

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference at CPIC

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 30 January 2003

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 30 January 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	• PIC Steering Board, Brussels • Statement by SDP Vice President • Fijuljanin Release Statement
b. OSCE	Henning Philipp	• Activities promoting youth participation in politics
c. EUPM	Jon Oskar Solnes	• Srebrenica Incident • EUPM visit to Srebrenica
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	•
e. SFOR	Major Shawn Mell	• Update on the status of Sabahudin Fijuljanin

2. Twenty-one members of the media including four television crews attended the conference.

3. The transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

A. Ollivier

Oleg Milisic – OHR

This morning the Secretary General of the Standing Committee on Military Matters presented defense targets to the PIC Steering Board. The High Representative welcomed this as a first step, though he pointed out that the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities will clearly have to do more work on this issue.

The High Representative praised the evident determination of the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to make Bosnia and Herzegovina a credible candidate for PfP membership within the next 18 months, but he referred to remarks made by the NATO representative at the PIC who said that Bosnia and Herzegovina will clearly have to go further than these defense targets if it is to achieve PfP membership.

The High Representative expressed his concern at the idea of State Level Command and control being exercised by the individual members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency.

The PIC will also be discussing the economic situation and the urgent need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to introduce the single customs Admin and Bosnia and Herzegovina wide VAT.

The World Bank told the PIC that 19% of the population is living below the poverty line and that 30% is only just above it. The High Representative will say that economic crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not inevitable, but only if Bosnia and Herzegovina embrace real reform.

Yesterday afternoon, the High Representative met the North Atlantic Council ambassadors and NATO Secretary General George Robertson. They discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the European Union's offer to consider taking

over from SFOR.

After the meeting, the High Representative said the discussions are at a very early stage but that he had had a very thorough and constructive exchange of views with the NATO ambassadors and with the NATO Secretary General.

At the PIC dinner last night there was a preliminary discussion of the Mission Implementation Plan. The HR said, and I quote: "The MIP focuses on the essential, rather than the desirable. Our job is to deliver real benefits for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina against a background of declining international resources; to put Bosnia and Herzegovina irreversibly on the road to becoming a peaceful, viable state on course for European integration. The MIP is part of a wider transition strategy to a more European, less interventionist, presence more suitable for a country wishing to join the European Union. This is not an exit strategy for the International Community; it is an entry strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina into Europe". – end of quote. The issue of domestic war crimes trials was also discussed at last night's dinner. The High Representative congratulated the OHR-ICTY Working Group on the progress that has been made so far. He thanked the ICTY for its participation and said that the full involvement of the ICTY in the development and implementation of the strategy to try more war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina is crucial for the strategy's success. He welcomed the Working Group's decision to meet again in February to discuss costs and to meet again in

March to discuss proposals from other PIC members. The High Representative said that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve a solution that offers the prospect of justice for all, but he warned that the International Community cannot have justice on the cheap.

I see Oslobodenje yesterday reported the High Representative alleged remarks about the SDS made in an interview to the

Moscow daily Izvijestija in December last year. Actually the High Representative was completely misquoted in that interview, a point we made clear to Izvijestija at the time, and actually a point we made clear to Oslobodenje at the time too.

Henning Philipp – OSCE

OSCE feels encouraged in its activities promoting youth participation in politics by the support for youth participation in municipal governance which has recently been demonstrated by the Mayors of the Upper Drina Valley. Following several meetings organised by the OSCE mission with youth and mayors last year, which focused on the mechanisms of youth participation in local governance, seven municipalities (Foca/Srbinje, Visegrad, Rogatica, Gorazde, Srpsko Gorazde, Rudo and Cajnice) have included a budget line for youth organisations in their 2003 budgets. The Mayor of Rogatica has recently recruited two young graduates to join his staff and the Mayor of Visegrad created two internship positions for young graduates in the municipality. The Mayor of Gorazde has given responsibility for the municipal web-site to a Youth Association. These developments have established the basis for good partnership relations between municipalities and their young citizens and set an example for other municipalities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Jon Oskar Solnes – EUPM

First, an update on the Srebrenica incident that has been intensively discussed in the media. From the latest findings I have from the Bosnia and Herzegovina police and EUPM co-locators, it seems we are dealing with two separate incidents.

The former I discussed the other day, the attempt to steal a van belonging to the workers at the Memorial centre. The van was found shortly after the Bosnia and Herzegovina police was alerted, in a ditch with a broken steering wheel. It now seems

that this incident did not have anything to do with ethnicity and the Memorial centre, it was simply an attempted car theft. The Bosnia and Herzegovina police are carrying out investigations but the perpetrators are still at large.

Then at a similar time there was another incident, as houses in the area were targeted by rocks and snowballs. The local police acted swiftly and have already arrested the alleged perpetrators, two young men. Following the conclusion of the investigation, SRNA yesterday reported that the mayor of Srebrenica, Abdurahman Malkic, thanked the local police for efficient action in discovering and arresting persons responsible for the incident in Potocari.

At first the local police believed as most of us that both incidents were related, which was somewhat disturbing in that sensitive area. Now it appears that both cases are distinct and should maybe not be overstated.

From the EUPM viewpoint, the main thing is that the local police is taking responsibility and conducting their investigations in a professional manner. EUPM co-locators continue to monitor the situation in Srebrenica.

