OHR BiH Media Round-up, 4/11/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Munir Alibabic reveals how was OHR preparing Lagumdzija's political elimination – Ashdown's people and Tokic attempted to persuade Munja to cooperate

Dnevni Avaz: Following a strike from RS – The Federation oil distributors request for counter-measures

Dnevni List: Decision of The Hague Appellate Council: New trial to Tihomir Blaskic?

Vecernji List: In a period less than three hours two bombs exploded in Mostar West: Explosions reverberate in Mostar again

Slobodna Dalmacija: Children killed in pulled down school: Shaken Italy said good buy to its angels

Glas Srpski: More people become allergic to flour – Expensive food the only cure; No trace of Maksimovic

Nezavisne Novine: Interview with Munir Alibabic: "Ashdown removed me because I was fighting criminals

Vecernje Novosti: Zivkovic about Iraq affair – High price for backroom dealing; UN experts on violation of embargo on weapon trade: Shady dealings from Belgrade; Wife and son of Bin Laden arrested

Blic: Petroleum cheaper; Everyone who takes bribe will be dismissed; New town on Drina – Slobomir wipes borders

Ljiljan: Due to Orao, Lijanovici affairs, the international community is thinking about to remove Sarovic, Covic

Alibabic's removal

Two officers from the High Representative Paddy Ashdown's office in the middle of the election campaign attempted to

force (persuade) Munir Munja Alibabic (the removed FOSS Director) to join a campaign of discrediting the SDP BiH leader, Zlatko Lagumdzija, said an Oslobodjenje front-page story written by Azhar Kalamujic (story continued on p 7). Alibabic said in a statement for Oslobodjenje that their request had been an ultimatum-like one, and that he had been requested the same also by two self-styled Ashdown's advisers. He did not want to specify the names. He also did not want to specify names of the BiH, as he said, terrorist newspapers, which had engaged the Speaker of the BiH House of Peoples (Sejfudin Tokic) to negotiate with Munja and convince him to join a group working on Lagumdzija's political elimination.
In a lengthy interview with **Nezavisne Novine** (pages 4-5)the former Head of the FOSS (Federation Intelligence Service) **Munir Alibabic** said that the main reason for his dismissal is the deal which the High Representative for BiH, Paddy Ashdown, made with Alija Izetbegovic and Haris Silajdzic. "*A couple of days ago the High Representative informed about his decision that none of the officials, who have been appointed to executive positions, will be removed or transferred. However, judging by things that appeared in the media one could draw a conclusion that Ashdown, Silajdzic and Izetbegovic had a meeting, when they decided they would stick to the High Representative decision that none of the FOSS officials will be removed, only if one condition is met, that is to remove me. Ashdown promised that in did it over night*", said Alibabic. According to him, the essence of his removal is the relationship of FOSS towards obligation it had towards the international community and OHR as well as fears of some IC representatives that some persons whose names are under sealed indictments or are publicly indicted might be brought to justice very soon.

Vjesnik (page 10, by Alenko Zornija, title "*Is Paddy Ashdown saving Radovan Karadzic from arrest*?"), **Jutarnji List** (page 2, title "*Mesic knows why Alibabic was removed*?"), **Vecernji List** (page 43, by Dejan Jazvic, title "*Removed agent accused Ashdown for hiding Karadzic*") and **Feral Tribune** (pages 28-29,

by Ivan Lovrenovic, title "Evergreen transversal") write about background of accusations of removed head of FOSS **Munir Alibabic** "Munja" against High Representative **Paddy Ashdown**.

Vjesnik says that "*Ashdown, with all the things that could be criticised with former leader of British liberals, is now facing a row of primitive attacks, far below line of good taste, and professional objectivity. From reminding to his long time ago forgotten sexual affair, through laughing out of his inclination to alcohol, to claims that he equalised Muslim and Serb responsibility for aggression on BiH. It is ironical that Sarajevo based papers are using the same methods that they accused their opponents for: until yesterday, Ashdown in texts of those newspapers was one of rare principled international politicians when it comes to the* 'Bosnian issue'*, and critics of his attitudes were stigmatised. (…) Now, overnight, Ashdown is* 'Divider of Bosnia'". Similar articles are in Feral Tribune, Vecernji List and Jutarnji List.

