

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

Subject: **JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 27 May 2003**

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday, 27 May 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Julian Braithwaite	• Anniversary of HR Paddy Ashdown • HR Schedule • Bosnia and Herzegovina Agricultural Situation • HR Television Address
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	• Roundtable on prison reform • The Anthology on Inclusive Education Conference
c. EUPM	Alun Roberts	• No Electronic Statement Received
d. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	• Anti Hail Rockets • 40th Joint Military Commission • Russian Withdrawal

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

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

Julian Braithwaite – OHR

Exactly a year ago today, Paddy Ashdown took up his duties as

High Representative in BiH. You will have seen his open letter published yesterday. The main message was clear: the days of charity, of getting something for nothing, are over. Yes, the EU and others will help BiH. But only if BiH helps itself by pushing through reform.

Today, the High Representative is carrying on business as usual. He will be visiting the Olympic Committee at mid-day, to support their work and the restructuring process that now means they represent the entire country. He will say that sport is important for BiH, for its young people, and for bringing this country together. This afternoon he will be going to a village near Prnjavor to spend the night and tomorrow with a farming family. Paddy Ashdown believes strongly that in order to do his job, he needs to know how the citizens of this country live, what their concerns are, and what they need. In the past, he has stayed with refugees who returned to Srebrenica, with displaced people in collective centers, and spoken to literally thousands of people across the length and breadth of BiH. Tonight, he and his wife Jane will be seeing how a farming family live, and accompanying them as they carry out their daily work. Farming in BiH has been badly affected by the recent weather, and the HR wants to see this for himself.

Farming, agriculture, is possibly one of most important sectors of the economy. It is potentially a major export industry, capable of generating good jobs for thousands of people and earning foreign currency for BiH. But at the moment it is not living up to its potential. Paddy Ashdown is determined to change that. In September, the OHR will be launching a major campaign to boost Agricultural exports, including an information campaign called: "Agriculture for Profit". In his Foreword for the information booklet that will accompany the campaign – copies available outside – the HR says "farming has the potential to be one of the most successful sectors of the BiH economy – an engine for new

jobs, successful businesses and export growth”.

The High Representative will also address the citizens of BiH in a TV address on Fed TV and RTRS at 8pm this evening. He will use the anniversary of his first year to consider how far we've come; and to look at the road ahead. Texts of the address are available afterwards. Many of the messages will be familiar to you from his letter to citizens. But for the first time, the High Representative will use this TV address to raise a question that is likely to dominate much of the rest of his time in Bosnia and Herzegovina: the cost of government. In his address, the HR makes the point that BiH simply cannot afford the government it has. At the moment, two thirds of people's taxes go on paying for politicians and bureaucrats, and only one third gets spent on the citizens. In other countries, these proportions are the other way round. The HR puts down a marker that this is not sustainable. If BiH is to join Europe, it will have to cut the cost of government. If BiH is to pay its pensioners, doctors and teachers, it will have to cut the cost of government. That means simplifying and streamlining the structures so they deliver more for the citizens for less of their taxes. The HR makes clear that it will be up to the people of this country to decide how to do this, how to simplify government. But it will be his job to make sure the issue is addressed, and addressed properly.

Alun Roberts – EUPM

No Electronic Statement Received.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

This morning a roundtable on prison reform started here in Sarajevo, hosted by the OSCE mission and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. The roundtable, which brings together officials and experts from South-East Europe, ends tomorrow. You are all invited to attend the

concluding session, including Ambassador Beecroft's closing remarks. The session starts at 11:00 tomorrow morning at the OSCE mission, in UNIS Tower A.

Furthermore tomorrow the results of a three-year project on inclusive education will be released at a conference on a program run by the governments of Finland and Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the conference, The Anthology on Inclusive Education, the most up-to-date book on education theory and practices in BiH and across Europe, will be introduced. The conference will also feature the premiere of a new film by award-winning Bosnian director Ahmed Imamović. A representative from the Finnish Foreign Ministry, the OSCE Head of Mission, Ambassador Robert M. Beecroft, and representatives of the Entity Ministries of Education will open the programme. Academics and practitioners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Denmark and Germany will present current research and will present their results. You are all invited to cover the event, which will start at 10:00 tomorrow morning in hotel Hollywood, Ilidža. A press conference will be held at 11:30 hrs, followed by a screening of Imamovic's film "Inclusion – School for Everyone".

