

# OHR BiH Media Round-up, 21/12/2005

Latest radio news broadcast at 12.00 on 21 December

<b>RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA</b> (12,00 hrs)	<b>RTRS</b> (12,00 hrs)
Const. changes talks continue	Talks on const. changes resume SA
BiH HoR discusses Law on Pardon	Mektic on security in BiH
FBiH HoR on budget for 2006	RS NA in session

TV news broadcast on 20 December

<b>RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA</b> (18,00 hrs)	<b>TV PINK</b> (18,00 hrs)	<b>BHT 1</b> (19,00 hrs)
Depleted uranium in BIH	NATO raids two companies	Trial against Scorpions started in BG
BIH Parliament's plenary session	BiH HoR and HoP in plenary session	Victims' families on Belgrade trial
BIH Presidency session	Rycroft meets Dodik	Trial for massacre in Kravica
FBiH HoR session	BiH Presidency in session	NATO operation in Vlasenica
<b>NTV Hayat</b> (19,00 hrs)	<b>FTV</b> (19,30 hrs)	<b>RTRS</b> (19,30 hrs)
BiH Presidency in session	BiH Presidency adopts 2006 budget	Matijasevic on terrorism

Chickens for BiH citizens	Proposal of the FBiH budget for 2006	Trial to Scorpions
FBiH Government on VAT	Malaysian Works Minister in Sarajevo	NATO search in Vlasenica
Revision of disabled war veterans	BiH Parliament's plenary session	Indictment against Mandic & others

<b>Oslobodjenje</b>	Mladic's associates Pecanac and Furtula questioned in Belgrade
<b>Dnevni Avaz</b>	Monsters are not sorry, they are threatening further
<b>Dnevni List</b>	Mostar losing status in UNESCO because of Hotel 'Ruza'
<b>Vecernji List</b>	Friend's mobile phone blew general's cover (Gotovina arrest)
<b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>	CIA tortures suspects with insomnia at Orao camp
<b>Glas Srpske</b>	One BAM for loaf (bread prices increase over VAT)
<b>Nezavisne Novine</b>	Trial of Scorpions commenced
<b>Blic</b>	Serbia related headline
<b>Vecernje Novosti</b>	Serbia related headline

	<b>LATEST NEWS OF TODAY</b>
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**Const.  
changes  
talks  
continue**

**RHB** – The constitutional changes talks continue today with the discussion on the BiH Presidency reform. SDA President **Sulejman Tihic** expressed a hope that an agreement would be reached during continuation of the talks and that the solution, which is the best for BiH citizens and that is a functional institution of the President would be accepted.

**RS Radio** – The topic of today's talks on constitutional changes that resumed in Sarajevo are future position and structure of BiH Presidency. **Dragan Cavic** briefly stated that his stance on this issue remains unchanged, i.e. *"one president is out of question"*. Although not-attending resumption of talks, **Mladen Ivanic** assessed today's talks would be harder than previous, reiterating PDP stance, i.e. *"agreement can be reached. However if hard-lined stances are kept, the chances for reaching agreement are minor"*. Owing to slow traffic, **Milorad Dodik** failed to appear at the talks. **Sulejman Tihic** came to the meeting with unchanged stance of SDA on Presidency, i.e. SDA supports one president' proposal. **Zlatko Lagumdzija** expressed hope framework regarding BiH Presidency restructuring would be agreed at today's meeting. **Dragan Covic** is of the view BiH does not need cosmetic but essential changes of Constitution, including BiH Presidency structure. Talks are taking place in the presence of **Matthew Rycroft and Douglas McElchany**, British and American Ambassadors to BiH respectively. Talks are expected to end before 10 January 2006.

