

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 5/3/2005

RADIO HERCEG-BOSNA (18,00hrs)	TV PINK (18,00 hrs)	BHT 1 (19,00 hrs)
HR's review of dismissed officials	HR's review of dismissed officials	HR's review of dismissed officials
Cavic on HR's review	OHR on investing in Brcko	Petritsch on Ashdown review
Covic's indictment	Bukejlovic meets Gregorian	Disregarding of state symbols in BiH
ICTY cases transfer	RS army military service	ICTY cases transfer

NTV Hayat (19,00 hrs)	FTV (19,30 hrs)	RTRS (19,30 hrs)
HR's review of dismissed officials	Veterans/disability pensions	HR's review of dismissed officials
ICTY cases transfer	HR's review of dismissed officials	Reactions to HR's review
Momcilo Perisic case	Cavic's reaction to HR's review	RS army military service
El-Mujahid unit case	Reactions to HR's review	Bukejlovic meets Gregorian

Oslobodjenje	OHR to 'pardon' those removed over obstructions
Dnevni Avaz	Invalid pensions must be reduced
Dnevni List	Dragan Covic in isolation
Vecernji List	Amnesty for removed officials

Glas Srpske	Competition for the obedient ones
Nezavisne Novine	EUFOR prevents smuggling attempt in Gradiska; Decisions on removals to be reviewed

Political developments/reforms	
Ashdown to review the status of sacked officials in BiH	<p>RHB, TV Pink, BHT, Hayat, FTV, RTRS, AFP, Oslobođenje cover page, pgs 4-5 'OHR to 'pardon' those removed over obstructions' Alda Omeragic, Dnevni Avaz pg 4 'Review of decisions on removal of 100 officials starts', mentioned on cover 'Review of decisions on removal of 100 officials', Dnevni List pg 3, mentioned on cover 'Paddy Ashdown returns (to office) removed officials', Vecernji List cover page, pgs 2-3 'Amnesty for removed officials', Glas Srpske cover page 'Competition for the obedient ones', Nezavisne Novine cover page, pg 3 'Decisions on removals to be reviewed' – The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, said Friday he would review the status of some 100 sacked officials so they can resume work. <i>"Some individuals who, because they have changed or because circumstances in which they were removed have changed ... we conclude they are no longer a danger to the peace process and therefore can resume public life,"</i> said Ashdown, who has the power to sack officials under the 1995 Dayton peace accords. Ashdown said a list of those who would be allowed to hold public office again would be completed in the next six weeks. Ashdown and his predecessors have dismissed and banned from public office 150 officials, mainly for obstructing the implementation of the accords or for supporting fugitive war crimes suspects. They include a member of BiH Presidency, and a president and prime minister of the RS.</p> <p>According to Vecerni List, Nikola Grabovac and Edhem Bicakcic are amongst those hoping to be rehabilitated, while Mirko Sarovic and Ante Jelavic cannot expect that.</p>

<p>RS President Cavic says Ashdown announcement to review removals a positive development</p>	<p>RHB, FTV, AFP – RS President Dragan Cavic hailed HR Ashdown's announcement to review decisions on removals of public office holders as a positive development. <i>"Such a decision represents a positive approach,"</i> Cavic told journalists in Banja Luka on Friday. <i>"I expect that a large number of people who were suspended and sanctioned ... without any real reason could be rehabilitated,"</i> Cavic added. Glas Srpske cover page 'Lawsuits filed', Nezavsine Novine pg 3 'Dragan Cavic expects a large number of rehabilitations' also carried Cavic's statement.</p>
<p>Former HR Petritsch, dismissed RS President Poplasen on HR announcement to review decisions on removals</p>	<p>BHT <u>Marina Boskovic</u> – Former High Representative in BiH Wolfgang Petritsch supported the decision of HR Paddy Ashdown to revise the dismissals of officials. He stressed that nobody can be punished forever. <i>"BiH has to become a country where government rules. I was dismissing people who obstructed the return. The return has progressed now and those people aren't obstacle any more. I completely acclaim and support the decision of Paddy Ashdown"</i>, said Petritsch. The reactions on Ashdown's move on revising the removal decisions are different. From 1998 to 2003, the High Representatives imposed more than 450 decisions and regulations and about 100 persons have been dismissed who were on different positions in public and political life. Nikola Poplasen was dismissed from the position of RS President in 1999, because obstruction of forming of the legitimate Government lead by Milorad Dodik. <i>"Many people from in BiH as well as in RS were dismissed because that was an agreement between criminals who belonged to certain nation and International Community. If that connection is broken, probably the most of those people will be rehabilitated"</i>, said Nikola Poplasen. Most of public don't believe that this Ashdown's decision is the moral act. Paddy Ashdown announced that domestic institutions can be involved in revision of some dismissals in the future.</p>

