

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 23/9/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Federation TV to sue Miss BiH Board for bringing in Jadranko Prlic to the show

Dnevni Avaz: Safet Halilovic – I will suggest that defendants in the Pogorelica case be allowed to stand trial out of detention

Vecernji List: Bosnian jails prevent Croats from eating pork

Dnevni List: Petritsch – new Austrian foreign minister?; Bobetko's Defense Team – Croatia is losing self-respect

Glas Srpki: Mesic under the magnifying glass of The Hague; "Storm " shaking Clinton

Nezavisne Novine: Europe on bicycles; Scandal surrounds new selection of Miss BiH

Blic: 1,115 000 ballots incorrectly printed; two persons day in an explosion in Budva

Vecernje Novosti: Steven Mayer: They may change the borders

Nacional: Carla Del Ponte: It's a shame that the Serbian and RS authorities protect Mladic and Karadzic

BiH State-level developments

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (p. 2), the BiH Minister for Civil Affairs and Communications, **Svetozar Mihajlovic**, said that he hopes that the **Agreement on Dual Citizenship** between BiH and FRY will be signed on Thursday in Sarajevo. *"We are also hoping to sign an Agreement which would allow the citizens of the two states to cross the border between BiH and FRY without a passport, and only with ID cards, will be signed as well"* Mihajlovic said, adding that he hopes that the delay in this matter, which was caused by the controversial

statement of Vojislav Kostunica about the RS, will be overcome in the coming days.

In an interview with **Vecernje Novosti** (front page), **Steven Mayer**, a professor of National Defense at Washington University, said that the NATO did not save the Balkans, but that the Balkans saved the NATO and American credibility. According to him the Balkans borders are not real and inevitably have to be changed. *"Bosnia does not function, and that is clear to everyone who seriously looks at it,"* Mayer said.

Federation Affairs

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (front page), the Federation President, **Safet Halilovic**, said that he will suggest that defendants in the **Pogorelica case** be allowed to stand their trial out of detention. *"I don't think this would set a dangerous precedent,"* he said, explaining that he received a petition signed by 2,800 residents of Gradacac, who demanded that basic human rights and dignity of Bakir Alispahic and other indicted persons from Pogorelica case is respected. *"I must say that it is my obligation to receive citizens' petitions especially if we are talking about nearly 3,000 signatories...I, however, want to stress that everything I will do in this case will be done in close cooperation with the Federation Defense Ministry."*

Vecernji List (front page, by Eldina Medunjanin) reports that the trial of **Munib Zahiragic**, a man charged with disclosing confidential information about possible terrorists in BiH to organizations that are believed to be linked with international terrorism and the former AID (former Bosniak intelligence service), has started before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court (SCC). VL reiterates previous speculations that the case might reveal involvement of other AID agents in the scheme and that the indictment against Zahiragic is the strongest argument that Al Qa'ida was active in BiH. It is interesting to note that Zahiragic requested the SCC that the process be open to public but the notion was denied because some confidential documents of the former Bosniak intelligence

service could in a process be disclosed.

Vecernji List (front page 3, by Zdenko Jurilj) carries an article on the alleged difficult position of **Croat inmates in BiH prisons**, saying that the Federation Human Rights Ombudsman reported on their status three years ago, providing detailed descriptions of their mistreatment. Noting that verbal insults, mental abuse, and physical violence of Croat inmates are usual in Zenica prison, the author adds that Croat convicts are even not allowed to eat pork, allegedly because the management of prison fears disease. Investigations that were conducted so far showed no results, because of the refusal of prison management to co-operate and the fear of inmates. According to the daily, institutions of Federation authorities are warned that all forms of ethnic discrimination are tolerated because of mono-ethnic structure of prison management staff.

Vjesnik (page 2) reports that because of the *“forced islamisation of Croats in Zenica prison and surgical treatments”* (NB: see Weekend Cropress, 22 Sep), HDZ BiH requested an urgent investigation of this case.

In a statement for **Oslobodjenje** (p. 6), the Federation Justice Minister, **Zvonko Mijan**, rejected the allegations of abuse of Croat inmates, and accused the HDZ of hijacking this issue for political purposes. **“We in the Federation Justice Ministry will continue doing our job and all well-intended criticism will be accepted,”** said Mijan, adding that there is absolutely no evidence of any form of mistreatment of inmates on national basis.

