OHR BiH Media Round-up, 17/12/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	**BH TV 1** (19,00 hrs)	**FED TV** (19,30 hrs)	**RT RS** (19,30)
Blaskic's appeal	Intelligence Law	Intelligence Law	Traffic accident in Petrovo
Protests at Doljani, Orasje	Farmers against free trade	Testimony of Clarke	RSNA session
Threats to Covic	Bank robbery in Mostar	Demobilisation in FBiH	
	US troops fire on civilians	Farmers' protests	

Oslobodjenje	Payment of a half of a backlog pension only in March
Dnevni Avaz	Our accession to EU is blocked by Oja and not by SDA
Dnevni List	What did Peace implementation council object to Ashdown; Mostar: Robbers stole 38.000 KMs; Blockades of all border crossings tomorrow
Vecernji List	Politicians are easy targets to assassins; Mostar: Robbers take away 38.000 marks; Defence seeks acquittal of Tihomir Blaskic
Slobodna Dalmacija	Mostar: 38.000 marks stolen from Zagrebacka bank; Ranko Bakic, leader of BiH farmers: We are organizing new peasants' rebellion
Glas Srpske	Sarajevo: Croats do it their way

Nezavisne Novine	Protest in Potocari: Police prevented the entrance to former workers of Battery Factory; Republika Srpska National Assembly special session: Report on budget realisation for first none months adopted; Adnan Terzic: Talks on establishment of intelligence agency failed; BiH Presidency: Confirmation on existing threats against Dragan Covic
Blic	Who is desecrating graves on Ozren: 137 bodies disappeared; 'Cajavec' employees banned the Director from entering the firm; Crime: They had damaged the RS budget by 5,26 million KM through tax evasion

Intelligence law, security

High Representative sets new deadline for agreement on BiH intelligence law	BHTV, FTV, ONASA – On BiH CoM Chairman Adnan Terzic's request on Monday night, and based on his firm belief that the Council of Ministers would act, the High Representative Paddy Ashdown has given the Council until the end of Tuesday to agree to forward the draft law on the Intelligence and Security Agency to the parliament at the Council's session on Friday, the OHR said in a statement. The High Representative firmly believes that if there is a chance that the Council will discharge its responsibility and push the reform agenda forward in a timely manner, then this opportunity should be given. The statement added that Ashdown awaits confirmation from the prime minister and his two deputies that the draft law on the Intelligence and Security Agency will be agreed upon at the Council's session on Friday, and that it will be forwarded to the parliament at that time. "This would be the best indication that the Council is ready to ensure that BiH can take its place in the fight against international terrorism and crime," read the statement. BHTV – OHR Spokesman Oleg Milisic: "If we don't receive positive information this evening then High Representative should unfortunately consider another options." Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'Law on intelligence by Friday?', Vecernji List p 2, "State Government will adopt key reform Law on Friday nevertheless?", by D. Jazvic, Dnevni List p 3, "Colak: Draft Law on Intelligence Service certain", by Miso Relota, Nezavisne Novine cover and pg. 3 'Talks on establishment of intelligence agency failed' also covered the issue. Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'Law on Intelligence-Security Agency (OSA) today in the state parliament' – If the BiH CoM does not agree on the draft law on intelligence, the OHR will send the document directly to the parliament for further consideration and adoption on Wednesday, learns the newspaper. The OHR expects the draft to be finally passed by the end of the week.

Ivanic says not authorized to discuss security agency bill	FTV, SRNA – BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic told SRNA on Tuesday that the endorsement of the bill on intelligence and security agency at the level of BiH was not a question of his personal view, but of the responsibility of the entities towards the law. "Without the consent of the entities – given that the services are still at entity level – I do not have a mandate to negotiate or be the one to coordinate the bill," Ivanic said, commenting on the decision by High Representative Paddy Ashdown, who has given the Council of Ministers until tonight to reach agreement on the bill.
Colak: Agreement on intelligence possible by the end of the day (on Tuesday)	FTV, RTRS, Dnevni List p 3, "Colak: Draft Law on Intelligence Service certain", FENA – BiH Council of Ministers Deputy Chair and Security Minister Barisa Colak confirmed on Tuesday that together with BiH Council of Ministers Chair Adnan Terzic and Foreign Affairs Minister Mladen Ivanic he intensified talks this morning on reaching an agreement on forwarding the Draft Law on the Intelligence-Security Service to parliamentary procedure. "We expect to receive additional explanations from Ivanic by the end of the day (Tuesday) so that we can agree the law. We could have an agreed text of the law by the end of the day. I think that we a close to a solution and that we should forward the law to parliamentary procedure not later than Friday", Colak told journalists in Sarajevo. He said that the issue of parliamentary control over the new service has been overcome and that there were certain disputes and different proposals on where the centres of the future service should be, as well as on the issue of starting employment in the new service.

