

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 22/11/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Following successful talks in Moscow – Agreed delivery of natural gas by February 1; Brussels – Ivanic and Sarovic were being questioned about Orao

Dnevni Avaz: Terrifying Lagumdzija's office abuses – Amina's corruption worth fresh KM 159,170; The Hague indictee being protected in Belgrade – War criminal Mladic lives nearby Topcider military barracks; George Robertson – State with two armies cannot accede to NATO

Dnevni List: Letter of Bishop Peric to Head of pilgrimage priest Walter Rossi: Friar Zovko was forbidden to serve mass in Washington

Vecernji List: At request of Mostar Bishop Peric: Church in USA forbade Friar Zovko to serve mass

Slobodna Dalmacija: " SDA and HDZ leaders signed Platform: Forming of authority by next week

Glas Srpski: "Bosanska Idealna Futura [Bosnian Ideal Future] on US black list: Benefactors of terrorism; Banja Luka; Association of naphtha and oil product dealers request that all taxes are paid at the border, upon entering the country

Nezavisne Novine: Exclusive report: International community initiates political responsibility in RS over cooperation with Iraq – "Orao" pulls down big players; SFOR inspection in private company "Laki Pri": SFOR found weapons storage in Prijedor center; Conflict between BiH Interior Ministry inspector and owner of "Avaz" reaches its climax: Zoran Cegar runs away from BiH, as recommended by IPTF; Sarajevo: SDA and HDZ sign Agreement on coalition; Banja Luka: Five parties in partnership with SNSD

Blic: Dodik sends offer to Ivanic again, the SDS claims it has majority with the PDP; SFOR found weapon and ammunition in Prijedor; Ashdown: Mafia threats to put BiH in jeopardy

Slobodna Bosna: Country of blackmailed politicians (Foreigners in BiH holding

under blackmail Sarovic, Covic, Cavic, Silajdzic, Prlic, Vuksic...)

BH Dani: Important meetings of Communist Party of China and BiH SDP – Congresses of continuity

PIC Steering Board session in Brussels

On Thursday in Brussels the **Peace Implementation Council's Steering Board** Political Directors meet with BiH President **Mirko Sarovic** and RS Prime Minister **Mladen Ivanic** regarding the **ORAO** affair. The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, following the discussion said that the Steering Board considered *"the interim report submitted by the Republika Srpska authorities was inadequate and the investigation needed to continue with international involvement"*. The Steering Board *"told Sarovic that this was the most serious failure by the state of BiH to uphold its international obligations since the war ended seven years ago – they did not believe the RS authorities understood the seriousness of the affair"*, the High Representative said. The PIC Steering Board also underlined the need for a full and public investigation to identify those responsible, and far-reaching reforms to ensure that this never happens again.

Nezavisne Novine (p 3) reports that, according to the report of the RS Supreme Defense Council, which is based on the findings of RS Tax Administration, there are significant indications on some illegal financial transactions of the **"Orao"** Institute. **"Orao"** Institute allegedly carried out its financial transactions with foreign companies through several local banks: Razvojna Banka, Banjalucka Banka, Kristal Banka and also with FRY YU Garant Banka and ZRZ VJ Belgrade.

Nezavisne Novine has learnt from an international community source that the issue the international community is now dealing with is political responsibility regarding the **"Orao"** affair, as well as the question whether those who are responsible and who knew about **"Orao"** activities from September this year can keep their posts. The same source claims that the international community is not satisfied with

the reaction of RS authorities, especially because of the fact that they were made aware of "Orao" activities in beginning of September. The daily quotes its source as saying: *"It is a common fact that "Orao" continued with violation of the arms embargo and it is logical that it did so with the consent of the highest RS officials. Only when the shocking results of investigation carried by SFOR were presented to the RS Government and when it was told that RS may face consequences, it decided to undertake concrete steps.*

According to the interim report of the RS Supreme Defense Council, forwarded to the BiH Presidency, OHR, OSCE and SFOR, the officials of "Orao" Institute were well aware who the final recipient of the equipment is.

