

BERNARDO JURLINA

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Here we go. Our dictaphone is on. At the beginning of this recording I would like to ask you to introduce yourself. So, your name, surname, date and place of birth, place of residence and occupation.

So, I'm Bernardo Jurlina, born on May 14th 1949 in Živušće, Makarska district. In the nineties I participated in the creation of pluralism of the political and Croatian democracy. In 1988 I was chosen, on secret elections, for the president of the Labour Union of Croatia. From 1989, from February, I cooperate – at the time mostly secretly – with the president, doctor Tuđman. In 1990 I was chosen for one of the three Vice Presidents of the Croatian Government, on the first democratic elections, and approved on May 30th 1990 by the Croatian State Parliament. After that I was the Minister of Labour and Social Care, and then our first ambassador in Bulgaria from 1992 to 1994.

From 1992 to 1994?

That's right. After that the ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until the end of 1995, and then in 1996 I went on a special mission on the level of the general consul in Bihać. So, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As far as the war path is concerned, from 1990 to 1992 it was mostly connected to the government. All that we did at the time in Croatia, all the front lines. Also as the Minister of Labour and Social Care I implemented and introduced decrees concerning the support and the Croatian National Guard and all those first formations that were created here in the Republic of Croatia.

I will go back a bit to the period of 1990 – 1992. At that time you were, if I followed you well, the Minister of Labour and Social Care?

First the Vice President of the Government...

First the Vice President of the Government.

...and then the Minister of Labour and Social Care. So, I did both functions. And after that only the one of the Minister of Labour and Social Care. In the second half of 1992, in autumn, I went to Bulgaria as the ambassador and I stayed there for two years. I came back and here I was the ambassador in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs until the end of 1995. At the beginning of 1996, in the agreement with the state politics, with the president, I left on a special mission in Bihać where the general consulate was.

The motive of our conversation is the bill of indictment brought against general Praljak. Part of that bill of indictment relates to the prosecutors conclusion about the criminal undertaking and the criminal association, and that's why it would be good to talk about what were, according to your knowledge from the period of 1990 – 1992, what were the relations between the two states: the Croatian state and the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina?

I think exactly the opposite. So, not only according to my knowledge, but also what we talked about in the Government and what we did – especially concerning Sarajevo itself and the western Bosnia – all the opposite was done. So, in cooperation, in warning about the possible aggression by Serbs, in all kinds of other help to the individual inhabitants or some people who would come, and especially who already came here from western Bosnia in 1991, to Zagreb, knowing what is going to happen. Then I, let's say, know for sure that already at the

time the creation of the common defence of Croats and Muslim was considered also in Bihać...

When?

At the end of 1991, the beginning...

The end of 1991?

...and the beginning of 1992, the joint organization of defence, because they were also convinced of what will happen regarding the Serbian aggression. So, people who were involved in politics in that area think about the organization of the joint defence of Croats and Muslims. Not only in that area, but altogether in the entire Bosnia and Herzegovina. Then, when it already started there, I absolutely know that our side gave a lot, and the weaponry, and help in food, and lot of medical help. Because many people from this part of western Bosnia, who were very close to Zagreb, they came also to get medical treatment here, with our help. So, I think there is absolutely no basis for the talk about that criminal association at that time, but just the opposite.

Good. So, we are talking about the fact that there was the intention to cooperate. There was the wish. It was talked about on meetings. What were the concrete forms of that help, i.e. how was the idea of that help realized in practice at that time?

It was in the form of weaponry, that's one thing. Another was that our people went there to help organize the defence of Bihać and that area. The third was in the form of food. The forth in medication. And the help to people who came here, to us, to get medical treatment as...

Tell me, have you in some form of this help, now you numerated several, several forms of cooperation, have you personally participated in any of them?

Yes. When the president of CDU (Croatian Democratic Union) in this area, and later the general of the Croatian Defence Council, was Mr. Šantić, and he was with Dragan Lovrić who was later in the Croatian Army – and I was the one, because they both personally knew me, who not only gave them support but I also took them to see Mr. Šušak. At the time he was the Minister of Emigrants and he already gradually took charge of the defence – and I was present when it was arranged to give them help in weaponry, which was then, as it is known, transported to Bihać by planes.

