OHR BiH Media Round-up: 19/12/2002

CROAT RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00 hrs)	**BH TV 1** (19,00 hrs)	**FED TV** (19,30 hrs)	**RT RS** (19,30)
HVO veterans protests	Biljana Plavsic to be sentenced in January	Prosecution demands 15 to 25 years in prison for Plavsic	Plavsic trial completed, sentence in January
Adnan Terzic nimination for CoM Chairman	WB approved loan to BiH of $102 million	Slovenian sources claim Slovenian milk contains no harmful antibiotic	ORAO managers released from custody
Plavsic's trial completed	Appointment of CoM chairman postponed for Friday	Sarajevo specials delivered with letters rejecting their appeals on IPTF decision	BiH Presidency to nominate Chairman of CoM on Friday
	Americans interested in mineral water import from BiH	Adnan Terzic is SDA candidate for CoM Chairman	

Oslobodjenje	BiH to ban import of Slovenian milk?; Adnan Terzic nominated for BiH PM designate

Dnevni Avaz	Adnan Terzic proposed as the SDA candidate for BiH PM designate; Milk affair: Hadziahmetovic – The import cannot be banned on the basis of a private statement
Vecernji List	Culmination of protests of war victims of HVO: Complete blockade of borders and roads
Slobodna Dalmacija	Fierce political battle for position of Prime Minister designate of BiH Council of Ministers: Bosniaks push Colak out of Prime Minister's position?
Glas Srpski	RS Elektroprivreda – There will not be power reductions; Bijeljina: Orao troika released
Nezavisne Novine	Denis Muhovic the best athlete of 2002; BiH is facing social unrest; Adnan Terzic, SDA'a candidate for CoM Chairman Designate; Orao managers released
FRY Nacional	Toma Fila: "Plavsic will not end up in jail"
Blic	Ostoja Kremenovic: "Either reforms or bankruptcy of pension fund"; The SDS party followers attacked councillor of the SNSD in Gacko; Wife murderer arrested; Evictions continue during winter
Vecernje Novosti	25 years for Plavsic?

Establishment of the new authorities	
Presidency postpones announcement on premier designate until December 20	Wednesday's session of the BiH Presidency, at which the name of the prime minister designate of the Council of Ministers was to be announced, has been postponed to give parliamentary parties time for additional consultations and an agreement on the candidate, FENA has learnt at the BiH Presidency. The session has been rescheduled for Friday, December 20, by which time the parties should reach full agreement on the new prime minister designate. (Dnevni Avaz, p 2)

SDA puts forward candidate for state premier	The presidency of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) on Wednesday in Sarajevo put forward SDA deputy chairman Adnan Terzic as candidate for the post of the BiH Council of Ministers chairman. the SDA leader, Sulejman Tihic, told journalists. “We believe that Terzic will hold this post responsibly in the next four years and that he will actively implement the outlined reforms which are required from the BiH Council of Ministers,” Tihic emphasized. He confirmed that the Croat Democratic Union (HDZ) has been notified about this decision and expressed hope that both parties would reach a consensus on the proposal and regarding the division of other posts in the executive government at the entities’ and state levels. The SDA is prepared to leave the post of the FBiH Prime Minister to HDZ, according to Tihic. (Oslobodjenje, p 3. mentioned on the front page, Dnevni Avaz, p 2, mentioned on the front page, Nezavisne Novine, front page , p 3, Glas Srpski, p 3)

