

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 18/12/2003

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	BH TV 1 (19,00 hrs)	FED TV (19,30 hrs)	RT RS (19,30)
Protest in Orasje ends	Law on intelligence service	HR – Law on intelligence	Intelligence Law
HVO members protest	Blockade by HVO soldiers	Mostar issue	SCMM meeting in BL
FBiH Govt. session delayed	Tobacco production	End of blockade in Orasje	Bond – Mikerevic meeting
Blaskic case	Pensions RS – FBiH	Sell of electricity to Debis	Srebrenica protests

Oslobodjenje	European politicians request for new Dayton
Dnevni Avaz	Safet Halilovic: We are in a colonial position
Dnevni List	Prime Minister Hadzipasic about to decide to dissolve Government?; Presidency saves Aluminij; Arrival of statesmen to opening of Old Bridge questionable
Vecernji List	Clifford Bond: BiH under terrorists' threat; Ashdown takes decision on Mostar; Tihomir Blaskic: I did not order a single crime
Slobodna Dalmacija	Central Bosnia: Snow cuts off settlements; Vinjani and Kamensko blocked as of today
Glas Srpske	New drama in front of Battery Factory: Cordon stronger than workers

Nezavisne Novine	Sarajevo: OHR forwarded draft law on intelligence for parliament procedure; Clifford Bond in Banjaluka: Republika Srpska fails to meet its duties towards The Hague Tribunal; Meeting of PIO Funds: No agreement reached on payment of pensions; Joint standards for both entity armies agreed: Same training for all soldiers in BiH; A distinguished group of delegates to European Parliament: Revision of Dayton demanded
Blic	Ashdown imposed BiH Intelligence Law; Firms at auctions: Racketeers bought everything

