OHR SRT News Summary, 25 May 1999

- Largest Number of Injured People in Sabac in Today's NATO Shelling of the FRY
- Chernomyrdin Stated that There is New Important Phase in Solving of Kosovo Conflict
- Regardless of Civilian Casualties and Damage, Spanish PM Asnar: NATO Must Continue Shelling Yugoslavia Until it Realises its Aims
- 39 Ukraine Miners Killed in Methane Explosion

NATO continues its bombing of the FRY, and the largest number of casualties was in Sabac, but according to unofficial information no-one was killed. During the day, NATO shelled the wider area of Belgrade, Nis, Vranje, Jagodina, Kragujevac, Kraljevo, Novi Pazar, Backi Petrovac, Sabac, and Bar in the south of Montenegro. According to Tanjug, the transmitting centre of Radio Belgrade was also shelled in the area of Obrenovac. NATO also continued its attacks in the area of Kosovo, including Kosovska Mitrovica, and Village of Lipljani in the vicinity of Pristina.

Reuters reports, NATO allies today approved plans for increase of forces for peace implementation in Kosovo and it is planned that these forces "KFOR plus" will have between 45 and 50 thousand soldiers.

There is a new phase in solving the conflict in the Balkans, and Russia will increase demands on NATO to cease bombing Yugoslavia, stated Russian Envoy for Yugoslavia, Chernomyrdin.

Intensive consultations will begin in Moscow today between Russian and Finnish experts who need to prepare new proposals for solving the Kosovo crisis. These proposals will be discussed at tomorrow's meeting of Chernomyrdin, President of

Finland, Ahtisaari and Deputy US State Secretary, Talbott.

Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ivanov repeated that Moscow is against sending ground troops to Kosovo without consent from Belgrade.

UN Secretary General, Annan, stated in Stockholm that at tomorrow's meeting with Ivanov they will consider efforts for creating a joint standpoint.

President of France, Chirac, and British PM, Blair, had a telephone conversation on Kosovo last night, during regular contacts of leaders of NATO countries. According to the Elysee Palace, they expressed determination in achieving the aims set by NATO, and assessed that shelling Yugoslavia had been efficient.

According to Madrid daily "Pais", NATO Supreme Commander, Clark stated that he is against a break in the shelling of Yugoslavia.

Tanjug reports that Italian Foreign Affairs Minister, Dini, expressed moderate optimism at the prospect of a diplomatic solution to the Kosovo crisis.

According to Beta, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Greece and Czech Republic, Papandreu and Kavan will suggest a new plan for the Balkans to the NATO Council, which includes a short term cessation of air raids.

UNHCR informs that 957,913 people have left Kosovo since March 1998.

According to a Brussels daily "La Libre Belgique", Holland and Czech Republic joined Italy and Greece in their stand on cessation of shelling of the FRY. The daily concludes that the differences between the allies are becoming larger.

A leading Chinese daily assesses that the Kosmet crisis is at a turning point and points out that the steps towards a

political solution are being accelerated.

Reuters reports, Montenegro PM, Djukanovic will talk today with the British PM, Blair, and British Foreign Minister, Cook about the Kosovo crisis.

Yugoslavia strongly supports a peaceful political solution of the Kosovo crisis which can be reached only with its direct participation and agreements within the UN, stated Head of FRY Mission in the UN, Jovanovic in New York today.

Leader of the SPO, Draskovic today called on the FRY authorities to request a session of the UN Security Council immediately, where a resolution on Kosovo should be adopted on the basis of the UN Charter, plan of the Group 8 and international law.

Beta reports that President of the Democratic Party, Djindjic, and Envoy of the UN Secretary General, Bildt today assessed that the plan of the Group 8 on solving of the Yugoslavia crisis should be the basis for a resolution of the UN Security Council.

President of the Democratic Alternative, Covic, in an interview to the Banja Luka weekly "Reporter", stated that FRY President, Milosevic, is the one who has to end the war as he is the one who initiated the affairs of both peace and war.

Spanish PM, Asnar stated today in Brussels that NATO has to continue bombing Yugoslavia, regardless of civilian casualties and damage, as long as its aims are not realised.

At today's NATO press conference in Brussels, NATO Spokesman, Shea stated that at the moment there are over 450,000 refugees from Kosovo in Albania. Together with the UNHCR, NATO commenced an action of refugee relocation from a camp in Kukes. General Jertz said that the air campaign against Yugoslavia continues with even stronger intensity. During the last 24 hours a wide spectrum of targets was shelled

throughout Yugoslavia, said Jertz. All the NATO planes returned safely to their bases.

RS PM today met with World Bank representative, Mytra, in Banja Luka. Supposedly they discussed the last donors conference, i.e implementation of funds allocated to BiH.

An information from the Cabinet of the RS NA Speaker states that the 6th session of the RS NA will be held on June 2nd. The previously scheduled date was changed due to the opinion of the majority of deputies that the session should not be held on May 31st which is the Orthodox celebration of Holy Spirit.

At today's press conference, President of the SNS, Plavsic today assessed that the RS Government, despite pressure from a part of the RS political scene, used its opportunity and properly represented the RS at the donors' conference.

Reports on press conferences of international agencies in Banja Luka and Sarajevo.

Note: At the end of the news there was a camera shot of two planes in the sky above Banja Luka, approaching a tanker plane and taking fuel. The speaker said that there was no information yet about the sort of action these planes were a part of, but that further information would follow after a check with the authorised institutions.