

OHR Local News Issues, 26 Aug 1997

Banja Luka – RS President Plavsic held a meeting with RS Army HQ Staff generals. Four out of eight Staff generals were present at the occasion, (Torbica, Talic, Simic, Milovanovic) and the main issue was the current situation in RS and the role of the army in that context.

- Regular IPTF press conference was held today, where the IPTF spokesman Roberts announced that the Training of BL police began today, as scheduled by the programme for the RS police reconstruction.
- The SFOR spokesman Wright announced that the firing and several explosions were registered in BL today. Wright added that it was supposed to be some sort of celebration, but he did not specify anything further.
- RS police, loyal to replaced Minister Kijac prevented policemen loyal to Plavsic from taking control over a TV transmitter nearby Doboje. Employees from the transmitter studios received an order to start transmitting the programme from the BL studio. Armed policemen loyal to Kijac are guarding the approach to the transmitter. SFOR observed these actions but did not react.

8'00"

Pale – The session of the dissolved RS Assembly was held today in Jahorina. Only 45 out of 83 representatives attended the meeting. OHR spokesman Bullivant said that OHR does not recognise this assembly as legal, and therefore, OHR observers would not be attending such meetings. The session was held in order to consider the current conflict between authorities in BL and Pale. Krajisnik accused Plavsic of dividing the RS. – OSCE spokesman Foley announced that the OSCE Media Experts Committee (MEC) asked from SRT that they refrain from violating EASC rules. SRT's General Editor was also asked to stand before the MEC to explain the broadcasts which were in opposition to the DPA. The publishing of OHR and UN announcements was also asked for, as well as the possibility of reaction to distorted SRT reports.

4'00"

Sarajevo – At the meeting of the Joint Military Committee, chaired by Gen. Simpson, it was announced that SFOR will not tolerate the use of military force, troops allocation or the calling up of reservists during the election term

1'00"

Tuzla – IC Supervisor for Brcko, Farrand met with Tuzla/Podrinje Canton President Jamakosmanovic. Farrand announced that the return of the 4500 expellees to this canton was enabled.

1'00"

Zagreb – The matter of the Middle-Bosnian canton was discussed at the meeting of Croatian President Tudjman, BiH Federation President Soljic, and HDZ Party for BiH President Rajic. The Presidents considered the issue of how to keep the Croat people in their place of residence in BiH

1'00"

Bugojno – An agreement on Croat returns to Bugojno was achieved several days ago. This discussion was continued today in the presence of OHR, OSCE and UNHCR representatives. Four villages in the Bugojno area were determined as starting points for the return project. OHR representatives expressed their satisfaction with the achieved agreements.

2'00"

Travnik – In order to support the full implementation of DPA Annex 7, a BiH Federation delegation visited Travnik today, led by Federal Prime-Minister Bicakcic, and Refugee Minister Kadic. They held talks with the Vice-Governor of the Middle-Bosnian Canton, Terzic, and discussed the refugee return project. BiH Federation Government will provide 1 000 000 DEM for this purpose. Bicakcic said that the BiH Federation Government was encouraged with the start this project, while Terzic said that the precondition for return is the announcement of freedom of movement.

3'00"

Mostar – HR Westendorp met with authorities of Her/Ner Canton, Mostar Mayor Prskalo, and Deputy Mayor Orucevic. At the press conference, held after the meeting, Westendorp said that many problems were solved, but several issues still remained, such as the full joint police establishment, and the adoption Cantonal Constitution amendments. Westendorp said that he hopes those matters will soon be resolved. Prskalo requested that Westendorp return the removed HDZ party representatives to the election lists.

