

OHR Local News Issues, 04 July 1997

Sarajevo – The US Senate, headed by the representative of Republicans, Lott [who is strongly against extension of the SFOR mandate after summer next year], met the BiH Presidency and discussed implementation of the DPA. Lott said that the US is proud with what has been done so far with regard to the implementation, but much more must be done in the future in order to develop democracy, peace, and coexistence. He said that they also touched on the current situation in the RS, since such problems can have an impact on the implementation of DPA. The US Senate also met the CoM Co-chair Silajdzic, who said that the US must learn to distinguish those who obstruct the implementation from those who do not and in line with that allocate the financial aid. Silajdzic also underlined that the DPA cannot be fully implemented while indicted war criminals are still at large. He added that he is against the withdrawal of NATO from BiH, particularly of US forces, because they are the only guarantee for peace in the country.

4:00

Comments on the clash between Plavsic and Karadzic:

Saying that they didn't want to interfere with internal political problems of the RS before, for the first time the BiH President Izetbegovic and CoM Co-chair Silajdzic expressed their views with regard to the current situation there because the RS Assembly held its session today regardless of the fact that it was dissolved yesterday in accordance with the RS Constitution and laws.

Commenting on the RS Assembly session today, OHR Spokesman Haselock said that whatever was convened today cannot be called an assembly because it was dissolved, adding that the split of the RS leadership is becoming more apparent by the fact that SRT refuses to broadcast news from the Banja Luka studio anymore.

Only the SDS, SRS [Serb Radical Party], and a few MP's from the Party for Peace and Progress attended the session. SDS and SRS agreed that the Assembly should be continuously in session until the present crisis is resolved, and asked of the RS Government to do the same.

The US State Department said that the situation in the RS is rather complicated. They supported Plavsic as the legal and the only co-operative representative of the RS, and supported the decision on increasing the number of SFOR troops in Banja Luka.

5:00

Sarajevo – BiH President Izetbegovic met the US Special Envoy Gelbard and discussed the current situation in the Herzegovina-Neretva Canton and Brcko.

The UN will put the blame on Croat MP's for violation of the DPA if the amendments to the constitutions of the two main cantons are not adopted, IPTF Spokesman Ivanko said. However, the press agency HABENA reports that the City Council of Mostar [Croat MP's] integrated three Mostar Municipalities with the Croat majority [South, Southwest and West] today. Mostar Mayor Prskalo and the head of Mostar HDZ Puljic also attended this meeting. Prskalo said that this integration is in the spirit of the DPA, therefore they expect that the international community will not condemn it.

3:00

Local Bosniak and Croat authorities of Kakanj and Vares, under the supervision of Federation mediator Schwartz-Schilling, signed the agreement on refugee return and opening of information centres which should encourage the Bosniak and Croat refugees to return. Schwartz-Schilling said that municipalities finally realised that they must implement the DPA themselves, which will be the only condition for receiving financial aid.

3:00

Sarajevo – Minister of Foreign Trade, Muratovic talked with the head of IMF for BiH, Scott Brown about the final condition for holding of the donors' conference. Muratovic said that the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Ministries of Finance of the Entities agreed in principle on the text of the Memorandum of Understanding. However, Muratovic said that the design of the joint currency is the only issue which remains to be agreed on and which shouldn't be linked to the holding of the conference.

3:00

Izetbegovic congratulated the Independence Day to US President Clinton. BiH TV presented a brief history of the US and called it the 'only real world power.'

4:00

Summary SRT News

In Jahorina, the 10th session of the RS Assembly is in progress. The agenda consists of 5 items:

1. Current political situation in RS following the decision by BP to dissolve parliament
2. Initiative to examine constitutional position of dissolution order by BP
3. Defence law amendments – Urgent procedure
4. Army law amendments – Urgent procedure
5. Proposal initiative for recall of President of RS

49 deputies are present. According to Mr. Kalinic, soon a group of deputies from Union for Peace & Progress will arrive at the session. Guests at the session are President from RS in the BiH Presidency, Momcilo Krajisnik, Premier Gojko Kljickovic, CoM Co-Chair Boro Bosic and VRS Chief of Staff Pero Colic.

First report from the Assembly: At the moment, there is a pause and the session will restart at 20.30. The discussion is still ongoing with regard to the first item on the agenda. The Parliament voted in favour of having a "continuous session" until the crisis is resolved. The same decision was made by the RS Government.