Implementation of the election results

Leaders and representatives of the political parties belonging to the Alliance for Change, as well as representatives of PDP and SNSD will meet late on Monday in the US diplomatic residence in Banja Luka, Oslobodjenje learns (p 3, mentioned on the front page, Azhar Kalamujic). As seven days ago at a meeting in the Sarajevo residence of the US Ambassador Clifford Bond, the leaders of the Alliance for Change and RS political parties are expected to discuss possible formation of the a new coalition. According to the newspaper, at the Sarajevo meeting, the Party for BiH representatives, Safet Halilovic and Beriz Belkic, and the PDP leader Mladen Ivanic did not express their opinion about the proposal of the rest of the parties related to the establishment of the post-election alliances at the level of BiH, RS and in some cantons. They are expected to respond to this proposal today, and then it will finally be clear if Ivanic has really decided to join coalition with SDS, and if the Party for BiH (and its

founder Haris Silajdzic as the most influential politician inside the party) has really been prepared to establish post-election partnership with SDA. Apart form the aforementioned politicians, Ambassador Bond has also invited Zlatko Lagumdzija and Alija Behmen (SDP), Milorad Dodik (SNSD), Kresimir Zubak (NHI) and Mladen Ivankovic – Lijanovic (People's Party Working for Prosperity).

Vecernji List (page 2, by Zoran Kresic) carries that it is still not known as to who will form the coalition at the state level, however, **HDZ** and **SDA** will form the authority at the Federation level, while SDS and PDP will do it in the RS. The article says that in spite of the ultimatum on the reduction of the American assistance if the national parties come in power, it can be expected that some compromise national alliance prevails in the future Government, that is, the BiH Council of Ministers. HDZ believes that they have to preserve 5 important Ministries in the executive authority (finances, defense, judiciary, trade and health). However, the possibility that Croats give defense and finances if they get in the position of a Prime Minister and the Ministry of Interior in return is not excluded. However, the option with the Bosniak as the Federation Prime Minister is more realistic. VL says that having in mind implemented "constituency" on the whole territory of BiH, it can be expected that Croats will be a Head of the BiH Council of Ministers in the next four years.

Dnevni List (page 7) carries a commentary signed by Petar Radic, in which he says that after confirmed partnership between **SDA** and **HDZ**, it is only just to say that voters of one of these two parties have voted for the other as well. Regarding decision of the High Representative **Paddy Ashdown** about verification of persons that will be performing ministerial duties, the author says that this should be seen from a positive aspect, because through that, moderate forces within the two parties could be strengthening, and the parties could shape up and democratise. If that does not happen, says the author, the open protectorate of International Community,

until new elections are scheduled, is possible.

Nezavisne Novine(p 6) quotes **SBiH Presidency Chairman Safet Halilovic** as saying that in the RS the SBiH had talks with SNSD and is satisfied with their approach and vision they have regarding the implementation of the election results. *"Therefore, we shall gladly cooperate with SNSD if it forms parliamentary majority*", said Halilovic. As for the parties from the BiH Federation, Halilovic said that SBiH is not negotiating possible future coalition with SDA. Halilovic said that SBiH would like to see SDA and SDP and other important parties as SBiH's future coalition partners. **Dnevni Avaz**, p 3, also reports that the SDA/Party for BiH official negotiations started behind close doors in Sarajevo on Sunday.

Vecernje Novosti (p 11) reports that a month after the elections an agreement on post-election coalitions has not been achieved. **Dusan Stojicic** and **Igor Crnadak**, spokespersons of the SDS and the PDP respectively, have stated that these two parties agreed about forming parliamentary majority. Together they have 35 seats, but still need 7 seats more in order to form the majority. Although Stojcic and Crnadak have not said it aloud, they have been counting on the SPRS. But, it seems that no agreement has been achieved with the Socialists, because vice-president of the SPRS Tihomir Gligoric told FENA that "the final outcome of the Orao affair will have a significant impact on formation of new authorities not only in the RS but also on BiH level. He said that the Orao developments will have a significant impact on new political scene in the RS and that the SPRS will take that into account when deciding on its future coalition partners." It is not clear to whom the SRS will join. Mirko Blagojevic and Ognjen Tadic have been saying that the Radicals will not form a coalition with the SDS.