2'30'

Summary SRT TV News

In Jahorina, the 11th session of the RS Assembly took place, attended by 46 deputies. The Parliament unanimously adopted a proposal to hold parliamentary, presidential and local elections at the same time. Speaker of the RS Assembly, Dragan Kalinic, read out the conclusions:

1. The NA accepts the decision of the RS Constitutional Court of 16 August and calls on the President of the RS to revert to respecting the constitution and laws of the RS and enable the full co-operation between the President and the NA within the scope of the mandate with which she was entrusted last year by the people of the RS in the elections. All acts made by the President contrary to the constitution will not be respected or considered by the NA and the legitimately elected RS government.
2. The NA assesses that the international agencies involved in implementing the peace agreement in BiH – specifically SFOR, IPTF and OSCE – has exceeded and changed their mandate over the course of the last few months. This is leading towards a protectorate over the RS with elements of military occupation. Concurrently, the peace process is seriously threatened. The NA calls on the government of the RS and all other organs of the Republic to defend, forthrightly and legitimately the independence of the RS and the status defined constitutionally and accepted through the Dayton agreement. The government, the Interior ministry and the State Security to devise, within 24 hours, an operative plan for the protection of the RS constitutional order and institutions. The NA also tasks the government with developing a document highlighting the detrimental effects of the change of mandate for the above mentioned international organisations and submit this document to the OHR, the govts of the PIC countries and others. The NA stresses that none of these organisations can unilaterally change the mandate without the consent the RS NA. The NA appeals on the IC to take an unbiased and balanced approach to the internal political crisis in the RS and not follow limited political and economical interests or support only one part of the RS. In doing so, the IC would contribute to the stabilisation of the situation in the RS and further the peace process.
3. The NA assesses that all personnel changes and the overriding of police stations initiated by the President of the Republic, aggressively and with the support of international troops are a clear violation of the constitution and laws of the RS. The NA supports the govt in its attempts to improve, in personnel and organisationally the situation in the RS Interior ministry in order to ensure the safety and security of the people of the RS.
4. The NA will reject all unconstitutional and illegal acts and decisions which may be made by the President with regards to the general staff of the VRS and the defence ministry. The President of the Republic should act in accordance with the recently adopted amendments to the army and defence laws [adopted also today during the first part of the discussions. No further details available through media yet]. which oblige her to accept the re-defined role of the supreme defence council which raises the collective responsibility of all state organs and institutions, including the president, in matters of defence and command over the armed forces. Only thus can we avoid the damaging consequences of any unilateral acts made by the President for the defence of the republic.

5. The NA supports the full freedom of media and their constitutional task. The NA strongly condemns the taking over of some state media and transmission sites. These media are not the property of one person or one party but that of the people of the RS. These media must continue to be run by the institutions mandated to do so through the information laws and the law on public companies. The NA demands that the studios and transmission sites be returned to their rightful owners within 3 days. If this demand is not met, the NA instructs the interior ministry and state prosecutor to act as necessary. The NA agrees to discuss all issues pertaining to media and the relationship between state and independent media in the presence of authorised representatives of the international community.
6. The NA calls on the PM to embark on a reshuffle of the government in order to enable it to cope with the current situation and render it capable of dealing with the economic and social problems in the RS.
7. The NA declares null and void the consent given by the President of the Republic to the OSCE to organise and monitor the municipal elections. This decision is made for the following reasons:
 - The election rules were adopted against the will of the Serb representative in the PEC and were not defined as such in the Dayton agreement.
 - Revoking the right to vote for a large number of Serbs, especially refugees, and for forcing citizens of the RS to vote in the Federation, against their will.
 - Not giving timely access to the registration lists which would have ensured the elimination of manipulation in the registration process.
 - The current political situation characterised by the unconstitutional and illegal behaviour of the President, the exceeding of their mandates by SFOR, IPTF and others, the violent take-over of police stations and media, attempts to split the VRS, threats and violent behaviour of paramilitary units and unidentified persons towards political parties and parliamentary deputies.

This indicates that the current political and security situation in the country is not conducive to holding municipal elections as scheduled for 13 & 14 September. The NA calls on the govt to enter into direct talks with the OSCE to try and rectify the issues which have lead to this decision.

