

OHR SRT News Summary, 19 May 1999

Headlines:

- RS delegation arrives in Brussels to attend donors conference
- 4 killed and 19 injured – toll of today's [NATO](#) attacks in Kosovo
- Solution of Kosovo crisis – discussed between Schroeder, Solana and Clark today
- Sergey Stepashyn officially becomes Russian Prime Minister

The RS delegation arrived in Brussels today to attend the fifth donors conference scheduled for tomorrow and the day after. Aside from its leader, the RS PM, Milorad Dodik, the delegation is also comprised of Djuradj Banjac, a RS Deputy PM, Novak Kondic, the RS Minister of Finances, Savo Loncar, the RS Minister of foreign economic relations, and Miladin Dragicevic, the RS Minister for refugees and DPs. The delegation is expected to address the conference and inform it about the principles of the RS development strategy until the year 2006. Donors will be urged to redress the existing imbalance in donors' resources between the RS and the Federation. Special interest has been aroused by a position that is expected to be taken by the IC tomorrow on the economic impact of the Kosovo crisis on BiH. Before leaving for Brussels, the RS PM gave a statement at BL airport. According to Dodik, the second day of the conference will mainly focus on consequences of the situation in the FRY affecting the RS economy.

The Cabinet of the Speaker of the RS NA has released a statement today saying that the sixth session of the RS NA is going to take place in BL on 31 May. The session will discuss

a report on the implementation of the RS NA Resolution dated 7 March 1999 relating to the Brcko Arbitral Award and the participation of RS representatives in the work of common institutions.

At least 4 civilian have been reported killed and 19 injured in today's [NATO](#) air strikes against Gnjilane. [NATO](#) also bombed exclusively civilian targets in the area of Prizren. No casualties have been reported. [NATO](#) further bombed the area of Pec, Istok, the village of Vojin Do, the municipality of Gora, the village of Ljubisda, Belajcevac and Pomazatin. The area of Raska was bombed several times today, including the mountain of Kopaonik and the area of Sjenica. In the area of the municipality of Pcinj, the village of Bujanovac was bombed. During the past night, [NATO](#) bombed a gas warehouse in the Belgrade settlement of Cukarica.

A meeting between the political directors of the G8 member states and Russia started in Bonn late this afternoon to design a [UN](#) resolution containing conditions for the cessation of the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY. The meeting is also being attended by Carl Bildt whereas U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Talbott is expected to joint it later on to inform participants about the talks in Helsinki.

News agencies have described the two-day Helsinki meeting between Chernomyrdin, Athisaari, the Finnish President, and Talbott, the Deputy U.S. Secretary of State as positive. While no details have been released, "Itar Tass" agency reports that the meeting has formulated a position towards the cessation of the [NATO](#) aggression. The same participants will be meeting in Moscow tomorrow, after Chernomyrdin's return from Belgrade.

The newly appointed Russian PM, Sergey Stepashyn, speaking to the Russian Duma, described [NATO](#) air strikes as being not only an attack against the FRY, but also against Russia and that people should draw conclusions from that.

After meeting Solana and Clark, the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, stressed that he fully agreed with the current parallel military-diplomatic strategy of [NATO](#) towards the FRY but that he was against the deployment of troops on the ground.

The Italian PM, Massimo D'Alema, has stated in Rome that the policy towards the Kosovo crisis that is pursued by Italy has gone a step ahead of Italian [NATO](#) allies and has described a [UN](#) resolution that would be based on conclusions by the G8 as being "realistic and necessary".

The Greek Foreign Minister, in a statement given to a Greek Radio Flash, stated that France, Italy and Germany supported the Greek initiative asking for a 48-hour lull in [NATO](#) bombing of the FRY with a view to enabling a peaceful solution for Kosovo.

According to "New York Times" today, the [UN](#) Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, has expressed dissatisfaction with efforts to marginalise the role of the [UN](#) in resolving the Kosovo crisis. Kofi Annan has also been quoted as criticising the U.S. for launching a military operation without waiting for approval by the [UN](#) SC and Russia for ignoring activities of ethnic cleansing which, as he has said, triggered the [NATO](#) air strikes.

