

OHR SRT News Summary, 4 March 1998

Headlines

- Milorad Dodik, RS Prime Minister – EU promises DM 190 million for the RS,
- The British Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, in Banja Luka,
- The RS President and Carlos Westendorp on the economic situation in the RS,
- In Kosovo, the situation is somewhat calmer today.

The RS Prime Minister, who had just returned from Brussels and Rome, stated that he had been given assurances that the RS would be allocated financial resources worth DM 190 million this year. The amount included ECU 50 million that were earlier allocated but then frozen for the RS.

2:04

The British Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, today addressed an extraordinary session of the RS Parliament in Banja Luka. Cook stated that all refugees and DPs must be able to return to their homes, if they so want, and described the attitude of the Croatian Government to the return of Serb refugees as obstructive. Cook also stressed the importance of free speech.

9:32

The British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, today held separate meetings with President Plavsic and Prime Minister Dodik. Cook paid tribute to the progress that had been made in the last two months, and added that progress now had to be backed with practical help.

3:48

Prior to meeting Plavsic and Dodik, Cook also met with Momcilo Krajisnik, the RS representative at the BH Presidency. The

meeting discussed the work of the RS Government, BH common institutions and issues related to the FOM. Krajisnik stressed that he was happy to see that the new Government had established good contacts with the IC, and that he hoped that the promised support would eventually arrive in the RS. Krajisnik, however, claimed that the Government continued to make mistakes in dealing with domestic affairs.

2:41

President Plavsic met with HR Westendorp on the economic situation in the RS. Describing the situation as rather difficult, Westendorp claimed that the responsibility for this lay with the former Government and its poor work. Regarding obstructions of the ongoing democratic processes in RS, Westendorp described those as being in contradiction of the DA.

1:29

RS ministers met with an economic task force comprising representatives of the World Bank, US AID, IMF and other donors to discuss RS Government budget, customs rules, privatisation and the reconstruction process.

1:30

In a short interview (6 min 37 sec) to SRT, the HR expressed optimism regarding the situation in the RS and praised the cooperativeness of the new RS Government. On democratic processes in the other entity, Westendorp said that the efforts towards pluralism had been effective in the RS, and that he hoped that the same effort would produce more pluralism in the BH federation. The HR added that the situation, in that sense, was better in the RS. Praising the decision by several Serb war crime suspects to voluntarily surrender to the Hague Tribunal, Westendorp stressed "What I cannot accept is President Plavsic absolving indictees. This is something only the Tribunal can do".

6:37

President Plavsic met with the Egyptian Ambassador in BH, Ahmed Abdul Abu Talib, on future economic co-operation between the two countries.

0:26

In Kosovo, the situation today was reported as somewhat calmer. Serb refugees from the collective centre in Glogovac moved to Pristina for safety reasons.

1:05

Krajisnik expressed bitterness over the recent developments in Kosovo and warned that no one had the right to usurp part of FRY territory and take it away. "This is an internal Serbian matter.'

0:42

The Austrian Chancellor today expressed the belief that there were no legal grounds on which the IC could decide to take measures in Kosovo themselves, and that the problem should be resolved within the FRY.

0:32

The Macedonian Defence Minister, Lazar Titanovski, said that the IC should help establish a closer dialogue between the Serbian authorities and Kosovo Albanians in order to prevent tensions from spreading. Part of the Macedonian Army still remains on a high state of alert.

0:20

Dragoljub Kumarac from Srbinje, a Serb war crime indictee, today voluntarily turned himself in to the Hague Tribunal.

1:56

The SDS held a press conference today. "We'll not join MPs from the Federation if they move to oust the new Government. The SDS is in opposition now, but it still maintains 70% of power at municipal level." SDS condemned representatives of the Hague Tribunal for, as the conference said, behaving brutally during the search of Banja Luka City Hall.

1:38

The SP RS held a press conference today. Kosovo is an internal matter and must be resolved in line with the FRY Constitution. An SP spokesperson stated that the case of Goran Vasic should be returned to the jurisdiction of the RS.

0:56

The third Civil Engineering Fair was opened in Banja Luka today.

1:10

The RS Ministry of Interior released a statement saying that the issue of new licence plates had been delayed due to technical reasons.

0:32

PTT lines between Banja Luka and Bijeljina were now improved following the installation of new telecommunication equipment through a joint effort by French "Alcater" and Belgrade "Telmar".

1:28

Marinko Kontic, the Director of the RS Railway Company, will travel to Zagreb tomorrow to discuss the restoration of railway traffic between BH and Croatia.

0:20

Delegations of the respective trade union congresses of BH and the RS reached an agreement to sign the protocol and establish a commission for cooperation between the two equal trade union congresses as soon as possible.

1:06