

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

CPIC/Media Conferences

1. The following attended the regular Press Conference held at the CPIC at 1130 hours on Tuesday 02 July 2002:

Agency	Spokesperson	Topic
a. OHR	Kevin Sullivan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Representative's Schedule.• Srebrenica.• PLIP Statistics• War crime trials in Bosnia and Herzegovina.• High Representatives editorial in New York Times.
b. OSCE	Urdur Gunnarsdottir	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14 deputies of the State and Entity Parliaments visiting Slovenia.• First of three phases of the Roma and Elections project.
c. UNMIBH	Kirsten Haupt	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• UNMIBH Mandate.• SRSG hands over donation to orphanage in Banja Luka.• IPTF Commissioner withdraws provisional authorisation from Stolac CID Chief.
d. UNHCR	Majda Prljaca	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No statement.
e. SFOR	Major Scott Lundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SFOR soldiers conducted a search of a house in Pale.

2. Thirty-eight members of the media and seven television crews attended the conference.
3. A transcript of the questions and answers is attached.

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

Kevin Sullivan – OHR

We will move on briskly. A few points from OHR this morning.

Paddy Ashdown is in London. He is having talks with officials in Downing Street and also at the Foreign Office. Tomorrow he will be in Brussels, where he will have talks with Javier Solana and other members of the European Union's common foreign policy and security committee. On Thursday, he will be in Vienna to address the OSCE Permanent Council.

Last night, Paddy Ashdown had a meeting with the mothers of Srebrenica. He was following up on his visit to Srebrenica on Friday night. On Saturday morning he wanted to emphasise to the mothers that they have his complete support and the complete support of the International Community and let them know about the latest developments on the Potocari Memorial site. He explained that the tender process was opened on Saturday for the design of the Memorial and that after the selection is made it is to be hoped that work will begin on preparing the site in the autumn.

The third item concerns the Property Law Implementation Plans (PLIP) statistics. The OHR, OSCE, UNHCR, CRPC and UNMIBH have just released the PLIP statistics for May. The overall implementation rate of the Property Laws has now reached 52%

countrywide. This is a considerable achievement, although obviously more has to be done to ensure that all property claims are resolved. In the Federation, the number of solved property claims now stands at 57% of the total received; the figure is 45 % in the Republika Srpska and 55% in Brcko district. It might be worth adding that that fewer claims were recorded in each Entity in May because claims for destroyed property have continued to be excluded from the statistics. This has noticeably affected the figures for Breza, Ljubuski, Drvar, South Mostar and Tuzla.

Finally, some of you may have come from a press conference earlier this morning given by the Chairman of the Presidency Beriz Belkic and the Senior Deputy High Representative Matthias Sonn. They were discussing the report that was compiled by the four independent experts tasked by Office of the High Representative to look into the problems associated with hearing domestic war-crimes prosecutions Bosnia and Herzegovina. The problems that exist are highlighted in an executive summary of the full report, and I have copies of that if anybody wants to pick them up at the end of the press conference. The report recommends establishing an International Humanitarian Law Division within the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which, with international participation at all levels, would be the most appropriate institution for the prosecution of war crimes here.

And the last point is that the New York Times published an editorial by Paddy Ashdown this morning in which he analyses the issue of continued participation of the United States in Peacekeeping Operations, specifically Peacekeeping Operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I have copies of that editorial if anybody wants them. With that, it is over to OSCE.

Urdur Gunnarsdottir – OSCE

Good morning.

Under the auspices of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, 14 deputies of the State and Entity Parliaments are visiting Slovenia from 1 to 4 July. The delegates are members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Parliamentary Assembly and members of the Defence and Security Committees of the Entity Parliaments. They are meeting with their Slovenian counterparts to discuss issues related to military security and parliamentary oversight over armed forces. The Slovenian parliamentarians are sharing their experiences, lessons learned and perspectives on subjects related to the role of a parliamentary defence committee with their guests from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Specific points of discussion will be democratic control and restructuring of armed forces, Partnership for Peace, defence spending and transparency, and the work of the International Trust Fund for De-mining and Mine Victims Assistance.

