

OHR BiH Media Round-up, 9/10/2002

Print Media Headlines

Oslobodjenje: Miscount and manipulations with votes; Final preliminary results: Victory of nationalist parties; Lagumdžija keeps position of SDP president

Dnevni Avaz: Losers spread lies and fear; Lagumdžija and SDP leadership offer their resignations

Glas Srpski: Nicholl requests abolishment of RS Deposit Agency; Prnjavor: Drunken pupils end up in hospital

Blic: The Government sells wheat in order to pay debt for buying up; Milorad Dodik: We do not want a coalition with the SDS; Petar Djokic: National divisions in BiH are bigger

Nezavisne Novine: BiH political scene after general elections: RS – Government possible without SDS; BiH Federation: New alliance uncertain; Change in SFOR command: Ward instead of Sylvester; Bakir Hadziomerovic, editor and host of “60 minutes” program: suspended because of Alija Izetbegovic; Peter Nicholl will request Ashdown to abolish RS Deposit Insurance agency

Vecernji List: New coalition between HDZ, SDA and Party for BiH

Dnevni List: After election to BiH Presidency: Dragan Covic leaves HDZ BiH?

Slobodna Dalmacija: Scandal at Federation TV: How does Director censor historical truth: Durakovic removes editor because of recording of Izetbegovic lining up mujahedeen

Elections 2002

According to the latest preliminary results from regular polling stations, **Sulejman Tihic** will become the Bosniak member of the BiH Presidency. **BHTV 1** and **FTV** report that according to ballots received from regular polling stations in the municipalities of Velika Kladusa, Cazin, Bosanska Krupa and Drvar, Tihic has a three-per-cent lead over Haris

Silajdzic. In comparison to yesterday's results, the SDA and the SDS have extended their lead by one to two per cent. A total of 43,000 postal votes, around 6,500 unconfirmed ballots and close to 60,000 proxy votes need to be counted before the final results can be announced.

The BiH Election Commission will receive postal votes by October 15 and announce final results by October 20.

In a statement with **Vecernji List** (page 5) SDA's **Sulejman Tihic**, rejects any possibility of forming a coalition with SDS. *"In any case there will be no coalition with SDS regardless of them accepting the reform by the OHR. We will talk to HDZ about co-operation but with other parties too. We do not want to go with HDZ alone"*. Asked about the possible alliance between SDA, HDZ and SbiH, Tihic says: *"As far as I am concerned, yes"*. In a separate statement for **BHTV 1**, Tihic rejected any possibility of SDA forming an alliance with SDP. *"This coalition is simply not realistic."*

On the basis of the counted votes which have arrived in the post, candidate of the **Party for BiH** for BiH Presidency Haris Silajdzic has received more votes than SDA's Sulejman Tihic, SBiH Election HQ said in a press release on Tuesday. *"SbiH cannot understand the delay in counting and announcing results in the main vote counting center. We wonder if manipulation and vote rigging are behind the issue, as it can affect the final result,"* the release read.

A member of the **S BiH** presidency, **Gavrilo Grahovac**, said that before undertaking any discussions on forming a coalition, the party will await the final results for BiH Presidency race. *"We are confident that Dr Silajdzic will win that post despite 48,000 votes from the diaspora not being counted yet. This will be very important for us in making our decision on any possible coalition for the next government."* (**BH Radio 1, Dnevni Avaz p. 2**)

Vice president of the **SDP**, **Sead Avdic**, told **Oslobodjenje** (p. 6) that the SDP is "looking into" the possibility of forming a

coalition with SNSD and PDP at the state level. Avdic explained that this party is analyzing the possibility of forming a majority in the BiH Parliament's House of Representatives, which would *"be a great chance to preserve the embryo of positive democratic development achieved by the Alliance."*

Vjesnik reports that representatives of the International Community in BiH are more than disappointed over the results achieved by the Alliance for Changes, primarily by SDP and 'moderate' Croat parties at Saturday's elections. The daily argues that it is quite certain that HDZ and SDA will form some sort of a coalition, however, it does not exclude even larger alliance with the Party for BiH, especially since neither SDA nor HDZ reject the possibility of forming the so-called expert Governments. According to Vjesnik, representatives of winning parties excluded a nationalistic rhetoric almost completely and they mainly promise that they will take a way of reforms.

