

OHR Local News Issues, 11 July 1997

Sarajevo – Regarding yesterday's "Tango" operation in which the accused war criminals Kovacevic and Drljaca were arrested, the [SFOR](#) spokesman Riley said that it was done in accordance with the SFOR mandate and policy. The arrest of Kovacevic was carried out without incidents, and as for the accusation from Pale that SFOR misused the Red Cross symbol to enter the hospital, it is not true. Regarding the Drljaca arrest Maj. Riley said that Drljaca resisted the arrest using a weapon. An SFOR soldier was wounded and SFOR responded, killing Drljaca in self – defence. SFOR soldiers also arrested Drljaca's son, and his son-in-law. The Hague [Tribunal](#) spokesman Chartier considers the "Tango" operation as very important. He hopes that it was not the last, because all of those accused for war crimes must be arrested.

3'00"

Moscow – Russian officials protested against the "Tango" operation, calling it a Cowboy's attack which threatens the DPA. Moscow officials also said that Russia will not bear any responsibility for the eventual consequences.

1'00"

Sarajevo – The ICG considers the "Tango" action as a turnabout in the [DPA](#) implementation. ICG stated that there can be no lasting peace before the extradition of accused of war criminals to the Hague.

2'00"

Sarajevo – OHR fully supports the "Tango" operation, carried out yesterday. OHR spokesman Haselock stated that the presence and influence of war criminals is the main obstacle for the DPA implementation. The UN spokesman Ivanko and [OSCE](#) spokesman Foley also supported the action, as well as Novak the IC

Missing Persons expert.

1'00"

Pale – The RS Representative in the BiH Parliament M. Krajisnik protested to the OSCE Head of Mission R. Frowick against the "Tango" action calling it extreme danger for the DPA. He also said that the action has caused a step back in Co-operation with IC.

2'00"

Pale – On last night's appearance on SRT, RS President Plavsic commented on the statement of SRT General Director who said that the RS President may appeal to the public, over the media, only if he allows it. Plavsic said that his statement is terrible but true.

1'00"

Sarajevo – At today's press conference organised by the Helsinki Human Rights Committee, and in the presence of the Helsinki Federation Representatives, OSCE, and ICG, the main conclusion was that a mass-media campaign in the RS should be carried out in order to inform Serbs that the arrest of war criminals is good for the people. HHRC also supported the action saying that it should have been done much earlier.

2'00"

Sarajevo – BiH Presidency member Zubak spoke with the US Embassy Representative Beecroft about the Joint Police Forces agreement in the Her/Ner Canton. Beecroft and Zubak expressed the need for a similar agreement in the Middle Bosnian Canton. In Zubak's conversation with the UN SRSG K. Eide the main subject was clearing the mine fields on the territory of the BiH Federation.

1'00"

London – The European Development and Reconstruction Bank approved the long-term credit for BiH Federation for the amount of 15.6 million dollars. The credit will be used in the

rebuilding of electric powerplants.

3'00"

Summary SRT TV News

Headlines – [SFOR](#) released Sinisa Drljaca and Spiro Milanovic. SRT introduction – 'Yesterday's savage murder of Simo Drljaca and brutal kidnapping of Milan Kovacevic, doctor and a humanist, caused numerous reactions and severe condemnation by the general public of the RS. After all that has been done, one wonders for how long will the so-called international community keep on persecuting and killing like beasts only us, the Serbs? We send a message to such a so-called international community that the Serb people have been and still are a member of the family of modern European nations, and that their unscrupulous anti-Serb campaign and hysteria will have to stop sooner or later. We should also add that certain foreign media have announced a false information that the body of the deceased Simo Drljaca had reportedly been sent to Prijedor, but no one from Prijedor had confirmed this information.'

1:00

Prijedor – Peaceful protest gathering – Yesterday, Prijedor was in shock and mourning, and today it is embittered, mourning and protesting to the brutal murder of Simo Drljaca, former chief of Prijedor police, and arrest of Milan Kovacevic, head of the Prijedor medical centre. The protest gathering in Prijedor today was initiated by 500 employees of the medical centre, who were then joined by other citizens of Prijedor and the region of Potkozarje, in order to express their disapproval of the new mandate of SFOR that resulted in yesterdays criminal actions. The local SDS's announcement, which was read before the protesters, condemned SFOR's action and demanded that the Hague takes into account the bad health of Doctor Kovacevic. Local SDS appealed to the people to light candles this evening as a tribute to all the victims of the war and yesterdays victim of peace. The protesters marched

through the town, and protested peacefully in front of the building where the SFOR troops, OSCE staff, and members of IPTF are situated.

