

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

Subject: JOINT PRESS CONFERENCE – 20 August 2002

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 11:30 hours on Tuesday 20 August 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Patrik Volf	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Representative to visit agricultural laboratory in Mostar Southeast.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children from Srebrenica and Milicic have the opportunity to take part in the festival.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Withdrawal of provisional authorisation.• Opening of newly constructed water supply system at Kamenica Elementary School.

d. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bosnia and Herzegovina's potential membership in Partnership for Peace. • Call from the State-level investigative commission currently studying the Mostar mortar bombs case. • Operation HARVEST. • The Commander of SFOR thanks the Saudi ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina. • Announcement of the death of Mr. Jolidon.
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2. Thirty-nine members of the media and five television crews attended the conference.

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

C. Barraud
Lt. Col. (FR A),
Chief Operations and Plans

Patrik Volf – OHR

My apologies for the short delay. Nevertheless, welcome everybody to our press conference today

I just have one announcement to make and that is, the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown, tomorrow will visit the agricultural laboratory in Mostar Southeast. The laboratory was established by the Italian NGO Comitato Europeo per la Formazione e l'Agricoltura, if my Italian is correct, in November 1999 in Mostar Southeast Municipality.

The laboratory is a significant contribution to the overall agro-infrastructure of the area. It provides soil and water analyses to agricultural producers. The services offered by the laboratory to the producers are increasingly being accepted and even demanded by the farmers in the region. There are plans to further extend the capacity to include final product certification, which would facilitate the export of agricultural goods on the side of Bosnia and Herzegovina

After his tour of the laboratory, the High Representative will have a discussion with representatives of returnee and domicile agricultural co-operatives. A more detailed media advisory will be sent out in the afternoon. We do not know the exact timing yet. Thank you, that is all from my side.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning everyone. I have only one brief point.

The Sarajevo Film festival has begun and along with it, as every year, a special programme for children. For the first time, children from Srebrenica and Milicic have the opportunity to take part in the festival.

The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina is covering the expenses for the transport of 150 children to Sarajevo, so that they can go to the film festival. For many of them, it is the first time they will see a movie in a theatre and this, is as well, the first time many travel to the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Around a hundred children have already been to the cinema and the last part of the group arrives in Sarajevo on Thursday for the 11:00 show. That is all from me.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning. I have two announcements today.

First of all, some withdrawals of provisional authorisation. The IPTF Commissioner, Sven Frederikson, has withdrawn the

provisional authorisation from two police officers, Mr. Nedjo Jovicic from Bjeljina and Mr. Tomislav Barisic from the State Border Police in Kamensko.

In the first case, on 7 December 1997, Mr. Nedjo Jovicic was one of two police officers in plain clothes to escort two officials from Teslic in an unmarked police vehicle. After having been overtaken by another vehicle they followed that vehicle, overtook it and set up a roadblock to stop it. When this vehicle approached the roadblock it turned around and sped away at which point the police officers opened fire at the vehicle causing life-threatening injuries to one passenger. The actions of the two police officers in this case were based on poor judgement. The Basic Court in Brcko found both police officers guilty of committing grievous bodily harm and sentenced them to three months imprisonment. The other police officer who has been part to this offence had his provisional authorisation already withdrawn earlier.

In the other case, late on 25 September 2001, when driving home in his uniform on the Split-Tomislavgrad road, Mr. Barisic caused a minor traffic accident by hitting another vehicle and continued driving without stopping. The other vehicle followed him and it came to a fight between Mr. Barisic and the two persons from the other vehicle. A police patrol reached the spot and all three men were found to be under the influence of alcohol. Mr. Barisic, as well as the other two men, were charged for violation of public peace and order. The Municipal Court for Minor Offences in Tomislavgrad found Mr. Barisic guilty of a number of offences including having caused a traffic accident, operating a vehicle without a license and driving under the influence of alcohol. He was sentenced to pay a fine.

Due to their performance, IPTF has found both officers unfit to serve in the police forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This decision precludes Mr. Jovicic and Mr. Barisic from employment in any law enforcement agency in Bosnia and Herzegovina now or

in the future.

The second item is a repeat of an announcement that we had to cancel on short notice. Tomorrow, Wednesday, 21 August, the Special Representative of the Secretary General Jacques Paul Klein will officially open the water supply at the Kamenica Elementary School in Teslic Municipality.

The school, which is attended by approximately 150 students, was reconstructed in May 2001, but lacked a modern water supply system. The United Nations Trust Fund donated the money needed for the construction of a new water supply system.

Kamenica is a village in Republika Srpska with a mixed population. Since 1998, some 60 percent of the pre-war population has returned and the village now has a Bosniak majority population.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein will be joined at the ceremony by representatives of the local community and by officials of Teslic municipality. A separate media advisory will be sent out to you later on this afternoon, thank you.

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

Dobar dan from SFOR. I have five points to address today.

First, the Commander of SFOR, Lieutenant General John B. Sylvester, re-stated NATO's position regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina's potential membership in the Partnership for Peace Programme yesterday afternoon in a letter that was delivered to all three members of the Tri-Presidency. In it, Lieutenant General Sylvester says NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson has stated the ground rules for eligibility to Partnership for Peace on numerous occasions in the recent past. The principal requirement that must be met before NATO will consider Bosnia and Herzegovina's entry to Partnership

for Peace is the creation of a single ministry of defence.

Lord Robertson said in April 2002 that the Partnership for Peace membership requirements are a “common security policy, democratic parliamentary oversight and control of the armed forces, the provision of a state-level command-and-control of the armed forces – including a state-level ministry responsible for defence matters, full transparency for plans and budgets, development of a common doctrine, and common standards to train and equip the armed forces of this country.”