Just a moment, let me see if I understood correctly. It's a meeting that you were present on....

That's right.

With, at the time not yet the Minister of Defence Šušak, but the Minister of Emigrants...

That's right. But it...

And on the other hand there were Mr. Šantić and...

Mr. Šantić...

And Lovrić.

Mr. Šantić who was the president of CDU from Bihać, and Mr. Lovrić...

When was that meeting held?

It was at the beginning of 1992.

The beginning of 1992?

That's right.

Where was that meeting held?

It was held, what is now the Parliament, but then it was the Government of the Republic of Croatia, on the 2nd floor, where we had our offices. So it was held in the office of Mr. Šušak.

And on that meeting, I know it's been a long time since then, but can you remember what was talked about?

Well now, first they talked about preparing the joint defence, together with... Croatian Democratic Union, people who were involved in that, knowing that Bihać...

We are talking about the region of Bihać?

That's right. About the region of Bihać. And that there will be the joint defence with Muslims, and that the army already handed out the arms to Serbs, that they can't defend themselves without it. That they will form the joint defence, what was also done later. And the first joint commanding officers of that brigade were Dudaković and Vlado Šantić from the Croatian side. And certainly Gojko Šušak said that he absolutely supports this, and that he will give the order to get them weaponry. And already then they got it. I think they also received a lot of clothes and footwear from the Croatian side. There, that was in February or March 1992.

In 1992. Good. After that an air bridge was established and the order to establish a mixed transport air force squadron was signed by Imra Agotić in May the same year, so two or three months after the meeting you are talking about. A period of frequent flights from the area of the Republic of Croatia to the airport Čoraliće begun in this way.

Yes.

Was that activity, that marked the big part of 1992, connected to this meeting?

Absolutely. I think they even flew before that order, as far as I can remember...

So, before May 1992?

Yes, I think it was. But this can be verified, and not only in transport of materials, but also in transport of people. So, many came here for medical needs, and many came for supplies. Not only weaponry, but also the necessary supplies of military clothing, footwear...

Did those representatives of the people from that area, Bihać, keep coming? Were there more meetings?

Yes, there were, as far as I know. Later I went to Bulgaria, and all the time there was...

When you went to Bulgaria did you still have contacts in this...?

No.

Not anymore?

No, I haven't.

When do you leave, in which month of 1992?

In September 1992.

Are trainings of Muslim pilots already carried out until September 1992?

That's right.

Do you know how that started?

I wouldn't know.

Do you know which pilots were at the time in training here?

I wouldn't...

Good. In any case it's exactly in this period...

But I know that the Government of the Republic of Croatia, what is also important now, on my initiative, at the end of March organized the biggest humanitarian convoy that at the beginning of April, I think, on April 15th 1992 went to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that was for Croats and Muslims. That was the convoy of 147 trucks. They were all trailer trucks. Because of the reality of contemplation of the size of that convoy: when the first truck, trailer truck, passed the highway check point in Karlovac, the last one was leaving Zagreb Fair. The convoy was then seen off also by the Vice President of Government of the Republic of Croatia, Mr. Mate Granić, and it was blessed with holy water by the Father Pavao Tomislav Duka. One such convoy was taken to Livno. Another was taken towards Mostar and third to Neum. But it was certainly, hundred percent, the order of the Croatian Government to divide it equally among Bosniaks and Croats. That is the biggest convoy in the history of war in this area from 1991 until the end of 1996. So, help in form of clothes, help in form of various food. Absolutely, that was a big competition to see who will give more, what is I think an important, important component of cooperation.

Very important. Good, I feel stupid asking this question....

Why?

...but I will do it anyway. So, looking at this development of events, relations, the agreement between Šantić, Lovrić and Šušak that you witnessed, the establishment of the air bridge, the big convoy – and that convoy wasn't the only convoy, there were more – I want to know the following: did the Croatian military, political top, Franjo Tuđman, did they know that this cooperation existed? And have you ever heard, seen or sensed that the Croatian top made impossible, more difficult or questioned this cooperation?

