OHR BiH Media Round-up, 28/6/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: The reconstruction of Mostar Old Bridge started – Italians began reconstruction, Turkish authorities consider the ceremony scandalous

Dnevni Avaz: The BiH Government provided 30 million KM – 3,000 dismissed soldiers to start receiving their severance pays as of today; Reconstruction of a Mostar symbol started – the Old Bridge links BiH with Europe

Jutarnje Novine: The Italian President marks beginning of the Mostar Old Bridge reconstruction; The BiH Federation Defense Minister will not resign – The payment of compensation to 3,000 demobilized soldiers starts today

Dnevni List: Old Bridge is a symbol of peace and restoration of BiH; OHR ienvestigating team enters Mostar SOKO?

Vecernji List: The reconstruction of Mostar Old Bridge started; Ashdown interested in Leutar case

Glas Srpski: Redzo Omerbasic died in the Tuzla Hospital – Antrax caused the death

Nezavisne Novine: The reconstruction of the Mostar Old Bridge started; Livno Canton; exploitation of forests in an HDZ way

FRY Nacional: Prosecutor Rade Terzic refused cooperation with Carla del Ponte; Someone must go to jail because of the Pavkovic affair

Blic: Milorad Vucelic – "Milosevic is an important capital these days"; Milorad Dodik – "Partnership for victory" against unsuccessful authorities

Vecernje Novosti: General Milan Djakovic exposes details of the "Communication Bureau Operation"

The reconstruction of Mostar Old Bridge started

At a ceremony held in Mostar on Thursday, the Italian President **Carlo Azeglio Ciampi** symbolically marked the

beginning of the reconstruction of the town's Old Bridge, The ceremony was also attended by top BiH and international officials including the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**. (**Oslobodjenje** – front page, p 6, **Dnevni Avaz** – front page with photo of Ashdown, p 2, **Jutarnje Novine** – front page, p 3, **Nezavisne Novine** – p 3)
However, according to Oslobodjenje (front-page, p 6), the Turkish authorities felt insulted because the Turkish President had not been invited to attend the ceremony. *"The ceremony represent a scandal in which I will not participate,"* Turkish Ambassador to BiH **Ahmet Erozan** said.

All Croat/ian dailies (**Dnevni List, p.13, Jutarnji List, p.2, Vjesnik, p.2, Vecernji List, p.3, Slobodna Dalmacija p.7**) report on visit of the President of Italy **Carlo Azeglio Ciampi** to Mostar when he officially marked the start of stone carving works on reconstruction of the arch of Mostar's Old Bridge. "*The destruction of the Old Bridge was an insult to our feeling for culture. That barbarian act, as well as the destruction of Buddha stones in Afghanistan should serve as a warning that the lack of cultural and ethic values can lead only toward a bad road. A lot has been achieved after signing of the Dayton agreement in regard to establishment of democracy in the state and establishment of inter-entity cooperation, but that is not enough. We must take care of minority protection and combat against crime, and move forward on the road of progress*" Ciampi said.

In relation to the issue, **Dnevni List (page 2,** by Miso Relota) carries an editorial in which the author says that the European officials attending the yesterday's ceremony have again sent a message that BiH is on the crossroads, either to European integration or on the road to hopelessness. "*Young people know the answer. Politicians who lead us are officially in favour of (*road to European integration), *but they deny their "European" efforts on daily basis. I wonder how long will we stay silent and accept the laziness of our politicians who made us serve them and not vise versa*", says Relota.

According to **Dnevni Avaz** (p 2), in Mostar, the Italian President **Ciampi** met with **Ashdown**. *"We discussed the future of BiH and the need that justice and rule of law are established and new jobs created in the country,"* Ashdown said following the meeting.