Related to this, the OSCE Mission is distributing posters promoting inclusive education in health institutions throughout BiH. Inclusive education is a relatively new field, aimed at ensuring that children with special needs are no longer sent to special education schools or institutions. Instead they attend regular schools, where they learn side by side with all other children. Hence the headline: "I want to learn the same things".

Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

Good Morning, I have three points today.

My first point pertains to Anti Hail rockets. The Chief of Staff (COS) at SFOR Headquarters, Brigadier General Bruno

Kasdorf, has sent a letter to Mr. Drago Radic, the Director of Civil Aviation for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). In the letter, COS passed on his congratulations for the major steps forward that the government of BiH has made in normalizing air operations in the past year. He then indicated that the pending change to the Instructions to Parties will release further control of civilian aviation to Mr Radic's agency and with that control will come an increase in the Directors responsibility for the safe conduct of aviation. This release of control is a welcome step on the road to the full civilian control of aviation in BiH. The letter also pointed out that SFOR has recently received requests from the government of the Republic of Srpska to approve the firing of rockets for the purpose of reducing hail in the agricultural areas of northern Bosnia and Herzegovina. COS indicated that while SFOR supports the efforts to reduce hail and protect the agricultural industry, it is not SFOR's responsibility to control the safety of BiH airspace involved in this request. COS went on to say that SFOR has no objection to the employment of rockets for hail reduction if it can be accomplished in a manner that does not jeopardize aviation safety. He then clearly pointed out that it is the direct responsibility of Director Radic and his agency to develop a plan to safely employ the rockets. COS concluded the letter by offering the assistance of his staff in identifying the many agencies that have interests in the skies above the agricultural areas in northern BiH.

My second point pertains to the 40th meeting of the Joint Military Commission (JMC) that occurred Friday, 23 May 03 at Camp Butmir. The subject of this meeting was the required reform and restructure of the Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Much was accomplished at this meeting and of significant note was the fact that for the first time the VRS and the VF conducted a joint presentation. In their presentation, the

VRS and the VF agreed to the creation of a new joint General Staff for the Armed Forces in BiH. The exact composition of this General Staff and its name are to be determined. The VF and VRS also put forth proposals on the restructuring of the Armed Forces, in order to make them financially viable. They announced that at this time, they would not apply the Active Reserve concept and that they would keep Passive Reserves and conscription. They also presented plans for the reduction of the number of Weapon Storage Sites and Ammunition Storage Sites and on the selection of weapon systems to be retained by the VF and the VRS. Finally, the VF and the VRS announced that they have agreed on common training for demining personnel and for Peace Support Operations. Also at the JMC, SFOR presented the significant and historic results achieved by the Common Military Doctrine Working Group on Thursday 15 May 03. At this working group, all parties from the SCMM, MODs, the VF and the VRS approved the overarching doctrine (referred to as the umbrella document or part IV) which brings together the three previously approved common doctrine documents. Those documents address Protection of Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity, Peace Support Operations and Military Assistance to Civil Authorities. This agreement marked the first time that all parties of the Armed Forces in BiH have agreed upon common doctrine. While much has been accomplished, there remains more work to be done. Relationships between the Presidency and the political and military leadership of the Armed Forces in BiH must be defined. Also, Weapons Storage Sites and Ammunition Storage Sites must be reduced further in order to meet the direction of the High Representative that there be less than 10. Finally, joint exercises must be agreed upon and carried out. COMSFOR has said that the political and military leadership of the Armed Forces in BiH should be proud of their efforts and accomplishments thus far. They have done much for their people and their country. Important progress has been made on the road to membership in Partnership for Peace. Lieutenant General Ward has also remarked however that there still

remains much work to be done if BiH is to continue on the path towards becoming a modern European state within the Euro-Atlantic defence community.

My third point pertains to the Withdrawal of the Russian Military Contingent from SFOR. A farewell ceremony will be held for the Russians tomorrow, 28 May 03 at the base in Ugleivik. The Commander in Chief Allied Forces, Southern Europe (CINCSOUTH), Admiral Gregory G. Johnson, US Navy and COMSFOR will be in attendance. For specific details on this ceremony please contact Major Jeff Coverdale in the Public Information Office of Multi-National Brigade North, Eagle Base. There are over 300 Russians in SFOR. They are based in Uglejvik and consist of two maneuver companies. They commenced their withdrawal on 22 May 03. It is scheduled to be complete by the 14 Jun 03. The withdrawal process is occurring with close coordination between Russian military authorities and NATO. It will not affect the safe and secure environment in BiH. SFOR will continue to effectively carry out its mandate. SFOR is in the process of reorganizing internally to ensure that a vacuum is not created in the force and that high level of operational effectiveness is maintained. This reorganization will be part of the reduction of forces in the region that has been going on for some time. As the security environment improves we need fewer troops in the area. The Russian forces have made a lasting contribution to the safety and security of the region and that contribution is very much appreciated. Russian soldiers and officers have been highly professional and committed to the joint goals of bringing stability to the region. For these reasons, their contribution will be missed. Thank you.

