

Foreign Press Office - Mostar

MEDIA REPORTS

Ulica Kneza Domagoja bb, 88000 Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina
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8.6.2005

MEDIA REPORTS DIGEST

May 22 – 31, 2005

Politics of BiH Political parties should not present an obstacle to BiH citizens' progress, says EU Foreign Policy and Security HR, Javier Solana

May 22, 2005

EU High Representative for Foreign Policy and Security Javier Solana believes that politics led by BiH...parties should not present an obstacle to BiH citizens' progress...that political leaders should be responsible for decisions...bringing on behalf of their nations. Solana stated in an interview for Banjaluka "Nezavisna novine" that party politics should not stand in the way of BiH citizens and that politicians should bear responsibility...that they are making in the name of their people. (NTV HAYAT, FTV, RTRS)

Chairman of the Croat caucus in BiH HoP Franjicevic confirmed that Caucus submitted a complaint to BiH CC over PBS

May 22, 2005

Chairman of the Croat Caucus in BiH House of Peoples Franjicevic confirmed that the caucus submitted a complaint to the Constitutional Court due to displeasure with the situation of public broadcasters in BiH. Franjicevic stated that the complaint was submitted after the FBiH House of Peoples declined to adopt conclusions of the joint commission that deals with the situation in the media. The commission suggested that the public RTV service should have one RTV channel with three programs broadcast in the languages of the three constituent peoples. (Radio Herceg-Bosna)

More than 15,000 faithful gather in Kupres to mark Central European Catholic Day

May 22, 2005

More than 15,000 faithful gathered in Kupres to mark Central European Catholic Day. Eight church bells from eight Central European countries were donated on this occasion to the Church of the Holy Family in Kupres. Reconstruction of the church is underway. (BHTV1, RHB, TV Pink, NTV Hayat, RTRS, Oslobođenje, Dnevni Avaz, Vecernji list)

HDZ BiH supports genuine police reform in BiH, says senior official

May 23, 2005

HDZ BiH believes that BiH needs genuine police reform as well as genuine reform of the constitutional order, including the abolishment of the entities and transfer of their competencies to municipalities and the state. Chair of the Croat Caucus in FBiH House of Peoples Mate Franjicevic states that HDZ BiH supports police reform in BiH, but that the recent events only represent an illusion and that BiH will not soon see the abolishment of entity Ministries of the Interior. (Radio Herceg-Bosna, Oslobođenje, Dnevni Avaz, Vecernji list, Nezavisne novine, ONASA, Glas Srpske)

Filipovic: HR misleading public regarding the PBS law

May 23, 2005

HDZ representative in BiH House of Peoples Ilija Filipovic talks about HDZ's proposed amendments to the PBS law and states that HDZ proposed transforming Herzegovina TV into a BiH Federation broadcaster. Commenting on the statement given by High Representative Paddy Ashdown who said that a broadcaster producing a TV program in exclusively one language is contrary to the Dayton Agreement, Franjicevic responds: "I would like someone from the Office of the High Representative or the Council of Europe to show us where such a thing is stated in the Dayton Accords." Franjicevic concluded that the fact that the existence of RTRS, which broadcasts only in the Serbian language, proves that Ashdown's claim is false. (Vecernji list)

Clashes between Croat soccer fans from Mostar, local Bosniaks in Stolac

May 23, 2005

Upon return from a soccer match played in Trebinje, "Zrinjski" fans from Mostar stopped in a café in Stolac where they came into conflict with local Bosniaks. It all started with verbal insults and led to a mass fight in the center of Stolac. Reports claim that the "Zrinjski" bus was stopped and attacked, with rocks being thrown at the windows. The soccer club "Zrinjski" issued a statement condemning the incident and all those who provoked it, assuring everyone that they would not allow this provocation to undermine the reputation of their club. The Herzegovina-Neretva Canton Ministry of Interior spokesman Srećko Bosnjak stated that the investigation is currently underway. (Radio Herceg-Bosna,

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NTV Hayat, Dnevni Avaz, Oslobođenje, Vecernji list,
Slobodna Dalmacija, Dnevni list)

Ashdown: High Representative's powers will soon change

May 23, 2005

The High Representative's powers will significantly change in the next 18 months such that domestic institutions will receive more and more authority, stated Paddy Ashdown, the current High Representative in an interview with Dnevni avaz on Monday.

Ashdown said in the interview that the task of the High Representative during the next year and a half needs to be transformed into a special representative of the European Union in BiH.

The international community has not yet decided whether the High Representative will still have the power to remove elected officials from office according to the so-called "Bonn powers."

He mentioned specific changes: state parliament would vet candidates for ministerial posts instead of OHR and the BiH Constitutional Court would examine the rehabilitation of previously removed officials.