At the session the High Representative also reported on the discussions regarding essential upcoming **economic reforms** in BiH. There was agreement that unless the state and entity governments accelerated the implementation of root-and-branch economic reform there would be serious consequences for all BiH citizens. There is a need to unify the customs system to end duplication and fraud, to introduce VAT at the state level to simplify taxation, and to reduce and harmonise business regulation across BiH. The PIC Steering Board was united in stating that these measures were necessary at the state level to promote a genuine single market that would attract foreign investors

*"The Steering Board congratulated the **entity ministries of education** on their education reform strategy, and fully supported the five pledges. They commended their determination to keep politics out of education. Focused and prioritised reform was essential to improve the quality of education, and for the sustainable return of refugees, economic renewal and reconciliation. The Steering Board welcomed the implementation plan for the March 5 2002 Interim Agreement on Accommodation of Specific Needs and Rights of Returnee Children. They agreed that BiH has a clear*

obligation as members of the Council of Europe quickly to adopt a state-level Law on Schools in line with European standards. They reiterated their opposition to parallel structures, and concluded that BiH needs to develop a common core curriculum that is consistent with European standards and to rationalise existing structures in order to make financing and management more efficient,” said the PIC Steering Board in a Communique issue following the session.

The High Representative and European Union Special Representative (EUSR), **Paddy Ashdown**, on Thursday addressed the **EU Political and Security Committee** in Brussels. The High Representative in his speech stressed the overriding importance of tackling organized crime in BiH and in the region in general. Organized crime now represents a grave threat both to the future of these countries’, to their prospects for a successful transition, and to the security and well-being of the European Union. *“We have to conquer this problem of organized crime, for the sake of our own communities, and because left unchecked, it could unravel all we have achieved in BiH and the region,”* the High Representative said.

The BiH Presidency Chairman **Mirko Sarovic**, BiH Council of Ministers Chairman **Dragan Mikerevic**, and BiH Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** held a joint press conference at the Sarajevo airport late on Thursday following their return from Brussels. They specified the tasks standing before the BiH state and entity’s authorities in the coming period including those related to the education and economic reforms discussed at the PIC Steering Board session in Brussels.

(**Oslobodjenje**, p 6, mentioned on the front page: “Sarovic and Ivanic were being questioned about Orao”, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 2: “Representatives of US, Great Britain fiercely criticized Sarovic and Ivanic over Orao”, **Slobodna Dalmacija**, p 15, **Dnevni List**, p 3, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 3, **Blic** p 2)

Upon his return from Brussels, the Chairman of the BiH Presidency, **Mirko Sarovic**, stated the following: *"The Ambassadors of EU countries insisted on prompt delivery of the final report on "Orao" investigation, report which would clarify all details that were not clear or non transparent in the interim report"* (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 3, **Blic** p 2). **Sarovic** stated that economic reforms and reforms in educational system were also discussed at yesterday's PIC meeting. According to Sarovic, it was concluded that certain progress was reached but that BiH authorities still have much to do, i.e. establish legislative acts in these spheres.

Glas Srpski (p 3) also reports on the PIC session in Brussels, but it focuses the attention to the statements of Chairman of BiH Presidency, **Mirko Sarovic**, Chairman of CoM, **Dragan Mikerevic**, and RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**. According to the daily, RS PM stated that BiH needs more reforms than suggested at PIC session. Glas Srpski quotes Ivanic as saying: *"I expressed two doubts, one concerning single customs service and the other about VAT at BiH level. As for the customs, we have harmonized legislation and all we need to do is to implement it. That is much better than to start from the beginning all over again. The same model should be applied on VAT: same legislation and collection of VAT by the entities."*

In a seven-page dossier on why some BiH politicians, businessmen and policemen are so obedient to the international officials, Suzana Mijatovic, Suzana Andjelic and Senad Avdic wrote in this week's **Slobodna Bosna** that the international community was actually blackmailing some of the prominent current BiH officials including **Jadranko Prlic, Dragan Covic, Mirko Sarovic, Dragan Kalinic, Ivan Vuksic**...over their involvement either in organized crime or war crimes.

