

OHR SRT News Summary, 20 May 1999

Headlines:

- [NATO](#) bombed the “Dragisa Misovic” Clinical Centre in Belgrade – 4 casualties reported
- In Brussels, RS PM, Milorad Dodik, asks for a halt to [NATO](#) air strikes
- Donors pledging U.S. \$1.52 billion for the RS and the BiH Federation this year
- Half of the collective refugee centres to be dissolved in the RS by the end of the year

4 patients have been reported killed in last night's [NATO](#) bombing of the “Dragisa Misovic” hospital in Belgrade.

The Russian Foreign Ministry have strongly condemned [NATO](#) bombing of Belgrade last night and have billed it as “a criminal action”. The Ministry have further appealed to [NATO](#) to change their mind and start serious political negotiations as there is “no other way out of the crisis”.

The EC and the [World Bank](#) are hosting the fifth donor conference that has started in Brussels this morning. The conference is expected to provide resources needed for the last phase of the priority reconstruction and rehabilitation programme in BiH. The first day of the conference concluded that U.S. \$ 1.52 billion would be granted for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of BiH this year. All of the participants speaking at the conference today stressed the economic impact of developments in the FRY on the economy of BiH, especially that of the RS. The RS PM, Milorad Dodik, also addressed the conference stressing that the RS was losing nearly DM 2.5 million daily due to [NATO](#) air strikes against the FRY. The HR, Carlos Westendorp, also referred to the impact

of [NATO](#) air strikes against the FRY on the economic situation in the RS and stressed the necessity to support the RS budget and the Government of PM Dodik. Tomorrow's round of talks is expected to discuss principles of the respective medium-term development strategies of the RS and the BiH Federation, the return of refugees and the revitalisation of Brcko.

Aside from Belgrade, [NATO](#) alliance warplanes today also bombed Vrbas, Srbobran Zrenjanin, Batajnica, Barici, Matis, Sombor, Fruska Gora, Sabac, Subotica and other inhabited areas. A bridge close to the border with Romania was destroyed.

The AP has today reported that after meeting the Russian Envoy, Victor Chernomyrdin, the President of the FRY, Slobodan Milosevic, has accepted the principles of a peace plan for Kosmet. A statement has been released from Milosevic's Cabinet saying that: "A solution for the crisis can only be reached through political means and within the framework of the [UN](#) and with the direct participation of the FRY". According to the AP, Chernomyrdin on his part, did not emphasise any particular progress and told the press that the important thing was that the FRY had returned to the negotiating table.

Negotiations between Chernomyrdin, Ahtisaari, the Finnish President, and Talbott, the Deputy U.S. Secretary of State, on the Kosovo crisis are to resume in Moscow tomorrow. Chernomyrdin is also expected to resume talks with President Milosevic on 24 or 25 May.

Before departing for Moscow, Deputy Secretary Talbott met with the French Foreign Minister, Hubert Vedrine, in Paris for diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a political solution of the Kosovo crisis. According to Vedrine, while certain progress has been noted, a lot is still to be done.

According to SRNA, U.S. officials warned that they did not expect [NATO](#) and President Milosevic to overcome their difficulties shortly.

Political directors of Foreign Ministries of G8 member states failed to agree on a draft [UN](#) resolution on Kosovo in Bonn last night. The German political director stressed that a certain progress had been made, but that there were still several items to be discussed, the most difficult of which was that pertaining to the composition and the command structure of international troops that would be monitoring peace in Kosovo, and that of the precise time framework for the cessation of [NATO](#) air strikes.

The Italian PM, Massimo D'Alema, who met the [NATO](#) Secretary-General, Javier Solana, in Brussels today, requested that [NATO](#) bombing of the FRY should be suspended in order to allow for a resolution on Kosovo to be designed based on proposals given by G7 member states and Russia. Solana stated that the air strikes were going to continue until President Milosevic had fulfilled the main requests by [NATO](#).

BETA reports that the U.S. Congress House of Representatives have warned President Clinton to stop using U.S. budget money for waging war against the FRY and that after this September, he is going to have to require special resources for the funding of any possible combat or peace operations in the Balkans.

BETA has quoted [UNHCR](#) sources in Geneva as saying that over 923,000 people have left Kosovo since the eruption of conflict there last March.

(breaking news) According to SRNA, after meeting the Finnish Presidency at the Finnish Embassy in Moscow, the Russian Envoy, Victor Chernomyrdin, told the press that the news was good.

BETA reports on a statement by the FRY 2nd Army HQ claiming that the territory of Montenegro has been used by an Albanian terrorist organisation from Kosovo for their illegal crossings into Albania and secret deliveries of arms and equipment to

terrorists several times since the beginning of the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY.

BETA reports that the Spokesperson for the Serbian Socialist Party has accused [NATO](#) of trying to present the interest expressed by parents for the schedule by which Serb military and police members are returning from Kosovo as demonstrations against the mobilization and the defence of the FRY.

The Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic, in a interview given to a Greek TV station, praised the ongoing negotiations on a possible solution of the Kosovo crisis and stressed the important role of Russia in this process, BETA reports. Djukanovic added that the announced agreement between Milosevic and Rugova would be unrealistic and accused Belgrade of having ruined the good reputation of Rugova amongst Kosovo Albanians.

The Leader of the Serbian Social-Democracy, Vuk Obradovic, claimed that the FRY leadership held the largest share of responsibility for the tragedy that has befallen the country.

The Swedish Foreign Minister, Anna Lindh, today described as unacceptable the bombing in which the Swedish Ambassador's residence in Belgrade was destroyed, and added that she was going to seek an explanation from [NATO](#) in terms of how this could have happened. Lindh stressed that [NATO](#) had used too much explosive in its bombing of the central parts of the town.

[NATO](#) held a regular press conference in Brussels today. Most of the questions by journalists concentrated on the incident in which a hospital had been bombed in Belgrade. Spokesperson Shea explained that this was a technical mistake adding that one of the bombs had gone astray. According to Shea, [NATO](#) was currently conducting an investigation into the incident. On a question regarding a possible 72-hour lull in bombings, should the [UN](#) SC adopt such a resolution, Shea said that it was a

speculative question and that he was not going to give any speculative answers. General Jertz informed the press about the results of [NATO](#) air strikes in the past 24 hours.

The President of the BiH Presidency, Zivko Radisic, during his meeting with the Russian Ambassador in BiH, Philipp Sidorskiy, today, confirmed that the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY had done much direct and indirect damage to the FRY and also to BiH. Radisic and Sidorskiy also discussed the functioning of common institutions in the light of the necessity to create prerequisites for quicker economic development.

The Director of the RS Directorate for Rehabilitation and Development, Radoslav Brdjanin, at today's press conference, informed the press about new specifics related to the work of this institution so far.

(report on activities by RS companies aimed at overcoming the damage caused by the situation in the FRY)

(Federation-related news) The Muslim representative at the BiH Presidency, Alija Izetbegovic, stated that the idea of cantonising the RS was good but unrealistic at this stage. Izetbegovic went on to refute an initiative by Croat political parties in the Federation on a possible cantonisation of the entire BiH.