"OHR in its current form uses too much oxygen and does not allow other democratic institutions to develop," said the British diplomat, adding that he is convinced BiH is at the doorstep of the EU and NATO despite all problems.

Ivanic: Time has come for BiH institutions to run the country

May 23, 2005

BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic on Sunday said that time has come for the BiH institutions to run the country, because investors will not come "as long as foreign institutions are managing certain areas".

"In order to convince the investors to invest money, we must have strong institutions primarily", said Ivanic at the opening of the plenary session of the Business Forum within the Annual Assembly of the European Bank for Recovery and Development (EBRD) in Belgrade, was reported by BHT1.

"BiH, ten years after the war, is encountering certain normal problems such as the matters of ensuring greater earnings and

a better life", said Ivanic and stressed that this part of Europe no longer feels isolated as in the past.

"If we have managed to change the negative image about ourselves, I am optimistic about the future", said Ivanic.

On Saturday evening, Ivanic held talks with the EBRD President, Jean Lemierre, about the projects that are funded from the Bank's credit funds and the plans for further operations in our country.

Lemierre was interested in the economic situation in BiH, especially the reforms that will enable a better position of BiH companies, was announced by the BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Ivanic commended the past engagement of EBRD in BiH, which consists of several significant projects such as the credit for the RS Telecom, the credit for reconstruction of railways in BiH, and the planned credits for the BiH Civil Aviation Directorate and for the small and medium sized companies.

In 2004, EBRD had a major placement of funds in BiH in the amount of 95 million euros, while a substantial increase is expected in this year.

The greatest amount of 145 million euros is planned for the reconstruction of railways in BiH, was announced. (FENA)

What is the connection between Bisera Turkovic and Islamist soldiers?

May 24, 2005

According to sources, the reason why the U.S has not sent accreditation for the newly appointed BiH ambassador to Washington Bisera Turkovic is the fact that during the war in BiH, as BiH ambassador to Croatia, she organized the arrival of Islamist soldiers to BiH, including those with connections to terrorist organizations. The BiH Ministry of Foreign Affairs has declined to comment the alleged connection between Turkovic and Islamist soldiers coming through Croatia to BiH. (Vecernji list)

BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic addresses EBRD annual meeting in Belgrade, calls for foreign investment

May 24, 2005

BiH Foreign Minister Mladen Ivanic presented BiH economic capacities at the Annual Assembly of the European Bank for

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Reconstruction and development (EBRD) taking place in Belgrade. He presented the results of economic reforms still underway in BiH. His presentation also involved representatives from UniCredito-Zagrebacka Banka, Mittal Steel Zenica, and the EBRD office in Sarajevo. Ivanic stated that BiH is ready to receive foreign investments and that the country has come a long way since ten years ago. (BHTV1, FTV, RTRS, Oslobođenje, Dnevni list, Nezavisne novine, FENA)

Ante Jelavic had no control over Miroslav Rupcic

May 24, 2005

The trial against former HDZ President and Croat member of the BiH Presidency Ante Jelavic continued Monday in the case of Hercegovacka Banka. Defense witness Marko Strbac, former assistant secretary to Jelavic in the FBiH Ministry of Defense, testified that the Ministry's office in Mostar received funds from the Republic of Croatia as well as funds from the federal budget earmarked for members of the Croatian Council of Defense. According to Strbac, Miroslav Rupcic was in charge of these funds during 1997 and 1998. (Dnevni list)

Dizdar: We will punish you for the mosque!

May 24, 2005

Several unidentified individuals attacked players from "Zrinjski" soccer club this past Saturday in Stolac when the club's bus was stopped and its windows smashed by rocks, resulting in several players being injured. The president of the Stolac Youth Forum Nerin Dizdar pointed out that "Zrinjski" fans threw rocks at a mosque and that he does not understand how they thought they could get away with it unpunished. Recently there was another incident when young Bosniaks demolished a Croat café. Perhaps one of the greatest consequences of the visibly damaged inter-ethnic relationship is complete economic destruction. Stolac is a divided city in which Croats and Bosniaks live and work separately and joint activities are very rare. The genesis of the inter-ethnic conflict in Stolac began with the arrival of Yugoslav National Army reservists who were warmly received by the local Bosniaks. After the liberation of Stolac in the summer of 1993, Bosniaks emigrated to third countries. Following massive Bosniak returns in 1997, the number of inter-ethnic incidents grew and Croats in Stolac point the finger most at the Stolac Youth Forum, which gathers Bosniak youth under the leadership of Nerin Dizdar. At the beginning of this year Federal Minister Mehmedagic ordered the forceful removal of the cross on the hill

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Krizevac above the city. The most recent tension has been caused by the monument near Radimlja which was built to honor Croat victims.