<p><b>PDHR Butler visiting B. Luka</b></p>	<p><b>RS Radio</b> – The Principal Deputy High Representative, <b>Larry Butler</b>, is visiting Banja Luka today, where he will meet with RS Prime Minister <b>Pero Bukejlovic</b>. Ambassador Butler and PM Bukejlovic will discuss the measures that the RS Government has taken in order to end fraud and mismanagement at RS Elektroprivreda and Srpske Sume.</p>
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	<p><b>War Crimes/Legal Proceedings</b></p>
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<p><b>Trial of Scorpions members started in Belgrade</b></p>	<p><b>Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni Avaz</b> cover page, pg 4 'Monsters are not sorry, they are threatening further', <b>Oslobodjenje</b> cover page, pg 5 'There will be another indictment against Scorpions', <b>Nezavisne Novine</b> cover pg splash 'Trial against Scorpions commenced', pg 3 'Medic: If I knew who recorded execution, I would kill him as a rabbit' by <u>D.Vidakovic</u>, <b>Vecernji List</b>, pg 22 'Scorpions do not feel guilty for killings', <u>not signed</u>– The trial against five members of the Scorpions paramilitary unit, who are indicted for war crimes against six prisoners from Srebrenica in 1995, started on Tuesday before Belgrade's District Court. <b>Slobodan Medic, Pera Petrasevic, Aleksandar Medic, Aleksandar Vukov</b> and <b>Branislav Medic</b> are accused of killing six Bosniaks from Srebrenica in Godinske Bare settlement near Trnovo in July 1995. Scorpions' commander Slobodan Medic claims that he did not find out about those murders until the video recording of the crimes was published in June 2005; he said that Branislav Medic than informed him that those civilians were supposed to be exchanged for some captured Serbs, but it did not happen because those Serbs were murdered. He added that, if he had known somebody was filming it, he would kill him as a rabbit. The director of the Belgrade Fund for Humanitarian Right <b>Natasa Kandic</b> delivered the video recording of the crime to the Hague Tribunal in early June; now, defence attorneys claim that it cannot be used as an evidence. <i>"Because we are not sure if it is an original, or some kind of staged material"</i>, stated defence attorney <b>Zoran Rajic</b>. <i>"In addition to this tape we have twelve witnesses, and many evidences from the Hague Tribunal"</i>, responded spokesperson of the Prosecutors' Office <b>Bruno Vekaric</b>. Prosecutor for war crimes in Belgrade <b>Vladimir Vukcevic</b> stated after meeting with the representatives of victims' families that the additional charges would be brought for this case. According to BHT reporter, the trial against five members of the Scorpions paramilitary unit is important because it is the first time that Srebrenica is mentioned during one trial in Serbia</p> <p>.</p>
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**SDHR Ney's letter  
to P. Bukejlovic:  
'Mladic's  
associates  
Pecanac and  
Furtula  
questioned in  
Belgrade'**

**Oslobodjenje** cover pg splash and pgs 4 and 5  
'Mladic's associates Pecanac and Furtula questioned  
in Belgrade' by E. Kamenica carries that according  
to the information that this daily has at its  
disposal it seems that the arrest of **Ratko Mladic** is  
at sight. Osl. goes on to say that the letter that  
they received from a reliable source written by  
Senior Deputy High Representative **Martin Ney** to RS  
Prime Minister **Pero Bukejlovic** recently shows that  
this time it is not just about a rumor. According to  
the article the letter, among the other things, says  
that two war-time associates of Mladic, **Dragomir  
Pecanac** and **Radovan Furtula**, were questioned in  
Belgrade, however, taking of statements cannot be  
considered a full investigation. The letter also  
says: *'The new information that you received,  
especially the ones that refer on the day when the  
Zepa wartime Commander **Avdo Palic** was taken from the  
Bijeljina prison were not further investigated and  
it is necessary to do so.'* SDHR Ney also expressed  
in this letter concern about the fact that the RS  
Ministry of Defence and RS Army were not involved in  
this investigation. Osl. explains that only formally  
the letter refers on Avdo Palic exclusively since  
one can read between the lines that this is about  
tightening a noose around Mladic and possibly  
**Radovan Karadzic** as well.

<p><b>BiH Prosecutor's Office is searching for another eight persons suspected of participating in Kravica massacre</b></p>	<p><b>BHT Boris Grubesic</b> – As BHT learns, BiH Prosecutor's Office is searching for eight persons suspected of participating in the massacre of more than 1,000 Bosniaks in the warehouse of the farming cooperative in Kravica in July 1995. Those persons are hiding in Serbia, and therefore BiH Prosecutor's Office asked Serbian judiciary for help. First BiH indictment for genocide charges 11 persons from RS Special Police forces for participating in the massacre of Bosniaks in Kravica. Ten of those eleven persons are in detention, while another eight persons – also suspected of participating in this crime – are still on the loose. <i>"Prosecutor's Office was unable to assure their presence in the court; according to our information, they are hiding in Serbia-Montenegro"</i>, stated Prosecutor in the BiH Prosecutor's Office <b>Ibro Bulic</b>. Prosecutor's Office plans to interrogate protected eyewitnesses, survived victims and certain persons from the RS Special Police. Institute for Investigating War Crimes reminded that several perpetrators of the crime in Kravica have not yet been indicted; according to the representative of this institute <b>Smail Cekic</b>, those are <b>Nikola Popovic</b>, <b>Ilija Nikolic</b> and <b>Raso Milanovic</b>, who was the commander of the police unit in Kravica.</p>
<p><b>NATO raided offices of two companies linked with Ratko Mladic support network; Stankovic says all documents on Mladic handed to The Hague</b></p>	<p><b>BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 3 'Searches over support to Mladic' by <b>M.C.</b>, <b>Dnevni List</b>, pg 5 'NATO searched two companies', <u>not signed</u> – Members of the NATO forces in BiH raided the offices of two companies in Vlasenica, 'Sipad 10<sup>th</sup> August' and 'Lorist', in which <b>Milje Kljestan</b> has partial ownership, searching for the information on The Hague indictee <b>Ratko Mladic</b>. NATO believes that those two companies are linked with the network that supports Mladic. RS police did not take part in the action.</p> <p><b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 3 'All documents on Mladic are in The Hague' by <b>D.R.</b> – <b>Milovan Stankovic</b>, RS Defence Minister, stated that RS has handed all documents from personal file of <b>Ratko Mladic</b> to the Hague. Those are two documents: one on appointment and second one on discharge from position of RS Army Commander.</p>