Questions and Answers

Q: Zeljko Tica – FTV

How do you comment on the criminal report submitted by the police against the cameraman of our broadcast service?

A: Alun Roberts – EUPM

I'm not going to make any comments more than what I've already said this morning. We will see the camera person in Mostar and we'll discuss with him actually what his personal view is of what occurred. We've read very carefully what's been published in the media as to what occurred. We've also read the police situation report as to the events, as to the actions that they claimed they took and why. We need to sort of hear his story. One aspect that is very important is to establish this morning with him whether or not he has made an official complaint to the police authorities. If he is claiming as we've seen in the media that he was assaulted and various aspects that would encourage him to make an official complaint and therefore we can then monitor the police investigation to ensure it's conducted properly and also openly.

Q: Zeljko Tica – FTV

What if he does not file or if he didn't file a report before? Does that mean you will simply close the case?

A: Alun Roberts – EUPM

No it doesn't mean that. The case is ongoing, this investigation which we encourage the Mostar police authorities to conduct. They've opened an investigation that is ongoing. As I said in the statement, police have a responsibility under existing police procedures now to thoroughly investigate all aspects of police procedures when these kind of situations arise. And to take disciplinary measures if it is proven that certain police officers acted irresponsibly, such as by the use of excessive physical force, which might be the case with some officers in this situation. But lets wait to see the results of the investigation as they come out. But we'll also be calling for that investigation to be open and the police do make public what their findings are as to what occurred.

Q: Zeljko Tica – FTV

Do the police have the right to prevent a cameraman from doing his work?

A: Alun Roberts – EUPM

If, as we've said in the statement, if a camera person is just simply filming a situation as was at Mostar, a crowd disorder situation, which involved filming police officers conducting their actions. And he was doing that professionally or he or she were doing that professionally, in that situation then no they haven't got the right just to detain them because police officers are being filmed. If however, there was other aspects involved such as what the police have alleged, we'll have to see if that's correct, then there may be reasons why the police took the course of action they did. But it seems to be from what the media reports are claiming, that the camera person said himself he was seriously physically assaulted by the police. This is why I want to try and get to him this morning and discuss personally with him privately what his views are and if this is the situation then he has to make an official complaint to the police.

Q: Zeljko Tica – FTV

Can you tell me in which way or do you as the EUPM do you have that information about how in fact the cameraman was involved in that incident.

A: Alun Roberts – EUPM

Well on this issue what needs to happen is as we said in the statement whenever any person is or feels they are being threatened or abused by the police the procedure has to be that they make an official complaint to the police authorities. The camera person therefore will be asked this morning has he done that. If not, he should do that. We will then check the police investigation to ensure what he is

claiming happened to him is properly investigated and if it's true official discipline action taken against the police officers who abused him. But no, the police don't have a right obviously just to abuse any member of the press simply because they feel that the camera person or press are filming or writing reports specifically about police behavior.

Q: Enida Dano – Jutarnje Novine

In regards to the letter sent by the Director of the Federal Police informing them about financial situation in the police. And that means on the lack of balance of wages and salaries and he actually proposed that a team be established together with the OHR to try to resolve this issue.

A: Alun Roberts – EUPM

Well we're aware of the letter that's been circulated. I think we need to review it a bit more carefully before we come out with an official comment in terms of response to the actual letter itself.

A: Julian Braithwaite – OHR

I think in the first instance obviously the OHR would be guided by the advice of the EUPM. But I think I'd like to make a general point, which actually refers back to what I said in my statement. Which is that the actual overall cost of government is too great in this country. And therefore the vital services that people need such as hospitals, schools, pensions, professional, and properly paid police force are under threat in effect by the fact that economically, there isn't the money for all these people. And so if you are actually to make sure that you've got properly paid doctors, properly paid teachers, properly paid policemen you need to tackle the overall cost of government that eats up so much of your budget. So much of your taxes goes not on paying policemen, not on paying doctors, not on paying teachers, but on paying for the many layers of government, the many

bureaucrats, the many politicians that this country simply cannot afford. And that in the long term if you are to be able to pay not just policemen, but also all the other essential services better than you need then that's an issue that needs to be tackled.