Well, I believe that Tuđman was informed about all important things. Not only that he knew, but he also influenced it. So, he certainly influenced this cooperation I am talking about, at the beginning of 1992. Absolutely. Anyway, he is the key-person who said that Croatia has to go that way and break the blockade, we will talk about this later, when we as a delegation went to Bihać, before the Storm in 1995. So, not only that he knew, but I believe that he absolutely encouraged all those procedures.

So, he knew and he agreed with that, is that right?

Yes, absolutely.

We said in September 1992 you went to Bulgaria. Here actually, in some way, you don't have close contact anymore...

I do...

You still do?

I do. One contact, I just can't remember the name of their member of Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina who in 1993, according to the decision of their Presidency went on a tour to Bulgaria, to Macedonia and I think also to Albania. In Bulgaria they said they have to rely on me as the Croatian ambassador. I connected them with the president Zhelev to present their whole situation. And he also at the time spoke very favourably and publicly about the help of Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Then I managed to arrange, to connect them to go and talk to Kiro Gligorov, who was at the time the President of Macedonia. Unfortunately, I can't remember the name of the one of Serbian nationality, that member of the Presidency. You'll find him. I can't remember.

So those were mostly your contacts with this area, the events in that period of 1992, 1993. Here happens...

Yes, that's right.

Tell me, did you have any kind of information in Bulgaria... That's the time when a big number of refugees are accepted, a big number of wounded from Bosnia and Herzegovina, through ports...

Yes. I am the man who organized that in Croatia. So, not only from the position of Minister of Labour and Social Care. I think that is something that functioned the best in Croatia.

You mean the Ministry?

Yes. So, I'm the one who set that entire system of organization, which certainly functioned supremely. And especially later, when the acceptance of refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina continued. As I see it, from the distance, it is not only the proof of real help, but also the actual decision of those people to which country they could go and find appropriate shelter.

Since we mention the Ministry of Labour and Social Care...Wounded were coming in, refugees were coming in, and displaced people were received. Does any kind of collective data on how many refugees, displaced persons and wounded persons the Croatian state had received exists anywhere?

You have to go to the archives of the Office for Refugees and Displaced Persons of the period. Because the displaced persons are the ones within Croatia, and refugees are the ones who come from another country. So, in Croatia, I don't really know by heart now, but it was certainly several hundreds of thousands. Have you seen that data at all or not?

Yes.

And that's absolutely from all regions. There is another thing that might be important, we forgot to say since we are talking about it, in order to see how big the cooperation was. So, in 1991, when the Serbian aggression was in the area of Plitvice lakes – so, especially Plitvice, then Vaganac, Drežnik grad, Slunj and all those places, then all our Croats run away and went to Bihać, Cazin, Kladaša and elsewhere. Muslims and Croatian people who are there, who are a minority, did so much in those three, four months for our refugees that it's absolutely unheard-of. First they received them in their houses. That's one thing. Secondly they gave them clothing, footwear and fed them. It was a dangerous time. People who organized for themselves the change of identity cards with other names and surnames could later cross over Samac, before it was closed, and return to Croatia. So, that's something I also appreciate, and think it's extremely essential and important...if you haven't heard it before.

Yes, I have heard it...

That's more...

And I actually heard another thing. I would like to know if you know, do you have any information on the way that Slunj actually later repaid the people from Bihać?

I have that part, but I know there were several meetings. What was the name of that mayor? Katić, was it? But I don't know how the regiment repaid them.

Namely, they transferred blood plasma.

Ah that, yes.

You didn't know that?

No. I heard it somewhere, but I didn't...

Tell me, do you know, exactly in this period organized transfer of groups of Muslims who came from the diaspora was going on, i.e. from Croatia and other countries and

they want to go and fight, and whose origins were in this region of Bihać? Did you have any information on that?

