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

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

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Thursday 27 March 2003:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Oleg Milisic	• Peace Implementation Council (PIC) meeting in Brussels
b. OSCE	Emir Salihovic	• OHR, OSCE and UNHCR sent a letter to Ministers of both Entities
c. EUPM	Jon Oskar Solnes	• EUPM Commissioner in Brussels
d. UNHCR	Bakir Jalovcic	• No Statement
e. SFOR	Captain Dale MacEachern	• Meeting between COMSFOR, LGen William Ward and Minister of Defense Milovan Stankovic Russia's participation in SFOR

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

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

Oleg Milisic – OHR

The High Representative and a High Ranking Bosnia and Herzegovina and Entity Delegation In Brussels Tomorrow to meet

with the PIC. As you are probably aware a two-day meeting of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) starts this afternoon.

During this two-day meeting the PIC will meet senior International Community, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Entity representatives.

Together with the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, and his deputies, the PIC will hear from Bosnia and Herzegovina's highest ranking government executives; the Bosnia and Herzegovina Prime Minister Adnan Terzic, Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Security Barisa Colak, Bosnia and Herzegovina Minister of Justice Slobodan Kovac, RS Prime Minister Dragan Mikerevic and FbiH Prime Minister Ahmet Hadzipasic.

They will report on the progress Bosnia and Herzegovina has made in fulfilling the Rule of Law targets agreed between the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and the International Community when the PIC met in Sarajevo in September of last year.

As part of this same process, the Bosnia and Herzegovina State and Entity Prime Ministers will tomorrow present the latest part of this 'Agenda for Reform' – the Public Administration Reform targets. Bosnia and Herzegovina and the RS have made some good progress in this field, civil service laws are in place, and civil service agencies have been established.

The PIC will discuss the outcome of investigations into the 'Orao' arms-to-Iraq affair and consider what action needs to be taken in the light of it.

The PIC will review Bosnia and Herzegovina's Economic Reform agenda. The High Representative and members of the International Financial Institutions will set out the challenges that Bosnia and Herzegovina faces, and will discuss the reforms that will be needed to meet those challenges.

The PIC will also review the current political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the development of the Bosnia and Herzegovina War Crimes Prosecution capability.

There is a press release covering these details on the tables outside.

Emir Salihovic – OSCE

On 20 March 2003, OHR, OSCE and UNHCR sent a letter to Ministers of both Entities competent for social welfare, urban planning, displaced persons and refugees issues urging them to adequately plan for a fully functioning social welfare system. This letter was a timely reminder of the pressing needs, especially in light of the expected completion of the property law implementation by the end of 2003, in accordance with the PLIP New Strategic Direction.

There are several categories of people currently housed in alternative accommodation whose homes were completely destroyed and who have been unable to find reconstruction assistance. Others had never possessed any property or had benefited from the social welfare system before the war. In all cases of people who have no prospect of being able to provide for their own housing needs, alternative accommodation under the property repossession laws is not an appropriate long-term solution. OHR, OSCE and UNHCR also called upon the competent ministries to provide social support to the growing number of people who are not legally entitled to temporary accommodation under the property and displaced person laws, but remain without resources to house themselves.

OHR, OSCE and UNHCR urged the competent Ministers to anticipate these issues and begin instituting measures that would ensure a seamless transition from provision of alternative accommodation under the property repossession laws to effective long-term social policies. Such measures should include both a review of the current legal framework regarding

social welfare and a realistic assessment of the resources necessary to meet anticipated needs.

Deputy Head of OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Victor Tkachenko, is going to visit Mostar on Monday and Tuesday, March 31 and April 1. He will meet with the heads of OSCE Regional Center there, and it is also planned that he meet with Prime Minister of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton, the speaker of Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Assembly, representatives of FBiH Ombudsman, and the mayor of Mostar.