In an interview with **Slobodna Dalmacija** (front page) HDZ's **Dragan Covic**, says that it will not be possible that political parties in the Federation form a government without representatives of the HDZ. *"I think this is no longer possible. I believe that everyone must show responsibility and respect results of the elections and the fact that BiH is a state with three peoples. Everyone needs stability so we could implement our programs in the interest of all peoples and citizenry in peace (...) When I say that I take encouraging statements of top IC representatives into account who democratically recognized the election results and expect the winning parties to form governments as soon as possible and start implementing reforms"*.

On possible affect of Law on Immunity and in that perspective his membership in BiH Presidency: *"As far as my candidacy is concerned and the election which is already undeniable, everything is legally and politically in order. Nothing can*

affect my election to BiH Presidency”.

President of the **SNSD**, **Milorad Dodik**, told the press yesterday that the formation of the Alliance for the RS, as proposed by the SDS, or a coalition with this party is not realistic at this time. Dodik explained, however, that SNSD would be ready to have a partnership with SDS only under conditions that SDS accepts requests for revision of privatization, reduction of armed forces, abolishment of conscription and institutional fight against organized crime. *“At this time, it is not even realistic to form a coalition with PDP, because he will not accept revision of privatization,”* Dodik said. He noted that the International Community bears significant responsibility for the victory of nationalist parties in BiH and added that SNSD will come out with *“an opinion on certain international institutions”* in the near future. (**Oslobodjenje**, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 3, **Blic** p. 2, **Vecernje Novosti** p. 4, **Nacional** p. 11)

A **PDP** official, **Dragan Mikerevic**, confirmed that his party will play a key role in the establishment of new Government. *“We do not want to think about who we will be in a coalition with, we will let other parties decide whether they want to join us. We are aware that we are in a position to decide on the future authorities and it is possible to establish it without SDS.”* (**Nezavisne Novine**)

Miso Vidovic in **Dnevni Avaz** (p.2) reports that the RS could witness the creation of a new-old coalition between SDS and PDP, together with several small parties. This coalition would secure 42 seats in the RS National Assembly, which would also give the two parties a chance to chose candidates for the new government. Vidovic writes that one wing of PDP strongly objects to this scenario, arguing that PDP will continue being only a part of the SDS entrusted with issues SDS is afraid of dealing with publicly.

High official in the Serb Radical Party [SRS], **Mirko Blagojevic**, stated that the interest of his party is to

establish authorities that would be in the interest of the RS citizens and survival of the RS. Blagojevic emphasized that new authorities have to be established without the SDS. *"We do not want to talk with SDS and that is the official stand of SRS. If SNSD and PDP agree and establish a coalition, Radicals will support that, in spite of the fact that Ivanic does not deserve it. SDS cannot count on Radicals as possible coalition partners, SDS can count on support of Sulejman Tihic and his party [SDA]."*

President of the **RS Socialist Party, Petar Djokic**, said that *"all options are open, we can even be in opposition. Those who have good economic program, will have our support. We will talk with everyone, and then decide. I do not believe that SDS initiative to establish Alliance for RS will be supported."* (**Blic p. 2, Vecernje Novosti p. 4, Nacional p. 11**)

DNS's Vice President, **Jovan Mitrovic**, stated that his party will enter a coalition with SNSD. According to Mitrovic, his party would support the coalition between SNSD and PDP, and will not even consider an alliance with SDS. *"The key to the solution is in hands of Mladen Ivanic. If he does not have some obligations towards SDS, he will join Dodik. If there is an interest for the future of RS people, the two of them [Ivanic and Dodik] should offer solutions"* (**Nezavisne Novine**)

Dnevni List (front and page 3, by Z. Krejic) learns from sources within HDZ BiH that **Dragan Covic**, once inaugurated a member of BiH Presidency, will leave the party. According to an anonymous senior official of the party, Covic has been thinking about this for some time already but has decided to inform only a few people in his party. The same source says that Covic indirectly announced this possibility earlier at a session of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton HDZ when he warned, when he is elected a member of BiH Presidency, that he would not be a "buffer" for blows against HDZ and the party's adventure with HNS (Croat National Assembly. The daily notes that Covic got an extra "nudge" when the High Representative, **Paddy**

Ashdown, issued a Decision on Law on Immunity. In that context, DL says that Covic shows, by leaving the party, that he is willing to co-operate in the implementation of the IC's plan for BiH.

Oslobodjenje (front page) reports that the **SDP presidency** decided to hold an extraordinary party congress on November 9, when officials are to discuss the future engagement of **Zlatko Lagumdzija** and other senior leaders in SDP. The daily writes that the US ambassador, **Clifford Bond**, paid an unannounced visit to the session and held a private meeting with Lagumdzija behind the closed doors.

