

OHR SRT News Summary, 17 May 1999

Headlines:

- Belgrade, Bor, Smederevo, Cacak, Kraljevo and Kosovo Polje targeted by [NATO](#) missiles
- [EU](#) Foreign Ministers discussing a draft resolution on Kosovo in Brussels
- Representatives of the [IMF](#) in BiH on the eve of the new donors conference
- A special session of the RS NA to take place in Banja Luka tomorrow

Politika TV has reported on one casualty in today's [NATO](#) air strikes against Bor. Studio B reports that a gas warehouse in Smederevo was bombed. Two rounds of [NATO](#) air strikes were also reported in Belgrade.

In addition, the areas of Lipovica, Batajnica, Velika Plana, Cacak (railway station and other targets), Uzice (airport) and Kraljevo were bombed today.

FRY Army air defence units shot down a [NATO](#) aircraft flying over the village of Donja Budriga, the municipality of Gnjilane, at around 09:30 hrs this morning.

In Kosovo, the following areas were bombed by [NATO](#): Djurakovac, the village of Emce, Tresnja (municipality of Prizren) and the village of Reka.

A [UN](#) delegation is currently visiting Belgrade to prepare the ground for the arrival of the first representatives of international organisations in Kosovo since the beginning of [NATO](#) bombings. According to Belgrade media, the [UN](#) delegation could possibly meet with President Milosevic.

Foreign Ministers of [EU](#) member states and the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, are meeting in Brussels today. The meeting is discussing diplomatic efforts to resolve the Kosovo crisis and the relations between the [EU](#) and Russia which have been affected by [NATO](#) air strikes against the FRY. BETA reports that the Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic, is expected to attend the meeting and announcements have been made claiming the participation of the leader of the Democratic Union of Kosovo, Ibrahim Rugova. BETA today published the unofficial translation of draft conclusions to be adopted at today's meeting in Brussels.

Tanjug has reported that a high-level official of the German Foreign Ministry, Gunter Werhoigen, today expressed scepticism regarding the proposal by the Italian Prime Minister, Massimo D'Alema, on the cessation of the [NATO](#) aggression and the solution of the Kosovo crisis.

After meeting the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Knut Vollebaek, who is also the Head of [OSCE](#), the Finnish President, Martti Athisaari, stated that the [UN](#) SG, Kofi Annan, supported him in his taking over as Envoy for the Balkans crisis. Athisaari went on to announce that his mandate would shortly be formalised.

The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, stated in Helsinki that the [EU](#) fully supported the appointment of the Finnish President as an international mediator for the Kosovo conflict.

AP reports that the U.S. Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, has claimed that signs have been registered in the FRY of discontent of Serb civilians and troops with the policy of President Milosevic.

According to a news report by Reuters, the British Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, at a [NATO](#) press conference, has not dismissed the possibility of [NATO](#) troops' involvement in a

possible land offensive in Kosovo. According to an assistant to Tchernomyrdin, Valentin Sergeyev, the Special Envoy of the Russian President has today met with the U.S. Ambassador in Moscow. Sergeyev specified that the meeting had discussed issues related to the meeting between Tchernomyrdin, Finnish President Ahtisaari and Deputy U.S. Secretary of State Talbot, which is to take place in Helsinki tomorrow. Tanjug has quoted Sergeyev as claiming that Tchernomyrdin will most probably be visiting Belgrade after the meeting in Helsinki.

After meeting Tchernomyrdin today, the Spanish Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, stressed that he was confident that a peaceful solution for the Kosovo crisis could possibly be reached in the next few days.

The Greek Defence Minister today stated that a [NATO](#) land operation in Kosovo was unacceptable and suggested that multi-national peace forces should be deployed in the area instead.

Today's regular [NATO](#) press briefing in Brussels primarily focused on the fate of Albanians who have stayed in Kosovo. Spokesperson Shea expressed concerns about reports claiming that the remaining Kosovo Albanians were being used as human shields. According to Shea, about 40,000 Albanians are now heading towards the South of Kosovo and young Albanians are being taken off the buses. Shea went on to say that member states of the G8 were currently designing a draft resolution of the [UN](#). General Jertz stated that no signs of FRY military troops withdrawing from Kosovo had been noted in the area and that there were about 580,000 internally displaced Albanians in Kosovo.