BETA reports that the EC has adopted a proposal on severing the existing economic sanctions against the FRY and Serbia, thus allowing for broader decisions on banning investments and freezing of FRY resources abroad.

(breaking news) BETA has learnt from Russian sources that the talks between President Milosevic of the FRY and the Russian Envoy, Victor Tchernomyrdin, started in Belgrade shortly after 15:00 hrs this afternoon and are still ongoing.

BBC has reported that two leaders of yesterday's demonstrations in Krusevac are going to be tried for treason.

Tanjug has reported on a statement released by the Krusevo Garrison HQ saying that the two leaders had been indicted in line with legislation valid in a state of war.

The [UN](#) Secretary- General, Kofi Annan, arrived in Macedonia today for a one day visit to the country. Annan stressed that the Macedonian Government had given him assurances that the border with Kosovo was going to remain open. Annan went on to say that the [UN](#) should have the lead role in resolving the crisis in Kosovo.

[NATO](#) held a regular press briefing in Brussels today. Spokesperson Shea stated that only 19 Albanian refugees had left for Albania today adding that about 450,000 refugees were currently living in this country. Another 226,000 refugees have been registered in Macedonia. According to Shea, about 130,000 Albanians were still living in their homes in Kosovo. Referring to the deployment of ground troops, Shea stressed that [NATO](#) was united on the matter – no ground troops would be deployed to fight in Kosovo, but to implement peace there. General Jertz spoke about the efficiency of [NATO](#) air raids so far. Referring to the results of [NATO](#) air strikes in the past 24 hours, Jertz claimed that 3 “S Galebs” had been destroyed and one damaged in Kosovo.

A regular international press conference took place in BL today focusing on the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY and the large number of refugees who have arrived in BiH so far.

The RS Commission for tracing missing and captured persons have identified five dead bodies exhumed in the area of Sanski Most and Petrovac on 12 May.

The President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, held separate meetings with the [OSCE](#) Head in BiH, Robert Barry, and the U.S. Ambassador in BiH, Richard Kauzlarich, today. No statements were released after the meetings. Radisic is also expected to meet with the British Ambassador in BiH some time

this afternoon.

Zivko Radisic also visited the municipality of Pale today and met with local authorities there to discuss the modalities of resolving acute problems including that of dissolving collective centres and of economic impact of the [NATO](#) aggression.

The current political situation in the RS was the main topic discussed at today's meeting between the Speaker of the RS NA, Petar Djokic, and the Russian Ambassador in BiH, Philipp Sidorskiy. Ambassador Sidorskiy also met with the RS Vice-President, Mirko Sarovic. No details were released after the meeting. The Russian Ambassador also met with the RS President dismissed by the HR, Nikola Poplasen, behind closed doors today. This was the first diplomatic visit to Poplasen since his dismissal as the RS President. The meeting discussed the current situation in the RS, negative impact of the [NATO](#) aggression, work of RS institutions and the necessity to stabilise the overall situation in the region.

After meeting representatives of the RS Chamber of Commerce in Bijeljina today, the Head of the Serbian Chamber of Commerce, Momir Pavlicevic, stated that the total damage to the FRY caused by [NATO](#) air strikes had amounted to U.S. \$ 56 billion. The meeting also discussed ways to ease trade relations between the two countries especially in the light of recently adopted BiH customs-related legislation.

(Federation-related news)

The SDS held a press conference in BL today concentrating primarily on yesterday's session of the RS NA. Dragan Kalinic stressed that SDS's vote for the RS budget was not a sign of support for Dodik's Government, but rather an attempt to strengthen the RS position at the forthcoming donors conference. Kalinic went on to stress that the RS should do its utmost to ensure the presence of FRY representatives at

the European conference on the Balkans that would be taking place shortly. Milan Tupajic, a SDS MP, said that the SDS was going to raise the issue of Brcko at the next session of the RS NA and expressed dissatisfaction with the results of the work of Serb representatives in common bodies.