

OHR SRT News Summary, 20 January 1999

Headlines

- Terrorist actions continued in Kosovo
- There are still options for a peaceful solution in Kosovo – NATO Council
- Dodik received representatives of the EC in charge of relations with B&H
- Dismissal of the House of Lords in Great Britain – Tony Blair

Dodik received representatives of the EC in charge of relations with B&H. The EC has come to Banja Luka to prepare activities for the future with PM Dodik and his Government – Patrick Reno, EC representative in charge of relations with B&H, said. “I have to express my pleasure at this successful discussion which resulted in consensus on priorities: economic reconstruction above all, creation of conditions for return, development of civic society and state institutions in the RS and B&H” – Dodik said.

0:43

International SRT Administrator sent a letter to the RS President, Nikola Poplasen regarding the President's appearances on the SRT and other TV stations:

Mr. President,

After I had come back from holiday two days ago I was faced with different statements of yours regarding SRT that were much more like a campaign against SRT than a fair cooperation the two of us had talked about immediately after your election as RS President. Your accusations are completely ungrounded and absurd, and the very fact that you could freely say all that you said on SRT on Monday

shows that.

I would like to address some more important issues:

1) You stated that SRT was organised in an “illegal” way and that its scheme was “non-constitutional” and “illegal”. I would like to remind you that the restructuring of SRT started based on the Interim Arrangements signed by the President of the Republika Srpska, Prime Minister and Minister of Information. The National Assembly, which is the highest legislative body of RS, based on the Interim arrangements, elected the Governing Board of SRT and me as its member. The Governing Board elected the General Director. The OSCE Provisional Election Commission made the decision according to which the Statute of SRT, as an integral part of the Interim Arrangements, shall have “precedence over all the existing laws of Entities that regulate SRT in case the existing law is not in conformity with the Statute”. This decision was published in the Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina on August 10, 1998.

What is illegal then?

2) You said on the Independent television on January 11: “I have no opportunity to say anything on SRT. I am not allowed to make a live statement even for a few minutes.” However, the truth is that I personally invited you to be a guest of SRT two days after your election. Immediately after that you got a written invitation by the General Director. On November 20, Predrag Laketa hosted a full hour debate with you on SRT alive. After the Madrid conference, on December 18, you were again a guest of the SRT live programme, together with Mr. Radisic and Mr. Dodik in the programme hosted by Milka Ceremidzic, which lasted for 102 minutes. Is it possible that on January 11 you had already forgotten all about that?

You stated that "SRT declares its President a lunatic".

That absolutely is not true. The statements of the SRT guests (which you allude at and which you interpret that way) are not the positions of the Serb Radio Television, in the same way your statements are not the opinion of SRT. Those times, Mr. President, are past, thank God!

4) You stated that SRT "rigs answers", that it participated in "spitting" and "causing chaos in the service of somebody else's foreign interests" and that it was "an anti-Serb" media. These accusations at the expense of SRT employees and associates are at the level of slander. Nothing of that is true. I take responsibility for saying that, because I have been nominated for the function of Administrator exactly for the reason of preventing manipulation, slander and promotion of one-sided interests that used to be on the agenda. All those who closely follow SRT (and there are many of them) confirm that this media has been radically changed in a positive sense since the Interim Arrangements were signed and that, in spite of all difficulties, it is making large strides towards international professional standards. I am aware that some do not like it. Nowadays, SRT is a public media open for all the citizens of RS no matter what nationality or religion they belong to, and SRT represents their interests. What is "anti-Serb" in that?

If you really think that you have sustainable objections to SRT programmes, why do you not address the authorised Commission for the media that is in charge of following – and if necessary, sanctioning – the work of all the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

5) You also stated that "a certain vocabulary from the Serb language must not be used" on SRT and that "the word Ustasha must not be used". I do not know why you rely on false information of the people who obviously want to

manipulate you. I only know that you have never asked for information about that from the authorised people of SRT. Only inflammatory language is forbidden. "Ustasha" can, of course, be used in an adequate context, but you cannot call any Croat Ustasha, as some people used to do.

And, finally, Mr. President: in your interview for SRT, you stated that "the facts must be presented in a professional and responsible way". I completely agree with you about that, but you will allow me to say that it is also applicable to you. I would like to repeat that SRT is still willing to cooperate, but it takes two sides for that.

Since you have stated your accusations publicly several times, I am sure you will understand me sending a copy of this letter to the media.

Respectfully yours,

2:32

The RS Ministry of Information issued a press statement regarding the SDS and SRS attitude towards media and SRT. The whole text was broadcast.

0:57

Brane Miljus stated at a meeting with the Veterans Association that the international community and especially media were to blame for all the problems in forming the a government, accusing them of distorting his statements, and named Dodik and Plavsic as the leaders of this campaign against him. Miljus categorically stated that he has absolute majority in the RS NA to from the government. "I shall obtain majority in the Assembly on Monday and this media war is not going to stop me in that".- Miljus said, emphasising that he would, after elected, start an initiative to pass a new Law on Information. He also said that he had asked Chief [ICTY](#) Prosecutor, Louis Arbour to come in Banja Luka, for her place is here because of

Biljana Plavsic's crimes. He continued promising the veterans that he would give them foreign currency savings books with deposits of 1,000 to 10,000 KM.

1:03

"SRS wants a government with all Serb political parties in it" – Mirko Blagojevic, acting SRS President, said at a press conference in Bijeljina. "Our attitude towards that government will depend on the PM designate's opening speech before the Assembly. SRS reiterates that it wants to take part in the government" – Blagojevic said.

0:37

Simon Haselock stated that a change of the establishment in Croatia would be desirable, accusing Franjo Tudjman and HDZ of obstructing the Dayton Agreement.

0:23

Louise Arbour stated that the Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman is not requested to send his army generals to The Hague, but she did not exclude the possibility that the names of some Croatian senior officers were on secret indictments.

0:12

Kosovo related issues:

- Albanian terrorists attacked one Serb house in Drvare village south of Vucitrn. Two children were injured.
- Early this morning police surrounded a house, in which are presumed to be 10-15 terrorists, in Vaganica village, on the Kosovska Mitrovica-Srbica road.
- Milosevic talked with the Russian Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Manager of the Institute of Forensic Medicine in Pristina stated that an autopsy of five killed in Racak has been performed. According to him there were no signs of massacre.