CRO Press on BiH PM designate issue	Vecernji List (page 3, by M. Markovic, "Besides Prime Minister, Croats get civil affairs, refugees and defence") claims to be in possession of a document that members of BiH Presidency signed last Monday, indeed as it carries a copy of the document, regarding the allocation ministerial positions within the BiH Council of Ministers. According to the daily, members of the BiH Presidency agreed that Barisa Colak of HDZ would become the Chair of BiH Council of Ministers, whilst Serbs would get offices of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Communications and Justice. In the same time, Bosniaks would get Ministries of Foreign Trade, Security and Finances. Moreover, Croats would get Ministries for Refugees and Civil Affairs, offices of Director of European Integration, two Deputy Ministers and four secretarial positions. VL comments the above mentioned allocation of Ministries saying that it is practically a done deal and goes on to say that there was another version according to which a Bosniak would be the Chair of CoM, the scenario in which Croats would get "stronger" Ministries – Finances, Security and Foreign Trade. In that context, the daily says that Croats and Serbs did not agree with the proposal so an appointment of Barisa Colak for the Chair of CoM could be considered a done deal. Vecernji List carries a separate article of the same page titled "SDA nominated Adnan Terzic", saying that the BiH Presidency postponed its session, at which it should have announced a name of the BiH PM designate, for Friday in order to leave enough time to political parties to carry out additional consultations. The daily notes that SDA Presidency decided to nominate Adnan Terzic for position of BiH PM designate. On the same issue, Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 13, by Blanka Magas, "Bosniaks push Colak out of Prime Minister's position?) carries the same news and reiterates reports from the past few days about the issue. The daily also reiterates an HDZ stance that out of three Prime Ministers' position in BiH, one should be given to the Croats. The author concludes the piece by saying that she has learned from a senior international official that the Americans will in the end decide who is going to become the BiH Prime Minister as well as decide who is going to form an executive authority at the State level.

Dragan Mikerevic says there are two ways for formation of government in RS	Nezavisne Novine quotes RS PM Designate Dragan Mikerevic (p 7) as saying after his arrival from the States that the representatives of the State Department with whom he met said they would prefer to see moderate parties in power at all levels in BiH. According to him, he told his interlocutors that there are two ways to form the government in the RS, that is, either to form the minority government or the government with the Serb majority. He said that the situation is slightly different when it comes to the state level. When asked when the new RS government will be formed, he said that consultations with all the parties will be finished before the New Year and that he will be open for talks with everyone. Mikerevic said that there is a team of experts working on a political platform on which all the parties in RS NA could agree. "At this moment I cannot really say who will be in the new RS government. However, I am quite sure that the new RS government's platform will be wide enough to attract many parties, which are currently against the Government. The most important thing around which we all should gather is the reform", said Mikerevic. Glas Srpski reported on the same issue (p 3, Headline: Mikerevic says there are two ways to form government).
Ivanic: Serb majority most important	Glas Srpski quotes (p 3) RS Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic as saying in an interview with a Bijeljina-based BN Television as saying that, when it comes to formation of government in the RS, the most important thing is that a Serb majority is secured and that there will not be major problems to secure that majority. Ivanic said the bigger problem would be the distribution of ministerial posts amongst the representatives of Serb, Bosniak and Croat peoples. He said that RS public expects that ministries of defence, interior, finance and war veterans go to Serbs. He said that two to three ministerial positions would go to SDS underlining that SDS has to take responsibility for these fields. Ivanic also said there is a possibility that he becomes a new BiH foreign minister if the future CoM chairman comes up with a reform-orientated program. (FRY Nacional, p 11)

Interview with RS NA Deputy Speaker Sefket Hafizovic	In an interview with Nezavisne Novine (p 6) RS NA Deputy Speaker Sevket Hafizovic said that a Croat deputy RS NA speaker will be appointed probably by the end of this year and that there will be some specific proposals next week. "NHI will propose its candidate and at the next RS NA session, the other deputy RS NA speaker will be appointed", said Hafizovic. According to Nezavisne Novine, the next RS NA session should take place either by the end of this year or in the first half of January. Hafizovic also said that the request for change of name of the RS is not Sulejman Tihic's vagary. He said that the BiH Constitution enables anyone to start that initiative. "We have constitutional amendments and I am sure that the BiH future depends on capability of three peoples to agree on various issues", said Hafizovic.