<p>FTV source says OHR decision on review of removals result of US pressures and pressures of domestic and international judicial institutions</p>	<p>FTV Sanjin Beciragic – According to FTV source, new OHR decision on revision of its own removal decisions is result of US pressures as well as pressures of domestic and international judiciary institutions.</p> <p>This is especially interesting after the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, refused to remove Croat member of the BiH Presidency, Dragan Covic, after BiH prosecution issued indictment against him in relation to Lijanovici tax frauds case. The HR in Covic's case is waiting for indictment confirmation by the Court of BiH, even though he didn't respected the court decisions in the case of de-certified police officers, commented reporter. According to FTV source, the HR justifies his decision not to remove Covic by words that Covic didn't worked against Dayton peace Agreement. The best example of the OHR's double standards is visible in the case of Nikola Grabovac, removed F BiH Finance Minister, and Edhem Bicakcic, removed "Elektroprivreda" Director, states reporter.</p> <p><i>"Simply, without investigation, without proves, without any possibility to appeal, things lead to violation of basic human rights defined in the article 6 of the European declaration on human rights",</i> said Bicakcic. As the most impudent OHR's removal decision, reporter described the decision on Grabovac removal. Decision was made on Grabovac's moral responsibility for illegal action in relation to customs and company "Amsped". There were speculations on criminal charges against him which were never filed and on his responsibility for not controlling the use of public income. Reporter asked Grabovac what does he think – would he be removed if he wasn't in conflict with the International Monetary Fund and with the World Bank. <i>"I think I would not be removed",</i> answered Grabovac. Reporter explained that Grabovac opposed to the IMF and the WB in relation to distribution of the income and priorities in expenditures. Reporter concluded with words that new OHR's decision on revision of removal decisions is noting else that retreat before the pressures on new removals of judges and politicians and attempt of washing of its hands from earlier wrong decisions and failures.</p>
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<p>RTRS: Reactions to HR's review of dismissed officials</p>	<p>RTRS <u>Vesna Cibic</u> – HR Paddy Ashdown's announcement of revision process for dismissed officials already caused certain reactions in RS. Bosko Lemes dismissed SDS official was still not aware of the announcement when contacted by RTRS. RS President Dragan Cavic stated that HR's decision means that there are positive steps forward in future RS political life. Cavic reminds that around 50 SDS members started court proceedings for human rights violation. Certain experts feel that HR in a way admitted that a mistake was made and authorities were overstepped. Tanja Topic political analyst says that OHR will never directly admit it. Experts also wonder why 2004, when most dismissals happened, will not be involved in the revision process. Reporter concludes that whatever happens HR has the power to dismiss or give amnesty regardless of the outside pressures.</p>
<p>SDA's Tihic, Party for BiH's Halilovic, SDU's Lazovic on Ashdown's announcement: Opportunity to correct injustice made to certain people</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg 4 'Opportunity to correct injustice made to certain people' – Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency and SDA leader Sulejman Tihic, BiH Minister of Civil Affairs and Party for BiH President Safet Halilovic, and President of BiH Social Democratic Union Miro Lazovic are of the opinion that the HR Paddy Ashdown's announcement to review decisions on removal of certain officials represents an opportunity to correct injustice made to some people.</p>

