president at the upcoming BiH elections on 5th October, and urged them to support an SNS candidate for RS president, Branislav Lolic. (**Nacional** p 11)

Cvijetin Nikic, a member of the SDS Main Board, said that his party supported a justified lawsuit brought by the Serbs of Bocinja against BiH, since their human and national rights were endangered. *"BiH is not trying to protect the Serbs of Bocinja, its citizens, and is not preventing Mujahedeens from Islamic countries from buying Serb property and ethnically cleansing the Zenica-Doboj Canton,"* Nikic said. (**Nacional** p

11)

The **SNSD** criticised on Monday the statement of the RS vice-president Dragan Cavic who said "*there is a great possibility that a Bosniak could be elected for the RS president*". According to the SNSD with such a statement the SDS wishes to once again frighten the Serbs before elections and force them to vote for it. (**Blic** p 3)

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Monday, 1900)

- Kostajnica border crossing construction begun
- US Government to donate one million dollar for Potocari memorial center
- Federal investigative commission on Mostar hidden grenade case continues working

FTV 1 (1930)

- George Bush signed a bill on cessation military assistance for the states refusing American proposal
- American Embassy statement after deportation of two American citizens from BH
- Multiethnic police in Srebrenica; promised assistance from relevant authorities is not provided

RTRS (1930)

- Housing loans approval procedure started formally
- RS Government agreed on selling 08 percent shares of the Development Bank
- Huge floods in Central Europe