Intelligence, security affairs

<p>HR sends draft intelligence law to BiH Parliament</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, RTRS, Dnevni Avaz pg. 2 'BiH Parliament should adopt the law on intelligence-security agency by March 1', Oslobođenje pgs. 4-5, mentioned on the front page 'OHR does not wait for CoM any more', Slobodna Dalmacija p 7, "BiH people does not need politicized Intelligence Services", by <u>Emil Karamatic</u>, Dnevni List p 3, "Council of Ministers not interested in citizens' security", by <u>M. R.</u>, Vecernji List p 3, "Ashdown sent 'intelligence officers' into procedure", by <u>DJA</u>, Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'OHR forwarded draft law on intelligence for parliament procedure', Blic p 13 'Verification by March 1', FENA – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, in accordance with Article 66 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council of Ministers, on Wednesday sent a draft Law on the Intelligence Service of Bosnia and Herzegovina to both BiH Houses of Parliament for consideration and adoption by 1 March 2004. On Tuesday evening, BiH Prime Minister Adnan Terzic, and his Deputies, Barisa Colak and Mladen Ivanic, were unable to reach consensus on adopting the law. "This is a regrettable failure of Government to ensure the safety and security of all its citizens – its most basic task," the High Representative said on Wednesday. "I have therefore sent this draft legislation to BiH's Parliament to allow BiH's Parliamentarians to consider it."</p> <p>BHTV – High Representative Paddy Ashdown submitted draft Law on intelligence service to BiH Parliament, after Council of Ministers failed to agree on the issue. After three months chairman Terzic and his deputies Colak and Ivanic could not agree on the draft Law, which is one of key for EU conditions. OHR spokesman Oleg Milisic: "It is pity there has been no agreement on this law, which is so important for security of BiH citizens." Main reason for failure was position of RS representatives who did not want to discuss it. Chairman Terzic: "There were no substantial objections on the text, but RS representatives considered there was not constitutional basis for its adoption without discussing at entity level. I don't share that view". This may send a bad signal to EU on readiness to make reforms. Security minister Colak commented: "It is very likely to have negative implications in EU institutions, but it is important the law will be passed in either way within given deadline." Deadline for fully functional security agency is March 1.</p> <p>FTV – Senior Deputy HR Werner Wnendt made an exclusive statement for FTV on the HR decision to send the draft intelligence law to BiH Parliament: "BiH can not afford anymore to have intelligence service without parliamentary control...there will be professional, depoliticised agency under parliamentary control."</p> <p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'OHR forwarded draft law on intelligence for parliament procedure – According to NN inset, Nikola Spiric, Chairperson of the BiH House of Representatives, assessed that by having done this, HiRep saved the BiH CoM instead of penalising it over its failure to reach consensus.</p>
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<p>Terzic says intelligence service bill can be adopted without entities</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, Dnevni List, Slobodna Dalmacija p 15, "No need for entity consent", by <u>D. Pasic</u>, Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'OHR forwarded draft law on intelligence for parliament procedure , SRNA – Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Adnan Terzic says that according to the BiH Constitution it is possible to adopt the law on the intelligence and security service at BiH state level without prior consent from the entities, reads a statement issued by the Council of Ministers on Wednesday. The statement says that the Council of Ministers has not succeeded in agreeing to a joint stance on the process of adopting the law on the intelligence and security service, because some members of the Council of Ministers felt that this area falls within the constitutional authority of the entities and not BiH. According to Terzic, the constitutional authority of the state over the intelligence and security service is contained in Article 3 of the BiH Constitution, which stipulates that "BiH will take over the jurisdiction of other functions which the entities agree on, or which are necessary for the preservation of the integrity, the political independence and international sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina".</p> <p>The statement issued by the Council of Ministers adds that High Representative Paddy Ashdown related the same stance, that the law on the intelligence and security service can be adopted by the Bosnia-Herzegovina institutions without prior consent from the entities, in his letter forwarded to Terzic on December 2.</p>
<p>US' Bond: BiH must have a single intelligence service</p>	<p>BHTV, FTV, RTRS – US Ambassador to BiH Clifford Bond said in Banja Luka on Wednesday that BiH had to make concrete steps in reforming the intelligence system. "BiH deserves a single, integrated intelligence service that will fight terrorism and organised crime", said the American Ambassador following his meeting with RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic. The terrorist threat, he added, exists everywhere, and not only in BiH, and hence it is necessary to insure the functioning of certain institutions, such as the state intelligence agency. "The terrorist threat in BiH has partially come due to foreign elements that entered BiH during the war", he said, adding it is necessary to build the institutions for battling terrorism.</p> <p>Vecernji List front "Clifford Bond: BiH under terrorists' threat" and page 3 "Bosnia and Herzegovina threatened by terrorism", by <u>Branka Stevandic</u>, Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'Republika Srpska fails to meet its duties towards The Hague Tribunal'; Glas Srpske, pg. 2, 'By summer in PFP', Dnevni Avaz pg. 3, mentioned on the front page 'US to assist BiH in fights against terrorism', Blic p 13 'Terrorism threatens' also covered the issue.</p>