Establishment of the BiH Defense Ministry

NATO Secretary General **George Robertson** held a press conference in Prague on Thursday following the first working

day at the Alliance's Summit in the Czech capital. Answering a question asked by **Dnevni Avaz's** (p 2, mentioned on the front page: "A state with two armies cannot accede to NATO") journalist Sead Numanovic, Roberstosn said that BiH could not expect accession to the Partnership for Peace Program all until it has established a joint command and control over the armed forces, as well as a single defense ministry at the state level. He added that otherwise it would be a precedent that one country was entering the European military integration with two armies. (**Dnevni List**, p 5, "A condition for BiH to join NATO is full cooperation with the Hague" carried similar report)

The BiH Federation Defense Minister, **Mijo Anic**, believes that the establishment of a single defense ministry at the BiH state level was the best option in terms of both proportions of the defense structures in the country and the formation of the future joint BiH army. IIN a statement with FENA, Anic said that he expected the BiH defense ministry to become operation next year. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 6, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 8)

Post-election deals/developments

Vecernji List (page 2, by Dejan Jazvic, "SDA and HDZ signed joint Platform: Agreement on creation of state Government"), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (front and page 16, by Zlatko Tulic, "SDA and HDZ leaders signed Platform: Forming of authority by next week") and **Dnevni List** (front and page 4, "Long announced agreement signed: SDA and HDZ officially signed agreement on cooperation") carry that **Sulejman Tihic**, the SDA President, and **Barisa Colak**, an acting President of HDZ, signed in Sarajevo yesterday the Platform for formation of parliamentary majority for democratic reforms in BiH. The signed document contains grounds for strengthening of the state authority and it also contains 6 basic tasks that **Paddy Ashdown**, the High Representative, tasked the new BiH authorities with. VL says that the HR has not seen the Platform yet, however, Tihic and Colak believe that all those who want the building of BiH as a state will support this document. SDA and HDZ believe that it is necessary to establish the BiH Government, which apart from the current Ministries would also have the Ministry of Defense, Justice, Interior, Finances etc. Tihic and Colak

called on other parties especially on Party for BiH to join them and accept the Platform. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 8, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 4, mentioned on the front page)

Dnevni list (p 4) carries that, after the SDA and HDZ BiH signed the agreement on party cooperation, **Sulejman Tihic** stated that the SDA advocates that **Haris Silajdzic** be the new BiH Government designate and added that any other Party for BiH candidate is out of question. A high-ranking HDZ official confirmed that **Barisa Colak** is the HDZ's candidate for the position.

Representatives of DNS, SNS, RS Democratic Party and Alliance of People's Revival, have yesterday officially joined the SNSD initiative named Agreement on Partnership for development and changes (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 6, **Glas Srpski**, p 2, **Oslobodjenje**, p 10, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 4, **Blic** p 2, FRY **Nacional** p 11). The SNSD leader, **Milorad Dodik**, told press conference yesterday that parties which support this agreement have total of 37 delegates in the RS National Assembly and they would represent a strong political block in the RS NA. Dodik stressed that five mandates are missing for creation of majority in the RS NA and called PDP leader, **Mladen Ivanic**, to join the program, in order to avoid crisis in the process of establishment of new RS authorities. He stressed that he has no interest to take any of the posts in joint BiH institutions, as offered to him by PDP.

Nezavisne Novine (p 6) also carry reports of Serbian and Montenegrin press that a secret meeting between SDS and PDP took place in Sokolac on Tuesday night and that the following was agreed at the meeting: minority Government will be established and the new Prime Minister designate will be PDP's **Zoran Djeric**. According to media reports, PDP leader, **Mladen Ivanic**, wanted **Dragan Mikerevic** to be the new PM designate, but SDS insisted on appointment of Djeric. According to this agreement, the minority Government would be composed of Ministers from PDP, RS Socialist Party and Democratic Patriotic Party. There would be no SDS ministers in the

Government but SDS personnel would keep key positions in most profitable companies and other institutions. **Zoran Djerić** did not want to comment on the media speculations regarding secret meeting in Sokolac. He said that negotiations took place and that they will continue until the inaugural session of the RS NA, that will most likely take place on 28th November. According to Djerić, it is still very early to talk about future PM designate, but PDP will insist that the post be allocated to its member.

The SDS Spokesman, **Dusan Stojicic**, said that no secret meeting took place in Sokolac and that those who want to cause conflict between PDP and SDS feed such information to the media. Stojicic also said at a press conference yesterday that SDS has provided majority in the RS National Assembly (**Nezavisne novine**, p 6, **Glas Srpski**, p 2, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 4, **Blic** p 2, FRY **Nacional** p 11).

