

OHR SRT News Summary, 10 Dec. 1997

Headlines

- The Bonn conference ended with the adoption of a final document – a basis for the future implementation of the Dayton Agreement
- The RS and the FRY delegations left the conference
- The fifth attempt to elect the Banja Luka Mayor failed
- Today is the international day of human rights

A two-day conference on BH ended in Bonn today. According to the Head of the FRY delegation, Dragan Vukicevic, his delegation left the conference towards the end because the issue of Kosovo had been included in the final document and it had refused to accept its conclusions. Representatives of the RS, including Plavsic, Krajisnik and Bosic, also left the session as a sign of solidarity with the FRY delegation. The FRY delegation, namely, believed that the Kosovo issue was not the responsibility of the PIC, but rather an internal affair of Serbia and the FRY. The 28-page final document deals with all the problems that have so far been encountered in the implementation of the DA. The document is supposed to serve as a basis for determining the future strategy in implementing the DA. Klaus Kinkel, at a press conference after the PIC meeting, stated that those Bosnian factions that obstruct the implementation of the DA, the return of refugees and block the development of the economy would have to face political and economic sanctions. Unlike the Sintra Declaration, the Bonn one does not have so many deadlines, but the Bonn deadlines are shorter. An agreement on common currency must be reached by the 20th December deadline, the common flag agreement must be reached by the end of the current year, and agreement on common licence plates by 31st January 1998. Starting 1st March

1998, RS citizens will not have to obtain visas to enter Croatia. The Conference also decided to suspend the ongoing privatisation process in the area.

2:49

According to a statement by Robert Gelbard, the Special American Envoy for the Balkans, the Bonn conference had authorised the High representative to remove any officials within BH joint institutions, should their activities or their lack of activity be assessed as blocking the implementation of the DA. Gelbard went on to accuse the totalitarian authorities in Pale of being responsible for blocking the DA. Should the High Representative, Gelbard said, decide to remove any Serb official, and the Serb side fails to appoint a new one, the institution concerned will, however, continue to work normally.

0:41

Klaus Kinkel, the German Foreign minister, today stated that no anti-Serb positions were behind the PIC conclusions made at the Bonn conference regarding the Kosovo issue, but that they had rather come as a result of the PIC's wish to ensure peace in the region. Stressing that the decision to add the Kosovo issue to the agenda came following strong requests by some PIC delegations, including Great Britain and the U.S., Kinkel stated that the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister had also agreed with the proposal.

0:46

In a statement to BETA, the Deputy High Representative, Jacques Klein, said that the FRY delegation had not left the Bonn conference because of Kosovo, but rather because of the forthcoming presidential elections in Serbia. Namely, the FRY delegation, Klein said, assessed that the time was not right to sign any controversial declaration referring to the rights of Kosovo Albanians.

0:19

German media today claim that the IC had run out of patience and had, therefore, decided to strengthen the respective mandates of SFOR and the High Representative in BH. German commentators quote a statement by Klaus Kinkel yesterday claiming that the IC could eventually move to make decisions contrary to the will of the Bosnian people.

0:25

All Austrian electronic media today report that the FRY delegation had left the Bonn conference before it ended due to the insistence by some countries that the so-called Kosovo issue should be included in the final document. While refraining from commenting on the matter themselves, the Austrian media report on regrets expressed by official circles in Paris regarding the decision by the FRY and the RS delegations to leave the conference.

0:42

The American media today comment that, two years after the DA was signed, international diplomats at conferences in Bonn and Vienna had tried to revive the weakening DA by warning Bosnian leaders that the world had got tired of the BH boiling pot.

0:25

Aleksa Buha, the President of the SDS Presidency, said that the party was satisfied with the results of the recently held parliamentary elections in the RS. Buha added that it was normal and logical to have members of the winning party appointed to the respective positions of the Speaker of the RS Parliament and the RS Prime Minister. The democratic right of the first move, Buha said, should not be disregarded here solely because the SDS was the party that won the elections.

0:49

The President of the RS Socialist Party, at a press conference today, stated that this party would work to establish the RS Parliament as soon as possible. The SP RS, together with the SNSD and the SNS have launched an initiative to hold the

constitutive session of the RS Parliament by 23rd December at the latest, and to appoint the new Government by mid January.

0:32

Banja Luka municipal deputies today failed to elect a local Mayor for the fifth time in the last few months. Namely, the fifth meeting of the first session of the local Municipal Assembly that resumed this morning, was adjourned again this afternoon, after none of the proposed candidates for the respective positions of the local Mayor, his Deputy and the Head of the Town Administration had obtained a sufficient number of votes. The session is expected to resume on 15th December.

1:35

The fifth meeting of the first session of the Prijedor Municipal Assembly today failed to appoint the Deputy Mayor of Prijedor again. 54 of the 65 deputies attended the session. A newly proposed candidate from the Serb Party of Krajina and Posavina refused his candidature, which is why the present deputies had to choose again between the two previously proposed candidates, from the Serb Radical Party and the Coalition for United and Democratic Bosnia respectively. Neither of the two, however, obtained majority votes in the first round of voting. The second round did not elect the Deputy Mayor either, and the deputies decided to resume the session on 16th December.

1:25

The Leader of the Independent Serb Democratic Party, Vojislav Stanimirovic, today stated that about 100,000 Serbs would remain in Eastern Slavonia permanently, after the complete withdrawal of UNTAES scheduled for 15th January. The safety of the remaining Serbs will be secured by 180 IPTF officers, and 1,700 local police officers, 800 of which will be Serbs. According to the Head of the Joint Council of Municipalities, the Serb requests include dual citizenship, the demilitarization of the area, a longer period of moratorium on

Serbs serving in the Croatian Army and soft borders as an additional safety measure. Starting 15th December, the current transitional police forces will start to be taken over by the Croatian Ministry of Interior.

2:05

Representatives of international humanitarian organisations today failed to attend a planned meeting with representatives of the Regional Association of Refugees and DPs in Bileca. The meeting was supposed to discuss the issue of abandoned property in the area, possible international humanitarian help in resolving the issue of employment for refugees and DPs and others. No vital issues related to the problems of local refugees and DPs, who are now about 28,000, has yet been resolved in the area of Eastern Hercegovina. Only 277 displaced families have so far been provided with permanent accommodation. About 10,000 are unemployed. The Association has, therefore, issued a request that the Central Commission for Refugees and DPs should establish an office in the town of Bileca to cover the entire region.

2:54

U.S. President, Bill Clinton, today stated that a permanent International Tribunal for War Crimes Against Humanity should be established by the end of the current century. Clinton stressed that all Bosnian war crime indictees must be brought to justice by the IC.

0:24