

OHR BIH Media Round-up, 5/7/2002

Print Media Headlines

Dnevni Avaz: Collapse of government avoided in the last minute; Graphic designers want the truth about CIPS; Workers' protests ended after police intervention

Oslobodjenje: Director of Coke Plant Tuzla charged with 10 million KM damages; Workers' protests ended after police intervention

Jutarnje Novine: Special Police breaks up workers' protests; Ari Fleisher: We will not leave BiH

Dnevni List: Federation – a safe heaven for the institution of legal inequality

Vecernji List: HDZ and SDA experience a rise in popularity; Police breaks up workers protests

Glas Srpski: Prijedor policemen answers Alun Roberts: Charges filed against Bob Grant; Bileca: Repossessed houses -empty

Nezavisne Novine: Tuzla: Strike of the chemical industry workers: 3,500 workers blocked Tuzla

Blic: Ministry of Interior Affairs: There is no organized crime in the RS Customs Administration; 6,600 less soldiers in VRS by the end of 2003

Social- Financial issues

Special police unit of the Tuzla Ministry of Interior broke up on Thursday the demonstrations of over 1,000 workers of Polihem, Tuzla Coke Plant, TDI and several other companies in this Canton. The workers gathered yesterday to protest against their difficult social position and demand the Cantonal and the Federation government to pass a Law on Social Care of Workers. According to media reports, the police arrested some 30 workers who refused to de-block the highway passing through Tuzla. (Front page story in **Dnevni Avaz, Oslobodjenje and Jutarnje Novine, Nezavisne Novine, Vecernji List**, reported

very prominently in all electronic media)

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that the Tuzla Canton Ministry of Interior submitted to the Cantonal prosecutor criminal charges against the director of the Coke Plant in Lukavac, Pasaga Muratovic. According to the charges, Muratovic is suspected of committing the criminal act of abuse of office and damaging the company for 10 million KM.

Workers in the Dairy Factory **Milcos** in Sarajevo sent a letter to the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, asking him to receive a delegation from this company and listen to their problems. The Union leader, Remzo Muhovic, said that 213 workers in Milcos have not received their salaries for over two years, while Cantonal and Federation *authorities "turned a deaf ear to all their previous requests."* (**Oslobodjenje** p. 8)

In a four page article, **Slobodna Bosna** (Mehmed Purgan and Danka Savic) writes about the cases of anthrax which appeared in Tuzla Canton last week and which threaten to spread across BiH. The weekly quotes several veterinarian-experts who say that the entire Tuzla Canton is anthrax-ridden area and blame the Federation Ministry of Agriculture for the present situation. *"The Federation Ministry of Agriculture does not have enough funds to provide for the adequate veterinary care, while the state Law on Veterinary Service has not been passed yet because of the obstruction coming from the RS,"* one expert notes, arguing that in other normal countries, the state authorities would have declared the state of emergency.

At yesterday's session held in Banja Luka, **the RS National Assembly** supported measures of the RS Government related to overcoming the situation in the RS Customs Administration (RUC) and asked for more decisive activities in this respect. In the report on the work in the RS Customs Administration, the RS Government proposed several conclusions, including the urgent launching of the amendments and addenda to the law on the RS customs service aimed at the defining of the responsibility of this institution towards the RS Finance

Ministry. The Parliament asked that the CAFAO allegations be checked in details, and that persons responsible for criminal acts be punished. (**Glas Srpski**, p.3, **Nezavisne Novine**, p. 3, **RTRS**, **BHTV 1**)

UN Mission's mandate in BiH

All media in BiH report that the UN Security Council decided on Thursday extend the mandate of the UN mission in BiH until July 15, after Washington backed away from a threat to close it down unless the SC provided a blank immunity to US peacekeepers from the new International Criminal Court. (first item at **BHTV 1**, **FTV**, **RTRS** prime time news, **Oslobodjenje**, f.p., p.5, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Jutarnje Novine**, f.p., **Vecernji List** p. 15, **Vjesnik** p. 10, **Slobodna Dalmacija**, p. 7, **The New York Times**, **Guardian**)

BiH Council of Ministers welcomed on Thursday the decision by the UN Security Council to keep alive the UN mission in BiH until July 15. *"The International Community ought to find the optimal solution in a given timeframe because a great deal of funds and effort that have been invested into BiH and because all the progress made in the country in the past years. I believe that this progress is the best message to the US and the EU and the entire International Community that they have to take into consideration that BiH, as frail as it is, could do on its own, however, it would probably slow down the process of certain reforms without the help of the International Community,"* said Council's chairman, **Dragan Mikerevic**. (**Oslobodjenje**, p. 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Jutarnje Novine** p. 3, second item in all electronic media. **The New York Times** also quotes Mikerevic)

The **White House** on Thursday reiterated that US soldiers will not leave BiH. *"We will not leave BiH. Our peacekeepers on the ground are well-prepared and equipped to do what they are told. Thus, this is not about the withdrawal, but about the question of mandate,"* said **Ari Fleischer**, the White House spokesman told the press. (front page in **Jutarnje Novine**,

