

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 15/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: SFOR encircles Sarajevo because of the summit

Dnevni Avaz: Sejfudin Tokic will ask for removals; SFOR puts road block around Sarajevo

Jutarnje Novine: Poverty in BiH; SFOR road blocks around Sarajevo; President's summit

Nezavisne Novine: Attempted assassination of Chirac

Glas Srpski: BiH Customs Tariffs Law controversial; Chirac – target of an assassin

Blic: Kostunica: Confirmation of the Dayton principles and borders in Sarajevo; Process on Ferhadija case starts today

Vecernji List: Federation Ministry of Interior warns about possible attack on presidents' planes

Dnevni List: Beriz Belkic – Do politicians create public or public creates politicians?

Three Presidents' Summit

The leaders of Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are scheduled to meet on Monday for a key summit on cooperation and reconciliation aimed at healing the wounds of the bloody wars that followed the break-up of the old Yugoslavia, report international media. The summit in the BiH capital brings together Yugoslav President **Vojislav Kostunica**, his Croatian counterpart **Stipe Mesic** and the members of BiH Presidency – **Beriz Belkic**, **Zivko Radisic** and **Jozo Krizanovic**. In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2), **Beriz Belkic** said that the meeting should not be seen as *"historic or revolutionary,*

but as an affirmation of the process that is yet to be strengthened." "This is indeed the first official meeting of this sort in the past ten years. Of course, we are burdened with the lack of apology, however I must go forward although I feel a bit frustrated by this. I am aware that I will have to share a burden of responsibility towards the public...I cannot blame Kostunica for what happened in BiH since he was not in power then, but I expect, as does the greater portion of BiH public, that the new structure in the FRY gain enough strength and face the fact that the previous government made an enormous damage to BiH and apologize for that."

In a statement for FENA (carried by **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2 and **Oslobodjenje** p.3, **Glas Srpski** p.3, **Blic** p.6), the FRY president, **Vojislav Kostunica**, said that he hopes that Monday's Summit will improve the cooperation among the three countries especially in the field of economic development. He however noted commenting on Belkic's statement that *"we should not talk about the past using the language of hate, nor we should try to find in it the justification for our own intolerance."*

According to **Blic**, the presidential troika will also meet with the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**.

In an interview with **Vecernje Novosti** (p.2) **Predrag Simic**, an aide to Vojislav Kostunica, said that for the FRY president and for Yugoslavia, the most important issues to be discussed in Sarajevo are the issue of refugees and the loosening of visa regime. *"The aim of this meeting is to look forward, in the future, to see what to do with this region. In 1980s it functioned as a single economic, cultural, linguistic ... area. That makes the development of economic cooperation easier, because there is the infrastructure for that. If political obstacles are overcome, the economy, i.e. trade liberalization, will be revived easily and quickly. And it would be easier for foreign investors to invest in one single market than in several divided,"* Simic said. Simic added that President Kostunica was going to Sarajevo convinced that was a summit of leaders who were aware of their obligations toward

their countries and the whole region and who wanted to leave the past to the past and to restore what could be restored and to find a way in which these countries would live together in the future. Regarding the special relations between Yugoslavia and Republika Srpska and the interpretation of Dayton, Simic said: *"The FRY has never deemed that the Dayton is disputable, which is confirmed by the fact that the Government has launched a procedure for the ratification of agreement in the Parliament. That is one of the Council of Europe's requests, because requests for revision of Dayton and return of some solutions that caused the war are coming from several sides. The agreement on special relations with Republika Srpska are being mystified a lot. The agreement does not contain any wording that is not in line with the Dayton Peace Accord. Whenever Republika Srpska is mentioned, BiH is mentioned as well."*

The RS President, **Mirko Sarovic**, stated that the RS supports the tripartite meeting of the Presidents of FRY and Croatia, **Vojislav Kostunica** and **Stjepan Mesic**, with the BiH Presidency, which is supposed to take place today in Sarajevo (**Glas Srpski**, p. 3). *"Of course that we are looking forward to any progress in relations between these countries, and we are also happy over any progress that is reached in relations between BiH and FRY. We in the RS support various agreements that were recently signed and ratified between BiH and FRY. These agreement will be for the benefit of all citizens of the two countries,"* said Sarovic.