Contact Group for BiH urges political agreement on police reform

May 24, 2005

LONDON, Britain – The Contact Group for BiH on Monday (23 May) urged leaders in BiH to ensure a political agreement on crucial police reform, according to a statement issued after a London meeting of the six-nation panel and international community High Representative Paddy Ashdown. The group urged the Republika Srpska Parliament to authorize local leaders to participate in such accords and enable the realization of the key reform, adding that it poses no threat to the two BiH entities. The Contact Group includes representatives of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Russia and the United States. (SETimes.com)

ILH: "Golden Charter" presented to Roy Gutman

May 24, 2005

Representatives of the International League of Humanists (ILH) presented the Golden Charter of Peace "Linus Pauling" to American journalist Roy Gutman in Sarajevo on Tuesday for his contribution to truth and justice through highly professional reporting on events in BiH during the war.

Roy Gutman expressed satisfaction with receiving the award and stressed that journalists always need to show things exactly as they are.

Gutman's texts were the first to seriously alarm the American public and turn their attention to events in Bosnia. *Newsday* published a number of Gutman's articles on Serb concentration camps. He is also the author of the book "A Witness to Genocide." (FENA)

OHR: Three years of Ashdown's mandate

May 24, 2005

On Friday May 27 it will be exactly 3 years since Paddy Ashdown took the position of the High Representative.

On his first day as High Representative Paddy Ashdown identified his primary aim as putting BiH irreversibly on the path to statehood and on the road to Europe, OHR

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spokesperson Mario Brkic told a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday.

That has been the focus of the last three years - and substantial and steady progress has been made. BiH has now moved decisively away from the era of Dayton to the era of Brussels, he said.

EU integration is now the defining context of political debate in BiH - a far cry from the arid nationalism that still prevailed three years ago.

The High Representative has said that his overriding aim for the rest of the year is for BiH to adopt the reforms that are necessary for the country to start negotiations for an SAA agreement, and to secure a position for BiH in NATO's PfP program. That will require a political agreement on police reform, as well as significant progress on defense reform. It will also mean continued cooperation with the ICTY, including the transfer of Radovan Kardzic and Ratko Mladic to The Hague, Brkic said.

But progress towards EU and NATO accession progress will depend upon the willingness of politicians in BiH to adopt the reforms that necessary reforms. Only by assuming responsibility for driving through strategic reforms such as police and defense reform will they succeed in taking BiH into the EU and NATO, the OHR spokesperson said.

He added that the speed and the ability of BiH's institutions to adopt and implement reforms will also help determine the future shape and size of international presence in the country. The sooner reforms are undertaken, the sooner the international presence in the country will shift from being lead by the HR to being lead by the EU.

This process has already begun. The number of HR's impositions has been reduced dramatically. Significantly, the process of regularizing status of removed individuals has begun, Brkic said.

Over the past three years, an institutional framework for a functioning sovereign state has been extended. Key areas of reform are: Reform of the judiciary. The HJPC, Court of BiH, Commercial Chambers are all operational. The War Crimes Chamber will also soon be operational. State level intelligence, border service and information and protection agencies have been established and are operational. A state level tax collecting authority has been set up. This will enable BiH to borrow on the international capital markets as a sovereign state. Mostar's city

administration has been unified. Special Audits have exposed abuse of public companies; package of corporate governance legislation has tackled this key area of economic life. CoM expanded from six Ministries in 2002 to ten Ministries today. Defense Reform is also well advanced; Police Reform is likewise advanced, pending resolution of political issues, Brkic said.

Clearly, none of the broad legislative agenda that has been enacted will have any impact if the laws are not implemented, he stressed.

Implementation lags well behind, which is why reforms have not yet translated into tangible improvements in the standard of living. But a huge amount of the groundwork has been done. The framework for comprehensive and effective implementation is now in place, Brkic told a press conference in Sarajevo on Tuesday. (FENA)

EUFOR Commander Leakey stresses importance of state-level police force

May 25, 2005

BiH needs a police force with a coordinated structure at the state level which will be able to efficiently fight against organized crime. "BiH police are effective in dealing with local crime but are not structured to handle state-wide crime and criminal networks in a coordinated manner. This is one of the reasons why police restructuring is critical." According to Leakey, organized crime is a serious problem in BiH because it operates within a framework of parallel structures, cheating the government out of large sums of revenue otherwise intended for education, health, pensions, and economic development. Leakey also mentioned that one of EUFOR's tasks in BiH is to coordinate the activities of BiH law enforcement agencies and to support all efforts aimed at the eradication of crime and corruption, which present obstacles to European integration. (ONASA, SRNA, Oslobođenje, Dnevni avaz, Dnevni list, Vecernji list, Slobodna Dalmacija, Nezavisne novine)

