

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 5/9/2002

Headlines in Print Media

Oslobodjenje: Whether the controversial Jagoda Savic (SOS Telephone Director) or the Belgian vaccine against hepatitis B will be removed? – Yet another child in coma at the Sarajevo Hospital

Dnevni Avaz: Interview with NATO Secretary General George Robertson – BiH must have the state defense ministry

Jutarnje Novine: Fresh amendments to the Federation Law on Pension-Invalid Insurance – special benefits for veterans

Dnevni List: Hasan Cengic on hidden shells in Mostar – SFOR knew about warehouses back in 1997

Vecernji List: Discrimination in the Federation budget – Not a KM for Croat culture

Glas Srpski: French journalist Thierry Messon says September 11th is the mother of all conspiracies; 120 apartments in Srebrenica vacated

Nezavisne Novine: Customs administrations of both entities harmonized tariffs for 900 products; HoP Chairman says Ivanic and Behmen help the oil lobby

Blic: Dragan Kostic, the DNS party: “the Government has neglected villages and peasants”; Payments of pensions through the RS post offices for another three months

Srebrenica report

With regard to the report on Srebrenica published by the RS Government in Banja Luka, the **European Union** decisively stands behind positions made by the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, on Tuesday, the officials at the EU Ministerial Council and European Commission confirmed to the **SENSE** News agency (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 9).

“The Hague Tribunal Prosecution Office, as well as the rest of

the international community has been embittered by that scandalous and shameful report, in which the reliable and comprehensive evidence presented before the Tribunal are being totally ignored," the deputy Chief Prosecutor, **Graham Blewitt**, told SENSE news agency (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 9, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 6)

The BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights condemns the attempts to revise historical facts in the study about Srebrenica made by the RS government's bureau for relations with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). *"The former verdicts in the processes against General Krstic and Drazen Erdemovic, as well as reports of the UN and Dutch Institute for War Documentation show that the crime committed in Srebrenica has been the worst crime committed in Europe since the World War II,"* according to a press release from the BiH Helsinki Committee for Human Rights. The lack of cooperation of the RS authorities has been making impossible the precise determination of number of victims of the massacre in Srebrenica, but all indicate that approximately 8,000 people were killed by units led by Ratko Mladic. (**Jutarnje Novine**, p 6)

The Srebrenica and Zepa Mothers association has said that the report of the RS government office on relations with the Hague tribunal is false, shameful and utterly amoral. The members of the association who survived the July 1995 genocide will not let anyone play down the number of their children, husbands, fathers, brothers, sisters and mothers who were killed in the most brutal and cruel way when the safe haven of Srebrenica fell, says a statement issued by the association. (**Jutarnje Novine**, p 6)

Speaker of the BiH House of Peoples **Nikola Spiric** said on Wednesday that the way in which the report on Srebrenica, produced by the RS government's office for relations with ICTY, was presented does not contribute to the credibility of either the RS government or parliament. *"The Republika Srpska*

Government made the best position on this, by distancing itself from the report. There is nothing worse than having the government distance itself from the institution it has established," he told reporters. Spiric said the study insults all Srebrenica victims, adding that the office has made more damage than benefit to the government. (**Jutarnje Novine**, p 6, **Glas Srpski**, p 5, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 6, **Blic**, p 6)

RS President **Mirko Sarovic** said on Wednesday that a report presented on Tuesday by the RS government's office for relations with ICTY, which minimizes (number of) Srebrenica victims, needs to be reviewed, not eliminated in a heap. Sarovic reacted to the report after a meeting with Deputy High Representative Gerhard Enver Schrombgens, who today visited Banja Luka and the RS for the first time. Explaining that the report has just arrived in his office, where it will be professionally analysed, Sarovic said he assumed it was created on the basis of available facts, but that it needs to be compared to other reports. He said it is good to have this report along with other reports issued before, because the truth does not always come from only one source. When asked about the minimization of the number of Srebrenica victims in the report, Sarovic repeated that *"the truth needs to be specified in full"*. (**Fena**, **Oslobodjenje**, p 3, **Jutarnje Novine**, p 6, **Glas Srpski**, p 5, **Nezavisne Novine**, p 6, **Blic**, p 17)