Political developments

<p>Ashdown to make final decision on Mostar in January 2004</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, BHTV, FTV, Nezavisne Novine, pg. 4, 'Mostar must get one administration by the end of January', Dnevni Avaz pg. 8 'Mostar to be a single town with six electoral units' – The current organization of Mostar, which is divided on the ethnic basis, is unacceptable and this must be changed if BiH wants to continue the process of drawing closer to the European Union (EU), the Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt, said in Sarajevo on Wednesday. The German diplomat told a news conference that High Representative Paddy Ashdown would make a final decision on the future organization of this southern city in January, after the commission in charge of Mostar's new organization failed to reach consensus on the matter. Officials for the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) insist that Mostar should continue to function as a city with six municipalities, namely three under the control of Croats and another three under the Muslims control. They have said any other solution will lead to the dominance of Croats, as they make up a majority of the city's population. The Office of the High Representative, however, strongly opposes the further division of the city into the Croat-dominated West Mostar and the Muslim-dominated East Mostar. International diplomats say the current administration is overstaffed, expensive and inefficient. "What is only completely unacceptable is status quo," Wnendt said.</p> <p>According to FTV, Mostar will be organized as a single town with a single administration and six electoral units.</p> <p>Vecernji List front "Ashdown takes decision on Mostar" and page 2 "Ashdown publishes decision on organization of Mostar in January, by <u>eme</u>) – also carries the Senior Deputy High Representative, Werner Wnendt, as saying that the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, will take a final decision on future organization of Mostar in January since the Mostar Commission could not reach a consensus on few key issues.</p> <p>Dnevni List (front and page 5, "Arrival of statesmen to opening of Old Bridge questionable", by <u>De. L.</u>) – apart from covering the SDHR Wnendt's press conference on Mostar, Dnevni List claims it has learned from a reliable source in the OHR that the big investment conference in Mostar, scheduled for February next year, is under the question mark if the HDZ and SDA keep postponing a final decision on Mostar. On top of that, says Dnevni List, the SDA and HDZ will bear responsibility for a high probability that many world leaders do not show up at the opening ceremony of the Mostar's Old Bridge scheduled for July 2004.</p> <p>Slobodna Dalmacija (back page "Mostar a test for future of BiH", by <u>Emil Karamatic</u>), Oslobodjenje pg. 3 'Interim Statute must be changed' carry the response of the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, to the report that the Chairman of Mostar Commission, Norbert Winterstein, had submitted to him.</p> <p>The response reads: "The solution you have found, with all its guarantees, safeguards and carefully negotiated power-sharing provisions, gives everyone in Mostar an opportunity to gain, while protecting everyone's vital interests. It is now up to all parties to seize that opportunity – to put aside 'impossibilist' negotiating positions, and to engage seriously in the process of implementing this, the best chance we have had, or will have, to bring lasting peace, security and prosperity to the people of Mostar. The wider future of BiH, and its ambition one day to become a full member of the European Union, depend on the resolution of this long-standing and damaging problem"</p> <p>Dnevni List (front & p 11, "Mostar – 2nd worst city in Europe", <u>not signed</u>) carries parts of the interview which Richard Holbrooke gave to Voice of America and which deals with the Balkans, Kosovo and BiH. "We could talk for hours about what is wrong in Bosnia. Mostar is the 2nd worst city in Europe after Mitrovica. Yet, looking at it from the American point of view – vis-à-vis the drama going on in Iraq, it's fine", Holbrooke is quoted as saying.</p>
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<p>European politicians request change of Dayton Agreement</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje front page, pg. 6 'European politicians request for new Dayton', Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'Revision of Dayton demanded', Dnevni Avaz pg. 4 'Dayton's double meaning must be overcome', FENA – On the occasion of the 8th anniversary of signing of Dayton Agreement, a group of 24 distinguished European political officials issued a joint declaration entitled “ To Ensure Peace in BiH by Further Annexing of the Dayton Agreement. The Declaration was made public on 16 December, at the same time in 3 European cities. In Brussels it was made public by the president of the delegation of European Parliament for South-East Europe, Doris Pack; in Warsaw by the former Polish premier and the UN Human Rights Delegate in BiH , Tadeusz Mazowiecky; and in Berlin by the member of the German Parliament being in charge of BiH. “It has been almost ten years since the Treaty of Dayton put an end to the shooting war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since then, the reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina has made good progress. However, the provisions laid down in the Dayton Treaty have proved to bear dangerous limits. Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is far from being secure although the country is currently shrouded in deceptive calmness. Against this background, it is worrying that the international community of states is losing interest in the development of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The international attention, especially the political world, has long since focussed on other areas. In the western countries, ever more people are asking the question when the international community will finally leave Bosnia and Herzegovina,” said the group of European politicians at the beginning of their declaration.</p> <p>Nezavisne Novine editorial by <u>Josip Blazevic</u>, pg. 7, 'Super structuring' – The author writes this editorial in support of the 24 distinguished European Parliament officials, who signed a joint declaration entitled “ To Ensure Peace in BiH by Further Annexing of the Dayton Agreement”. He thinks that all political forces in BiH should pledge in favour of super structuring of Dayton Peace Agreement, in which order it would start functioning as any other modern European state.</p> <p>He admits that Dayton Agreement had been amended over the past years, noting that these changes had been of mainly “cosmetic nature”.</p>
<p>Ivanic visits Israel, tells Israeli premier Road Map only solution for peace</p>	<p>RTRS, Oslobodjenje pgs. 4-5, mentioned on the front page 'Ivanic accepted dictate of the Israeli ambassador' and 'Ivanic meets with Sharon', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2, SRNA – On the first day of his visit to Israel, BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic held talks with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and said that BiH's position was that both the Israeli and Palestinian people have the right to their own states, where they can live in peace and security. Ivanic said in a statement to SRNA that he had expressed the view to Sharon that the Road Map, defined by the UN, EU, US and Russia, was the only possible solution for a final peace settlement, and that all legitimate Palestinian authorities, including Yasir Arafat, have to take part in its implementation. Discussing talks held on economic cooperation, Ivanic said that Israel was well known for investing in countries undergoing transition, but BiH was very low down on that list with a very low annual exchange amounting to less than 3million KM.</p>
<p>SDA officials criticize Ivanic's visit to Israel</p>	<p>RTRS, Oslobodjenje pg. 5 'Minister in a private visit', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2, FENA – The visit to Israel by Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic should be treated as private because it was arranged without the approval of the BiH Presidency, despite the objections of the Bosniak member of the body, Sulejman Tihic. By accepting the Israeli request that on this occasion he does not meet with Yasir Arafat – the elected president of Palestine – Ivanic caused the visit to Palestine to be postponed, which has seriously disturbed the friendly relations with Islamic states, the statement said.</p> <p>Dnevni Avaz pg. 2, FENA – BiH House of Representatives Deputy Speaker Sefik Dzaferovic supports the position of the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency concerning the visit of BiH Foreign Affairs Minister Mladen Ivanic to Israel stressing that the visit and the circumstances under which it is taking place could seriously undermine friendly relations between BiH and Islamic countries. “This is why I shall request a debate on this issue before the BiH House of Representatives”, Dzaferovic said.</p>