Stephen Mayer: Serbia to get part of RS as compensation for Kosovo

May 25, 2005

Former Chief CIA analyst for the Balkans and currently professor at the Washington National Defense University, Stephen Mayer, thinks BiH and Kosovo are two significant failures of Western political engineering. He also thinks there

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is no reason why borders in the Balkans shouldn't change, if this is what people want. "Why shouldn't it be proposed that a part of Kosovo north of Ibar and Mitrovica, including mines, be given to Serbs and the rest be given to an independent Kosovo? In exchange for losing Kosovo, Serbia might get eastern RS," Mayer said and warned that if the politics of "frozen" borders I smaintained, nothing will be resolved – tensions will exist, without economic progress. (Vecernje novosti)

BiH Croat politicians discuss constitutional reform

May 25, 2005

All Croat political parties in BiH attended a meeting held last night in Sarajevo to discuss constitutional changes. The Croat parties agreed that constitutional reorganization of BiH is necessary because the current structure doesn't suit BiH as a state or the Croat people, who do not enjoy equal rights in BiH.

HDZ President Barisa Colak stated that constitutional reform needs to take place so that BiH could have a democratic system guaranteeing rights to all peoples and citizens. HDZ BiH President Colak confirmed that his party, as the most powerful Croat party, has its position on this matter, but that it is appropriate to hear other participants and representatives of political parties.

"I think the purpose of this sort of meeting is to form a consensus regarding the most essential issues because there is no need to have different viewpoints on certain matters," stated Colak.

"This country is divided into two entities, in which, on paper but not in reality, there live three equal and constituent peoples, who are supposed to have these characteristics throughout the whole territory," said Colak, stressing that "work still needs to be done in order to create a self-sufficient state, which will be self-sustainable in economic terms as well and in which all three peoples will feel equally comfortable."

Vrhbosna Cardinal Vinko Puljic also attended the meeting primarily in a mediator role and stated that "we [Croats] as a people, faith, and culture have an equal place with all others in BiH. (Oslobodjenje, Dnevni avaz, FENA)

HVO members to lose pensions from Croatia?

May 25, 2005

According to the current situation, HVO members will continue to receive their pensions from Croatia only until the end of this year. A new Croatian law leaves out the term "HVO defender" and the only way for these veterans to receive future funds is to sign a bilateral agreement between Croatia and BiH.

After a five month break, talks on the status of HVO victims between Croat associations of war victims and the competent Croatian ministry are scheduled to resume next week. (Slobodna Dalmacija, Vecernji list)

Jelavic approved 5 loans

May 25, 2005

The trial against former HDZ President and Croat Member of the BiH Presidencz Ante Jelavic in the Hercegovacka Banka case continued on Tuesday with testimony by defense witness Ante Colak, a former member of the commission in charge of granting housing loans. Colak stated that, according to the Rules of Procedure of the FBiH Ministry of Defense for granting housing loans, Jelavic as Defense Minister had a right to grant loans to those who were not selected by the competent commission. Colak concluded that Jelavic used this right for five persons at most. (Slobodna Dalmacija)

RS: Croats also unsatisfied with representation in local self-government

May 25, 2005

The Croat Caucus in the RS Council of Peoples on Wednesday has decided to launch the vital national interest protection procedure to the RS Government's Report on implementation of the Law on Local Self-government, which was adopted at the latest session of the National Assembly.

Chief of the Croat Caucus Pejo Krnjic indicated that Croats are not represented in the bodies of local administration, and that the Law on Local Self-government has not been implemented in several municipalities in RS.

Krnjic told the press that the Croat Caucus has also launched the vital national interest protection procedure to the conclusions of the RS National Assembly that refer to the request for passing the Law on Census in BiH.

Namely, the Bosniak Caucus in the RS Council of Peoples on Tuesday launched the vital national interest protection procedure on the RS Government's Report on implementation

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of the Law on Local Self-government, and to the Assembly's conclusion that requests passing the Law on Census in BiH. (FENA)

Pack accuses International Community, BiH for failing to capture Karadzic and Mladic

May 26, 2005

Chief of the European Parliament Delegation for Southeast Europe, Doris Pack, accused the International Community and BiH authorities for failing to capture the most wanted war crimes indictees Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic/ At the same time, NATO reiterates that the North Atlantic Alliance is not the only institution responsible for arresting Karadzic and that he should voluntarily surrender to the ICTY. (BHTV1, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni list)

RS President Cavic: Dayton guarantees RS

May 26, 2005

Speaking at a lecture at Matica Srpska in Novi sad on the topic "RS – Ten years after Dayton," RS President Dragan Cavic stated that all those in favor of separating the RS from BiH must know that they are talking about violating Dayton. Cavic stated that the biggest guarantee for RS is the status accorded to it under Dayton and, if the RS wants to leave, it has to know where it is going. "Our policy has to be within the framework of Dayton – a policy that does not violate the integrity and sovereignty of BiH. However, we also demand our international right as recognized in the document – that the RS remain a factor in the decision-making process."