Orao case

"If the responsibility for the Orao and Lijanovic affairs of

Mirko Sarovic and Dragan Covic is proved, it is obvious they will not be coming in the BiH Presidency building," Enes Jakupovic wrote in this week's **Ljiljan** referring to a possibility that the two newly-elected BiH Presidency members are removed from the office by the international community.
US National Radio reported that the "**Iraqi connection**" of the RS and FRY has a special dimension especially if we bear in mind that the Yugoslav channel in Baghdad was also used by some other parties for equipment and improvement of Saddam's armed forces. The report states that a Belgrade-based company "Yugoimport" has the UN Security Council's approval to participate in the Food for Oil Program, but there are some indications that the main business dealings of Yugoimport office in Baghdad were connected to illegal import of military technology, ammunition, weapons, spar eparts, etc., not only from RS and FRY but also from Russia and some other former Soviet republics. **Nezavisne Novine** carried excerpts from the report (p 2).

Nezavisne Novine carries (p 3) a lengthy interview with BiH Minister for Foreign Economic Relations **Azra Hadziahmetovic** in which she said that the Orao affair initiated a number of activities, which are basically the measures of precaution for situations like this one when there is a possibility for sanctions to be imposed.

Nezavisne Novine quotes (p 5)former Head of the Federation Intelligence Service (FOSS) **Munir Alibabic** as saying that **Ivanic** and **Sarovic** knew about the **Orao** affair, because it is their job to discuss reports on results and achieved in various branches of production, industry, economy, etc. "*It is not possible to discuss the report on Orao without knowing where the goods is being sold. Furthermore, the talks about arrival of Iraqi experts to Serbia…., please that is ridiculous. Only this High Representative can buy it. That man has completely undefined view on Bosnia. And he wants to swallow that, unless the Americans exert pressure. It is a shame that the High Representative did not remove Sarovic and*

others immediately. It is also a shame that Covic from HDZ was not removed because we (FOSS) provided the information that Covic is involved in tax evasion. It is also a shame that the High Representaive did not remove some Bosniak leaders, the SDA leaders, who have issued almost 700 fictious citizenships from the DPA up until now", said Alibabic.

RS Supreme Auditor Bosko Ceko said on Saturday that a review of the financial dealings of the Bijeljina-based Orao Aviation Institute would begin on Tuesday and that the public sector auditing office would not be reviewing any other military industries in the RS until further notice. "*A team of three authorised auditors along with a junior auditor will start checking the financial dealings of Orao on Tuesday and they will report to the RS Supreme Auditor*", Ceko said.

Both papers, **Glas Srpski** (p 2) and **Nezavisne Novine** carry a press release, issued by the **RS Government**, which states that the RS Government delegation intended to travel to Iraq in March 2001 in order to discuss the possibilities for joining the Oil for Food Program and that the visit had nothing to do with the Orao affair and therefore illegal arms sale to Iraq. The press release further states that the RS Ministry for Foreign Economic Relations requested the approval from the Council of Ministers as well as from the BiH Mission to UN. "*Since the RS Government did not receive the approval from the CoM and UN, the preparations were halted*", states the press release. It also states that the RS delegation intended to negotiate an import of oil for the Oil Refinery in Brod in exchange for export of food to Iraq. "*Given that the official request was sent to the UN Security Council, there is no way we can talk about mystery in this case*", states the press release.

SPRS Vice-chairman Tihomir Gligoric said that the final outcome of the Orao affair will have a significant impact on formation of new authorities not only in the RS but also at the BiH level. He said that the Orao developments will have a

significant impact on new political scene in the RS and that the SPRS will take that into account when deciding on its future coalition partners.