In an editorial in **Oslobodjenje**, Ibrahim Prohic, notes that today's summit should not be labeled as historic only on a symbolic level. *"Instead of tinkering with the romantic concept of apology for the war and aggression, it would be better if [the Presidency] would initiate the signing of bilateral or trilateral protocol whereby all three states would oblige themselves to give up all territorial pretensions and refrain from using violence in settling the disputes...This*

would mark the end of the period of confrontation and the beginning of the cooperation phase.”

Dnevni List (page 2, signed by Miso Relota) writes that “although it seems that today’s summit is an ordinary meeting of the Presidents, who are exerting efforts in order to normalize relations among three countries, the situation on the ground is very different.” Relota notes that Kostunica should apologize for the war in BiH. “Kostunica is perceived as a nationalist and he has never denied his nationalistic ambitions and the project of Greater Serbia.”

Helsinki Committees for Human Rights in BiH and Croatia welcome the meeting of the three presidents in Sarajevo. “This is an important step in stabilization of the situation in the region,” note the organizations, warning the participants that their symbolic statements will affect the future contacts between the three countries. (**Dnevni Avaz, Oslobođenje** p. 4)

All Sarajevo news papers report on their front pages that, ahead of the Summit, security in and around the city has been tightened with the SFOR setting road blocks and doing random checks of vehicles on all entrances to Sarajevo.

Vecernji List (front and page 3) reports that the Federation Ministry of Interior warned that a group of Islamic extremists from Travnik purchased four anti-aircraft missiles somewhere in the RS and that the possible targets of their attacks are the aircraft’s carrying presidents **Stjepan Mesic** and **Vojislav Kostunica**, but also Javier Solana who should come to Sarajevo soon. The daily says that SFOR troops are controlling roads to Travnik and Novi Travnik, and mostly checking drivers with long beards and women covered in traditional Islamic way. **Vjesnik** (p 3), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p 3, with title “Mini Dayton”) and **Jutarnji List** (page 2) also report on meeting of BiH Presidency with Mesic and Kostunica.

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (front page), a vice president of the SDP, **Sejfudin Tokic**, said that, at the party presidency session which is scheduled for today, he will ask for reopening of discussion about removals of the Federation Defense Minister, **Mijo Anic**, his deputy, **Ferid Buljubasic**, and a deputy Minister in the Council of Ministers, **Jadranko Prlic** because of their alleged involvement in several dubious activities.

Vecernji List (page 2) reports that the new Law on changes and amendments to the Law on special taxation of oil derivatives should drastically improve the financial situation of the Federation budget. According to the daily, the experts in the matter believe that the new law will amass some 200 million KMs, the amount which was being lost every year when the law was not harmonized in the whole BiH. Vecernji List says that it will be the customers who will pay the excise taxes thus putting an end to the former manipulations which were done by some distributors in the business.

Vecernji List (front and page 41) reports that the Federation Minister of Trade, **Andrija Jurkovic**, and his brother **Ilija** have been suspected of violating the law by trying to put on the market, through their company "Trgopromet Jurkovic", cigarettes and alcoholic drinks using the false stamps. Namely, continues VL, inspectors of the Federation Tax Administration, the regional branch of Mostar, conducted an investigation in the company of Minister Jurkovic and ascertained that goods which had forged stamps were sold there (in the company). VL notes that the minister is a second person from political circles in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton within ten days who is being mentioned in the context of cigarette and alcohol smuggling. *Namely, some ten days ago, a report of the Italian police labeled a former Mayor of Mostar Safet Orucevic as a suspect of main organizer of production and smuggling of cigarettes.*

