
Documentation

Foreign minister: 'Shame is the only word to use'

Below is part of an unofficial transcript of the media briefing given by Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdzic at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington, D.C. on Dec. 18, 1992. It has been largely blacked out of the mainstream press and media:

. . . The overall impression when one reads about Bosnia in western papers is usually as an English politician, a former politician involved in the Yugoslavia question said, "They, down there in Bosnia." Well, Bosnia, I'm proud to say, is a cultured place, used to be for hundreds of years.

And if we suffer now, we suffer because we are not understood. As a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society, that's played very well, and with dignity, the role of bringing civilization together. Bosnia is a seam in the fabric of civilization, bringing civilizations together. You cannot do without these welded places, without seams, and that is what Bosnia is. It brought us a lot of problems, but it brought us a lot of quality too, and the quality is the knowledge of the otherness, the knowledge of the imperative to live together. That the ethnically pure means nothing, and that, you know, only if you live with another, if you experience life. Five hundred years ago, just one example, of Bosnia being a refuge for all those who need refuge: The Spanish Sephardic Jews came to Sarajevo through Istanbul and Greece, trying to find a refuge from then exclusive Europe, the least to say. And they found it there, not because there was a United Nations charter, but because Bosnia was used to receiving refugees; was itself a refugee from the world's exclusiveness. That was a special place.

Fascism and extremism are not dead

Now that place, at the end of 20th century, after all—after piles of documents on human rights—that place is being destroyed, not because the world does not need those places anymore, not because the fascisms and extremisms are dead, because we know very well they are not dead. But because the world does not appreciate that, does not fully understand the impact of destroying such a successful model of culture and civilization as Bosnia is.

We warned those who either do not care, or do not know, that Bosnia is going to be paid heavily for. They thought it was far-fetched, just a small place—it might be a small place, it's only about 5 million people—but then it carries a

great weight—historic, civilizational, culturally. We warned about that. And now the time is coming when we can say they did not listen to us, and because of Bosnia, or encouraged by Bosnia, there are dangerous movements in Europe, in Asia, the former Soviet Union. And that Bosnia has become the prism in which all tensions reflect, instead of being protected as a model of cultured and civilized society—civilized profoundly, not through charters or administrative decisions, but because of a tradition not of co-existence, but pro-existence between different cultural groups, ethnic groups, religions, and so on.

Now that is something that I do not understand, that this fact is not appreciated. That in today's civilization, whatever is not immediate gain, immediate and pragmatic, is dismissed as far-fetched, or not of vital interest.

And especially because in 1938 we had a lesson to be learned, and obviously we did not learn anything. We are repeating the mistakes. So history never repeats itself. Man repeats mistakes. That is what we are doing now, in Bosnia. So I am proud to say I come from that country, from such a country, where, until today, and despite all that happened—and what happened there, has only a few precedents in human history. Despite all that—in the town of Sarajevo, besieged by savage people, shelling it now for 9.5 months—despite all that, you still have in Sarajevo all four major, I would call them cultural groups. The Croats, the Jews, the Serbs, and the Muslims, not only living together, but fighting together.

I do not mean to make a pathetic cause of Sarajevo. This is reality. And this is a shame; this is to shame today's world; Bosnia is a shame for all of us. They are fighting there, they are growing thinner and paler every day, but they grow stronger, and that is what these savages, sitting around on the mountains, cannot understand.

But we expected the cultured, civilized world to understand. But the civilized world did not care at all, because they do not need Bosnia. They got either far away, or too strong. Well, let me tell you, the virus of extremisms could not be contained in Bosnia, if the purpose is to contain the fire in Bosnia. That virus of radicalisms, extremisms, fascisms, cannot be contained there. . . . You cannot contain it by tanks. It spreads like fire, and we feel it now. And all those concerned know very well that we asked for peacekeeping troops one year ago. We asked them to understand, but they wouldn't listen. Most of them would not listen.

Now what is the . . . immediate cause of what they call conflict in Bosnia? And war. In my opinion, what goes on in Bosnia is euphemistically called war. Probably for lack of a better technical term, because there cannot be war between hundreds of tanks and none, aircrafts and none. There can be only slaughter. And that is what it is, exactly. In Bosnia and Hercegovina, we do not have war, we have slaughter.

Under the watchful eyes of the civilized world, we have

a big slaughter going on now for nine months. That is why I do not hesitate to use the word shame, because that is the only word to be used, and the only one adequate to describe our feelings toward this, what is going on in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The old plan of Greater Serbia

The immediate cause is expansionist policies of the Belgrade regime. That plan of greater Serbia is 100 years old,

approximately. This regime went back to history, and to that plan, because they could not produce a viable, modern, economic, national, cultural program. Going back to history in the Balkans always pays. And in blood.

Unfortunately, the expansionist plan was to be carried out without regard to human life. So as a consequence, as a direct consequence, we have people killed or driven out of their homes as the main goal of the war, not as a by-product. But the main goal is to have cleansed territories either by



Amelia Boynton Robinson addresses a rally in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 25, 1991, against the Serbian oppression of Croatia and other Balkan republics.