Since Bosnia and Herzegovina still has to develop appropriate defence and parliamentary structures as a prerequisite for its membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace program the Bosnia and Herzegovina parliamentarians can benefit from Slovenian experience in becoming a member of the program and in coming closer to NATO membership. The meeting is a continuation of the productive dialogue and co-operation established through various OSCE facilitated Defence Committee Round Table meetings and seminars held since the beginning of the year 2000 in Slovenia, Switzerland, Germany and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Secondly, OSCE recently completed the first of three phases of the Roma and Elections project. Its purpose is to promote the registration of Roma persons for the upcoming and future general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, now that the deadline for voter's registration has passed. OSCE sent two Romani activist teams to inform Roma communities about the election registration process. In their visit they discovered that many Roma persons do not have the necessary documents,

they do not have ID's, They do not have passports or birth certificates to participate in registration and that they are unaware of the registration process in the country. The teams distributed copies of information guidelines about the registration and the mission plans to produce a publication about the upcoming elections in Romani and Bosnian languages and furthermore to establish a team to monitor Roma participation in the Bosnia and Herzegovina elections, which we believe is very, very low. Thank you very much.

Kirsten Haupt – UNMIBH

Good morning ladies and gentlemen.

The first item from me today, as you can imagine, is about the UN mandate. You have no doubt followed what has happened over the weekend and yesterday. There is not much to add at this point. Consultations and discussions on the extension of the UNMIBH mandate continue at the UN Security Council. We cannot but emphasise that this matter is exclusively being dealt with by the UN Security Council. In the meantime, UNMIBH in Bosnia and Herzegovina continues its programmes in assisting the law enforcement agencies in Bosnia-Herzegovina. What concerns mandate implementation beyond 3 July – that is tomorrow – will be subject to further UN Security Council decisions and we will have to see what comes out of New York as of tomorrow.

The second item today, is the visit of Jacques Paul Klein, to Banja Luka today. At a ceremony held in the morning, Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein officially opened the playground and the stands constructed at the Rade Vranjesevic Orphanage with a UN Trust Fund donation worth some 35,000 KM.

During his visit today to Banja Luka, the Special Representative of the Secretary General will also meet with top Republika Srpska officials, including Republika Srpska Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic and Republika Srpska President

Mirko Sarovic. Further, Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein will meet with the Rector of the Banja Luka University, Dragoljub Mirjanic. Special Representative of the Secretary General Klein will also participate at the opening ceremony of the Joint Branch Office of the Embassies of France and Germany in Banja Luka. A press conference will be held later in the afternoon at the International Press Centre in Banja Luka.

And lastly, an item on the further withdrawal of an provisional authorisation. The IPTF Commissioner, Sven Fredriksen, decided to withdraw the provisional authorisation to exercise police powers from Andrija Stankovic. After conducting a comprehensive review of the acts and omissions of the Chief of Crime Investigation Department in the Police Administration in Stolac, IPTF has found that Stankovic's performance renders him unfit for service in the police forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Stankovic was found to having deliberately delayed and hindered an investigation into a return related incident in 1999. Also, in 1999 as well as in the year 2000, Mr. Stankovic had to appear in disciplinary proceedings for having violated basic rules for police conduct. In the year 2000, Mr. Stankovic refused to vacate an apartment he was illegally occupying in Stolac. In August 2000, the Special Response Unit of IPTF carried out the assessment of the crime department of Police Administration Stolac and found that the quality of the work there was poor and that the Chief of CID, Mr. Stankovic, had failed to investigate a number of minority return incidents in Stolac in the correct manner. The Commissioner's decision is effective immediately and prevents the officer, Mr. Stankovic, from participating in any aspect of police work anywhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina, either now or in the future. That is all I have, thank you.

Majda Prljaca – UNHCR

No statement for you today. Thank you.

Major Scott Lundy – SFOR

Dobar dan from SFOR, I have two points for you.