The Democratic National Alliance's (**DNS**) presidential candidate in the RS, **Dragan Kostic**, on Wednesday said that speculation on the number of the victims of crimes committed in Srebrenica had been motivated by politics, adding that he was sorry that BiH Federation politicians had been manipulating Srebrenica's tragedy at political gatherings in order to promote themselves. *"No-one should ever manipulate victims. The big discrepancy in the number of the killed and missing in reports by the BiH Federation and the RS is telling of the fact that something else is hidden behind the whole issue and that the families of the victims have been used for*

political purposes yet again,” Kostic told a news conference in Banja Luka. He added that it was astonishing that, even seven years after the war, the exact number of Srebrenica victims had not yet been established. He also urged the two entities’ commissions for missing persons and prisoners of war to establish better cooperation. (SRNA)

Nezavisne Novine(p 6) also carries other reactions of various political parties and officials, who all condemned the Report on Srebrenica, issued by the RS Government’s Bureau for Cooperation with the ICTY, which includes the press releases of the British Deputy Foreign Minister, Dennis MacShane, the ICTY Chief Prosecutor Deputy, Graham Blewitt, the RS Helsinki Human Rights Committee, Bosnian Party (BOS), Party for BiH (SBiH), the BiH Foreign Minister, Zlatko Lagumdžija and the BiH Association of prisoners of war.

Glas Srpski carried an excerpt from the RS Government’s Report on Srebrenica. In today’s edition Glas srpski is focusing on the Srebrenica war commander, Naser Oric. The paper will keep carrying excerpts from the Srebrenica report.

BiH Presidency members sign final version of a document on new SCMM structure; other BiH-related developments/statements

The BiH Presidency members on Tuesday signed the final version of a document on the organization and work of the BiH defense structures, finally making the new structure of the Standing Committee for Military Matters (**SCMM**) official. According to an **Oslobodjenje** story on the issue (pages 4-5), the SCMM is supposed to be a key body for ensuring command over the armed forces in BiH at the state level, which is one of the main pre-conditions for the country’s accession to the NATO Partnership for Peace Program. The well-informed sources told the newspaper that the crucial thing in the whole process would be the appointment of a general secretary, who would head the SCMM Secretariat.

“There are not standard criteria for the membership in the

Partnership for Peace Program. It is needed that BiH undertakes certain actions before its nomination for the accession to the integration starts to be considered seriously. The first and the most important thing is creation of a common state command and a control structure of the military forces. This includes the defense ministry at the state level," Nato Secretary General **George Robertson** said in an interview with **Dnevni Avaz** (front page, p 5)

Slobodna Dalmacija (last page) reads that **BiH Presidency** received on Wednesday representatives of UN Mission to BiH, led by the IPTF Commissioner **Sven Frederikson**. The main topic on the agenda was creation of the BiH Agency for information and protection with both sides concluding that the procedure of appointments of principals is running behind schedule and that the task ought to be completed as soon as possible. According to Frederikson, the creation of the Agency is of utmost importance for the UN Mission to BiH because a lot of efforts has been made in creation of the relevant laws and meeting material pre-requisites for foundation of such state institution. (**Dnevni Avaz**, p 2)

Both Banja Luka dailies, **Glas Srpski** (p 3), **Nezavisne Novine** (front page, p 3), and **Dnevni Avaz** (p 4) quote the BiH House of Peoples Chairman, **Nikola Spiric**, as saying at a news conference in Banja Luka that the so-called oil lobby in BiH caused damage to the RS budget, which amounts to a few hundred million KM and twice as much in the BiH Federation. Spiric said that the oil lobby is made up of the RS Prime Minister, Mladen Ivanic, the RS Minister for Mining and Energy, Bosko Lemez, the BiH Federation Prime Minister, Alija Behmen and the BiH Treasury Minister, Anto Domazet.