NN editorial on intelligence	Nezavisne Novine editorial by Mirza Cubro, pg. 7, 'Control over intelligence agents' – The author writes about the failure of BiH COM to adopt the draft law on intelligence and security agency, According to the author, the ruling quintuplet in BiH cannot agree on a single law without an extreme pressure of the international community. He claims that the positions taken by each of them are completely difference, owing to which reason the Chairperson of BiH Council of Ministers, Adnan Terzic, has called on the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, for the third time to impose this law. The author stresses that it is indeed an astounding fact that the most responsible officials of this state cannot agree on whether citizens of BiH should live in a safe environment or not. It seems like, according to the author, the officials of SDA, SDS, HDZ, Party for BiH and PDP are fighting as greater influence over intelligence agents as possible.
Vikic appointed new Commander of FBiH MoI's Special Unit	Dnevni List (p 2, "Dragan Vikic new Commander of FBiH MoI's Special Unit", by N. D.) reports that the Director of FBiH Ministry of Interior's (MoI) Administration has appointed Dragan Vikic to the position of the FBiH MoI's Special Unit Commander. Vikic has so far performed the duty of the Minister's police advisor and he has had the consent by the EUPM for the new appointment. Sarajevo media also reported on the appointment.

Threats to Covic	Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 2, 'Confirmation on existing threats against Dragan Covic' – Zeljana Zovko, the Head of Cabinet of Chairperson of BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, yesterday confirmed that the Chairperson received some threats on possible assault during Christmas and New Years' holidays. According to Vecernji List, the threats come from radical Islamic circles in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Zovko was not able to provide more details to the press. Vecernji List (front and page 5 "Politicians are easy targets to assassins", by Zdenko Jurilj) – amid reports that the Chairman of BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, has received threats from Islamic radicals, today's VL carries a piece on security arrangements of officials in BiH, arguing that potential assassins could easily liquidate any member of BiH Presidency, entity Presidents or Prime Ministers with very little preparations. In this context, VL says that in the situation in which the intelligence apparatus in BiH is disoriented, SIPA not formed, Covic, Paravac and Tihic would be an easy pray. VL goes on to say that the security arrangements within the Republika Srpska authorities are better than in the Federation of BiH, following the assassination of Zoran Djindjic, adding that the security arrangements of international officials are much better. VL notes that the High Representative for BiH and his deputies have large security and that the HR's house, which he recently bought near Konjic, is permanently under Police watch although the HR usually comes during weekends.

Economic/social issues

Protests in Doljani, Orasje continue	Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'Blockade of border crossing continues', Dnevni Avaz pg. 8 'Blockade of four border crossings on Thursday' – Former members of HVO that have lost their retirement blocked on Tuesday the border crossing in Doljani for five hours. Former HVO members emphasized that if the Federation Government does not solve the issue of 750 HVO pensioners they will continue with peaceful process and blockades of border crossings. Pero Blazevic, President of the headquarters for protection of the rights of HVO pensioners stated that if the Federation authorities does not responds positively to their request that the HVO retired members will continue the blockade on Wednesday of the border crossing starting at 1000 hours to 1600 hours. Dnevni List (front & p 3, "Blockade of all border crossings tomorrow", not signed), Vecernji List (p 4, "We are ready to be on streets on Christmas eve", by ZOG & "Posavina tobacco growers do not believe promises any more", by Nada Koturic) and Slobodna Dalmacija (p 17, "Citizens gave us food, authorities avoided us", by Darko Juka) carry that retired HVO members, who were protesting at Doljani for the last 2 days, announce that blockade of Doljani, Vinjani, Kamensko and Orasje border crossings will be organized throughout the day tomorrow. Croat Radio Herceg Bosna – Tobacco producers continued with the blockades of border crossing in Orasje from 11 to 13 hours on Tuesday. They are still requesting the payment of the premiums from 2002, and will not leave the border until that money is in the bank. On Wednesday will probably block the border for the whole day starting at 1100 hours. Dnevni List (p 11, "Payment of premium by Christmas", by Fena) also reports that tobacco producers will keep on blocking the Orasje crossing, while Radio Odzak yesterday aired that FBiH Minister of Agriculture and Forestry, Marinko Bozic, promised premium payment by Christmas.

