

OHR SRT News Summary, 11 Dec. 1997

Headlines

- The conference on BH that ended in Bonn yesterday was aimed at designing a plan needed to speed up the implementation of the DA in BH in 1998
- The Bonn conference document anticipates new developments

(Telephone interview with President Plavsic) "I will just brief our people on the conference now, and I plan to inform them in detail once I have returned to Banja Luka. The people in RS should be worried about the conclusions made at the conference. The new powers that the High Representative was given here are not worrying. For example, on the issue of media, we can work hard to professionalise the media as a preventive measure and thus prevent Mr. Westendorp from resorting to this new mandate of his that covers media-related issues too.. On the return of refugees, as the most difficult part of the DA, there was not much discussion on the matter. Participants, especially the key ones, understood that the return process must be accompanied by larger investments in the RS. My speech focused on the issue of refugees in the RS. I presented the conference with the refugee problems in the RS, I even mentioned that a few have already started to arrive from Eastern Slavonia, while the economic capacity of the RS was poorer by far than that of the Federation. We need to respect the DA, but from what I saw at the conference it seems that people have started to understand what happened here and the changed their opinions even regarding the very beginning of the war in the RS. The conference referred to Krajisnik as the representative of hard-line politics in the RS, which implied that there was also soft-line politics. However, in my

speech, I stressed that neither the hard line nor the soft line can help the people that we represented at the conference, but rather realistic politics.

Our public has already been informed that the FRY representative along with the RS delegation left the conference after the Kosovo issue had been raised. Namely, several participants referred to the issue in their speeches. I think that a conference that was to focus on a very delicate situation in the RS and the BH Federation need not have taken up this very complicated and difficult issue, and, also, the Dayton Agreement does not cover the Kosovo issue. However, in the conclusions made by the conference, there are only two lines related to the issue. Nevertheless, if they did want to initiate a discussion on the matter, I do not think that it was appropriate because Kosovo is part of Serbia, and should remain an internal matter of a sovereign state. After the FRY delegation left the conference I stayed for another few minutes to tell the conference what I just told you. To tell the participants that the place was not right to discuss the matter, that the conference was convened to focus on the Dayton Agreement, rather than on the Kososvo issue, and that there were no competent people from Serbia at the conference, who could respond to various insinuations and questions regarding the matter."

8:30

Momcilo Krajisnik, at a press conference in Pale today, stated that the platform of the RS delegation at the Bonn conference was fully compliant with the DA, and that any possible revision of the DA without the consent by all three sides would be dangerous. Krajisnik went on to stress that the RS delegation assessed that the implementation of the DA had so far gone successfully, and that the criticism expressed at the conference in terms of unsatisfactory implementation was unfounded and too strong.

0:43

The German media today mainly focus on the outcome of the Bonn conference. "Frankfurter Rundschau" thus stresses that the afternoon round of the Bonn conference had proved that planned firmer activities by the IC in BH were really necessary. The dramatic departure of the respective delegations from the FRY and the RS proved two main truths: firstly, that the IC should have resorted to determined disciplinary measures a long time ago, and, secondly, that there will be situations where President Plavsic will listen to her national feelings, rather than the voice of a rational political reality. The newspaper stressed that the Bosnian issue, just like the Kosovo one, would remain unresolvable as long as Milosevic had power in Serbia. Another German newspaper also agreed that a more determined approach by the IC in Bosnia announced by Minister Kinkel was really necessary, because, otherwise, the extended mandate of the High Representative will be impossible to put into practice. "Kolnen Stadt Einzeigen" however, believed that the conference was successful and that it clearly demonstrated the decisiveness of the IC to cut off reconstruction support for those who disrespect the DA and do not reconstruct.

2:16

The Spokesperson for the OHR, Aisling Byrne, stated that the powers that had been assumed by the High Representative under the conclusions made by the Bonn conference now could be used in a better and more efficient way. Byrne stressed that the High Representative now had the authority to make decisions on matters that the three Bosnian nations failed to agree on, and that should the deadline set in the Bonn conference conclusions not be respected, the High Representative would have the mandate to come up with his own solutions that would remain in force as long as the respective Bosnian authorities were not able to make good decisions themselves.