<p><b>NN op-ed critical of Webber/Leakey statements over Karadzic/Mladic whereabouts</b></p>	<p><b>Nezavisne Novine</b> op-ed pg 7 'Hide-and-seek' by <u>Almedic Sisic</u> – Commenting on the recent statements of <b>David Leakey and Lewis Webber</b> (saying that <b>Mladic and Karadzic</b> are not in BiH), the author sarcastically notes the two have showed they perfectly fit into BiH political mixture, that is unpredictable, contradictory and inconsistent. He highlights that if nowadays everybody knows Karadzic and Mladic are not in BiH, and then they should also all know where they are. In regard to this, he stresses: <i>"Is it possible to know something, and not knowing something else linked with it?"</i></p>
<p><b>VN on Karadzic/Mladic whereabouts: Hiding according to chetnik' principle</b></p>	<p><b>Vecernje Novosti</b> pg 13 'Karadzic and Mladic as Cica Drza', announced on cover 'Accomplice privately' by <u>D.Stojakovic</u> – Daily notes that the two most wanted Hague fugitives, <b>Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic</b>, are hiding according to chetnik's principle "one man one accomplice", owing to which reason information on their movement nobody knows. Also the fact they do not use modern means of communication (cell phones, computers and akin) makes it harder for forces searching after them to locate them.</p>



**DL: 'Ashdown is protecting Karadzic's aides?!'**

**Dnevni List**, pg 3, mentioned on front 'Ashdown is protecting Karadzic's aides?!', by Danka Polovina-Mandic – **Dusko Tomic**, a lawyer of **Momcilo Mandic** who is suspected of involvement in the 'Privredna Bank of Srpsko Sarajevo' illegalities and of being a financier of **Radovan Karadzic**, says he will contest the way the raising of indictment against his client is being stalled. Tomic says the prosecutor in charge, **Jonathan Rattle**, is deliberately stalling the process because he only submitted the indictment in English, and the reason behind all this is the plan to raise the indictment once the current High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, has left the country. Tomic explains that his client two years ago sent HR Ashdown, via the RS Finance Minister **Svetlana Cenic**, a complete documentation about Karadzic's financiers. *"We publicly call on Ashdown to appear as a defence witness and explain why he pressured Serbian judiciary to have Mandic arrested, claiming that it would result in arrest of Karadzic, because Mandic was allegedly the chief financier of Karadzic"*, says Tomic. Tomic also calls on Ashdown to submit the Prosecution all the documentation Mandic had forwarded to him and to explain why he never spoke about people who finance Karadzic, instead of pushing the whole process in the wrong direction.

**BiH PO  
supplemented  
indictment in PB  
ES case**

**Nezavisne Novine** pg 4, announced on cover 'Indictment against Sarovic and others supplemented' by A.Sisic/G.Maunaga – The BiH Court Tuesday confirmed that the BiH Prosecutor's Office (PO) Tuesday filed a supplemented indictments against **Mirko Sarovic and Momcilo Mandic in** Privredna Banka East Sarajkevo case. The supplemented indictment was also filed against **Milovan Cicko Bjelica and Milorad Govedarica. Dusko Tomic**, legal representative of Mandic, expressed surprise over qualification of parts of indictment, stressing he expected his client would be charged with organized crime, not only for office abuse and aiding war crime suspects. Tomic again refers to a letter Mandic sent to OHR and **Paddy Ashdown** through **Svetlana Cenic**, calling on HR to leave his UK address after he leaves BiH in order to be able to summon him as a witness before BiH Court (when he should explain why he was persistently presenting untruth and accusing Mandic and his bank of aiding **Radovan Karadzic**). PHR did not want to comment on this, saying it does not comment correspondence. Tomic also warns that "*Mr. Mandic witnessed a number of secret meetings between Ashdown and Karadzic during the war. if Ashdown fails to publish the names of persons and institutions protecting Karadzic, we will do so.*" (**Vecernje novosti** pg 13 'Lord, leave the address!' by V. Mitric – call on Ashdown to leave UK address available)

**EuroBlic** RSpg 3 'Mirko Sarovic remains in custody' by T.V. – BiH Constitutional Court released a press statement, saying that BiH CC Tuesday decided to reject file motions for temporary measures against **Mirko Sarovic and "Zenica prison case" Milorad Rodic, Vlastimir Pusara, Ivan Bakvic and Zoran Knezevic** (demanding transfer to another prison). BiH CC reads that Sarovic' motion for temporary release is ungrounded. **Dnevni List**, pg 2 'Mirko Sarovic's appeal rejected', not signed, **Oslobodjenje** pg 4 also reported on rejection of Sarovic's appeal.