In a front page article in **Oslobodjenje**, Almir Terzic writes that a manipulation of votes on a large scale has taken place in some municipal counting centers, especially in Gorazde and Srebrenica, and other towns in Podrinje canton. According to Terzic, over thousand of votes have been stolen only in this canton and Federation Ministry of Interior units and FOSS (Federation Intelligence Service) are already investigating this case. The president of the Election Commission Council for Complaints, **Hilmo Pasic**, however, tells the daily that he has received only 21 complaints about minor offenses, most of them pertaining to violations of the election silence. He explained that the SDA is under investigation because of alleged distribution of promotion material during the silence period and because of frequent hate-speech at its pre-election rallies. **Oslobodjenje** writes that the OHR asked for this investigation to take place.

Commentaries

In a statement for **Dnevni Avaz** (front page), vice president of the **SDA**, **Mirsad Kebo**, strongly criticized *"attempt of some political parties and officials to create hysteria"* and spread fear of possible new war because of the victory of nationalist parties in BiH. "This project is being organized by the defeated political forces with the aim of provoking a

protectorate or finding different solutions without respect for the will of voters.," says Kebo. S BiH's **Beriz Belkic** seconded this view: "I am not concerned. We are living in a completely different environment now. I believe that the nationalist parties today do not even think about resolving problems through conflict.."

In a statement for **BHTV 1** news, a renown Bosniak intellectual, **Adil Zulfikarpasic**, said that he agrees with the thesis that Saturday's elections were not a return to Bosnia's nationalist past. "This is the case, especially if we talk about the SDA. SDA is no longer the party it was in 1992 or even in 1995." Head of the Jewish community in BiH **Jakob Finci** was of similar opinion. "SDA, HDZ and SDS are not the same political parties they were ten years ago. Bosnia has transformed, so have these parties. I believe that progress and reforms in BIH are inevitable and cannot be stopped, and could only be slowed down by these parties." **Miodrag Zivanovic**, an independent intellectual from Banja Luka, told the **BHTV 1** that the outcome of Saturday's elections was predictable. "Even if non-nationalist parties had won, they would inevitably assume national roles. I am certain that the High Representative will assume more powerful role in the coming period."

In an Op-Ed in **Vecernji List**, Dejan Jazvic writes that the International Community will accept 'national' parties for their partners, because both leaders of SDA and HDZ, as well as the leaders of all leading parties in the RS, said after the elections that they will accept the plan of reforms. "It seems that **Paddy Ashdown** will not repeat the mistake of his predecessor **Wolfgang Petritsch**, who supported elections engineering by the OSCE after the last elections, and forcefully removed SDA and HDZ from power. Immediately after the results of the elections were published, Ashdown stated that voters have punished ruling 'Alijansa' because it did not do enough in implementation of social, economic and political reforms in the country. (...) Ashdown stated that he will accept the real election winners and judge them on the basis of their deeds and readiness to implement planned reforms, and not on

the basis of stories from the past. Ashdown reacted very strongly on blanked remarks about intentions of SDA and HDZ, that editor of Federation Television presented during TV interview on Monday. Ashdown did what was unimaginable for his predecessors, he stood in defence of 'national' parties. Because of editor's partiality, he was suspended, what is a proof that policy of FTV, which is under dominant influence of the International Community, is radically changing".

In his op-ed in **Dnevni list**, Miso Relota writes that "the fact that almost fifty percent of voters decided to stay at home and stare at their walls, not thinking about consequences of such decision is speaking for itself. One must openly say to all of them that they are irresponsible persons who know only how to whine and complain about their destiny and criticize others, not willing to solve their own problems. It seems that they are expecting others to do that job for them. And that "others" is the International Community. (...) Statements that are especially dangerous are coming from some losers at the elections, who are asking the International Community to cancel the elections, what really shows that they don't care about voters but only about their positions in authority. What would then happen if results of the elections were different? (...) To all those, one can only send a message not to underestimate will of BiH peoples who live in BiH, because that is the wrong way that will not bring good and bright future".