<p>Paravac says nothing controversial about Ivanic's visit to Israel</p>	<p>BHTV, RTRS, Oslobođenje pg. 5 'Regular trip to Israel', Dnevni Avaz pg. 2, FENA – Serb member of the BiH Presidency Borislav Paravac said Wednesday that he sees nothing controversial about BiH Foreign Affairs Minister Mladen Ivanic's visit to Israel. Commenting on BiH Presidency member Sulejman Tihic's statement that Ivanic's trip to Israel should be considered a private visit and that it was not approved by the BiH Presidency Paravac said that the BiH Presidency discussed the visit to Israel on November 27 and that Tihic did not oppose it then even though it was mentioned that Ivanic would not meet Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. "I think that Ivanic is a responsible man and it is his job to execute BiH foreign policy. I cannot see any incident in this", Paravac told journalists in Sarajevo.</p> <p>Vecernji List page 2 "Paravac says: Ivanic is implementing BiH foreign policy well", by <u>Dejan Jazvic</u>, Dnevni List, front and page 2 "Presidency saves Aluminij", Slobodna Dalmacija, back page "Lack of supply of electricity endangers Aluminij", by <u>B. Kristo</u>, <u>D. Pasic</u> also carried Paravac's statement.</p>
<p>DL: "Prime Minister Hadzipasic about to decide to dissolve Government?"</p>	<p>Dnevni List (front and page 3 "Prime Minister Hadzipasic about to decide to dissolve Government?", by <u>Miso Relota</u>) – reports that a session of Government of Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH), which was scheduled for yesterday in Mostar, has been postponed because there was no agreement on the agenda. FBiH Prime Minister, Ahmet Hadzipasic, following a last night's meeting of the Commission for Defence and Security of FBiH Government that was attended by the FBiH Deputy Prime Ministers Dragan Vrankic and Gavriilo Grahovac, FBiH Defence Minister Miroslav Nikolic and FBiH President Niko Lozancic, stated that the scheduled session would not take place and that the session scheduled for Thursday was under question mark too. In that context, the daily reports that PM Hadzipasic sent all the Ministers home. DL also reports that when it comes to the status of 750 retired members of HVO who have been blocking Doljani border crossing for the past few days, PM Hadzipasic says the issue has to be consulted with the commanders-in-chief of FBiH Army. The issue of electricity supply for "Aluminij" Company of Mostar was reportedly not discussed at all.</p>
<p>Poll: citizens in RS support early elections</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 2, 'Over half of electorate in support of extraordinary elections' – Over half of the electorate in five biggest cities of Republika Srpska (Banjaluka, Doboj, Bijeljina, Zvornik and Prijedor) are of the view that extraordinary parliamentary elections should be held along with the local elections next year.</p>