0:40

The Secretary General of the Serb Radical Party, Ognjen Tadic, today stated that the RS delegation had the full right to

leave the Bonn conference. According to him, the decision to leave the conference was a positive move, which proved that the key Serb leaders had eventually got together around the most vital Serb national interests. Tadic, however, noted that the move was primarily initiated by Milosevic, who wanted to buy time and to obtain new political scores for the left-wing candidate at the forthcoming presidential elections in Serbia.

0:36

Commenting on the Bonn conference, the Vice-President of the Serb National Union, Ostoja Knezevic, stated that he was not sure whether the decision to leave the conference now could significantly affect relations between the RS and the IC. What is important is that the conference made conclusions related to the further implementation of the DA. On the issue of Kosovo, Knezevic stressed that it was a Serbian internal matter that needed to be resolved within Serbian institutions. Based on the behaviour of some political parties in the RS that wanted to portray themselves in public as parties that will work to save the RS, the IC made an assessment of potential disagreements here and, therefore, decided to broaden the mandate of the High Representative in order to speed up implementation of the DA.

0:58

The RS Socialist Party has released a statement on the Bonn conference in which the President of the Party, Zivko Radisic, described the attempt to open a discussion on the Kosovo issue as being in violation of the spirit of positive diplomatic intentions and as a sign of the lack of appreciation for the integrity and the sovereignty of the FRY. We support the move by the RS delegation to leave the conference together with their colleagues from the FRY.

0:46

The Yugoslav Government today supported the decision by the FRY delegation to leave the Bonn conference following an attempt by some participants to directly interfere with

Serbian internal matters. The majority of political parties in Serbia today also supported the decision by the FRY delegation to leave the conference. Those are the Serbian Socialist Party, the Serb Radical Party, the JUL, the Communist Union – Movement for Yugoslavia, the Radical Party of Nikola Pasic and the Serbian Democratic Party. The Serb Movement of Renewal , however, described the move as being “in the interests of the state and the national damage”.

1:06

The President of the RS Socialist Party, Zivko Radisic, today addressed a letter to the RS President, Biljana Plavsic, and the Speaker of the first convocation of the RS Parliament, Dragan Kalinic, appealing to them to employ their utmost efforts to establish the new RS Parliament as soon as possible.

Radisic proposed 23rd December as the date for the first session of the new Parliament and also proposed the town of Brcko to host the session because of the well-known strategic importance of the town for the RS.

0:55

The second regular session of the Gradiska Municipal Assembly today removed the old Vice-President of the Municipal Executive Council along with all its old members, and appointed two new Vice-Presidents and other members of the municipal administration. The new composition of the Executive Council was fully supported by the Coalition for United and Democratic Bosnia and by representatives of all 7 political parties from the RS.

1:09

Ostoja Knezevic, the Vice-President of the Serb National Union, at a meeting with the respective local SNS boards and their vice-presidents in Banja Luka this evening, said that the SNS must now work to justify the confidence of RS voters expressed at the recently held parliamentary elections. Our

priority is the economy now. The ruling party will try to buy our MPs, as they have already tried with the Socialist Party.

1:07

A delegation of the RS Army General-Staff today met with the management of the Bijeljina-based "Orao" Aviation Institute. The meeting discussed the crisis that recently emerged following the decision by the RS Government to remove the current Director of the Institute and to relocate it to the territory of Serb Sarajevo. After the meeting, Teodosije Kecman, the Deputy Director of the Institute, told the press that the Chief of the RS Army General-Staff, General Pero Colic, had given assurances that the situation would remain the way it was before the disputable decisions by the RS Government. If the illegal activities against the Institute should, however, continue, the 450 employee will be prepared to resign collectively. Kecman informed the employees that the removed Director would be invited to return from Belgrade, where he had to flee for he was threatened with arrest, to Bijeljina. The management of the Institute announced that the press would be presented with copies of all documents and decisions related to the work of the Institute tomorrow, after which the situation in terms of who is putting pressure on the RS judiciary, including the RS Supreme Court, would become clearer.

2:41

The Spokesperson for the SFOR MND North, at a press conference in Dobojski today, clarified that SFOR had no authority to react regarding the shipment of sophisticated weaponry that the FRY military recently received from China, and that the balance of armaments in the possession of the formerly warring parties would not be affected. The IPTF Spokesperson participating at the press conference was not able to confirm or deny a news report by ONASA claiming that police loyal to President Plavsic had taken control of the town of Brcko. The IPTF Spokesperson added that the situation in Zepca, where some

incidents had recently taken place, had now been reported as satisfactory.

1:25