<p>Some of removed officials comments on HR removals review announcement</p>	<p>Dnevni List pg 3 'Tokic: Absolute power of HR' – Marko Tokic, a removed HDZ official, says Paddy Ashdown's announcement only shows that the HR has absolute power in BiH (to remove and pardon people). DL pg 3 'Luzanski: Lawsuit before court in Strasbourg to follow' – Another removed HDZ official Ivo Andric Luzanski says he does not expect to be pardoned in the course of the announced HR review of decisions on removal of officials. However he expects the Court in Strasbourg to annul HR decisions of this sort. Dnevni List pg 3 'Milic: Abuse of fundamental human rights' – Petar Milic, former leader of BiH Croat Christian Democrats who was removed from office by OSCE Head of Mission ot BiH, says that removal of officials by the international community in BiH is about violation of basic human rights. DL pg 3 'Tuka: Positive signal' – Mijat Tuka, former deputy FBiH Minister for Refugees who was removed by HR in 2003, considers HR announcement as a positive signal. DL pg 3 'Krizanovic: Positive step forward that should have been made earlier' – Jozo Krizanovic, a senior SDP BiH official, considers the HR announcement as a positive step forward that should have been made earlier.</p> <p>Glas Srpske cover page carries reaction of the removed Head of RS Refugees Ministry office in Bileca Cedomir Popovic who said that he was glad Ashdown had found strength to publicly admit some of his mistakes. On the other side, Slavko Tosovic, former head of Srsko Novo Sarajevo municipality, says that neither the decision on his removal of 2004 nor the latest announcement of review of such decisions is clear/understandable to him. Nezavisne Novine pg 3 'Removals were illegal' also carried reactions by Tosovic, Poplasen and Grabovac. Moreover, the daily quotes Munir Munja Alibabic, the removed FOSS Director, as saying that he does mind the fact he was on the list of removed officials together with those supporting war criminals, obstructing Dayton and having criminal background. Milovan Bjelica, former Srpsko Sarajevo Assembly chair, says that the decision on his removal was actually prepared by his political enemies.</p>
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<p>SDS Main Board discusses change of the party statute, preparations for the party elections</p>	<p>RTRS <u>Biljana Knezevic</u> – SDS Main Board held a session in Banja Luka. Acting SDS Chairman Dragan Cavic stated that the main board gave a positive evaluation of decisions and actions of its members. Main Board made a decision on changing the SDS statue, which will influence the election of Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the party. Cavic says that from now on the Chairman will be elected based on his/her political platform. He also added that elections on all party levels will be announced so new SDS bodies could be appointed in June. Oslobodjenje pg 4 ‘SDS is political discriminated’ <u>O. Vukovic</u>, Dnevni Avaz pg 8 also covered the issue.</p>
<p>RS Prime Minister Bukejlovic discusses defence reform, cooperation with ICTY with Defence Reform Commission’s Gregorian</p>	<p>RHB, TV Pink, RTRS, Oslobodjenje pg 7 ‘Full cooperation with The Hague then negotiations’, Glas Srpske pg 2 ‘Reforms for partnership’, Nezavisne Novine ‘The Hague key for PfP’, FENA – RS Prime Minister Pero Bukejlovic on Friday held talks with the Deputy Chair of the Defense Reform Commission, Raffi Gregorian, and underlined the commitment of the Entity Government for full cooperation with the Hague Tribunal, which envisions voluntary surrender or apprehending the persons indicted for war crimes. Bukejlovic said that apart from the determination and activities of the RS Ministry of Interior, the realization of full cooperation with the ICTY requires the cooperation with the other security institutions in BiH such as SIPA, SBS, OSA, as well as the EUFOR troops. Bukejlovic and Gregorian ascertained that once the procedures of staffing the BiH Defense Ministry, the BiH Joint General Staff and the Operational Command, have been completed and once the activities on reforming the defense sector in RS and BiH have been concluded, the necessary conditions would be met for BiH’s admission into the Partnership for Peace. Bukejlovic, however, underlined that implementation of defense reform requires respecting of the Agreement on Principles of Coordinated Political Activities reached by the six strongest political parties in RS. He added that all decisions on defense reform must be issued through consensus of all political subjects in parliamentary procedure.</p>

