OHR BiH TV News Summary, 18 Dec. 1997

18 December 97, 19:30

SFOR arrested two indicted war criminals Vlatko Kupreskic and Anto Furundzija in the area of British SFOR troops, nearby Vitez. Furundzija surrendered peacefully, while Kupreskic resisted with automatic weapon and was wounded during the action. SFOR spokesman, Clark said that Kupreskic is in stable condition and received proper medical care, and will be transported to the Hague. UN spokesman Ivanko said that Kupreskic was indicted in November 1995, of severe violation of the Regulations and Customs of War, and murders and arrest of civilians in several villages near Vitez in April 1993. Furundzija was a member of the HVO special unit 'Jokers', and was present when two prisoners were interrogated in a HVO base when one was raped and the other beaten. Furundzija was indicted of the Human Rights Convention violation. The wider area around two villages in Vitez municipality is being blocked by SFOR troops, while members of the Patriot War Veterans' Association appealed on the people to protest, and blocked the M-5 road Sarajevo – Travnik.
3:00

NATO Secretary General, Solana asked from the Croatian President Tudjman to use his influence in order to prevent possible retaliations after the arrest of Kupreskic and Furundzija, because the action was not aimed against the Croat people in global.

SFOR Commander Shinseki addressed a letter to Krajisnik and said that the action of arrest has commenced. I ask from you to do everything to extradite the indicted to the Hague, said Shinseki.

US President Clinton announced that the troops will remain in Bosnia after their mandate expires in June next year. Clinton said that withdrawal of the troops might occur when it is determined that the joint institutions are functioning without the troops presence, that the political parties gave in the control over the media, whether the local police is ready to take over its assignments, and if the military forces are structured upon the democratic criteria. Clinton also said that the peace implementation is possible even if some of war criminals were not extradited to the Hague, explaining that it would be the case if they would not have any political influence in the state. Clinton added that the division of Bosnia is not an alternative and that it would probably cause another war.
2:30

The Federation President Soljic and Presidency member Zubak addressed a protest letter to the High international officers in BiH, the members of the Contact Group, the Pope's Nuncios Monsignor Monterisi, and to the Cardinal Puljic, on this morning's arrest of Kupreskic. The letter says: We, Croat officials in the bodies of BiH are addressing to you on the violent arrest of Vlatko Kupreskic. The letter says that the Croats in BiH are supporting the work of ICTY and SFOR mandate, as long as it is equally applied on all sides, including, of course, crimes over Croats in BiH. We wish to warn that this is yet another humiliation of BiH Croats, since only the number of Croats in the Hague is increasing. The Croat representatives expressed their dissatisfaction with the way the action was carried out, and that is not by chance that the action was carried out just before the great Catholic holiday – Christmas. This is another attack to the dignity of Croat people and their experience of Christmas as a holiday of family peace.
5:00

Former OSCE Ambassador Frowick said that the progress made in

BiH in the past two years is higher than anyone could have expected. Frowick also said that one of the essential matters of the peace and reconciliation process is arrest of war criminals, especially Karadzic, who still have a strong influence on the political events in the RS. Frowick appealed on Karadzic to step aside definitively from power for the sake of his own people. Frowick also severely criticised reports of the US media, saying that they are sending mainly negative reports from BiH, which distorts the picture of BiH in the public. He added that these reports are creating a negative attitude in the US public, making people wonder why billions of Dollars are being spent in BiH and why their soldiers are there.
2:30

A policeman, Dzaferovic, was heavily wounded on the border line between two entities, early this morning. Sarajevo Canton Minister of Internal Affairs, Dahic said that two persons were identified, but there is no police prosecution of these persons.
1:30