Oslobodjenje, p. 5)

The High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, said in Vienna yesterday that it would be serious but not disastrous if the UN police force in BiH was withdrawn. *"It is serious, but not a catastrophe. Europe has the will to step in if the UN can't continue. It won't be tidy and quick but it can be done. I have no doubt that it can be done and I have no doubt of Europe's will to do it,"* said Ashdown in Vienna. (**AFP** report)

In an editorial in today's **Independent**, Adrian Hemilton argues that Europe, despite the US retreat to its own security, is still not ready to take the US role in Bosnia or any other post-conflict country. *"There isn't the faintest indication that Europe has developed the unity or sense of purpose to contribute a united front on any international issue, from the Balkans to the Middle East or even its own enlargement, let alone being in a position to undertake major peace-keeping operations without America...America no longer has the means or the will to engage in the world...The implications are clear: Europe, like the Middle East and Asia, must forge a future for itself."*

Philip Stephens of the **Financial Times** on the same issue and the future of European Foreign police: *"Of itself, a US withdrawal from UN peacekeeping will not cause an earthquake. Only about 700 US troops and policeman currently serve under a UN flag. The meaning, though, is profound. For Europe, security lies in the framework of international law and multilateral institutions that the US now renounces. For America, it now rests on the freedom to make its own decisions. Sole superpower maybe, but you cannot build a new world order over such a chasm."*

In a column in **Vecernji List** (p. 2), Dejan Jazvic argues that the possible withdrawal of the UN before the end of this year would seriously endanger the process of the establishment of the State Border Service and it would challenge the police

reform in BiH. *"In that case, the police might come again under the political influence of certain groups in BiH, which would, most probably, cause a division of police, according to the national principle."* Jazvic concludes that the crises in the **Security Council** has shown all powerlessness of the BIH state, its authorities *"who demonstrated that even 7 years after the war ended they are not able to influence the future of BiH."*

In an editorial in **Dnevni List** (p. 5), Ivica Glibusic argues that the withdrawal of US forces from BiH might cause new ethnic conflicts in the country. He also notes that the only reason why that various international officials are fighting so vehemently against the US pull-out is because they would like to preserve their high salaries.

Senad Avdic in his opening column in **Slobodna Bosna** seconds this view, saying that the UN Secretary General, Jacques Paul Klein, has just demonstrated that he is more concerned about losing his job in BiH if the UN withdraws than he is about the possibility of his fellow-Americans being prosecuted by the newly created International Criminal Court.

Federation affairs

Dnevni Avaz (front page) reports that, despite the anticipated discussion in the Federation government about the removal of the Financial Police Chief Inspector, Zufer Dervisevic, and his deputy Miroslav Vidovic, the Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen, removed this item from the agenda of yesterday's session. According to the daily, the entity president, Safet Halilovic, told Behmen that the Financial Police officials are known for their good work and that there is no sound reason to discuss their possible removal. Speculations have it that this position was also reinforced by representatives of the International Community who commended the two officials for their professional conduct. Avaz comments that after yesterday's session, the attempts of Zlatko Lagumdzija, the SDP leader, to gain control over Financial Police finally

failed for good.

Dnevni Avaz (p. 3) reports that the ministers in the Federation government and deputies in the Federation Parliament's House of Representatives have been speculating for days that **Franjo Franjic** has given up on the post of the entity Finance Minister. The daily notes that it is still not certain when the appointment will be made, but emphasizes that it is clear that the Alliance, at this time, could not secure the necessary number of votes in this chamber to name Franjic to the vacant post. *"I have not given up the candidacy and I do not know who is spreading such information,"* Franjic told Avaz.

Dnevni List (page 3, by Sven Brucic) accuses the former head of the Criminal Department in the Federation Ministry of Interior, **Faik Lusija**, who was the leader of *"one-nation team (Bosniak) for detecting murderers of Jozo Leutar"*. Saying that Lusija enjoyed unlimited credit with Head of UN Mission in BiH **Jacques Paul Klein**, the daily adds that the judge on this case, **Salem Miso**, is controversial and keeps prolonging the Leutar case, even though *"he had possibility to finalize this case, due to inappropriate evidences that were presented by Sarajevo Cantonal Prosecution Office."*

"I am truly surprised by allegations of abuse of office and national discrimination made against me", Agriculture, Water Management and Forestry Minister in Federation Government **Behija Hadzihajdarevic** said on Thursday (**Dnevni List**, p.6). The statement comes only a few days after a letter sent by Croat officials from several Federation cantons to the High Representative in which they accused the Minister of national discrimination and abuse of office. Minister Hadzihajdarevic said that in order to fully and correctly inform the public she would respond to all questions raised in the letter to the High Representative within the period of time specified by the OHR.