Nezavisne Novine (p 7) carry a report on how much money political parties have spent during the election campaign. Representative of "Partner" Polling Agency, **Srdjan Puhalo**, says that voters cannot be attracted only with huge numbers of posters and billboards. To support this, Puhalo mentioned the campaign of PSDC, led by **Ranko Bakic**, which was very aggressive and yet reached nothing. According to Puhalo, voters are irritated over the fact that such huge amounts of money were spent on campaigns. The SNSD did not want to reveal how much money they spent on the campaign, as they have not yet completed the report. According to the statements of political party leaders, this is how much they spent for election campaign: SDS – 350 000 km, PDP – 300 000 KM, RS Socialist Party – 70 000 KM, DNS – 40 000 KM, SNS – 30 000 Km, SRS – 30 000 KM.

With regard to the meeting that took place in Zagreb on Wednesday between **Barisa Colak**, an acting HDZ President, and **Ivo Sanader**, the President of the HDZ Croatia, **Vecernji List**

(page 3, by **Robert Bubalo**) carries **Branimir Glavas** from HDZ Croatia as saying: " *There is nothing and there will be nothing disputable in the relations between HDZ Croatia and HDZ BiH. The reasons due to which there have not been meetings at the higher level lately, probably lay in the fact that both parties were occupied by inter-party elections, and that the elections in BiH were taking place.*" VL says that on the other side HDZ BiH wants a better cooperation. VL carries **Niko Lozancic**, the HDZ Vice President, as saying: " *I am not too satisfied not only with the relations with HDZ Croatia but with all other Croatian parties.*" Lozancic says that HDZ BiH is trying to have as many contacts as possible with HDZ Croatia for the sake of the national interest of Croats in BiH.

Federation-related affairs

Dnevni List (page 7) carries an interview with **Zlatko Lagumdzija**, the SDP President, who says that with regard to the removal of **Munir Alibabic Munja**, the Head of FOSS, **Paddy Ashdown**, the High Representative, removed Alibabic without arguments. Lagumdzija says that the HR allegedly said that Alibabic was doing his job great, however, his information were leaking. Asked whether he (the HR) has evidence that Alibabic's information really leak the HR stated that he does not. Lagumdzija goes on to say that Alibabic was removed and wonders as to why **Dragan Covic**, a Croat members of the BiH Presidency, against whom criminal charges were filed was not removed as well as **Mirko Sarovic** due to the Orao affair. Lagumdzija concludes: " *Obviously we have a problem with the application of the same criterion and principles for different politicians.*"

"**Ashdown** was requesting from the foreign primarily US diplomats the removal of the (former FOSS Director) **Munir Munja Alibabic** yet since his arrival in BiH. He had no support for such the move until the October elections, but after the elections it was clear to everybody that Alibabic would go either by Alija Izetbegovic or Ashdown's will," **Slobodna Bosna**'s Editor in Chief Senad Avdic quotes a foreign diplomat

in his this week's opening editorial. Avdic wrote that he however had not got any explanation why Alibabic's removal had been Ashdown's priority, and he was only told that the High Representative had come from London with an order to do so.

According to **Dnevni Avaz** front-page story (continued on p 11), the acting BH Telecom Director **Amir Spahic**, loyal to SDP leader **Zlatko Lagumdžija**, has this year paid on the account of the Sarajevo-based Ars Creativa Marketing Company owned by Lagumdžija's wife Amina a total of KM 159, 170 for a job given without any public tender.

