OHR BiH Media Round-up, 19/11/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Crime in the Federation free customs zones – Officials ordered evasion of KM 30 million

Dnevni Avaz: SDA, Party for BiH hope that Lagumdzija will remain SDP leader

Dnevni List: Federation Defence Minister Mijo Anic: OHR requested list of removed people

Vecernji List: Conflict between Defence Minister and senior Croat officers: Anic leaves HVO officers to Ashdown

Slobodna Dalmacija: Disaster in economy threatens convertible mark: Euro an official currency in BiH?

Glas Srpski: Repossession of military apartments in BiH Federation: A law for housing robbery; Frankfurt: There is smoke but no witnesses

Nezavisne Novine: "Milkos" employees expect help from Canton Sarajevo Government: Dairy plant in bankruptcy, its officials in court; Kofi Annan's visit to BiH completed: Transfer of authority from UN Mission to European Union insured

Nacional: Seselj's pact with Djindjic; Carla del Ponte brings new sealed indictments to Belgrade

Blic: Bureaucracy is a nuisance to foreign investors; Annan: Weapon affair must not happen again; Mikes: Authority will be divided between PDP, SNSD and Socialists

International community/OHR-related news/commentaries

On the second day of his official visit to BiH the UN Secretary General **Kofi Annan** met with the members of the **BiH Presidency**, **BiH Council of Ministers** and **Prime Ministers of the Entities**. At the start of the talks, members of the BiH

Presidency thanked UN Secretary General Annan and his special envoy to BiH Jacques Paul Klein for the successful completion of the UN mission in BiH, whose mandate expires at the end of this year. By establishing the State Border Service and the police forces in line with European standards the UN has largely helped the development of BiH, Bosnia-Hercegovina Presidency members said. A joint conclusion was made that the State Information and Protection Agency should start working as soon as possible. They also discussed further cooperation with the ICTY and the need to bring to justice all war criminals as soon as possible. According to Kofi Annan, the UN mission will continue its work and good cooperation with the relevant BiH institutions through UN agencies, which will continue to operate in the country. The UN Secretary General upheld the resolve of the BiH authorities to join the European integration process and their readiness to take personal responsibility for the future of the people in the country. On this occasion Kofi Annan extended an official invitation to BiH Presidency members to pay an official visit to the UN in New York at the beginning of December 2002 to attend a meeting with UN Security Council members. Addressing the violation of the UN arms embargo by the Bijeljina-based Orao Aviation Institute, Annan told journalists that such the affair had not to happen again. He however emphasized that in his opinion BiH should not face international sanctions over the affair. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 3, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Glas Srpski**, p 3, **Nezavisne Novine,** p 3, **Blic** p 2, **Vecernje Novosti** p 9) **Vecernji List** (front and page 15, title *"Annan against sanctions"*), **Dnevni List** (front and page 3, *title "Withdrawal does not mean the end of the engagement in BiH"*), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 7 and last page, *"BiH authorities still need international assistance", "Still UN will not end up its engagement in BiH"*) and **Vjesnik** (page 2, "UN failure is that it did not protect protected zones") also report on Annan's visit to BiH.

*"The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, has finally got to the point. He has made a connection between his basic political principle (Jobs and Justice) and the essence of the problem – the refugee return process and reservation towards*

the nationalists," Mirko Sagolj wrote in the **Oslobodjenje** In Focus column.

The Hague Tribunal's Chief Prosecutor, **Carla Del Ponte**, is expected to arrive in Sarajevo on Tuesday for a brief official visit, the Tribunal's spokesperson, **Florence Hartmann**, confirmed in a statement for FENA. Del Ponte is scheduled to meet with the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, but Hartmann did not specify which issue would be on the agenda. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 5, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2)

Vecernji List (page 15, by Zdenko Jurilj, title "Del Ponte requests Karadzic's arrest from Ashdown ") and **Dnevni List** (back page) announce that the High Representative for BiH, **Paddy Ashdown,** will today meet with the Chief ICTY Prosecutor, **Carla del Ponte.** VL's Zdenko Jurilj says that unlike previous pompous visits, this one is almost a secret one. Jurilj unofficially learns that del Ponte will push for arrest of **Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic** especially after reports that Karadzic is enjoying protection from RS secret service and army. The author also speculates that del Ponte might talk to Ashdown about reforms of the BiH judiciary and recent removal of **Munir Alibabic Munja** who del Ponte commended for his engagement in hunting down of war criminals especially in light of Alibabic's statement that Ashdown's removed him for locating Karadzic.

