

A French general speaks: 'Bosnia is a fiction'

The following are excerpts of a speech given in early 1994, by the French general commanding the 92nd Regiment of Infantry for Unprofor at Bihac in Bosnia. The document, which we are happy to make available to readers in full, is an internal briefing intended for French officers deployed to Bosnia. It is therefore an accurate expression of the reality behind the mealy-mouthed, hypocritical "diplomacy" practiced by the French government. Note that Bosnia is called "Yugoslavia."

Title: Conference—Yugoslavia

. . . The Serbian strategic aim is clear: restore the unity of the Serbian nation. They consider that such a union can be got, only by dividing Croatia and Bosnia. What has abusively been called ethnic cleansing, will allow for regrouping the populations according to their nationality and will thus make this division feasible. . . .

The Serbian position is relatively well-grounded. . . . Bosnian unity, assuming that it did ever exist, has become a fiction. That unity is, in any case, far less legitimate than Yugoslavian unity which was quickly dropped.

The obstinate determination to uphold that unity is mainly due to ideological reasons. But the Serbians and the Croatians don't want to belong to Bosnia anymore. . . . That puts to rest any debate about the survival of a multi-ethnic Bosnian state.

The Bosnian leadership will find it hard to sign a peace accord, because they bear responsibility for unleashing

the war and they have attached their name to the principle of upholding Bosnian unity.

Since the beginning, they have tried to bring the world onto their side by using the mass media very effectively, and multiplying provocations. . . . All of our dead [the French soldiers killed] were killed by the Bosnians.

At Geneva, the Bosnians wrecked the talks deliberately by their excessive demands. Their leaders are die-hard nationalists, who are now going to have to prove just how representative they really are. They are getting more and more radical, and have reorganized their Armed Forces. Bosnia lives today under a military regime. They have been backed in that way of thinking by the U.S.A., which has played an ambiguous role toward Bosnia. . . .

I know I may seem anti-Bosnian or pro-Serbian by saying all this . . . but *facts are facts*, and hiding them will only bring us further away from a realistic solution. . . .

The Muslims must be pressured to see that their idea of a unified Bosnia is dead and buried, and give in to a three-way confederation with a realistic carve-up. . . .

At Zagreb you would think yourself in Germany or in Austria. There are a lot of Croatian emigrés in Germany, and, therefore influential pro-Croatian pressure groups in that country. They are very nationalist and high-strung. The U.N. has a bad image in Croatia, and the Croatians are doing everything they can to disrupt the U.N. troops' activities. Generally speaking, they do not like us, for historical reasons (*we have always been their enemy*). . . . It will be very hard, not to say impossible, to change this image. Croatia, as well as Slovenia, will become the rich nations in the region, and they are both the private hunting grounds for Germany [emphasis added].

called "ethnic cleansing," aggression and genocide, and to take them to the International Court of Justice;

(h) To CALL UPON the United States Congress, the European Parliament, and other legislative bodies to hold formal hearings in their legislatures to hear testimonies of former inmates of Serbian concentration camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia concerning atrocities and war crimes;

(i) To CALL FOR the speedy trial of Serbian war criminals, especially Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, and Ratko Mladic;

(j) To COMMEND the ongoing inter-religious dialogues among peoples as extremely important to frustrate and overcome the evil schemes by some powers to incite and foment religious and sectarian conflicts and wars, and to foster understanding among nations and religions; and to call for the intensification and deepening of such dialogues;

(k) To CALL UPON all western governments to act on the basis of the understanding that the continuation of the present

geopolitical policies in the Balkans will escalate the danger of a new World War and it is necessary therefore to implement immediately a program of global reconstruction, including not only the East but also the South, as the only basis for world peace;

(l) To CALL UPON all concerned national and international Non-Governmental Organizations to cooperate closely and to intensify their efforts to help build a New World Order based on justice;

(m) To CALL FOR and WORK FOR peace that is based on justice, full restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, human rights and the return to their homes for all refugees; and

(n) To INSTRUCT the Secretariat and the Co-Chairmen of the IPGB to establish an ongoing international Working Group and to take all other possible measures to carry out the decisions of the Conference and to inform members of the Conference as and when necessary.