First – early this morning, Peace Stabilisation Force soldiers conducted a search of a house on the outskirts of Pale in Republika Srpska that is suspected of being associated with an illegal smuggling network in Bosnia and Herzegovina. SFOR units provided security around the house to ensure the safety of the local population and those SFOR personnel participating in the search. The house is also associated with Radovan Karadzic.

In the conduct of the search, forged documents were identified and seized by SFOR soldiers. A small number of firearms were also seized to ensure the safety of SFOR soldiers and other personnel in the area.

A housekeeper was present during the search and he was questioned related to information found during the search. The housekeeper has subsequently been released.

This operation highlights SFOR's active role to disrupt particularly dangerous criminal activities and smuggling rings. This operation is consistent with SFOR's legal mandate established under the Dayton Peace Accords and also contributes to a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

My second point is a public service announcement related to fireworks. A fireworks display will occur between 22:00 and 23:00, at Camp Butmir on July 4th, the purpose of which is to celebrate the United States of America's Independence Day. I ask that you inform your readers and audience that this will happen, so no-one in the Sarajevo Valley area is surprised with what they see and hear on Thursday evening. That is all from SFOR.

Questions and Answers

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP:

A few questions for SFOR. First, could you elaborate on this smuggling network? What kind of smuggling?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I do not have all of the details. This operation only took place approximately eight hours ago. The time of the operation was approximately 3 a.m. this morning. SFOR is concerned with smuggling activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina particularly as they relate to the peace and stability here. Where these activities take place, we have been monitoring this. SFOR becomes involved as they see fit and as it will advance our efforts to stamp it out.

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP:

Does it mean you suspect Karadzic of being involved in this illegal activity?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

The location was critical to this effort. It is one of several homes in the area, I understand, that are owned by the Karadzic family. As far as the information that was taken, I can tell you that several forged passports were among the illegal documents taken. I do not have a full inventory yet. Again, this only happened eight hours ago and we are still bringing all of the information together. Clearly, our focus was the illegal smuggling network, however some of this information may also help us in our efforts to successfully detain Radovan Karadzic.

Q: Amra Hadiozmanovic – AFP:

Was this operation aimed at arresting?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

As per my last answer, to repeat myself, the focus was illegal smuggling activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Q: Amra Hadosmanovic – AFP:

Just one more, who's name was on these forged passports, you seized?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I do not have those details and I may not be in a position to ever give those to you, because that information lends itself to a follow-on activity.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC:

Scott you still did not tell us what kind of goods were smuggled. Weapons, cigarettes, what?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

There are many different types of smuggling that the international community is aware of. Those include economic smuggling, weapons, and human trafficking. I am not speaking on behalf of everyone here, but there is awareness that these things are taking place and SFOR is part of the International Community's efforts to put a stop to it.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC:

And are you satisfied with the result of this morning's operation?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

Well, it's only been eight hours, and I have been responding to all of your queries for the last three-and-a-half (hours). But we are going to have a look at the information taken and some of the items removed, and based on that, we may be in a

better position to comment on the situation a little later in the week.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC:

And just one more (question). There were reports in the local media that a special NATO team has arrived in Banja Luka, whose main task is to locate Karadzic. Can you comment on that?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

We spend part of everyday looking for Radovan Karadzic and other persons indicted for war crimes, and we dedicate certain resources to that, but for reasons of operational security, I am not in a position to give you a 'yes' or 'no' answer.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

How many times have you done these kind of things, raiding homes, suspected of being associated with illegal smuggling. Do you usually let customs, administration, local police do this. How many times have you tried to interrupt a smuggling ring?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

The lines between a smuggling network, weapons caches, and persons indicted for war crimes, are not as clear cut as all of us would like, so to try and say that one effort three months ago was one thing and not another would not be accurate. It is all inter-linked. SFOR operations specialise, but we recognise that we have to approach this in a global way.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

Can you give statistics of other kinds of operations, how many war crimes suspects have been arrested, how many weapons have been collected, how many times you have raided weapons caches

and so on. I am sure you have these kinds of statistics as well?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I simply don't have an answer for you now.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

For example in the last six months how many times have you tried to interrupt the smuggling network?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

No, the short answer is no! The slightly more nuanced answer is a weapons cache in one location may in fact be part of a larger smuggling network, but we have not been quantifying it in this way and I don't have the information you are looking for in the way you would like it.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

Did you know that this house belonged to the Karadzic family? You say in your press release that it was associated with the Karadzic family. Did you know that this is the house where he met his wife a couple of weeks ago?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

SFOR was aware it was within the Karadzic family holdings in the Pale region, but as to who has signed the deed or title that is for you to find out. I do not have that information.

