

OHR Local News Issues, 14 February 1997

Brcko decision – Brcko will go under international control, whereas the final decision will be made in March next year. BiH TV read all the rules from the arbitration decision which should be followed by both parties (Annex 2). BiH TV shows pictures from Rome and emphasises arbiter Owen's words that Brcko will have a special status like Washington DC.

In Sarajevo, President Izetbegovic met US special Envoy Kornblum, HR Bildt and members of the Contact Group. Co-chair Silajdzic, vice-president of the Federation Ganic, and Federation legal experts for the arbitration attended the meeting. After the meeting they gave brief statements. Izetbegovic pointed out good and bad sides of the decision saying that this was not a fair decision, but a step towards the justice. Kornblum asked the international community and the Contact Group to decrease tensions with regard to this issue. HR Bildt said that the first meeting of the Steering Board for implementation of the decision will be held in Brussels on Wednesday. He emphasised three important issues in relation to this: freedom of movement, return of refugees and local elections, as well as implementation of the elections decisions. Ganic said that both the Federation and the Serbs will build the town together. HR deputy Steiner said that it is in the interest of both sides to fully co-operate with the newly established institution because the final decision depend on their co-operation. He also said that it is very important for the people to accept this decision with dignity and stay calm.

10000 people gathered at the protest meeting Brcko Brcacima (Brcko to Brcko people). Brcko people think that this interim decision is in favour of the Federation side. They hope that after they have east and west Mostar, they would not have to handle with north Mostar too.

15:00

Mostar – SFOR reports that there was use of fire weapons near the line of separation. The Croat police set up an illegal check point. IPTF said that they check IDs of people who pass from one part of Mostar to the other, from hotel Mostar to Spanish square. SFOR's helicopters have been flying over Mostar for whole day. When asked why the return of evicted Bosniak families to west Mostar was stopped, the SFOR said that it is because of the present situation, without giving any further explanations. Deputy Mostar mayor Orucevic met chief of the HR regional office Sir Martin Garrod and requested from SFOR and IPTF to continue with a strong patrolling and presence in the city in order to keep the peace. Federation Interior minister Zilic decided to cancel the curfew in Mostar because the police can guarantee safety to their citizens.

5:00

Sarajevo – with regard to the announcement that the Donors Conference, which was supposed to be held on March 4, was postponed because BiH hasn't complied with the DPA, Foreign Trade Minister Muratovic said that this decision is not logical, but mans a punishment to all BiH citizens. He said that the RS is the one that obstructs the agreements, and the Federation shouldn't be punished because of that. 1:00

Summary SRT News

According to the decision made by the Arbitration commission for the IEBL in Brcko area, announced by Roberts Owen today in Rome, Brcko remains a part of RS. Owen said the situation will remain changeless for another year. In the meantime, parties can submit more proofs for a decision to be revoked by the Arbitration commission. One year, a period by the end of March of 1998 was set up for RS, the Federation and the joint institutions to build and strengthen authority bodies. The HR Carl Bildt asked USA to help finding and naming the HR deputy, to be sited in Brcko and to oversee the implementation of the DPA for one year.

1,5 min

The decision of the Arbitration commission was the main theme in the talks between president from RS in the BIH presidency Momcilo Krajisnik, Speaker of the RS Assembly Dragan Kalinic, Co-chairman of the BIH CoM Boro Botic and the US special envoy for Balkans John Kornblum, the HR Carl Bildt and the members of the Contact group.

/Pale/

Momcilo Krajisnik stated afterwards that Kornblum and members of the contact group informed the RS representatives with the global and prevalent judgments of the arbitration. After the RS delegation that participated in the process of the Arbitration is back and after they present their views, the highest state bodies will make an evaluation as well.

- “What I can say now is that an interim tension was present here during the arbitration process. We don’t know whether we have reduced this tension, let’s believe we have. And the message must be, whatever comes as an obligation for the implementation must be considered calmly and should be implemented. I think that it would be wrong for anybody to feel as a winner or a loser. We must believe that the International community will respect the equality of the two entities and three peoples, that the economic aid not only for Brcko but specially for Brcko will reduce tensions, establish a better co-operation and completely eliminate the consequences of the war. In this hope, with the trust we must have in the members of the Contact group, we believe we shall find the best and clear solution, which will forever eliminate a potential focus of war in BIH. We do not need it, and we can take Mostar as an example. I wish to express our gratitude for all the efforts made and we commit ourselves to objectives and synchronize the situation in order to avoid any incident,” said Krajisnik.
- John Kornblum: “The message was not to discuss the details of the decision, that is Mr. Owen’s responsibility, but to stress the commitments of our countries, together with Mr. Bildt, to implement both spirit and letter of what Mr. Owen has decided. The spirit of Mr. Owen’s decision is that there should be no winners or losers, that there should be equal treatment for the rights of everyone and that there should be a process based on the full implementation of the DPA, which makes Brcko an example of co-operation rather than confrontation. The letter of Mr. Owen’s decision is to establish an implementation structure which will make possible the much improves implementation of the DPA, and by so doing to establish conditions which can truly build co-operation in this region.”
- HR Carl Bildt emphasized that the International community will insist on the implementation of the DPA and of the decision made by the main arbiter for Brcko, for which representatives of RS and the Federation obliged themselves to embrace it.

10 min

In Brcko, a conventional day. Previously scheduled meeting of some resource ministers of the RS government with business executives took place. In town itself, no special comments were made nor were they expected.

2 min

Reactions: In the opposition circles in Belgrade, the decision invited no excitement or surprise. Official Belgrade on the other hand, made no comments at all. The spokesman of the Democratic party Slobodan Vuksanovic estimated that the decision is good since Brcko is of vital importance for RS. Democratic party of Serbia believes that the International community did not have enough strength to esteem arguments of RS in regard to Brcko and in that way permanently solve the problem of this city.

6 min