Nacional (p 4) reports that Chief Prosecutor of the ICTY, **Carla Del Ponte**, brings new indictments to Belgrade. Although the official reason for her visit is a meeting with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who will be in Belgrade as well, Nacional learns from a source that is a screen for the real purpose of her visit: another serious warning to Belgrade to fulfill its obligation toward the Tribunal.

The Council of the Bosniak Intellectuals Congress (**VKBI**) on Monday sent an open letter to the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, and the Head of the UN Mission to BiH, **Jacques Paul**

Klein, requesting them to warn IPTF and the RS leadership of all the seriousness of the attacks on the Bosniak returnees *"in order to finally eliminate organized nationalist criminal forces in the Entity,"* according to **FENA** (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2, **Slobodna Dalmacija,** last page, by Fena, *title "Chetniks' Ravna Gora Movement maltreats Bosniak returnees"*).

Vecernji List (page 2, by Dejan Jazvic), **Dnevni List** (page 7) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 18) read that the BiH Presidency has confirmed that it received a letter sent by the NATO Secretary General, **Lord George Robertson,** in which Robertson requested establishment of the State Ministry of Defence and joint military HQ. It is only Vecernji List that has a commentary to the situation. Namely, the author says that there will be a split in the Presidency i.e. that **Sulejman Tihic and Dragan Covic** would support Robertson's request and that **Mirko Sarovic** would rule out the request. VL also reads that circles close to BiH Presidency speculate that the three members of the Presidency could come up with a compromise which would include further strengthening of the Standing Committee of Military Matters (SCMM) and extension of authorities of the SCMM Secretary General. According to VL, the RS leaders are aware that the "Orao" affair has negative political consequences and that they are ready for compromises but under condition that there is no insisting on the State MoD.

The **RS Army General Staff** informed **SFOR** on Monday on the measures undertaken after claims that, during recent inspection carried out by SFOR in **Zaluzani** barracks, seven combat helicopters were found hidden. The RS Army General Staff announced that the Command of the RS Air Force and Air defense investigated the case thoroughly and delivered written report on the helicopters in question, signed by the Commander of RS Air Force, General Major **Marinko Siljegovic (Nezavisne Novine, p.3, Glas Srpski, p.3).** SFOR did not want to comment on the case yesterday. As announced, the Acting Head of RS

Army General Staff, General **Momir Zec,** and SFOR Commander, General **William Ward,** should discuss the issue soon. (**Blic** p 7, **Vecernje Novosti** p 5 also report on the issue)

The Supervisor of Brcko **Henry Clarke** issued the Order on excluding houses of worship and cemeteries from the assets of public owned firms before they are privatized. The Order reads: *"Under this order, issued on 18 November 2002, houses of worship and cemeteries must be excluded from the assets of public enterprises before they can be privatized. Houses of worship include churches, mosques, synagogues, and other buildings used primarily for prayer or worship by a religious community. The exclusion does not apply to completely destroyed buildings or to cemeteries from which all known human remains have been removed."* (**SRNA, Glas Srpski,** p 3, **Nezavisne Novine,** p 6, **Dnevni List,** p 4)

Ozren Kebo wrote a commentary in this weeks **Start** magazine under the 'Primitivism and renaissance' column entitled: "Paddy Ashdown started off well, and then suddenly gave in; Is there a chance someone could return him to the right path". Examining the role of the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown,** Kebo first pointed out a few of Ashdown's positive sides. He wrote that Ashdown has an incredible energy to do the work, hie is positively oriented, totally confident in what he does, determined that nothing would stop him in implementing reforms. Furthermore, Ashdown keeps insisting on informal communication and has clearly defined the goals and priorities. On the other hand, Kebo also pointed out that Ashdown began the curing process of BiH with a wrong diagnosis. *"Very confidently, Ashdown announced, even before his arrival, that the problem of this country was corruption and not nationalism. It would be nice if this was true and it was not. When elections took place, he misdiagnosed once again."* Kebo goes on to say that the fundamental problem is not an attempt by anti-reformist forces to block the reform, but to change their (SDS and HDZ) state addresses. *"This is*

the fundamental problem the IC has had – today with Ashdown, yesterday with Petritsch – and has been refusing to recognize it. The most important role of the IC is to tame the destructive terrorist forces that have been trying to destroy the country."

