

OHR BiH TV News Summary, 30 November 1998

- RS Assembly – property laws
- Masline-Stolac blockade lifted
- Ivica Pasalic on Bosniak status in Croatia
- that even in their current condition they are better than no laws at all.

The RS Assembly session was the focus of the evening news, in particular the prospective fate of the property laws. The Law on Cessation of the Law on Abandoned Property, and the Law on Changes to the Law on Housing relations were named as the key items on the 28 point agenda, by the reporter. However, they did not come under discussion, due to argument over the rest of the agenda. The reporter stressed that that all non-governing parties, Federation and RS-based, have reacted against the draft passed by the RS government, the SDS saying the draft will endanger the living conditions of more than 400 000 DPs in the RS. The KCD BH does not support the current draft, and will vote against it if certain of the 30 changes they propose – particularly to article 6 – are not accepted. After more than 7 hours of discussion, the issue of the cancellation of financial exchange between the RS and the FRY was placed on the agenda for discussion, together with the issue of a position for the RS delegation to present at the PIC session in Madrid. Also included on the agenda was the proposal of suspension of all evictions until Spring.

Great conflict arose following the acceptance of the initiative raised by Krstan Simic from the SNSD, that the law on security and intelligence should be amended. The SDS and the Radicals asked President Poplasen to replace Milorad Dodik as premier, and consider dissolving the RS Assembly. Harsh words were met with an equally harsh response from Dodik, who called the members of these parties ‘people of chaos’. He accused them of opposing amendment of this law because they want to retain their own parallel Ministry of the Interior.

Ambassador Schumacher explained the position of the OHR on the property laws – that even in their current condition they are better than no laws at all. However, the KCD BH reiterated that if at least 12 particular points of the 30 changes they propose, are not accepted, they will vote against the laws.

4:00

Tomorrow the Federation House of Peoples holds a session, with only one point on the agenda: choosing its representatives for the State House, the constitutional session of which is scheduled for Friday.

1:00

The Masline-Stolac roadblocks were dismantled last night around midnight. They were in place for 11 hours, after SFOR arrested Marijan Prce for being in possession of arms and ammunition in contravention of international conventions. Following negotiations in which the OHR, SFOR, and Hercegovacka-Neretva Canton authorities participated, the roadblocks were removed, but SFOR remains present in increased force, in spite of objections from demonstrators. Richard Ellerkmann of OHR Mostar visited Stolac, and talked with Mayor Pero Pazin. – OHR spokesman Chris Riley said the OHR supported the action of SFOR, because the local authorities are not competent to control the situation.

2:00

Adviser to Croatia’s President Tudjman, Ivica Pasalic, asked whether Bosniaks will be included as minorities in the constitution of Croatia, as requested by the HR, replied as follows: All autochthonous national minorities are included in the constitution, but Bosniak Muslims cannot be included among this number, being a very young nation, dating from only 1968. Previously they were merely recognised as belonging to a particular religion. To be described as autochthonous, a nation must have lived in one place for centuries – obviously not the case, where Bosniaks are concerned.

He also told the press: Croatia would be delighted to stop financing the HVO, but this cannot at present be the case, and the help will continue. Without this help the Croat component of the Federation army would be unable to function.

1:30

Foreign Bloc:

As its first foreign news story TV BiH reported that the US government is changing its attitude to Milosevic, withdrawing from regarding him as a partner in its peace efforts in the region, and holding him to blame for the current situation. The discussion on Milosevic held in the White House moved to the topic of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic – but the White House denied having offered five million dollars per head for their arrest.

A general strike among the workers of the BiH rail company, scheduled for 2 December, is becoming more and more of a concrete prospect, as the union's negotiation with the government has not succeeded. Tuzla coal mines are in difficulties as they are producing more coal than they are able to sell. Nor are pensioners' prospects brightening – homes for the elderly are in grave financial difficulties, and nearing closure, with many residents, including the disabled, facing homelessness.

2:30

As of today, BiH Insurance's green card for traffic insurance is valid everywhere in Europe, except across the Drina (ie, Serbia). The company hopes that the RS insurance companies will be included, following protests the company has made to the OHR over the differing systems.

1:30