<p>BiH Defence Minister, NATO commander discuss defence reform</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 2 'Political consent in BiH of crucial importance', Dnevni Avaz pg 2 'NATO judges positively implemented defence reforms', ONASA – BiH Defence Minister Nikola Radovanovic met on Friday in Sarajevo with admiral Michael G. Mullan, commander of NATO South Wing, with whom he discussed the progression of defence reforms in the country. The meeting was also attended by BiH military commander general Sifet Podzic and NATO Sarajevo commander Steven Schook. Admiral Mullan commended the progress achieved in the reforms. The officials agreed that the upcoming months are crucial for BiH, as political consent must be reached, and defence reforms accelerated.</p>
<p>Mostar Mayor Beslic met with OSCE Head of Mission to BiH Davidson</p>	<p>RHB, Oslobodjenje pg 2 'Reorganisation of Mostar institutions slowed down', FENA – Mayor of Mostar Ljubo Beslic received on Friday in Mostar the OSCE Head of Mission to BiH, Douglas Davidson. Addressing the journalists after the meeting, Beslic said that he had informed Davidson on the ongoing political/reform processes in Mostar, since the OSCE was directly involved in process of monitoring and reorganizing the city of Mostar and its institutions. According to Beslic, the mentioned processes are in a way slowed down due to some technical problems, which are not related only to the city administration. <i>"The aim of my arrival in Mostar was to become familiar with the situation in the city, especially after unification of the city municipalities,"</i> said Davidson, adding the OSCE would continue supporting development of Mostar institutions.</p>
<p>SIPA Director Novic says both RS and BiH will regret if the best solution for police reform is not found</p>	<p>Dnevni Avaz pg 5 'We must determine if there are 'sleepers' in BiH' – In an interview with the daily, acting SIPA (State Investigation and Protection Agency) Director Sredoje Novic reiterated that both RS and the entire BiH would regret if the best solution for reconstruction of police system in the country is not found, because the level of security for the citizens would remain inadequate.</p>

Economic/social issues

<p>WB representatives discuss financial issues with top FBiH Government officials</p>	<p>TV Hayat, FTV, Dnevni Avaz cover page, pg 2 'Invalid pensions must be reduced', Oslobodjenje pg 6 '108 million dollars for implementation of reforms', mentioned on cover 'Invalid pensions for November, December under question mark' – The Wolrd Bank requests the FBiH Government to reduce funds for payments of pensions to veterans from 301 to 288 million KM, said FBiH Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic following a meeting with WB Coordinator for South-East Europe Orsalia Kalantzopouslos and WB Director In BiH Dirk Reinerman on Friday. <i>"We are requested to make a Budget re-balance in April. If we do not do that, BiH will lose a WB loan of 150 million dollars,"</i> said Hadzipasic. Dnevni List pg 2, mentioned on cover 'Urgently fulfil conditions for realisation of new loans' also covered the issue.</p>
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<p>Terzic visiting Japan , discusses improvement of economic cooperation between two countries with his hosts</p>	<p>Oslobodjenje pg 4 'Japan interested in reconstruction of railways, highway construction', Dnevni Avaz pg 3, mentioned on cover 'Japan announcing investments in BiH', Dnevni List pg 5 'Terzic discusses reforms with Japanese PM Koizumi', Nezavisne Novine pg 5, mentioned on cover 'New forms of mutual cooperation proposed' – Japan and Bosnia and Hercegovina reached a consensus on the need to reinforce economic ties, including direct investment in the Balkan country by Japanese companies, during a summit Friday, a Japanese Foreign Ministry official said. The BiH prime minister, Adnan Terzic, who is in an official visit to Tokyo, noted the importance of foreign direct investment in increasing jobs, telling his Japanese counterpart Junichiro Koizumi that joblessness is running at an estimated 20 per cent. Koizumi was quoted as saying Japan will do its utmost to help Bosnia and Hercegovina reinvigorate the economy. The Japanese official said Terzic, before his meeting with Koizumi, held talks with Osamu Watanabe, chairman of the Japan External Trade Organization, a semi-governmental group working for promoting trade. Terzic and Watanabe agreed to a plan to have the Japanese trade organization sponsor a seminar in Tokyo aimed at encouraging Japanese corporations to boost investment in Bosnia and Hercegovina but details such as when it should be held were yet to be determined, the official said.</p>
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Covic indictment

