

OHR Local News Issues, 03 July 1997

Lukavica – the CoM session – The CoM mainly discussed the conditions for signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the IMF, which is the last condition to be met for the holding of the donors' conference. Co-chair Botic said that the Foreign Trade Ministries and the Ministries of Finance of the two Entities will hold a joint meeting tomorrow at 10 hrs. for the purpose of reaching a solution. The CoM also discussed the work of the Entity governments and the Central Bank. On the question of how he comments on the possibility of another postponement of the donors' conference for September, Botic said that all options are possible, adding that he wouldn't be surprised if that happens. The head of the IMF office for BiH, Brown and the US Special Envoy Parmley also attended the session.

3:00

At the SFOR regular press conference, the OHR Spokesman Haselock informed the media about the Contact Group Conference which was held in Hague yesterday, saying that the Contact Group members confirmed the importance of implementation of the Sintra Declaration, and agreed to influence Croatia and FRY to support the implementation. The Contact Group also mentioned the importance of solving the problems with regard to war criminals and refugee return issues. 2:00

Sarajevo – The Federation Government continued its 13th session, and focused on the law on the cessation of customs privileges for former soldiers, invalids, refugees and others, which was adopted eventually. The Law will enter into force 60 days after its adoption by the Parliament. Prime minister Bicakcic stressed the importance of implementation of the QSP Laws, which will lead to signing of the stand-by arrangements by the Federation, planned for September. Rasim Kadic did not agree with the adoption of the law above, saying that its adoption will force the refugees abroad to move 'overseas', instead of returning.

4:00

Sarajevo – The fifth session of the Federation Council for Brcko – The members discussed the current situation in the town, concluding that the process of return is being carried out very slowly, and they expect from the international community to speed it up. They also noted that the Joint Multi-ethnic Council for the town was not established yet in spite of the guarantees given by the OSCE.

3:00

Mostar – the seventh Cantonal Assembly session – The MP's did not adopt the amendments to the Cantonal Constitution once more. Croat MP's blocked the session again, and underlining the issue of the status of the city, they said that SDA amendments are against the DPA. President of the Canton Ivan Bender also confirmed that Croat MP's in the Sarajevo Canton didn't adopt the amendments, and appointed the continuation of the seventh session for the third time sometime next week. Sir Martin Garrod was obviously very disappointed with the result of today's meeting, so he said: 'Let us be honest and true. Why have the leaders changed their mind from the 6th of June? Why? What is the real reason? Not a lot of nonsense we have heard in there. And are they fully behind the unified city administration of Mostar? Yes or no! Let's stop playing games. Everyone agreed on the document, it was a clear agreement at the end of the meeting, after six and a half hours'.

4:00

Sarajevo – Presidency member Zubak met the UN Special Envoy Eide and the IPTF Commissioner and discussed the establishment of the joint police. They agreed that this issue will be solved by July 6.

Reuters quoted SRT report that SFOR got the warrant to arrest war criminals Karadzic and Mladic on June 18. SRT learned from reliable military and security sources that a special unit with the SFOR HQ North in Tuzla should carry out the operation. The two of them should be arrested by July 15. In the meantime, the international community and the VRS fully support Biljana Plavsic as the legal President who is protecting the RS Constitution. This evening Plavsic signed a document on dissolution of the National Assembly in order to protect herself from the hard-liners who could use the method of outvoting and gain the majority of votes. With regard to the current situation in the RS, HR Westendorp held a meeting with Krajisnik, saying that they [the international community] 'fully support the institutions legally elected and the constitutional order and we are very much hoping that the current problems can be solved.'

3:00

Tesanjka – About 500 Bosniaks blocked the Doboj-Teslic road, protesting against the Croat decision to include Tesanjka in the new Usora Municipality.

3:00

Vares – Croat and Bosniak MP's held an eight-hour long meeting on return of refugees and human rights issues and agreed on the establishment of an information centre which should speed up the return. The Special Envoy for the Federation, Swartz-Shilling also attended the meeting.

3:00

Sarajevo – The Federation representatives signed a \$ 9,8 million contract with the EC on reconstruction of the main water pump in the city.