Nezavisne Novine reports (front page, p 2) that the agreement on harmonization of **customs tariffs** for 900 product, signed by the customs administrations of both entities on July 31st this year, has become effective on September 1st this year. (**Dnevni**

Avaz, p 10, **Oslobodjenje**, p 7, also report on the issue)

Federation Affairs

Vecernji List (front and page 5) carries an interview with **Franjo Franjic**, 'a former candidate for Federation Finance Minister', as described by Vecernji List, in which he told the papers that he has given up the candidacy for the post for good. "One of the reasons I was not appointed not even at the fourth session of the Federation Parliament is my attitude towards the rule of law, because had I been appointed the Finance Minister, it would not have happened that Alija Behmen (Federation Prime Minister) illegally pays in the money for years of service of Bosniak employees only (...) A lack of quorum is not the problem, but the problem is that I have not seen any efforts to secure the quorum ", says Franjic. Questioned why he is not appointed to the post, Franjic says: "If somebody does not want to appoint a Finance Minister, it means that he has open hands to spend the budget money. He who controls finances, he controls complete authority. In this case it is SBiH and SDP".

Dnevni List (page 2) reads that the OHR has suggested the Federation House of Representatives to confirm appointments of the Federation Finance Minister and Federation Minister of Social Affairs: "I appeal to you to rise above the politics and do the right thing for the citizens you represent by giving the Government the necessary resources for providing of services", reads the letter that was sent to **Ismet Briga**, the Speaker of the Federation HoR, by the Principal Deputy High Representative, **Donald Hays**, on behalf of the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**.

At a session in Sarajevo on Wednesday, the BiH **Federation House of Representatives** adopted the amendments to the law on pension-disability insurance giving the veterans a right to pension benefits for the participation in the war. These benefits include a pension raise of 0.25% of an average Federation pension for each month spent in the armed forces during the war.

Dnevni List (front and page 3), **Vecernji List** (page 2) and **Slobodna Dalmacija** (back page) carry statement of **Hasan Cengic**, a former BiH Federation Deputy Minister of Defense, who appeared before the Mostar Municipal Court 2 and stated that he does not know anything about the Mostar mortar rounds case. He could not explain why his father **Halid Cengic** failed to appear before the court. Hasan Cengic also demanded a waiver of **Faruk Balijagic**, a lawyer of one of the suspects, and refused to answer any of his questions, because, according to Cengic, Balijagic was giving information on the course of the investigation to media and conducting his campaign for member of BiH Presidency through this case. Hasan Cengic stated that SFOR knew about hidden mortar rounds back in 1997. **Munib Tahirovic**, an employee of Federation Ministry of Defense, also gave his statement about the mortar rounds that were hidden in Mostar. (**Oslobodjenje**, p 7, **Dnevni Avaz**, p 11)

Dnevni List (page 11) carries statement of **Mijo Anic**, NHI candidate for Croat member of BiH Presidency, who said that certain members of HDZ BiH are manipulating for months with 450 soldiers who are on long sick leaves and another 750 who were retired without proper procedure. Although he said that he as Minister of Defence has nothing to do with hundreds of protesting soldiers, because last of them left Federation Army two years ago, Anic initiated meeting of competent cantonal ministers in order to help them. However, as Anic said, cantonal ministers lied and were acting as party soldiers, so that Deputy Minister for Defenders Issues **Dobrica Jonjic**, together with Anic, organised first degree commission that will examine 450 soldiers that were on long sick leave, on Monday 9 September.

Vecernji List (front and page 2, by Zdenko Jurilj) reads that the **betting shops** that have been closed down in the recent operations conducted by the Federation authorities are planning to sue the state for the damage the closing has inflicted on them. VL also reports that if the lawsuit does

not give a favourable verdict, the bookies are planning to hire an international team of lawyers that will seek justice with the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg. VL also notes that betting shops in the RS that are owned by bookies from the Federation are still working without problems despite new legal provisions.