In the course of his one-day visit to BiH, **Ciampi** in Sarajevo met with the members of the BiH Presidency members (**Dnevni Avaz** – p 2)

Ashdown visits Foca; other OHR activities

Dnevni Avaz (p 3 – Sead Numanovic) reports that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, on Thursday visited Foca, where another "Town Hall" meeting with citizens was held.
The **OHR** has called on **BiH government leaders** to end delays in passing crucial economic legislation. The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, in his inaugural address to the BiH Parliamentary Assembly, defined his priorities as "first justice, then jobs, through reform." He went on to say that in modern economies, governments are responsible for creating the conditions in which investors and entrepreneurs can create jobs. He agrees with those who say that in BiH, economic legislation is often inadequate and contradictory. This discourages rather than encourages private enterprise and foreign investment. (**Oslobodjenje** – p 15, **Jutarnje Novine** – p 7, **Nezavisne Novine** – p 5))

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, today issued two Decisions amending the *BiH Law on Identity Cards of Citizens of BiH* and the *BiH Law on Central Registers and Data Exchange.* The amendments clarify the contents of the new BiH identity card. In particular, the amendments remove the Entity reference, in response to recommendations made in a recent Council of Europe report on the protection of personal data of citizens. (**Dnevni Avaz** – p 10)

Dnevni List (page 2) carries article in which stands reaction

of workers of SOKO company from Mostar to statement of acting Manager General **Josip Gojak**. Gojak said that bringing problems in SOKO company to public could only harm the company and that he asked for help of Federation Government several times but he did not get any answer. The daily said that the last appearance of former General Manager **Dragan Covic** (highly positioned official of HDZ BiH) was a sign of seeking after a solution, because it is obvious that **OHR's Anti-Fraud** team might take the case on investigating SOKO. The daily learned that Federation Government and local authorities will do nothing regarding SOKO case before the elections. In their open letter addressed to Manager Gojak workers wrote: "*…We have called for help all relevant state institution, the International Community, including the High Representative Paddy Ashdown. We convince you that we will be persistent in seeking the truth about managing SOKO since 1992, when the destruction of the company started, and reasons for current strikes and social instability were created.*"

Dnevni List (page 5) across the whole page and **Vecernji List** (front and page 2) carry parts of a letter signed by seven Croat officials from Federation Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry and cantonal Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry to the High Representative in which they ask removal of the Federation Minister **Behija Hadzihajdarevic**, accusing her for misuse of position and ethnic discrimination. The articles say that Croat officials have accused Minister Hadzihajdarevic for sabotage and ignoring companies with Croat majority, while in the same time she was favouring Bosniak majority companies. The letter was sent after meeting of the mentioned officials on 26 June in Mostar.

Slobodna Dalmacija (page 15) and **Vecernji List** (page 4) carry report from trial to six Croats in the Leutar case. Saying that the trial was postponed for Thursday because none of the six legal defenders have come to the trial, the dailies add that High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** was intrigued by the

case, on the occasion of his visit to Siroki Brijeg, when he met mother of Zeljko Cosic, one of the accused. Saying that Ashdown contacted wife and mother of Cosic several times, Slobodna Dalmacija learned that Ashdown is determinant that this process should finish very soon, because he thinks that it is unallowable to spend so much time on this process.

In an article in **Slobodna Bosna** (pp. 10-11), Asim Metiljevic writes that the recent statement by Paddy Ashdown that he will not have political favorites at the upcoming elections was provoked by the [Haris] Silajdzic's bragging that the entire International Community stands behind his return to politics. Metiljevic also reports that, in addition, Ashdown sent a private letter to Silajdzic warning him to pay attention to his statement because it was meant specifically for him. "*The decisiveness and persistence with which the High Representative is trying to stress that the IC does not have favorites at the elections could be interpreted precisely as a signal that Silajdzic does not have the international support*."

BH Dani carries a lengthy interview with **Paddy Ashdown** (by Senad Pecanin) titled "I am the High Representative, not God" in which he discusses his ideas and concrete moves which he is planning to take in order to change the ill-functioning Dayton BiH. "*According to my information from well-informed sources, Ashdown is well aware of all shortcomings of the Dayton structure of BiH and is planning to undermine it with his project of 'municipalization'. Apart from knowing what the meaning of 'municipal' is in English, not too many people are aware that with this project, Ashdown is planning to eliminate the existing structure, which is obviously a part of the problem, not a part of solution.*" Apart from this issue, Pecanin further writes, the only other serious question he asked Ashdown was about the Aliminij Mostar, which he wisely evaded. "*I would love that my intuition is wrong, but I am afraid that Ashdown is profoundly aware of the domestic crime*

and international interests in this and that he will also adhere to famous Tito's principle of strictly sticking to the law [as Tito used to say in order to evade potential national issues]."

