

OHR SRT News Summary, 3 December 1998

Headlines

- SFOR troops in Tuzla today transported arrested General Krstic to the Hague
- President Poplasen lodged protests with the HR, Carlos Westendorp, and the SFOR Commander, Montgomery Meigs, against the arrest of General Krstic
- President Poplasen and PM Dodik met with the HR, Carlos Westendorp, and the UN SRSG, Elizabeth Rehn, in Banja Luka today
- The BiH House of Representatives met in Sarajevo – Mirko Banjac and Halid Genjac elected as co-chairmen
- British-French top-level meeting on establishing European Union military forces

According to the Spokesperson for the Hague Tribunal, Jim Landel, Serb General Krstic, who was yesterday arrested by SFOR troops in a village about 20 km away from Bijeljina, has today been transported to the Hague Tribunal cells. General Krstic is expected to appear before the Hague Tribunal at the beginning of next week. The Chief of the RS Army General-Staff, General Talic, today described the arrest as being conducted in a planned and calculated SFOR action, and informed RS MPs about the specifics related to the arrest at yesterday's round of the second session of the RS NA.

02:06

RS President Poplasen today addressed a letter to the HR, Carlos Westendorp, and the SFOR Commander, Montgomery Meigs, sharply protesting against the arrest of General Krstic. In the letter, Poplasen specified that the arrest had taken place in an action overstepping the SFOR mandate as defined in the military part of the DA and expressed amazement at the fact that General Krstic had been arrested on war crimes after three years of normal co-operation with SFOR representatives. The letter went on to request that General Krstic should be provided special protection of his rights and liberties until circumstances of the arrest were clarified.

1:54

While only 6 of the 34 items of the adopted agenda had been discussed, the three day session of the RS NA Assembly ended in BL last evening. The RS NA is now expected to meet again on 9th December. Following the arrest of General Krstic, the RS Supreme Defence Council also met in BL yesterday and unanimously adopted conclusions condemning the action by SFOR troops. President Poplasen, therefore, addressed the session of the RS NA informing the present MPs about the conclusions.

2:20

An international press conference took place in Sarajevo today focusing on the arrest of General Krstic. The SFOR Spokesperson, Shina Thompson, stated that General Krstic had been arrested in line with the SFOR mandate and refuted claims of SFOR having overstepped their mandate as ungrounded. Thompson specified that there was a sealed indictment brought against General Krstic and that the action had been approved by the NATO Secretary-General. According to the Spokesperson for the UN, the indictment against General Krstic had only been brought on 2nd November which is why he had not been arrested before.

1:19

The President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, today stressed that it was very important that the RS Supreme Defence Council had reacted decisively to the arrest of General Krstic and that it was high time for responsible institutions to remain within the jurisdiction of their respective mandates vested under the DA. Radisic explained not only could this and similar actions possibly endanger results of the democratic processes so far, confidence building efforts and the progress achieved on creating a climate where the difficult legacy of the past war would be overcome, but also the Madrid conference and other activities of special importance for the RS and the implementation of peace in BiH.

01:06

The RS Army General-Staff have released a public statement expressing their dissatisfaction at yesterday's arrest of General Krstic and describing General Krstic as a disciplined, devoted and patriotic military officer.

1:00

The U.S. Administration have supported the arrest of a Serb Army General, Radislav Krstic, and described it as an action contributing to the maintenance of lasting peace in BiH and as being in line with relevant UN SC Resolutions and the DA. Stressing that the arrest had was not an action against the Serb people or the RS Army, but rather an action that could be a warning for other war crime indictees still at large, that all of them were seen as being individually responsible for war crimes committed during the war in BiH.

1:21

The Democratic Party of Serbia today released a statement saying that the arrest of General Krstic on alleged war crimes in Srebrenica in 1995 represented just another means of pressure on the RS on the eve of the Madrid Conference on BiH.

0:18

The RS PM, Milorad Dodik, met with the UN SRSG, Elizabeth Rehn, in BL today on the reconstruction of the RS police. After the meeting Rehn announced that the final document on the police reconstruction would be signed next week, on the eve of the Madrid conference, but failed to give any details in terms of its contents. The meeting also established a joint negotiating team that will be comprised of representatives of the RS and the UN.

