

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 12 June 2003

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday, 12 June 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Vedran Persic	• Peace Implementation Council Update • Party Leadership Must Re-establish Their Authority • Bjelasnica
b. OSCE	Zinaida Delic	• Another Ten Municipalities Expected to Develop Communication Strategies • Ambassador Zipper de Fabiani participates in the Second Communication University of Southeast Europe
c. EUPM	Jon Oskar Solnes	• Monitoring in Doboj reveals weaknesses that must be fixed • BiH police preparations for the Pope visit on track
d. SFOR	Major James Billings	• The Visit of the Supreme Allied Commander Europe • New SFOR Chief of Public Information

2. Sixteen members of the media attended the conference.

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

Vedran Persic – OHR

Peace Implementation Council Update

The Political Directors of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), the body that oversees the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, begin a three-day meeting in Sarajevo yesterday evening.

Yesterday the meeting focused on the steps that must be taken before the end of this year in order to speed up the pace of economic reform and promote BiH's further integration in Europe. Discussions began with a presentation by BiH Prime Minister Adnan Terzic and were focussed on the following three points;

- firstly, progress on completing the European Commission's study of the feasibility of BiH moving to the next stage of European integration, negotiation of a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU.
- secondly, the forthcoming EU summit in Thessaloniki, on 21 June. As you know the the summit will be dedicated to the future of the Balkans in the EU.
- thridly, the work of the Independent Tax Commission, which will shortly conclude its work on establishing a single customs administration and putting in place a plan to introduce VAT.

Today, the PIC will receive an update on the political situation in BiH with a particular focus on the Education Targets agreed between the BiH authorities at the PIC meeting in November 2002 in Brussels, progress on refugee return and the establishment of the Defence Reform Commission. There will also be substantive discussions on the future of domestic war-crimes prosecutions in BiH and the Human Rights Chamber.

There was good progress at last night's dinner, and we are

hoping that the PIC will be able to reach some decisions on both these issues. Cannot comment further today – will need to wait until the communique.

The focus on Friday is economic reform, which reflects the seriousness of the economic situation in BiH, and the need for resolute and substantive progress in this area in the near term.

BiH Prime Minister, Adnan Terzic, FBiH Prime Minister, Ahmet Hadzipasic and RS Prime Minister, Dragan Mikerevic, will brief the PIC on the major economic priorities agreed between the BiH authorities and the International Community at Bjelasnica last month. These priorities are designed to create a better business environment, relaunch the privatisation process and boost exports.

It is on Friday that, the OHR hopes, the Prime Ministers will endorse a plan to accelerate the pace of economic reform over the next four months, which will include;

- Completing the legislative and administrative requirements for restructuring the electricity sector.
- Privatising five strategic companies in each Entity before the end of the year.
- Establishing the BiH Indirect Tax Administration.
- Reforming the sales tax system.

Party Leadership Must Re-establish Their Authority

You all saw the High Representatives reaction to the failure of the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Assembly to elect a Government.

The OHR expects the Presidents of the SDA and the SBiH, Mr. Tihic and Mr. Halilovic to explain why their party members voted against a proposal that they and the leadership of these two parties had signed only hours before, in the letter I have here.

More importantly, the HR is looking to them to re-establish their authority with their party members in Canton 7 and to make measures to ensure that the commitment they entered into is honoured by their party. They as the leaders of these parties have a duty to the Citizens of Canton 7 and BiH as a whole to ensure that their parties act responsibly. OHR doesn't see this as "back to square one" after eight months of prevarication and inaction. We expect this to be resolved in hours or days, not weeks or months.

To reinforce this the sanctions that the High Representative has put in place will begin mounting incrementally as of six o'clock next Monday;

- Party financing will be cut by a further 5% for every working day until a government is formed;
- The appointment of the Speaker-Elect, Mr. Omer Cevra, will be cancelled without a possibility of reappointment to that post, for failing in his constitutional duty to muster a consensus behind forming a government in Canton 7.

The High Representative has reserved the right further measures, as he deems appropriate in light of developments over the next few days.

For eight months now these parties have shown a blatant disregard for the interests of their citizens, those very citizens that elected them. Rather than showing that they are ready for reform and ready for close integration into Europe they have shown a blatant disregard for the civic duty to which they have been elected.

The HR is outraged and shocked to learn that while teachers go unpaid and pensioners are poor, the political parties pay themselves first out of the government budgets. We are therefore looking at ways of introducing a new law which only allows the parties to draw one twelfth of their subvention

every month. The parties have paid themselves over 1.5 million this year, money that could pay the average monthly wage of 2,500 elementary school teachers .

Bjelasnica

Working group for Bjelasnica-Igman tourist revitalization held its second meeting today under the chairmanship of The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown. Meeting was also attended by the Federation BiH Minister of urban planning Ramiz Mehmedagic, Sarajevo Canton PM Denis Zvizdic and representatives of FIPA, SERDA and Mayors of Ilidza, Trnovo and Hadzici.

At the meeting, Sarajevo Canton PM Zvizdic briefed on the current situation at Bjelasnica and Igman by presenting cantonal plans for development of the area. Three hotels, SMUK, MOK and IGMAN are going to be offered in the first wave of tender process. Process of tendering and resolving of related property issues should be done by end of summer so the initial reconstruction works could be seen at the beginning of autumn. Parallel to this there will be a preparation for tendering of other hotels and facilities so the entire area would get to the desired level of development of tourist infrastructure.