Slobodna Dalmacija (page 15) carries that Cardinal **Vinko Puljic** stated for Fides, the Catholic News Agency, that that building of the process of reconciliation and trust takes time and it has to be done gradually, however, the **International Community** believes that BiH will become a stabile county by fast merging of religions and ethnic groups in BiH. The Cardinal also said that the fact that people voted for national parties was the reaction towards the self-willingness of IC representatives, that deeply hurts people sometimes. The Cardinal says: *"People feel hurt since the IC believes that they are immature and that politicians cannot cope with their tasks… The best way in the relations between religions and ethnic groups is the way of dialogue, noticing of differences, building of trust and tolerance."*

Affairs in the Federation

The Director of the BiH Federation Customs Administration, **Zelimir Rebac**, confirmed in an interview with **Oslobodjenje** (front page, pages 4-5) doubts on the existence of irregularities and office abuses in all 11 free customs zones in the Entity. According to the date available to Rebac, the sate has suffered damage of approximately KM 30 million in these zone through the application of extremely suspicious procedures.

In relation to yesterday's article in **Vecernji List,** according to which the Federation Defence Minister **Mijo Anic** sent a letter to the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown,** requesting him to **prevent the return of officers that were loyal to the Croat "self-rule"**, today's **Vecernji List** on front and page 3, by Zdenko Jurilj, title "OHR decides on permanent ban of work of HVO officers", reads that a meeting between employees of

the Federation MoD and OHR was held yesterday. In a statement for the daily, Minister Anic confirmed that there were threats that some people would be laid off and that OHR wanted to hold a meeting because of that. VL also says that OHR experts are analyzing a list of some 40 senior HVO officers who supported the Croat self-rule in March 2001. *"They* (OHR) *requested the list and they got it, together with a list of people who were previously removed from the Federation Army or MoD by SFOR"*, says Anic.

Dnevni List (front and page 3, by S. Kuzman, title "OHR requested list of removed people"), carries Minister Anic as saying that he was never threatened by generals but there were pressures from individuals who left the army on their own. Questioned to comment on the timing of the OHR request i.e. that the OHR gets a list of removed people just after the elections, Minister Anic says: *"Now there is a possibility that a new structure takes over and in order not to install people who went against the law, the OHR's request is logical. In my opinion that's the only reason. OHR is carrying out some sort of prevention so those people do not return to the Ministry of Defence".*

Vecernji List carries two reactions to the issue. First by the Association of Volunteers and Veterans of Homeland war of HVO of Herzeg-Bosnia, which says that Anic's accusations are false and recommends the HR Ashdown not to be influenced by *"political and human skeletons and desperate"*, and the other one by a former Commander of HVO, **Lt-Gen Dragan Curcic,** who says that Minister Anic is lying. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 7, also reports on Anic's letter sent to Ashdown)

Glas Srpski (cover page)reports that if the **BiH Federation Parliament** passes the most recent proposal of the **Law on return of military apartments**, the BiH Federation property value will be increased for millions of KM, at the expense of the former JNA officers whose apartments are located in the Federation. According to the proposal of the Federation

Government, apartments should be returned only to those who privatized their apartments allocated to them by the Army, before March 1st 1992 and forwarded their contracts to the authorized tax administration. Another condition set by the Government requires proof that the purchase price was determined in line with the legal provisions valid at that time and that total amount is paid. According to this proposal, only some 900 apartments would be returned. The Public Attorney of the RS Army, **Branko Mitrovic,** stated that the proposals of the BiH Federation Government are not in line with the decision of the Human Rights Chamber and European Convention on protection of human rights and freedoms.