<p><b>Croat self-rule case update</b></p>	<p><b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 4 'Trial for "Croat self-rule' postponed' by <u>A.D.</u>, <b>Dnevni List</b>, pg 4 'Trial chamber rejects new prosecution witnesses', by <u>Erna Mackic</u>, <b>Vecernji List</b>, pg 6 'Toby Robinson cannot stand witness', by <u>Dejan Jazvic</u> – The Trial Chamber in the 'Croat self-rule' case rejected the Prosecution's request to investigate additional 12 witnesses due to procedural (legal) reasons. Prosecutor <b>Eric Larsson</b> noted that in the interest of the truth, the Prosecution planned to question new witnesses, such as <b>Ivo Kulis, Toby Robinson</b> and others.</p>
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	<p><b>Political Developments/Reforms</b></p>
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<p><b>BiH Parliamentary Assembly held plenary session with regard to the Dayton Agreement's anniversary</b></p>	<p><b>RHB, Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Oslobodjenje</b> pg 3, mentioned on cover 'The time has come for change to Dayton Agreement', <b>Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 3, mentioned on cover, <b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 2, announced on cover 'Building of state to follow' by <u>M.Cubro</u>, <b>Glas Srpske</b> pg 3 'Jovic's attack on Dayton' by <u>Srna</u>, <b>Dnevni List</b>, pg 5 'Jovic belittles hundreds of thousands of victims', by <u>Danka Polovina-Mandic</u>, <b>Vecernji List</b>, pg 2 'Time to modernize Dayton', by <u>E. M.</u>, <b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>, pg 23 'No future without equality', by <u>B. Kristo</u> – Both Houses of BiH Parliament held plenary session on Tuesday with regard to 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dayton Agreement. Chair of BiH Presidency <b>Ivo Miro Jovic</b> addressed the participants of the session. Jovic stressed that DA ended the war but hasn't brought just peace. He also stated that it is important from now on to implement actions that will allow for all 3 peoples in BiH to be equal. The Chair of the BiH House of Representatives <b>Nikola Spiric</b> said that by launching the Stabilization and Association Agreement negotiations, BiH was going to face great challenges. U.S Ambassador to BiH <b>Douglas McElhaney</b> welcomed readiness of BiH authorities to carry out constitutional changes. <i>"BiH has to speak up in single voice, as united state, in order for its voice to be heard in Brussels, and BiH has to be able to meet the tasks being the EU and NATO partner state"</i>, said McElhaney. McElhaney added that U.S. Government would continue supporting BiH in its reforms.</p>
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**BiH Presidency member Tihic: Time will come when BiH will be full member of NAT. EU and OIC**

**Oslobodjenje** pg 6 'The West stopped suffering of Bosniaks', **Dnevni Avaz** pg 9 'There is no agreement on BiH membership in OIC', **Nezavisne Novine** pg 2 'BiH will be a bridge between East and West' by A.Sisic, **FENA** – BiH Presidency member and President of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) **Sulejman Tihic** expressed belief that time will come when BiH will be a full member of NATO, the European Union, but also of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), like the Republic of Turkey for instance. At the tribune entitled "BiH's position between OIC and EU" organized by the "Ilbmija" Association of the Islamic Community in BiH, Tihic stressed that political consensus, unfortunately, currently does not exist for membership in the OIC.

*"Even back in 1994 when we were able to formally apply for full membership this was not done, because at that time we were accused of building an Islamic state. Now the situation is somewhat different, but it does not matter. The constitutional and political structure in BiH is such that membership in the OIC can only be result of consensus among all her peoples",* said Tihic. He explained that BiH should be a full pledged member state of the OIC primarily due to the economic reasons, because this status would provide for BiH's access to development programmes and funds of the Islamic Bank for Development.

**EC handed  
draft SAA to  
BiH**

**Dnevni Avaz** pg 2 'In EU in 10 years?' by S. Numanovic – Representatives of EC on Tuesday finalized draft SAA text and one of provisions of this text reads SAA should be completely implemented within maximum 10 years. The draft warns BiH authorities of its obligation to cooperate with the Hague Tribunal, points on the necessity of police reform, stricter control of borders, asylum and visa regime. Most of the draft text refers to economic issues – customs, fees, privatisation of state owned firms etc. A special attention was given to the necessity of introduction of Bologna process in BiH education system. It is expected BiH would sign SAA contract by the end of Autumn next year, after which it would be ratified at parliaments of 25 members of EU, which is a process that might last up to three years.

**Oslobodjenje** pg 4 'Negotiations will start on January 25' by M. K. S. – **Dirk Lang**, the head of EC Unit for the western Balkans, handed over to BiH chief negotiator **Igor Davidovic** draft text on SAA on Tuesday in Brussels. The article reads it was confirmed the first round of official negotiations will start on January 25 and topics of the discussion will be preamble, general principles, political dialogue, regional cooperation, financial cooperation and SAA cooperation policies.