Appointments in judiciary, police

**OHR says SDA
should take
its case to
the
Constitutional
Court**

Oslobodjenje pg. 6 'Let them adders the Constitutional Court', Dnevni Avaz pg. 4, FENA – If the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) believes there is a constitutional issue to be addressed, it should take its case to the relevant Constitutional Court. That is the proper forum through which to decide this issue, the spokesperson of OHR, Oleg Milisic, said responding to SDA accusations on disproportional representation of Bosniaks in judiciary and police bodies. "It is clear that unless the political parties of this country genuinely support the principle of an independent Police and Judiciary and give up trying to influence the functioning of these services, this country will never get into Europe", said Milisic. The details of the appointment process in the police, judiciary and prosecutorial services are a matter for the EUPM and the HJPC who are supervising the introduction of an independent appointment process in line with BiH's Constitutional framework. The HJPC and the EUPM have the OHR's full support, stressed the spokesperson of OHR.

VL's take on SDA claims of Bosniak poor representation	<p>Vecernji List (page 2 "Endangered Bosniaks", by <u>Robert Bubalo</u>) – slams the SDA's claims about poor representation of Bosniaks at State and entity levels (in Police and judiciary), claiming that the daily got information from Jakob Finci (Head of Civil Agency Service) that representation of peoples is not ideal, but still bearable. In that context, the author says there are more problems at lower than at higher levels. Bubalo goes on to criticize the Bosniak politicians for not reacting a year and a half ago when the Croats allegedly did not hold a single important position at the State and entity levels finishing the piece with a thought: "Let's remember who the war started. The Serbs were, allegedly, endangered".</p>
Safet Halilovic: We are in a colonial position	<p>Dnevni Avaz front page pg. 4 'Safet Halilovic: We are in a colonial position' – President of the Party for BiH Safet Halilovic said in a statement for the newspaper that everywhere in the world the legislative authorities were involved in the process of judges and prosecutors appointments.</p>

Defence reform

**BiH military
working
group adopts
draft joint
military
doctrine**

BHTV, RTRS, Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 4, 'Same training for all soldiers in BiH', Blic p 12 'Agreement on training of armed forces', Slobodna Dalmacija page 7 "First step towards Partnership for peace", by M. Labus, Dnevni List, page 4 "Agreement on standards for training of armed forces", by Fena, SRNA – Representatives of the Standing Committee for Military Matters, the Defence Ministries and the armies of the RS and the Federation of BiH on Wednesday reached and agreement on the draft joint military doctrine and training standards for the BiH armed forces, which is one of the conditions for entry into the Partnership for Peace program. The representative from the RS Defence Ministry and Army, Radovan Smitran, said that the draft joint doctrine and training standards will be forwarded to the Standing Committee for Military Matters for adoption, and that it should come into force in the second half of next year.

