

Transcript of the International Agencies' Joint Press Conference

OHR, Kevin Sullivan

OSCE, Aida Besic

EUPM, Zinaida Ilaria

EUFOR, Tim Smith

NATO, Derek Chappell

OHR

Press Conference on Current Situation in BiH

The High Representative and other members of the International Community will hold a press conference here at the OHR on Thursday at which they will comment on the principal issues facing Bosnia and Herzegovina in the wake of the failure to secure a green light to start Stabilisation and Association talks with the EU by the tenth anniversary of Dayton.

Defence Reform Points Way Forward

SDHR Martin Ney is in Butmir this morning, addressing officers of the Armed Forces of BiH who are taking part in a Peace Support Operations seminar. Officers from elsewhere in the region and further afield in Europe are also taking part in this seminar.

Ambassador Ney will make the point that Defence Reform has shown the way forward for BiH in its efforts to integrate in Euro-Atlantic structures. As a result of a realistic and constructive approach by all sides, BiH now has the prospect

of armed forces that reflect its needs and its financial resources and that are clearly predicated on ensuring the security of citizens – which is the core duty of armed forces in any democracy.

Although BiH has we just experienced a significant setback in its efforts to start Stabilisation and Association talks with the European Union, Ambassador Ney will point out that in other areas “BiH is moving forward at a pace that would have been considered unrealizable even two or three years ago. Defence Reform is proceeding on schedule – and that means the benefits can start to be delivered without unnecessary delay.”

Ambassador Ney will also emphasize that “the scope for the BiH Armed Forces to establish a distinctive niche in international peacekeeping – consistent with this country’s particular logistical and personnel resources – is very large indeed,” and that “the rehabilitation of the BiH Armed Forces under the Defence Reform process offers pointers to the broader postwar rehabilitation of BiH itself.”

Helicopter Crash Memorial Ceremony

Representatives of the International Community and the BiH authorities will take part in a memorial ceremony at Prokosko Lake , near Fojnica, tomorrow at 11.00. The ceremony will mark the eighth anniversary of the helicopter crash in which seven staff members of former UNMIBH and five OHR staff members were killed.

OHR will provide transport for journalists wishing to cover the ceremony. Journalists who intend to use this transport are kindly asked to contact the OHR Press Office, by 16.00 today. Journalist who decide to go with their own transportation are advised to be outside the Police station in Fojnica tomorrow at 09.30.

OSCE

Ambassador Douglas Davidson visits Prozor-Rama today

Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina , is visiting the Marko Marulic Primary School in Prozor-Rama today. He will meet with teachers, students, and parents at the school as well as with the Mayor of the Municipality and representatives of the youth organisation Fenix.

Ambassador Davidson is making the trip in order to see for himself what is happening with education in Herzegovina-Neretva Canton in light of the recent decisions taken by municipal authorities in Prozor-Rama and Capljina.

The restructuring of schools appears to have had the practical effect of dividing schools on the basis of ethnicity. Ambassador Davidson will discuss with local authorities the importance of complying with the spirit of the Framework Law on Primary and Secondary Education and the commitment to create "multi-ethnic" schools which was freely entered into by BiH's Ministers of Education before the Peace Implementation Council in 2002 as part of the country's education reform strategy.

EUPM

Head of the European Union Police Mission, Commissioner Kevin Carty yesterday addressed a letter to RS Interior Minister Darko Matijasevic expressing his concerns that the principle of strict separation of politics and policing was not at all times respected in the Republika Srpska.

In the letter, Commissioner Carty stressed that the line that runs between the rights of the public to receive information

about the work of police and divulging operational information has been yet again deliberately violated by the press conference organised by the Ministry on 9 September 2005 in Pale.

EUPM believes that the unfortunate series of press conference held by the RS Ministry of Interior have shown that this line was all too often not respected. The timing, periodicity and political implications of those press conferences have been an indication that they have been organised following political, rather than policing considerations.

The letter also reminded Minister Matijasevic that the strict separation of politics and operational policing was a key European Commission principle for police restructuring, a principle which RS Government claimed to have had endorsed.

EUFOR

No statement.

NATO

No statement.

RTQs:

Tarik Lazović, VIP:

Good afternoon. Tarik Lazović, from the daily newspaper VIP. My question concerns the possible and eventual punishing of the RS following the failure of police reform. Today certain media have reported that the speakers from the RS, scheduled to appear at the manifestation at Rača, have been taken off the protocol, and that this is the beginning of the punishment

for the RS because of the failure of the police reform. Is this true and what is your comment on this? This question is for the OHR and the EUPM.

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

Well, at this point I think the important thing is to concentrate on the issue, which is that the RS has to accept the three principles that have been laid down by the European Commission in connection to this issue. And, other than that, the issue of a protocol act or actions is not something that we would comment on.

Zinaida Ilaria, EUPM:

I really do not have anything else to add to what Kevin just said. The position of the EUPM regarding the issue of the importance of police reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been clear for the last eighteen months, as well as our position that the police reform must be carried out in accordance with the European principles. That is all.

Rubina Cengic, Nezavisne novine:

A question for the OHR. According to reports from BHT1 you have received around one hundred names of people that are now in public service positions in the RS, who were involved in the war crimes committed in Srebrenica in July 1995. Will OHR be satisfied with this list or will they insist on acquiring the entire list containing around eight hundred names? If you do not receive that list, will there be any consequences? And one question for the EUPM – are any sanctions possible against Mr. Matijašević if he continues to act this way?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

Well from the OHR's point of view the issue, again, is very clear and that is that the Commission must deliver its report, and it must deliver a full and satisfactory report by

the end of this month. That has been made clear to the RS authorities. And beyond that I wouldn't comment on details such as the one you've raised.

Zinaida Ilaria, EUPM:

In regards to the question concerning minister Matijašević, I am not in a position to speculate on that matter. However, what you do know is that the Office of the High Representative – Kevin can comment on this as well – has sent a letter demanding an answer in writing by the 21st of September. So, in that regard, apart from what we have already said as a professional police organization, I have nothing more to add.

FTV:

A question for the OHR. With regards to the terrorist attack that occurred in the embassy of Great Britain in Zagreb, have the representatives of the international community in our country increased their security measures?

Kevin Sullivan, OHR:

As you know we never comment on security measures.