Jovic visits Plehan and Bosanski Brod

May 26, 2005

The Croat Member of the BiH Presidency, Ivo Miro Jovic, visited Plehan and Bosanski brod today.

Accompanying him were Deputy Minister for Human Rights and Refugees in the BiH Council of Ministers Ivica Marinovic and former Presidency Member Dragan Cavic.

Jovic visited the Plehan monastery and the newly-renovated clinic, to which he donated medical supplies necessary for providing care.

The Plehan parish numbered some 7,500 inhabitants prior to the war. Now there are 166 individuals who permanently live there and about 200 during the summer.

Jovic mentioned that this was his first working visit as Presidency Member and that he chose to come to Plehan because it is foremost a "very important spiritual center for Croats."

His visit, as he said, is support for the Franciscans and the people returning to the area.

"My wish was to visit this region and receive information firsthand. The number of Croat returnees is small and reconstruction is slow, which means there is much work for politicians. I would like to convey that such a beautiful region does not exist anywhere and that people return," said Jovic.

Following Plehan, Jovic visited Bosanski Brod, where he met with the municipality chairman Vid Ivanovic and his associates. They discussed refugee returns and the problems facing returnees to that area.

Jovic pointed out that the preconditions for coexistence in the municipality are being created, but the economic situation is still an obstacle to larger returns. (Pincom.info, FENA)

EU's Rehn sends letter to Prime Minister Terzic

May 28, 2005

European Union Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn sent a letter to Adnan Terzic, Chairman of the BiH Council of Ministers, stating that sufficient progress has not yet been made in the reform of the police structure and the Public Broadcasting System. Rehn reiterated three European Commission principles for police reform and stresses that without concrete results the Commission will not be able to give a green light for starting Stabilization and Accession Agreement (SAA) talks. In concluding, Rehn expressed his hope that BiH would start SAA negotiations before the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Agreement. (BHTV1, FTV, RTRS, Dnevni avaz)

Croat TV channel initiator Jurkic sends open letter to Ashdown

May 28, 2005

The launcher of an initiative for a Croat TV channel in BiH Stjepan Jurkic sent an open letter to HR Paddy Ashdown due

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to his statement that a channel broadcasting in only one language would be in violation of the Dayton Agreement. Jurkic asks Ashdown where this is stated Dayton. He reminds Ashdown that RTRS broadcasts its program exclusively in Serbian, while the FTV program is unofficially broadcast in Bosnian. Jurkic expresses hope that the HR will acknowledge all objections made in good will in the open letter. (Radio Herceg-Bosna)

Ashdown defends RS. Ashdown says "If" RS complies with police reform!? Ashdown didn't remove Dokic because the minister was set to speak at an important conference!?

High Representative Ashdown's comments on TV Hayat show "Face to Face"

May 29, 2005

TV Hayat Senad Hadzifejzovic – As Senad Hadzifejzovic said, guests of Face to Face were the High Representative, Paddy Ashdown and himself.

At the beginning of their talks, Hadzifejzovic said that in December, 2004, according to the CD survey, 3.800 citizens supported the HR's work, while last Saturday, the number decreased to only 108 citizens, and asked the HR whether he was worried by that fact. The HR said that he did not believe in surveys conducted in that way, and added that he doubted the accuracy of such surveys.

"It is not my job to be popular, but to get things done. I have been here for three years. We have done a tremendous job to build the state, and of course we have made some persons unhappy, and of course I take it seriously", said the HR. *"Of course, there are persons who do not support the work I have done in past three years. When you are working in a state in which three people who fought each other, are trying to build a state, it is natural not to meet all nations' needs. After three years of solid work here, in which we have created all ingredients of the states, we have started solving the issue of criminal nets in the state",* said the HR.

Hadzifejzovic pointed out that he would like all the Cantons and entities to be abolished, but that it seemed as if it was never going to happen.

"RS is not going to be abolished, and I will tell you why; it is a part of the Dayton Agreement and my job is to implement and protect the Dayton", said the HR.

"Whole Europe, Brussels, smart people, politicians, your chiefs say that the Dayton is a mistake and that Brussels BiH should be created. It seems as if someone is lying here", said Hadzifejzovic.

"No one said that the Dayton was a mistake. You cannot have peace without Dayton. If you want to abolish RS and FBiH, and maybe you should, it is something you have to do. I cannot do that for you. I thought you understood this. International Community (IC) cannot do that for you", said the HR.

"IC can, if it wants to abolish RS, almost overnight", claims Hadzifejzovic. Hadzifejzovic said that BiH citizens saw no aim, no one had offered any political program to BiH, neither IC nor the HR, and added that BiH wondered aimlessly.