Affairs

CoM might ban import of milk from Slovenia	The BiH Council of Ministers might at its session scheduled for Thursday in Sarajevo make a decision to ban the import of milk from Slovenia, Oslobodjenje learns from reliable sources (front page, pages, 4-5). The reason for such the decision will be a repeated discovery of a damaging substance, chloram-phenicol, in the Slovenian milk. Azra Hadziahmetovic, the BiH Foreign Trade and Economic Relations Minister, said in a statement for Dnevni Avaz, p 5, mentioned on the front page that the import of the milk from Slovenia could not be banned on the basis of a private statement but only on the basis of reliable evidence.

SD: Deficit amounting to 115 million KM has been left to new Federation Government	Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 15) carries that the BiH Federation is faced with bankruptcy, since the current Federation Government will leave a deficit amounting to over 115 million KM to a new Federation Government. SD says: “Although the representatives of the International Community were constantly warning about a possible bankruptcy, members of the Federation Government did not pay too much attention to it. According to some analyses, the problems will emerge next year and new debts will be created because of the unrealistically planned budget.”
Herecgovacka Bank	Vecernji List (page 3, by Robert Soldo) reads that the Mostar Cantonal Prosecution (MSC) has submitted an amended bill of indictment against a former CEO of Hercegovacka bank, Ivica Karlovic, after the initial bill was rejected by the Cantonal Court in Mostar due to shortcomings it had contained. VL reports that the new, amended bill also charges Karlovic with abuse of office or authority adding that the Court will decide on the case next week in Mostar.

Orao troika released	Glas Srpski reports on its front page that the Bijeljina Basic Court decided to release from detention Milan Prica, the Orao General Manager, Teodosije Kecman, the Orao Deputy General Manager and Gordan Santrac, the Chief of the Orao Marketing Department, all three suspected of being involved in illegal arms sale to Iraq. Glas reports that, after the release, all three persons went right away to the Orao Aviation Institute where they met with the Orao employees who have been protesting about their detention for more than a month. Prica told the employees that without their support they probably would not have been released relatively soon nor would they have had the strength to prove that the Orao path was right. Nezavisne Novine reported on the same issue (front page, p 3, Headline: Orao managers released), as did Vecernje Novosti, p 5, FRY Nacional, p 9.
Vanier: Report on "Orao" on January 3	"The International Task Force "Orao" case will let the RS authority to do their work and to complete the report on Orao affair until January 3, because the International Community does not want to do this work for the RS", SFOR Spokesperson Yves Vanier stated on Wednesday. He also said that the International Community would revise the report, but it has not been decided yet whether the report would be made public. He added that the Work Group did not have an obligation to make public the details of the report. (Blic, p 7)

RS Pension-Insurance Fund Reform	"The RS Pension Insurance Fund is in a difficult situation and its system of work is not sustainable for a long-term period of time. We have to reform the insurance system in order to ensure higher pensions. If the Pension Insurance system is not reformed, we will face a situation without an exit, and the possibility of bankruptcy is not excluded as well", Ostoja Kremenovic, the RS Pension Insurance Fund Director, stated. He hopes the reforms could be finished by the end of 2003, but also believes that reforms in other fields should take place prior to reforms in PIO system. (Blic, p 6)

Mostar unification	Slobodna Dalmacija (p 17, “Bercot meets Safet Orucevic”, by M. Landeka, full translation) reports that the Head of the OHR Mostar, Jean Pierre Bercot, met on Tuesday night the former Mayor of Mostar, Safet Orucevic, at the new OHR Mostar building. As the source close to international organisations in Mostar reveals, the current situation in Mostar and the town’s future organisation were discussed in the meeting. Over the last weeks, there have been information published on the plan of organisation of the City as a single Municipality, by which its current national division into 3 Bosniak and 3 Croat Municipalities would be overcome. The Mostar SDA City Board opposes the idea whereas the Party for BiH, as well as a circle of Mostar intellectuals and public workers of all the nationalities, gathered around former Mayor Orucevic, strongly support the idea.

