

OHR SRT News Summary, 8 April 1999

Headlines

- Tragic toll of NATO air strikes last night – 13 killed and more injured
- Central parts of Belgrade and Pristina, the Zica Monastery, factories and civilian facilities – targets of [NATO](#) bombs
- RTS transmitters and repeaters, as well as RTS facilities, will be destroyed – [NATO](#) threatens
- Crisis of institutions in the RS to be overcome in a democratic and constitutional way – Sarovic and Westendorp agreed
- On the eve of Orthodox Easter, RS high level officials address congratulations of RS believers and clergy of the RS Orthodox Church

The Speaker of the Cyprian Parliament, Spiros Kyprianu, arrived in the FRY today. According to news reports, Cyprian could possibly broker a release of the three U.S. soldiers held by the FRY authorities.

In spite of a unilateral declaration of cease-fire in Kosovo, [NATO](#) continued their air strikes. The number of civilian victims of [NATO](#) bombings is increasing. Domestic and foreign journalists were today able to visit Pristina and see results of [NATO](#) air strikes. 10 people are believed to have been killed in last night's bombings of Pristina. [NATO](#) also bombed the area of Zlatibor, Belgrade, Kadinjaca (in the vicinity of Uzice), the wider area of Kraljevo, Lucani (in the area of Cacak), the Zica Monastery, and a local gas warehouse in a village in the vicinity of Sombor.

According to the Serbian Commissioner for Refugees, Bratislava

Morina, over 30,000 refugees, who had earlier found shelter in collective centres in Serbia, were now homeless again due to [NATO](#) air-strikes. Morina added that there were casualties amongst refugees, too.

The U.S. Secretary of Defence, William Cohen, arrived in Brussels for discussions with U.S. [NATO](#) allies on the still non-existent political strategy of getting out of the aggression against Serbia. However, BETA reports that Cohen yesterday claimed that [NATO](#) bombings would become even more violent in the days and weeks to come.

(A CNN report on [NATO](#) bombings of the FRY – situation in Pristina)

Main news commentary – “no comment” – pictures of [NATO](#) air-strikes

At a [NATO](#) daily briefing in Brussels today, after several denials, [NATO](#) confirmed a report of a U.S. special task spy aircraft having been shot down by the FRY air-defence forces in Kosovo. The [NATO](#) military representative, Wilby, denied claims that the destruction of the town of Pristina had been caused by [NATO](#) bombings. Wilby went on to say that, should Milosevic refuse to accept [NATO](#) requests related to RTS, this broadcasting company could possibly become a new [NATO](#) target. Describing [NATO](#) air strikes as a catastrophic mistake, the Montenegrin President, Milo Djukanovic, today requested that the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY should stop.

French journalists reporting from the Kosovo-Albanian-controlled area reported that Kosovo Albanians were providing [NATO](#) with information on targets on the ground to be bombed in [NATO](#) air strikes.

The Russian President, Boris Yeltsin, addressed a letter to the Japanese Prime Minister, advocating the cessation of [NATO](#) air strikes against the FRY.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, along with the OSCE Chairman, Knut Vollebaek, in Moscow today assessed that the problem of Kosovo could only be resolved through peaceful means. Ivanov praised the French proposal to start modifying the Rambouillet Agreement on Kosovo.

U.S. President Clinton has today reiterated that [NATO](#) air strikes against the FRY will only stop provided that there is a full compliance with all requests by the Alliance.

Commenting on [NATO](#) officials' statements describing the Belgrade declaration of a cease-fire as insufficient, today's issue of the "New York Times" newspaper reports that a new reality is now developing in Kosovo that [NATO](#) Alliance officials will not be able to ignore.

The British "Daily Telegraph" newspaper today reports that [NATO](#) might attempt to use the separatist OVK for its land operations in Kosovo.

China today reiterated the necessity for a political solution of the Kosovo crisis and requested that the [NATO](#) aggression should unconditionally stop against the FRY.

Cuba today again condemned the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY and warned that [NATO](#) attacks had started turning into genocide.

Belgrade hackers have broken into the [NATO](#) Internet site planting a virus there that is difficult to locate and eliminate.

Protests also continue in the RS. About 15,000 local pupils, students and professors of Banja Luka today gathered in the centre of the town to protest against the [NATO](#) aggression against the FRY. A workers' protest rally was held in Celinac. In Banja Luka, another protest rally of doctors. Workers also protested in Trebinje.

The Presidency of the RS Association of Municipalities and Towns have started an initiative aimed at establishing coordinating boards in RS municipalities and towns to collect humanitarian help for the FRY. The President of the "Srednja-Bosna" Association of Serb DPs has today refused to accept humanitarian support from Norway and Switzerland intended for members of a collective centre nearby Visegrad. [SFOR](#) soldiers who were to deliver the aid were told that no support was wanted there and that it should better be delivered to Aleksinac.

The Banja Luka SNS Local Board today addressed a letter to the FRY Government expressing their solidarity with the suffering of all citizens of the FRY.

A protest rally took place in Samac today. Students of Zvornik today guarded the local pedestrian bridge linking the RS and the FRY. Protests are continuing abroad, too, in Greece, New York, Moscow, Avian, Stuttgart, Hamburg.

The RS Vice-president, Mirko Sarovic, and the HR, Carlos Westendorp, met in Serb Sarajevo today. The meeting focused on the situation in the FRY and the way in which it reflected in the RS. Sarovic and Westendorp discussed the use of BiH territory for [NATO](#) needs and actions by [SFOR](#). Sarovic said that the RS expected [SFOR](#) to return within their mandate as it had been defined in the DA.

Meeting between a Co-chairman of the BiH CoM, Svetozar Mihajlovic, and the Head of the OSCE Mission, Ambassador Barry, today discussed the current political situation in the RS. Barry stated that the IC would no longer tolerate the current blockade of joint institutions in BiH. Mihajlovic stated that no RS representative could continue participating in the work of joint institutions without a decision by the RS NA.

The RS PM, Milorad Dodik, and the [SFOR](#) Deputy Force Commander,

have today agreed on the establishment of a working group that would determine the way in which [SFOR](#) would control the portion of the Belgrade-Bar railway line running through the RS to ensure that it would not be used for military purposes.

The RS Government, which is in permanent session, today considered issues of importance for ensuring favorable foreign loans, as well as preparations for the upcoming donor conference.

The Speaker of the RS Parliament, Petar Djokic, met with a delegation of the Board for the protection of the DA and support for the decisions by the RS from Brcko. The meeting was also attended by Vitomir Popovic. The goal of the meeting was to update the Board on activities taken to implement the RS NA Resolution and on the work of the Political Expert Commission.

Zeljko Radovanovic, the President of the Board for the protection of the DA, at a press conference today, stated that in spite of the pressure, citizens of Brcko would continue their protest rallies until the Brcko Award was changed in favour of the RS. Radovanovic stressed that the Board wished the RS NA to be in permanent session until the election of the new Government and criticized the reporting by SRT on rallies in Brcko.

(Easter greetings by Poplasen, Dodik and others)

Unlike some claims, the Bulgarian border with the FRY remains opened for citizens of the RS and the BiH Federation.