"I do not understand why you want to paint such an extraordinary black picture of your state. Since I have come here, single judicial system, single legislative system, BiH Council of Ministers without rotating Prime Minister position, military forces under state control, single taxation system, united custom services, has been created... you are in front of the European doors and that is a phenomenal achievement. In the last year, economy has developed faster and stronger than in any other Balkan state; industrial production in FBiH has increased by 1/4 in the last year, poverty rate dropped from 20 % to 17 %; foreign direct investments have gone up 25 %; export from BiH has gone up by 25 %... I agree that ordinary people still see no results of all the achieved... ", said the HR.

"For 16 years, since I am performing this duty, news editor, I have been reporting on the same topics... But this kind of nationalism and dissatisfaction has not been seen ever, even not before the war in BiH", said Hadzifejzovic.

"I do not believe that you are doing any good to this state by painting such a black picture. Of course I understand your impatience, but the progress you have achieved in last 10 years is amazing...you have asked me what I am planning to do in next 6 months. I am leaving by the end of the year and it is very important to make a good plan, and that is what I am going to do on Tuesday. If RS decides to continue police reform and if BiH heads towards Europe, I want to start transferring OHR authorities to local BiH institutions", said the HR.

"We want you to make this state the most normal and to stop experimenting", said Hadzifejzovic.

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“*But you should do that. You have to joint the Europe*”, said the HR.

On being asked why he had not removed Minister Branko Dokic, Ashdown said “*I told Dokic that unless he submitted his resignation, I would have to remove him. Dokic is doing a major conference next week, and it would damage BiH if he resigns before the conference. I expect him to do that after he comes back*”.

At the end Ashdown pointed out that BiH could not join EU thorough OHR and that BiH politicians had to start doing something about the issue. “*You have to start creating the environment of trust, not to constantly destroy that*”, said the HR.

In terms of RS Director, Dragomir Andan’s claims on Madrid terrorist attacks being prepared in BiH, the HR said that the claims were being investigated, and that he was going to conduct certain measures after having all facts investigated. In terms of RS National Assembly session, which is to take place on Monday, the HR said that he hoped that RS politicians were going to bring right decision and to continue talks on police reform.

At the end, Hadzifejzovic pointed out that an ordinary person saw no future, young people were leaving BiH and that politicians were doing nothing to change that. “*That is your job. I cannot ...I came here three years ago and said that we were doing to do two things; create jobs and justice. Who would say, three years ago, that we are going to create institutions, powerful enough, bring presidents of state at courts of justice... but we have managed to do that. I agree with you that ordinary people cannot yet see any differences, but it takes time. You job is to criticise, but sometimes you should present good news as well. The reason why young people were leaving may be the fact that media does not present any good news at all. It is ridiculous that I had to promote BiH tourism abroad. Why have not you done that, why media does not do that*”, asked the HR. (OHR Media Round-up)

RSNA adopts conclusions on police reform

May 30, 2005

The RS National Assembly on Monday evening concluded that any model of organizing the police in BiH whose local police areas would cross the inter-Entity boundary line is unacceptable.

In the conclusions, which were adopted after the whole-day discussion on police reform in BiH, the National Assembly reiterated its commitment to reforming the police structures in BiH within the RS and BiH Constitutions on basis of the European standards.

The National Assembly deems that talks on police reform need to be continued within the RS and BiH institutions, is said in the third conclusion.

The conclusions were adopted with 62 votes in favor and 14 votes against.

Adoption of these conclusions marked the end of parliamentary debate on police reform in the RS National Assembly. (FENA)

BiH UXO disposal unit leaves for Iraq on June 1

May 30, 2005-06-06

Members of the BiH Armed Forces’ Unexploded Ordnance Disposal Unit will deploy to Iraq on June 1 to take part in the peace support mission there.

Representatives of the BiH Joint Staff and Operational Command presented at a press conference in Sarajevo today equipment that this unit will use in Iraq.

The equipment was provided by the entity ministries of defense, by the BiH Ministry of Defense in one part, and in the largest party by the US Government through train and equip programs.

Chief of Joint Staff Col Gen Sifet Podzic said that the first installment of 2.580 Euro for the month of June has already been paid to the accounts of the soldiers taking part in this mission.

After the first ten days, which they will spend in Kuwait for additional training, members of the BiH UXO Disposal Unit will be deployed to the sector of the Division West near Faluja, as part of the 8th Engineer-Marine Battalion of the US Marine Corps.

Podzic said that not a single incident has been registered in this sector during the last month. Members of the unit received maximal training, they have good equipment, and will be able to professionally carry out their task, he added.

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The BiH MoD signed an insurance contract with the «Sunce BiH Osiguranje» insurance company. In the event of death of a soldier 100.000 KM will be paid, while in the event of permanent disability 200.000 KM will be paid.

