OHR SRT News Summary, 01 Feb. 1998

Headlines

- RS Prime Minister hosts Swedish diplomatic delegation
- Serb refugees from Sarajevo currently living in Brcko reject possibility of return and demand compensation for property
- Croats demand postponement of the Brcko Arbitration Council session
- Military solution for the Iraq crisis – soon

Commenting on the RS Assembly session, RS Prime Minister Milorad Dodik said that the laws passed by the ousted Assembly on July 3rd, 1997 were void and added that for the following Assembly session the Government would spend a day preparing drafts to revoke the laws. Aleksa Buha, president of the SDS, informed press after the third Assembly session that two SDS deputies had voted for Banja Luka to be the seat of the newly appointed Government, because they and their families had been threatened. The Head of the Coalition for United and Democratic Bosnia, Safet Bico, stated yesterday in Banja Luka that the Coalition had decided to vote for Mr. Dodik's concept because the membership believed that such a concept supported the Dayton Agreement.
1:20

The RS Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Djuradj Banjac, received a delegation from the Swedish Foreign Ministry in Banja Luka today and discussed the economic assistance that the Swedish Government intends to send to the RS. The RS Prime Minister assessed today's meeting as very important for future co-operation with the Swedish Government and the Embassy. This was the resumption of talks which had started in September 1997. Concrete assistance for the

stabilisation of the economic situation in the RS was discussed. “We have defined the areas in the RS which will receive assistance from the Swedish Government. So this time the Sipovo area is highlighted, but we have also talked about the area of Ribnik,” stated Deputy Prime Minister Djuradj Banjac.
2:00

The Conference on Return of Refugees and DPs will take place in Sarajevo on February 3rd. Besides representatives of refugee associations from B&H and abroad, RS President Biljana Plavsic, Special American Envoy for B&H Robert Gelbard and the High Representative to Bosnia Carlos Westendorp will attend the Conference.
0:30

Refugees from Serb Sarajevo currently accommodated in the Brcko area rejected any possibility of returning to Sarajevo and demanded that the Ministry for Refugees and the RS Prime Minister intensify negotiations with officials from the Federation about exchange or compensation for the abandoned property. At today’s meeting they assessed that the former Government had not done enough for that section of the population, especially in terms of their status, housing, employment, health and social insurance.
1:00

On February 20th the Russian Defence Minister will visit the Russian brigade serving with SFOR in B&H. The Minister will meet Russian officers and visit soldiers. He is also expected to attend a ceremony to consecrate the bell tower of Alexander Nevsky’s church in Ugljevik.
0:20

The RS NA decided yesterday that at the next Assembly session it would draft a declaration demanding that the Arbitration Council for Brcko come to a final decision in March this year. Petar Djokic, Krstan Simic and Mirko Sarovic, deputies

appointed at yesterday’s session to shape the declaration, failed to do so due to shortage of time.
0:30

Croat representatives of the B&H Federation Brcko Arbitration Commission stated that Ejub Ganic, president of the Commission, could not represent the Croat side at the International Arbitration Tribunal. Mate Tadic, a Croat member of the Federal Arbitration Commission, asked Roberts Owen to delay the session scheduled for February 5th in Vienna. “In the event that the session takes place, the Croat side will demand independence,” stated Tadic.
1:10

The international border crossing between the RS and Croatia at Gradiska is a model of how to exercise freedom of movement as envisaged by the DA. Around 70 vehicles and 250 travellers enter the RS every day. The police and customs officers perform their duties efficiently.
3:00