OHR SRT News Summary, 18 Jan. 1998

Headlines

- The RS has a new Government with Milorad Dodik as the new Prime Minister
- The newly-elected Prime Minister announces a united and integrated RS and the full implementation of the Dayton Agreement as two main priorities to be worked on by the new Government
- International officials welcome the election of the new RS Government
- While the British hope to see a diplomatic solution of the Iraq crisis, Sadam Husein appeals to volunteers to get involved in military training.

Early this morning, respective RS MPs from the Serb National Union, the RS Socialist Party, the Party of Independent Social Democrats, the Coalition for United and Democratic Bosnia and the BH Social- Democratic Party elected Milorad Dodik as the new RS Prime Minister and adopted his proposal on the composition of the future RS governmental cabinet that will consist of 20 ministers. The session of the RS Parliament that elected Dodik, along with the ministers, was not attended by MPs from the SDS and the Serb Radical Party, which is why only 42 of the 83 MPs supported Dodik and the new Government.

The newly appointed Prime Minister stressed that the Government would primarily work to preserve a united and integrated RS, to implement fully the Dayton Agreement, to curb crime and corruption, particularly in state bodies, and to provide necessary reconstruction and development funds. In his speech to the session, Dodik stressed that the urgent and full implementation of the DA in both Bosnian entities was the only way to achieve lasting peace in the region. Dodik added

that the final settlement to the current political crisis in the RS, along with the restoration of homogenous authorities throughout the RS, was not only in the interest of the Serb people in the RS, but also in the interest of all its citizens. According to Dodik, the new Government will not let the current situation of dual power continue like this, because it would be in contravention of the RS Constitution. Speaking about economic development and post-war regeneration of the RS, Dodik described the current situation of the RS as that of no economy at all. "Our economy needs to go through the process of full reconstruction and privatisation. To this end, the new Government will come up with an urgent draft package of laws that should have been passed immediately after the Dayton Agreement was signed. These primarily include laws and regulations regarding companies, the reconstruction of banks, changes to the current Privatisation Act and the establishment of a special agency". Dodik went on to accuse the SDS of misusing the on-going privatisation process to gain profit to the detriment of ordinary people. The privatisation process, as seen by Dodik, will not result in the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

The new Prime Minister also proposed a composition of the new RS Government that will include 20 ministers, four of which will also act as Vice -Presidents. The present MPs supported the proposed composition, after which Dodik spoke to the session again and promised that the new Government would work in line with the law and in the interest of the RS people. "They accuse us of many things, including our relations with the IC. But I promise to the High Representative here that he will have many problems with me. We will work to achieve quick and efficient solutions, and to quickly implement agreements that will be reached."
8:29

RS President, Biljana Plavsic, in a statement given in Bijeljina, said that the new RS Government had been formed in

line with the will of RS parliamentary parties. Plavsic went on to blame the SDS and the Serb Radical Party (SRS) for not attending the session that elected the new Government and the new Prime Minister. Stressing that hard work and many challenges were ahead of the new Government, Plavsic appealed to newly appointed government officials to put aside their parties' interests and work as state officials rather than as members of a political party. "The interest of the RS President is to ensure the functioning of the state, which is an interest that is a way above remarks they (SDS and SRS) have made here. I expect a lot from you. It was difficult to rule the RS without a government and without a parliament, but it was worth working hard to preserve the RS and to return it to the right path. I hope that we will run a democratic marathon in the months to go before this September, and also in the four-year term after the September elections".
5:41

KRAJISNIK – "I am deeply disappointed with what is currently going on within the RS Parliament. I do not think we are aware that the current situation threatens to bring the RS to the edge of chaos. Bad business has been accomplished today where the IC was used forcibly to elect a new prime minister. I, therefore, appeal to all those involved to think things over in the next few days and work to achieve a Serb consensus on the new Government. There must not be any outvoting here. This was the case in the old BH Parliament which, then, led to a catastrophe, We all need to display more wisdom and have the RS as our top priority interest now".
1:00

RADISIC – On behalf of the RS Socialist Party, Radisic thanked the RS Parliament for having accomplished the hard and responsible work of electing the new RS Government and the new Prime Minister. Radisic hoped that the newly elected Prime Minister, along with other ministers, were aware of the responsibility that their election involved, especially under

the current difficult conditions.
1:24

According to Reuters, the High Representative, Carlos Westendorp, today welcomed the election of the new RS Government. Spokesperson for the HR, Duncan Bullivant, stated that the new RS Government would be offered full support by the IC.
0:26

The German Foreign Minister, Klaus Kinkel, today promised urgent and full support for the newly formed RS Government. Kinkel went on to describe the appointment of Milorad Dodik as the new RS Prime Minister as an important step in the implementation of the DA.
0:23

The trial of a Serb, Slavko Dokmanovic, who was formerly the Mayor of Vukovar, on alleged war crimes is to begin before the Hague Tribunal tomorrow.
0:17

After meeting with leaders of parliamentary parties today, the recently appointed Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic, proposed the current Minister of Interior as a candidate for the position of new Montenegrin Prime Minister. While consultations with opposition parties are still on-going, Djukanovic is expected to present his proposal officially within few days. World media continue to monitor carefully the situation in Montenegro. Official circles in Washington have welcomed the final inauguration of Djukanovic and have expressed readiness to support “the reformatory Government in Podgorica”, ignoring the fact that Djukanovic’s official inauguration witnessed violent police action against participants of three-day peaceful demonstrations that had taken place prior to the inauguration day. Commenting on protests and demonstrations on the streets of the Montenegrin capital on the eve of Djukanovic’s inauguration, a

representative of the U.S. State Department reiterated an appeal by Washington to the Montenegrin leadership to work to overcome divisions that had arisen in the last few weeks and to focus on necessary political and economic reforms. It is, however, still uncertain whether this involves stronger police measures against those who disagree with the newly appointed leadership.
1:37

The main Macedonian daily newspaper today claims that the so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) controls 50 villages (approximately 60,000 people, 99 % of which are Albanians), in an area about 50 kilometers away from Pristina. According to the newspaper, members of the KLA wear camouflage uniforms and black hoods, carry kalashnykovs and speak Albanian and German. During the day, they wear civilian clothes and patrol the controlled villages. The Vice-President of the Kosovo Democratic Union, Fahim Nagani, stated that his party disagreed with those who wished to provoke conflicts with the Serbs. According to the leader of the Serb Movement of Resistance, Momcilo Trajkovic, members of the so-called KLA are rough terrorists who are supported from abroad. Trajkovic warned that the FRY and Macedonia would most likely break apart in the event of the establishment of a Republic of Kosovo. The Vice-President of the Kosovo Parliamentary Party, Bajram Rusumi, described members of the KLA as extremists who were using radical methods.
1:35

According to the President of the RS Trade Union Congress, Cedo Volas, schools in the RS will start working on 26th January. However, representatives of local RS trade unions of culture, education and science met in Teslic today to discuss the on-going strike of RS teachers who work in primary and secondary schools. The President of the local Trade Union in Teslic, in an introductory speech, stated that strikers were facing many problems, including attempts by some school

principals to obstruct the strike. The meeting concluded that the strike would not cease until all requests by striking teachers were met.
1:35