Dnevni Avaz (p. 2) reports that the Federation government established a inter-ministerial working group, which will control and audit all monthly reports issued by the **Federation Intelligence Service** (FOSS). The group, which will be comprised of Ministers of Justice, Interior, Finance and Defense and their deputies, will also analyze and approve all

FOSS request for close intelligence support.

OHR Activities/Reactions

The **People's Forum of Srebrenica** sent on Sunday an open letter to the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, urging him to grant returnee status to Serbs in Srebrenica. *"The forum wants to know why the Serbs have not been granted the status when they returned to Srebrenica after the 1995 events and after spending three years as refugees. The Srebrenica Serbs had to leave their homes and property in 1992 because of the war, in circumstances similar to those in which the Bosniaks left the town three years later,"* the letter says and points out that most of the local Serbs played no role in the events which took place in July 1995. According to reports compiled by the forum, around 1,000 Serb families live in Bosniak homes in Srebrenica today and, in line with legal decisions adopted by Ashdown's predecessors, they are being treated as "internally displaced persons". *"With this status they do not have the right to apply for donations or any reconstruction aid and they have not been granted other rights enjoyed by returnees belonging to other ethnic groups the letter says. According to the forum, the number of destroyed or damaged Serb homes in Srebrenica is proportionally much higher than the number of destroyed Bosniak homes.. We believe that a just solution could move many things in a positive direction and that the only just decision is to grant returnee status to the Srebrenica Serbs."*The letter says that 70 per cent of the forum members are Bosniaks, 25 per cent Serbs and 5 per cent others. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Dnevni List** p. 4)

Dnevni Avaz (p. 2) reports that the **Kuwaiti Finance Minister**, Jusuf Hammad Al-Ibrahim, will arrive today in a two-day visit to BiH, where he will meet with the BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, **Azra Hadziahmetovic**, and the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**. Al-Ibrahim is also scheduled to travel to Zenica for talks with the management of BH Steel.

The **Association of People of Eastern Hercegovina** today strongly protested against the "indolent behavior" displayed by High Representative **Paddy Ashdown**, UN mission head Jacques

Klein and the anti-terrorist team of the Council of Ministers, *"who failed to take any steps to provide security for the returnees to eastern Hercegovina"*. The letter was written after the destruction of a recently rebuilt mosque in the village of Kljuc, near Glamoc. The association urged the High Representative to take energetic steps and replace the chief of the Gacko municipality and Gacko candidates at forthcoming elections. The association urged Klein to take steps against the [local] police authorities which still employ a number of perpetrators of war crimes.

In a press release, the **SDS** condemned in strongest possible terms, the destruction of the mosque in Kljuc near Gacko. SDS assessed this incident as an act directed at the RS and all its citizens. The SDS requests that all RS law enforcement agencies conduct an investigation and bring perpetrators to justice. (**Glas Srpski**, p. 4)

Glas Srpski (p. 4) carries an article dedicated to the High Representative's decision to annul the appointment of two judges from the RS to the BiH Constitutional Court. The authors of the article, **Gojko Dakic and Milenko Sajic**, argue that Bosniak vital national interests cannot be jeopardized simply because no Bosniak judge has applied for the position in the BiH Constitutional Court. *"The IJC insisted that the vacancy for this position be re-advertised because a very few candidates applied for the job, but again no Bosniak candidate applied."* According to the paper, the OHR supported the decision of the Bosniak members of the RS NA Constitutional Commission to veto the appointment of judges Simovic and Lukic. However, despite the fact that the RS representatives informed the OHR that the appointment process was carried out in accordance with the OHR's rules and regulations, Ashdown decided to annul the appointments. Glas Srpski argues that in this case Bosniak vital national interest is not jeopardized and illustrates this with the fact that the Bosniaks vetoed the appointment process after the two judges from the RS had

been appointed. *"This means that Bosniaks felt jeopardized with the delay. Had the Bosniak national interests been really jeopardized, they could have vetoed the appointment process at least at three points: 1) At the session of the RS NA Collegium, which discussed the RS NA agenda. The session was attended by the RS NA Constitutional Commission Chairman, Miroslav Mikes who said that the appointment of judges would be discussed at the RS NA session, which took place on September 25th and 26th; 2) At the RS NA session when deputies discussed the agenda on which Bosniak representatives voted too; 3) During the discussion on the Report, submitted by the Commission for Selection and Appointment, which had taken place before the RS NA discussed the appointment of judges Simovic and Lukic."*