Judicial reform in RS	Vecernji List (page 2) carries that the reform of the judicial system in the RS, whose purpose is the building of the independent and multi-ethnic judiciary, has been brought in question due to the lack of Judges and Prosecutors of the Bosniak and Croat nationality and for this reason the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of the RS decided to publish again the vacancy notice for the aforementioned positions in the Commission for Protection of Vital National Interests of the RS Constitutional Court. VL says that this situation shows that it will be very difficult to find enough Judges and Prosecutors for these positions. Sanela Tunovic, a Spokesperson of the HJPC, stated: “It is hard to say now as to what might happen if enough proper candidates do not apply for certain positions. We have to wait and see as to how many candidates will apply and only then we shall consider next moves.”

Protest rallies	

HVO veterans to continue with protests, meet with OHR officials	The Presidency of the Association of the Croat Disabled Soldiers and War Victims (HVIDRA) agreed on Wednesday in Vitez to continue the blockade of the roads in the BiH Federation and the blockade is to last longer, from 1000 to 1700 hrs, until the fulfillment of requests related to the payment of disability pensions and ompensations for October. President of the HVIDRA of the Livno Canton Mirko Brnic told the Radio Livno, according to ONASA, that the Croat people are invited to join the demonstrators on Thursday. Brnic said that members of the HVIDRA Presidency would meet tomorrow with representatives of the Office of the High Representatives (OHR). Members of the Headquarters for Protection of Rights of Military Pensioners of the Croat component of the BiH Federation Army will also join the protests tomorrow. According to Brnic, the blockade will last until the fulfillment of the HVIDRA's requests. The HVIDRA decided to block the roads because the BiH Federation Ministry for Veterans' Issues does not want to pay disability pensions and compensations to members of the Croat Defense Council (HVO) and families of fallen and missing soldiers because they have not delivered the updated lists of disability allowance beneficiaries. (Oslobodjenje, p 3, Dnevni Avaz, p 3 – announcement of the HVIDRA representatives meeting with OHR officials)

CRO Press on HVIDRA protests	With regard to the blockade of roads and border crossing of HVIDRA and Croat Associations resulting from the Homeland War, Vecernji List (front and page 2) and Slobodna Dalmacija (front and pages 13 and last page) carry that roads and border crossing will be blocked today from 10 until 17 hours. Andjelko Barun, President of HVIDRA of Herceg Bosnia, says that the members of the aforementioned Associations will not give up the blockades until they receive their disability allowances. Barun also says: “It is interesting that the information about a number of beneficiaries from the line of the Bosniak people is being hidden. We have always supported the idea to make a revision, however, not in this way.”

Protest rallies in RS to take place on December 26	RS on 26 December Both papers quote Chairwoman of the Education, Culture and Sport Trade Union Ranka Misic as saying that the people employed in the RS public sector scheduled a 1-hour warning strike on 26 December at 11:00 AM. Misic requested the RS Government to pay the debt from 2001, one and a half salary in arrears for people employed in sectors of culture, science, education, Ministry of Interior, judiciary and administration. The Trade Union Chairwoman also requested the Government to pay 50 million-KM debt to health workers. Misic said if the Government does not meet the trade union's requests then we will have a very non-peaceful spring. Glas Srpski (p 2, Headline: Strike without politics). Nezavisne Novine (front page, p 2, Headline: BiH is facing social unrest). (Blic, p 7)

BiH/international community

Mikerevic returns from visit to US	Chairman of BiH Council of Ministers Dragan Mikerevic returned to Sarajevo from Washington on Wednesday, after a two-day visit to the USA. Talks with prominent US officials dealt with a number of issues relating to political and economic development in BiH. Mikerevic explained that talks with the Export-Import Bank of the USA and the Treasury were encouraging in terms of future arrangements with the aforementioned bank for import and export investment. However he said that there was a general assessment in the US State Department that “they would appreciate very much the establishment of the executive authorities in BiH without national political parties.” (SENSE, Oslobodjenje, p 6: US does not want nationalists in the RS Government”)

Sefik Dzaferovic: We will rectify mistakes of former Parliament	Questioned to comment on an assessment that the High Representative for BiH will again be busy enacting important laws and taking important decisions, Sefik Dzaferovic, Speaker of BiH Parliament's House of Representatives (Vecernji List, page 5), hopes that the new Parliament will not be as obstructive as the last Parliament and that the political parties will realize that BiH needs to take the road of reforms, something, in Dzaferovic's opinion, that is in interest of all BiH peoples and citizens. Dzaferovic also advocates that the IC keeps a close eye on every single MP and award those who are constructive and penalize those who are obstructive. Talking/asked more about obstructions, Dzaferovic says that those political parties mostly come from the RS hoping that it is not the case in the new Parliament.

