

OHR Local News Issues, 20 May 1997

Defence Minister in the new British Government, George Robertson has been visiting BiH since yesterday. Having inspected a British contingent serving with SFOR in BiH, he held talks with BiH and SFOR officials today. The British Government has changed, but its stance towards BiH stays the same, Robertson said, and emphasising that London continues to believe that the DPA process offers the best chances for building the BiH future. The British Defence Minister met separately with Alija Izetbegovic and Momcilo Krajisnik.

2'30"

The British and the American policy towards BiH were a subject of discussion between the new British Chief of Diplomacy, Robin Cook and his State Department hosts in the Pentagon and Congress. London supported the stand that it would be difficult to accomplish everything that was foreseen in DPA by July next year – the time designated for a withdrawal of SFOR. Cook asked that the USA once again debate the date of pulling out its troops from BiH.

1'30"

Franjo Greguric, special envoy of Franjo Tudjman for BiH and the Federation, announced on HTV that a meeting between Izetbegovic and Tudjman should be held as soon as possible, regardless of the number of agreements they were going to sign. It is important to talk, since each contact represents a step forward, Greguric said, pointing out that the meeting is expected very soon.

1'30"

Alija Izetbegovic, BiH Presidency Chairman received the HR Carl Bildt, today. They talked about the forthcoming meeting of EU Foreign Ministers, which will focus on BiH questions.

The highest BiH officials will be invited to attend the meeting. The collocutors discussed further implementation of the DPA with regard to strengthening communications and the development and increase of exchange of goods and services inside the country.

1'30"

Vladimir Soljic, Federation President, received Kai Eide, UN Mission Chief. They discussed the establishing of the police force in Mostar, Talks between Kresimir Zubak and a delegation from the International Organisations in BiH focused on refugee return and recent incidents in Drvar. American experts for the questions of local authority self-management, headed by Richard Winnie, together with the EU experts who talked with Ejup Ganic today, will be helping Federation Working Group on the issue, Haris Silajdzic, CoM Co-Chair received a delegation of Bosna-Podrinje Canton headed by Governor Rijad Rascic. They discussed the planning and building of the Sarajevo-Gorazde.

3'00"

Sir Arthur Watts, Special Mediator for succession issues in former Yu. held talks in Sarajevo today. According to the participants in the talks, the unified stand of both BiH entities on the issue, will be presented at the next meeting in Brussels, designated for beginning of June, this year.

2'30"

A meeting between Vladimir Soljic and Ejup Ganic with Amb. Steiner and David Crishkovic (IPTF) focused on discussion of the Protocol Draft of establishing the police force in the Hercegovina-Neretva and Srednja Bosna Cantons. Signing is expected to take place on Thursday, May 22.

2'00"

Summary SRT News

Banja Luka – RS President Biljana Plavsic and Vice President Dragoljub Mirjanic held talks with Head of the EU Head Office for Foreign Affairs, Catherine Day. The talks encompassed a number of subjects related to commercial and trading relations between the RS and neighboring countries.

Issues related to the implementation of the DPA dominated the talks between the RS President and Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov. Commenting on the talks, Ms. Plavsic stated that her interlocutor pledged that the Russian Federation would give financial loans to the RS in order to help it overcome the difficult economic situation until a Donors Conference on BiH. Mr. Ivanov underlined that full compliance with the DPA was the sine qua non for the preservation of peace in this region, along with the restoration of economy.

3'50"

Pale – President in the BiH Presidency Momcilo Krajisnik met with British Defense Minister George Robertson. Krajisnik stressed that the British Government has demonstrated a balanced and even handed approach towards the RS and FBiH during the war time and afterwards which the RS leadership greatly appreciates. Minister Robertson pointed out that the new British Government was committed to the Dayton peace process and time-table laid down in Dayton. Expressing hope that progress in the peace process was to follow, he reminded that SFOR troops were deployed in BiH not to enforce peace but to implement the DPA.

4'50"

Banja Luka – RS PM Gojko Klicekovic has officially opened the first fair of electronic and mechanical industry "Demi 97". Addressing the present guests, Klicekovic pointed out that only a nation which can organize such a display of creativity, stands a chance of building its own state.

1'50"

Pale – Secretary of the RS Defense Ministry Dragan Kapetina discussed military aspects of the DPA with British Defense Minister George Robertson. Mr. Kapetina informed his collocutor that the VRS Army had been observing all commitments undertaken by the peace agreement. However, he added: I have availed myself of the opportunity to express our disagreement and even protest against arming of the FBiH Army through the program "Train and Equip". The program seems to be having opposite effects from that which was initially conceived. The military balance in BiH is being disturbed to the RS detriment. Mr. Kapetina further requested that VRS officials inspect arms shipments for the FBiH within the program "Train and Equip".

3'00"