BiH farmers announcing mass protests on December 28	BHTV, Oslobodjenje pg. 7 ’Blockade of all border crossings’ – Farmers demand temporary suspension of free trade agreements with neighbouring countries. Association of farmers in BiH announced blockade of border crossings on December 28 if BiH authorities do not respond to their requests. Some 200 thousands farmers are ready to protest. Head of the association Ranko Bakic: “We call on authorities to talk to us…we don’t trust any promises from politicians because there were too many hollow promises.” Main problem is fact BiH producers can not export due to lack of technology and institutions. Assistant BiH Foreign Trade Minister Seadeta Ceric has another view: “One of few success of our export promotion are free trade agreements since export to these countries increased…Entity governments should deal with agriculture not to send, like Mikerevic, farmers to Sarajevo. Only 35% of agriculture export comes from these countries.” Dnevni Avaz on pg. 5 ‘We do not trust anyone’s promises any more’ carries an interview with Bakic in which he presented the association’s views.

RS National Assembly discusses privatisation failures, budget	BHTV, RTRS – RS National Assembly on Tuesday started heated debate over privatisation process in RS. Opposition criticized concept of privatisation and numerous deficiencies and manipulations. Privatisation has neither increased production nor created new jobs. RS Prime minister Mikerevic: “We proposed another model i.e. restructuring of the companies before privatisation, but we could not finance it. So we decided to offer them through stock exchanges.” SNSD leader Dodik proposed: “Whole process should be interrupted and we need to make another workable model”. Nezavisne Novine cover and pg. 5 ‘Report on budget realisation for first none months adopted’; Glas Srpske pg. 2 ‘Guilt falls on somebody else’, Vecernje Novosti p 21 ‘Privatization full of rebuttals’, Blic p 13 ‘Inadmissibly bad’ also reported on the session. According to the RS dailies, at yesterday’s special session in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska MP’s also adopted the Report on realisation of the budget in the first nine months of this year. Branko Krsmanovic, Republika Srpska Finance Minister, in his address to MP’s, said that the budget has been realised 97% in the first nine months of this year.
Oslobodjenje: Payment of a half of a backlog pension in FBiH only in March	Oslobodjenje front page, pg. 3 ‘Payment of a half of a backlog pension only in March’ – The pensioners in the Federation of BiH might receive a promised half of a backlog pension only in March next year, learns the newspaper.

Aluminij issue	Reminding that it is expected that the FBiH Government at its sessions today and tomorrow makes decision on electric power special consumers, including “Aluminij” and “BiH Steel”, Vecernji List (front page “Status of special consumer to Aluminij” & p 5 “Aluminij Mostar becomes special consumer”, by zk) carries that Aluminij CEO Mijo Brajkovic yesterday sent a letter to FBiH Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic warning him that tentative suspension of production in Aluminij would make everyone a loser. Dnevni List (front & p 5, “Suspension of production in Aluminij will cause new political tensions”, by Ivica Glibusic) and Slobodna Dalmacija (back page, “Keep away from Aluminij”, by Zoran Zekic) add that, in his open letter to Hadzipasic, Brajkovic says that long-term preparations are needed for closing down of a factory like Aluminij and that re-starting of production following suspension is very costly. Brajkovic also warns of other consequences the closing down, including political tensions. DL and SD remind that Aluminij’s subcontractors have also expressed their concern with the situation development.

Protest at Srebrenica/Potocari Battery Factory	Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'Police prevented the entrance to former workers of Battery Factor' – Around 08:00 hrs yesterday morning, the Republika Srpska police prevented around 25 former workers of the Battery Factory Potocori near Srebrenica to enter the facility. The President of the Syndicate of Battery Factory, Dragomir Vasic, stated that the workers decided to go on protest because Republika Srpska Government still avoids fulfilling its duties, after the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown, decided to turn one part of the factory as part of Memorial Centre Potocari. The workers complain because Government has failed to pay out the promised amount of BAM 10 thousand to each of them as a compensation for forcible termination of employment at Factory. The workers announced that unless Government official addressed to them by today, they would forcibly enter the facility and stay inside until their demands are met. Sarajevo media, Vecernje Novosti p 21 'Cordon stopped employees' also covered the issue.