Of course. I know they also went by air transport. I know they also went with the help of our people from Saborsko and other places. By those roads over Plješivica, they entered this area. Yes, of course I do.

And that they were trained and...

Trained.

Provided with arms.

Yes.

Tell me, do you know where that weaponry that went to the region of Bihać came from? So, from Croatia, through Croatia. Where did that weaponry come from?

Well, I don't know. I think from different countries, where we got them ourselves too. But from which I really...

Do you have any information on how the port Ploče, Split, Raša functioned? So, what went through those areas to Bosnia?

No, I don't.

You don't?

No, I don't.

Good. So, in 1992, 1994 you are in Bulgaria. You come back. Now we come to Bihać again. You say it was in 1995...

That's right.

Before the Storm?

Yes. That was... So, those initiatives didn't only come from me but also from the Office of the President. So, at the same time. And also from the President of the Government of the time, Mr. Nikica Valentić, and General Janko Bobetko. Not only that the president supported those initiatives but he also gave certain orders that everything has to be done, that precisely we from Croatia have to break that blockade of Bihać that already lasted more than 1200 days. So, blockade caused by Serbs. And we really prepared a lot in Croatia but discreetly, secretly. So, I was at the head of delegation as...

Do you remember, I'm sorry to interrupt you... What was the situation like in Bihać at the time? You say thousand and how many days?

1201 days.

1201 days of the blockade of Bihać. What kind of information did you receive at the time? What was the situation like in the area at the time?

Actually, they always counted on Croatia for everything. There were no conflicts there, maybe political disputes in 1992, but there were absolutely no conflicts because they worked together on the level of the district. On the level, as I said, of organization of defence, food and all of that. And the information came by different means. So, by plane or helicopter connections, by protected e-mail connections, then different amateur connections, and you had many of them in Bihać and that area who were connected with the ones from Croatia. We should also mention that a great financial help was collected here from our side, that was sent there by helicopter connections – individually, to certain families as well as to organizations. Not only to CDU but also to Caritas and Bosniak organizations all the time, until...

This group of people that worked for the 5th corps functioned also here in Zagreb the entire time. Is that right?

Absolutely.

So, what was their task?

Their task was to here, from Croatia, have the direct and constant communication with the 5th corps. That's one. The second thing was to collect weaponry. And the third thing was the only real sanctuary, not only in atmosphere, but also in reality because Croatia gave the entire support, right, the logistical one. Not only the place for the takeoff of helicopters and planes, but also all other logistics, including weaponry I mentioned before.

Yes. That was actually that group of people, Hadžić...

Bajo Hadžić.

Biban, Palić Silvija etc.

Have you talked to them? Senad Palić!

They were all involved. However...

No, Senad Palić was the direct connection to the 5th corps, and Bajo Hadžić was more the connection for Velađić and that organization.

Well, now I would like to know one thing. So, we are talking about the period from 1992 to 1995, to 1996, let's say. During that time many different things happened. The alliance, then the conflict, then again alliance. So, it wasn't actually a peaceful time. Did it happen that during that period, I'm going back to the Croatian political and military top, that they question or deny the possibility of giving help...

No, no...

Or in other words, more concrete question: did the conflict between Croats and Muslims which happened at one point during that time reflect itself on giving help?

No, not at any moment. Absolutely.

And how come?

No, no. I think Croatia really cared about that. Croatia really cared about that help for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as the whole. That's why I think that not giving help wasn't even an option, or any other kind of retaliation. Although tensions existed also in these parts. Tensions yes, that were in the air and so – but conflicts or not giving help, not at any point.

So, I other words: Croatia helped during the entire war within the limits of its possibilities...

Absolutely.

...and objective circumstances...

Absolutely.

...at the time...

Absolutely.

...to the region and the people in that area...

Yes.

...and the 5th corps.

I think that general Tus gave the key-statement in the program "Slikom na sliku" (Picture on picture), where I also appeared. Two things. That without the 5th corps and the Croatian connection in that area where there were no conflicts, since the 5th corps had the people supporting them. So, that was one key-lever. And the other key-lever was the help that arrived from Croatia. Without that this area would have no chance of survival. That's the statement that you can certainly find, "Slikom na sliku" from general Tus. I think it's even on this...