Glas Srpski quotes (p 3) **an analyst from Washington Eric White** as saying that in the following period the Washington administration will increase pressure on BiH authorities to speed up the process of reforms and to make sure that those RS officials, who are proven to be involved in illegal arms trade with Iraq, are sacked. According to him, the US will insist on the reforms of the anachronic state structure, set up by the DPA, which will profile a new, more efficient inter-entity cooperation in the field of defence and economy. White said that the situation in BiH is better than in Serbia and that the RS will get away without sanctions. He said that this is a true litmus test for the nationalists in the RS to prove how they are going to make their promises happening, because the High Representative told in New Your that what he expects from them are deeds not words. "The authorities in Banja Luka have to set their teeth and accept changes in the army and setting up a joint civil control over a joint BiH army", said White.

The High Representative to BiH, **Paddy Ashdown**, said that the case of the cooperation between the Bijeljina based "Orao" Aviation Institute and Iraq represented individually the biggest challenge of the international credibility of BiH. He, however, expressed belief that this was not a new kind of crime.*"I think that this concerns an old network and old connections of generals from the time before the break-up of Yugoslavia. We can still not say who is guilty and who is not. Therefore, we need to wait for the entire investigation to be completed*." He said he would not be surprised if it was proved that money earned by weapon selling had been used for creating a structure for protection of war criminals. (FRY **Nacional** p 7)

Former RS Prime Minister, **Milorad Dodik**, told Novi Sad's Dnevnik that ORAO affair would destabilise the RS and BiH as a

whole. "*The current authority buries its head in the sand in order to impute responsibility for it on someone else*", Dodik said. (**Nacional** p 7, **Blic** p 12)

Former RS Minister of Defence **Manojlo Milovanovic** said that "*as far as ORAO affair is concerned I am clean*". "*It is true that with late FRY Minister of Defence Pavle Bulatovic I signed the Agreement of Cooperation between two ministries on 28 August 1998, and the same agreement was renewed on 30 March 2001 with General Dragoljub Ojdanic, but it does not have anything in common with ORAO affair. Similar agreements have been signed with Russia, Greece, France and other countries*," Manojlovic said. Commenting on accusations of the SDS spokesperson, Milovanovic said that it was inadmissible that the investigation had been conducted by political parties "because that is the task of competent state bodies". (**Vecernje Novosti** p 6)

Analyst **Zoran Kusovac** says that apart from companies from FRY and BiH, some companies from Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia might be involved in illegal trading with Iraq. "*There are strong indications that not only military equipment has been exported, but technology which improves Iraqi military equipment, i.e. electronic systems and some technologies from ex-Yugoslavia countries that Iraq does not have,*" Kusovac told Radio Free Europe. (**Vecernje Novosti** p 6, **Blic** p 12)

Vecernji List (front and page 5, by Zdenko Jurilj) carries an interview with **Mijo Anic**, the Federation Minister of Defense, who says that "*due to the Orao affair the military industry in BiH will be faced with a great loss*". Anic also says that he is not afraid of a possible SFOR revision, because he has not signed any decision on export of weapon without a consent and seal of SFOR. Anic also says that the Orao affair has shown that responsible persons from the International Community are not completely principled, since **Nikola Grabovac** was removed although it was not proved that he was guilty, while the persons against whom criminal charges were issued because of

much more serious issues can be candidates at the elections. Anic said that he supports the idea that **Mirko Sarovic**, a Chairman of the BiH Presidency, has to be removed due to the Orao affair. If **Dragan Covic**, a Croat member of the BiH Presidency, loses this position because of his alleged involvement in some affairs, Anic says that he would not accept to take over this position since he wants to come to this position in a legal way only. Anic says that in many municipalities in Herzegovina NHI had about 50 or 60 invalid voting lists on which his name was, and Anic says that this is a proof that there was the election engineering of some parties.

