

Transcript of the International Agency's Joint Press Conference

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OHR

High Representative Agrees to Extend RS Srebrenica Working Group Deadline

The High Representative, at the request of RS Prime Minister Pero Bukejlovic, agreed yesterday to extend the deadline for the Srebrenica Commission to present its report to the end of March.

At a meeting held yesterday in Sarajevo the RS Prime Minister explained to the High Representative that initial delays in setting up the working group and the sheer volume of work required meant that the working group was not in a position to report by the end of February.

The RS Prime Minister yesterday gave his personal undertaking that the working group would report by the end of this month. The High Representative said [I quote] "I expect you to keep track of the progress of this group and ensure that your ministries cooperate in full...they should be obeying the spirit, as well as the letter of the law". If the March deadline is not met the High Representative said that he would have to consider what action he will take that is appropriate.

On December 16 last year the High Representative required the RS Prime Minister to set up a group to analyse the documentation produced by the Srebrenica Commission, and to identify all officials, with emphasis on those still in the employment of the RS authorities, whose names appear in these confidential annexes. The working group's report is to be delivered both to the State Prosecutor and to the High Representative. The RS Government Working group was established on 13 January 2005.

OHR Monthly Economic Report

I have brought along copies of the latest OHR monthly Economic Report. The trend identified in this report is positive. The trade figures are encouraging. The currency remains strong, and, despite a falling off in trading volume in one of the stock markets, equity trading is robust. One problem, though, is that the latest consolidated figures we have are for January. These statistics are not obscure – they are the principal data used by economic planners and – equally important – prospective investors. The fact that the latest we have are more than two months old only points up the absolute urgency that should be attached to the current effort to provide BiH with a functioning statistics capacity.

High Representative in Banja Luka to Discuss Police Restructuring

As you know, the High Representative is in Banja Luka today. As we speak he's addressing professors and cadets at the Banja Luka Police Academy . Later he'll be meeting RS officials, including Dragan Cavic and members of the RSNA committees in charge of Defence and Internal Affairs. The High Representative will then hold a short press conference at the IPC in Banja Luka at 15.40 this afternoon.

The media advisory we issued yesterday on this visit is available afterward for those of you who may not have seen it.

OSCE

Ambassador Davidson to visit Vitez and Banja Luka

Ambassador Douglas Davidson, Head of the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina , is visiting "Srednja skola Vitez /Mjesovita srednja skola Vitez" – a "two schools under one roof" today in Vitez. He will be accompanied by Cantonal Minister of Education Lovrinovic, with whom he will have a separate bilateral meeting following the school visit. Ambassador Davidson will use that opportunity to discuss the Minister's plans to comply with the laws on primary and secondary education which call for administrative and legal unification of 2/1 schools. The Ambassador looks forward to lending his support to the Minister, as Minister Lovrinovic carries out his obligations as a lawful official as well as those commitments made by BiH officials on education reform.

Ambassador Douglas Davidson, the Head of the OSCE Mission to BiH, will visit Banja Luka tomorrow, Wednesday, 16 March 2005 . During his visit Ambassador Davidson will meet with officials from the Republika Srpska. He will meet with Milovan Pecelj, Minister of Education of RS, Jasmin Samardzic, Minister of Refugees and DPs, and conclude the visit with the meeting with Nada Grahovac, the RS Ombudsman. There will a press conference with Ambassador Davidson on 16 March, at 1215 hrs. at the International Press Centre in Banja Luka . The host institutions will be informing about the detail timing and locations of the photo and press opportunities.

EUPM

Police Restructuring Explained

EUPM and OHR continue public information road show on police restructuring

The European Union Police Mission (EUPM) and the Office of the High Representative (OHR) will continue a series of public meetings being held throughout BiH on police restructuring. This weeks events will be held in Bihac, Prijedor and Prnjavor. The purpose of these meetings is to present the Police Restructuring Commission's (PRC) proposal to citizens, police, civil society representatives, and other interested stakeholders, and to open a broad dialogue on the ongoing process of police reform.

Police restructuring will: make it harder for criminals to operate and easier for the police to catch them; give police officers better access to modern crime fighting technology; increase the salaries of police officers and improve their working conditions; allow for significant savings in administration; money that can be spent on schools and hospitals;

This weeks meetings will be held in the Bihac Assembly Hall at 18:00 on 16 March, in the City Theater in Prijedor at 18:00 on 17 March, and at the Dom Kulture in Prnjavor at 18:00 on 18 March.

The meetings will deconstruct the myths linked to police restructuring. Police restructuring is not about abolishing the entities, or the Entity Ministry of Interiors – it's solely about creating an professional police service, accountable to the citizens and effective in fighting crime.

Each public meeting will focus on answering questions from members of the public.

No formal statement.

NATO HQ

I have two points for you today.

NATO Headquarters Sarajevo (NHQSa) welcomes the surrender by ICTY indictee Gojko Jankovic.

We are also very pleased with the reported statement of the Serbian government that it is co operating 'intensively' with the government of Republika Srpska in meeting their commitments to the Hague tribunal.

We hope and expect that this co operation will result in further handovers that we have all been awaiting.

NATO welcomes the comments of RS Prime Minister Bukejlovic that the RS will fully participate in the process of Defence Reform. At the current meeting in Mostar two representatives of the RS are present and involved. Concerning this issue, Dr Gregorian will address the Assembly of the RS on Friday.