Tape?

Tape.

Good. In 1995, you say, you went on a special assignment to...

That's crucial. I think that's crucial.

That's right. Can we explain a bit what that special assignment actually was?

First of all to show that Croatia was the one – not that it was brave, but that it's the one who, there, even sacrifices its own people. Because the question was if we'll be able to fly over there by helicopter or not. Will they shoot us down or not? We wanted to show, first-hand, on the spot, that Croatia is the one who wants to break the first blockade. That was the first thing.

Secondly, to show on the spot what was the real force of the 5th corps and the defence forces of the Croatian Defence Council. Third, to see what are the relations like between Bosniaks and Muslims. Fourth, to see the relations between Bosniaks, Muslims and Croats, to see to which extent that conflict between Fikret's forces and the 5th corps was expressed and to give a significant estimate... of course, already then it was thought about, those were the predecessors of the Storm, how important will it be, how long can Bihać survive using those forces. Those were, I think, five key-tasks that were listed in the report.

That was your task?

Yes. Absolutely.

Who else, besides you, was involved in that special task?

Mr. Muhamed Zulić who was from that region, he comes from Kulen Vakuf, and at the time was a member of the Parliament. And Mr. Dragan Lovrić, who comes from the Croatian villages on Zavalje, he was and still is the member of the Croatian Air Forces. Yes, and that time when we went in that helicopter connection....

When was that?

That was from February 6th to February 7th 1995. You have it in the report. Yes, and then we took as much weaponry as we could with us. But there is a lot of help that was allowed by the cargo of transport in that helicopter connection. So, I must say, what was the key thing from the people who meant something in the public of that period, when we first publicly appeared, they said that, I think it's also on a tape, that it was clear to them then, when we came from Croatia, that they will be able to survive and that Croatia is 100% behind them. That they were firmly convinced about that only then.

Tell me, that special assignment, you went several times or only once?

Once. And we stayed for three weeks. We were in the middle of all conflicts and attacks. We arrived one day after that big Serbian offensive, when they almost entered Bihać. Because they came up to the hospital. So, it was all still hot. We came one day after that, in February, and we stayed for three weeks in total.

What is the thing you remember today about those three weeks?

First of all, what I remember best is the determination of the members of the 5th corps and the Croatian Defence Council to actually defend that area. But it was absolutely clear to them ***** how important was for them the help that came from Croatia. From other parts it hasn't arrived almost at all. That's one thing. Secondly, I noticed the incredible famished condition of all of them, including the members of the 5th corps and the Croatian Defence Council. Third, I saw that there are only individual single disputes between the members of the Croatian Defence Council and the 5th corps, but not regarding concept. And fourth,...

You mean mutual...?

Mutual, yes, yes and the members of the CDC. And fourth, I saw that the conflict was actually quite fierce, even to the level of hate between the forces of Fikret and the members of the 5th corps. Maybe even fiercer than with the Serbian aggressor. Yes, those are the things that...

And then you came back to president Tuđman, right?

Yes. President Tuđman also received us, what was public and made known. We handed him some presents. To go back a bit, an important thing. On the suggestion of president Tuđman and Gojko Šušak we... I brought and publicly delivered Croatian pistols. One to General Atif Dudaković. And another to the general of the Croatian Defence Council Mr. Vlado Šantić. And it was carved there, Mrs. Dunja Zloić technically prepared that, "from the minister of defence of the Republic of Croatia Gojko Šušak". And that was publicly delivered in Bihać, on a military political gathering, to one and to the other. So, it's not simply to show our appreciation. But, I think that it's...

How did they react to that?

Well, I think not only that they reacted spontaneously, but also general Dudaković himself, actually, almost every day had a connection to Croatia. They thanked us. But I think that their Veladžić who after all belonged, and also belongs today to a radical Islamite current, didn't really like it.