4:00

Zvornik – Meeting of the Supreme Defence Council and the VRS General HQ last night – The Defence Council, which includes RS President in the BiH Presidency Krajisnik and RS Assembly Speaker Kalinic, advised the VRS not to be provoked by the recent activities of SFOR. The participants also discussed the level of combat readiness of the VRS to carry out the constitutional role in defending the RS. It was agreed that there would be closer co-operation between all RS state institutions and MUP and the VRS General HQ in the exchange of information related to the newly-established situation and possible incidents related to the current situation in the RS. An information on movements of the MND troops and BiH Federation Army was also presented at the meeting, and it was discussed whether the VRS should still communicate with these forces. The conclusion was that the contacts with them should be kept at the necessary level, and in case any thoroughly-planned military actions such as the one yesterday happen again, then it would be insisted that all further meetings be held in the territory of RS, with maximum security provided for all RS officials. The RS will continue honouring its commitments from the DPA, but the VRS and the RS people are the only guarantee of defence of the RS. All actions of all RS state institutions must be co-ordinated in the aim of overcoming the present constitutional crisis. President Krajisnik also had consultations with the Defence Council and VRS General HQ in relation to the Standing Committee on Military Matters.

4:00

Pale – Krajisnik's meetings with General Crouch and HR [Westendorp](#), and Robert Frowick – Everyone agreed that the most important thing is to preserve peace, and that the current

political situation in the RS and the murder yesterday must not be a cause of further misunderstandings. Krajisnik stated that the talks with General Crouch and HR Westendorp were constructive and useful for both parties. 'We shall suggest to our army, police, and our people that the most useful thing to do at this difficult moment is keep a clear head, as one should in times like these, and find a way out. We must not dramatise the situation and lead it towards conflicts, rooting for anyone, rallying, and divisions.' Krajisnik stressed that the RS still wants to have good co-operation with SFOR and the international community, but it must object to the existence of 'secret lists, private lists, or lists that cause unrest'. He expressed his hope that this matter will be solved too, because there must be no mysteries with regard to it, otherwise it could cause a general state of panic. HR Westendorp said that the co-operation can continue as long as a peaceful situation is maintained, and General Crouch described SFOR's recent actions, 'brutally outside of their authority' in SRT's words, as in full compliance with their mandate. At the meeting with Ambassador Frowick, President Krajisnik discussed the freedom of expression and use of media in RS. With regard to yesterday's incident, Krajisnik said that it has led to a situation more difficult than the situation before the [Dayton](#). There is general fear that something has changed, something which could call into question the DPA. President Krajisnik also informed Frowick of the RS Constitutional Court decision, and said that all matters must be discussed, which is better than 'sawing at the badly-measured spot'.

4:00

Excerpts from the SDS Petrovdan Epistle – For its seventh anniversary, the SDS addressed its activists, officials, and voters, in order to explain what the SDS has achieved and what it is fighting for, as well as what the others are fighting for, those who 'were against us yesterday, are against us today, and will be against us tomorrow, in alliance with the

enemies of each Serb idea. Of course, we are not talking about the democratic opposition, which we deeply respect and with which we co-operate in one of the most democratic assemblies, the RS Peoples Assembly... What is the aim of arrests, trials, killing before the eyes of sons, kidnappings, humiliation of our police, various forms of harassment of people? The aim is to create a sense of hopelessness, to exert pressure on our politicians to break down and accept what must not and does not have to be accepted. It is not a problem for them to force us to accept what must be done. They want to force us to accept what we do not have to accept if we are a people and if our representatives are brave and honest. Their aim is for us to be left without an army, and particularly without the police because the army's movements are restricted, so that they could destroy us like that and bring us to our knees. Their aim is to lead us towards hopelessness and desperation through rallies and social dissatisfaction, and break us and melt into a unified Bosnia. Their aim is to... make us leave our homes and let the country be lead by their protégés. That is why they arrest and kill without warning or remorse, so that we would all feel unsafe. We have a solution, and it should be threefold: it should be Serb, democratic, and Christian...'

