OHR BiH Media Round-up, 22/7/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Fresh problems at the border with Croatia – UN and IPTF ordered withdrawal of the SBS from the Kostajnica border crossing; At a celebration near Posusje – Mladen Ivankovic attacked

Dnevni Avaz: General against Deputy Minister – Ajnadzic accuses Buljubasic; A serious incident near Posusje – Former policeman attacked Mladen Ivankovic

Jutarnje Novine: Tensions in Kostajnica

Dnevni List: At the people's celebration "Ilija's Hill 2002" near Posusje – Attack prevented on a presidential candidate Mladen Ivankovic

Vecernji List: Carla Del Ponte against Blaskic's liberty

Glas Srpski: Fresh tensions in Kostajnica

Nezavisne Novine: Border dispute between Bi9H and Croatia – IPTF ordered withdrawal from Una

Blic: Petar Djokic: "There will be no dividing of BiH"; Upon the IPTF order, the State Border Service, team Kostajnica, moved 50 meters back; Males: "The RS police is ready to bring the Croatian police back to the initial positions"

FRY Nacional: If the Law allows, the Socialists will candidate their chief: the SPS party – Milosevic for the President of Serbia again

Ljiljan: Affairs – Arms, Am Sped, Bralo, CIPS, Telecom: Lagumdzija and 40 bandits

Fresh tensions over Kostajnica border crossing issue

The Director of the BiH State Border Service, **Slavisa Vukovic**, confirmed that the representatives of the UNMIBH and IPTF had ordered a SBS team at the Kostajnica border crossing to step back 50 meters in the area between the rivers of Una and Uncica. *"In my opinion, the people from IPTF threatened our*

border crossing team, after which the SBS member were forced to withdraw for 50 meters," Vukovic said. The BiH Presidency Chairman, **Beriz Belkic**, said he hoped the BiH Council of Ministers would find a resolution for the Kostajnica problem at an extraordinary session scheduled for Monday. With this regard, the BiH Foreign Ministry has sent a diplomatic note to the Republic of Croatia. (**Oslobodjenje**, front-page and pages 4-5, **Dnevni Avaz** – p 2, **Jutarnje Novine** – p 4, announced on the front-page, **Vecernji List** p 2, **Jutarnji List** p 2, **Vjesnik** page 1, **Vecernje Novosti –** p 13, **Blic –** p 11, **FRY Nacional –** p 11)

Both Banja Luka dailies also report on the current situation in Kostajnica (**Glas Srpski,** cover page, **Nezavisne Novine,** cover page and p 3)with regards to the border dispute between BiH and Croatia. The RS Government Press Bureau announced that the RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic,** sent the following order to the RS Interior Minster, **Dragoljub Jovicic:** *If Croatian forces cross river Una, the RS police should, within one hour, establish the previous situation, that is to put the bridge in Kostajnica from which it withdrew on July 13th under its control."* Dramatic situation in Kostajnica developed after the announcement of Croatia that its police and border service will cross to the right bank of Una and set up a border crossing between Una and Uncica. The situation got even more complicated when members of the BiH State Border Service withdrew from the bridge, under the pressure from IPTF. The RS Prime Minister Ivanic assessed that the IPTF overstepped its mandate as it got involved into the inter – state issues and it has no mandate to do so. Over the weekend, the citizens of Kostajnica gathered at the bank of Uncica river in a peaceful protest. **Glas Srpski** recalls that Kostajnica has become a bone in the RS throat on July 30th 1999, when the then member of BiH Presidency, **Alija Izetbegovic** and Croatian President, **Franjo Tudjman,** signed the Agreement on Borders. The SDS Spokesman, **Dusan Stojicic,** stated that it turned out that SDS was right when it requested the RS police to remain at the border crossing until the border issue is resolved. The Chairman of

the BiH Presidency, **Beriz Belkic,** stated for **Nezavisne Novine** (p 3)that members of the BiH State Border Service will remain at the checkpoint between Una and Uncica rivers until the BiH Council of Ministers decides on its final stand towards the issue.

The Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, Dragan Mikerevic, excluded on Sunday a possibility that any incidents occur at the border crossing between BiH and Croatian near Kostajnica. Mikerevic assessed that the border dispute had to be resolved through a dialogue between the two countries, and that the problem itself could be overcome by building a joint border crossing between the rivers of Una and Uncica. (**Oslobodjenje** – latest news p 36)

"Kostajnica: a 50 meters long dispute between BiH and Croatia. That is exactly how the firm positions of the two states can be described on where will be placed the containers of their border services," Husein Orahovac wrote in the **Dnevni Avaz** Commentary of the Day (p 3).

Mladen Ivankovic attacked at a people's celebration near Posusje

Dnevni List (front and p5) and **Vecernji List** (p2) report that a member of HDZ and a former municipal and senior police official from Posusje, **Zvonko Kukic,** attacked the leader of Working for Prosperity party and a candidate for BiH Presidency **Mladen Ivankovic** at a public fiesta near Posusje. According to the papers, Kukic entered a tent in which Ivankovic and his friends were sitting, threatened Ivankovic and went on to attack a TV cameraman trying to get through to Ivankovic. The incident was calmed down thanks to cool heads of the owner of the tent and party's officials. DL carries both sides of the story, a reaction by Working for Prosperity which condemns the incident and Kukic's version who says that he got revolted with election campaign of Ivankovic's party which was, according to Kukic, distributing promotional material thus spoiling the public fiesta. DL tried to get a

comment from responsible official of Posusje police but failed to get one. (**Oslobodjenje** – p 3, announced on the front page, **Dnevni Avaz** – p 2, announced on the front page)

Veteran's Law

Jutarnje Novine (p 7, announced on the front-page) report that **the caucuses** of the constituent peoples in the BiH Federation House of Peoples are expected to meet on Monday and discuss further destiny of a draft veteran's law proposed by **Munir Karic**, a deputy to the House, which was on Friday rejected by the BiH Federation Government.
"It is my impression that the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are interested not in any fairness but just in how much the veteran's law will cost the tax payers in BiH," the BiH Federation Minister for Veteran's Issues, **Suada Hadzovic**, told **Oslobodjenje** (p 6, announced on the front page).

"The Law on Veteran's Issues has brought the current authorities into an unpleasant situation. If they pass the law breaking the budget for several hundreds of millions of marks, they will not get (necessary) international financial institutions' support of $100 million, and if they do not pass it, they are risking that the veteran's population turn its back to them at the October elections," *Ibrahim Prohic* wrote in the Oslobodjenje In Focus editorial (p 2).

Chetnik gathering in Manjaca

Both Banja Luka dailies carry reports on All Serb gathering in Manjaca (near Banja Luka), organized by the Ravna Gora Movement for the Serb Homeland and Banja Luka Eparchy (**Glas Srpski,** p 3**, Nezavisne Novine,** p 2).The gathering begun on Saturday and continued on Sunday, with a liturgy and revealing of the monument of **Uros Drenovic.** Representatives of RS War Veterans Association and RS Ministry for War and Labor Victims attended the ceremony and together with the representatives of the Cabinet of the RS President, **Mirko Sarovic**, laid wreaths on the monument. **Nikola Kavaja,** man who attempted to assassin **Josip Broz Tito** and who spent more than 20 years in US prisons

attended the gathering. **Momir Covic,** member of the Ravna Gora Chetnik Movement, with a head office in Brcko, stated that the gathering in Manjaca was organized by the communist wing of SDS, which wants to control this movement at any price.

BiH Federation Army General Nedzad Ajnadzic: It would be the best for Ferid Buljubasic to resign

General Nedzad Ajnadzic has recently made a decision to terminate his professional engagement and leave the BiH Federation Army. In an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (front page, p 5), he speaks about his dissapointment, difficult situation and parallelisms in the BiH Federation Army and Defense Ministry. *"The resolution of the key issues will obviously have to wait for the second Defense Minister and his Deputy,"* Ajnadzic said adding that "it would be the best for Ferid Buljubasic, the current Deputy Defense Minister, to resign," due to his failure to make more concrete steps in abolishing parallel structures.

