

OHR Local News Issues, 13 February 1997

Brcko – President Izetbegovic talked by phone with US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright this evening and then met HR Bildt who came back to Sarajevo. It seems that there have been some changes regarding the final decision because of the Society Brcko Bracima (Brcko to Brcko people) requests. A month ago, on Jan. 14, Izetbegovic sent a letter to the Contact Group announcing his resignation, if Brcko solution would not be in favour of BiH Federation. He also assumed that Silajdzic, Bicakcic, Ganic and others would also resign. If the international community decides to give Brcko to Serbs it will do it with premeditation. "I do not know who could be able to explain this to our people after all they have been through." Izetbegovic sent letters to Albright yesterday and to Bonn today, via German Ambassador to BiH.

According to BiH TV reporter from Washington, BiH arbiter Cazim Sadikovic announced positive turn of events regarding Brcko issue. He said that BiH made a list of disputable issues important to the official Sarajevo which were finally taken into consideration. Washington Post reports that the status quo will be preserved even if official Sarajevo regain the town. Brcko should be, according W. Post, under the international community protectorate for another year, supervised by HR Bildt special envoy. After that period the Brcko issue will be revised.

Several thousands of Brcko people gathered in Brcko suburbs under Federation control, ready to return to the town. SFOR did not stop them. People are impatient. They cannot believe that the whole world recognised beastly acts against Bosniaks. One of them said that USA can stay in Brcko for 10 years, but as soon as they go away he will return... this is yet another international community farce.

20:00

Sarajevo – Vice president of the BiH Federation Ganic came back from Germany where he tried to stress the importance of Brcko for BiH Federation. He said that if decision based on democracy is not made, they (BiH authorities) will not co-operate with the world anymore. This is the choice between Karadzic and people who want to return. USA came to Bosnia after 200-300 thousand people gave their lives for this country and made enormously big profit out of this. "We have paid very high price. Should we put everything back to the beginning."

2:00

Tuzla – Canton Ministry of Interior meeting – in order to prevent any possible terror in Brcko region (TV BiH learns from Tuzla police that Arkan's units are in the ZOS) Federal police, SFOR and IPTF increased their patrols in the region.

2:00

Mostar – last night 6 shots were fired from west Mostar to the east side, whereas another four Bosniak families were expelled, despite from the agreement reached yesterday in Sarajevo, Federal police reports. The programme of return of Bosniak families recently evicted from west part of the city was suddenly stopped. SFOR and IPTF did not give any comments. Only one out of 12 items agreed at the meeting in Sarajevo was implemented: restoration of the telephone lines between the sides. Helsinki Committee for Human Rights condemned violence in Mostar, especially the Croat authorities which denied that Croat police took part in killing and injuring people. They requested detention of the responsible for the incident. Reisu-l-ulema of the Islam Community, Mustafa Effendi Ceric said that he thought justice and love shall overcome injustice and hatred in Mostar.

4:00

Sarajevo – Co-chair Silajdzic and Foreign Trade minister Muratovic met Governor of the Central Bank for BiH Mr. Brown, and talked about RS obstruction of establishing of Central Bank and joint BiH currency.

1:00

Sarajevo – Mr. Tilmann Zuilch, Society of Jeopardised people chairman, held a press conference explaining that the international community is partially responsible for the genocide in BiH because it equalised all three sides in the BiH war, instead of telling the truth about the aggression against BiH by FRY. He was also talking about total destruction of Islamic and partially Catholic culture in BiH.

2:00

Summary SRT News and SRNA reports

BRCKO – The chief of the General Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska (GS VRS), brigadier-general Pero Colic, expressed his belief that even after a final decision of the Arbitration Commission is made peace will be preserved in the area of Brcko. “I do not want to interfere in political affairs, but SFOR guaranteed that it will, regardless of the arbitration’s decision, preserve peace and I do believe in it”, concluded the commander of the General Staff of the VRS.

BRCKO – The RS deputy minister of foreign affairs, brigadier-general Milenko Karisik, warned that the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MUP) and the City Assembly of Brcko have undertaken all measures to prevent any incidents in the area, regardless of tomorrow’s decision by the Arbitration Commission. “SFOR and IPTF allowed the reinforced measures to Serb police, and in the interest of RS is that no incidents, mass gatherings, protests and similar occurrences take place there, while the MUP will do its utmost to prevent all activities that might jeopardise peace”, said Karisik.

BRCKO – At a session held in Brcko, the RS Government considered an initiative for creating conditions for the realisation of the rights of war veterans. After they got acquainted with the documents which were sent to the Council of Ministers of the Dayton BiH, the Government members resolved a series of staff problems. The ministers also used their visit to Brcko so to check the extent of the realisation of the previous governmental decisions on the housing of refugees and displaced persons, the repair of houses and the supply of suburban parts of Brcko with electricity.

VUKOVAR – The leadership of the Serb Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srem District warned that the forcing of the Serbs to participate at the elections under the current conditions represents a blatant violation of the Erdut agreement, and is making the elections to be double irregular. “The elections are irregular, for 600,000 Serbs, who were the constitutive people in Croatia until recently, can not participate at the same”, this was concluded at a meeting of the district leadership and non-governmental organisations held in Vukovar, which was presided over by the District head, Goran Hadzic. It was warned that even by a division of the District and manipulations of citizenship certifications by the Croatian authorities, the elections become a strong means for the ethnic cleansing of the remaining Serb population.

BELGRADE – The president of the Serbian Radical Party (SRS), Vojislav Seselj, stated in Belgrade that the radicals are asking for a new local elections in Serbia, which would be held along with the regular republic and presidential elections during the year. “That is the only rational solution for the extremely irregular situation provoked after the legal order of Serbia and FR Yugoslavia was violated by the passing of a special law on recognition of the local election results”, explained Seselj at a press conference.

BELGRADE – Demonstrations in Serbia will be organised all until it is seen how a special law on recognition of the local election results is enforced and whether it will be manipulated with in any kind, stated the head of the Citizens’ Alliance of Serbia, Vesna Pesic. She stressed that ‘in the event that the Socialist Party of Serbia fully recognises the November 17 election results, the Zajedno [Together] coalition would have yet to fight for democratic changes such as freedom of expressing and unblock of media are.

BELGRADE – The Association for help to refugees and exiles in FR Yugoslavia condemned a statement given by the president of the Serbia Assembly, Dragan Tomic, for the Hungarian Radio, saying that refugees are ‘a militant core of the protests in Serbia. An open letter sent to Tomic points out that such a statement about refugees and exiles is “shameful, dangerous and unacceptable”.