

OHR Local News Issues, 13 April 1997

While flying over BiH territory, Pope John II sent a cable to Alija Izetbegovic. Greeting him, he said that he is keeping in mind all Presidency members and BiH people and will pray to God to give them a just peace, reciprocal respecting, equality, respecting of rights and responsibilities of each person individually and of each people.

1'30"

A solemn fare well was organised for Pope after his two days visit to Sarajevo. First Alija Izetbegovic and then Kresimir Zubak addressed Pope at the Sarajevo airport. Pope said that his visit of Sarajevo represented an important pilgrimage for him and pointed out that he many times tried to draw attention of the International Community in order to end the conflict which was destroying your country. Never more a war, he exclaimed and said that it is not only warning but a prayer.

2'00"

Kresimir Zubak addressed Pope at the airport, in the name of the Presidency saying that the visit of the head of the Catholic Church, but also an extraordinary man will be written in the history of our country, but also in the hearts of its citizens honoured that BiH has been on the road of peace of the Holy Father.

2'00"

Early this morning Pope met with Alija Izetbegovic, Presidency President and the Presidency members Kresimir Zubak and Momcilo Krajisnik. The highest BiH and Federation officials and the representatives of the Catholic Clergy attended the reception. Izetbegovic addressed the Pope with the warm words saying that this is a big day for our country and its people. He also informed Pope that this country has many problems: material and psychological ones – problems of confidence among peoples, refugee return and country's reconstruction.

1'30"

The central event during the Pope's visit in Sarajevo was a holy mass which the Pope served at the stadium Kosevo before more than 40 thousand believers. The atmosphere at the stadium could be shortly expressed in two words: cheerfulness and delight for having met a man whose thoughts were turned to BiH in its most difficult days. Thousands of congregations but also people of the other confessions came to Kosevo to greet the tireless peace maker and proven friend of BiH. We cannot ever forget that Sarajevo became a sign for suffering in the whole Europe. Europe took part in this suffering as a witness, but we have to put a question if it has been always a responsible witness.

3'00"

Pope John II met representatives of the religious communities in BiH, called on their estimation of each other and appealed on their responsibility to raise a prophetic voice against violation of all kinds, injustice and evil, calling them by the proper name and not letting any earth power threaten them while doing it.

1'30"

The Pope wished to plant three trees of peace in Sarajevo, Mostar and Banja Luka as a sign of hope that a war will never be repeated. Pope's Nuntio, Francesco Monterezzi together with Sarajevo Canton Governor, Midhat Haracic, planted a Pope's tree in the park opposite to the Presidency building.

1'00"

On the occasion of the Pope's visit, a Croatian delegation headed by Mate Granic, Foreign Minister met with Izetbegovic and other BiH and Federation Officials. Jadranko Prlic, BiH Foreign Minister announced a meeting between Izetbegovic and Tudjman, soon to deal with a kind of an inventory of the previously signed agreements and their realisation. Croatia attaches a strategic importance to the relations with BiH and supports Federation, i.e. the integral Dayton Accord, Granic said.

3'00"

Summary SRT News

Sarajevo – Krajisnik's meeting with the Pope – Krajisnik brought a message from Serbs to the Pope, that the Pope should keep in mind that a harsh civil war had been fought here and the priority and necessity for the Serbs is to have reconciliation and strengthening of the peace. BH Presidency member said that it is for the benefit of no one to have a historical dispute in this region same as in the Middle East, and the peoples here should leave next to each other [i.e. not together] if this is necessary for having a permanent peace. 'We shouldn't give priority to politics but to peace.' He said everything is politics so this visit will have a political dimension and political consequences because the Pope came here on both as a religious leader and a statesman. 'The meeting was the sign of good will from the Serbs and their respect of the Catholic church so that the Serb religious officials would be respected in the same way.'

3:00

Banja Luka – For the purpose of promoting their book, 'Eulogy of the Serbs', its authors, eight writers and intellectuals from France, visited RS Vice-president Mirjanic. They said that the Serbs should bear the title of winners of the recent war, because they had practically fought against the whole world. The authors of the book have already published 'The truth about the Serbs' in France during the war.

2:00

Croatia – Elections – The international representatives announced that the elections might be prolonged due to a large number of irregularities that appeared today. When asked whether he would be satisfied with such elections in his own country, US Ambassador to Croatia Galbraith said that he certainly wouldn't, but he thought it even worse if they were to be annulled.

7:00

World News:

Sarajevo – The world reports showed scepticism regarding the use of Pope's visit to the city which the Muslims want to ethnically cleanse, as was confirmed in Cardinal Puljic's interview given to the Die Welt. Corriere de la Sera said that it wasn't a good sign that the BH President was wearing a military beret at the welcoming ceremony at the airport. Yesterday the BH Federal police arrested several members of a Islamic fundamentalist terrorist group which had been planning to assassinate the Pope.

3:00