OHR SRT News Summaries, 8 Sept. 1997

Banja Luka – Patriarch Pavle met Plavsic and Krajisnik, and discussed the current political crisis and ways to overcome it.

Banja Luka – the SDS rally – Plavsic's para-police set up a number of check-points and harassed Serb patriots who were travelling to the SDS rally. In Klasnjice, 10 km from Banja Luka, Plavsic's police stopped and harassed even members of the RS Government, such as Minister of Agriculture, Arsenovic who was not allowed to continue his trip to Banja Luka. According to information on the ground, where SFOR, as well as the police, also made problems for Serb patriots, a certain number of buses managed to pass check-points and arrive in Banja Luka. SDS announced that their rally would last as long as it took the last Serb patriot to arrive in the city.

Therefore, how long the rally will last depends on those who block the roads and violate all basic democratic rights and freedoms of the RS people. SFOR again interfered with RS internal politics by preventing a dozen buses from entering Banja Luka. The first SFOR check point was set up in Brcko, where they stopped the convoy and excluded them from the traffic without any explanation. (SRT journalist's report was made via phone and was rather understandable). However, according to the pictures SRT played, a lot of SFOR vehicles could be seen, as well as helicopters and aircraft.

From early this morning people were heading towards Banja Luka in order to raise their voice against the division of the RS, and to support its reunification. Bijeljina and Brcko were full of people and buses from RS Herzegovina, who stopped there on their way to Banja Luka. Bijeljina and Brcko people warmly received them and provided them with accommodation and

food. All of them have the same goal – a unified RS. SRT interviewed some people who basically reiterated the same motto – a unified RS, adding that they support the legal leadership, and will not allow it to be split apart because many people laid down their lives for their country. (Karadzic's posters on windshields of buses).
10:00

The Assembly Speaker, Kalinic convened the 12th Parliament session to be held in Jahorina, Hotel Bistrica, on September 10. MP's will make a final decision regarding the holding of local elections, and discuss the current political situation.

In regard to Plavsic's decision to dissolve the Parliament, the RS Senate released a joint statement which says that they are very sorry that Plavsic did not even find it necessary to inform them about her decision which is not in accordance with their agreement made in Bijeljina on July 24 (at a previous session, Plavsic decisively claimed that the Agreement on Special Relations between RS and FRY was a very important political decision on which the Senate should have had given its opinion before it was agreed). However, Plavsic did the same thing – she dissolved the Parliament, refused to accept the CC decision, and with the help of foreign troops, she took over certain police stations, SRT studio in Banja Luka, and several TV transmitters, by which she directly usurped the authority of the RS Government, suspended the Minister of Interior, and appointed her own Minister, and usurped the authority of the Prime Minister and Parliament. Such acts represent an usurpation of the power as well, whereas involvement of foreign factors in the RS represents violation of national interests of the RS people. Since Plavsic is not ready to respect the Constitution and law she should check if she enjoys people's trust before she decides to run for the president on the pre-term general elections.
3:00

Flash news:

Austrian, Italian and German media report that holding of SDS rally in Banja Luka is the beginning of Plavsic and her mentors' end. 1000 Serbs enter Banja Luka every hour. SDS rally should represent the Serb unity. France International reported that Swiss international banks announced that Karadzic did not have any bank account at Swiss banks.
2:00

OSCE and IPTF in Banja Luka said that they do not agree with Plavsic's decision to ban a public gathering of people during the pre-election campaign. However, people's security is the priority.

Brcko – the local election committee reported that preparations for local elections are being carried out, reminding that the final decision regarding the elections will be made by the Parliament. 20 polling stations will be opened for the elections, and one in the ZOS for Muslim and Croat voters with three teams of monitors.
2:00

Secretary of the PEC Cecic denied a report that Serbs who will vote in FRY and Muslim-Croat Federation were offered a lot of money and other privileges.

In regard to the letter which was sent to Krajisnik and the General Manager of SRT Toholj from Generals Klein and Shinseki, SRT conveyed an extraordinary Collegium of SRT and Radio editors, concluding that the letter will be preserved as an example of denial of 'freedom and human rights', and 'the worse act of violence over freedom of media and public expression.' SRT employees demanded that SRT management and Krajisnik send the OHR and SRT letters to international human rights organisations, all the embassies in FRY and BiH, journalist's organisation world-wide, and the RS Government and Parliament. We refuse to accept any of the requests with indignation and we announce in public that we will not accept them under any conditions. SRT promises that it will continue

with the derision of orders, such as ‘the material we are sending you must be played in full without any changes,’ and ‘cherish’ permanent ignorance towards all censors which were or will be established by some factors in the IC. They will respect the DPA and good relations with SFOR and all the IC officials who are in favour of an agreement and tolerance. We demand from HR Westendorp to give his opinion on the letter in public, and we stop any further contacts with his spokesman Bullivant. SRT invited everyone from the IC and political party representatives in the RS to give their opinion before cameras, even if it is not the same opinion as of the Government or the SRT. Despite threats, force, blocking of SRT installations, our cameras will always be open for all that does or doesn’t suit the certain IC factors.
5:00