

# OHR Local News Issues, 18 Aug 1997

**Sarajevo** – US Special Envoy Gelbard arrived to Sarajevo today. Gelbard said that the US President Clinton is unsatisfied because of delayed implementation of the DPA. Gelbard met with BiH President Izetbegovic, accompanied with US Ambassador Beecroft. Izetbegovic and Gelbard agreed that BiH currency should not have any national marks or symbols applied. After the meeting with Izetbegovic, Gelbard also met Presidency member, Zubak. However, there was no official information from this meeting. Afterwards, Gelbard went to Pale to meet with RS representative, Krajisnik.

3'00"

**Banja Luka** – RS President Plavsic said that because of political pressure on Constitutional Court (CC) officials, the decision of the CC was not legal, and therefore not obligatory to her. Regarding the seizure of police HQ in BL, Plavsic said that evidence was found that point to wiretapping of RS President and state officials. Plavsic remained firm, and said that it is her intention to carry on with the struggle against the hard-liners in RS. IPTF troops are still in police HQ in BL, investigating the case of human rights violation. Regarding the decision of the CC, the OHR spokesman Haselock said that it is more extortion than a political decision. Haselock also said that there is a possibility that the CC members were directly threatened. He also said that the OHR supports Plavsic's call for the pre-elections, because the current crisis must be solved in a democratic manner.

**Washington** – Reacting on last week's SFOR "rehearsal" of war criminals arrest, US Manager for Eastern Europe, Buganski said that the arrest of Karadzic may be carried out right after the elections. Buganski said that carrying out of this action

depends only on calculation of how many victims can be tolerated. Buganski also said that if Karadzic remains active after the elections, the pressure will grow to take actions regardless to the casualties.

3'00"

**Zagreb** – According to the AP, a Bosnian Croat indicted for war crimes, Skopljak was arrested and transferred to prison in Croatia. Skopljak was Croatian high officer, during the Croat and Bosniak conflicts in central BiH. Skopljak has been indicted by ICTY for war crimes over Bosniak people in Vitez area.

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**Jajce** – It is still uncertain how many Bosniaks will return to Jajce area. The Bosniak side asked for the return of 97 heads of families, as previously agreed. The Croat side denies this number for, allegedly, only 80 Bosniaks should return first, instead of 99 who returned already.

1'00"

**Sarajevo** – BiH Federation President Soljic's cabinet announced that recent demolition of Croat houses in Bugojno area represents the most direct stroke to the refugee return process. Soljic demanded from police authorities to conduct an immediate investigation of these events.

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**Mostar** – Mostar Mayor, Prskalo, and his deputy, Orucevic were discussing the problem of refugee return to Stolac. Orucevic said that the solution of the refugee return problem lies in joint police forces establishment. Regarding the EASC decision for HTV Mostar, Prskalo said that the decision jeopardises interests of Croat People. Prskalo also addressed a letter to OSCE Ambassador, Frowick asking for meeting in regard to this matter.

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**Sarajevo** – Regarding the refugee return to Bugojno, Federal Minister for Refugees, Kadic had a meeting with BiH HDZ party representatives. HDZ delegation expressed a wish from Bugojno Croats to return to their homes. HDZ representatives said that they look forward to the return of Bosniaks to Jajce, hoping that it might make the return of Croats to Bugojno more certain. Kadic also presented the plan for the return of all refugees to Middle Bosnian Canton.

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## Summary SRT TV News

**Pale** – Momcilo Krajisnik, RS President in the BH Presidency (as referred to by the media) met with US Special Envoy for the Balkans, Robert Gelbard. The report informed that the meeting was being held behind closed doors and was still in progress. However, most likely topics on the agenda, maintained the report, were provisions of the DPA yet not implemented – a single currency, flag and coat-of arms – and a political crisis in the RS.

The report underlined that this was the second visit of the US Envoy to the RS and FBiH in the last ten days aimed at mounting pressure on representatives in the BiH joint institutions to endorse the draft-laws on citizenship and passports and reach an agreement on joint insignia.

Last week in Washington, Mr. Gelbard reportedly stated that one of the reasons for his visit to the Balkans was disagreement between the Federation partners on the establishment of a joint intelligence service.

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**Banja Luka** – RS President Biljana Plavsic held talks with Robert Farrand, Supervisor for Brcko. The collocutors discussed arbitration, personal documents and the forthcoming elections. After the meeting, the RS President stated that the RS Constitution, the DPA and the Arbitrator's decision are to

be observed, a solution for Brcko will not be difficult. Speaking about the issuance of personal documents to returnees from the FBH, President Plavsic criticized the relevant offices of the Interior Ministry for irrational resistance to issue IDs to returnees. She underlined that by accepting RS personal documents, returnees at the same time would acknowledge the RS authority.

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The Brcko Supervisor told the press that he had spent more than four months in an effort to find peaceful and methodological solutions of key issues for this city. He underlined that only upon his insistence, the FBiH agreed to issuance of RS IDs to returnees to Brcko, adding that this was the only way for the RS police to control circulation of people.

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Prior to her meeting with Mr. Farrand, Ms. Plavsic held a regular press conference. On this occasion, President Plavsic reiterated that the decision of the constitutional court was not based on the Law and as such was not obligatory. Plavsic further maintained that the President of the Constitutional Court announced earlier that court's ruling would be guided not only by legal but political, economic and social interests as well.

As to the incident in the Banja Luka State Security Centre, President Plavsic admitted that her special security unit seized the State Security Centre in order to prevent further tapping of her cabinet as well as of some other officials and opposition leaders.

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**Pale** – The RS Government issued a statement related to the Banja Luka incident directly accusing President Plavsic of creating a constitutional crisis in the RS, which has caused a split among Serbs. According to the statement, the whole

scenario was devised to cause a rift amongst Serbs and thus weaken and destroy them. The Government appealed to the irregular police unit under Biljana Plavsic's command to leave the Centre's premises and avoid further incidents. In addition, SFOR Commander Gen. Shinseki was notified by the RS Interior Ministry that the situation will call for deployment of police forces including an anti-terrorist brigade to use all means available to remove the armed irregular police unit from the State Security building.

In response to the unsubstantiated allegations about the alleged lack of cooperation by the Interior Ministry with the OHR and the Brcko Supervisor, the Government has publicized documentation related to the issuance of IDs to returnees to Brcko, clearly indicating that the Ministry organized prompt issuance of documents in three different locations, concluded the statement.

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**Pale** – RS Interior Minister Dragan Kijac announced the establishment of a three-member commission to investigate on the Banja Luka incident and submit a report in 7 days. SFOR and IPTF are requested to allow RS police officials to enter the premises of the State Security Centre and carry out their duties. Minister Kijac accentuated that nobody will be allowed to interfere with police work or to engage in dismissal of police staff members contrary to the Law even at the cost of using force, which could lead to unthinkable consequences.

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