<p>US' Bond on defence reform in BiH</p>	<p>BHTV, FTV, RTRS, Oslobodjenje pg. 4 'Short term for PfP', Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 3, 'Republika Srpska fails to meet its duties towards The Hague Tribunal'; Glas Srpske, pg. 2, 'By summer in PfP', FENA – The U.S. Ambassador to BiH, Clifford Bond, indicated on Wednesday that it is crucial for the governments in BiH to agree on the matter of appointing the BiH minister of defence and his deputy by mid January next year for the purpose of insuring BiH's admission into the Partnership for Peace. After talks with RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic, Ambassador Bond stressed that in the view of defence reforms it is necessary to respect the deadlines, set until June 2004, when BiH should become a member state of the Partnership for Peace.</p>
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<p>Economic/social issues</p>

<p>Protests by tobacco producers, former HVO members</p>	<p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, FTV – After the Federation Government Decision, which was announced by Djuro Kopic, the President of the Association of Tobacco Producers in Posavina Canton the premium for tobacco in 2002 will be paid on Friday, the three-day blockade of border crossing Orasje has ceased. If the Federation Government decision is not fulfilled the protests will continue on Monday. VL (p 5, “FBiH paid premiums to tobacco producers”, by <u>nk</u>) and Dnevni List (p 10, “FBiH Government paid premiums to tobacco growers”, by <u>A. B.</u>) read that FBiH Government yesterday paid 440,000 KMs to tobacco producers on account of premiums for 2002.</p> <p>Croat Radio Herceg Bosna, FTV, Oslobodjenje pg. 2 ‘Blockade of four border crossings’ – Pero Blazevic, President of the Headquarters for protection of the rights of HVO pensioners send the message is that the HVO protesters will not give up from the fight for survival and gained rights. The Federation Government is responsible for the current situation, as they have already decided in March 2002 that pensioners should receive 70% of the average salary in BIH in the following six months until when their status of the HVO pensioners was supposed to be solved. “They have received 5,5 monthly payments and they have no incomes for month and half, and the Government is not even considering the issue of 750 pensioners. The blockade is on going for three days and no one has addressed the protesters on behalf of Federation Government” , stated Blazevic. The blockade will continue on Thursday in the following border crossing Doljani, Vinjani Donji, Kamensko and Orasje. Vecernji List (p 2, “HVO still on border”, <u>not signed</u>), Slobodna Dalmacija (front & p 15, “Vinjani & Kamensko blocked as of today”, by <u>Darko Juka</u> and back page, “We will persist in demanding our rights”, by <u>Ivanka Dzajic</u>), Dnevni List (front & p 7, “Blockade of all border crossings today from 10-16 hours”, <u>not signed</u>) also covered the issue.</p>
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<p>BiH Presidency discuss electricity supply for Aluminij</p>	<p>BHTV, FTV, Oslobođenje pg. 3 'Production must not stop', Dnevni Avaz pg. 8, Vecernji List page 2 "Paravac says: Ivanic is implementing BiH foreign policy well", by <u>Dejan Jazvic</u>, Dnevni List, front and page 2 "Presidency saves Aluminij", Slobodna Dalmacija, back page "Lack of supply of electricity endangers Aluminij", by <u>B. Kristo, D. Pasic</u> – BiH Presidency considered dispute between BiH elektroprivreda and Aluminium. Since the Presidency signed a protocol with Chrysler Daimler on economic cooperation, they asked for solution of that dispute since it may have consequences for future relations with this investor. Borislav Paravac: "Aluminium Mostar is so important exporter, so there should be an early solution for energy supply, since it may have severe consequence for production." (The statement made after the session of the body)</p>
<p>Protests of former Potocari Battery Factory workers</p>	<p>RTRS, Glas Srpske, cover page story, 'Cordon stronger than workers'; Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5, 'Workers blocked the road Srebrenica-Bratunac with their bodies', Blic p 12 'Incident in Potocari' – After unsuccessful entrance on Tuesday and Wednesday into the Battery factory in Potocari/Srebrenica, the former workers of the factory blocked the road by their bodies. They are persistent in their request to receive 10.000 KM of compensation for violent abolishment of their jobs due to the hand-over of the factory to the Memorial Center in Potocari promised to them by the RS government. Dragomir Vasic president of the Union of the Battery factory stated that the workers are organized and that they wanted to show what would follow by blocking the road in the sign protest.</p>

