

OHR SRT News Summary, 05 Oct. 1997

US Special Envoy Gelbard continued his tour to BiH visiting Krajisnik in Pale this morning. They talked about the work of joint institutions, media, and the Belgrade Agreement. Gelbard said that the US and Contact Group position is to support the holding of parliamentary elections in the RS. As for the presidential elections, there are a lot of questions from our side that we discussed with Krajisnik today. Those questions are primarily related to their legality then OSCE must supervise the elections, and that they must be held right after the parliamentary ones. Commenting on the Pale TV fate, Gelbard said that the US Government is concerned because of programme that was aired until last week from that studio. It is necessary to continue with democratic development of BiH institutions and we think that media is the key element of democracy. Now is the time to solve the media issue, especially the electronic media. There is a question of freedom of speech in all this, as well as the following – distortion of news, lies, and threats that the IC had to face in regard to Pale TV. He also suggested establishment of an institution that will issue licence and regulate work of the media, which would be a good path in helping independent media in BiH. Gelbard already talked about this with HR Westendorp. After the meeting with Krajisnik, Gelbard met the other two BiH Presidency members.

3:00

President Plavsic gave an interview to Nasa Borba paper, talking, among other things, about the Belgrade Agreement. This Agreement aims to calm down the situation in the RS, which should be much easier after the parliamentary elections. She said that she is not satisfied with the current situation with the RS media, adding that the only way to preserve the RS

is by implementing the DPA. She also said that she is not sure whether some other peace agreement would guarantee that the RS would gain what it gained through the DPA. Commenting on the latest SFOR action on seizing Pale TV transmitters, Plavsic said that the Udrigovo agreement was violated by us [referring to Pale TV]. She underlined that no-one has the right to make experiments with the people, and the people will have the chance to decide whom they trust at the forthcoming elections. On the question as to why she relies on the IC so much, Plavsic said that she wants to pick up good ideas from the west and apply them to the RS in order to develop democracy in this territory.

4:00

Serbian and Montenegrin elections – The second round of elections brought to the surface four names of candidates for Presidents of Serbia and Montenegro: Lilic (Milosevic's candidate), Seselj (Serb Radical Party) – for Serbia, and Bulatovic and Djukanovic for Montenegro. The response of voters is very low, and if less than half of population vote, the elections will be declared null and void.

3:00

Weekly Review

1. On October 1, SFOR punished Pale TV because they violated the Udrigovo Agreement reporting unprofessionally and extremely pretentiously about the IC, whereas the item on Prosecutor Arbour reached the climax. In that regard, Plavsic sent a letter to the IC asking them to allow Pale TV to join the unified SRT network, whereas the Government continued their old story blaming the whole world for everything that doesn't suit them.
2. Plavsic met Gelbard and talked to him about various issues. He expressed his satisfaction with the holding of parliamentary elections and having OSCE monitoring them.

3. Plavsic said that media must work professionally in order to reach the same level of professionalism that is present in other world countries.
4. The CoM in Sarajevo signed the MoU with the Finnish Government on reconstruction of the water system in Sarajevo.
5. In FRY, Belgrade Mayor Djindjic was ousted and independent radio Studio B was closed down, whereas in Kosovo, Albanians organised protest expressing again their separatist ideas.
6. Yesterday, SRT Pale decided to go on strike because of the latest events, which was accepted by Banja Luka Studio with regret since they had asked from SFOR to allow Pale TV to rejoin the joint SRT network, and respect the Udrigovo Agreement in the future. The RS will survive as a whole, but it is very important to remember that one should respect agreements signed with the IC, especially if that person is responsible for whole RS people. One should also remember that we should not bluff and play, because we had lost our people and territories because of bluffing with the IC before.

4:00

Novi Grad – Plavsic's party Serb National Union was established in this little town at the ceremony that was held today. Plavsic also attended the ceremony, saying that the IC wants to see a development of democracy in the RS which is in tradition of the Serb people. It is true that this could not be seen during years of totalitarian regime, that is already behind the RS people now. People showed their tendency towards democracy, and such process will officially begin with the parliamentary elections.

3:00

Pale – As a part of a strike of Pale TV called 'The Freedom', TV employees organised a panel discussion with Krajisnik as one of the guests. He said that the main democratic right –

the freedom of media was violated by stopping the programme from one of SRT studios.

2:00

Collegium of Banja Luka TV editors sent an open letter to OHR regarding the last night's programme aired in accordance with the Agreement Krajisnik – Shinseki. The letter said that both SRT viewers and SRT staff were extremely dissatisfied with the programme. The content of the programme was provocative and politically thoughtless. Your advisors must have been deluded if he/she thought that this is the way to spread democracy. They said that Banja Luka TV is doing their best to keep up with democratic courses, but the type of programme that was aired yesterday did not keep up with that course itself. Kenovic and Sidran are among Muslim nationalist leaders and supporters of the policy that has been led from Sarajevo. To prevent such misunderstandings, Banja Luka TV suggests suspension of the Dayton Agreement because it has become harmful. However, Banja Luka studio will be open for live interviews with IC representatives, and programmes that will contribute to permanent peace and mutual respect.

3:00

Independent Serb Democratic Party sent an open letter to Croatian President Tudjman demanding from him to influence the state media and stop them creating intolerance and mistrust towards the Serbs in Eastern Slavonija.