Post-election developments

Whether **Zlatko Lagumdzija** will really maintain top post in the BiH Social Democratic Party and what does that mean for the future of the political scene, wondered M. Vidovic in **Dnevni Avaz** front-page story (continued on p 4). Its is not secret, according to Vidovic, that both SDA and Party for BiH will be very satisfied if the autocratic SDP leader would have won the majority at the party's Congress scheduled for November 23 and the explanation is simple: a bad reputation of the current SDP President will definitely ruin all chances of the party to get any major voter's support at the next local elections.

Vecernji List (page 2) carries that **Ivo Komsic** and **Sejfudin Tokic**, Vice Presidents of SDP, and **Miro Lazovic**, SDP Secretary General, stated at the press conference, which was held in Banja Luka, that they want the democratization of SDP, however, **Zlatko Lagumdzija**, the President of SDP, does not allow that. The three stressed that an Emergency Congress of the party was not scheduled because of the complete analyses of the failure at the elections and a constant dropping of the party, but it was scheduled in order to make possible that Lagumdzija preserves the position of the leader. *"If at the extraordinary congress of the SDP scheduled for 23rd November Zlatko Lagumdzija's stand wins, none of us will be a member of*

his party, which means a half of the party's presidency," **Ivo Komsic**, Vice-president of the SDP, said (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 4, **Nacional** p 11, **Blic** p 2)

Dnevni List (front and page 5) carries that **Mirko Sarovic**, Chairman of the BiH Presidency, stated that the BiH Presidency will start negotiations on the forming of the Council of Ministers with the political parties that have representatives in the BiH Parliament on Friday, November 22. Sarovic stated: *"The construction of the Assembly's majority that might vote on a new composition of the BiH Council of Ministers is almost known."* According to Sarovic, having in mind good results that SDS achieved, this party will get as many positions as it suits these results and the people who voted for SDS expect that.

Nezavisne Novine (p 5)reports that the RS Prime Minister and leader of PDP, **Mladen Ivanic,** met on Monday in Sarajevo with the US Ambassador, **Clifford Bond.** Ivanic and Bond discussed the establishment of the future authorities of BiH and RS. Ivanic did not want to make any comments on the meeting. Nezavisne Novine recalls that PDP has not yet made a decision with whom to enter a coalition with.

Member of the SDS main board, **Cvijetin Nikic,** stated on Monday in Bijeljina that over the weekend, the SDS made arrangements with other parliamentary parties related to the majority in the RS National Assembly (**Glas Srpski,** p 2, **Nezavisne Novine,** p 5).Nikic did not want to name parties with which the SDS reached agreement on the majority, he just appealed on other political parties *"which are still in deciding phase to join this SDS led majority in order to establish authorities in the RS that would reflect the will of the RS citizens."*

"I presume that SDS, PDP, SPRS and some minor political parties will manage to establish parliamentary majority in the RS. SDA is prepared to join such the majority," the RS Vice-president, SDA's **Adil Osmanovic**, said in an interview with

Dnevni Avaz (p 5).

"*I believe that by the end of this week we will have a clearer picture on forming the parliamentary majority and authority in the RS, because by the end of the next week constitutional session of the RS National Assembly should be held. At the same time, although we have agreed that we will form a coalition with the PDP, the Socialists will have final discussion with the PDP this week*," vice-president of the SPRS, **Miroslav Mikes,** said. He said that the most probably the authority would be divided between the PDP, SNSD, SPRS and some other moderate parties, without participation of nationalistic parties SDS and SDA. (**Blic** p 2)

Dnevni List (page 7) carries an interview with the leader of HNZ, **Milenko Brkic,** in which he, talking about the today's meeting of the Coalition Council (HDZ-HNZ-HD), says that the Coalition is going to discuss issues such as who is to become the Coalition partners in forming of authorities and at which levels as well as inter-Coalition relations. Talking about establishment of authorities at different levels, Brkic says that when it comes to the Federation level, there should not be problems with forming of authority with SDA and that principles have already been agreed upon. Regarding the State level and US Ambassador **Clifford Bond's** role, Brkic says: "*I think that Bond did not expose himself to that extent, not as much as some parties who see him as the last hope did, in order to stay in power (…) It is likely that our Coalition with SDA and other parties from the other entity will manage to form the authority*", says Brkic and rules out a possibility of new elections.