In an editorial in **Jutarnji List**, **Zoran Kusovac** argues that 'losers from the last elections, primarily Lagumdzija's 'multi-ethnic' SDP are still hiding their despair hoping that some post-election cuisine of **Paddy Ashdown**, the High Representative, still could make possible that they remain in power.' According to Kusovac, interfering of the International Community in the affairs of the states of former Yugoslavia has shown to be inefficient and senseless many times. Kusovac says that 'IC representatives are not trying

to understand national and regional peculiarities.’ ‘Insincere West, that is not interested in this area, is finding partners in incapable people from Balkan’ ...‘international representatives behave as Governors of colonies and they function according to Yugoslav-Communist principle- do not make an obvious mistake, even if it will not give results.’ Kusovac says that during the elections in BiH ‘patriots’ both in Serbia and Croatia had their favorites among extremists in BiH hoping that they will be next winners in Balkans, which functions as communicating vessels. *‘In a long run, this sort of games are suicidal for their peoples and their states, however, until the IC shows knowledge, will and resoluteness to urge and support sincere changes (and it could demonstrate this easily by arrest of Radovan Karadzic) the empire of lies, in which everybody deludes oneself and all the others will rule, just to make possible to get as much power as possible as soon as possible, and that they can enjoy in this power as long as possible with the smallest number of disturbances. ’*

Reactions

OHR chief spokesperson **Julian Braithwaite** told the press that the High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**, will address on Wednesday representatives of regional developmental agencies and foreign investors in Sarajevo. In this speech, Paddy Ashdown will set out the actions by which the international community will judge the new governments. *“He will set out 6 tests for 6 months: 6 tests of seriousness on the reform agenda which he believes any government will need to implement over the next 6 months if BiH is to stay on track for delivering the people’s priorities: justice and jobs,”* Braithwaite said. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 3, **Dnevni Avaz** p. 3, **Nezavisne Novine** p. 4, **RTRS**)

In a statement for **FENA** news agency, **US Embassy’s** public information office said that the US will withhold any comment on the outcome of the elections until the final results are announced. *“Authorities on state and entity levels must be committed to the implementation of necessary reforms. BiH*

cannot afford taking a step off the path of reforms and integration into Europe and the West.” (Oslobodjenje p. 4, Dnevni Avaz p. 4)

Bosnia's ability to hold peaceful elections last weekend confirmed the peace process was gaining strength in the Balkan state, the **Russian foreign ministry** said on Tuesday. In reaction to the vote, Russia said the election “*answered general European standards, proving that the peace process was gaining strength.*” It added that Russia was “*prepared to cooperate constructively with a process*” that began with the 1995 Dayton accords. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 4)

German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer on Tuesday hailed the holding of elections in BiH as “*another step forward*” to independence and implementation of the 1995 Dayton peace accords. In a statement, Fischer said the staging of the weekend legislative and presidential election “*deserves respect*” as they were the first organized by BiH itself rather than by the international community. Regardless of the result, Fischer said, it was important now to continue the reform process in the Balkan state, above all in the areas of justice and the economy and in anchoring BiH into Europe and transatlantic structures.

Iran on Tuesday said it was pleased with the “successful” holding of general elections in BiH. Foreign Ministry spokesman **Hamid Reza Asefi** hoped “*the results of the elections, which are the fruit of the wise Bosnian people's prudence and farsightedness, will strengthen bases of democracy, freedom of religions and peaceful coexistence among various sects in this multicultural and multi-ethnic (Balkan) country.*”

The Serbian Prince, Aleksandar Karadjordjevic, congratulated the SDS candidate for the RS President, **Dragan Cavic**, on his success in the presidential elections in the entity. “*I am convinced that the people made a good choice and that RS*

citizens will have the President whose mandate will mark the time of stabilization, progress and democracy.” (Blic p 2)

OHR/IC activities

SFOR

US Lieutenant-General William Ward took command of the **SFOR** on Tuesday and immediately called on the country's newly elected leadership to accelerate the reform process. *“I challenge the leadership of the new government to work hand in hand with the multinational and international community to take the difficult and sometimes unpopular decisions that will make BiH a place dominated by democratic institutions, the rule of law and sound economic reforms,”* he said. (**Oslobodjenje** p. 5, **BHTV 1**)

Immunity

In a statement for **Oslobodjenje** (p. 2), OHR spokesman **Oleg Milisic** explained that cantonal, entity and state constitutions include provision which clearly stipulate responsibilities of officials protected by immunity. *“For example, if a prime minister is accused of a bank robbery, it is clear that this was not a part of his regular duties. He will be charged. If he decides to claim immunity, the court will be the final instance to rule in this case. If it decides that the act was not a part of minister's regular duties, criminal charges will serve to initiate legal proceeding,”* Milisic said, and explained that the new set of laws will not have retroactive powers. *“Definition of a criminal act will not be changed, but the law removes the possibility of claiming immunity if the disputed act was not a part of regular duties of the official in question.”*