Dnevni List: Dragan Covic in diplomatic isolation

Dnevni List cover page, pg 7 'Dragan Covic in diplomatic isolation' – At a session in Sarajevo on Friday, the Peace Implementation Council unanimously accepted a proposal made by US Ambassador to BiH Douglas McElhaney to put Croat member of the BiH Presidency Dragan Covic in a sort of diplomatic isolation i.e declare him persona non grata, according to the diplomatic sources in BiH. The decision will become effective if Covic does not resign after possible confirmation of the office abuse indictment against him by the BiH Court.

Dnevni Avaz: Dragan Covic trying to avoid resignation

Dnevni Avaz pg 10 'Dragan Covic trying to avoid resignation' – According to the daily, Croat member of the BiH Presidency **Dragan Covic** is still considering possibility to resign if the indictment for office abuse against him is confirmed by the BiH Court. Covic will in coming days try to get support from certain diplomatic circles not to resign.

<p>VL: Not all ambassadors in BiH want Covic to resign</p>	<p>Vecernji List pg 3 'International community not unified (in opinion on Covic)' <u>Zoran Kresic</u> – According to Kresic, the international judges at BiH Court are likely to confirm indictment against Croat member of the Presidency Dragan Covic and the others. However, Kresic writes that, when it comes to requesting Covic to resign, not all the international representatives in BiH share opinion of British Ambassador Ian Cliff.</p>
<p>HDZBiH leader Colak: I am expecting indictment against myself as well</p>	<p>Slobodna Dalmacija cover page pg 17 'I am expecting indictment against myself as well' – In an interview with the daily, HDZ BiH leader Barisa Colak did not want to comment on the indictment against Dragan Covic, Croat member of the BiH Presidency, since it has till not been confirmed. <i>"If that happens, the HDZ BiH will make clear position on the indictment, determine concrete political moves regarding the issue and inform public on that,"</i> said Colak. However, asked if an indictment could be raised against him as well, Colak said: <i>'Why not! If this happens to Covic, it is not excluded that the same will happen to me.'</i></p>

<p>HDZ Presidency member Marinovic says requesting Covic to resign premature</p>	<p>RHB – HR Paddy Ashdown will not comment on the indictment against BiH Presidency member Dragan Covic until the indictment is confirmed. Member of HDZ Presidency Ivica Marjanovic stated that everyone is innocent until proven guilty and added that requests for Covic's withdrawal from the function are too early. He also stated that HDZ will wait for the confirmation of the indictment and then make a public announcement regarding the matter.</p>
<p>BiH Constitutional Court Chairman Tadic: I will resign only at request by Constitutional Court</p>	<p>Slobodna Dalmacija pg 17 'I will resign only at request by Constitutional Court' – President of BiH Constitutional Court Mate Tadic, who is accused of taking bribe from the Lijanovic Company and who is together with Dragan Covic and others waiting for confirmation of the indictment by BiH Court, said that even if the indictment is confirmed he would resign from office only at a request by Constitutional Court.</p>