The NATO Secretary General also said there may be other “political conditions” that may be required, but he stressed that the above-mentioned conditions needed to be met by Bosnia and Herzegovina if it was ever to gain entry to Partnership for Peace. These conditions remain in effect.

My second point concerns a call from the State-level investigative commission currently studying the Mostar mortar bombs case to SFOR for a formal report based on its own, separate investigation into the matter.

SFOR generally prefers to work with police investigators, prosecutors and judges who are investigating cases, instead of providing testimony in courtrooms and filing formal reports with State or Entity-level commissions. Indeed, this was the case with respect to the Mostar mortar bomb cache. Within days of the initial discovery, SFOR provided copies of relevant documents to the investigation team. SFOR was co-operative with the appropriate authorities from the very beginning of the police investigation.

Nonetheless, SFOR provided a written response to ten questions posed by the Bosnia and Herzegovina House of Representatives' Parliamentary Assembly Investigative Commission on Thursday afternoon. SFOR considers the contents of its response confidential as they may have some bearing on the final

findings of the State-level commission.

Now, SFOR waits to see what the local authorities will do to ensure those responsible for hiding vast quantities of mortar bombs in residential Mostar face justice.

My third point relates to Operation HARVEST. As almost everyone in Bosnia and Herzegovina knows by now, Operation HARVEST has achieved a level of success in 2002 that has never been seen before. The number of illegally-held small arms, ammunition, grenades, mines and other war-making devices that have been collected since this year's operation began is truly remarkable.

SFOR believes much of Operation HARVEST's success this year is due to a slightly different approach to the collection process. Instead of creating central collection points and then waiting for citizens to bring illegally-held weapons and munitions to them, collection teams are now going door to door, informing residents of Operation HARVEST and asking them to turn in any illegally-held items they might have in their household.

With this in mind, citizens can expect to see collection teams appear at their doors in towns and villages throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, particularly in those more remote areas where Operation HARVEST may never have been carried out before. SFOR calls on the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina to turn in all illegally held weapons, ammunition, grenades, mines and other war-making devices when the collection teams visit during Operation HARVEST. Help make Bosnia and Herzegovina a safer place for your friends and your family and especially, for your children.

My fourth point: the Commander of SFOR thanks the Saudi ambassador to Bosnia and Herzegovina for the way in which he and his country recently assisted the people of Hajdarevici.

Several months ago, Lieutenant General Sylvester toured some

villages with a handful of ambassadors. At that time, he challenged these diplomats to make a tangible improvement to Bosnia and Herzegovina by donating their countries' money to practical community projects that would meet the day-to-day needs of citizens.

The Saudi ambassador took up Lieutenant General Sylvester's challenge. Working with the local authorities, SFOR's Civil-Military Co-operation teams and representatives from various International Organisations, the Saudi Government donated seven cows, some tractors, grain and a new oven for baking bread to the people of Hajdarevici.

Hajdarevici is a shining example of the way in which the International Community can make a small but significant improvement to the lives of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens.

Finally: it is with great sadness the NATO Peace Stabilisation Force, announces the death of Larry Jolidon, Director of Communications to the Commander of SFOR.

Mr. Jolidon, 64, a Fulbright scholar, distinguished journalist and author passed away at Camp Butmir this morning. He had worked for the NATO Peace Implementation Mission in 1995-1996 and for SFOR for much of the last year.

Mr. Jolidon's career as a United States Marine, United States Army Soldier and journalist, author, teacher and publisher spanned several decades of service to the United States and to the peoples from Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Central America, the Caribbean, Russia, Africa and, of course the, Balkans.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Thank you very much. Can I ask you for your questions please.

Questions and Answers

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic – Reuters

Scott, Bosnian-Serb media reported today that although the search for the support network of Karadzic has ended, there is a strong SFOR presence at the border with Montenegro and helicopters continue to patrol the area. Is it an on going operation? Can you say anything about this?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

We conduct helicopter operations across this country everyday. I think everyone in the room has heard me say that. We have patrolled along the border of Montenegro and will continue to do so from time to time, as it is in our interests. The specific reasons for that, I cannot share with you for reasons of operational security.

Q: Daria Sito-Sucic – Reuters

So there is an operation going on?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

What I am saying is, we will patrol along there from time to time. We patrol lots of places with helicopters. As to what exactly it is we are looking for when we fly these missions, I am not able to say.

Q: Fedzad Forto – FENA

A question for the Office of the High Representative. According to what Scott said about Partnership for Peace, the major condition is the creation of the Ministry of Defence at State level. Would you facilitate or help the Bosnian Government negotiate?

A: Patrik Volf OHR

It is a very clear view on the reform of the defence policy,

and I think Scott will agree with me. In order to get into the Partnership for Peace Programme, there is a lot of reform that needs to be done; there is no way to get into it without reforming. The key prerequisite from our point of view is that Bosnia and Herzegovina is able to act independently in defence matters as part of the International Community. To my knowledge there is an initiative on the side of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency, we fully support them in their efforts.

Q: Antonio Prlenda – Oslobodenje

Scott, why did Commander SFOR decide to send the letter now?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

We are aware that the Tri-Presidency is discussing the matter and he wanted to ensure that all those taking part in the discussion had a very clear idea of what NATO saw as being the preconditions. That is why he sent the letter. The part that I read for you, Lord Robertson's words from April, that is identical to what was stated in the letter.

Patrik Volf – OHR

Any further questions? Thank you very much for being here and have a nice day.