The EUPM wants to pay the chief of police and the Mayor of Srebrenica a visit to assess the situation, not the least regarding returnees which is one of EUPM key priorities. We have planned a visit for tomorrow with the EUPM Commissioner. However, given the fact that the last planned trip had to be canceled due to bad weather, and the forecast is not that good, I will be sending out a media advisory later on today to confirm the trip and timing of press events.

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

UNHCR has no statement.

Major Shawn Mell – SFOR

Good morning, I have an update on the status of Sabahudin Fijuljanin. This morning Fijuljanin was transferred to the custody of the Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs at Eagle Base in Tuzla.

Fijuljanin was detained after he had conducted surveillance of Eagle Base in addition to other related events and activities, including possession of a fully functional anti-tank weapon. Assisted by the information provided by Fijuljanin, SFOR was able to conduct a thorough investigation of the threat he poses to both the safe and secure environment and the SFOR personnel who maintain it. SFOR has now reached a point in its investigation that we can accommodate a transfer of Fijuljanin to the FMUP.

His transfer to Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities does not diminish our position that he is a threat, and now the transfer to FMUP custody places responsibility on the Federation authorities to continue the investigation. The future disposition of Fijuljanin is now the responsibility of the FMUP. We expect that Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities will take the appropriate actions and we will continue to co-operate with their ongoing investigation.

The necessity for SFOR to detain Fijuljanin has highlighted the urgent need for Bosnia and Herzegovina to establish a legal regime to effectively address terrorism and serious criminal activity. The new Bosnia and Herzegovina Criminal Code and Criminal Procedure Codes are a good first step. Once the Entities implement the new provisions, Bosnia and Herzegovina's ability to conduct a thorough investigation while detaining individuals suspected of Terrorism and serious criminal activity will be greatly enhanced.

SFOR takes its responsibilities seriously and will continue to enforce its mandate under the General Framework Agreement for Peace, and will, when necessary, conduct similar detentions in order to both protect SFOR personnel and provide a safe and

secure environment for all Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens.

Oleg Milisic – OHR

As you know the OHR position has been that this issue is firmly within SFOR's sphere of operations and that SFOR has been acting within its mandate.

Now that Sebahudin Fijuljanin is to be under the jurisdiction of the FbiH authorities, the OHR certainly expects to see this processed fully within the law.

OHR agrees with SFOR that there are a number of wider issues – irrespective of this particular case – that need to be considered and OHR will be discussing this with the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Entity authorities.

Questions and Answers

Q: Fedad Forto – FENA

Do you still think that Fijuljanin was linked to Al Qieda?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell- SFOR

As you know, throughout the last 3 months we haven't been able to discuss the evidence regarding the investigation. Remember this is still an ongoing investigation and right now will be a little too early to provide any information on any links to terrorist activities.

Q: Fedad Forto – FENA

Let me clear something; he was officially accused from the disposition that he's linked with Al Qieda?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell – SFOR

As I said, its still part of the ongoing investigation, until it has concluded, we are not at liberty to give out any specific details regarding the evidence.

Q: Fedad Forto – FENA

Do you follow the case of Mr. Cavic, Dragan Cavic, he was indicted by the FMUP, and are you going to take any measures with the federal authorities?

A: Oleg Milisic – OHR

I think in any case, this is something that you would have to, for comment, speak to the investigative authorities. Eventually; presumably the court, I mean it's a matter being dealt with entirely through the domestic legal process.

Q: Fedad Forto – FENA

But in the case of the former minister, Grabovac, he was removed from his position without an indictment and Cavic is indicted. So what make this any different?

A: Oleg Milisic – OHR

The difference as I said is, this is a domestic legal crisis which is ongoing and we're following that the same way I suppose all of you are.

Q: Sabina Arslanagic' – AFP

Back to Filuljanin, are you still involve in an investigation or not? And then also this question about his links with Al Qeada; I mean you guys said he was linked to Al Qeada so without providing any further details do you still maintain that he is or was linked to Al Qeada?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell – SFOR

I'll answer the second part of your question first. We still consider Mr. Filuljanin an extremist. Which leads into the

first part of your question, Yes, we are going to continue to co operate with the FMUP throughout the course of their investigation. It's very difficult to give information out when you're dealing with this type of information. You have intelligence sources and methods of gathering such information that you have to be very cautious about revealing that, and that is the case at this point. I understand your interest in getting that information, but you also have to understand that it is under investigation and right now it's too early to put that information out.

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic – Reuters

Was Filuljanin transferred in response to the Presidency request for that?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell – SFOR

Mr. Filuljanin was transferred because we had come to a point in the investigation that accommodated a transfer to the Bosnia and Herzegovina government. We had always taken the viewpoints of other organisations into consideration but the final decision came down to SFOR and the transfer.

Q: Aleksandar Dragicevic – AP

Major did he say anything this morning before he was handed over? And one more thing, about the procedure, is there any chance that he sued you; and in the case of something like that, what is the procedure?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell – SFOR

Well I have no information whether he was talking this morning with any conversation. And with regards, did you say sue, is that legal action? At this point I don't know what the process will be and I'm probably not qualified to comment on that at this point, but regards to him talking, I'm not aware. I'm sorry.

Q: Zdravko Ljubas – DPA

Just one thing, do you share every possible information you have about this cause with the Federation police?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell – SFOR

We are sharing enough information as we possible can with the FMUP.

Q: Zdravko Ljubas – DPA

Does it include everything, like possible intelligence sources or whatever that you have they might use or turn against him?

A: MAJ Shawn Mell – SFOR

Well I'm not aware of exactly what has been turned over to the FMUP, but we are sharing with them what we can.