

OHR Local News Issues, 16 April 1997

Sarajevo – CoM meeting at the OHR – Members of the CoM were supposed to meet with the OHR expert team, IMF, and the US Treasury to discuss the joint strategy of the Council with regard to servicing of the BH external debt, but the Serb members notified the Council that they will not attend the meeting only ten minutes before the start. The meeting was held after all, but without any specific results. Silajdzic stated that this is one concrete issue which requires participation of all CoM members and expressed his hope that this issue will not cause damages to the overall situation. US experts said that debts need to be serviced so that new credits could be received.

3:00

Sarajevo – representatives of the RS did show up though at the meeting with Federation representatives at the US Embassy, with mediation of Robert Beecroft. The items on the agenda were, among other things, joint projects, protocol on trade between the entities, and the security situation. The delegations were headed by the respective prime ministers, Klicakovic and Bicakcic. Concrete agreements were made with regard to energy, mining and industry. Apart from two other joint ventures, it was agreed that the two entities should jointly run a metallurgy plant, the RS providing the raw materials, and the Federation processing them. Respective ministers were tasked with preparing all the necessary plans by the end of April. Bicakcic said that May would probably see re-establishment of the railroad.

4:00

Sarajevo – Federation HoR session – Expected adoption of the main laws, Law on Purchase of Apartments, Draft Law on Changing of Municipality Borders, and Amendments to the Federation Constitution, was postponed for the next session, and the adoption of the last two was delayed because the materials were not submitted to the MPs on time. Ambassador Steiner addressed the Parliament and urged it to discuss the amendments because this is in the general interest, but it was decided that a quorum was not established.

4:00

Sadako Ogatha's visit to Brcko – at the press conference held at Supervisor Farrand's office, she said that this is the year of return of refugees and displaced persons. She said that the situation throughout the country is returning to normalcy and she backed this up by the example of Gornji Vakuf, where the authorities of both Federation partners are gradually allowing the return of minorities.

3:00

General Assembly of the Association of Refugees and Displaced Persons in Tuzla – the Assembly proposed some concrete steps in order to help this category of population which is in a more than difficult situation, but these cannot be taken unless the international community fulfils its obligations from Dayton, and the local authorities should also help in the process of return to greater extent than so far.

3:00

Vitez – 4th anniversary of the Ahmici massacre of Bosniaks by the HVO – the Central Bosnian Canton authorities, along with SDA representatives and Federation Vice-president Ejup Ganic, came to Vitez today to mark the anniversary of the massacre, and the former residents of Ahmici were able to visit the graves of their dearest in the destroyed village only after the intervention of Ganic with the Croat authorities. Ganic stressed the necessity of building a monument in the village so that this crime would not be forgotten and never happen again.

3:00

With regard to Ambassador Steiner's letter to Klicakovic, demanding the presence of Federation lawyers in the role of defenders at the Srebrenica Seven trial which is to begin tomorrow, Klicakovic said that he ordered the respective RS ministry to provide the Ambassador with an answer by the end of the day.

3:00

Summary SRT News

RS President Biljana Plavsic, who is currently touring east Herzegovina, visited Gacko today and discussed economic issues with local officials. The RS President visited a thermo-power plant Gacko, which is in a final stage of restoration and a secondary school complex. She expressed her optimism in regard to the restoration of economy and industry in the region.

1'50"

RS PM Gojko Kljickovic met with FBiH PM Edhem Bicakcic in "the Muslim part of Sarajevo" today. The collocutors discussed commerce and trade between the two entities, with a special emphasis on the control of commodities' transactions in order to improve collection of budget revenues. It was agreed to introduce a strict regime of control of commodities in transaction. Relevant ministries were tasked to prepare a protocol on commercial transactions to be endorsed at the next meeting designated for the beginning of May. PM Kljickovic commented on the meeting in the following way: "We talked about a number of projects where both entities could get into arrangements with the World Bank, the IMF or similar institutions. Mainly in the food processing industry, crude oil refinement, metal industry etc" He added that the restoration of main railway lines was also discussed. FBiH PM Bicakcic told the press that FoM between the two entities was on the agenda as well and that it was agreed that greater FoM should be provided for citizens visiting cemeteries in the RS and the FBiH. In addition, the two PMs reached an agreement on modalities for payment of the outstanding bill for gas consumption.

5'00"

The RS does not recognize the authority of the ICTY. However, RS officials are prepared to submit authentic documentation to the Hague Tribunal, clearly proving that the RS leadership had taken all measures to prevent war crimes. The report quoted a Dutch paper which published parts of this documentation, particularly orders issued by Radovan Karadzic from May 1992 instructing the army and police to observe the Geneva conventions.

3'00"

RS Defense Minister Milan Ninkovic and Chief of Staff of the RS Army Gen. Pero Colic received in Pale today military attaches from Slovenia, Turkey, France, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria and the USA.

Minister Ninkovic and Gen. Colic briefed their guests on the defense system of the RS.

2'00"

The Defense Minister, Gen. Colic and Deputy Foreign Minister Radomir Lukic held a meeting in Pale today with OSCE Special Envoy Gen. Billac Eide. The talks focused on the planned reduction of armament in the RS. After the meeting, Minister Lukic told the press that RS representatives reminded the OSCE official that "the process of reduction of armament is not independent from overall political developments in the region". The RS representatives also insisted that the quantities of weapons provided for FBiH Army within the program Train and Equip be included in the designated limits.

4'00"