How did you conclude that?

I concluded that because during that time he hasn't received us personally, but only participated on the joint gatherings. Then I also received other information that he wasn't very pleased with the fact that they received such presents from the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia.

But there wasn't any open sparks?

No, no.

Good, you came back, and in 1996 you leave again, then as a consul to Bihać, is that right?

Yes, then it was like this. Then all those activities that... So, we were received by president Tuđman and he publicly expressed gratitude that not only we went there with his knowledge, but also by his order. He thanked us for the presents that he received from the Bosniak and the Croatian side – yes that was a small gun. Then some... a painting and things like that. We also met with general Bobetko and minister Šušak to whom we delivered a report which was certainly used later when the Storm was prepared.

And in 1996, how come you went to Bihać again? Did you expect it or...?

Well, I didn't expect it. But as a person who maybe knew the area better, and especially because Muslims absolutely accepted me, well, they make 90% of the total population there. Because otherwise that area has some 315 thousand inhabitants and an actually objective, necessary opening of the Croatian diplomatic mission in that area happened. So, on the level of the general consulate. And president Tuđman told me in a private meeting that he wanted

someone to go there who could perform a function of unification of the ones and the others, and further show all this help from the Croatian side. I think the important thing in this was that at the beginning of 1996, just after the Storm, what is also important and essential, the first humanitarian convoy was organized by Branimir Glavaš, as the head of Osijek of the time i.e. the head of the area. And we, so, me together with the Croatian Government, operatively from the Croatian Government, lead by Vice President Kostović, we organized again the biggest convoy in this area in the name of the Croatian Government, which consisted of 22 trailer-trucks. As far as I can remember. Trailer-trucks, not regular trucks. And Croatia ordered that it should be escorted all the time by the Military Police in order to avoid problems. And that help, which consisted of food, cigarettes, footwear etc., should be completely equally divided in the warehouses of Muslim Bosniaks and several thousand Croats who live in that area. And as far as the diplomatic mission is concerned, first of all it was crucial that Croatia does, considering that in that area we have the longest border, that Croatia works on the mutual economic connection, to help in...because they always relied on Zagreb – as far as education, culture and health care are concerned and to help with that. And as we already knew then, that there are many Bosniaks who had the Croatian orientation, who favoured Croatian citizenship. One of the key activities was getting Croatian citizenship and also for people who were not according to the Law on Croatian Citizenship the ones of the four criteria. So, not originally Croats, it was used since 1992, when our first ambassador in Sarajevo was Mr. Sančević. I certainly know that Mr. Sančević argued in favour, and that many respectable Bosniak individuals received the Croatian citizenship already in 1992, in Sarajevo and other places in Bosnia and Herzegovina. And here I'm talking about several thousand people...

Several thousand?

At that time.

Several thousand people in 1992?

Yes, 1992 and 1993.

You say Muslims, if I understand well?

Yes, yes. You understand well.

Who got Croatian...

Yes, citizenship. Of course, and the corresponding recommendations of the ambassador and the respectable people were necessary there. That was the proscribed procedure. And in this area it was more pronounced because many people had in their families Croatian documents even before 1939. So, people who declared themselves as Croats of Islam determination before 1941. So, in this area that lasted intensively from 1996 to the end of 1999, when... besides, from this entire area there were more that 54 000 Croatian citizens. I think somewhere around 55 000.

We are talking about the region of Bihać?

About the region of Bihać. 55 000.

55 000?

The region that includes Bihać, also Kladaša, Cazin, Ključ, Sanski Most, Bosanski Novi and Bosanska Krupa and Bužim. As I ...

Good, you say, 55 000 certificates...?

Of Croatian citizenship.

Of Croatian citizenship, yes. And the certificate was the concretization of the citizenship, right?

Yes, but Croats and Bosniaks are included in that number of 55 000.

And that was in the period between 1996 and 1999?

That's right. Absolutely. But also...

And why was the interest so high at that point, let's say, of Muslims to get the certificate of Croatian citizenship?