The demobilized soldiers to start receiving their severance pays as of today

Dnevni Avaz (front page, p 3) reports that the BiH Federation Prime Minister **Alija Behmen** and the Deputy Finance Minister **Sefika Hafizovic** have directly from the Budget ensured the rest of 30 million KM needed for the payment of the compensation to 3,000 demobilized soldiers. *"The payment will start today but due to technical reasons it will be continued on Monday,"* Behmen told the newspaper. (**Oslobodjenje** – p 5, **Jutarnje Novine** – p 5, **Vecernji List** – front and p 3)

The International Community and the Balkans – The Balkans still represents a threat to the US interests

International and local press prominently report that there is a substantial theoretical possibility that the US withdraws its peacekeepers from UN missions in BiH and Kosovo in an attempt to obtain immunity from prosecution by the newly created International Criminal Court. **The New York Times** (Serge Schmemann), **Financial Times** (Judy Dempsey), **Independent** (Kim Sengupta) and **BBC News** report this morning that the leading members of the UN Security Council met last night in order to find a compromising solution of the dispute between the US and Europe which threatens to endanger the peacekeeping operations across the world, in particular in BiH, where the deadline for their extension expires on Sunday. This time however, **John Negroponte**, the US representative to the UN, said, the US will not consider another extension. "*A veto is definitely and option if the issue is not resolved in a way that provides the kind of immunity that we believe that non-party states to the ICC that send troops to international peacekeeping missions should receive,*" he said. **Financial Times** reports that the US has insisted that the UN SC includes two resolutions in a new mandate for BiH exempting US

peacekeepers from prosecution. "*The first would exempt only US forces in BiH, while the second one would exempt peacekeepers in all UN-mandated operations,*" the daily said, noting however, that SFOR in BiH is not dependent on a UN mandate. "*It is up to NATO*," one senior NATO diplomat was quoted as saying.
European diplomats and human rights groups across the world, however, warn that such blanket immunity would send a clear signal to the countries that have not recognized the court that they are free of its jurisdiction. **The NY Times, BBC, Independent** also addressed the issue as well as **Vjesnik** (correspondent from London, Jasna Zanic Nardini) and **Dnevni Avaz (**Sead Numanovic)

Oslobodjenje (p 3) carries a **SENSE** news agency report that the US President **George Bush** has extended the validity of the presidential decree, according to which the US national interests (through its participation in the international peacekeeping efforts) are still under threat in the area of western Balkans (BiH, Kosovo, Macedonia).

BBC News reports that refugee aid in Kosovo and Croatia may have to be halted next month because the cash is running out. According to the UNHCR chief, Ruud Lubbers, all UNHCR programs would have to stop by the end of July unless donors provided extra $4 million. "*Over the past two years, we have finally seen significantly larger numbers of people going home. They deserve our help more than ever*."

Two Grabovac's assistants suspended for a year; Grabovac appears before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court

Oslobodjenje (p 3) reports that a disciplinary commission of the BiH Federation Government decided to terminate professional engagement of the Assistants to the removed BiH Federation Finance Minister **Nikola Grabovac**, **Tihomir Curak** and **Krunoslav Jelic**, in the Ministry and suspend them from the engagement in any other administrative body for a year due to

their involvement in AM Sped case.
The former BiH Finance Minister **Nikola Grabovac** appeared on Thursday before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court for a hearing, which was, however, postponed for July 10, because Grabovac's lawyer had been engaged too late and was therefore not in position to well prepare for the proceeding. (**Oslobodjenje** – p 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p 9)