Schiller Institute broke the blackout on genocide

While all the world was keeping silent about the atrocities being committed by Greater Serbia against its neighbors, Amelia Boynton Robinson, a leader of the Schiller Institute, visited Croatia July 1-6, 1992, and pledged a worldwide effort to bring the truth to light and to put a stop to the genocide. Pictured above, Mrs. Robinson addresses a

Croatian rally in Washington, D.C. on Sept. 25, 1992.

Mrs. Robinson is a veteran of the U.S. civil rights movement and a collaborator of Lyndon LaRouche and Helga Zepp-LaRouche. She visited Croatia as the guest of the Croatian group Bastion of Love—Mothers for Peace.

In a press conference in Zagreb, she sharply criticized the policy of the Bush administration, which she accused of having egged on the Serbian military against the other republics seeking independence from the communist dictatorship. Her interventions received widespread coverage in the Croatian press.

killing or by the combination of the two.

That is why we have 128,448 persons killed in Bosnia and Hercegovina. That is the effect of an A-bomb. Devastated cities, devastated generations. I was asked the other day how many children died in Bosnia, and I answered, all of them. Those who are really dead are dead—sometimes cruel deaths. But those still living are not children any more, because they experience the rape of their mothers, death of their friends, sisters, and brothers, and they are not children any more. They are just young very old men.

That is why I refuse, when we talk about the possibility of military intervention in Bosnia, to talk any more about any reason beyond this reason. There can be no reason beyond the fact that there is a great crime against humanity being committed in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

Bosnia is one big bleeding place, has been now almost for a year, without almost any meaningful, *any* meaningful reaction from the civilized world. There are some people that really sacrifice their lives there, try to help; but those are individuals from some organizations attempting to do something, but nothing adequate to the colossal crime going on in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

I also think whatever we do now is too late, too late for those dead, for those raped, and for Europe, because it has been defaced, dehumanized. Having rape camps in Europe at the end of the 20th century, having death camps, having people transported in cattle wagons—and not to react to that—is indicative of a state of mind of this civilization. A new neo-isolationism which is, I must say, caused not by political considerations so much as by sheer selfishness and the lack of understanding of how history works.

That is why I say it is my duty to come here to convey the message of what is going on. And it is up to those who can make decisions and who make decisions to do it. If they can live with this, then we can die with this.

Ambassador: 'While we live, it is not too late'

What follows is part of an unofficial transcript of an interview on "CBS This Morning" with Mohammed Sacirby, Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations, conducted on Dec. 28, 1992 by Paula Zahn.

Zahn: As we approach the end of the year, U.S. troops are securing the relief effort on the ground in Somalia, and patrolling the no-fly zones in the skies over Iraq. And sometime soon, U.S. forces may also be called upon to enforce

the United Nations' no-fly zone over Bosnia. . . . Should the U.S. and other foreign nations enforce the no-fly zone?

Sacirby: Absolutely. It has some practical value for our people, because it prevents helicopters and jets from attacking our town, but it also, I think, sends a symbolic message to stay out of Bosnia's skies.

Zahn: It does not appear that all nations are on board with this idea at the moment. The Russians are sort of going back and forth on this notion.

Sacirby: It does not appear so. I think it's unfortunate because we have so many resolutions passed on Bosnia and by the U.N., and none of them are being enforced. This really sends a very hollow message of what the new world order means.

Zahn: Why do you think the Russians are resisting at this point? And what is your concern about their vacillation?

Sacirby: Well, I think there are quite a few countries that are resisting for reasons that I'm not quite clear on. But, I suspect some of them have to do with concerns that—regarding their troops in Bosnia; and number two, regarding, I think, their being proven wrong in their entire policy of what I would consider appeasement of Serbia.

Zahn: The concern you hear from many Americans is: Okay, so we go in and help enforce the no-fly zone. Then what? Are we going to find ourselves involved in a quagmire like Vietnam and ultimately have to use our ground forces?

Sacirby: Bosnia already has more than sufficient manpower to resist the aggression on its own—

Zahn: You don't think U.S. ground forces then are needed?

Sacirby: Absolutely. We don't think they're needed and we don't, frankly, want them. We think it's a bad idea.

Zahn: What then has to go on from here on out?

Sacirby: I think there are three steps. Number one, enforce the no-fly zone; number two, give the Bosnian troops the right to arm themselves against the superiorly armed enemy; and number three, use American and other western air assets to neutralize the heavy weapons—the tanks, the artillery—that keep bombarding our cities. That three-step solution, I think, could be very effective.

Zahn: How about, in addition to that, surgical air strikes; wiping out power grids; really creating an economic blockade around Belgrade?

Sacirby: Well, at this point in time, we're concerned about the aggression in Bosnia, and nothing is being done to stop the killing of the civilians in Bosnia. If the next necessary step is to do something more regarding Serbia's economic base, so be it.

But, we do not want to have Serbian citizens being at-