

OHR Local News Issues, 08 July 1997

Madrid – At the NATO summit which begun today, among various issues, such as Hungarian, Poland and Czech entry into the alliance, the matter of Bosnia was also discussed. On the first day of the summit, NATO clearly decided to support the RS president B.Plavsic. It was repeated again that there will be no firm peace until the arrest of accused war criminals. Leaders of NATO do not exclude NATO engagement in this matter. Nato was also criticised for not doing anything about the arrest of accused war criminal Karadzic who is the key figure in the current political conflict within the RS leadership. In the official announcement NATO appeals on the hard-liners who support Karadzic to solve their differences calmly, and warns that they will be faced with greater isolation. NATO Secretary General Solana spoke over the phone to HR Westendorp regarding the Bosnian crisis. Answering the question whether NATO could order the arrest of war criminals, Solana said that nothing is excluded, and that the decision of the 16 leaders represented in NATO will be forthcoming.

6:00

Sarajevo – Bosnian Presidency meeting was held today. The main subject was the Diplomatic Network organisation. Because of the complexity of the matter, the negotiations will be prolonged for about twenty days. The design of the new, convertible Bosnian Mark was also discussed, to enable the conditions for the holding of the Donors Conference . ICHR Westendorp was also present on this discussion

Sarajevo – The Presidency met Malaysian Foreign Minister His Excellency Badavi on his official visit to BiH. The reasons for the visit are continuing co-operation in political and economic matters, and hardening of bilateral relationships.

Sarajevo – At today's press-conference UN spokesman A. Ivanko announced the IPTF Commisssioners M. Seitner's announcement, which said that Croatian authorities in Mostar refused to agree with three main principals in creating the mutual Police Forces in the Herzegovina/Neretva Canton.

Sarajevo – Member of BiH Presidency K. Zubak received the UN Secretary -General's Special Envoy K.Eide., the IPTF Commissar M.Seitner, and the US Representative R. Beecroft. Issue discussed was the police establishment in Her/Ner canton. Zubak said that the police foundation agreement draft, made by Izetbegovic and himself contains all the relevant matters for subsequent establishment of the police forces in this canton, according to the Petersburg Declaration principals , and that this agreement does not need any additional amendments.

2:00

Mostar – Councillors Club of the List for a United Mostar, announced the members of the Coalition for Democratic and Unied BiH. The parties in the Coalition are:SDA, party for BiH, Liberal party, GDS, and Serbian Citizen Council of Mostar.

Banja Luka – RS President Plavsic met the RS Army Commander Colic today. General Colic said that the Serbian Army will remain stand by to the conclusions, although he did not say what conclusions those were. SDS Deputy in charge.Buha said that mutual authorities of BiH should pronounce moratorium in case of confirmation of Plavsic's decision to dismiss the Parliament by the RS Constitutional Court of Law. Buha also said that concurently with the dismissal of the Parliament, the RS representatives in BiH Parliament would also be dismissed since they have the mandates from the RS Parliament

According to the Belgrade daily "Nasa Borba", a member of the RS government said that Plavsic must accept the compromise with the rest of the leadership or she shouldl leave president's functions.This source said that he knows for sure that the RS Constitutional Court of Law will find Plavsic's decision illegal and unconstitutional. Another source said that, according to "Nasa Borba" one of the former closest men in Karadzic's security stated that Karadzic decided to change the whole team in charge of his eventual evacuation from the RS, for he no longer trusts to Milosevic, and thinks that he would sell him for the FRY presidential seat.

6:00

Sarajevo – The letter to B.Plavsic from the OHR, SFOR, IPTF, and UNHCR states the conclusion that her decision of the Parliamentary dismissal was in accordance with constitution of RS and thus the Parliament cannot meet again, nor make any legitimate decisions. It was demanded that the RS authorities act in accordance with the constitution of the Serb entity, as well as with the BiH constitution, respect for the Police reform, checkpoints policy, and

solving terrorism, criminal and corruption problems. Also, full co-operation with the IPTF and the International Brcko Supervisor was demanded

2:00

Pale – Krajisnik said that Plavsic avoided their meeting again. Krajisnik invited Plavsic for the new meeting, saying this is a no win situation, and that it spreads disturbance among the people. D.Kalinic appealed to Plavsic to cease the conflict with the Parliament and await for the decision of the Constitutional Court of Law .

Belgrade – Officials in Belgrade do not support any of the sides in the RS because it has its Parliament, its representatives in BiH Parliament, so let them resolve their own arguments, said the FRY ambassador in Croatia V.Knezevic. Belgrade accepts Krajisnik as the representative in the BiH Parliament and Karadzic is politically dead as far as Belgrade is concerned so it doesn't matter whether he remains in Pale or leaves for the Hague.

Banja Luka – Spokesmen for the OHR, SFOR, and IPTF refuted the quotes from Colic's letter to Plavsic regarding the high combat readiness of SFOR and Federation Army. OHR representative D. Bullivant expressed great concern regarding the RS media, especially with the fact that President Plavsic has no access to it.

Una/Sana – After visiting the area, the Federal Government's expert team has made an assessment by which this area might receive up to 52 000 refugees. Ministry of Refugees made the Repatriation Programme upon this basis. The realisation of the programme will require 779 million DEM.

