

OHR Local News Issues, 5 June 1997

Lukavica – Session of the CoM – the CoM did not discuss the proposals with regard to the Law on CoM. Therefore, Co-chair Silajdzic said that the session was a failure. He also said that the Serb side had changed the Agenda and he heard from international representatives that they do not accept the Law on Tariffs because it annuls the economic relations between the RS and FRY. On the other hand, Silajdzic said, the RS doesn't want to discuss and adopt the Law on CoM because the joint institutions will become weaker that way, which is in the RS interest. HR Deputy Steiner said that CoM working tempo is very slow, especially after the constructive discussions in Dubrovnik and Sintra. 'We have deadlines which expire on August 1, and I think that the CoM must now speed up its way of working.' However, the CoM discussed the opening of borders towards Croatia and preparations for the negotiations on servicing of debts with the London Club of Commercial Banks.

4:00

According to unofficial information, one of the next CoM sessions will be held on the isle of Sveti Stefan. This idea is also supported by Ambassador Steiner, BiH Press reports. But the Croat delegation is against this since FRY and BiH haven't established diplomatic relations yet. In Steiner's opinion, this isn't relevant for such a session, and this position is backed by Silajdzic who said that he didn't care where the session would take place as long as it would yield some results.

BiH is a host to the Central European Initiative Conference at the ministerial level, which will start in Sarajevo tomorrow. Ministers will discuss the reconstruction of BiH and Croatia, security situation in the Balkans, the implementation of the DPA and the Washington agreement, establishment of free market zones, etc. in order to provide better co-operation among country members of the organisation.

4:00

The Deputy of the Hercegovina-Neretva Canton Assembly, Omer Cevra sent a letter to the HR Deputy, Steiner, requesting his engagement with regard to overcoming of the crisis in the work of the Assembly and further implementation of what was agreed. After the amendments to the Cantonal Constitution were agreed, the Croat side attempted to stop the whole process at the Cantonal level in Mostar by proposing new amendments. Cevra asked Steiner to attend the Assembly session and support the adoption of amendments which were already agreed.

3:00

Steiner called for a meeting on the Mostar city administration, establishment of the joint police, and amendments to the Cantonal Constitutions, to be held on June 6. Apart from the leading politicians of the two peoples in the Federation, Izetbegovic, Zubak, and the Federation President Soljic, the Croatian Foreign Minister Granic and high ranking officials of the international community in BiH should also attend the meeting.

Sarajevo – Izetbegovic received the delegation of the Sarajevo Canton, and discussed further strengthening of the state governing system, especially with regard to fighting crime.

2:00

BH Press reports that the Head of OHR South, Sir Garrod sent a letter to the President and the Vice-president of the Federation, Soljic and Ganic, in which he asked for an explanation at the highest level with regard to a residential building located near the Hotel Ero in West Mostar that used to house the Sokol company. Sokol sold the building to Herceg-Bosna authorities in 1995, and a number of persons who have apartments in the building as legal holders of occupancy right complained recently to the HR office in Mostar that their apartments will be taken away from them by the new owners.

2:00

Representative of the HDZ MP's Club, Franjicevic said that HDZ MP's will not participate in the Federation HoR sessions until certain conditions are met, such as de-blocking of the work of the Parliament where SDA has an absolute majority and is taking advantage of it so as to avoid implementation of signed agreements.

Banja Luka – Federation President Soljic met the RS President, Plavsic, and discussed the Sintra Declaration, further implementation of the DPA, return of refugees, establishment of the economic co-operation and communications between the entities.

2:00

Reuters quoted from the new HR Carlos Westendorp's statement from the press conference held in Madrid, in which he said that the West must use pressure if it cannot persuade the key players in the Balkans to hand over the accused war criminals. He said that he will start his mission with an attempt to make the sides to do so. Those who comply with this issue will be fully supported by the international community, whereas those who don't will not be supported at all. Westendorp will demand implementation of the DPA and he will respect BiH within its borders as the country with two equal entities. 'We cannot and must not act outside of the DPA. The DPA is the only guarantee that peace will not move in the wrong direction,' Westendorp said.

3:00

Summary SRT News

Banja Luka – RS President Biljana Plavsic met with FBiH President Vladimir Soljic for the first time since their appointment to presidential offices. The talks focused on conclusions of the Sintra meeting, particularly the issues of refugees and DPs and restoration of road communications with neighboring countries. The two presidents reportedly agreed that the problem of refugees and DPs should be resolved on the principle of the right of each individual to choose the place of residence. The need for intensified economic cooperation between the two entities was also discussed.

2'50'

Pale – Momcilo Krajisnik, RS President in the BiH Presidency (as referred to by the media) held consultations with RS representatives in the BiH joint institutions. After the meeting, Slobodan Bjelic, RS deputy in the BiH Parliamentary Assembly made a statement to the effect that the meeting of the RS deputies in the BiH Parliament was convened to review all implications of the Quick Start Package. Bjelic specifically referred to the customs tariff policy as a segment of the package to be further negotiated. In that sense, he mentioned that the RS had certain obligations towards FRY under the Belgrade Agreement and claimed to be in possession of the information that at the Paris meeting, President Izetbegovic signed an agreement on a customs union with FRY. In that context, he went on, since there were some differences in tariffs, we shall have to ask the assemblies of both entities to take position in that regard. Lastly, Bjelic expressed hope that a solution would be found and a unified customs policy employed throughout BiH.

3'50"

Pale – At its session today the RS Government adopted a draft on flats and a regulation on commercial trade with FRY.

The Government has secured funding for the construction of Serb Sarajevo with the assistance of the FRY Government. Realization of Phase 1 which includes revitalization of 29 companies is almost completed and Phase 2 – construction of housing units is under way, maintained the report. The Government refuted speculations that the territory of Serb Sarajevo would be exchanged for some other territories, qualifying such allegations as malicious propaganda fabrications.

4'00"

Lukavica – At today's session of the BiH CoM, not much progress was made since ministers failed to agree on priorities within their scope of work. During the session, most attention was paid to the border crossings with Croatia. After the meeting, Co-chair Boro Bosic stated that the BiH Foreign Ministry was instructed to contact the relevant authorities in Croatia in order to finalize the agreement on border crossings. The second part of the session was dedicated to preparations for the London Club meeting. It was agreed that a platform for this meeting should be prepared for review at the next session on Tuesday, 12 June. At this session, a CoM delegation will be selected to participate in the talks on BiH external debt to be held in London from 17-20 June.

3'00"

Moscow – In the presence of a large number of Russian officials and dignitaries, the RS "Foreign" Minister Aleksa Buha officially opened the RS Centre.

1'00"