Commenting on media speculation that **General Ivica Zeko**, the

Deputy Commander of the Joint Headquarters of the BiH Federation Army, refused the order to rationalize the number of soldiers as ordered by him, the Federation Defense Minister, **Mijo Anic**, said that this order was issued too early and that it did not go through a regular procedure. Anic also said that he did not demand a removal of General Zeko and added that General Sylvester can confirm this. (**Dnevni List**, p. 2, **Oslobodjenje**)

BiH state level – European integration

Oslobodjenje (p. 4) reports (original **ONASA** report) that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, met on Wednesday with the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, **Javier Solana**, and two other EU representatives for the Balkans, **Alain Le Roix** and **Erhard Busek**. During a working dinner in Brussels, the four officials discussed the ways of bringing the Balkan countries closer to Europe and strengthening their ties with the EU. According to ONASA, Ashdown noted that people in the Balkans are under the wrong impression that it is the US who funnels most funds to this region. *"When you ask people in BIH who is helping their country the most, the typical response is that this is the US...which helps, however not nearly to the extent Europe does,"* said Ashdown.

The **OSCE's Permanent Council** in Vienna agreed on Thursday to authorize the OSCE in BiH to work on education reform in BiH. According to OHR Chief Spokesman, **Julian Braithwaite**, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and the head of the OSCE mission in BiH, Robert Beecroft, addressed the Council yesterday and won its support for the initiative that the OSCE BiH assumed the role of a coordinator in the field of education reform. *"The aim is that the educational system becomes the place which will teach tolerance and reconciliation, and fight against the hate and intolerance. With its developed network across BiH, the OSCE can successfully coordinate the implementation of this project,"* said Braithwaite. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p. 2, **Nezavisne Novine**, p..5)

"Education is in crisis. Instead of facilitating a unified Bosnian identity, it is widely used as an ideological and political tool to reinforce ethnic bias, intolerance, segregation and discrimination," Ashdown said in a statement before the Permanent Council. (AFP report)

Deputy speaker of the BiH Parliament's House of Peoples, **Sejfudin Tokic**, asked the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, to urgently ensure the proper implementation of all legal decisions and decisions by the High Representative on Kotorsko, Janja, Kozluk and other areas. *"The escalation in the distribution of land for construction of homes for refugees and displaced persons who do not want to return to their pre-war homes has evolved into the first class political problem. Although this practice is present in both entities, it is much more prevalent in the RS,"* said Tokic in an open letter to Ashdown. (**Dnevni Avaz** p. 2, **Oslobodjenje** back page)

Dnevni Avaz (p. 9 by Sead Luckin) argues that the BiH citizens should be concerned about the money they will be paying for their new personal identity documents, which will be realized through the CIPS (Citizens Identity Protection System) project. According to Luckin, despite the last summer controversy over the tender for the company which would implement the project, German "Siemens" was awarded this 40 million KM worth job, while numerous functional and modern BiH companies for graphic design were virtually excluded from this project. *"[Grafic Designers Union] has 7,300 members. Had the local graphic design industry got this job, 7,300 families could have made a living off of it,"* said **Amer Toskic**, the president of the Union. **Mirko Skrbic**, the head of Direction for CIPS told the daily that *"It was the OHR who was selecting the bids via selective tender which was in line with the entity laws, since this involves the necessary security measures for identification documents."* Luckin notes that most of the funds earmarked for this project will leave BiH, while some of the systems for the implementations, such as the

printing house, may be handed to Skrbic's private company. However, OHR spokesman Oleg Milisic denied the OHR was deciding on this issue. *"We were only interested in the project being implemented, and it was domestic authorities which made the selection."*

BH DANI calls catastrophic the move of the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, to impose changes and amendments to the Law on BiH Identification Card which would allow the entity symbols to appear in the new ID cards. *"Will this High Representative, who was welcomed with great expectations, follow the path of his predecessor Wolfgang Petritsch? Will Ashdown start playing these hypocritical games of giving in to RS politicians?...Or, is he only testing the ground in the RS for making more important decisions?,"* asks DANI.

Belgrade's **Vecernje Novosti** (p. 9) and Zagreb's **Vecernji List** (front page) quote the **UNDP** Survey, conducted among 2,000 households within BiH. Both dailies report that the results indicate that a high percentage of Serbs wishes to be joined with Serbia, while Croats would like to have their own entity. According to the survey, only Bosniaks see BiH is their homeland.

Bosnian airline to launch Sarajevo-Belgrade route on 5 July 2002

Air Bosna will organize today a promotional flight between Sarajevo and Belgrade on its modern Fokker 50 airplane made in the Netherlands. This will be the first flight on the Sarajevo-Belgrade-Sarajevo route since 1992.

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Mandate of the UN mission to BiH extended until July 15
- Chemical workers demonstrations in Tuzla broken up by police

- BiH urges Turkish businessmen to invest in BiH

FTV

- Mandate of the UN mission to BiH extended until July 15
- BiH Council of Ministers welcomes the UN SC decision
- OHR expect the mandate of UNMIBH to be extended by the end of the year

RTRS

- The RS NA supported measures of the RS Government related to overcoming the situation in the RS Customs Administration (RUC) and asked for more decisive activities. (10)
- Mandate of UN Mission to BiH prolonged until July 15th by UN Security Council. (2)
- BiH CoM hails the decision by UN Security Council (2)
- SFOR states that during the search of Radovan Karadzic's house in Pale several forged passports were found (1)