Stjepan Mesic: Croat entity would create Palestine in middle of Europe	Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Zoran Kresic) carries that opposing the ideas of Zdravko Tomac, Deputy Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, about a new organization of BiH which would be more just for Croats, Stjepan Mesic, the Croatian President, stated in an interview given to HTV Oscar C that the International Community cannot allow an establishment of a Croat entity in BiH because it would result in an establishment of a radical Islamic creation in the heart of Europe. Mesic concluded: “It would be a new Palestine in the middle of Europe.” Mesic also said that a cantonization of BiH, according to a model of Belgium and Switzerland, could be an acceptable solution. Mesic believes that the entities must not have authorities of the state and that BiH should have a joint Army.

War crimes	

Trial of Plavsic completed, sentence to be announced in January	The sentencing hearing of the former RS President, Biljana Plavsic, finished yesterday with the closing arguments by the prosecution and the defense. The ICTY Chief Prosecutor, Carla Del Ponte, requested that the Tribunal should sentence Plavsic to 15-25 years' imprisonment for persecution and crimes against humanity. Del Ponte pointed out that the prosecution would call for a life sentence if Plavsic had not voluntarily surrendered and pleaded guilty. Del Ponte said that apart from the gravity of the crimes, another aggravating circumstance was Plavsic's refusal to cooperate with the Prosecutor's Office and appear as a witness at other ICTY trials. The defense did not call for any specific sentence, but it pointed out that bearing in mind Plavsic's age, any sentence over 8 years would be a life sentence. Judge Richard May announced that the verdict would be brought in after the holidays. He said that until that time Plavsic could retain her status – temporary release – under the same conditions in Belgrade. (FRY Nacional, p 4, headline "Fila: Plavsic will serve her sentence in an institute" Vecernje Novosti, p 10, Headline: "Lenient 25 years", Blic, p 17, "Plavsic does not want to testify", Oslobodjenje, Dnevni Avaz also reported on the issue) Vecernje Novosti, p 10, carries a statement given by FRY Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic, who assessed that former RS President Biljana Plavsic was brave to confess that she, and not her people, was responsible for was crimes in BiH. "This is a good approach – everyone should revise their own role in history and bare personal responsibility, and not to hide behind a collective and institutions and the world politics", Djindjic stated. He added that he would like all other who are accused of war crimes to surrender and act in the same way as Plavsic, and in this way to take the responsibility of people and state. VN also carry a statement of Mladen Ivanic: "Trials are individual for every person, every person has the right to defend in front of the Hague Tribunal, and this is the only context in which I see the trial in Plavsic case". He also stated: "In relation with this I do not expect any special consequences for the RS. The RS has been exposed to criticism and pressures by international institutions for years after the Dayton Agreement signing, so I do not expect any additional increase in pressures against the RS than usual". FRY Nacional, p 4, quotes Toma Fila who believes the Prosecution and the defense have reached a secret deal that may influence the sentence for Plavsic. He points out that Plavsic could serve her sentence in a monastery or some of re-socialization institutes, which is very common in western countries. Slobodan Milosevic's legal advisor Dragoljub Tomasevic commented the unexpected accusation of Plavsic against Slobodan Milosevic for organized genocide in BiH. "The agreed upon confession of Biljana Plavsic could have great consequences not only for Milosevic but also for destiny of the RS. The Hague inquisition Tribunal will certainly eagerly wait to proclaim Milosevic as a war criminal, whose signature at the Dayton Agreement would have no legal meaning, and the RS would be marked as an entity created through ethnic cleansing. This could bring the survival of BiH in question", Tomasevic said.