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

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 3 June 2003**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday, 3 June 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Vedran Persic	• High Representative addresses OSCE Permanent Council • Defence Reform Commission first meeting • Protocol for prosperity
b. OSCE	Zinaida Delic	• Draft law on primary and secondary education • NATO Defense College Seminar in Zagreb • Entity and cantonal ministers of education, as well as key education stakeholders meeting in Banja Luka • Property Law Implementation Plan guidelines approved by OHR, OSCE, UNHCR and CRPC
c. EUPM	Jon Oskar Solnes	• No statement today
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	• Extension of temporary admission status of persons from Serbia and Montenegro

e. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	• Operational Rehearsal JOINT RESOLVE • Grenade Focused Harvest

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

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

Vedran Persic – OHR

The High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, is in Vienna tomorrow where he will address the OSCE Permanent Council. The High Representative will report on progress during the first year of his mandate in the priority areas he defined at the start of his mandate; the rule of law, economic reform, the efficacy of the BiH institutions and the EU association process. The High Representative will highlight four specific areas in which OHR is working especially closely with the OSCE. On education reform the High Representative will draw attention to the fact that the BiH authorities themselves will set out their progress at the PIC meeting in Sarajevo next week. He will note that although there is a draft state-level law on primary and secondary education and the Curriculum Steering Board is working to harmonise the three curricula, sadly education reform in BiH still requires the continuous and robust engagement of the International Community. On defence reform the High Representative will point out that the existing arrangement is unsustainable, it doesn't provide effective territorial security, is makes it impossible for the armed forces to work effectively with other international organisations and it is incompatible with Euro-Atlantic standards. The High Representative will brief the Council on the Defence Reform Commission, which will hold its first meeting tomorrow. The High Representative will also brief the

Council on consultations with the BiH Authorities and the International Community on the future of the Human Right Chamber and on the capacity of BiH courts to try war crimes.

The Defence Reform Commission (DRC) will hold it's first full meeting tomorrow here in Sarajevo. There will be a media opportunity at the start of the meeting, planned for 10.00 in the OSCE offices in the UNIS towers. The meeting will be chaired by James Locher and Senior Deputy High Representative, Gerhard Enver Schrömbgens, will also attend.

On Wednesday afternoon at 16.00 at the National Museum the High Representative will join the three prime ministers, the speakers of the three parliaments, the Mayor of Brcko, representatives of the six regional Bulldozer Committees and a representative of the Agricultural Bulldozer Committee at a ceremony to mark the formal conclusion of the first phase of the Bulldozer Process and the formal launch of Bulldozer Phase II. The BiH participants will sign the "Protocols for Prosperity," a document that places economic progress at the centre of BiH's recovery and integration in Europe. The Protocols highlight the crucial importance of the dialogue that has been developed – through the Bulldozer process – between businesspeople and politicians. This dialogue has been made possible by – and has contributed to – the strengthening of civic society in BiH. In the next phase of the Bulldozer Process the dialogue will be expanded so as to include the trades union and other social sector representatives. The Protocols include a commitment from the politicians and the businesspeople to "unlock domestic resources through reforms at the local level, which will benefit every citizen in every municipality in BiH," through Bulldozer Phase II. The signatories will each plant a rose sapling in a special "Prosperity Garden" at the Botanical Garden in the National Museum. This event will be followed by a press conference, and of course you are all invited. We will be sending out a media advisory later today.

Zinaida Delic – OSCE

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is encouraged by the recent positive steps taken by the political leadership of all parties in their efforts to finalise the draft law on primary and secondary education as it moves through the parliamentary procedure. Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, Head of the OSCE mission, notes that passage of the law in the coming weeks is an important step towards fulfilling the first of the five education pledges presented to the PIC last November as well as being a key Council of Europe post-accession commitment. Ambassador Beecroft was pleased to note the progress so far and has assured the parties of his "committed support in their efforts to agree a final text". The key is to have this law passed and implemented in time for the next school year, which starts in September, "we have no time to loose, the children of this country cannot afford to wait for a better education".

The Head of OSCE mission is addressing a NATO Defense College Seminar in Zagreb today, titled "Security and Defense Reform in Central and Southeast Europe." He will update the seminar on recent developments within defense reform in BiH, particularly focussing on the establishment of the Standing Committee on military matters and the Defense Reform Commission, which is meeting for the first time tomorrow.

Entity and cantonal ministers of education, as well as key education stakeholders, will meet in Banja Luka tomorrow. Amongst other issues they will discuss efforts for establishing a Common Core Curriculum, including the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, which lays down the work plan, membership and financing mechanisms of the bodies now working on implementing the Common Core Curriculum. This Memorandum of Understanding will be signed tomorrow in Banski Dvor, and will be followed by a press conference at 14:15 at the same premises. You are cordially invited to attend both events. A media advisory is on the table outside.

