OHR SRT News Summary, 25 August 1999

Headlines:

- Lt.Gen. Momir Talic arrested in Vienna today;
- VRS Chief of Staff Momir Talic was arrested by Austrian Police in Vienna on the basis of a sealed indictment issued by ICTY;
- Barricades still in Orahovac in Kosovo;
- 13 bodies of Serb civilians found in mass grave in Gnjilane;
- The Union of Education workers will not give up on the strike that the RS Ministry of Education considers illegal;

SRT dedicated almost 15 minutes to the news related to Talic's arrest and to the reactions of the RS officials on the event. Lt.Gen. Momir Talic was arrested by Austrian Police in Vienna this morning on the basis of a sealed Hague indictment. The RS delegation attended the military seminar in Vienna when the detention took place. The item was followed by the statement of RS Minister of Defence Manojlo Milovanovic who gave a detailed description of the event. Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that Talic was arrested on the request of ICTY which was sent to Austrian authorities last night. According to Austrian authorities Talic was transferred to the Hague.

REACTIONS ON TALIC'S ARREST

RS PM Dodik said that the RS Government expresses bitterness over the arrest of Talic and added that this act means that anyone can be arrested due to the existence of "legal uncertainty". This act caused a revolt in the RS because Talic made a great contribution to the democratic process in the RS.

The RS Government expresses its worry about the further consequences which might be caused by the act.

Zivko Radisic said he was very surprised at the arrest of Talic, especially at where and how he was detained as well as the fact that Talic's appointment at the post in March was agreed by SFOR, which means that according to BiH Constitution there were no obstacles for performing his duties as the VRS Chief of Staff. Talic was also the member of the Standing Military Committee and his arrest could mean that the functioning of the Committee could be brought into question.

RS Vice-president, Mirko Sarovic said that the Seminar in Vienna was misused for arrest of Talic. "This act means that besides the civilian structures, the RS is "dismantled" from the military standpoint as well. We ourselves are to blame for this", said Sarovic.

The RS Veterans' Organisation demanded the immediate release of Talic, or as they call him, "their war commander". They will also ask the RS authorities to reconsider their relations with the IC and to stop any co-operation with SFOR and ICTY.

Stanko Stanic (SNS Vice President) requested the IC to stop treating Serbs like this. He also demanded ICTY to release Talic and to stop causing chaos among the Serb people.

Dragutin Ilic (SPRS Vice-President) said that it is unallowable to invite someone in an official capacity and than to arrest him. All the indictments should be made public, added Ilic.

SDS stated: "This is yet another political and national blow to the RS. Only three days ago Gen. Meigs commended Gen. Talic for honour, professionalism and good co-operation. Secret indictments are reserved for Serbs only which proves that the ICTY is a political and not a judicial institution.

Krstan Simic (SNSD deputy) invited the Hague Tribunal to

publish all sealed indictments in the spirit of their own rules, since sealed indictments create fear among the people

Predrag Radic (Serb Coalition for the RS deputy) said that the arrest of Talic was an unprecedented move. He added that the Hague should make the indictments public since the most of indictees would volunteer to go to the Hague themselves." I am sure that Gen. Talic would have gone to the Hague had he known he had been indicted". – TANJUG

SRT also carried the statements of DS and DSS expressing surprise, bitterness and regret over Talic's arrest.

Louise Arbour said that Talic was indicted on March 12 together with Radoslav Brdjanin. They have been indicted for expelling non-Serb population in Bosnian Krajina including Prijedor during 1992. They will stand trial together.

OSCE was not aware of the sealed Hague indictment. The Seminar in Vienna was not organised by OSCE but by Joint Consultative Commission.

Petar Djokic (The RS NA Speaker) reacted upon the arrest of Talic. He sharply protested over the deceitful manner of Talic's arrest. This is a strong and unpleasant message to the RS since this is not the first time a total lack of respect was shown for the highest RS authorities. The only strength that can protect and defend RS is internal organisation and functioning institutions. Activities of the RS should not jeopardise internal peace and stability or the Dayton Agreement.

Talks between Svetozar Mihajlovic and the Head of IMF Juan Fernandez Ansola on functioning of the BiH common institutions and improvement of co-ordination between entity institutions and BiH common institutions, which has not been very successful so far. The main topics were the harmonisation of entity and state laws, functioning of customs service as well as functioning of border service.

KOSOVO AND FRY RELATED NEWS

SRT carried the news on 10 bodies of Serb civilians exhumed from the mass grave in the village Ugljare near Gnjilane, Albanians blocked the roads preventing Russian K-for to enter Orahovac, negotiations between Russian, Dutch, German K-for and Albanians to unblock the roads, session of the Interim Council of Kosovo, 50 monasteries and churches in Kosovo looted and burned down, more than 100.000 Albanians entered Kosovo illegally after the withdrawal of VJ Army. SRT also carried the news on extraordinary elections in FRY scheduled for 7th of November this year and Lord Russel Johnson rejects the possibility of sending the election monitoring mission in Yugoslavia as long as Milosevic stays in power. SRT also carried the statements of Mladjan Dinkic (G-17 Co-ordinator), Zoran Djindjic and Momcilo Perisic (former VJ Army Chief of Staff).

After previous block of news, SRT is going back to “domestic” topics. SRT carried the statement of Thomas Miller, new appointed US Ambassador in BiH; 6 bodies of Serb civilians exhumed in Petrovac; SRT paid attention to the news item on return of 30 Bosniak families in village Kula near Gacko; The RS Union of education workers will not give up on the strike that the RS Ministry of Education considers illegal. SRT carried the statements of both, Nenad Suzic (RS Minister of Education) and the representative of the Union.