

OHR SRT News Summary, 25 Jan. 1998

Headlines

- In Banja Luka: first meeting Dodik – Botic
- The Minister of Defence, Manojlo Milovanovic; heads of the RS Army and its units: only the best experienced and best educated officers
- USA getting closer to military intervention against Iraq

The President of the Government of RS, Milorad Dodik, talked to the Co-president of the Council of Ministers, Boro Botic, today in Banja Luka. This was the first meeting of Dodik and Botic after the formation of the new Republic Government, and was primarily concerned with relations of RS towards the common bodies of BiH. After the meeting, regarding common activities of the Republic Government and members of the Council of Ministers, Dodik stated to the press that the main activities of RS are stipulated in the Bonn document and the Dayton Agreement. "The result of our conversation is an agreement that the joint session of the Government and members of the Council of Ministers from RS will be held on Thursday in Banja Luka. In order to normalise life, we have to establish a range of measures for the realisation of the provisions from the Bonn document and the DA. We have also discussed certain organisational and technical matters of the Council of Ministers in the common institutions of BiH", stated Dodik. Stressing that only a unified RS can be a constitutive part of the Dayton BiH, Botic stated that the work of the Council of Ministers from RS is closely connected with the work of the Republic Government. "We have a lot of work to do together and as I have already said to Mr. Dodik, many of those activities will be the responsibility of the Entity Governments, which is the Government of RS, starting with the implementation of laws brought in at the level of BiH and many other obligations which are exclusively the responsibilities of the Entities: media, return of refugees, health, education, privatisation, etc. We are obliged to maintain close co-ordination, because our position in the Council of Ministers and the position of the RS in international relations depends on the economic and political stability of RS", stated Botic. Co-operation between the Government of RS and the Council of Ministers is not a matter of desire, but rather an obligation towards the people of RS, that is the conclusion of the discussion between the Prime Minister of RS, Milorad Dodik and the Co-president of the Council of Ministers, Boro Botic.

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The transfer of duties between members of the former Government and the Ministers of the newly elected Cabinet is not as dynamic as planned. Concerning today's activities of certain Ministries, this process, however, shows tangible results. From the Cabinet of the Prime Minister of RS, Milorad Dodik we received the following announcement: "The Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the former Government of RS, Dr Radomir Lukic has resigned, on his own initiative, as representative of RS in the Brcko arbitration process and as member of the Republic Arbitration Team. At the second session of the RS Government on the 23rd January in Banja Luka, Lukic informed members of the preparations for the final hearing of both sides in Vienna, and confirmed that he was resigning as representative of the RS Arbitration, stating various reasons, political and legal. The Government considers this obstructive and believes Mr Lukic's party-political behaviour damaging to the vital interests of RS, especially as his decision was announced just before the final session of the Arbitration, after which the final decision on Brcko would be taken", states the announcement from the RS Government.

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In the central Ministry of Interior in Bijeljina, the transfer of duties between the new Minister of Interior, Milovan Stankovic and the former Minister Slavko Paleksic will take place tomorrow, reports Tanjug. At a meeting of the collegium of the former Ministry of Interior, held in Bijeljina, the concept of joining the Ministry of Interior has been supported as a condition for preserving RS. The collegium of the Ministry of Interior will, as announced, support any individual who would maintain the unity of the Ministry of Interior, strengthening professionalism and preserving the results of the defensive war of the Serb people, according to the Dayton Agreement.

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The newly elected Minister of Defence of RS, Lieutenant General Manojlo Milovanovic, stated that he considered

the assumption of this function as primarily a patriotic necessity and obligation, and stated his belief that senior officers could contribute to the strengthening of the RS Army and the revival of its full authority. The most experienced and the best educated officers will be the heads of the RS Army and its units, he said in the interview for Belgrade's "Vecernje novosti". The injustice suffered by the most prominent people of the RS Army had to be corrected, because the people who fought and created RS had left the Army. Those people must have the positions they deserve, not for themselves, but for the necessity of our country and our people. Our most prominent officers, after many replacements, have behaved with dignity with never a negative attitude towards their country or the people, because of somebody else's decisions. The wartime military leadership of the RS Army deeply respects the new age, understands it and is prepared professionally and responsibly to continue with the development of the Army in peace conditions, stated Minister Milovanovic, adding that the Army would soon be as it should and as the people deserve. In our heads, not only on paper, is the strategy for the defence of RS, and we know what to do. We have the experience and the knowledge, and it has been announced that there would be enough money.