Interview with RS Elektroprivreda Director Pantelija Dakic	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 8, 'Incomes of Republika Srpska Elektroprivreda increased, losses decreased' – NN carry a page-long interview with Pantelija Dakic, General Manager of Republika Srpska Elektroprivreda, who said that the power production on the first ten months of this year has significantly increased if compared with the same period last year. And this, according to him, has resulted in increased income. He also stressed that the payment of electricity bills has improved. He also added that the tender is to be announced shortly, regarding the sale of electricity surplus in the first four months of next year. On second OHR audit at Republika Srpska Elektroprivreda, Dakic expressed expectation that this report is to be finalised soon. According to him, Elektroprivreda has achieved good results, from the point of production, reduction of production expenses and management.
Spiric advocates for establishment of a single power market in BiH	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 9, 'BiH needs a single market in electricity' – Nikola Spiric, Chairperson of the BiH House of Representatives, yesterday stated that the establishment of a single market in electricity in BiH would evade all politicisation related to production and export of electricity surplus. He yesterday met with the members of the State Regulatory Commission for Electricity. Spiric promised that State Parliament would do all it can to establish a single market for electricity.

Sulejman Tihic meets Ante Markovic over investment in BiH hydro-electric sector	Vecernji List (page 3 “Markovic as Italian trump-card for cheap electricity”, by Dejan Jazvic) – less pompously than on previous two occasions, the last Prime Minister of socialist Yugoslavia, Ante Markovic, is visiting BiH in an effort to prepare the ground for possible building of hydro power-plants in BiH, which would be financed by Italian investors. Yesterday, Markovic met with the Bosniak member of BiH Presidency, Sulejman Tihic, and according to information released by Tihic’s office, Tihic is supporting the initiative, assessing the intention of Italian investors to include domestic companies and experts in the project as positive. According to VL, Italian investors are very smart to hire Markovic, whose charisma, even ten years after his political retirement, is still intact. (Dnevni List, page 2 “Italians will build hydro power-plants”, unsigned, Slobodna Dalmacija, back page “Markovic at Tihic’s”, by D. Pasic)

Appointments in judiciary, police

SDA's another reaction to appointment of judicial, police officials	Oslobodjenje pg. 4 'Non-serious and insulting/offensive reactions', Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'Instead of giving correct responses they started calling Bosniaks a minority', Dnevni List p 4, "Bosniaks incapable for leading positions", FENA – The BiH Party of Democratic Action (SDA) once again calls on the OHR, the EUPM and the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council to correct the unconstitutional decisions regarding the appointment of judicial and police officials, and requests public responses to these remarks. "Not a single of the nine asked questions has received a valid/appropriate answer, and reactions are unserious, some even offensive. They state that there are no Bosniaks capable of taking the top functions, while deputy and lower posts have been reserved for them. Even in the RS Bosniaks and Croats are regarded as minorities," said the party in a press release. It is our obligation, the release added, to insure obeying the Constitution, the laws and European standards, and in this context we will continue to use all democratic means. SDA is particularly concerned about the fact that the call for respecting the Constitution and laws, and in line with this the request for equal position of the Bosniak people, is interpreted as an attempt of establishing political control over these institutions. Dnevni Avaz front page, pg. 4 'Our accession to EU is blocked by Oja and not by SDA' – Vice-president of SDA Seada Palavric told the newspaper that it was absolutely clear that some key provisions in the law on HJPC were not in compliance with the article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

Political developments	
Adoption of 44 laws condition for start of negotiations with EU	Oslobodjenje pg. 7 'Adoption of 44 laws condition for negotiations with EU', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 – In order to start negotiations on acceding the EU, BiH should in the next six months adopt 44-45 new laws and start their implementation/application. "Following a positive response it had received from European Commission, BiH has entered in a new more quality phase of its relations with EU," said Osman Topcagic, the Director of the BiH Directorate for European Integration, on Tuesday while presenting activities of the body at a session of the BiH Parliament's Commission for Foreign Affairs.

