

OHR SRT News Summary, 27 Oct. 1997

Headlines

- Serb President, Biljana Plavsic, met the European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Hans van den Broek
- The session of the Serb Government today at Pale
- The blowing up of the Serb Orthodox Church in Brcko: HEZBOLAH is knocking on the door of Europe
- Futile constitutive session of the Banja Luka Town Assembly
- The Christian holiday, Saint Petka, celebrated in Orthodox temples throughout the Republic of Srpska

Top stories

"Association with Europe is very important to us. The Serbs are democratic people and they are searching for their place in Europe," the RS President, Biljana Plavsic, stated after meeting with the European Commissioner for Foreign Affairs, Hans van den Broek, a Dutch diplomat who we remember from the time of the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia, and who finally arrived in the RS. At today's meeting he expressed the readiness of the European Union to provide the RS with humanitarian assistance and to contribute to the improvement of free media in our country.

Biljana Plavsic assessed the meeting as very important. Undivided attention was given to the forthcoming parliamentary elections and to economic issues.

"We are both hoping that after the elections we shall get a good and democratic National Parliament. We are interested in economic assistance. Association with Europe is of great importance to us. We were pushed out of Europe when we accepted the totalitarian regime. The Serbs are democratic people who are searching for their path and their place in

Europe," the President said.

The Commissioner of the EU pointed out the importance of the forthcoming elections and added that the EU would help only the political forces which respected the Dayton Agreement and which fought against crime and corruption.

"I want to convey the message on behalf of the EU today. Those that are trying to depict the EU as discriminating against Serbs are spreading misleading propaganda in order to maintain their own power. I have just exchanged views with Mrs. Plavsic, which is very valuable for me, and I have assured her that the EU and the EC will continue supporting those that respect Dayton," Mr. van den Broek stated after the meeting. As far as assistance for the media was concerned, he promised significant help which amounted to 80 million ECU. He also reiterated that a strong and democratic Government and Assembly were necessary for realisation of that assistance.

3:35

The RS Government held its session today at Pale. Several draft laws were passed. The composition of the delegation that would travel to Geneva to the International Conference on radio-diffuse frequencies was announced. Several laws were passed at today's session of the RS Government, held at Pale. Amongst them were a law on a fund for protection of veterans and invalids, a law on child protection and a law on the town of Serb Sarajevo. A decision on the construction of the military complex in Johovac near Doboje was made.

0:50

Bishop Vasilije today condemned the barbarous act of blowing up the Orthodox Church in Brcko. He called on Serbs to be patient and to pray.

This morning at 4:30 am a strong explosion damaged the walls and supporting columns of the Serb Orthodox Church which has been under construction for four months now. Shortly after the

explosion the RS Police, SFOR and IPTF arrived at the scene to conduct an investigation. Neither the RS Police nor members of SFOR and IPTF could give details about the event. They stated that they would be able to provide these after the investigation.

There are grounds for suspicion that this terrorist act was performed by those most upset by the construction of the Orthodox temple in Brcko.

Supervisor Farrand's spokesperson stated that his office condemned the act.

The Council of Defence of the Municipality of Brcko condemned today's terrorist action, saying that its culprits had left the clear message Hezbolah on the internal wall of the church. "It is obvious that the forces of darkness do not want the implementation of the DA. The action itself is not directed only against the Serbs, but also against Dayton," Miodrag Pajic, stated the President of the Municipal Assembly of Brcko.

Radoslav Roga, member of the SDS Presidency from Brcko, stated that he was not surprised because it was known that Islamic terrorists would take the first opportunity to do that what they had done that morning, and added that it was an attempt at intimidation against Serbs, by which they wanted to let us know how our future common life would look like.

The President of the Municipal Board of the Socialist Party from Brcko said that the act of blowing up the church was a direct attack against Serbs and that the organiser and culprit of that crime showed that they did not care about peaceful implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

03:50

Banja Luka is still without a mayor and citizens still wonder why the national anthem was not played at today's session of the Town Assembly.

The mayor of Banja Luka was not elected at today's constitutive session of the BL Town Assembly. The date for the next session was not scheduled. The current mayor, Savo Cuk, announced that the next session would be chaired by Teodor Brckovic, one of the eldest representatives in the Town Assembly.

Since no party won an absolute majority, it was decided that the first mandate for the post of mayor would be given to the Socialist Party. The socialists nominated Nebojsa Radmanovic, president of the Town Board of the party.

Dorde Umicevic, president of the Executive Board of Serb Party for Krajina and Posavina, which according to the election results won an equal number of seats as the Socialist Party, said that the mayor should be from the centre or from the right wing.

The SDS and Serb Radical Party failed to participate in voting. The Serb Radical Party left the session, while Vitomir Popovic stated that SDS would not participate in any future sessions of the Town Assembly because the Serb national anthem had not been played at the beginning.

The Secretary of the Town Assembly, Branko Cvijic, explained that the anthem had not been played due to the OSCE's regulation which did not foresee that.

However, two commissions were founded. One is the Commission for voting and appointing, and the other is the Mandatory and Immunity Commission, the first consisting of 11 members and the other consisting of 7 members.

Radoslav Brdanin, president of the People's Party, informed that the party had not been a member of the Coalition for Banja Luka since October 26th, which practically meant that the Banja Luka Town Assembly was consisted of 12 political parties and one coalition.

03:35

Agencies' report

"It is quite certain that four members of the Muslim Army, who were brought before the Hague Tribunal because of crimes they committed in Celebici against Serbs in 1992, will not be the only members of the Muslim Army or politicians who will temporary become citizens of the Netherlands," Muslim newspapers stated today, adding that the Hague Tribunal had renewed the process against Drazen Erdemovic, a Croat, indicted for crimes in Srebrenica against Muslims.

The Guardian today states that international forces in Bosnia believe that new military troops will have to replace SFOR after June 1998. Military superiors still do not want to talk about it publicly, at least not until the sceptical American Congress becomes aware that other alternatives do not exist, according to the Guardian.

02:00

Summary SRT TV News Pale/Banja Luka

Monitored by OHR in Sarajevo

There was neither Pale nor Banja Luka news. There was only a text in Cyrillic saying that :

Upon the request of the HR, SFOR carried out a technical inspection of the SRT transmitter Veliki Zep, on October 18 1997. Upon SFOR's arrival, they learnt that unknown RS citizens carried out an act of sabotage. SRT from Banja Luka will start with its programme as soon as conditions allow.