0:36

PM Dodik met with HR Westendorp in BL today. After the meeting, Westendorp stated that he had met with Dodik and representatives of other two political parties constituting the Sloga Coalition and that he expressed concerns of the IC over the failure by the RS to form a new Government. Westendorp went on to say that the prime minister designate proposed by the RS President would not get the support of the majority in the RS NA which is why he should return the mandate to the RS President and thus avoid further destabilisation of the RS and any further delays that could be detrimental to the RS people. Stressing that President Poplasen should propose the sole candidate that would be able to get the support of the parliamentary majority, Milorad Dodik, Westendorp said that the main task of the Madrid conference would be to ensure a stronger democratisation of BiH and to approve a plan for the return of refugees.

1:16

President Poplasen met with HR Westendorp in BL today. A statement was released by Poplasen's Cabinet after the meeting saying that it had mainly focused on the arrest of General Krstic. The statement went on to say that Poplasen had stressed that the arrest was a pure terrorist act and conducted in violation of the SFOR mandate vested in it under the DA. According to the statement, the meeting also discussed the participation of the RWS in the forthcoming Madrid conference, as well President Poplasen's insistence that the final document to be released by the conference should include positions and proposals made by the RS.

01:01

President Poplasen also met with the UN SRSG, Elizabeth Rehn, on issues related to the reorganisation of the RS police, the efforts aimed at ensuring the participation of all nations living in the RS in the composition of the police force, and further activities related to preparations for a framework agreement on the reconstruction, reforming and democratisation of the RS police.

0:39

The Madrid conference, the second session of the RS NA and the formation of the new RS Government were amongst topics discussed at the meeting between HR Westendorp and the President of the SDS Presidency, Dragan Kalinic, in BL today. Stressing that the issue of the new Government should be resolved through a compromise, Kalinic said that he was going to employ efforts to have this issue resolved within the deadline prescribed in the Constitution. Voicing his wish that the new Government should be formed as soon as possible, HR Westendorp expressed satisfaction with the work of the RS NA and with the passage of property laws, which, he added, would open doors for a more constructive co-operation and the continuation of the democratisation process.

1:29

The RS President who is also the RS Army Supreme Commander, Nikola Poplasen, held a working meeting with the RS Army General-Staff in BL today. The meeting was also attended by Prime Minister Dodik and the RS Defence

Minister, Manojlo Milovanovic. In explaining the conclusions made by the RS Supreme Defence Council following the arrest of General Krstic, the Chief of the RS Army General-Staff, General Talic, stated that the reduction of co-operation with SFOR to only the most necessary extent meant that the RS side would only attend meetings of the JMC and the SMC, whereas no other aspects of military co-operation or confidence would be further developed.

2:17

The constitutive session of the BiH House of Representatives today resumed electing its respective co-chairman of Serb and Bosniak nationality, Mirko Banjac and Halid Genjac, whereas the Croat one has not been elected. Expressing hope that the members of this common institution would co-operate in a good manner, Mirko Banjac proposed that the HoR should condemn the existence of secret war crime indictees' lists of the Hague Tribunal as, he explained, those did not contribute to the implementation of the DA in BiH. The proposal encountered a number of different reactions and opinions amongst the members of the HoR. The next session of the HoR has been scheduled to take place in seven days with the agenda including: the election of parliamentary commission, the work of respective clubs of members of the HoR, and the activities related to the Madrid conference.

2:41

The RS Commission for the Exchange of POWs and missing persons held a press conference in Serb Sarajevo today confirming the number of bodies exhumed from five mass graves in Sarajevo during the exhumation work conducted in the past five days. The total number of bodies exhumed is now 81, 28 from the Lav Cemetery, 27 from the Kosevo Stadium and 26 from the Vlakovo Graveyard. Special concern was expressed at the conference regarding the fact that some mass graves had been relocated from one place to another. The conference went on to reiterate that 165 bodies had earlier been returned to family members at a cost of from 1,750 up to 2,500 DM which was making the work of the Commission even more difficult as those bodies had not been identified and the families could not be sure that they belonged to their beloved. Special thanks were addressed to Deputy High Representative, Jacques Klein, under whose concept the exhumation work had been carried out. The exhumation work is to resume on 1st March 1999.

2:22

RS PM Dodik, the U.S. Ambassador to BiH, Richard Kauzlarich, and the Director of the USAID, Craig Buck, attended a solemn opening of joint offices of the US Embassy and the US AID in BL today. Stressing that today was a very important day for the RS, PM Dodik thanked the U.S. and, as he said, other friends from Europe and the rest of the world who had been supporting the RS.

1:11

(Kosovo-related news)
3:16

(Federation -related news)
3:42