**Nezavisne Novine** pg 2 '1<sup>st</sup> round of talks on 25 January' by M.C. also covered the issue.

<p><b>VL doubts BiH Parliament will be able to enact 100-150 laws per month</b></p>	<p><b>Vecernji List</b>, pg 5 'Parliament will be enacting 150 laws a month', <u>not signed</u> – VL notes that the BiH Parliament, in order to harmonize the BiH legislation to the EU's one, will have to enact some 100-150 laws a month during the process of getting closer to the EU. However, VL is not very optimistic that the BiH Parliament can meet the requirement, given that the current composition of the BiH Parliament has in past three years been enacting some 60 laws per year. VL also warns of additional burden, namely the competence of entity and cantonal assemblies for certain issues.</p>
<p><b>Komarica with Pack: Poor return of Catholics to Banja Luka area</b></p>	<p><b>Dnevni List</b>, pg 3 'Lack of political will to help sustainable return', by <b>KTA</b>, <b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>, pg 22 'Expelled Catholics are almost not returning', by <b>E</b> – The (Catholic) Bishop of Banja Luka, <b>Franjo Komarica</b>, met with an MP in the EU Parliament in charge of South-eastern Europe related issues, <b>Doris Pack</b>, on Tuesday when he informed her about the very poor return of the Catholic (Croats) to the Banja Luka area. Both Pack and Komarica agreed that in 2005 there was a lack of political will of both the domestic and international officials to help the sustainable return and establish the rule of law.</p>

<p><b>Talks on constitutional reform to continue today</b></p>	<p><b>RHB, Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 2 'Rycroft: Compromise can be reached' – Another round of talks on constitutional changes in BIH is scheduled for Wednesday. Apart from leaders of 8 political parties in BIH US Ambassador <b>Douglas McElhaney</b> and British Ambassador <b>Matthew Rycroft</b> will be present at the meeting. Reform of BIH Presidency and BIH Parliament will be discussed at the meeting. McElhaney stated that BIH needs one voice in future negotiations with the EU and added that it is possible to reach an agreement by which BIH will have one President.</p>
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**Rycroft visits  
Banja Luka,  
discusses  
constitutional  
reform with  
RFS  
politicians**

**RHB, Pink, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni Avaz** pg 2  
'Rycroft: Compromise can be reached' – With regard to talks on constitutional changes, which are to be continued on Wednesday, UK Ambassador to BiH **Matthew Rycroft** said that Serbs were going to accept establishment of BiH President, if two Vice Presidents are to be introduced as well. Rycroft met with the RS politicians in Banja Luka on Tuesday to discuss the issue. Rycroft also said that he hoped that as the talks continue, BiH political parties' leaders were going to agree on having the Parliamentary Assembly established on the basis of recommendations given by the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission, and define state and entity authorities. *"These issues will be difficult; compromises will be necessary if we are going to reach the agreement but I am confident that a agreement can be reached and I have been encouraged by the positive and constructive atmosphere so far"*, said Rycroft. SNSD Chair **Milorad Dodik** said that the best situation would be to appoint President and two Vice Presidents. Dodik added that authorities to the BiH Presidency should be reduced. *"BiH Council of Ministers should be in charge of the issue of budget"*, said Dodik. Rycroft also met with the RS National Assembly Speaker **Dusan Stojicic**.

**BHT: BiH to have one president after all?**

**BHT** Boris Gagic – According to BHT reporter, on the eve of the continuation of talks on constitutional changes it looks very likely that BiH in the future would have one president. British and Swedish Ambassador to BiH visited Banjaluka on Tuesday, where they discussed the constitutional changes with the RS representatives. BHT reporter stated that they were not discontented with what they have heard from the RS representatives about the possibility that BiH has only one president. *"We will see how the negotiations will end, but I have heard Serb representative saying that they could accept one president in case there are two vice-presidents"*, stated British Ambassador to BiH **Matthew Rycroft**. This is the compromise solution proposed by the SNSD leader **Milorad Dodik**; he also believes that the executive authorities of the BiH Presidency should be reduced and transferred to the BiH Council of Ministers. Dodik stressed that, for the political situation in BiH, it would be the best if the future president and two vice-presidents were rotated every 16 months. But it seems that Croat parties are not ready to make significant changes in the organisation of BiH Presidency. *"We are certain that the changes on the level of BiH Presidency and Parliament will not be necessary, and that changes in the functioning of the BiH Council of Ministers will be enough"*, stated HDZ President **Dragan Covic**. On the other hand, representatives of the opposition parties are optimistic ahead of the talks on constitutional changes in Sarajevo. *"I believe that there will be some changes to the BiH Presidency, and that is a good thing"*, stated SDP's **Slobodan Popovic**.