BiH-related news

The BiH Association of Independent Trade Unions has lodged a complaint to the Geneva-based International Labor Organization with regard to the violation of a convention stipulating the right to freedom of association. The complaint refers to the position of the BiH Ministry for Civil Affairs and Communications banning the Association to register in accordance to the BiH Law on the Associations and Foundations. The Ministry rejected the Association's request saying it had no legal continuity since it had not registered in accordance to the BiH Federation Law on Associations. It therefore offered the Association to eventually register as a new association. The Ministry actually challenges the right of the BiH Independent Trade Unions Association to be legal successor of the former BiH Trade Unions Association. (Oslobodjenje, p 6, mentioned on the front page: "BiH Trade Unions threats with launching legal proceeding before the Strasbourg court")

War crimes

Vecernji List (page 2, by Marko Markovic) carries that **The Hague investigators** revealed the location on which bodies of 7 Croats from **Bugojno** might be. These Croats belong to a group of 26 Croats, who disappeared in Bugojno in the summer of 1993. VL says that they tried to checked this information in The Hague and with the liaison officer, who is in charge of relations with The Hague, and they answered: *"There are many*

activities regarding The Hague. There are a few parallel investigations underway, and the results are being expected by the end of the year. When we complete the investigation, when we collect all evidence, than we shall act in accordance with our rights and obligations."

Dnevni List (front and page 3) carries that the ICTY Appellate Council concluded that new evidence were not available during the trail against **Tihomir Blaskic**, an HVO General charged with the crimes committed over Bosniak civilians in Ahmici. For this reason the ICTY Appellate Council concludes that the evidence refer to a possibility that the verdict was not grounded and fair. This Council called Prosecutors and defense to discuss the possibility of a new trial. The defense and Prosecutors will state their opinion on this issue on November 21.

BiH Federation affairs

Dnevni Avaz reports on the front page (story continued on p 8) that the BiH Federation oil distributors will on Monday make a final decision on eventual interruption of the work of the gas stations in the entity. *"If the RS Government's decision on the reduction of taxes on fuels from 17 to two phenings takes effect, and if the Federation Government does not take adequate counter-measures, the blockage of the gas stations work will surely take place,"* **Muhidin Alic**, a representative of the Federation Oil Distributors told the newspaper.

Dnevni List (page 3, by I.D.) carries that according to a Dnevni List source, leading SDA officials have been exerting pressure in order to cover up as soon as possible or to stall the case of the **Mostar mortar rounds** so that this case can lose its importance. DL says: *" Non-interfering of the International Community in this case and return of the national parties in power hints that many crimes will never be resolved and that the perpetrators of these crimes will continue to do their job undisturbed, not suffering any consequences for these crimes. "* The article mentions again the document that **Jusuf Piralic**, a suspect in this case, allegedly sent to the competent authorities in 1998 informing

them about the mortar rounds in Mostar. According to **Tatjana Kazazic**, a judge in this case, they have to check whether the documents really disappeared. DL says that judiciary hesitates to turn the investigation in the right direction and the investigation might progress if **Safet Orucevic**, a former Mostar Mayor, helps in the revealing of this case. The article also says that Orucevic did not make a decision to store the mortar rounds, however, he was appointing management in the Mostar Tobacco Factory contrary to all legal grounds. The article concludes: *'The Orao case and unresolved case of Mostar mortar rounds indicate that the top of BiH iceberg started to melt."*

Vecernji List (front and page 3, by Robert Soldo, title "Explosions reverberate in Mostar again") reads that one 77-years old woman died and two young man were injured in two explosions of hand grenades, that took place Saturday, between 21 h and midnight, in two different buildings in (West) Mostar. Motifs for setting the bombs are unknown, says the author, adding that the cases are under investigation of the investigative judge of Mostar Municipal Court I, **Semsa Droce**.

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Sunday, 1900)

- At least ten people has been injured in conflicts at the premature elections in Turkey
- Is BiH unity government possible?
- Beside BIH and FRY, other ex-Yugoslav countries could be involved in the weapons delivery
- Iranian security forces arrested one of Osama Bin Laden's sons

FTV 1 (1930)

- Women of Srebrenica will not give up on personal responsibility for suffering in entire safe zone
- Appeal Council of the ICTY proposed new trial against Tihomir Blaskic
- American press claims that military technology from Russia has been

transferred to Iraq through Belgrade’s Jugoimport

RTRS (1930)

- New discussion on BiH indictment against FRY to begin tomorrow in The Hague