Pre-election news

Milorad Dodik sent letter to RS Tax Administration Director, Milica Bisic

Nezavisne Novine (p 5)reports that the Chairman of the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), **Milorad Dodik** addressed a letter to the RS Tax Administration Director, **Milica Bisic,** in which he said the following: *"I want to address you personally and tell you that you can count on full and unconditioned support from the SNSD and me personally in a difficult fight against corruption in the RS. Even though I disagree with the measures brought by the RS Government with regards to the tax policies, I want to express my support to the determination you showed in carrying out tasks entrusted to you."*

Socialist Party candidate for RS President Petar Djokic claims that RS President should not be from SDS

The RS Socialist Party (SP RS) candidate for RS President, **Petar Djokic,** stated that if SDS remains in power, the

pressure of the international community will grow (**Nezavisne Novine**, p 4).Answering to a question as to whom would he appoint for the RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic** or **Milorad Dodik,** Djokic said that both of them want the position and that it is realistic to expect that one of them will be the Prime Minister. Djokic also stated that an idea that current structure of BiH is only temporary should be abandoned and that the international community should prevent actions of some politicians, such as **Haris Silajdzic,** who want to abolish the RS. (**FRY Nacional –** p 11 and **Blic** – p 3carry similar reports)

New Croatian Initiative in Banja Luka

FRY Nacional (page 11)reports that the NHI party established the Municipality Board on Saturday in Banja Luka. The President is Borislav Bjelkanovic and the Deputy President is Marko Cosic. The Banja Luka Municipality Board of the NHI party will work on increasing the number of members in Banja Luka, the return of displaced Croats, respect of human rights, business and property safety and realization of the Constitutional changes.

International Community

Oslobodjenje carried a **SENSE** news agency report (p 3) according to which the **EU Council of Ministers** is expected on Monday to note that BiH is a potential candidate for the EU membership and underline its strong commitment to the future of BiH.

All the Croat(ian) dailies carry respective reports (**Dnevni List** p17, **Vecernji List** front and p9, **Slobodna Dalmacija** p3, **Jutarnji List** p6 and **Vjesnik** p2) that the ICTY Prosecution, answering to an appeal submitted by HVO General **Tihomir Blaskic's** lawyer **Ante Nobilo,** assessed the appeal as ungrounded saying that the first degree verdict was correct in concluding that Blaskic is personally and responsible as a commander for expulsion of Muslims from the Lasva valley.

Following a letter that President of NHI **Kresimir Zubak** sent to the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** (see Cropress summary 20 and 21 July, 2002) asking him to get involved in the process of (non)appointment of the Federation Finance Minister, **Slobodna Dalmacija** (p15) carries an interview with Mr. Zubak in which, talking about the letter to the HR, says that he does not know what would a reaction of Mr. Ashdown be like expressing hope that the HR would give support to their requests. Questioned as to who has the signing authority for financial transactions in the Federation Government after former Minister **Nikola Grabovac** has been removed, Zubak says that those persons are **Alija Behmen,** the Federation PM, **Sefika Hafizovic,** the Federation Deputy Finance Minister and **Mijo Anic,** the Federation Defence Ministeradding thatfinancial transactions couldbe executed without Anic's signature. On the same issue, Zubak says that Grabovac was removed so the real culprits could have a control of funds. Questioned to comment on recent attacks on members of NHI (Grabovac, Anic, Zubak), Zubak says that it is all a part of pre-election games with SDP and SBiH in main roles and goes on to say that these two parties, when it comes to attacks on Croats, do that in order to prove their Bosniak and Muslim affiliation before the electorate. Zubak went on to accuse SBiH of blocking the work of the Aliance and that Federation institutions are being abused to control companies owned by Croats.