FBiH Minister Mehmedagic briefed that by the beginning of August cross country track on Veliko polje should be finished with the help of German SFOR contingent and also certified by competent authorities of international skiing Federation so it can comply with all the international standards and be proclaimed as an Olympic track.

Besides these mid term measures the High Representative also initiated some measures that will improve the winter sports facilities in upcoming season, to bring them up to European tourist standards. Feasibility of installing upper ski lifts should be examined as well as placing of auxiliary facilities,

which will improve the comfort of the tourist using skiing resort.

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Zinaida Delic – OSCE

Municipalities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina are increasingly discovering that government functions better when involving citizens. These days, several municipalities from all over BiH are finishing an OSCE five-week project called Public Outreach Initiative. The project helps municipalities establish steady lines of communication with citizens, by assisting them to develop public information strategies. Participants from Livno, Siroki Brijeg, Bosanski Petrovac, Mostar Stari Grad, Bugojno, Vlasenica, Lukavac, Ugljevik, Sokolac and Srpsko Novo Sarajevo worked on developing strategies to meet their legal obligations related to providing information to the public and the media. In addition, the municipal representatives were trained on crucial skills like writing press releases, making statements to the press and producing communication materials, such as leaflets, brochures, web sites and advertisements. This is the second round of the OSCE Public Outreach Initiative. Twenty municipalities participated in the project last year, and have already made remarkable progress in improving their communication with the public. The next step for the municipalities in this round is to develop municipal communication strategies.

The Deputy head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Henry Zipper de Fabiani, will participate in a roundtable of the Second Communication University of Southeast Europe, which starts today at Holiday Inn Hotel in Sarajevo and lasts until June 14. Ambassador Zipper de Fabiani will take part in a panel debate “Education for information society – are there priorities?” on Friday, and will also deliver a speech at the closing session on Saturday, which starts at 19:00hrs. He will underline how urgent it is to reform the

education system and administration in BiH, partly through the introduction of the new technology and by improving human dimension of the communication. Indeed, both are necessary for young people and professionals to get competitive in the region, in the context of the future integration of BiH in the EU. The forum brings together experts in communications, as well as politicians, scientists, journalists and media professionals from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Macedonia, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania and Moldova. The aim of the forum is to initiate public discussion on the role of communications in development and cooperation among countries of Southeast Europe.

Jon Oskar Solnes – EUPM

Two days ago, the EUPM discussed a case in Doboj, with the Media, where a man was released by the BiH police shortly after he had been seen by several police officers and other witnesses throwing a hand grenade in the street which caused considerable material damage. The EUPM wondered, why the man had been released following such a violent act. In such cases, the EUPM officers monitor closely what has been going on and also look closely at further developments. And this is the procedure that the EUPM follows all over BiH when law enforcement incidents take place that do not seem to conform to common European practices. In this particular case in Doboj, the EUPM has assessed that the police officers on the scene of the explosion, conducted themselves in a professional manner and arguably prevented a much more serious incident by warning off local passers by. Following the explosion, however, a consecutive number of mistakes were made. In general terms, the information flow from the police officers on the scene to the investigation inspectors and further on from them to the investigation judge, was poor. This reveals serious faults with the reporting system, which led to the release of the suspect. These faults have already been discussed with the local police managers, and they will be

corrected. This is in many ways a typical case, where the EUPM can help the BiH police identify its shortcomings and advise on professional police methods. The more high profile efforts of the EUPM, helping the BiH police develop operational capabilities to fight organised crime, of course attract more attention than cases like the one in Doboj which the EUPM has discussed today. However, it is important to note, that within the EUPM mandate a somewhat unspectacular but extremely important learning process is going on, daily, all over BiH.

One of the main priorities for the EUPM these days is our monitoring of the police plans on security for the visit of Pope John Paul to Banja Luka on 22 June. Responsibility for arranging security, for traffic control, for ensuring the free movement of what will be a large number of people and for ensuring a safe environment for the visit, however, lies with the RS Ministry of Interior. The EUPM is, nevertheless, involved in monitoring the preparatory plans of the police. Those police plans will have to cover all eventualities that may arise. EUPM's role is to advise when necessary, but the planning and the security effort on the day of the visit belongs to the police authorities of the RS. The EUPM role is also to monitor the co-operation between the RS and the BiH Federation police, which has been good so far. A very comprehensive operational plan has been drawn up for the visit and the EUPM is currently finalising its analysis of it. According to the latest EUPM assessment, the preparation for the pope visit, from a police view, is on track and according to the tight time schedule. Thus the EUPM is confident that the BiH police will manage this complex event in a professional manner.

Major James Billings – SF0R

Good morning, I have two points this morning. My first point pertains to a visit by the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General James L. Jones. On Tuesday, 10 Jun 03,

SACEUR visited SFOR. Specifically, the General visited the SFOR locations in Banja Luka and Tuzla. At both locations, he was briefed on current operations and activities in each of these areas, as well as the local political and military situations. Visits of this nature allow the SACEUR to see first-hand SFOR's progress and the normalization process in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My second point pertains to the SFOR Headquarters position of the Chief of Public Information (CPIO). On Sunday 08 Jun 03, Lieutenant Colonel (LTC) Rupert Wieloch assumed the duties and responsibilities of the CPIO position. LTC Wieloch has spent 25 years in the British Army. He has held a variety of appointments including two years as one of the spokespersons for the Army Board in the UK. This is LTC Wieloch's second operational tour in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His first tour was as commander of an independent unit, during the transition between UN Peacekeeping and NATO Peace Enforcement in 1995. Thank you.

Questions and Answers

There were no questions.