Mostar restructuring	Dnevni Avaz pg. 8 'Imposition of solutions for Mostar dangerous' – The Party for BiH considers dangerous any imposition of resolutions for Mostar by the international community without prior bringing of the SDA and HDZ positions closer, according to Safet Omerovic, who represented the party in the Mostar Commission. Dnevni List (page 18 "Council of Europe asked for help", by De. L.), Oslobodjenje pg. 7 'Protection of referendum results before the court in Strasbourg' – spokesperson of the Mostar's Municipality North, Miralem Gluhovic, says that pursuant to conclusions of the Municipal Council of the City Municipality Mostar-North, which are based on results of the referendum in the Municipality North, a procedure of protection of interests of citizens through arbitration and help from the Council of Europe has been requested. Gluhovic adds that in the same time a procedure of protection and arbitration is being launched with the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe and Steering Board for local and regional democracy of CoE. "Should there be a decision that goes against the will of citizens of Municipality Mostar-North, a procedure of protection of human rights will be initiated with the European Human Rights Court at Strasbourg. The procedure on protection has already been initiated with the Constitutional Commission of Federation of BiH and Federation of BiH Parliament's Board for Local Self-Government. All this is in function of protection of result of referendum conducted in the Municipality North and to protect the human rights of the citizens who voiced their opinions on future organization of city of Mostar", says Municipality North. Dnevni List (page 2, "One municipality and one constituency", by Miso Relota) – claiming it is certain that Mostar will be organized as one unit of local self-government, the author argues that in that case Mostar must be one constituency too. To back his claim up, the author says the Law on local self-government does not foresee existence of several constituencies at the level of local self-government. The author goes on to say that whatever the protection mechanisms of vital national interests in Mostar be decided upon, it is necessary to include them in the Constitution of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and BiH Election Law and apply them in all units of local self-government that have a similar national composition as Mostar. Finally, the author notes that the ultimate decision and big responsibility rest with the High Representative, "who will take a just and only logical decision that Mostar becomes one unit of local self-government, it is only questionable how many constituencies we are talking about".

DL: "What did Peace implementation council object to Ashdown	Dnevni List (front and page 9, "What did Peace implementation council object to Ashdown", by Zvonimir Jukic) – saying that the public in BiH was only informed about the positive assessments of the High Representative's work in BiH from the Peace Implementation Council's last session in Brussels, the author claims to have learned from a "senior diplomat of a western country in BiH" that the HR Paddy Ashdown also faced criticism which should be directions for his future work. According to DL, the PIC was not happy with several issues such as the issue of Mostar because the PIC criticized HR Ashdown over failures of two Mostar Commissions to find a solution on unification of the city; economic reforms were labeled as a facelift, not thorough enough; PIC deemed the HR's policy towards the opposition as unacceptable because the HR is, according to DL, is not co-operating enough with the opposition etc. DL also reports that HR Ashdown had requested the PIC to extend his mandate for two more years and that there were polemics whether to extend his mandate at all, but compromise was reached to extend the mandate for one more year and in the same time the HR was given clear instructions what sort of policy he was to run in the times to come.
Initiative for a new Croat Canton establishment/OHR reaction	Glas Srpske, cover page story, 'Croats do it their way' – BiH media/Tanjug on Tuesday reported that the United Croat Party of Rights has launched an initiative for convening referendum regarding integration of West Herzegovina Canton and a part of Neretva Herzegovina Canton with Croat majority into one Canton, whose seat would be in Mostar. The initiative was launched following a failed completion of work of the Commission for the City of Mostar. The political circles in this area interpret this initiative as a re-occurrence of idea on establishment of a third Croat entity. Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5, 'Referendum of Croats counter-productive' – The OHR Spokesperson, Mario Brkic, yesterday stated that "he initiative of the United Croat Party of Rights (on referendum) is counter-productive attempt of finding a solution, which should be in the interest of all the citizens of Mostar. Neither, this initiative or referendum of Bosniaks in Municipality of North would have any impact upon the position taken by the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown."
Srebrenica Commission established	Nezavisne Novine, pg. 3, 'Srebrenica Commission established'; Glas Srpske, pg. 2, 'Srebrenica Commission established', Blic p 13 'Commission for Srebrenica', Vecernji List page 4 "RS Government establishes Commission on Srebrenica research" – On Monday, the Republika Srpska Government passed decision on establishment of the Commission, which is to investigate developments that took place in Srebrenica from 10 to 19 July 1995. The Commission is founded as a interim body, which has the authority of conducting all investigative procedure. The members of the Commission will be appointed later on.