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Press conference – Mladen Ivanic, RS Prime Minister

Visit to Washington – Ivanic assessed the visit as very important and successful, because the two entity prime ministers went together and they visited important financial institutions. The emphasis of the visit were put on economic themes, rather than political ones. During their meetings with the World Bank and the International Financial Corporation the two prime ministers gave their suggestions on the preparation of a new program for BH called "Strategy for fighting poverty" which would begin in the beginning of 2002. Until then, the BH will receive $100mil., with RS participation of 40%.

The political part of the talks was held with the officials from the US State Department who are working on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ivanic expressed satisfaction that there was a tendency to accept new governments in BH as partners, not objects of action, and that there were no pressures. "The cooperation with the Hague Tribunal remains an open issue, though, and I informed them that the Law on Cooperation with the Hague Tribunal will soon be adopted in the RS National Assembly". He said he believed that majority of the parties would accept this law, which will be proposewhich will be proposed as draft, even if they recently stated they might not support it. He added that the issue of cooperation needs also verification in the RSNA, as the responsibility of all, not only the Government. Ivanic also said that he will hold a short meeting with the parties comprising parliamentary majority (SDS, PDP, DNS, SPRS) to rule out any possibility of non-adoption of the law.

He added that high officials of the US Department assured the

BH visitors that the GFAP cannot be changed unless agreed with all sides.

RS Budget in first six months of 2001 – domestic revenues are higher for 13%, overall revenues + credits are higher for 12% in comparison to last year, Ivanic said. He also added that 6 salaries were paid and 6 pensions; (the average salary is now 309 KM, pension 110 KM). The RS export increased to 43%, and import is decreasing, while inflation is 1,5% and prices are stable. Ivanic gave importance to the economic reform of tax system that the Government is planning and said that the RS Government session tomorrow will discuss 16 laws planned to decrease taxes, which will stimulate increase of employment and eliminate unregistered employment. (See Gvt session agenda attached below)

Regarding the complaints about the slow process of privatization, he said that a significant part of the job has been done this year, but he agreed agreed that the privatization of part of the state-owned capital is too slow, and "that is why we made personnel changes in the Directorate (for Privatization) improvements can be expected by the end of this month", he said.

Partnership for Peace – Lagumdzija had separate meetings in the Pentagon, and the ideas on creating a single army are well known. The position of the RS Government on that is: it is already covered by the Constitution and the only way to change is to change the Constitution. At this moment there are no political conditions to do that.

Sejfudin Tokic's (SDP) initiative on questioning constitutionality of prefix "srpski" in the name of towns – "Tokic is already known for his initiatives whenever he feels neglected by the media. These initiatives are not useful to the Alliance nor anyone else and the Law on Local Self-Government covers this matter", said Ivanic.

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