All Croat(ian) dailies (page 4 of Jutarnji List, front page and page 3 of VL, DL cover page & page 3, last page of SD) carry that one of the best-known **Herzegovinian Franciscans, friar Jozo Zovko**, found himself in front of the closed door of a Croat(ian) Catholic Mission's church in Chicago. By not allowing him to hold a mass, the ban by Bishop **Ratko Peric** dated back in 1998, who had limited Zovko's pastoral activities except in the place of his residence as he labeled Zovko as a "disobedient priest", has been re-activated. Bishop Peric additionally punished Fra Zovko in 1994 because Zovko continued to do confessions. Fra Zovko heads processions on the Hill of Appearance in Medjugorje several times a year which is something Bishop Peric can in no way influence. Carrying a chronology of the "Herzegovinian Franciscans case", VL comments that the Bishop's decision will cause a world's religious scandal that will additionally compromise the "Herzegovinian case". Fra Zovko has also been invited to bless a chapel that is built in Pentagon on the site of the plane crash on September 11 2001. DL quotes Washington priest, reverend Gerard Pett, as saying that Bishop Peric has been motivated by "political" reasons as a result of the dispute on the Medjugorje appearance.

War crimes

The head of the Hague tribunal's office in BiH, **Refik Hodžić**,

said on Thursday that Hague tribunal's Chief Prosecutor **Carla Del Ponte**, during her visit to Belgrade, had handed over an amended indictment for the former commander of the Serb Army, **Ratko Mladic**, to the deputy chief of the Yugoslav Army General Staff, General **Branko Krga**. *"All other stories about the alleged indictments which Del Ponte had brought to Belgrade are pure fabrication. It is known exactly how the indictments are handed over and the chief prosecutor is not a postman who would be carrying them around personally,"* Hodzic said. (**Nacional** p 3)

Serbian Prime Minister **Zoran Djindjic** told a press conference on Thursday that *he "does not know"* whether **Carla Del Ponte**, chief prosecutor of the Hague tribunal, had delivered any new indictments during her visit to Belgrade, and dismissed her claims that she knew where General **Ratko Mladic** was staying as speculation. Pointing out that he had not met the Hague tribunal's chief prosecutor, Djindjic said that the claims about Mladic residing in Belgrade were *"speculation, as usual"*, and that *"this is an international topic that is being heated up"*. (**Nacional** p 3, **Vecernje Novosti** p 2, **Blic** p 3)

Vjesnik (p 1 and 2), **Jutarnji List** (page 4), **Vecernji List** (page 12), **Dnevni List** (cover page & page 3), **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p 2) carry that the ICTY Prosecutor's Office on Thursday assessed that a new trial in the **"Blaskic case"** is not justified adding that it would take the ICTY Appeal Council 3 to 4 weeks to hear witnesses and consider new evidence on the grounds of which it is to make a decision on his appeal. Prosecutors stated that the Statute and Rules of the ICTY do not give the Appeal Council authority to order a new trial at this moment. Prosecutor Farrell claims that new evidence do not change the state of facts and has even assessed that some mitigating defence evidences even make Blaskic's position more difficult. Intelligence report by the then Chief of HIS, Miroslav Tudjman, that indicate to other culprits for the crimes in the Lasva valley, has been discarded as *"unsubstantiated"* by evidence. **Florence Hartman** is quoted by DL as saying the discussion on the case is still

underway.

SFOR discovers weapons storage in Prijedor

SFOR identified storage with huge amount of weapons and ammunition in a private company "Laki Pri" in Prijedor settlement of Urije. SFOR announced that weapons were found during a routine check up. The owner of the company, **Dragan Dragojevic**, stated that neither he nor his employees knew anything about the weapons. He said that the entrance to the room in the storage where the weapons were found, was camouflaged with wooden boards and that he did not know there is one more room in the storage (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 2, **Glas Srpski**, p 3, **Blic** p 7, **Vecernje Novosti** p 5).

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Thursday, 1900)

- 7th anniversary of signing of the Dayton Agreement
- Peace Implementation Council unsatisfied with the report on Orao case
- NATO invited 7 states from southeast Europe to joint it
- Achieved agreement with Gazexport on continuation of gas delivery

FTV (1930)

- Plan of education reforms in BiH presented; priorities of economic reforms established
- SDA and HDZ leadership signed document for basis of parliament majority for democratic reforms
- New annex of the agreement for prolongation of gas delivery to BiH till February 1 2003 signed in Moscow

RTRS (1930)

- Brussels – Ashdown in his statement emphasised as imperative fight against crime
- Sarovic upon his return from Brussels – Ambassadors insist on final report in Orao case
- BiH cannot joint Alliance with two Ministries of Defence, stated Robertson on the summit in Prague

- SF0R found larger quantity of weapons in Prijedor