Each month new municipalities in BiH join the group of those having completed their property caseload. Currently 32 municipalities have done so. To ensure transparency and a standardized approach, the agencies involved in Property Law Implementation Plan, OHR, OSCE, UNHCR and CRPC, have approved a set of guidelines to verify that municipalities have complied with all the legal obligations under the law. These guidelines indicate concrete measures that the housing authorities have to take in their own municipalities before declaring PLIP substantially completed. The municipalities are required to report all solved cases, to make any additional alternative accommodation available to neighboring municipalities, to regularly review the lists of alternative accommodation beneficiaries and to maintain sufficient administrative capacity to deal with any property case submitted to their offices in the future. International agencies working in the field will assess together with the housing bodies that all requirements to declare Property Law Implementation substantially completed have been met. Consequently, the State Commission for Refugees and Displaces Persons and the media will be informed on the completion in the respective municipalities. This will ensure transparency to the process and make sure that it is equally applied throughout BIH. Finalizing Property Laws Implementation is only one step towards the full realization of Annex VII. Municipalities still remain obliged to facilitate by any other means the return of refugees and displaced persons. For municipalities that complete Property Law Implementation and municipalities can now fully dedicate themselves to their economic and social development and progress towards a normal life.

Jon Oskar Solnes – EUPM

No statement today.

Bakir Jalovcic – UNHCR

Citing the Decision of the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees (MHRR) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are announcing that the temporary admission status in Bosnia and Herzegovina of persons from Serbia and Montenegro will expire on 30 June 2003, with the exception of those from Kosovo, for whom the status shall be extended until 30 June 2004. On 30 April 2003, the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees has issued an Instruction according to which persons from Serbia and Montenegro including Kosovo should approach the municipal body competent for refugees and displaced persons in the municipality of their re-registration, in order to have their temporary admission card extended. The above mentioned persons can contact the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees, UNHCR and its network of Legal Aid and Information Centres in order to obtain more information on their legal status in BiH upon the expiration of their temporary admission status via the following telephone numbers:

Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees: 033 206 664

UNHCR Sarajevo: 033 290 390

Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

Good morning I have two points this morning.

My first point today pertains to the Operational Rehearsal JOINT RESOLVE. JOINT RESOLVE XXIX, will be conducted in the Multi-National Brigade South East area of responsibility from 2 to 6 Jun 03. This operational rehearsal will include soldiers and equipment from all three Multi-National Brigades, the Multi-National Specialized Unit and the Tactical Reserve Air. SFOR trains and conducts operational rehearsals regularly to maintain a high level of readiness and to practice and hone its operational procedures. This includes regular training in the deployment of its Reserve Forces.

JOINT RESOLVE is the name given to a regular, pre-scheduled series of Tactical Reserve Force (TACRES) operational rehearsals which take place throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). They are run quarterly and hosted in turn by each of the 3 Multi-National Brigades (MNBs). Their aim is to practice the TACRES in a series of rapid multinational deployments using credible operational scenarios. These operational rehearsals ultimately ensure that COMSFOR's Reserve Forces are robust, flexible and rapidly deployable assets that allow the Commander to move forces to anywhere in BiH where there is a threat to the safe and secure environment.

My second point pertains to the grenade-focused harvest that is being conducted. We are now in the first week of the three-week harvest. Last year a total of 38,199 grenades were harvested for the year. This year during the months of January, February, March and April 14,473 grenades have been harvested. While these figures are significant and impressive, much more work needs to be done. Once again, SFOR calls upon the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to make a concerted effort to remove grenades from society. If you have any grenades or are aware of the whereabouts of any grenades take action and turn them in. Make this country a safer place to live. I wish to re-emphasise that this grenade-focused harvest does not replace or preclude normal harvest operations. Normal harvest operations are still ongoing. SFOR will still accept any type of weapon or ammunition at any time. Thank you.

Questions and Answers

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

Vedran, do you have a comment about Karadzic allegedly sending flowers for the funeral for General Talic? Are you interested in who might have ordered those flowers? Does SFOR have any comment about that?

A: Captain MacEachern – SFOR

No, I'm totally unaware of any alleged flowers being sent to any funeral.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

How come you are so disinterested?

A: Vedran Persic – OHR

Because as far as I'm aware there is currently a huge operation underway against this network of supporters. It's impossible to chase somebody who writes graffiti on a wall. You have to have more serious evidence to conduct an operation or something of this sort.

Q: Amra Hadiosmanovic – AFP

And your not interested in Karadzic sending flowers to the funeral?

A: Vedran Persic – OHR

I have no idea about those flowers whatsoever.