

OHR Local News Issues, 18 February 1997

The eyes of the BiH people were directed towards Brussels today expecting the Steering Board for the Implementation of the Peace Process in BiH, headed by the HR Carl Bildt, to appoint an American Supervisor for Brcko and give more details on the Arbitrage decision. But the only information received from Brussels was Carl Bildt's stance expressed at the NATO Council meeting, that the Arbitrage decision needs a long period for implementation.

0'30"

During a visit of the BiH Federal Officials to the Neretva-Hercegovina Canton, Ejup Ganic, Federation Acting President, and Rasim Kadic, Federal Minister for Social Affairs, talked with Fatima Leho, Canton Governor, about the situation in Mostar, prior to the release of the investigation report on the tragic event on 10 February. They stated the need to increase the role of SFOR in Mostar and to urgently unite financial functions in the Canton.

2'00"

James Pardew, who overviews the American Program of military assistance, announced that due to tensions between the Federal partners, military training of the Federation Army must be cancelled. He told Anto Jelavic, Defense Minister, that "the time for nationalistic extremist attitude is over and the individuals who support such behavior must be replaced". 1'30"

The Franciscan monastery St. Anton in Sarajevo requested public protection because of repeated stoning attacks. The Statement issued today reads that stoning was frequent, but the monastery officials thought it better not to inform the public to prevent creating negative tensions among citizens.

1'

It was expected that the Special Commission set up to investigate the bloody incident in Mostar on 10 February, would hand over the results by the agreed date – 19 February, but at today's SFOR and IPTF Press Conference in Sarajevo, the issue was neither mentioned nor was a new date given for the handing over of investigation results.

1'30"

At future Press Conferences we shall hang up our symbols, the representatives of SFOR, OHR, UN and UNHCR told a Press Conference in Pale following a reaction of the BiH journalists that the conference is taking place under the RS symbols. RS is one of the legal entities in BiH and I don't see a problem in sitting under its coat of arms, Colum Murphy, OHR Spokesman said, but added that there will be international symbols in future. Alex Ivanko, UN Spokesman informed of three worrying evictions in Prijedor which happened on 17 and 18 February.

2'30"

A pilot project for the return of displaced Bosniaks back to Stolac is still on hold since the security situation after the bloody incidents in Mostar has worsened to such extent, that the elementary conditions don't exist for the project realization, Chris Janowski, UNHCR Spokesman told a Press Conference in Pale. He added that he is in constant contact with the people from Stolac, and they should judge for themselves when the adequate moment for their return home will be.

2'30"

Croatia caused a strong reaction today by definitively refusing to hand over documentation which could be used as evidence in the case against war crime indicted Croatian General Tihomir Blaskic, AP informs.

0'30"

Trade Minister Hasan Muratovic explained in an interview for BiH TV that the existing economic problems especially the

trade imbalance, between BiH and Slovenia originate not only from insufficient transport permits through Slovenia, but from the fact that BiH doesn't produce enough.

2'30"

Summary SRT News

Banja Luka – RS president Plavsic met Holland's Ambassador to Dayton BH. The discussion was about the current situation in the RS, economic problems of the country, and the recently made decision Brcko arbitration decision. After the meeting, Plavsic said that she expressed the RS position. and emphasised the RS existential problems which could be solved through financial help. The ambassador said that she is aware of the problems this country is facing, and that she is ready to talk about them with the RS representatives again.

2:00

Pale – President of BH Krajisnik [as said by SRT] met newly appointed US Special Envoy for civilian implementation of the DPA, Mr. Claude Ganz. They discussed current problems with the RS and the Federation. Krajisnik expressed the Serb position with regard to certain economic issues.

Northern Ireland – the RS delegation headed by parliament speaker Kalinic met Ireland Prime Minister, and representatives of the Protestant and Catholic Church. They concluded that the situation in Dayton BH and Northern Ireland is very similar. Irish representatives were interested in the Brcko decision, and destiny of the Serbs who live there, if Brcko is handed over to the Muslim-Croat Federation in a year. In that case, the RS delegation stressed, the situation there would become extremely unstable. Irish representatives promised to give specific aid to the RS. The RS delegation met representatives of the Labour and Conservative parties last night. The discussion was about British investment in the RS economy. The RS delegation will meet Lord Carrington tomorrow.

4:00

Lopare – Touring the RS border towns, government representatives, headed by Prime Minister Klinkovic, visited “this most important strategic point of the RS”. The local authorities presented economic and other problems of this municipality.

3:00

Brussels – NATO session – NATO members focused on the Brcko decision and the appointing of Brcko supervisor issues. HR Bildt, who also attended the session, said that he welcomes the cautious and positive reaction of the BH parties [regarding the arbitration decision]. A long period of implementation will be necessary for the arbitration. He said that he did not ask for NATO assistance either in Mostar or Brcko, although the situation is still very tense there. US proposed the establishing of special police forces which would depend neither on NATO nor IPTF. They would be armed, and responsible for the Brcko region only.

2:00

Lukavica, Serb Sarajevo – a new RS post office, which will provide another 700 telephone lines for the citizens of Serb Sarajevo, started working today. PTT Romanija financially supported the reconstruction works. ‘This is the best way to show the world, and our enemies how indestructible we are, and that Serb Sarajevo does exist and will be developed into a strong city centre’, PTT Lukavica director said.

2:00

Banja Luka – the proceeding against Alija Izetbegovic continued with witnesses testifying at the High Court. Another four witnesses were heard today. One of them, a middle-aged woman Vila Daric, said that she lost all her family when 300 Muslims slaughtered 33 residents of Cemerno village, whereas the two soldiers described the ‘Golgotha’ they went through in Muslim prisons.

3:00