Following an interview that a former SDHR **Matthias Sonn** gave to Dnevni Avaz in which he said "*we broke Ante Jelavic's gang*", **Vecernji List** (p2, by Ilko Brabaric) carries an editorial in which the author says that this *clinteaestwood-like statement is one of the most tactless statement made by a foreign diplomat in BiH.* Barbaric acknowledges that some HDZ members used national issues as an excuse to profit from it but heavily criticises Sonn's statement on *the so-called lack of right of Croats* saying that the "Croat issue", Sonn was in charge with, started to be solved through tanks and SAS raiding the Hercegovacka Bank imposition of illegal

appointment of of MPs in the Federation House of Peoples, murder of Jozo Leutar and the farce that followed it… Finally Barbaric notes that Sonn fails to see bandits like Karadzic, Mladic, Abu Hamza, Mostar shells and Bosniak rifles for Americans.

Interview with Goran Bilic, HNC Minister of Interior

Vecernji List (front and page 5) carries an interview with the Minister of Interior of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton (HNC) **Goran Bilic** in which he talks about topical issues. Questioned to comment on the project "One City – One Police", Minister Bilic says that the project has a future and that the project would eliminate all the differences on the ground thus creating a professional and free-of-politics police force in Mostar. Regarding the case of Mostar secret ammunition caches, Bilic fears that there might be attempts to present the case to the public as something of smaller importance and adding that without a co-operation with the Federation MoI and MoD the investigation would suffer. In that context Bilic believes that the Federation Government in Sarajevo will be give in to the pressure of the public and relevant international factors so the truth as to who produced and stored the ammunition is finally revealed. Questioned whether he would launch a police investigation into cases of murders of Bosniaks in HNC between 1994 and 1998, the initiative which was restarted by the Cantonal Prosecutor **Mirsad Resulovic,** Minister Bilic stresses that the murder cases from the aforementioned periodare still being worked on by the CID not questioning the Resulovic's initiative. What Bilic does mind is Resulovic's failure to initiate a similar request aimed at solving of cases where Croats and Serbs were victims of murders. At the end of the interview Bilic talked about the case of the car bomb that went off in Mostar in 1997 saying that people who have been identified as culprits are members of El Mujahedeen unit and that the public mentions that members of this unit threatened to shoot down presidential aircrafts during the recent Sarajevo summit between leaders of BiH, FRY and Croatia.

Without collective refugee centers in the RS by the end of the year

The RS Government PR Office issued a statement saying: "The Ministry for Refugees and DP's has made a significant progress in 2002 regarding the implementation of the Property Laws and Reconstruction of Devastated Housing Units within BiH". According to the preliminary reports for the first six months of this year, the percentage of the implementation of the Property Laws was over 50 % in the RS. The RS Government also points out that a progress has been achieved in closing the collective centers within the RS, explaining that there were 74 collective centers at the beginning of 1999, and only 17 collective centers at the end of May this year. The RS Government points out that it is planned to close all collective centers by the end of this year. (**Blic –** p11, **FRY Nacional –** p 11)

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Sunday, 1900)

- UN Mission orders SBS to withdraw from bridge on border crossing Kostajnica
- Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers Dragan Mikerevic on Sunday played down the possibility of incidents on the border between BiH and Croatia at Kostajnica
- UN spokesperson Kristen Haupt said that IPTF's action was fully in accordance with the agreement signed between BiH and Croatia
- BiH Council of Ministers to hold extraordinary session on Kostajnica on Monday

FTV 1 (1930)

- Financial police launches investigation in Postanska Banka
- Topic: Election campaign in BiH preceded by numerous affairs
- UN Mission orders SBS to withdraw from bridge on border

crossing Kostajnica. SBS members moved 50 meters on the border crossing

- SBS deputy director Tomislav Mihalj said that Council of Ministers will discuss the problem of Kostajnica at its session on Monday

RTRS (1930)

- UN spokesperson Kristen Haupt said that IPTF's action was fully in accordance with the agreement signed between BiH and Croatia
- RS PM Mladen Ivanic informed Chairman of the Council of Ministers Dragan Mikerevic that IPTF has overstepped its mandate since it is not authorized for inter-state issues.
- Chairman of the Council of Ministers Dragan Mikerevic said there was no agreement between RS officials and IPTF
- UN Mission orders SBS to withdraw from bridge on border crossing Kostajnica
- SDS said that latest events in Kostajnica proved SDS's point that the RS police should have stayed at the border crossing until signing of the agreement on regulation of the border between BiH and Croatia in Kostajnica