<p><b>Dodik with Swedish Ambassador: No to abolishment of entities</b></p>	<p><b>Dnevni List</b>, pg 5 'Exclude requests about abolishment of entities', <u>not signed</u> – During the meeting with the Swedish Ambassador to BiH, <b>Lars-Erik Wingren</b>, which was held on Tuesday, the SNSD leader, <b>Milorad Dodik</b>, noted that when it came to future of constitutional reforms talks, requests related to abolishment of entities must be excluded.</p>
<p><b>HDZ leader Covic on constitutional reform talks: Issue of middle level will be raised, drawing of maps to follow</b></p>	<p><b>Vecernji List</b>, pg 6, mentioned on front 'Next up is drawing of maps', by <u>Zoran Kresic</u> – carries an interview with the HDZ President, <b>Dragan Covic</b>, in which he comments on the constitutional reforms talks. Questioned whether the issue of middle level of authorities will be raised during the talks, which is the issue that the international mediators do not want to raise, Covic says the talks about the issue will be started. Covic comments that everyone is aware that when the issue does get raised, it will mean drawing of maps, which is always a difficult job. <i>"If we are talking about 4-5 regions, than you must precisely says where the border lines go through"</i>, said Covic adding that we (probably referring to HDZ) advocate for establishment of 4 (middle level) units.</p>

<p><b>While FBiH political parties point out the need for having the BiH Ministry of Health established, RS political leaders disagree</b></p>	<p><b>Hayat Elma Kazagic</b> – Talks on constitutional changes in BiH have resulted in establishment of two new ministries; Ministry of Agriculture and Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment Protection. But many believe that BiH Ministry of Health should as well be established, says the reporter. Leaders of several FBiH political parties said that now, as BiH is to head towards Euro-Atlantic integrations, the Ministry should be established. SDP leader <b>Zlatko Lagumdžija</b> said that situation with health sector in BiH faced critical phase and that the state should support it. Party for BiH leader <b>Safet Halilovic</b> agrees with Lagumdžija and adds that Cantons cannot solve health issues on their own; they have to lean to the World Health Organization. On the other hand, several leaders of the RS political parties say that there is no need for having the Ministry established.</p>
<p><b>Party for BiH maintains its stance</b></p>	<p><b>Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 2 ‘Party for BiH maintains its stance’ – Party for BiH’s <b>Safet Halilovic</b> supports structural constitutional changes that would change the current non-functional organization of BiH at various levels. Halilovic said this party maintains its stance that BiH needs to have a single president.</p>

<p><b>RS/Serbian press: Comments on the eve of new round of constitutional changes' talks: RS parties deny McElchany</b></p>	<p><b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 5 'RS against, F BiH pro one president of BiH' by <u>V.Popovic</u> – On the eve of new round of talks on constitutional changes, dailies carry comments of politicians from RS (<b>Milorad Dodik, Mladen Ivanic, Petar Djokic, Dragan Cavic</b>) and F BiH (<b>Adil Osmanovic, Safet Halilovic and Slobodan Nagradic</b>). RS officials deny latest statement of the US Ambassador to BiH, <b>Douglas McElchany</b> (it is possible to reach agreement on one President of BiH), reiterating their claims RS cannot accept establishment of one President of BiH. Officials from F BiH support such initiative.</p> <p><b>EuroBlic</b> RSpg 2 'RS does not want president of BiH' by <u>Nedeljka Breberina, Vecernje Novosti</u> pg 4 'Serbs do not want to have president' by <u>Sl. Pesevic</u> – carry comments of Dodik, Cavic and Halilovic, along the same lines.</p> <p><b>Glas Srpske</b> pg 5 'Why fear?' by <u>Z. D.</u> – SDA's <b>Sulejman Tihic</b> expects an agreement on a single president would be reached today. He assessed the differences in stances, with regard to the Presidency, as '<i>a matter of political trades</i>' and he sees no reason why BiH should not have a single president, whose role would be of protocol's nature. '<i>No fear from CoM President, who has much greater authorities, exists and, at the same time, there is fear from the single president. I think there are no justified reasons for this</i>', Tihic said.</p>
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**US' Rosemary DiCarlo: We are encouraged with agreement on changes to BiH Constitution**

**Dnevni Avaz** pg 5 'We are encouraged with agreement on changes to BiH Constitution' by Sead Numanovic – Deputy Assistant of US State Secretary for European and Euro-Asian issues **Rosemary DiCarlo** stated in an interview to *DA* that USA were encouraged with progress of leaders of eight political parties that was reached during the past talks on constitutional changes in BiH. She noted the next year is very important for BiH, especially with regard to elections, since the elected politicians will lead BiH and reform processes in forthcoming years. She also said USA believes it is the time to transfer more authorities onto BiH, having in mind the institution of HR exists in BiH for almost ten years now. 'We are extremely satisfied with the work of **Paddy Ashdown** and we are happy **Christian Schwarz-Schilling** would replace him. He is a very active man and knows the region well. We think, as we have agreed, that more competences should be transferred to BiH authorities as soon as possible', DiCarlo said. Inset 'No link between RS and Kosovo' – DiCarlo said the final status of Kosovo has no similarities with the situation in BiH and she added that the stance of international community is clear – RS is a part of BiH and they do not want to see any changes of boundaries.

