

OHR Local News Issues, 9 April 1997

Central Bosnian Canton – muster of the joint police forces is expected tomorrow. Sarajevo – President Izetbegovic received the national delegation from Indonesia, headed by the national Muslim religious leader and the Indonesian Ambassador to BiH. President Izetbegovic's Council – The Council has 10 members, Bosniak politicians and intellectuals, including Haris Silajdzic, Ejup Ganic, and Edhem Bicakcic. Although this form of an advisory body for the President may be a novelty in this region, it is quite a common practice in countries with developed democracy, therefore the large attention that the media drew to this issue is unnecessary. Mirza Hajric said for BiHTV that Bosnia and Herzegovina has now reached a very sensitive point in implementation of DPA, and this body was established in order to provide the best advisory services for Izetbegovic before he makes decisions within the BiH Presidency that will be crucial for the future of the country. The sessions of the Council shall be held on a regular basis, every fortnight, with extraordinary sessions if necessary.

4:00

Herzegovina-Neretva Canton – Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy, Robert Beecroft, held a number of talks with the highest officials of the Canton. Becroft discussed strengthening of joint police forces with the Canton Ministry of Interior, which will be included in the report that he will submit to US Special Envoy, Kornblum, who is coming for a farewell visit to Sarajevo next week. Beecroft said that the deadline for establishment of joint police by April 15 must be respected, and that it won't be represent a problem for the Central District police, although it might require a couple of weeks more on the Canton level, "but again, that depends on having the government up and running again".

4:00

Odzak – Vice-president of the Federation Ganic visited the Bosnian Posavina Canton, where he said that it is good that the two "pockets" of that Canton, which "can hardly breathe", are maintaining firm economic and transport ties with the neighbouring Croatia, although this cannot be positive in the long-term because this is a country fighting for survival and might lose everything it has this way.

4:00

Doboj and Tesanj – Although the Croats and Bosniaks of that area fought side by side against the aggressor during the war, and still live together without any conflicts in peacetime, now there is an initiative by the Croat (HDZ) leadership to have two municipalities carved along ethnic lines, Doboj Jug (Bosniak) and Usora (Croat). HDZ says that they only want what is provided for them in the Constitutions of the Federation and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, this kind of administrative division was agreed in principle, but the only problem that remains now is the municipality borders, because the Croats want one third of Tesanj municipality for Usora. This is unacceptable for Bosniaks, because they do not want to bargain for territories as the Croats are proposing.

4:00

UBSD press conference in Tuzla – The party strongly opposes any creation of municipalities along ethnic lines in the Tuzla region, as was attempted by carrying out of a referendum for setting up of the Gornja Tuzla municipality. UBSD does not oppose the idea of the advisory council of President Izetbegovic, but feels that members of other parties should have been included in it, even if they would have been all Bosniaks.

1:00

Alexander Ivanko said that IPTF will increase its presence on the Gorazde road after the recent attack on the bus coming from Sarajevo Herald Tribune article – According to RS officials, Radovan Karadzic is making millions of US Dollars by monopolizing the RS market with his import company, Centrex, which he runs together with Krajisnik. He has the exclusive right to sell gasoline, cigarettes, and numerous other articles, completely free of customs and tax fees. The company enjoys full protection of the police and SDS. In 1996, together with the Ministry of Interior, Karadzic formed another company, Selt-Impex, which operates under a different name in Cyprus and, apart from some small-scale import businesses, its main purpose is providing additional salaries for employees of that Ministry, who are still receiving their salaries from FRY Government. The one who feels the most jeopardised by this racket is Biljana Plavsic, because Karadzic and Krajisnik use this as an instrument to gain loyalty from other officials. The international donors community is therefore reluctant to assist RS because it feels that RS is the sole estate of two persons.

Summary SRT News

RS President Biljana Plavsic held talks with OSCE Political Director Vladimir Kuznetso Banja Luka today. The talks focused on the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, particularly the segments related to human rights and the process of democratization. Commenting on the meeting, President Plavsic told the press that by its basic orientation, the SDS was a democratic party and that democratization of the RS was in the best interest of Serb people who expected their leadership to enhance this process. Thus, this condition imposed by the international community would not be difficult to fulfill. However, Plavsic expressed concerns about the decision of the OSCE not to hold municipal elections in Brcko at the same time as everywhere else in the RS and the BiH Federation.

8'00"

Mr. Kuznetsov emphasised that next years elections will be held at all levels throughout BiH and that SFOR troops would withdraw in July next year. A permanent OSCE commission should be established in BiH to organize elections, pointed out the OSCE Political Director, who warned that the deadlines for the implementation of the provisions of the Dayton Agreement had not yet been met, especially in the parts related to human rights and democratization.

6'00"

RS President Biljana Plavsic congratulated lyricist Matija Beckovic, on receiving the Dacic prize for literature. The report quoted extensively Plavsic's letter, in which she apologized for not being able to attend the award ceremony.

1'00"

The RS Government appealed to all state institutions, companies and citizens to use the national symbols-flag, coat of arms and hymn as prescribed by the Bill on use of national insignia and the official language. The Government's statement reminded that the adherence to the proscribed law was a "patriotic duty" and criticized its frequent disregard.

1'50"

Today in Bijeljina, the Chief of Staff of the VRS Army Gen. Colic met with the SFOR Deputy Commander Gen. Cordy-Simpson to discuss VRS cooperation with the international troops. They agreed that the cooperation was satisfactory. The stabilization of the situation in Brcko and de-mining projects were also on the agenda.

3'00"

The ideal replacement for Carl Bildt whose resignation is expected soon would be Steiner, maintained a report quoting German press. Until recently, Steiner's appointment was practically fait accompli, continued the same report, but the US Administration interfered because it "has become irritated with Steiner's neutral stance towards political developments".

1'00"

On the eve of the September municipal elections, the West has launched a campaign aimed at splitting the RS leadership into several factions. Following a strategy prepared for the last year's election, this is supposed to weaken the Serb electorate. Organizations such as the EC and the Helsinki Commission for Human Rights, who closely cooperate with the OSCE, have been trying to cause division into two opposed factions, weakening the national block and leading to mixed coalitions. In effect, this would undermine the Serb national unity and foster a unitary state.

2'00"