

OHR BiH TV News Summary, 21 december 1998

The newscast opened with a report on the escalation of conflicts in Kosovo, maintaining that the situation was most critical in the area of Podujevo. The main hospital in the town is reported as being besieged by Serbian forces.

2:20

The report bringing the US-lead operation in Iraq in line with Israeli Premier Netanyahu's decision to declare the unilateral end of cease-fire was next. Furthermore, TV BiH reported that the Western countries were now lobbying for the international isolation of Saddam Hussein.

3:20

The BH Constitutional Court postponed the hearing on the bringing of the entity laws in accordance with the BH (state level) laws in line. The proposal, which was initiated by BH Presidency member, Alija Izetbegovic, together with the hearing related to the issue of the constituency of peoples, is now scheduled to take place on January 22-23.

1:00

Protocol activities – Members of the BH Presidency met with Italian Premier Massimo D'Alema and discussed the peace implementation in BH. The Italian Premier also had meetings with the HR and Lagumdžija of the SDP. Canadian Minister of Defence, Carl Egleton discussed the "Train and Equip" programme with the HR and the officials of the Federal Ministry of Defence.

1:00

The RS Government assembled today and discussed the amendments on property laws, ahead of the continuation of the RS Parliament session, which is scheduled for tomorrow.

Privatisation (of companies of strategic importance) in RS and the 1999 budget were also discussed.

0:50

“The adoption of property laws in RS should open the door of return to RS more widely”, is how the anchor introduced the next report, dealing with a meeting of 14 refugee associations in BH. “It will take 40 years for the returnees to return to BH if the ongoing trends continue”, one of the representatives of the associations was quoted.

1:20

The opening of the bridge (border crossing) in Orasje is expected for tomorrow. “Everything is ready”, according to TV BiH for the ceremony of opening, which will also be attended by Croatian President Tudjman. The report was followed with a story on the Slovenian government’s donation of 18 tractors to Orasje, in the presence of the Federal Minister of Agriculture, Ahmet Smajic.

1:10

According to the next report, Orasje might become a duty free zone. The BH foreign trade policy experts discussed the strategy in this field, and proposed that inter-state contracts on duty free zones (between FRY, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia) be signed, emphasising that this was not in conflict with neither the existing laws nor the OHR’s demands.

1:20

In an answer to possible strikes of mineworkers, TV BiH allocated some airtime to the leaderships of mines, emphasising that the production of coal has risen for one third in comparison to 1997. Premier Bicakcic was also given actuality sound – he stated that mining holds one of the leading positions (in the country’s economy), and that this was achieved thanks to self-sacrifice and restraint (of the mineworkers). Bicakcic also announced higher investments in mining (credits from Japan and Slovenia).

2:00 More protocol activities – Bicakcic meets Central Bank Governor Peter Nicoll, Nicoll informed Bicakcic that the CB Steering Board had expressed support for the protection of the CB Currency Board structure during the liquidation of the National Bank; Bicakcic meets the European Bank representative, discusses new projects (30 million DM of credits for small businesses) Party activities – Centre Coalition says that the corruption and crime should be discussed in Parliaments, not just within one party (reaction to Izetbegovic's most recent corruption line); Liberal Party dissatisfied over the fact that it received no posts in the Sarajevo canton government; SDS satisfied with the Madrid conclusions, and says that Kalinic would decide on the composition of the (RS) Government 'soon'.