5:00

RS Government replied to the letter of SFOR Deputy Commander Simpson, denying his account of what happened in Prijedor. The RS Government said that the SFOR went beyond the framework of the UN Resolution. 'Your peace forces broke the rules and started with a hunt of RS citizens who didn't do anything to cause such a brutal SFOR attack. Drljaca was murdered while having a rest together with his son, whereas Kovacevic was literary kidnapped from his work. The SFOR didn't ask either Simo or his son to identify themselves first, but immediately opened fire at him, his underage son, and his brother-in-law, severely wounding Drljaca and then killing him afterwards. Then your soldiers took away Simo's body to an unknown destination and kidnapped his son and brother-in-law. They

severely violated the rules of humanitarian institutions when they entered the hospital compound armed and in red cross vehicles, and kidnapped Milan Kovacevic under the threat that they would execute him. SFOR soldiers abused the best-known symbol of solidarity in the world – the Red Cross sign, by transporting humanitarian parcels which they allegedly wanted to give to the hospital. SFOR used a secret list with names of alleged war criminals, proving once more that peace forces dramatically changed its mandate in BiH. Mr. General, you have demanded from the RS Government not to undertake any actions or issue statements which might inflame the situation. The Government is making efforts to explain to their own people that somebody wants to provoke a new war in BiH, and that they shouldn't respond to those provocations. Mr. General, you should tell us why you capture and kill our civilians. What kind of army is that which kills wounded people?'

5:00

Pale – The CoM Deputy Foreign Minister, Bozanic sent a letter of protest to the British Ambassador to Sarajevo with regard to the incident in Prijedor, saying that he joins in the justified protest of the RS Government and asked him to communicate the letter to 'his General and the British Government.'

2:00

Comments on the current situation:

The Russian Government protested against yesterday's incident, saying that SFOR changed its mandate to a cowboy-style manhunting, adding that Russia does not want to take part in such one-sided actions. The US President Clinton said that the SFOR action in Prijedor was 'the real thing'.

The London Times reported that the RS President demanded from NATO to detain Radovan Karadzic and hand him over to the Hague. This demand was sent to NATO last weekend, at a meeting between Plavsic and SFOR HQ Commander Crouch.

3:00

The Sveti Jovan Radio condemned Plavsic for betraying her people and country. They said that she used her political office to release a false story about criminals in the RS while having a tête-à-tête meeting with the US State Secretary Albright and flying to London in secret. 'Perhaps you can say that Karadzic and Mladic are criminals, but you cannot say that Lazar, Obilic and Tesla were criminals as well. Damn all your money in the Swiss banks that you have received...'

3:00

Pale – The RS President of the Red Cross, Ljiljana Zelen-Karadzic met the head of the Red Cross for BiH in relation to the letter of protest that she had sent to the Head of the International Red Cross, Samaruga. They talked about the abuse of the Red Cross sign, return of Drljaca's body and, relations between the RS and RC in the future. Zelen-Karadzic demanded prosecution of the British soldier who killed Drljaca. IRC expressed their concern regarding the RS claim that the Red Cross sign was abused in the SFOR action, adding that SFOR had denied such an information.

4:00

Celinac – At the opening of the new digital telephone exchange, RS Prime Minister said that the current constitutional crisis in the RS will be solved soon by compromise, and that the Prijedor incident was an act of vandalism and a contracted murder, which shows the true colours of the 'Western Democracy'.

5:00

Brnica and Petkovci villages in the Zvornik area – Although the international experts said that there are no alleged Muslim mass-graves in this area, SFOR troops, with helicopter support, tried to escort a large group of Muslim women in buses from Sapna through these villages so that they could visit the alleged grave sites. The villagers organised

themselves, carrying pitchforks and putting barricades on the road, and didn't let the women pass. 'This is where Zvornik, the Serbs, and Drina are defended, this is where are defending our children, everything. We lost everything, we have nothing anymore. We don't want to live with them ever again. We want our own state. They have divided us, what's ours is ours, what's theirs is theirs, they can't have more than that', one of the Serb women screamed into the camera.

4:00