BiH state officials activities

The BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, **Azra Hadziahmetovic,** presented the document called "Strategy of the fight against poverty" yesterday in Sarajevo (**Nezavisne Novine,** p 5, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 3).According to this document, in

order to create self-sustainable economy, the BiH needs to pass 116 laws and provisions, adopt 22 international conventions, establish 14 institutions, mostly on the state level and implement 600 measures in different fields. This document offers two scenarios of possible developments in the period between 2003 and 2006. If the reforms, envisaged by the strategy are not implemented, current level of poverty and unemployment would remain the same. However, if the reforms are carried out by 2006, the current level of poverty and unemployment would go down for 50 %.
With regard to the issue of an agreement on dual citizenship between Croatia and BiH, **Vecernji List** (page 5, by Dejan Jazvic) carries that according to VL sources from the BiH Presidency, **Sulejman Tihic**, a Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency openly warned that he will not give a consent for signing of the agreement with Croatia until the BiH Parliament extends the deadline for regulating of this issue with other countries as well. Allegedly, most of Bosniak representatives in the BiH Parliament will support this stand of Sulejman Tihic.

In addition to this article VL carries that **Mirko Sarovic**, a Chairman of the BiH Presidency, met yesterday with **Josip Vrbosic**, the Croatian President in BiH. On this occasion Vrbosic informed Sarovic about the steps that have been taken in order to make possible the signing of the aforementioned agreement by the end of this year. **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 18) and **Dnevni List** (page2) also covered this information.

11th anniversary of Herzeg-Bosnia

Dnevni List (front and page 5, by Zoran Vidic, "Some celebrated, some worked, others protested") and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (front and page 14, by Darko Juka, "Honour to state without borders") and **Vecernji List** (front and page, "Herzeg-Bosnia thwarted many people's designs) carry respective articles on the issue of 11th anniversary of Herzeg-Bosnia. Dnevni List notes that school and some public institutions in the "Croat" part of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC) did

not work because of the anniversary which triggered the President of HNC SDP, **Mehmed Behmen,** to send a letter to the Head of OHR South, **Ambassador Jean-Pierre Bercot,** complaining that the Anniversary of Herzeg-Bosnia is again celebrated after a one-year break. Behmen adds that somebody has again taken all the prerogatives of the authority upon himself/herself and parallel to the executive bodies of the HNC issued a decision to public institutions on the celebration of the date. According to DL, OHR is yet to comment on the situation. The same daily reads that Croat employees in the Central Bosnia Canton in public institutions and companies got a day off by a decision of competent minister **Mirko Batinic.** The minister based his decision on the Law on holidays and non-working days in Croat republic of Herzeg-Bosnia enacted in 1995.

With regard to the 11th anniversary of the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna (CCHB), which was marked yesterday, **Vecernji List** (page 2, by Zvonimir Jurcevic) carries an editorial on this issue. VL says that *"any story about CCHB is a story about attempts of Croats and their aspiration to win for a dignified position in their state"*. The editorial says that those, who care about their positions and who in return give an unreserved support to the project of a powerful part of the International Community, are the ones who do not care about equality of the Croat people with other peoples in BiH. The editorial concludes: *"It will depend on the organizational skills and wisdom of the Croats whether the Croat people will start to approach a desired goal or they will remain an object of the manipulation."* (**Oslobodjenje**, p 6, also reported on the issue: "Herceg-Bosna celebrated in Grude")

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Monday, 1900)

- International Community will not abandon BiH
- Milk and diary products from Slovenia do not contain harmful antibiotic
- Representatives of official and alternative medicine together for the first time

- Will radioactive waste still be deposited in Kopaci?

FTV 1 (1930)

- Kofi Annan finished two-days visit to BiH
- General Hamid Bahto no longer suspect for weapons smuggling to Kosovo
- Slovenian milk and diary do not contain antibiotic chloram-phenicol

RTRS (1930)

- Kofi Annan – Rule of law and economic reforms for BiH
- Extended custody for teenager who wounded the Banja Luka school director
- Health Ministry claims Slovenian milk is not hazard, nuclear waste storage in Kopaci will not jeopardize people and environment