

OHR SRT News Summary, 23 March 1999

Headlines

- A special session of the RS NA today in Banja Luka.
- After the second round of talks with Milosevic, Holbrooke returns to Washington via Brussels – unfinished business.
- For the first time since it was established, the Yugoslav-Macedonian border was closed, due to the escalation of fighting in Kosmet
- NATO and the Western leaders threaten more aggressively attacks on FRY
- Today's blocking of the Bijeljina-Brcko road is a response to increasingly frequent controls, searches, break-ins and arrests by [SFOR](#) troops.

The current political situation in the RS is the main topic of the RS NA session, scheduled for 16:00 today.

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Second round of talks between Milosevic and Holbrooke concluded unsuccessfully today. The FRY Government definitely refused to sign the agreement on Kosovo.

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The NA of the Republic of Serbia holds session today to discuss topics related to the Kosovo agreement.

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After leaving Belgrade, Richard Holbrooke said none of the goals of his mission were achieved.

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The Russian foreign minister, Igor Ivanov said Russia would consider lifting the embargo against Yugoslavia, in case [NATO](#)

bombed Yugoslavia.

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Diplomatic sources at [NATO](#) HQ claim that air strikes against Yugoslavia could begin within 24 hours, if Richard Holbrooke does not reach an agreement with Milosevic.

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UK PM, Tony Blair said Britain was ready to participate in air strikes if the agreement was not reached.

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French PM, Lionel Jospin said France had decided to take part in military action against Yugoslavia, upon the failure of negotiations.

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On behalf of the EU, the German foreign minister Joschka Fischer called upon the Yugoslav President Milosevic to sign the agreement and avoid war.

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Russia suggested the continuation of talks and strongly opposed military action, "Srna" agency reports.

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China calls for a patient and flexible approach in the Kosovo negotiations, "Beta" agency reports.

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Greece thinks the problems in Kosmet should not be resolved by a military intervention, said the Greek foreign minister, Jorgos Papandreu.

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The national security council of the FYR Macedonia decided that the territory of this country could not be used in aggression against any neighbouring country.

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The [NATO](#) commander in FYR Macedonia, Michael Jackson said that 10,000 of his troops stationed there are not a threat for the FRY.

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Macedonia closed all border crossings with Yugoslavia this morning.

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Three foreign airlines cancelled their flights to Belgrade.

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Conflicts in Kosmet continue.

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The citizens of Brcko gathered for a peaceful rally for the sixth time today, to protest against the arbitration award.

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The road between Bijeljina and Brcko was blocked today by citizens, in protest against frequent [SFOR](#) controls and last night's arrest of members of presidential security.

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The members of the presidential cabinet, Mirjana Sainovic and Ognjen Tadic held a press conference today and strongly condemned [SFOR](#) actions last night.

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CoM co-chair, Svetozar Mihajlovic explained that the stopping of his vehicle by [SFOR](#) troops was due to wrong identification of the vehicle.

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[SFOR](#) troops carried out a cantonment site inspection in the VRS barracks in Zvornik today.

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