<p><b>OHR surprised over Matiajsevic' statement regarding police reform</b></p>	<p><b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 5 'OHR surprised over Matijasevic' statements' by <u>N.N.</u> – <b>Ljiljana Radetic</b>, OHR Spokesperson, Tuesday stated that the OHR is surprised over statements <b>Darko Matiajsevic</b>, RS Interior Minister, gave (that police reform would see RS MoI remain as a sub-system within security structures in BiH). According to her, the state and entities authorities have accepted three EC principles on police restructuring, adding: <i>"We cannot understand why Matiajsevic keeps presenting framework proposals for which he was told on several occasions last year those do not comply with EC principles."</i></p>
<p><b>VL says candidates for Police Reform Directorate have dubious past</b></p>	<p><b>Vecernji List</b>, pg 2 'Police reformers come from underground', by <u>Zoran Kresic</u> – The author notes that no candidate for membership in the Police Reform Directorate was proposed by any cantonal Interior Ministry, which in turn will jeopardize the Croats' position in the police reform talks. VL notes that all candidates were proposed by the entity MoIs and that some candidates have 'a rather suspicious past'. Apart from <b>Faik Lusija</b> (see OHR Media Round-up, Dec 20, 2005), VL notes that one of such candidates is a person connected to a hard felony (murder) in Bihac and that his previous surname was <b>Bobuljica</b> (he changed surname in the meantime). Other candidate with 'suspicious past' is <b>Anton Talajic</b>, who was allegedly subjected to nine disciplinary procedures.</p>

<p><b>HDZ Presidency in session: Covic on Presidency's decisions to expel Ljubic, Raguz and Merdzo, constitutional reform</b></p>	<p><b>RHB, Hayat, FTV, Oslobođenje</b> pg 3, <b>Dnevni List</b>, pg 6, mentioned on front 'Covic confirms he is retiring', by <u>Sanja Bjelica</u>, <b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>, pg 12 'Ljubic, Raguz and Merdzo expelled from party', by <u>Z. Zekic</u> – Responding to a journalist's question whether he will withdraw from the office of HDZ President, <b>Dragan Covic</b>, stated that it was 99% certain he would leave the office after the 2006 elections. Covic also informed the press that the HDZ Presidency had rejected the appeal submitted by <b>Bozo Ljubic, Martin Raguz</b> and <b>Josip Merdzo</b>, who had contested the decision of the HDZ High Court of Honour regarding their expulsion from the party. On constitutional changes, Covic noted that the HDZ would continue to participate in the ongoing talks, and he also stated that the party's position was that there should not be changes to the BiH Presidency and BiH Parliament, namely that a three-member Presidency and two-chamber Parliament should stay in place.</p>
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<p><b>Raguz: Only HDZ Central Board can decide on appeal</b></p>	<p><b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>, back pg ‘I am not informed about decision of HDZ BiH Presidency’, by <u>E</u> – Deputy Speaker of the BiH House of Representatives, <b>Martin Raguz</b>, stated for Fena that only the Central Board of HDZ BiH can take decision on the appeal which, apart from him, was lodged by <b>Božo Ljubić</b> and <b>Josip Merdžo</b>, who have been excluded from the party by the High Court of Honour of HDZ BiH. Commenting on decision of the HDZ BiH Presidency on rejecting the appeal of the three members, Raguz asserted that he was neither invited to the HDZ Presidency’s session nor has he been informed on the mentioned decision. <i>“We hold that it is only Central Board of the party which can take decision on our appeal, and all other things are breach of both Statute of the party and Standing Orders”</i>, Raguz said.</p>
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	<p><b>Economic/Social Affairs</b></p>
<p><b>BiH Presidency adopts draft BiH 2006 Budget</b></p>	<p><b>RHB, Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, Oslobodjenje</b> pg 2 ‘BiH Budget adopted’, <b>Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 8, <b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 2 ‘Proposed budget adopted’ by <u>A.S.</u>, <b>Glas Srpske</b> pg 3 ‘Draft budget was adopted’ by <u>Srna</u> – BIH Presidency adopted draft budget of BIH institutions and international obligations for 2006 at a session held on Tuesday. Proposed budget will be submitted to BIH Parliament. It also adopted the financing of project Zeljeznice 2 as well as a decision on ratification of additional loan agreement between BIH, European Community and BIH Central bank.</p>

**FBiH HoR  
discusses  
FBiH 2006  
Budget**

**RHB, Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV,  
Oslobodjenje** pg 3 'Government-proposed  
Budget amounts to 1.135 billion KM' –  
FBiH House of Representatives  
considered proposal budget for 2006 at  
a session held on Tuesday. FBiH  
Finance Minister **Dragan Vrankic** stated  
that the budget contains additional  
expenses in social segment due to  
compensations to be paid to socially  
endangered people once VAT is  
implemented. Many amendments were  
submitted to the budget so voting on  
it will be held on Wednesday.  
**Nezavisne Novine** pg 6 'Today to vote  
on budget' by R.C. also covered the  
issue.