UXO Disposal Unit Commander Major Stjepan Musa said that members of this unit will be responsible for the destruction of conventional weapons in storages in the area ensured by the US military.

The first rotation is consisted of one team from the RS Army and two teams from the FBiH Army. They will spend six months in Iraq and then be replaced by the second rotation.

The BiH Presidency will organize a send-off ceremony at the Sarajevo International Airport at 11:00 on June. (FENA)

Bosnian TV commentator: Ashdown more successful in form than substance

Independent TV Hayat, Sarajevo

May 30, 2005

Bosnian TV commentator Senad Slatina, a former ICG analyst, says that on paper, Paddy Ashdown is "probably the most successful High Representative that Bosnia-Herzegovina has ever had". However, in practice he has failed to confront the two "mutually exclusive" policies at work in Bosnia today which are thwarting efforts to build a modern state. On the one hand, Slatina says, there are those who endorse reforms and Bosnia's European road and on the other, there are those who are "blocking the reforms in the most flagrant ways". It is thus "still equally legitimate today to build Bosnia and to take it apart", Slatina says, and this fact, along with the "inability to mobilize the leading world powers" to tackle this "colossal" problem is the "greatest shortcoming of Paddy Ashdown's engagement so far".

The following is an excerpt from the commentary aired on the "Korak" current affairs programme, broadcast by Bosnian Independent TV Hayat on 30 May:

[Host Elvira Ahmetovic] Good evening, dear viewers. Does Bosnia-Herzegovina need a High Representative ten years after the Dayton [Peace] Agreement? The question has become topical with Paddy Ashdown's arrival at the office and his methods of absolutely autonomous action in Bosnia-

Herzegovina's legal system. Citizens and politicians have different views about the role the High Representative has played over the past three years. The critics of the OHR's [Office of the High Representative] role and performance say the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina today is worse than in three years ago. By contrast, there are those who assert that Paddy Ashdown has resolutely set Bosnia-Herzegovina on the road of European integration.

Anyhow, one should be realistic and admit that of all the High Representatives so far Paddy Ashdown has done the most for the country. And the time ahead will show to what extent his decisions have been right. A commentary by Senad Slatina:

[Senad Slatina, former ICG analyst, reading his commentary over archive footage] In one of his first speeches in the capacity of High Representative three years ago, Paddy Ashdown said his goal was to set Bosnia-Herzegovina on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration from which it would not be possible to return to the past. The High Representative's programmatic declaration of sorts contains the only relevant criterion for evaluating his performance: the criterion is to what extent Bosnia-Herzegovina is essentially a more independent and more stable community than three years ago.

[Passage omitted: the commentator lists the common state institutions established during Ashdown's mandate]

Thus, it all looks spectacular on paper, and if we look only at the form, Paddy Ashdown is probably the most successful High Representative that Bosnia-Herzegovina has ever had.

However, this same form and its pronounced promotion, while turning a blind eye to the fact that it is being disregarded in the most flagrant way, is at the same time Paddy Ashdown's greatest failure.

Our strengthened Council of Ministers is essentially still a house of cards which may collapse at any moment. We saw an example of this early this year, when the state government did not function for several months because this was the will of the [Bosnian] Serb Republic ministers. SIPA - the police agency of paramount state importance - still does not have a permanent seat, proper leadership or any results of its work. The state intelligence agency exists only formally, while the entity components are still submitting intelligence reports to their entity bosses, just as they did prior to the reform. The state defense ministry is not capable of responding properly to the evident mockery of its very essence, which we saw at the recent oath-taking ceremonies with recruits in the Serb Republic.

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The common tax administration is still prolonging the start of its operation, and we have no reason to be particularly optimistic regarding its future efficiency. The [state] court and prosecution have started operating, but are evidently lacking professional creativity in interpreting the provisions of the Criminal Code.

Thus, if you wear a swastika in this country, sanctions will probably be ordered against you for provoking religious or racial hostility. If, however, you mount a huge banner saying "Knife, wire, Srebrenica", the local policemen and prosecutors will consider this [as the exercise of] your freedom of expression, which should not be called into question.

All the new institutions share one striking feature: they are so weak that they stand no chance of surviving should a serious crisis strike. In any major deterioration of the situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina, they would be defeated by the old, entity or sub-entity institutions, with things promptly returning to the situation of 1995.

The High Representative has been promising for months that it is now time for implementation - for the new institutions to really take root. This promise, however, remains unfulfilled.

Speaking of the substance and not the form, it is worth noting that in almost all spheres Bosnia-Herzegovina today ominously resembles the former Yugoslavia before its break-up. This is particularly evident at football matches, where the most impassioned and most sincere political views are conveyed in the most primitive form.