Vecernji List (front and page 2, by Zoran Kresic) reads that Federation Government decided to remove institutions for preservation and development of Croatian culture and language from list of NGOs that are receiving budgetary support. According to the daily, the Federation Government decided that 'Matica Hrvatska', Association of Croat Writers, Croatian Information Centre, Association of Amateur Cultural Groups, Association of Croat Artists, ... should not receive support from Federation budget. The explanation of the Federation Government was that *"associations of the same kind should merge in one organisation on Federation level because of rationalisation and reduction of public expenditure"*. According to the daily, out of 1,690,000 KM for NGOs from Federation budget, Croat ones received only 265,000 and Bosniak ones 1,425,000 KM.

Dobrovoljacka street case

Following the news that the Bureau of the RS Government for co-operation with the ICTY has pressed charges for the crimes committed against JNA soldiers on Dobrovoljacka Street in Sarajevo in 1992, the charges that include the name of **Stjepan Kljujic**, a member of the then BiH Presidency, **Slobodna Dalmacija** (page 15, by Dino Mikulandra) carries Mr. Kljujic as saying that he is not upset by the news one bit. Kljujic stresses that he was not present on the site of the conflict between "green berets" and BiH Army and JNA: *"I was speaking on the television then, appealing that security and safety of all people be secured, to prevent any provocation in the city and in the country"*. According to the author of the article, Kljujic views the charges in the context of awakening of Serb nationalists who are using every opportunity to rewrite

history about the Serb aggression and defence war conducted by Bosniaks and Croats. According to Mikulandra, Kljucic also puts the blame for the course of event on the IC, which insists on the strange balance of guilt, and on the Alliance for changes that met with the RS PM **Mladen Ivanic** at Mrakovica, whilst there has not been a single word of regret for the atrocities coming from the Serb side.

Vjesnik (page 11, by Alenko Zornija) also carries a piece on the Dobrovoljacka case. The daily carries **Biljana Plavsic**, a former member of BiH Presidency and an ICTY indictee, who spoke about **Ejub Ganic's** role in the whole deal: *"The operation was conducted by Ejup Ganic. Kljucic got involved a bit, but Ejub told him 'Kljuja leave it, I'm running this operation' (...) I am of an opinion that he is responsible, even young men that he was giving lectures at the university dies there"*, said Plavsic.

In the statements for **Oslobodjenje** (p 3), Kljucic, the retired BiH Army General **Jovan Divjak** and the war time BiH Presidency member **Ejub Ganic** also denied their involvement in the alleged war crimes committed in the Sarajevo Dobrovoljacka street.

Reactions to the High Representative's decision to remove Dobož acting mayor; SDHR Schroombgens' visit to Banja Luka

Glas Srpski quotes (p 3) the removed acting mayor of Dobož, Mirko Stojcinovic, as saying that the High Representative's decision to remove him is politically motivated and is aimed at weakening the SDS's position in the eve of the elections. He said he was surprised with the High Representative's decision because it contains some factual mistakes and inaccuracies. He said that the construction works in Kotorsko ceased 10 days ago. Stojcinovic also denied he was obstructing the implementation of Annex 7 of the DPA and misusing the office. He claims that the PDP is involved in his removal. *"The CoM Chair and top PDP official, Dragan Mikerevic, was telling me that I will be removed unless I listen to him, and in cooperation with the OHR he accomplished what he wanted"*,

said Stojcinovic. The paper reports that the new Doboj deputy mayor will be Mirko Okolic who is also a SDS member.

Glas Srpski carries (p 3) a press release, issued by the SDS, which states that the SDS finds the High Representative's decision to remove the acting mayor of Doboj, Mirko Stojcinovic, is unfounded and planned in advance. The SDS is of the opinion that the decision was made despite Stojcinovic's efforts to implement High Representative's decisions. The statement further reads that the SDS has an information that some political parties, which are very close to the Alliance for Change and the Council of Ministers, lobbied for this decision.