(foreign media reports) According to a BBC news report, Clinton's Administration has confirmed statements by military commanders saying that [NATO](#) cannot win the campaign against the FRY without the deployment of ground troops. "The New York Times" has today carried a warning by the Special Russian Envoy for the Balkans, Victor Tchernomyrdin, saying that

President Milosevic has become frustrated at the slow pace of negotiations which, as he said, has increased Milosevic's mistrust when it comes to the intentions of Moscow.

"El Pais" today claimed that the conflict in Kosovo was actually a war between superior technology on one side and heroism of one nation on the other side. The newspaper went to say that a new term of "collateral damage" had been invented to justify civilian victims of high technology.

The new Communist Party of Macedonia has today sharply protested against the ban on re-broadcasting of RTS Main News program by private TV stations in Tetovo, Gostivar and Ohrid.

Reuters has quoted a Pentagon official as saying that the two Yugoslav soldiers who are being kept in a U.S. military base in Germany are expected to be released today. "The Washington Post" has also confirmed the report on the release of two FRY soldiers.

President Milosevic met with a top-level FRY official today. The meeting discussed the normalisation of situation in Kosovo.

According to a statement given by an [EU](#) official to Reuters, the Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic, has today requested the [EU](#) to identify a new person to replace President Milosevic in efforts aimed at reaching a diplomatic solution for Kosovo. Talks that are currently ongoing in Brussels are also being attended by Ibrahim Rugova.

The Montenegrin Prime Minister, Filip Vujanovic, has today stated that the decision by the FRY Government introducing a visa regime for Italian citizens in Montenegro will not be implemented.

The FRY State Prosecutor, Vukasin Jokanovic, met with the former U.S. State Prosecutor, Remzy Clark, to discuss the Kosovo crisis.

The Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, Bratislava Morina, has today stated that 80% of collective centres housing refugees from Croatia and Bosnia have been damaged in [NATO](#) air strikes so far.

(reactions by FRY political parties and institutions – the Democratic Party of Serbia; the Serb Radical Part; the Left-Wing Radical Party- Nikola Pasic; the SP0; the FRY Patriotic Union; the Directorate of the FRY Left -Wingers)

(breaking news) The [UN](#) SG, Kofi Annan, at today's joint press conference with the Dutch Prime Minister in The Hague, appealed to the FRY leadership to be open to a solution of the Kosovo crisis in order to stop the bombing and destruction.

(RS-related news)

The RS vice-president, Mirko Sarovic, the President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, and the Speaker of the RS NA, Petar Djokic, held separate meetings with the Head of the [EU](#) Mission in BiH today. The meeting primarily focused on the current situation in the RS and BiH in the light of the developments in the FRY, the forthcoming donors conference and the implementation of the DA.

The Speaker of the RS NA, Petar Djokic, has scheduled the third extraordinary session of this body for tomorrow. The planned agenda involves only one item – preparations for its participation in the forthcoming donor conference scheduled for 20th and 21st May.

The RS Prime Minister, Milorad Dodik, met with the respective ambassadors of [EU](#) member states in BiH, in Serb Sarajevo today. The meeting discussed the overall political situation in the region and the forthcoming donor conference.

The RS Minister for Refugees and DPs, Miladin Dragicevic, has received a [UN](#) delegation led by the Special [UN](#) Rapporteur on Human Rights, Jiri Dienstbier, in BL today. The meeting

discussed the situation of human rights following the arrival of a large number of refugees from the FRY.

Members of the BiH CoM met in Sarajevo today to discuss preparations that are under way for the forthcoming donor conference in Brussels. The same matter was also discussed at a meeting between a Co-chairman of the CoM, Svetozar Mihajlovic, and representatives of the [IMF](#).

The Minister for civilian affairs and communications at the BiH CoM, Marko Asanin, met with the U.S. Ambassador in BiH, Richard Kauzlarich, today. The meeting discussed problems that had emerged in the RS and BiH as a result of the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY, refugees and economic difficulties.

The President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, met with the Croatian Ambassador in BiH, Damir Zoric, in BL today. The Meeting discussed overall cooperation between BiH and Croatia.

A delegation of Banja Luka led by its Mayor, Djordje Umicevic, has returned from Moscow where it participated in the work of the International forum for improving peace in the world.

The HR, Carlos Westendorp, today assessed that the main reason behind poor functioning of the BiH Federation was the lack of confidence and understanding between the federal partners. Westendorp went on to warn that if no progress was made on returns, which would also contribute to confidence building, there would be no international support for the Federation.