

OHR Local News Issues, 20 February 1997

Alija Izetbegovic, BiH Presidency President received James Pardew, Special American President's Envoy for military stabilization on the Balkans. Present were: Kresimir Zubak, Federation President, Defense Minister, Anto Jelavic and his Deputy Sakib Mahmuljin, and Federal Army Commander, Rasim Delic and his Deputy, Zivko Budimir,. No information of this meeting was received till the beginning of the Central News.

1'00"

BiH CoM accepted its Rules of Procedure at the meeting held in Sarajevo today which was attended by the HR Carl Bildt. CoM discussed also the "Quick Start Package" of draft laws – on which a certain step forward was achieved, but it is still suffering some significant differences among the parties. The Serb side deems that entities should pass their own laws on the respective topics and the Federation side insists on BiH CoM dealing with them.

2'00"

A three hour meeting of the BiH Federation Forum was held on the ministerial level, without the presence of Federation President Kresimir Zubak and his Deputy Ejup Ganic, behind closed doors in the American Embassy, Sarajevo. According to its conclusions the Federation gives the impression of providing declarative promises and is heading towards a concrete carrying out of tasks. Izudin Kapetanovic, Minister for Energy, talked about the session's agenda.

2'30"

Initiated by the Federation Forum, a meeting on Electronic Media will be held in the OHR tomorrow.

0'30"

Alex Ivanko told a Press Conference today that the IPTF report on the 10 February incident in Mostar needs several days to be completed because some details have to be confirmed and other material translated. This was the reason why the Federation Forum didn't discuss the issue.

1'00"

The UN Special Envoy for Human Rights, Elisabeth Rehn talked in Mostar today with Sir Martin Garrod, the HR Envoy, and the Mayor of Mostar, Ivan Prskalo and his Deputy Safet Orucevic. She paid a visit to both Mostar Mufti, Seid Smajkic, who is recovering after being injured on the 10 February, and to Bishop Ratko Peric. She insisted on an investigation and punishment of the culprits for the incident on 10 February in Mostar, and on return of refugees to their homes.

1'30"

The US suggested a new creative plan of armed powers for Brcko which according to a Tribunal decision will be under international control, informs ONASA quoting AFP. Washington will take over the initiative to set up UN police powers who will help the International Monitors in Brcko. They will be armed and authorized to use power, reads the information.

1'30"

On demand of the British Embassy to BiH, Charles Crawford, the British Ambassador made a statement explaining the stance of Great Britain toward several BiH issues which the Media have been interpreting inadequately. One of them is Brcko. It is disappointing to hear and read that my country wishes to award Brcko to RS, he said among other things.

1'00"

An unusual and interesting story of Turko Ahmetovic living as a caveman of the modern times, was broadcast in a lengthy report. Turko is waiting to leave a cave near ZOS when he hears on his radio that Federal police have entered Brcko.

2'00"

SDA told a Press Conference that the International Community is fed up with false excuses and weak reasons for not canceling Herceg-Bosna and implementation of election results in Mostar.

2'00

Summary SRT News

London – the RS delegation headed by parliament speaker Kalinic held a meeting with Lord Carrington. The Discussion was about the Dayton BiH, relations between the RS and Federation, and the Federal partners, and the Brcko arbitrage decision. Lord Carrington expressed his position regarding the international community, saying that the international community has never recognised the RS arguments. He said that he did not find support in the USA policy either, and that he doubts the international community's objectivity. Therefore, he frequently had conflicts with them. The RS delegation visited the British parliament building, and talked with representatives of the Labour and Conservative parties. The Delegation is heading back to the RS tomorrow.

3:00

Pale – the Government session – ministers discussed the RS budget policy, and concluded that the state must have full control over the goods and money operations.

1:00

Sarajevo – CoM session – the ministers finally signed the Rules of Procedure, the final version adopted at the last session. HR Bildt also attended the session. The ministers could not reach an agreement on the QSP which must be adopted before the donors conference can be held. This time, there were principle differences with regard to privatisation and property relations. The RS position was that these problems should be solved on the Entity, and not on the Union level, which was the Muslim idea. They began discussion on the issues of corporation, external debt servicing, measures for reduction of the inter entity criminal, and custom policy and tariffs.

3:00

Pale – RS Minister of Refugees Vladusic talked with UN liaison officer Geoffrey Beaumont with regard to amendments of the Refugees and Displaced Persons Law. Vladusic introduced Mr. Beaumont to the amendments of the Usage of Abandoned Property Law which will be discussed at one of the RS Government sessions. Amendments to the Laws were made in accordance with the DPA and for improvement of living conditions of refugees in the RS. They also discussed problems of the Serbs from Eastern Slavonia, and concluded that those Serbs will come and settle in the RS if their rights are not respected in accordance with the Erdut Agreement.

2:00

Banja Luka – return of refugees – commentary – SRT criticised the Banja Luka authorities because they do not allow refugees from other parts of former BiH to settle there. SRT has information on 10000 abandon apartments in the Banja Luka municipality. However, the local authorities reported only about 50 apartments as abandoned, whereas others were taken by certain people who now have four and more apartments each. On the other hand, refugees who want to live in Banja Luka have to pay 600 DM/month for the apartment.

3:00

Banja Luka – the proceeding against Alija Izetbegovic continued with witnesses testifying at the High Court. Among several witnesses who testified today, SRT focused on a 16-year-old young boy who was captured by Muslim soldiers in Kotor Varos. He was taken to a prison, and tortured until he was released with the help of ICRC. He said that he was beaten up many times [in the prison] and even made to beat up other prisoners with sticks. The other witness [also tortured in the Muslim prison] said that he was allowed to see his parents the day after they were massacred. He could not recognise his mother because she was tortured before she died. 'They took her eyes out, cut off her ears, and fingers...', he said. All witnesses who testified today, found Izetbegovic guilty of crimes against humanity.

4:00