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Significant humanitarian assistance and investment in the revitalisation of RS are important preconditions in the process of connecting infrastructure and the revitalisation of war damaged utilities. Great attention is being paid to the control of resources allocated for that purpose. That was one of the reasons for the visit of eminent Swiss guests to Banja Luka. Banja Luka was visited today by the Swiss Ministers for Science and Culture, Ruth Dreifuss, and the Swiss Ambassador, Wilhelm Smidt, with their associates. Their programme started with a visit to the "Rada Vranjesevic" orphanage, where the Swiss representatives met with the newly elected Prime Minister of RS, Milorad Dodik. According to Ruth Dreifuss, the aim of the visit was to see the living and working conditions in this children's institution and to see the results of the humanitarian assistance of the Swiss organisations, SDR and ECHO, which financed the adaptation of the building. "The newly elected Government will do everything to assist these institutions in order for children to feel better and workers to improve the standard of their work", said Dodik and thanked the Swiss representatives for their assistance. The Swiss Minister for Science and Culture met afterwards with the Rector of Banja Luka University, Dragoljub Mirjanic, and professors of the Banja Luka faculties. They discussed the problems of professional co-operation between Banja Luka University and other universities in the world; in this case, in Switzerland. At the end of their visit, the representatives of the Swiss Government and humanitarian organisations held a press conference, where they expressed their hope for a positive solution to the return of refugees and respect for human rights, said Ruth Dreifuss.

2:00

Tomorrow in Strasbourg, the five day session of the Parliament of the Council of Europe will begin, where recent events in Monte Negro and Kosovo will be discussed, while the discussion on FR Yugoslavia was announced for Wednesday. The Parliament of the Council of Europe concluded that Kosovo was on the verge of civil war. During their session, they would also discuss the return of refugees in BiH.

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Today a session of the All Serb National Assembly was held in Pristina, organised by the Serb National Political Council from Kosovo and the Bishop Rasko Prizrenski Artenije. Two hundred members of various parties participated, and their motto was: "Kosovo in Serbia, Serbia in Kosovo". Students from the University in Pristina founded an Initiative board yesterday and announced that they would fight with non-violent and democratic methods for their rights.

1:00

The joint police in Mostar is still not functioning, report the independent Sarajevo media. In Vares, Croats and Moslems have not agreed on the implementation of local election results in spite of the order of the High Representative for Bosnia.

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The United States are getting closer to resolving the control of Iraqi armoury by military action, and it could happen in the next few weeks, stated an anonymous official of the National Security Council

1:00

Members of the crew of the American shuttle "Endeavor" joined the crew on the Russian shuttle "Mir" after a successful landing yesterday.

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This spring, the plowmen of RS are preparing an "offensive" on the fields. Preparations for cultivation have started already, and 595,000 hectares will be used for the production of food.

2:00

A three day seminar will be held in Laktasi tomorrow, organised by the European Confederation of Trade Unions from Brussels: an education project for the Trade Union cadre of RS.

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On the initiative of UNHCR and a Spanish non-governmental organisation, an association of women "Valley remains mine" was founded in Nevesinje, which will provide humanitarian, psycho-social and legal assistance to the local and refugee population, and to all those who need help.

1:00

During the past week, the strike board of RS education workers has talked to the Minister of Finance. Because of the lack of money, no solution was found, so the beginning of the second semester is uncertain. Until the demands of teachers are fulfilled, the school will not open, it was stated today at the strike board.

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On Tuesday 27th January, St. Sava holy liturgies will be held, and in schools the traditional "St. Sava manifestations" will be held.

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