In an opening column in **Slobodna Bosna**, Senad Avdic, argues that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, should not expect the Federation Parliament or any other institution in the entity to select **Grabovac**'s successor, as Grabovac was not removed by them but by Ashdown. "*The future minister, said Ashdown via his spokesman, should be young, wealthy, special, educated, free from any criminal aspirations, apolitical and an NHI fanatic*". Avdic writes that "*Such experts of all profiles and colors, of domestic and foreign origin would always, upon return to BiH, stop by the High Representative or the head of the OSCE mission in order to check whether the pay of their drivers is still 3-4,000 KM and their spokespersons around 10,000 EURO…Since the Federation Finance Minister is condemned to the pay lower than the thinnest guard in the OHR and as he (the minister) is not permitted to steal, we are doomed ad infinitum to settle with Franjo Franjic and similar characters.*" Avdic also notes that Ashdown's argument about competent diaspora has already been proven flawed, as Toby Robinson gathered a number of such experts around herself, and "*15 months later, she has not revealed anything more than what we already knew.*" "*Mijo Anic and Grabovac toppled the Croat self-rule in two-three months, while Robinson's team decided to draw the investigation until retirement. Why? Perhaps because their pays were too low and they did not want to procrastinate. Why would Robinson hurry*?"

Ahead of the seventh anniversary of the Srebrenica tragedy – 7,500 bodies exhumed so far

According to **Oslobodjenje** (pages 4-5), 7,500 bodies have been

exhumed so far from the mass and individual graves in the region of Podrinje, which for itself speaks about how big the Srebrenica tragedy was. The seventh anniversary of the massacre will be marked from July 5-13 this year. According to the plan, the central manifestation including the religious burial of the remains of 10,000 victims is expected to take place at the locality of Potocari. The associations of the Srebrenica victims' families have accepted the solution for a framework plan of the Potocari Memorial center including the Accumulators Factory. However, it is still not certain when the construction of the center will start since there is not a single mark on the Foundation's account.

"No one can say that all the Srebrenica-related project were dishonorable. However, no one can deny either that enormous amounts of funds initially intended for Srebrenica have been spent dishonorably allegedly without any knowledge of those who have been allocating them. And it is primarily about the internationals on the seven-year temporary engagement in BiH, as well as their local people of trust," Almasa Hadzic wrote in the **Dnevni Avaz** Commentary of the Day.

Dnevni Avaz (p 9) reports that the BiH Federation President Safet Halilovic and Vice-president Karlo Filipovic will at the next session of the BiH Federation Government request an investigation to be launched into how the funds provided by the Dutch Government for Srebrenica has been spent.

"Illegal" distribution of land in eastern Bosnia

In a 5 page article in **Slobodna Bosna** titled "Serbification of the RS", Suzana Andjelic writes that some of the recently revealed documents indicate that RS authorities suggested "humane population transfer – 1,5 million – in order to resolve the Serb question in BiH." According to Andjelic, this plan originally devised by the former Yugoslav president, Dobrica Cosic, was openly supported by the SDS, HDZ and latently by the SDA, while in the post-war period, the RS government was directly involved into activities which obstructed return and sought to ensure that Serbs displaced from the Federation stay in the RS. **Uros Makic**, the president

of the Banja Luka regional board of Refugee Association: *"[RS government and the RS National Assembly] uses various association supporting the settling of Serbs in the RS to foster and sustain the illegal construction in order to bring the original owners of land and the International Community before the fait accompli. Members of religious associations who build religious buildings on the land where they never existed are also involved in this."* **Slobodna Bosnaquotes Hamzalija Becic** of the Kotorsko Refugee Association, **Fadil Banjanovic**, the president of the Tuzla Regional Board of Refugee Association and **Ahmet Ibrisimovic** of the Association of "Sustainable Return", all of whom blame the OHR of virtually sanctioning the illegal allocation of land in eastern Bosnia. Although this allocation, as Andjelic writes, is almost systematic in the RS, the Federation is also not spared of this problem. **Vujadin Berberovic** of the Mostar Board of the Federation Refugee Association says that this problem is especially prevalent in Herzegovina. *"On the [Hepok-owned] land one can see a number of settlements, Bosniak and Croat. These are all ethnically clean neighborhoods from Salakovac, via Capljina and Mostar to Stolac."*

The eastern part of the RS territory will not be united with Serbia, a political analyst

FRY Nacional, page 5. "The secret plan of CIA in projection of the former Chief for the Balkans, Steven Myers, according to which one of the crisis options is uniting the eastern part of the RS to Serbia, is actually not a secret plan", Tomislav Kresovic, the political analyst of the BINA agency, said. He also stated "this option, however, will definitely not come true, and at the same time, the project of regionalism within BiH gets stronger, in order to weaker its entities in time and to "merge" those into a united state to hold BiH under a control in a much easier way, since it is the most dangerous Islamic country in the Balkans and in Europe". He says "every attempt to redefine the borders would be a threat with war, therefore the pressure of USA and NATO on weakening the political, military and economic relations between the RS and Serbia is getting stronger and stronger".