Commenting on the possibility of newly elected officials could be affected by the Law on Conflict of Interest and Law on Immunity imposed by **Ashdown**, the President of BiH Election Commission, **Lidija Korac**, says that the Commission welcomes

the Law and that, once the election results are final and official, it will apply the said Law in its entirety. (**Dnevni List**, front and page 3)

World Bank

At a press conference held on Tuesday, the governor of the BiH Central Bank and the chairman of the BiH Deposit Insurance Agency, Peter Nicholl, said that he will ask the High Representative to impose a law, which would abolish the Federation Deposit Insurance Agency. *"I have to do this because the Federation Parliament failed to abolish the agency, and if necessary, I will do the same in the RS,"* said Nicholl.

Judicial reform

Glas Srpski (p.5) continues its series of interviews with judges dismissed by the former High Representative, **Wolfgang Petritsch**. In today's issue, a judge in the Banja Luka Basic Court, **Jefto Jankovic**, stated that he will make no comments on his case, until he receives an answer to his letter from the current High Representative, **Paddy Ashdown**. However, he did say that he want to inform public on the real reasons behind his suspension. Jankovic commented on reasons that made **Zeljko Lalic** (judge dismissed by Petritsch) to commit suicide and said the following: *"Lalic told me that at a meeting he had with IJC's **Malcolm Simmons**, another IJC official, **Milan Romanic**, "promised" to kick him out of the court. He also told me that he and Romanic had some unsettled issues from Knin and Okucani"*. Glas Srpski's journalist V. Janjic writes that GS asked IJC for permission for an interview with Romanic, but was told by IJC Spokesperson, **Sanela Tunovic**, that it is not possible. In this article, V. Janjic also writes that the judge who committed suicide, **Zeljko Lalic**, mentioned IJC officials, **Malcolm Simmons** and **Milan Romanic** in his farewell note.

Slobodna Dalmacija (front and page 15, by Marijan Sivric) carries an interview with **Josip Muselimovic**, a Mostar lawyer, about the information that the criminal proceedings against

Ante Jelavic will be continued before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court. *'This will not happen and this case is under jurisdiction of the Mostar Cantonal Court.'* Muselimovic stresses that *'the BiH Constitutional Court adopted the appeal completely on May 10, 2002, and it decided that this case should be conducted before the Mostar Cantonal Court.'* He added that he was waiting for this decision to be published in the Official Gazzete, however, since this did not happen Muselimovic went to the BiH Constitutional Court to check the files in details. *"To my great surprise I found out there a petition of the Deputy High Representative for Legal Issues, by which a reexamining of the BiH Constitutional Court decision from May 10, 2002 was demanded.'* Muselimovic explains that the decision can be reexamined by a competent Commission of the BiH Constitutional Court and judges and not by DHR. Muselimovic also says that *'a group of the Croats from Stolac are being processed before the Sarajevo Cantonal Court because they behaved in an uncivilized way while they were entering the Police Administration, while persons involved in the case of hidden Mostar mortar rounds are being processed before the Mostar Cantonal Court.'*

War crimes

In an editorial in **Oslobodjenje**, Amra Kebo argues that the plea of guilt to crimes against humanity entered by Biljana Plavsic before the ICTY will change the nature of all ongoing and future processes in The Hague tribunal. Moreover, her plea will also shake the ever weakening structure of the RS, which was – this is now obvious event to most adamant skeptics – created on the crime. *"That is why Mirko Sarovic is inviting parties to form an Alliance for the RS."*

Electronic Media Headlines

BHTV 1

- Sulejman Tihic leading by 3 percent over Hariso Silajdzic
- Intellectuals say election results do not necessarily mean that BiH is returning to the past

- New witnesses in The Hague process against Slobodan Milosevic
- USA President expressed hope that there will be no military operation in Iraq

FTV

- Election commission released final preliminary results of voting at regular polling stations
- SDA does not want to go into coalition with SDP
- Strike stopped registration of shares in FBiH

RTRS

- Government transferred rights on land and facilities in the Mali Logor military barracks to RTRS in Banjaluka for construction of the TV house
- RS Tax Administration – 4 deputies failed to pay taxes
- American General William Ward takes over SFOR Commander duty from John Sylvester
- Bush once again demands disarmament of Iraq even for the price of war.