

OHR Local News Issues, 1 May 1997

Brcko – Two buses with expelled Bosniaks visiting the town in the organization of the SDP have been stoned in two separate incidents. As a results several passengers were lightly wounded and the buses totally demolished. The SDP leadership forwarded a letter of protest to HR Bildt, Deputy HR Steiner and Supervisor for Brcko, Farrand. " Members and sympathizers of the SDP and other citizens who gathered for the central celebration of the international holiday of labour – the First of May, have been brutally attacked by a group of organized criminals, despite protection of the international military and police forces", read the letter. It further said that the international community should use " all mechanisms at its disposal to identify and punish the perpetrators ".

3'00

Ganic – Steiner meeting – FBiH Vice President and the Head of the Commission for the Implementation of Arbitral Decision on Brcko, Ejup Ganic, held talks with Deputy HR Michael Steiner on the procedure for the return of refugees to Brcko and to this related a practical resolution of the problem of personal documents.

1'00

Zubak – Frowick meeting – A member of the BiH Presidency Kresimir Zubak met with the Chief of the OSCE Mission Ambassador Frowick to review the organization of the upcoming elections, in particular in Brcko. FBiH Vice President Ejup Ganic also met with Ambassador Frowick to discuss the same topic. On this occasion it was reiterated again the elections in Brcko were decisive for BiH reconstruction and continuation of the peace process. Ambassador Frowick explained that the position of the international community was based on three factors: the DPA, the Arbitral Tribunal's decision and the

rules and regulations of the Interim Electoral Commission.
1'50.

Sarajevo – The September elections were a dominant topic at a press conference in Sarajevo. Both foreign and local correspondents reacted fervently to OSCE Spokesman David Foley statement that " DPs will be able to vote in municipalities where they resided in 1991, but they will not be able to visit their homes " . Foley also explained that all BiH citizens would be in position to choose where to vote. However, he failed to reply to a question who would be responsible for the implementation of election results, i.e. to ensure that the elected candidates would assume office. (comment: actually Foley did answer this question saying that a post election implementation commission would be established).

Spokesman for the OHR Colum Murphy stated that the Donors conference on BiH would not be held until progress was achieved with respect to the Quick Start Package. Murphy reiterated that the arrest of war criminals and their extradition to the Hague Tribunal had to be carried out as soon as possible.

4'00.

New York – HR Carl Bildt submitted a report on BiH before the UN Security Council. The media covered it extensively, underlining that Bildt maintained the DPA was being implemented, but slowly. According to correspondent's report, he was not specific about which sides violated the agreement and to what degree. " A new war, an open secret secession or domination of a majority nation are the three dangerous aspects of political environment in BiH which have to be avoided", the high Representative pointed out. To a question why the RS was rewarded for non-compliance with the DPA, he replied that there are two kinds of conditioning: negative and positive. The time had come to allot some funds to the RS to create conditions for the return of refugees.

3'50

Summary SRT News

Pale – President of the BiH Presidency Krajisnik met the Russian Foreign Minister Gerasimov and discussed the implementation of the Peace Agreement and work of the common institutions. President Krajisnik reiterated the unacceptability of having Muslims as representatives of all three peoples in BiH a year after the signing of the DPA. Prior to this meeting, Krajisnik met the European Parliament Representative for Relations with Former Yugoslav Countries and discussed the issue of common institutions and prospects for firm peace in this region. Krajisnik said that he is grateful to the international community for already providing a near-firm peace here and improving relations between the Entities.

3:00

On this day two years ago, the Croatian army started the military offensive 'Blijesak' and attacked Western Slavonia. The Croats killed more than 1500 civilians and expelled several thousands of them before the eyes of the entire world. The Croatian army continued the process of ethnic cleansing of this Serb region, which had started in 1991. On that occasion, several thousand Serbs gathered on the Gradiska bridge, throwing wreaths and flowers into the Sava river and paying tribute to victims of the liberation war. The UN representatives also attended the ceremony by cruising the area in a helicopter, looking like an ominous black bird.

4:00

Brcko – Instead of opening of a bus line from Brcko to the Federation and back, two buses with Muslims from various parts of the Federation, headed by SDP party leadership, drove to Brcko today to visit none other than Supervisor Farrand. Zlatko Lagumdžija and his followers tried to impress the Brcko Supervisor by wearing red carnations, symbols of May Day. However, Farrand was indifferent towards red carnations, so he reminded the visitors that the returnees have an obligation to accept RS laws. ' On a larger scale, I would like to say that all of you should take your time to read those procedures (of

return) yourselves, ' Farrand said. It seemed that this reply ruined their day, because they left Brcko rather depressed.

5:00

World News Mostar – The EU finally finished its mandate yesterday, after 2 years and 10 months, leaving behind a still deeply divided city.