8. The authorities, representatives of the IC as well as all political parties in the RS are called upon to bring back constitutional and political stability to the RS in order to enable the NA to decide on the holding of parallel municipal, general and Presidential elections. This decision will be made by the NA once it receives the relevant information on this subject and the feasibility assessments for holding such elections as proposed from the government, the RS election commissions and parliamentary parties. If satisfied, the NA would then support and welcome the participation of international monitors.
9. The NA reconfirms its intention to continue, through the legal organs and system institutions the fight against crime, corruption, black economy and for a democratic and lawful state. The NA demands of the govt to inform the deputies of all findings collected so far in the cases of Select-Impex, Centrex and others. The NA will demand that these findings are submitted to the working groups of the NA on a continuous basis.

The VRS Chief of Staff, Pero Colic, met with the Hungarian Ambassador today in Pale. The main subject of discussion were the Agreements on Regional Stabilisation and Sub-regional arms control. Colic reiterated that RS is willing to fully carry out the military part of the Dayton agreement. After the meeting, Colic spoke on camera about the current political situation: "Since the Government, Ministry of Defence and the Supreme Command Council adopted the final decision that the Supreme Command Council is the only decision-making body for the use of army, we told President Plavsic that we will come to the meeting only when she acknowledges that fact. She is not accepting that, she pictures herself as a state within a state. She has a tendency to decide about the destiny of the Serb people whom she drags into a very difficult position. As a VRS Chief of Staff, I don't want to be held responsible for what is happening now. Plavsic should and could realise by now that she already made a split among people, police and now she is trying to do the same with the army. I reckon that we officers are

consciousness people, we don't root for any side, we only want to preserve the RS." Answering the question about the level of harmony on that issue within the VRS, Colic said that there was no dispute there, that the people of RS will soon realise that the policy of President Plavsic leads to cantonisation, a unitary Bosnia and to the division of the RS.

In Banja Luka, Biljana Plavsic (anchor strictly calls her by her name) met with the VRS officials. After two hour of talks, no official statement was released. The meeting was attended by the Commanders of the 1st and the 3rd Corps, Gen. Momir Talic and Novica Simic, Commander of Aviation, Milan Torbica and Colonels Milorad Kutlesic, Rajko Balac and Radomir Djavic.

Tanjug reported that Metropolitan Patriarch Pavle left for the RS today. He is due to meet separately with Momcilo Krajisnik, President from RS in the BiH Presidency, Dragan Kalinic, Speaker of the RS Assembly, and Biljana Plavsic. It is expected that he will discuss ways of overcoming the current crisis. (Patriarch Pavle, will meet Biljana Plavsic in Banjaluka, tomorrow at 9:00hrs, this was announced from the RS presidential cabinet, SRNA reported)

A rally of support for the legally elected institutions of RS was held in Bratunac today. "We have nothing against Plavsic's appearances on SRT every night, but now she blocked everything and this part of the country has no clue what is happening over there," one man said on camera. In the crowd, banners were seen saying 'we are your army, not SFOR' and 'Biljo, don't split the Serbs'.

BRCKO: The municipal SDS Board held a session today and reviewed the unity of the party. Also, the political situation in this town was discussed. It was concluded that the IC is trying to carry out ethnic cleansing in Brod and Brodusa.

At the extraordinary session of the Banja Luka City Assembly a conclusion was made that people must be enabled to watch the unified program of the SRT. It was also agreed, that the city assembly meets on a daily basis, if necessary. An assessment of damage made by SFOR vehicles in BL will be made and the bill sent to the SFOR Command. Together with the bill, SFOR will also receive a protest note because of the 'overstepping of their mandate'. The BL Mayor, Savo Cuk, was tasked to make contact with Biljana Plavsic in order to normalise the situation in the town. Gen. Tolic will get a demand to withdraw his troops from the front of Banski Dvori.