<p>Mikerevic meets with PDHR Hays</p>	<p>BHTV, Nezavisne Novine, pg. 5, 'Too many non-working days in Republika Srpska', Dnevni List 3, "Number of regional ITA centres remains the same", FENA – Principal Deputy High Representative Donald Hays said in Banja Luka Wednesday during talks with RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic that the number of Indirect Tax Administration regional centres should not exceed the planned number. Mikerevic and Hays discussed the establishment of the Indirect Tax Administration and proposed amendments to the law concerning this sector, the RS Government stated. They also concluded that a decision should be passed on limited export of wood until laws regulating this industry are passed. They also discussed the defining of the status of local self-government and transparency of work, especially at the level of municipalities. Mikerevic informed Hays that the RS Government would soon review the new draft law on self-government that will define the position of municipalities in accordance with European standards. Mikerevic also added that a pilot project of treasury based financial activities in five RS municipalities is being implemented aimed at increasing transparency in using financial assets. Hays said that there are too many non-working days and holidays in the RS, which has negative consequences on the economy and the overall functioning of the society. They agreed that changes to the regulations and laws need to be prepared in order to reduce the number of non-working days in the RS using the example of other European states. RS Deputy Prime Minister and Trade and Tourism Minister Boris Gaspar also took part in the talks.</p>
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<p>No agreement on pension payment between entities</p>	<p>Nezavisne Novine, cover and pg. 8, 'No agreement reached on payment of pensions'; Glas Srpske, pg. 2, 'Again at the starting point', Blic p 13 'Without agreement on pensions' – The representatives of the PIO Funds of Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina yesterday failed again to reach any agreement regarding the payment of pensions at BiH level. Republika Srpska officials demand full respect and implementation of the BiH Human Rights Chamber's decision that payments should be paid out by the entity in which they had been earned.</p> <p>The meeting was attended by following officials: Jovo Kosmajac (Acting Director of PIO Fund), representatives of PIO Fund from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina led by Bakir Mujic (Deputy to Acting Director of PIO Fund), representatives of World Bank and IMF.</p>
<p>Republika Srpska pensioners critical of HiRep</p>	<p>Glas Srpske, pg. 3, 'Ashdown ran out of time' – Republika Srpska Pensioners are not satisfied with the work of the High Representative to BiH, Paddy Ashdown. Accordingly, they have demanded from the Peace Implementation Council top remove him from the position. Rade Rakulj, President of the Republika Srpska Association of Pensioners, yesterday made this announcement following the meeting he had with the SFOR members.</p> <p>According to Rakulj, SFOR was interested as to what extend the work of HiRep has contributed to improvement of living standard of pensioners in Republika Srpska.</p>

<p>Appointments to HT's Steering Board</p>	<p>Dnevni List (page 3 "Brankovic confirms illegality of session", by M. B.) – reports that "following the illegal session of Supervisory Board of HT Mostar (Croat telecommunications Mostar) during which there was an attempt to remove the CEO, Stipe Prlic", the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Communications, Nedžad Brankovic, sent the President of HT Supervisory Board, Vlado Majstorovic, a letter that confirms that the session was indeed illegal.</p> <p>Minister Brankovic notes that the session was illegal because representatives of HT Zagreb and HP Zagreb (shareholders in HT Mostar) did not attend the session and that the relevant laws and Ombudsman's and special auditor David Taylor's recommendations were not observed.</p>
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