Q: Nedim Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

Some people think this is a good PR exercise in the light of all other events linked to SFOR, the UN mission, trying to draw attention to something else what do you have to say about this?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

SFOR is continuing on with it's efforts here as part of it's existing mandate. We carry out our activities as the situation allows and when the situation is right. SFOR took appropriate action yesterday in the area of illegal smuggling and we are going to carry on with other operations, today and tomorrow. I don't think it is fair to try and connect any dots in this particular case. We are simply getting on with the work we have to do here.

Q: Julie Harbin Poucher – IWPR:

Question for OSCE. You mentioned, obviously, that the deadline has passed for voter registration. Do you know the percentage of eligible voters that have registered in Bosnia and Herzegovina? And the second question is regarding the Roma. Is it not too late for them to register? Are you not talking about subsequent elections?

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir:

On the first question are talking about in general or about Romas?

Q: Julie Harbin Poucher – IWPR:

I am talking about in general for the upcoming elections.

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir:

I do not have that information, you have to go to the election commission. I think it is about time that people understand that we are not conducting elections anymore.

Q: Julie Harbin Poucher – IWPR:

But, you mentioned something about it being very low?

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir:

We know it is extremely low, but we do not know how low it is, in terms of whether it is too late, this is something that took place in June. I am telling you what we found out. This is going to take quite a while, because people had absolutely no clue in many cases as to what was going on. So I think it takes time to actually inform them, then they might be ready in time for next election.

Q: Julie Harbin Poucher – IWPR:

Because they have to get their passports and ID's and so on?

A: Urdur Gunnarsdottir:

This was done in June. This was aimed for the general elections, but we will continue, because there will be elections after those and this takes time.

Q: Bernard Milosevic – SRNA:

Scott, what has made you to believe that these houses, these people, are involved in an illegal smuggling network, when it is known that these houses have been under surveillance from 1997? What has made you conduct that action yesterday?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I will not give you any reason for that. We do as we feel is necessary in order to ensure success, to protect the people that were involved in the operation and to maintain the level of secrecy that is required so that it does not go wrong. And so, it was successful yesterday. As for the timings, it is an ongoing operation so I can not give you an answer as to why yesterday and why not two days ago or five days from now.

Q: Bernard Milosevic – SRNA:

You also mentioned a small quantity of firearms is it possible now to know what is it?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I do not have any more clarification for you, these were weapons that were in the house and that were removed simply to ensure the protection of the people who were carrying out the search, so they may have been just family weapons. I do not know at this point, but I can get back to you later.

Q: Aleksandar Dragicevic – AP:

Kevin, why is Mr. Ashdown in Brussels, London and elsewhere, is a reason the dispute between the United states and the United Nations?

A: Kevin Sullivan – Office of the High Representative:

This trip was scheduled in any case, I imagine that topic may come up for discussion, but that is not the principle reason that he is having these talks.

Q: Snjezan Lalovic – RTRS:

I am interested to know, what kind of goods were we looking for, who were the suspects for this illegal smuggling, and what kind of damage was inflicted to the house?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

As far as who the suspects are, SFOR is not going to provide you with that kind of information because it would impair our ability to take action in the future. We acted on good information and we were led to believe that certain items in this building would promote our activities to curtail smuggling here, in Bosnia Herzegovina. So that is why we went in. But as to the type, the specific nature of information we were looking for, or items we were concerned with, I don't have that answer. And I think that for reasons of future operational requirements, I am probably not going to be in a position to give that to you any time soon.