Jon Oskar Solnes – EUPM

The EUPM Commissioner, Sven Frederiksen, yesterday met with the Secretary General/High Representative Solana in Brussels. They discussed the progress made since the launching of the European Union Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1 January 2003. The assessment of Commissioner Frederiksen is that the first three months of the mission have been successful and that EUPM is fully deployed and established in State, Entity and local police authorities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The EUPM Commissioner also explained the two initial priorities – organised crime and returnee security – and outlined how the EUPM is working closely with Bosnia and Herzegovina police authorities on the implementation of targeted programs, which have led to the first co-coordinated countrywide raids by Bosnia and Herzegovina police on night bars. The need to fight, with determination, organized crime had further been emphasised by SG/HR Solana in a meeting with Mr. Adnan Terzic, Bosnia and Herzegovina Council of Ministers' Chairman, which also took place yesterday.

Commissioner Frederiksen noted that nationwide operations indicated the increasing recognition of local police professionals that law and order in Bosnia and Herzegovina

could only come about through cooperation between its different police forces. EUPM has set in motion a number of projects to further this cooperation, including information sharing and joint criminal investigation mechanisms.

SG/HR Solana and Commissioner Frederiksen discussed the recent assassination of Serbian premier Djindjic and noted that the murder had no apparent effect on stability and order in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They congratulated Bosnia and Herzegovina police and government authorities on the professional way in which they responded which included precautionary measures such as increased border security. The two men also discussed the current war in Iraq and its possible effects in the Western Balkans. Bosnia and Herzegovina currently remain stable and calm.

The EUPM Commissioner will be holding further meetings with senior EU officials in Brussels this week, today he will meet with the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament.

Majda Prljaca – UNHCR

No Statement.

Captain Dale MacEachern – SFOR

Good morning, I have two points today.

My first point concerns a meeting between COMSFOR, LGen William Ward and Minister of Defense Milovan Stankovic that occurred Tuesday in Banja Luka.

This was the first meeting between these two gentlemen since Mr Stankovic was appointed to his position as Minister of Defense. The meeting was positive and very productive. The main topics of discussion were the harvesting of illegal weapons and the destruction and disposal of obsolete and excess weapons held by the Armed Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Minister Stankovic and COMSFOR both agreed on the inherent dangers that the widespread presence of illegal weapons represents to both the community in general and, more specifically, the children of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They both agreed that there is still much work to be done in this area and that they would further explore ways in which SFOR and the RS Government can work together in dealing with this matter.

Both parties agreed that the number of weapons held by the military must be consistent with the size and structure of the military and that excess weapons represent a drain on resources. COMSFOR and Minister Stankovic agreed that any weapons above necessary requirements required disposal and that SFOR and the RS government would also work together on this matter.

My second point pertains to Russia's participation in SFOR.

We are aware that the Russians are considering withdrawing from SFOR but it is our understanding that a final decision has not yet been made.

The Russian government has however assured SFOR that any potential withdrawal will be done in close co-ordination with the North Atlantic Council (NAC). This close co-ordination will ensure that a vacuum will not be created in SFOR and that SFOR will continue to effectively carry out its mandate of maintaining a safe and secure environment.

Thank You.

Questions and Answers

Q: Lyubic Spomenka – FTV

A question for the OHR; What's your position about the adoption of the law on state services in the Parliament House of Representatives in the Parliament in the Federation?

A: Oleg Milisic – OHR

We commented on this yesterday and I think the High Representative was also quite clear in his interview to Oslobodenje today. Basically the international community is willing to support and give financial assistance to civil service reforms that represent an adoption of European standards. However, it is unclear why the International Community should be asked to pay for 11 civil services agencies in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina which these amendment do represent, nor why the citizens of the Federation should be asked to do so either. The High Representative said yesterday Bosnia and Herzegovina politicians have a choice to go towards Europe or to go backwards to work for jobs for their parties members or for jobs for the people. European civil service agency reform, in fact, means taking the patronage out of the political scene and it's pretty clear that these amendments are not necessarily about cleaning up the political space.

Q: Zana Filipovic – Radio Free Europe

A question for the OHR: Can I hear more details about the foreseen removal from office of Mr. Sarovic?

A: Oleg Milisic – OHR

Our position of that has been stated often. As you know the, (as I said in my statement in fact) these implementation council will be considering the final Republika Srpska authorities report. The High Representative has said, given the seriousness of this issue, the only thing that is certain not to happen is nothing. The PIC will review the final report tomorrow and I'm certainly not going to speculate about what they will be saying.