

OHR SRT News Summary, 30 July 1998

Headlines

- High Representative for BiH, Carlos Westendorp, and the U.S. Special Envoy for the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, met with the RS leadership
- EU delegation described their two-day visit to the FRY on the Kosovo matter as successful
- Russian economic delegation visiting the RS
- Japan has a new Prime Minister

President Plavsic and Prime Minister Dodik held separate meetings today with Westendorp and Gelbard. While no statements were issued after the meetings, Dodik and Westendorp and, later on Gelbard addressed the present press. According to Westendorp the situation in the RS is improving. "The forthcoming elections should be held in a peaceful and democratic way and I am sure that the RS people would make the right choice". Dodik believed that the RS Government would do their utmost to ensure fair and democratic elections. "Joint efforts by the Government and the OHR have considerably improved economic and social situation of the RS people. I would like to thank Mr. Westendorp on his personal efforts which have led to international donors acknowledging and appreciating the situation here. What is very important is that, today, the international community has no reserves in terms of Eastern parts of the RS, and that there are several dozen joint projects currently ongoing there". On the recent decision by the RS Government removing 16 directors of local radio and TV stations, Westendorp said: "Prime Minister Dodik has convinced me that the rules of fair and accurate reporting that are valid in democratic countries must be respected here, too. A Statute and a Charter have been signed that have been approved by the Government and the IC and should now be honored." The new Head of the Banja-Luka- based OHR, Miguel Arias, was introduced at the meetings today.

4:13

Prime Minister Dodik also met with Gelbard and the U.S. Ambassador in BiH, Kauzlarich. Dodik stated that: "Concrete projects by the US AID and the U.S. Government prove that the policy pursued by our government is supported by the U.S Government". Gelbard stressed that: "The U.S. is amazed at the activities that have been undertaken in the past 6 months, since the appointment of the new Government. We are impressed with the progress achieved by the Government with Madam Plavsic, Mr. Dodik and Mr. Radisic in the head." Gelbard believed that the forthcoming elections would be held in a fair and democratic atmosphere and praised the work of the OSCE.

2:06

Gelbard and Kauzlarich, along with the Head of the USAID in BiH, Craig Buck, also visited Bijeljina today. In a meeting with the local Mayor, Dragomir Savic, Gelbard stated that the U.S. was planning to donate up to U.S. \$ 100 million worth of the additional donation for the RS by the end of this year. According to Buck, this change in the American policy is a result of the implementation of the DA. "Here in Bijeljina we are now engaged in very serious programs to support the reconstruction of infrastructure, including the electricity system and the water system". After the meeting, Gelbard visited the local office of the Helsinki Council for Human Rights, where he met with its Head, Branko Todorovic, on the human rights situation in the area.

3:16

(Kosovo-related news) President Milosevic of Serbia met with a EU delegation comprised of the respective political directors of foreign ministries of Great Britain, Germany and Austria, in Belgrade today. At the press conference after the meeting, a member of the delegation, who is also the Austrian Foreign Minister, said that the meeting focused on different aspects of relations between the FRY and the EU, and particularly, on the Kosovo issue. The Austrian Foreign Minister stated that representatives of Kosovo Albanians in Pristina had given assurances that they would agree to have a joint platform in negotiations with the Serb side. President Milosevic, he said, on his part, also gave assurances that the Moscow Declaration would be implemented urgently, and that the FRY military would not act against the civilians. The European diplomats reiterated the position of the EU which is against the independence of Kosovo, and will only support its independence within the Republic of Serbia.

5:32

Brcko citizens today held a rally in front of the local municipal building protesting against the markation of houses identified as available for the return of Bosniak families in the nearby settlement of Klanac, where over 300 Serb refugee families currently live. On whether such development could possibly affect the final arbitration decision, the local Mayor said: "I do not think so, because the developments have not been politicized here".

1:21

The RS delegation led by the Deputy Prime Minister, Savo Loncar met with the Russian delegation led by the First Deputy to the Russian Minister of Economics, Andrej Sapovaljac, in Banja Luka this evening. The meeting discussed economic cooperation between the two countries, primarily their future cooperation in the respective fields of oil industry and civil-engineering. The Russian delegation also met with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of the BH CoM.

2:16

Following reactions to the recently made decision on the removal of directors of 16 local radio and TV stations in the RS, the RS Ministry of Information today released a press statement saying that the largest part of local and international public has reacted correctly in terms of the position that every possible irregularity would be corrected. However, the statement went on to say, only local tycoons and those still supporting the ideology of media totalitarianism have protested against such decision. The statement claimed that the recent measures were aimed to ensure the introduction of professional criteria of reporting, which means, equal access to media for all political options and the rule of law in the business of reporting.

0:56

Prime Minister Dodik, the RS Deputy Prime Minister, Tihomor Gligoric, along with the Minister of Information, Rajko Vasic, are currently meeting with the respective Mayors and the respective presidents of local executive boards of municipalities affected by the recent decision of the RS Government. The meeting is expected to reach a final settlement on the issue, i.e. to ensure unhindered work of commissioners appointed by the Government.

0:48

An international press conference took place in Sarajevo today. According to representatives of the IMC (media commission), the professional code of behavior of electronic media in BiH should become effective as of 1st August. The code is meant to regulate the rules and standards related to contents of TV and radio programs in BH, as well as the behavior of their staff. Those media which violate the established code of behavior will be sanctioned. The IMC was established as an independent agency by the High Representative on 12 June, under Annex 10 of the DA, and conclusion of the PIC Bonn Conference.

1:00

Simon Haselock, the Spokesperson for the High Representative, at a regular international press conference in Sarajevo today, informed the press about the condemnation of recent explosions in Stolac and Kakanj by the High Representative. It is clear now, Haselock said, that these incidents are connected and aimed at preventing returns from taking place.

1:17

Momcilo Krajisnik met with the Austrian Ambassador in BiH, Valentin Inzko, in Serb Sarajevo today, to discuss the policy of Austria as the country that will be chairing the EU in the next 6 months.

0:55

Report on the process of issuing passports in Bijeljina.

0:32

According to the Sarajevo-based media, the Central- Bosnian Cantonal Parliament, under a strong pressure by the Croat side and the IC, have passed a decision on the new division of the Travnik municipality, into three Croat and three Muslim zones.

0:26

The FRY Minister of Justice, Zoran Knezevic, met with the RS Deputy Prime Minister, Ostoja Kremenovic, and his RS counterpart, Petko Cancar, on the possibility of their cooperation on the court process against Dinko Sakic in Zagreb.

0:29

Four persons were arrested in Brcko today suspected of being involved in the beating of Admir Karic,(a Muslim who was born in Brcko and lived in Srebrenik (BH Federation), who passed away on 27th July, as a result of beating. While murdered Karic is Muslim, the police investigation identified no political motives behind the murder.

0:34