Glas Srpski furthermore suggests that nothing in this whole process was carried out in accordance with foreseen procedure and that the letter, which the RS NA Constitutional Commission Chairman, Miroslav Mikes, sent to the OHR's Legal Department, can be taken as the best illustration for this. The letter states that the appointment process was carried out in accordance with the OHR rules and that the vital national interest clause was not forwarded to the RS NA Constitutional Commission but only to the OHR and that the Commission only received the copy of the letter, which Bosniak members of the Commission sent to the OHR.

Economy

Commenting on the recent decision of the BiH Council of Ministers on **Liquid Fuels Quality**, the BiH Minister for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, **Azra Hadziahemtovic**, said that the quality control will be conducted by market inspectors, who will also control all accompanying documentation of imported fuels.

Speaking at the **Circle 99** round table discussion, the president of FIPA BiH, **Mirza Hajric**, said that been has moved from being 186th country in terms of incoming foreign

investments to 130th place. He, however, noted that foreign companies are still reluctant to invest larger sums of money in BiH due to ill-regulated system, lack of security and long bureaucratic procedures for registering companies. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 4)

In an editorial in **Dnevni Avaz**, Eldar Dizdarevic writes that the position of BiH in terms of foreign investments is quite alarming, as only in the past year, foreigners invested in the country ten times less than in the Croatian economy, for example, in the same period. *“Foreign investments are the only real foundation upon which we can build the economic future of the country. If they fail to come, there will be no development, growth, nor better life. Economists say that next year will mark an upward trend in the overall foreign investments, as some of the key state infrastructures (e.g., Elektroprivreda, Telecom) will be up for sale. This is something that BIH officials need use well and try to attract greater amounts of foreign capital, and also keep the trend in the coming years.”*

Vecernji List (page 2, by M. Stankovic) reports that an unemployment rate in BiH is over 40%. About 600, 000 people in BiH are employed and 25% of them are employed in the public sector. The number of persons, who are employed in industry, has been reduced for 400,000, compared to a pre-war data. Out of a total number of unemployed persons, 62% of them are highly educated persons and most of them are young persons, who want to leave BiH and go to developed Western countries.

War Crimes

Glas Srpski reports on its **cover page** that the Informative – Documentation Center “Veritas” claims that it would not be a major surprise if, in the near future, the current Croatian President, **Stipe Mesic**, is indicted by The Hague Tribunal. “Veritas” recalls that during 1991 and 1994, Mesic was the *“first man of the Croatian Parliament and was one of the*

highest officials in Croatia in the period mentioned."

Washington Times reports that the ICTY is deciding whether or not to start an investigation against the former US President, **Bill Clinton**, and the Ambassador **Richard Holbrooke**, for their role in the "Storm" operation. In a commentary published in the daily, Jerry Cuhner says that it is only a matter of time when the American officials will have to appear before the Tribunal. Cuhner claims that "Storm" operation was used as a model for some American actions in Afghanistan. (**Glas Srpski**, cover page, **Nezavisne Novine**, p.7, **Vjesnik**, **Dnevni List**, **Vecernji List** and **Jutarnji List**).

All Croat(ian) dailies and the **RTRS** report very prominently about the Croatian **General Janko Bobetko**, who has been indicted by The Hague Tribunal for war crimes against Serb civilians in Krajina. **Dnevni List**, **Vecernji List**, **Slobodna Dalmacija**, **Jutarnje List** and **Vjesnik** carry numerous letters of support to Bobetko by state officials and associations. **Vecernji List** notes that the Croatian government will ask the Constitutional Court to review the charges and determine whether or not they are in line with the Constitution, which will *"simply buy more time and put the ICTY warrant on hold"*. The dailies also quote the ICTY Prosecutor's spokesperson, **Florence Hartmann**, as saying that Croatian authorities have no other option but to fulfill Croatia's international obligation and extradite the general. (front pages in **Dnevni List**, **Vecernji List**, **Slobodna Dalmacija**, **Jutarnji List**, and **Vjesnik**. Belgrade's **Vecernje Novosti** and **Nacional** also report on the issue).