If form-wise we are perhaps almost there, substance-wise we are still very far from the road to Europe from which there is no returning to the past.

Of course, not all of this can be blamed only on Paddy Ashdown. The job of the leader of the international community is to try to create a framework for a modern state - a framework that would be rendered meaningful by local political forces. It is in these forces that the essence of the problem in Bosnia-Herzegovina lies. But the responsibility of the leader of the international community figures here again if he consciously refuses to recognize the crystal-clear differences between particular political forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina. On the one hand, there are those who endorse reforms and Bosnia-Herzegovina's European road; on the other hand, those who are blocking the reforms in the most flagrant ways. And things have, thus, been more or less left open in the period 1995-2005.

Through the will of the international community, these two main - and mutually exclusive - policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina are still equally legitimate. It is still equally legitimate today to build Bosnia and to take it apart. The refusal to confront without reservation and do away with one of these two policies in Bosnia-Herzegovina - and the inability to mobilize the leading world powers for this colossal task - is the greatest shortcoming of Paddy Ashdown's engagement so far.

Croat TV channel at all costs

Slobodna Dalmacija
by Blanka Magas

May 31, 2005

If Croats in BiH were categorized as a national minority, they would be entitled to their own language, education, culture, and, surely, media. However, since the Croats' constitutional category is "constituent people," that means they are a building block along with the other two peoples, Bosniaks and Serbs, and thus it is logical that have equal rights and responsibilities.

However, since BiH is void of all logic, that which is written in and guaranteed by the constitution is actually no guarantee that rights will be exercised and respected. Croats thus find themselves in an impossible situation and are forced to sign a petition asking for equality and rights guaranteed in the constitution.

Although they pointed out inequalities in public electronic media by signing the petition, neither the petition nor requests submitted by Croat representatives were able to help correct this obvious injustice because the state level House of Representatives outvoted the Croat members and adopted the decision to establish some sort of TV production center in Mostar, which is supposed to be Croat.

(excerpt)

US Embassy Press Statement

May 31, 2005

The United States is deeply disappointed by the failure of leadership demonstrated by the RS government in yesterday's

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session of the RS National Assembly on police restructuring. As the ruling party in the government, the SDS bears ultimate responsibility for explaining to the people of the Republika Srpska how to deal seriously with this critical reform issue. Police reform is essential for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina, both to ensure the highest standards of policing for the citizens of this country, and to clear the way for BiH's advance towards Euro-Atlantic integration. As a major donor in BiH for law enforcement and rule of law programs, the United States can only deplore the failure of the RS Government to commit itself to supporting the restructuring of Bosnia's police forces. It is up to the RS Government to propose a way forward.

Ashdown says Bosnian Serbs have turned their back on the future over divided police

by Samir Krilic

Bosnia's Serb parliament has turned its back on the future and blocked the country's EU membership bid by rejecting plans to unify the police, international administrator Paddy Ashdown said Tuesday.

The European Union Police Mission in Bosnia said Monday evening's rejection after 12 hours of debate of police reforms was "a tragedy for Bosnia," which "means denying the police the opportunity to work within a structure that would allow them to tackle serious and organized crime in an efficient manner."

"The consequences of yesterday's failure will have severe effects not only on policing but also on the future of Bosnia in its aspirations to advance toward the EU," the same statement said.

Ashdown, Bosnia's top international administrator, told reporters in Sarajevo that "all reforms were placed in grave jeopardy by last night's decision," adding, "this is a very bad time indeed to put your country at the back of the queue on the road to Europe."

Ashdown said that "the road to Europe remains closed for Bosnia," and the responsibility "lies firmly," with the Bosnian Serb government. He did not exclude imposing sanctions on it.

"I will be considering what actions to take next," Ashdown said.

After 12 hours of debate, 62 out of 83 Serb deputies voted Monday evening to reject police reforms proposed by representatives of the international community - a condition

for opening negotiations about Bosnia's membership with the European Union.

The EU has made membership talks conditional on the establishment of a mixed state-controlled police force that would effectively patrol the whole country.

But parliament said Monday that the proposals would not work.

The peace agreement that ended the 1992-95 war among Muslim Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs and Catholic Croats left the country divided into two ministates - a Bosniak-Croat federation and a Serb republic, each with their own governing institutions and police but linked by a common government.

Currently, police in Bosnia remain the only major divided institution, and Bosnian Serb leaders want to keep it that way since they fear unification of the police force would wipe out Serb autonomy and effectively annul the peace accord.

Talks on police reform failed over the map of future police regions, but Monday's rejection by the Serb parliament does not mean a definite end of negotiations.

The parliament "deems that negotiations on police reform should be continued within the institutions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Serb Republic," Article 2 of Monday's decision said. (Associated Press)