Activities of the High Representative

High Representative to BiH, **Paddy Ashdown**, will address the BiH Parliamentary Assembly on Tuesday 16th July, and also plans to hold a speech before the RS National Assembly on 26th July and the Federation Parliament on 30th July. During the addresses, Ashdown will urge the entity and state parliaments to adopt the necessary legislation. "It is planned that the High Representative speaks for 15 minutes and then give deputies a chance to ask questions and propose amendments to the proposed laws. This will particularly refer to the Law on the creation of a special state court which would deal with issues of organized crime and corruption," the OHR Chief Spokesperson, **Julian Braithwaite**, told **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2)

Oslobodjenje (p. 7) carries today excerpts of the **Vecernji List** article claiming that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, is considering removing the heads of municipalities in Stolac, Capljina and Srebrenica. However, the OHR Chief Spokesperson, **Julian Braithwaite**, told the daily that Ashdown is not planning to remove the three mayors, but noted that their activities and work are being closely followed. *"Speculations about the three removals are not true. It is certain, however, that OHR departments follow the behavior and work of municipal heads and the return rates in their respective municipalities,"* said Braithwaite.

Ivan Lovrenovic in **Feral Tribune (pages 30-32)** writes about forthcoming elections in BiH. After quoted results of UNDP's *Early Warning System* project's results about 30% of Croats, 40% of Bosniaks and 50% of Serbs who stated that they do not wish to vote, the author says that after *"debacle of 'Alliance' there are many signals that indicate return of single-ethnic mood."* Lovrenovic also condemns **Paddy Ashdown's** statement that crime and corruption are more dangerous than nationalism. *"If you would like to imagine picture of future Bosnia and Herzegovina, think only about triumvirate **Silajdzic – Sarovic – Covic** at a leading position in the state. That is a picture of moving backwards, to condition of **Izetbegovic – Krajisnik – Jelavic**, or even further back, **Izetbegovic – Karadzic – Boban**. Perverse? Yes. And almost sure. For now, the*

most intriguing question is – what, in such possible/likely scenario, is the role of Paddy Ashdown and international Community?”, Lovrenovic wrote at the end of the article.

ICTY-related issues

Dnevni List (pages 4-5) carries statements of majority leaders of Croat parties who are all unanimously condemning the announcement that the ICTY will not accuse **Slobodan Milosevic** for genocide over Croats in BiH. *“Tragedy of Croats this time is not only that they are victims of relations of Serbs and Croats, but their own representatives who betrayed interests of their people. Most of them are blackmailed and that is the reason why don’t they protect interests of their people and don’t have responsibility towards them. The question of charging Milosevic with genocide over Croats must be raised by Croat representatives”,* **Stjepan Kljuic**, Republican Leader stated. **Ilija Simic** (HSS), **Petar Milic** (Croat Christian Democrats), **Zeljko Koroman** (Croat Rightists Block), **Zivko Budimir**, (HKDU), **Zarko Pavlovic** (HSP) and **Barisa Colak** (HDZ) agreed that the genocide over Croats in BiH was committed.

Srebrenica commemoration

Feral Tribune (pages 33-35) carries an editorial written by the former High Representative for BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, in which he talks about “the ethnic cleansing”, seven years after the tragedy of Srebrenica. Petritsch cites a Bosnian lawyer Drazen Petrovic who puts the ethnic cleansing on the same level with Stalin-like methods and national-socialism. *“This term kept its fatal meaning during the war in BiH,”* says Petritsch and notes that the ethnic cleansing is a bureaucratic term that suggests planning and execution and that its mechanisms show endless means of controlling the people, discrimination against the people, one-sided police measures that lead all the way to organized physical destruction which includes denying of one’s honor. Petritsch argues that the war in BiH was the first war in the European history of the 20th century which had more civilian than military casualties saying that the weakness of European policy coincided with the lack of UN system. *“The idea of neutral peace keeping was destined to fail. Where there is not*

a peace, one cannot keep the peace. Conceptual confusion, probably enhanced by certain historic prejudices, finally led to the Srebrenica tragedy in July of 1995", says Petritsch.