

# OHR SRT News Summary, 6 Nov. 1997

## Headlines

- RS President, Biljana Plavsic, visited Mrkonjic Grad
- The Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council met with the BH Presidency members and Chairmen of the BH Council of Ministers in Sarajevo
- The World Bank and other international agencies have appealed to RS authorities to cancel the planned privatisation process
- The White House have clearly indicated that American troops will remain in BH
- New tensions arise between Washington and Baghdad

The RS President today visited Mrkonjic Grad to attend the constitutive session of the Serb National Union in the town. At the session President Plavsic spoke about the current political, social and economic situation in the RS. According to Plavsic, the forthcoming parliamentary elections will represent a turning point in the history of the RS. Answering questions by other participants, President Plavsic reiterated accusations claiming a number of failures and irregularities in the work of the ruling party. The session appointed Radojlo Tomic as President of the SNS in Mrkonjic Grad.

00:42

Representatives of eleven member states of the Peace Implementation Council met with the BH Presidency members and two Co-chairmen of the BH Council of Ministers in Sarajevo today. Before the meeting, the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council held its regular monthly session, with Carlos Westendorp in the chair.

01:28

According to a statement by an unnamed Western analyst to Reuters today, the World Bank and other international organisations have appealed to RS authorities to cancel the privatisation process in over 500 state-owned companies, which is expected to commence next week. Reuters reports that the Head of the World Bank mission in BH, along with Carlos Westendorp, have appealed to RS authorities to suspend the privatisation process until amendments were adopted that would ensure the process would be conducted in a fair and honest way.

00:32

The U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, has indicated, more clearly than ever, that Washington plans to maintain its troops' presence in BH even after the current SFOR mandate has expired next June. According to Albright, the meeting between President Clinton and American Congressmen on Tuesday unofficially agreed to extend the international troops' mandate.

00:21

The possibility of BH becoming a member of the European Council was discussed at the Council's HQ in Strasbourg today. A five-member BH delegation met with representatives of the Political Department of the Council's Parliamentary Assembly. The informative meeting, also attended by Jacques Klein, exchanged information on progress made so far on the conditions for BH's membership of the Council. The Director of the European Council Political Department told the press that it was only a question of time when BH would become a member of this body. Klein stressed that members of the Council should be states, rather than entities, which is why the equal participation of both entities was so important

02:13

President Milosevic of Serbia met with the UN TA in E. Slavonia, William Walker, in Belgrade today. The meeting expressed satisfaction over the full implementation of the

Erdut Agreement.

00:27

The UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights, Elizabeth Rehn, in her most recent report, accused Croatia of being responsible for systematically aggravating the conditions on the ground aimed at obstructing mass Serb returns. Rehn further accused Croatia of abolishing the independence of its judiciary, of controlling electronic media and of feeding religious and national intolerance. The report also expressed strong concerns over the recently voiced intention by Croatia to allow the settlement of 180,000 Bosnian Croats and Croats from Posavina in Croatia.

00:46

The international mediator in negotiations on the succession of property owned by the former Yugoslavia, Sir Arthur Watts, has announced that the distribution of property formerly owned by the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia could possibly start in few months. He added that, at the session of the Peace Implementation Council scheduled for the beginning of December in Bonn, he would present a new draft Memorandum on succession issues.

01:11

RS President, Biljana Plavsic, met with leaders of local opposition political parties which are members of the Coordinating Board for supporting the RS President in Banja Luka today. The meeting behind closed doors discussed the forthcoming parliamentary elections and the media presentation of candidates. Political parties, members of the Board, reproached electronic media for setting too high prices for time slots that will be allocated to political parties. The Board has addressed a proposal to all candidates to hold at least two joint round tables during the election campaign that would be covered by the state TV.

01:38

Tomorrow's issue of the Banja-Luka based "Nezavisne Novine" daily newspaper carries an article criticising the RS Government for planning to fund the election campaign of the ruling party illegally from money that belongs to the RS people. By doing so, the article claims, the RS Government has made it clear that it only serves the interests of the ruling party, rather than the interests of the people.

02:58

Representatives of international organisations for human rights today assessed that the BH Federation Government had adopted a Law on Housing that was discriminatory towards Serb refugees and was also in violation of the Dayton Agreement and the Geneva Conventions. According to the Law, those who had left Federation territory and then settled in the RS, along with those who helped or served in the RS Army, will not be able to claim apartments to which they held the right before the war.

00:41