<p><b>Malaysia would submit to BiH offer on construction of Corridor Vc in next 6 months</b></p>	<p><b>Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 10 'Malaysia would send offer to BiH in next 6 months' by <u>L. Sinanovic</u> carries that Malaysian Minister of Labor <b>Samy Vellu</b> stated on Tuesday that in the next 6 months Malaysia would submit to BiH an offer for Corridor Vc. Also, in mid January Malaysian Government's experts would come to BiH to analyze with experts form the BiH Ministry of Traffic and Communications the things that would have been done until then. Vellu agreed with Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers <b>Adnan Terzic</b> that upon the end of these analyzes a memorandum would be signed between two competent Ministries that would define mutual relations of the Governments in construction of the highway. Also reported by <b>Oslobodjenje</b> pg 2, mentioned on cover 'Malaysians want their feasibility study' by <u>A. Kalamujic</u>, <b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 4 'Agreement on participation in highway construction next year' by <u>D.Muminovic</u>.</p>
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<p><b>SDP sent into parliamentary procedure 2 proposals of law on changes and amendments to Law on VAT</b></p>	<p><b>Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 11 'SDP on VAT changes' <u>not signed</u> carries that SDP representatives in the BiH HoR have sent into the parliamentary procedure 2 proposals of the law on changes and amendments to the Law on VAT. SDP President <b>Zlatko Lagumdžija</b> proposed introduction of a zero VAT rate that would refer on basic provisions and stock-cattle feed. A proposal of SDP representative Jozo Krizanovic proposes a zero VAT rate on teaching aids, newspapers, printing industry, book publishing etc.</p>
<p><b>Rycroft: 'It is late for VAT changes'</b></p>	<p><b>Dnevni Avaz</b> pg 11 'Rycroft: It is late for VAT changes', <b>Nezavisne Novine</b> pg 6 'Non-adoption of budget will not postponed introduction of VAT' by <u>P.Klinčov</u>, <b>EuroBlic</b> RSpG 3 'Matthew Rycroft: VAT on 1<sup>st</sup> January' by <u>N.B.</u> – British Ambassador to BiH <b>Matthew Rycroft</b> stated in Banja Luka on Tuesday that the VAT would be introduced on January 1 and that '<i>it is late for any changes</i>'. Stressing that the VAT would be introduced regardless whether the entity budgets would be adopted or not he underlined that he hopes that the RS Government and RSNA would be able to respect an agreement and that the VAT would be introduced together with welfare programs that are very important in this process.</p>

<p><b>FBiH Govt. called on ITA to exempt professional literature, textbooks from the VAT</b></p>	<p><b>BHT</b> – FBiH Government called on Indirect Taxation Administration to exempt professional literature, textbooks and books as the final products from the Value Added Tax. This would also apply for newspapers and magazines when they come to market as the final products. <b>Slobodna Dalmacija</b>, pg 12 ‘Books and print media without VAT?’ also covered the issue.</p>
<p><b>SDHR Ney: Telecoms are obliged to collect RTV tax</b></p>	<p><b>BHT</b> – Senior Deputy High Representative <b>Martin Ney</b> stressed that the payment of the Radio-Television Tax is a legal obligation, and that all three telecom operators in BiH are obliged to collect these taxes. This is the reaction on HT Mostar General Director <b>Stipe Prlic</b>’s statement, in which he proposes new agreement on collecting RTV tax.</p>

**Ivanic: RS  
Govt. did  
nothing and  
it should  
resign**

**Nezavisne Novine** pg 4, announced on cover 'RS Government did not do anything and should leave' by N.Krsman – In an interview to daily, **Mladen Ivanic**, PDP President, says that he would not demand the vote-of-confidence to RS Government, adding that demands for such action by **Dragan Cavic**, RS President, are hypocritical. He claims RS Government should go by itself, since it has no parliament majority. He could not recall a single positive issue the Government has done since it assumed position. He does not want to speculate about possible participation of PDP in authority jointly with SNSD, adding that PDP would support the Government formed by SNSD.

**EuroBlic** RSpg 1, announced on cover 'Bukejlovic on a thin ice' by Rajna Radosavljevic – carries statements of **Dodik, Ivanic and Djokic**, reiterating they would not support RS Government proposal on budget and economic policy for 2006.

**Glas Srpske** pg 5 'Who wishes to win – will lose' by Z. Markovic and Z. Domazet – Dodik and Ivanic on const. talks

**Glas Srpske** pg 5 'Government without support' by Z. M. – SPRS not to support draft 2006 RS budget