Q: Snjezan Lalic - RTRS:

What was the amount of damage when you raided the house, and will you compensate the owner for the damage?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

My understanding is that there may have been some minor damage to the house, which would have been made during the entry. And just as we did in Celabici, we would ask that the property owners come forward with any claims that they wish to make. At this point we will find out who is on the title or deed to this property, and we will consider their claim. As you will recall in Celabici, we did actually make some payment to the citizens.

Q: Nicholas Hawton - BBC:

Scott, you said that the raid this morning may help in your efforts to ultimately catch Mr. Karadzic. In which way?

A: Major Scott Lundy - SFOR:

Well, information is just information until it is analysed. So we are going to have to wait a while until the people who do that kind of work can look at all the information that may have been collected today. I do not have specifics to that, but the focus is the arms smuggling network, so we may find a bunch of information that will assist us in that effort. There may be something in here that will provide us with more information on Radovan Karadzic. If that is the case, that will be of some use to us.

Q: Nicholas Hawton - BBC:

When the decision was made to carry out this raid you were obviously focusing on the smuggling matter, but was the thought that if we do this it could help us in our Karadzic hunt as well? So, was that a matter of consideration before

you went in?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

I do not know because I was not part of the senior planning of this operation, but I think anything we find that can assist us with persons indicted for war crimes would be a windfall.

Q: Nicholas Hawton – BBC:

If American troops pulled out of Bosnia, how would that effect you and your colleagues in SFOR here?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

You have heard in the last day or so the North Atlantic Council speak from Brussels and say that the nations are committed to this operation, and you have also heard the US Ambassador, Mr. Bond, commenting on the position of his country. I suggest if you want a further NATO position, you would be best advised to speak to the people in Brussels. We are going about the business we do, it is day-to-day, no change. So if you want an answer, Brussels is the place to go.

Q: Nedin Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

Did you just say that the armed smuggling ring was the focus of this raid, we have asked you at least five times, what was smuggled. You do not want to tell us if it is arms?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

Let me put it back to you, all of you. Let me ask you: have you not seen and heard and reported on arms smuggling and other kinds of smuggling here, extensively? The answer is yes, and SFOR, as part of the international community is concerned with anything that could potentially disrupt the safe and secure environment. We have worked together with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina for more than six years to

create this and that is why we are concerned with it. Why now? Why *not* now?

Q: Nedin Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

No, I mean it is perfectly okay, I mean why did you not just tell us immediately and save us twenty minutes of questions. We asked immediately what was smuggled, so can you be more precise, is it small weapons, nuclear weapons whatever, what kind of weapons of weapons were being smuggled? I do not know? maybe in the next twenty minutes we will get that piece of information from you?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

Well, I certainly do not feel you are wasting mine, so I will answer your question. The answer is we are concerned with all types of smuggling. Clearly we are a military force, so we have a certain expertise, a certain familiarity, with the weapons component of smuggling. But there is much more going on and SFOR has been asked to become engaged in the whole broader issue as part of the global effort. It is not just the international community; your people are doing a lot of work in this field too. It just happened to be today and you can expect to see more of this in future. I cannot tell you when or where, but you will see more of it.

Q: Nedin Dervisbegovic – Reuters:

Is it an international ring, or just local? Are arms being smuggled through other countries, continents? Are local armies involved?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

That is what we are trying to come to grips with now – the extent of it, where it is going, who is sending it around, etcetera, etcetera. I do not have all the answers right now.

Q: Merdijana Sadovic – ABC:

Was there anybody else involved in the operation apart from SFOR? And also, what were the local police doing at that time?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

That is a good question and I do not have an answer. When I arrived this morning I was told that there had just been an operation that was wrapping up, and then I got to the business of telling you what SFOR was doing. I would suggest you get that information from the local police and others who may or may not have been involved. That is up to you to dig around for and I will work on your behalf as well.

Q: Geinger Viola – Freelance for Cox Newspapers:

I want to clarify if I understand correctly that you are not saying what type of smuggling was possibly going on in this particular situation. Right?

A: Major Scott Lundy – SFOR:

Right.