Another dismissal in RS Finance Ministry

Nezavisne Novine (page 5)reports that the RS Government, at the session held yesterday in Banja Luka, dismissed **Miodrag Kudic**, Assistant to the Finance Minister for fiscal issues. The Head of the RS Government Press Bureau, **Cvijeta Kovacevic,** explained that the RS Government established that Kudic is also responsible for the situation in the RS Customs Administration.

Pre-election news – SDA nominates Desnica Radivojevic for the Serb member of the BiH Presidency

All Sarajevo dailies and Nezavisne Novine – p 4 report that the **SDA Presidency** nominatedthe Chairman of the Srebrenica Municipal Assembly, **Desnica Radivojevic**, as the party candidate for the Serb member of the BiH Presidency.
Glas Srpski (page 3)carries the statement of the RS President, **Mirko Sarovic,** with regards to the SDA initiative to change name of RS. Sarovic stated in Visegrad: *"The SDA initiative is political marketing and by such ideas, the SDA and other Bosniak parties are trying to attract more votes. The one who tries to change the name of RS gives us a right to ask for change of name of BiH. If something is determined by international agreements, it has to be accepted, whether one likes it or not."*

Glas Srpski (page 2)reports that the RS Socialist Party (SP RS) established its candidate list for the upcoming October elections. On behalf of SP RS, **Petar Djokic,** will run for the RS President and **Dragutin Ilic** for the BiH Presidency. Bearers of the lists for six constituent units are: **Dragoljub Kitovic (**Prijedor), **Miroslav Mikes** (Banja Luka), **Dragutin Skrebic** (Teslic), **Nedjo Djuric** (Bijeljina), **Budimir Acimovic** (Zvornik) and **Slobodan Mrdic** (Trebinje).

On the same page, **Glas Srpski** reports that the recently established party, Union of People's revival, will also have candidates at the elections: **Miroslav Cabo** from Serb Sarajevo is the candidate for BiH Presidency, while the President and founder of the Party, **Mirko Banjac,** will run for the RS

President.

Nezavisne Novine (page 4)reports that the President of DNZ, **Fikret Abdic Babo,** signed the candidacy yesterday in the detention unit of the Karlovac (Croatia) prison for the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency. Abdic's candidacy will be forwarded to the BiH Election Commission on Monday.

The daily also reports (page 5) that the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD) will announce its candidates today. According to **Nezavisne Novine** sources, **Nebojsa Radmanovic,** will be SNSD candidate for BiH Presidency and **Milan Jelic** for the RS President. The President of the Alliance, **Milorad Dodik,** will be the bearer of the list for the Constituent Unit 1.

Blic, on page 3 carries out the statement of **Milorad Dodik** who stated "the SNSD party initiated the establishing of the "Partnership for victory", which will gather important political parties and individuals with an aim to change the existing structure of the authorities through elections". Dodik points out that even a part of the current RS authorities can join the "Partnership", and the SNSD party will contact a significant number of the parties, except as he said "the ultra-nationalistic options". (The same idea Dodik presented in an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** – p 5)

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Thursday, 1900)

- President of Italy Carlo Azeglio Ciampi on Thursday officially marked the start of stone carving works on reconstruction of the arch of Mostar's Old Bridge. (2)
- The three-member BiH Presidency met on Thursday in Sarajevo with Italian President Azeglio Ciampi (.4)
- Former FBIH minister of finances Nikola Grabovac apepared today before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court regarding the Am-sped case. (1.5)

FTV 1 (1930)

- The Steering Board of Zenica's BH-Steel Company said on Wednesday that no move was made in resolving the workers' problems (3)
- Problems in privatization of "Alhos" do not wane. (2)
- The dismissal wages for 3,000 dismissed soldiers of the BiH Federation Army will be paid by middle of the next week at the latest – Hafizovic (.4)