

OHR SRT News Summary, 21 May 1999

Headlines:

- 20 civilian casualties – a tragic result of today's [NATO](#) bombing
- FRY mission in Brussels and [EU](#) institutions lodges a protest against [NATO](#) bombing of civilian areas and destruction of hospitals
- \$ 1,52 pledged at the Donors' conference in Brussels for reconstruction of BiH
- Diplomatic efforts to resolve the Kosovo crisis continue in Moscow and Bonn
- China officially confirms the ban on U.S. combat ships visit to Hong Kong

The two-day Donors' conference for BiH ended in Brussels today pledging U.S. \$ 1,52 billion for the reconstruction of BiH. The second day discussed projects for the district of Brcko, the reconstruction of the old bridge in Mostar, and the media situation in BiH. The conference stressed that the decision on Brcko District remained the key issue in terms of a successful implementation of the DA. After the end of the conference, the RS PM, Milorad Dodik, departed for Rome to attend the conference on the stability in South- Eastern Europe that is to start tomorrow.

At least 19 persons have been reported killed and over 10 injured in today's [NATO](#) bombing of the Correction Center in Istok in Kosovo. The tragic toll of the [NATO](#) bombing is believed not to be the final one as several hundred inmates and their guards were still inside the compound during the second round of [NATO](#) bombing. One person has been reported killed and several injured in last night's bombing of Sombor. [NATO](#) also bombed Smederevo (7 injured), Belgrade, Pozega,

Velika Plana, Kosmaj and Bor. In Kosovo, [NATO](#) bombings have today been reported in the area of Djakovica, the municipality of Zubin Potok, Urosevac, municipality of Kosovo Polje, the area South-West of Pristina and Decani today.

FRY President Milosevic met with a delegation of the Greek Parliament today. Milosevic stated that the FRY had been semi-accused of being responsible for the exodus of Albanians from Kosovo. Bombings must stop and the resolution of the problem must be sought through the [UN](#), Milosevic added.

BETA reports that the U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, has stated that the U.S. and Russia have neared their positions on the way of resolving the issues in Kosovo, but has failed to specify what those issues are. Albright has announced that Americans will not be able to participate in a possible peace force for Kosovo.

Political directors of foreign ministries of G8 member states continued negotiations on a [UN](#) draft resolution on Kosovo in Bonn. SRNA has quoted German media as saying that the Chairman of the talks had stressed that small but positive progress had been made but had failed to specify what the progress was about.

The Special Russian Envoy for the Balkans, Chernomyrdin, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Talbott and Finish President Ahtisaari, continued talks in Moscow today on the proposal for stopping the Kosovo conflict, BETA reports. On returning from Moscow, Ahtisaari stated that he was going to meet the [UN](#) SG, Kofi Annan, on Saturday to discuss the Kosovo issue.

BETA reports that the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, stated that the talks with the U.S Deputy Secretary of State, Talbott, were aimed at coordinating concrete issues related to the Kosovo crisis. Talbott on his part, stated that the meetings behind closed doors were going to continue.

Referring to sources close to the Russian diplomat, Itar Tass

has today reported that Victor Chernomyrdin has canceled his meetings with the Greek Foreign Minister and the [UN](#) Envoy for Kosovo, Carl Bildt, scheduled for today for the lack of time.

BBC has today reports that the [NATO](#) Secretary- General, Javier Solana, and the British PM, Tony Blair, have agreed in London that air strikes against the FRY would continue until all of the requests set by the alliance were met.

Tanjug today reports that China has officially confirmed that it has banned visits by American war ships to Hong Kong in response to the recent [NATO](#) bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade.

SRNA reports that the Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, ordered Russian space experts to explore the manner in which [NATO](#) had been using space technology to support air strikes against the FRY and whether a similar technology could be developed in Russia.

(breaking news) The meeting on the Kosovo crisis has just ended in Bonn. According to the chairman of the talks, while participants have made a limited progress on a joint plan ending the Kosovo conflict, major differences still remain, BETA reports.

The FRY Mission in Brussels has lodged a sharp protest with the [EU](#) institutions and representatives of [EU](#) member states against bombing of civilian targets in the FRY and the bombing of the "Dragisa Misovic" hospital in Belgrade.

The EC has today proposed to its 15 member states to expand their air traffic sanctions imposed against the FRY due to the war in Kosovo. FRY air carriers will now be banned from landing and taking off in any member state of the EC regardless of their final destination, says a report by BETA.

Tanjug reports that the Swiss Government has expressed concerns about damage done to the residence of the Swiss

Ambassador in Belgrade and has announced that this issue is going to be raised before the Alliance in Brussels.

BETA reports that following the damaging of the Swiss residence in Belgrade, Joshka Fisher, has requested that [NATO](#) should urgently review its target-determining strategy.

(Reactions by foreign media: NYT, Daily Telegraph, Independent, Die Welt)

The [UN](#) humanitarian delegation headed by Sergio de Mello is expected to collect information on the needs of local population during its three-day visit to Kosovo and, based on that, make plans for the solution of humanitarian problems.

According to "NYT" today, the [NATO](#) Commander for Europe, General Clark, has spoken in favor of an urgent deployment of 45.000 -50.000 troops along the FRY border in Kosovo aimed at increasing pressure on Milosevic to accept Alliance's requests.

[NATO](#) held its regular press conference in Brussels. Spokesperson Shea and General Jertz had no details regarding the incident in Istok in which a correction center was hit. Jertz stated that [NATO](#) had bombed a military installation in the area this morning. According to Jertz, Yugoslav forces were militarily active in central and Western parts of Kosovo. Speaking about the refugee crisis, Shea said that 75% of the Albanian refugees were women and children under 15 years of age, which, Shea added, made people think what about 225.000 of men of military age. Shea went on to claim that Montenegro was still resisting military, economic and political pressure from Belgrade and referred to an incident in Cetinje where an additional 1.000 Yugoslav troops had been deployed and to the disarmament of 600 Montenegrin police officers loyal to President Djukanovic.

Four martial court judges and the RS Martial Court Prosecutor have today taken their oaths before the RS President, Nikola

Poplasen, who had been dismissed by the HR.

The Speaker of the RS NA, Petar Djokic, visited the area of Prijedor today and met with local authorities there.

The RS Minister of Education, Nenad Suzic, at a press conference in BL today, stated that the RS, as part of BiH, was going to keep its own curriculums and textbooks. This, according to Suzic, was concluded at the recent meeting in Strasbourg which discussed preparations for the admittance of BiH into the Council of Europe.

Dragan Lolic, the Director of the BL Hospital, today stated that RS health care workers sharply protested against bombardment of hospitals in the FRY. Lolic also spoke about problems faced by the RS health care system caused by [NATO](#) air strikes against the FRY, including a probable shortage of drugs shortly.

The return of some 30 Bosniak families to the area of Kotor Varos has been postponed due to the resistance by local population who stressed that the return was not in line with the municipal return plan that had earlier been designed in coordination with [UNHCR](#).

110 Serbs have today returned to several villages and hamlets in the area of Glamoc.

(Federation-related news)

According to a statement released by the RS Customs Administration, the Novi Grad border crossing between the RS and Croatia will be opened tomorrow at 8:00 hrs.