Well, there, according to me, the following. I don't believe that it's about... it's not about the classical interest but the internal, the proper declaration what many did with their documents, we pointed that out, because the families had the declarations before. That's one thing. Secondly, simply they wanted, they believed that Croatia did so much that they wanted to get that citizenship. And third, also very important, this gave the feeling of maximal personal security. So, here those three components came together. So that in that period somewhere around 12, more than 12 000 people got the citizenship...the Bosniaks. From 1996 to 1999.

12 000?

Yes, 12, I think we can round that up. Including the fact that the structure has all layers. From the simple people to the members of their executive power, not to mention names now, to the ones from the lines of ...

Why not? Well, mention the names if you know them.

Some names?

Yes.

Let's say, Mr. Čoralić who was the member of the 5th corps, very highly positioned. Then, Mr. Šarganović, who was one of the legendary commanding officers of their 502nd, I think, brigade and who was also later politically engaged. Then there were many doctors. I would say almost more than 80% from the district hospital. Then, many of their religious members form the religious hierarchy.

And Mr. Dudaković?

No.

Not him?

Mr. Dudaković was suggested by us and president Tuđman accepted it with open hands, for him to get a special recognition. I reported that to the VONS (National Defence and Security Council). However, since at the time a big accident with general Šantić occurred, who was leading the Croatian Defence Council, who disappeared and until today it is...unsolved, but in any case, that's someone from those extreme members of the 5th corps. Because then they were celebrating March 8th, by the river Una in one excursion centre, and since they were drinking and who knows why they were fighting about etc, and since in that time... it wasn't a problem to raise the hand on someone. Then Šušak said: "Mr. President, I agree with that and all. But what will others tell me, since the case of Šantić still hasn't been cleared, does it have any sense?" So that it wasn't stopped, but postponed. And in Zagreb just after the Storm we did a big meeting "Bihać to Zagreb", that happened in the hotel Internacional, where Mareković and general Dudaković met for the second time. It was an extremely big meeting. I have those notes and a video somewhere, but I have to find them. Like... Like we also organized in April 1996 a big concert "Zagreb to Bihać" where some ten of our performers participated and there were more than 3000, 4000 people, in their concert hall, with big prizes. It's interesting that the first prize, so, spending the summer vacation in Croatia, was won by a Croatian-Bosniak family. So, he was, the husband was a Croat, and she was Muslim. And that video, if it's important to you I think they have it on the television. They have a tape somewhere, because it lasted over an hour, a special entertainment show.

How long did you stay in Bihać?

Until 1999 and at the time I already had to go to Slovakia as ambassador. There were preparations. However, president Tuđman got ill and no more appointments or anything were done. And in 2000 the coalition power came to the scene and 38 ambassadors were promoted or moved, they were driven out within two months from the Ministry of the Foreign Affairs. Or better to say, removed from the foreign countries. Yes, absolutely like that. There are more interesting details that...

So, Mr. Bernardo, we came somewhere to the end of our conversation. Did we forget to say something? Do we have to mention something else when we remember this period?

Well, I don't know, I think that the basic line here is seen with unselfish, really true help of Croatia in that area. So, we can not talk about anything else. Because without that they wouldn't be able to survive. So, it was done constantly from 1991 during the next nine, ten years. What is absolutely proven here. Because, secondly there were no serious incidents after all and even less conflict in this area... I left out an important thing, that very often the 5th corps gave also ammunition and weaponry to the members of the Croatian Defence Council. That's one. Secondly, that they acted together. Especially 502nd brigade lead by Šarganović, the commander who got Croatian citizenship. In many actions when there were attacks of those Serbs from Lika in that area. So, very often they acted together. Or the other way around, when some kind of special ammunition was in the hand of the members of the Croatian Defence Council, they gave it to the members of the 5th corps.

Tell me, do you know where Mr. Šarganović is now? What happened to him?

Of course I do. He is in Bihać. I think he is now a member of SDP (Social Democratic Party). And that he is even member of the Council and that you can reach him and talk, because that would be interesting.

Thank you very much.

Thank you.