OHR Local News Issues, 21 February 1997

The highest authorities in BiH condemned the attack in Sarajevo on the Franciscan monastery. Izetbegovic issued statement saying: “I received with bitterness the news of the attack, which could only have been committed by a lowly coward or an enemy of Bosnia. I expect the police authorities to unearth the assailants quickly and call on all people to stand against these mindless people”. Such incidents never occurred before the war and many viewers expressed their outrage in phone messages to TV BiH.
(2 min.)

NATO SG Solana condemned attack in Mostar on Spanish SFOR & IPTF personnel. Quoted as saying “SFOR will not tolerate such attacks”. Comd MND SE Chatelier quoted saying “I have 10.000 SFOR troops under my command and we will ensure that such incidents are not repeated”. Situation in Mostar was serious enough to warrant visit from US Embassy Charge Beecroft who met with Orucevic. Speaking after their meeting Orucevic said “Mostar has become the cancer of the Federation and it’s time for this cancer to be removed. We believe measures are being taken in that direction. If this doesn’t happen, we will ask the international community to undertake special measures in Mostar…”
(4 min.)

BiH Press, quoting Deutsche Welle quoting Hina, reports on statement from West Mostar police authorities announcing charges pressed against six policemen for taking part in the Bayram incident. The six, unnamed, are reportedly guilty of having not intervened during the disturbances. They have already been dismissed from service.
(1 min.)

According to Deutsche Welle, German police arrested one Dragan L. based on arrest warrant issued Oct. 96. Dragan L. is suspected of having taken part in massacres and ethnic cleansing in Visegrad area in 1992.
(1 min.)

From IPTF press conference in Sarajevo, Spokesman Ivanko reports that two uniformed RS policemen have abducted one Muslim man in Teslic. Ivanko said at least 7-8 assault and harassment incidents reported in Teslic recently.
(1 min.)

James Pardew speaking after meetings in Sarajevo: “the restructuring and training of the Defense organs and Federation army must be completed by July 1998 because the Federation will then be faced with the departure of SFOR”. Pardew said no progress was achieved on adopting personnel structure for Fed. army since Croats reject the 70:30 Bosniac to Croat ratio. Agreement on the Defense Ministry and the Supreme Command signed.
(3 min.)

The “State” Commission on Brcko, headed by Ejup Ganic, met with Izetbegovic in Sarajevo. He was given a progress report of its work.
(1 min.)

New Swedish ambassador Eliasson presented his papers to Izetbegovic.
(1 min.)

German ambassador to BiH Preisinger visited Una-Sana Canton and met with Governor Veladic. Among the subjects discussed was the project for return of 20.000 refugees from Germany during 1997. Preisinger stressed that Germany will assist with repatriation costs as well as with investment in areas of return.

Croatian minister for Reconstruction and Development Jure

Radic: “All BiH refugees in Germany with dual BiH/Croatian citizenship who do not wish to return to BiH but have to leave Germany will be allowed to enter and stay in Croatia”. It is interesting to note that announcement comes only days after Germany asked Croatia to lessen its sphere of interest in BiH through the Herzegovina Croats.
(2 min.)

Report from Belgrade, via BBC world service, on Dindic becoming Mayor in Serbia’s capital. Also announcement of imminent split in Zajedno Coalition as Vuk Draskovic boycotts ceremony in city assembly. Report concluded with announcement of Seselj taking up office as mayor of Zemun.
(1 min.)

Summary SRT News

Pale – 17th government session – the government adopted amendments to the Draft Laws on Turn-over Tax, Weapons and Ammunition, Usage of Abandoned Property etc. They also discussed the problem of settling refugees and the Brcko arbitration decision, and agreed to convene separate sessions with regard to these issues.
2:00
London – SRT journalist reported that the British parliament and RS delegation established good co-operation during their five day visit to England and Ireland. British representatives emphasised their friendship towards the RS. All members of the RS parliament, except the SDA one, went to London. The SDA representative was told to come, but he did not appear. Head of the delegation, Kalinic, was extremely satisfied with the reception. He said that this was a starting point and a step towards establishing of RS and UK co-operation at the parliament level.
3:00

Banja Luka – representatives of the Republic Customs Office

met representatives of the European Commission for Fiscal and Customs Aid. The discussion was about training and education of the Serb customs officers by standards of developed, democratic countries. This project will start very soon, because the Commission has already provided financial resources for it.
2:00

RS Army HQ Commander, gen. Colic, said that only unity of all Serbs can be stronger than any weapons, now that Serbs have their final goal – to defend the RS. He warned that Muslim Army is making preparations and digging in, especially in the area of responsibility of the 2nd corps.

Banja Luka – the proceeding against Alija Izetbegovic, inspirer of the bloody civilian war, continued with witnesses testifying at the High Court. Three new witnesses were heard. They described what they had to survive in Muslim prisons (their skin was burned, bodies stung with needles, and they were pushed into a minefield to clean the area with their bare hands). They were witnesses to the presence of the foreign fighters who came to BiH in already summer of 92. The supreme judge postponed the further hearing of witnesses until March 21.
2:00

World News: Sarajevo – two hand grenades exploded in front of the Catholic church St. Ante last night, Sarajevo media reported Mostar – last night, an SFOR APC was hit from an anti-tank grenade while moving. The grenade came from the Croat side, SFOR reported.
2:00