Interior Minister, Dragan Kijac, said that a month and a half ago his Ministry submitted a report to the state authorities which said that the goal of certain events was to destabilise RS in order to dissolve the Government and the National Assembly. He was surprised that this report wasn't taken seriously. In his address to the Parliament, Kijac presented statistics that praises the work of the Interior Ministry. Regarding Brcko, Kijac said that the dispute between the Interior Ministry and IPTF arose because the International Police tried to exclude Brcko from the Zone of Responsibility of the RS Interior Ministry and to place it under control of the Supervisor. So far, the Ministry was successful in preventing that. Kijac also said that the current situation is a result of the special war fought by the International Community with the aim of introducing a protectorate over RS and then merging it with BiH.

A letter from Veselin Djuretic, member of the RS Senate was read out, calling upon members of this body to convene a session tonight or asap. The conclusions of this meeting would be binding for all state bodies on the territory of RS, says the letter.

Second report from the Assembly: Speaker of the RS Assembly, Dragan Kalinic, explained that this session was summoned because BP made decisions which will have a negative effect on the future of RS. Those decisions are the dismissal of Minister Kijac and the dissolution of the RS Assembly. "We are now facing the constitutional crisis after our President did not respect the RS Constitution, at least in two cases. I already sent a letter to the Constitutional Court of RS asking them to make a judgement about constitutional procedures adopted by the RS Government as a respond to the BP's decisions about the Interior Ministry. The preliminary confirmation says that the Government acted according to the constitution. By dissolving the parliament, the constitutional crisis would spread to BiH, since it would lack Serb deputies in the House of Peoples. We have decided to defend this Assembly," said Kalinic. He also welcomed the decision of the International Community not to interfere, since this is an internal matter of RS.

Vice president of the RS Government Aleksa Buha said that the misunderstandings appeared with the issue of the RS sovereignty in relations with the international factors. "When you can only rely on yourself, you are in a very difficult position. I think that Plavsic found herself in such a situation and it is not necessary to explain to you that the International officials, when sensing the opportunity to get by easier, will focus all their efforts and strength on that person." Buha also said that BP refused to come to Pale and work together with other state officials at least until September elections.

President from the RS in the BiH Presidency, Momcilo Krajisnik, said that 'one head is not enough to solve the problems in Brcko'. "There shouldn't be special treatment for Brcko nor Brcko can be divided from other parts of RS. The culmination of our disputes come after Sintra. I must say, that it was after Sintra that we stopped working

together. Each one of us talked to the representatives of the International community separately and each of us got information's, criticism and threats separately. The main reason for our split is Mr. Karadzic. Mr. Buha, Madame Plavsic, myself and Mr. Karadzic made an agreement with Mr. Holbrooke in which we all agreed that Mr. Karadzic will not make his candidacy for the President of the Party, that he does not appear in public and that he doesn't not do any state business. Now, what we are seeing, because we have some powerless international mediators, is a situation where they blame Karadzic for everything. When Serbs reject something, Karadzic is to blame, when there is a halt in the implementation process, again, Karadzic is to blame," said Krajisnik. He added that BP should step down if she doesn't want to shake the hand of conciliation.

Krajisnik dismissed as unconstitutional the decision of RS President to disband the RS Assembly. "The decisions must be withdrawn otherwise they can easily endanger the survival of RS," he said. If Plavsic stays in disagreement with the majority of the state officials, then she should resign, concluded Krajisnik.

The Constitutional Court sent a letter to Mr. Kalinic, informing him that the RS Government was entitled, under Article 114 Paragraph 1 of the RS Constitution, to suspend enforcement of regulations it regarded unconstitutional and illegitimate (BP's decree to suspend Kijac, CSB Chief in Mrkonjic Grad and the wording "all further instructions to above mentioned bodies from the Ministry of Interior can be given only with previous approval of the RS President").

The session of the BiH Presidency was held today in the National Museum in Sarajevo, with the presence of seven US congressmen. Momcilo Krajisnik assessed the talks as a useful opportunity to present RS attitudes, which differ a lot from those being presented in the USA in the name of the whole of BiH.

(The session of the RS Assembly stopped at 22.20 p.m. and will continue today at 10.00 a.m. The discussion will continue with the first item on the agenda, the current political situation in RS following decision of BP to dissolve parliament.)