Vecernji List (page 5, by S. Stipovic) quotes **Ivo Lozancic**, the former Commander of 111th HVO Brigade from Zepce, as saying that The Hague has lost its credibility when it issued a bill of indictment against the retired Croatian General Janko Bobetko. According to Lozancic, The Hague is being increasingly politicized and it serves as an instrument for exerting pressure against certain states. Lozancic added that,

*'at The Hague's request, the Cantonal Court in Zenica is conducting an investigation against 10 members of the Headquarters of the 111 HVO Brigade from Zepce, while instead of launching the investigation against **Djevad Mlaco**, a President of the Bugojno War Presidency, who was telling in public during 1993, 1994 and 1995 that he expelled and killed ustashas, the Cantonal Prosecutor gives up the investigation against Mlaco..'*

Election Activities

Oslobodjenje (p. 3) reports that authorities in the Federation Parliament's House of Peoples, RS NA Council of Peoples, and the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples should be constituted within a month after the confirmation of results of October elections and without a delay. The daily notes that this new rule set by the Election Commission will ensure a timely formation of legislative and executive authority at all levels in the country.

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that the **Federation TV** will sue the **Miss BiH Board** for failing to inform the FTV in a timely fashion that the leader of the ProEns party, Jadranko Prlic, will be the main sponsor of Saturday's show. Board of editors at the FTV believes that Prlic abused the election of Miss BiH for his personal pre-election promotion.

President of FRY and candidate for the President of Serbia, **Vojislav Kostunica**, said on Saturday that he recognises borders created by internal division of former Yugoslavia, and that his statement given in Mali Zvornik did not refer to the separation of the state, but Serbian nation, which should be overcome. *"I care about all people, but I care a bit more about those living in the RS, and I am also obliged to that under the Agreement on special and parallel relations between FRY and RS. My task his also to see in which way such division can be overcome"* – said Kostunica. (**BHTV 1, Glas Srpski p. 3, Dnevni List** front page)

In an editorial in **Vecernji List** (page 2), Gorden Knezovic

writes that the 'cause of verbal attacks on the BiH's sovereignty of most influential Serbian politicians, first of all of **Vojislav Kostunica** and **Zoran Djindjic**, are Serbian pre-election reasons and the intention to keep Kosovo within the international law framework of Serbia, at an example of the BiH's integrity. Pragmatic internal-political rhetoric of leading Serbian politicians serves them in the pre-election campaign, but also in the international policy in their lobbying for the issue of Kosovo, which has not been resolved yet. It is perfectly clear to both Serbian leaders that there is no an international consensus on the change of borders in southeast Europe. Politicians from the RS have used Kostunica and Djindjic's statements in their pre-election campaign, however, they have not helped themselves on an international plan with the statements on the RS way to Europe independently from BiH.'

"If the SDA and its leaders continue emphasizing that their party's priority is the abolishment of the RS, the DNS and I will advocate the survival of the RS, and if necessary, ask for independence and secession," **Dragan Kostic**, the **DNS** candidate for the RS President, said over the weekend (**Blic p. 2**)

"The BiH Presidency has handed over the foreign policy to the Council of Ministers, i.e., to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. But this should be a responsibility of the Presidency," **Branko Dokic**, **PDP's** candidate for the Serb member of BiH Presidency, said at an election gathering on Saturday. "Had the Presidency completed its job, it would never happen that the Minister of Foreign Affairs gives a statement saying that an unjust peace was signed in Dayton," Dokic said.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Germany holds Elections

- Day without cars – a holiday for pedestrians and bicyclists
- Second phase of “stand by” arrangement in December
- Derby Zeljaznicar – Sarajevo points divided

FTV

- As a part of the campaign for cleaner air and less noise, more than 100 million Europeans did not drive cars today
- 5 thousands inhabitants of Moscanica in Zenica are refusing location of regional waste site near the settlement
- Former High Representative in BiH, Wolfgang Petritsch, leading the list of Social Democratic Party at Austrians federal elections
- Israeli army continues destruction of the Jasser Arafat's seat

RTRS

- RS became part of European ecological initiative celebrating day without cars.
- RS Government decides tomorrow on performer of works on RTV building.
- Political committee of the Council of Europe recommended acceptance of FRY in this institution.
- Hague Tribunal tomorrow decides on temporary release of Milan Martić.