Sarajevo – At the Alternative BiH Government press-conference two of the issues were the return of the refugees and the current situation in the RS. Regarding the repatriation matter, the Alternative Government Minister for Refugees . Nozica said that this matter should be discussed at the federal, and not the cantonal level. As for the situation in the RS, Nozica said that things would be much better if the accused war criminal Karadzic was arrested.

Summary SRT News

Gornji Drapnici village near Sokolac – The RS is again a target of terrorist attacks of Muslim extremists. Such an attack occurred last night at about 2130 hrs., when a group of five Muslim men sneaked into the village of Gornji Drapnici near Sokolac and started shooting at the lumberjacks in one cottage. One of them was wounded (he died later) by the villagers, whereas the others escaped. The RS police reported the incident to IPTF, which did not even bother to come to the scene of the incident and carry out an investigation themselves. Residents of Gornji Drapnici fear the night ahead of them, but the VRS is not allowed to enter the area because the village is located in the ZOS, and SFOR is never there when one needs them. "They are probably having fun with the local girls at one of the cafes in Sokolac," the SRT journalist concluded his report.

4:00

Banja Luka – Last night an unknown person threw a hand grenade on the house of the RS SRS [Serb Radical Party] Vice-president and RS National Assembly MP, Pantelija Damjanovic, destroying his car and causing damages to his children's bedroom. Fortunately, no-one of the Damjanovic's family was hurt. FRY SRS HQ directly put the blame on President Plavsic, adding that they will continue with their policy regardless of Plavsic's harassment. SDS said that SRS and SDS MP's have become shooting targets in the RS because of 'shameless puppet-like behaviour' of those opposition parties who rallied in Banja Luka and protested against SDS and SRS taking part in the Parliamentary Assembly 'dissolved' by Plavsic. However, SDS hopes that such people will finally wake up and realise that unity is the only remedy to get the RS through the current crisis. Glas Srpski fears that Banja Luka could enter a phase of 'bombing democracy', which shall be exercised on all of the SDS and SRS MP's who live in Banja Luka and who attended the Assembly session on Friday and Saturday. Glas Srpski underlines that those MP's had no other choice because the Assembly is the only constitutional body where an MP should raise his/her voice for or against somebody or something. With regard to Plavsic's statement that she had cancelled the meeting with Krajisnik in Bijeljina because a group of terrorists plotted to attack her, Glas Srpski concluded that that could be the same group that nearly killed MP Damjanovic's children.

5:00

SRT learned that Serbian President Milosevic sent letters to both Plavsic and Krajisnik, asking them to calm down their emotions and work together in order to overcome the present crisis and implement the DPA. He also invited them to Belgrade for a joint meeting.

Banja Luka - The RS President Plavsic met the VRS HQ together with HQ Commander Colic, commanders of VRS corps, and air force commanders. The meeting lasted for two hours without a press release afterwards. However, it was found out that HQ Commander Colic had said that VRS will not change its position, and that the letter to Plavsic was simply expressing the concerns of the VRS with regard to the current situation and was not calling in question the RS President's authority as the VRS Supreme Commander. Plavsic also met the head of OSCE Frowick and visited SRT staff in Banja Luka. She said that SRT would overcome this crisis as it had done many times before.

4:00

Sarajevo - BiH Presidency and the CoM Foreign Ministry discussed the allocation of ambassador posts but did not reach an agreement. Deputy Foreign Minister Bozanic said that, in accordance with the DPA, the RS should get 1/3 of posts. However, Muslims and Croats were in disagreement between themselves because Izetbegovic insisted on pre-war modalities (i.e. Others should also be allocated posts), whereas Zubak's opinion was that only the three constituent peoples should be involved in the diplomatic and consular network. The Malaysian Foreign Minister also attended the session and Krajisnik didn't miss the opportunity to tell him that Malaysia did not equally treat the RS and the Federation when donating their financial aid in the post-war period.

4:00

Pale - The Assembly Speaker Kalinic and his Deputy Vjestica held a joint meeting with the representatives of all the RS municipalities and discussed the current situation in the RS. They disapproved of the rallies in support of Plavsic and concluded that the National Assembly is the only forum for making decisions and discussions and the only DPA-recognised body to organise the new elections.

3:00

Comments on the present crisis in the RS:

The principals of international agencies, headed by HR Westendorp, addressed the RS President, underlining that it is of essential importance that the RS bodies carry out their duties in line with the Constitution and acknowledge the fact that the decision on dissolution of the National Assembly is legal. They reminded Miss Plavsic of the RS authorities' obligations from the DPA, Annex 11, with regard to reorganisation of police, political control of check points, and special police forces. They also recalled the Sintra Declaration with regard to crime, marketeering and corruption. The international community requested full co-operation with the Brcko Supervisor and the IPTF on the issues of police, freedom of movement, and issuing of I.D's to returnees, as well as co-operation with OSCE during the voters' registration period. They also reminded the media to fully respect the freedom of expression and independent press, and recognise the need for reconciliation. These are the pre-conditions for holding of the donors' conference, along with the signing of the Letter of Intention of the IMF. Dutch media reported that the international community is supporting the conflict in the RS in order to create two implacable power centres in Banja Luka and Pale and divide and neutralise the RS. The Dutch analysts reminded that the RS President is still in favour of nationalist ideas, but in the conflict between her and the rest of the leadership the West openly took her side because she is the only one who can jeopardise the stable political centre in Pale. The West hopes to establish a parallel government in Banja Luka that would partition the strongest political party in the RS and pave the way for a new, civic party that would insist on union with the Bosniaks.

5:00