2:00

Summary SRT News

"Tonight's news programme will be broadcast from TV studio in Sarajevo because editors at TV Centre in Banja Luka are being pressured and blackmailed to follow instructions issued by the Office of the RS President. RS TV officials have decided to broadcast programme from TV centre in Sarajevo until further notice", said a statement read out before the prime news programme.

RS President Biljana Plavsic sent a letter to Speaker of the RS National Assembly Dragan Kalinic requesting his position with regard to dissolution of the RS Assembly to be presented in writing by 15:00 hours today.

Momcilo Krajisnik, RS President in the BH Presidency, responded to this request by writing back to President Plavsic. In this letter, Krajisnik wrote that the political crisis in the RS had deepened lately and that the announcement for dissolution of the RS Assembly would further deteriorate the situation. "First of all I would like to remind you that you have no right to dissolve the parliament for the reasons you have stated and without prior agreement of the Speaker of the Parliament and the Prime Minister. Should you make this decision alone, it will be not be considered as valid". He further reminded Ms Plavsic how she had lost her credibility after the SDS Main Board had declared its position in this matter and how she personally advocated last year that the president alone should not be making decisions on dissolution of the parliament.

Lastly, Krajisnik appealed to resolve all disputes in the parliament and warned that "the Republic of Srpska Krajina" had undergone a similar crisis before its terrible tragedy.

4'50"

Serbs in diaspora and officials of the Serb Orthodox Church appealed to the RS leadership to overcome differences and prevent "the seeds of evil planted by the international community and NATO from taking roots", maintained the report.

2'50"

Despite numerous appeals, RS President Biljana Plavsic, has decided to issue an order for dissolution of the RS Assembly. The order states that new elections for the parliament will be called on 1 September 1997. In justification of this decision, President Plavsic wrote: "I have concluded that the rule in RS is in a deep crisis to a degree that it has endangered state security and reflects in the work of public institutions. Particularly, the Interior Ministry instead of focusing on crime prevention and law enforcement issues, has organised criminal activities and maintained trading relations with the FBH without parliamentary control. The Prime Minister refuses to co-operate with the RS President while the National Assembly disregard this problem". In conclusion, Plavsic stated that only new parliamentary elections could resolve the crisis.

3'50"

SFOR officials received orders to arrest Radovan Karadzic and Gen. Ratko Mladic, informed the media, quoting sources close to military and intelligence circles in the RS. The same sources maintain that the order for arrest was issued on 18 June, two weeks after the Albright-Plavsic meeting, which was partly held behind closed doors. Three special units from the US and the UK stationed in Tuzla have been tasked to carry out the arrest on 15 July. The Office of the RS President reportedly confirmed that orders of the arrest of Karadzic and Mladic had been received.

2'00"

Pale – Momcilo Krajisnik, RS President in the BH Presidency met in separate meetings with HR Carlos Westendorp and US Special Envoy Robert Gelbard. Both meetings focused on the current political situation in the RS.

Mr. Westendorp was quoted as saying that the international community supported legally elected institutions in the RS.

Speaking about political problems in the RS, Mr. Gelbard proposed that "matters should be resolved in a constitutional manner" and insisted that Radovan Karadzic be removed from the public life. The report underlined that the US diplomat once again conditioned economic assistance to the RS.

1'50"

Dobož – VRS Chief of Staff Gen. Pero Colic stated today that the RS Army would not get involved in political disputes of the RS leadership since "it is not a military matter".

1'00"

At its emergency session held late today, the RS Government debated on RS President Biljana Plavsic's decision to dissolve the assembly. The Government concluded that this decision was in contradiction to Article 72 of the RS Constitution since Ms. Plavsic did not consult the RS National Assembly Speaker and Prime Minister. "Thus, based on Article 114 of the RS Constitution, the Government is authorised to suspend all acts deemed unconstitutional and illegal", read a statement issued after the session. However, the Constitutional court will have a final say in this matter, added the statement.

The Government also said that with her irrational acts, Ms. Plavsic had been leading the country into a constitutional crisis, and had paved the way for all those factors wishing to undermine the RS.

2'50"

The BH CoM held a session today to finalise a debate on economic laws from the Quick Start Package set as a precondition for a Donors conference. Today's debate focused on contents of the Memorandum on Understanding with the IMF. It has been ascertained that the CoM has practically completed its work.

1'00"