Glas Srpski reports (p 3) that the **RS President, Mirko Sarovic**, met with the **SDHR, Gerhard Schroembgens**, to discuss the refugee return, the implementation of constitutional changes and the forthcoming elections. After the meeting, Schroembgens and Sarovic said that the RS Law on Ministries should be implemented after the elections.

RS-related news

On Wednesday, the RS Minister of Communication and Traffic, **Branko Dokic**, met with PIO Fund Director **Ostoja Kremenovic** and the Director of the RS Post service, Milutin Pejic. After the meeting, Branko Dokic stated: *"For the next three months, pensions will be paid out through post offices without provisions, and the will of pensioners who wish to receive pensions on their bank accounts will be respected"*. He adds that the RS Government, Steering Board of PIO fund and Steering Board of the RS Post Service will find a permanent solution within next three months. (**Blic**, p 6, **FRY Nacional**, p 11)

The RS Prime Minister, **Mladen Ivanic**, and the **Mayor of Moscow**, Jurij Luzkov, have signed the Agreement on Cooperation in construction, which defines the participation of construction firms from the RS in construction apartments in Moscow. (**Blic**, p 7)

*“UNMIBH is satisfied that the trial of 16 individuals charged with participating in the violence in Banja Luka on May 7th last year has finally got underway (**Ferhadija** case)”, UNMIBH Banja Luka Office Spokesperson **Alun Roberts** said. According to his words, the trial would serve as a test, which would show how good the police investigation of the events in Banja Luka last year has been conducted. (**FRY Nacional**, p 11)*

Croats' position in BiH

Vecernji List (page 7) reads that 127 Croats from central Bosnia that arrived to Golubic near Knin (Croatia) in March this year fear that they would not be able to survive through the winter. *“At a meeting with the Mayor of Knin on Tuesday, we realised that the town and the state have not the strength, intention or will to help. We got some undefined answers about our survival in Knin and Croatia. That’s why we are asking the (Croatian) Government if the Croats from central Bosnia are allowed to live in Croatia and whether the Constitution of Republic of Croatia that says that we are welcomed in Croatia still applies”,* said **Nikola Gvozdenovic** on behalf of the 127 people. In case of a negative answer or silence from the Croatian Government, the Croat refugees are announcing a hunger strike.

Dnevni List (page 2, by Ivica Glibusic) carries an editorial, which says that it seems that representatives of the Croat people do not know what the Croat national interests are and how to fight for them but they only care of their personal interests. *‘By all accounts, Croats are still fighting for those positions that Dayton guarantees them, and it means that the political struggle of the Croats has taken an opposite direction.’* The author states problems regarding the Mostar University, a TV in Croatian language etc. The author concludes: *‘The only way out for the Croats in BiH is to finally find people who will not tailor interests of one people in cafes but in competent places.’*

Headlines in Electronic Media

BHTV 1 (Wednesday, 1900)

- Hasan Cengić stated before Mostar Court that he was not aware of the hidden weapon
- Staff reduction triggered protest of employees with the company Vaso Miskin Crni
- Pensioners in RS will be in position to use both commercial banks and post offices for transfer of their pensions.
- Attack on Iraqi more likely to happen after President Bush's meeting with congressmen

FTV 1 (1930)

- Zenica: a boy and a girl ejected from the car and left behind
- Federation House of People decided on higher pensions for members of the BiH Army, HVO and police
- Hasan Cengić, a witness in case of Mostar grenades accused Federation Government for political set up
- Donations gathered at the first BiH donors' conference were invested in reconstruction of houses in Dobretići

RTRS (1930)

- Return of all refugees and displaced persons in BiH within one year is possible, estimates Ashdown's deputy
- Hearing of defendants in Ferhadija case is completed
- Pension payment without commission
- Solana's arbitrage unacceptable, says Djindjic