

ZDRAVKO TOMAC

DECLARATION FOR THE NEEDS OF THE DEFENCE OF GENERAL PRALJAK

Considering that during the Great Serbian aggression against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina I filled important statesmanlike posts and that I'm familiar with all events in the process of defence of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Great Serbian aggression I feel that it is my moral obligation and duty to dispute with arguments the bill of indictment against general Praljak and other Croats in the political process in Haag.

Besides the entire time from 1989 until today I studied especially the position of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina and all the events that happened during the Great Serbian aggression and later in the civil Muslim-Croatian war and I wrote several books about this, I especially point out the book "Who killed Bosnia?". I consider that it's my duty to oppose the unargued bill of indictment saying that Croatia committed aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and that it was organized together with Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a criminal organization.

Croatia did not commit aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina. Just the opposite. Without the help of Croatia Bosnia and Herzegovina would not survive nor would there be the Dayton Peace Agreement, nor would the Great Serbian aggressor be forced to end the war and sign the Washington and Dayton Peace Agreements.

As the member of the Supreme Council of State that brought all the strategic decisions and as the Vice President of the War government who coordinated the foreign policy, with the full responsibility I claim that Croatia saved Bosnia and Herzegovina and that during the entire war, including the fatal civil war between Croats and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it helped the Muslim people. Croatia received hundreds of thousands of Muslims and accommodated them although it also had several thousands of refugees of its own. At one point Croatia had 700.000 refugees and displaced persons.

Croatia even during the Muslim-Croatian conflict received and cured wounded Muslims, took care of refugees and materially and in other ways helped Muslims, and not only Croats. All the weaponry for the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed through the Republic of Croatia. Croatian ports and the Croatian air space were used. So the entire life of the Muslim people during the Great Serbian aggression couldn't have been saved without the great help of Croatia.

The Croatian government was the first to recognize the sovereignty of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

President Tuđman and the Croatian government and all Croatian political parties essentially influenced Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina to go to the referendum and vote for Bosnia and Herzegovina as independent and sovereign state in the AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of National Liberation of Yugoslavia) borders. Croatia was the first to establish diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, but not only through the Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina but also through all their institutions Muslims were helped to stay alive in that environment.

The liberation action "Storm" saved Bihać from genocide that would according to the number of victims probably even be larger than the one in Srebrenica. Croatia formed a military alliance with Muslims and with joint actions of the Army of BH, the Croatian Defence Council and the Croatian Army liberated a big part of Bosnia and Herzegovina and made the aggressor accept the Dayton Peace Agreement. With the running of the naval blockade and the agreement with Alija Izetbegović Croatia enabled the armament of Bosnia and Herzegovina and render it capable for defence.

During the Muslim-Croatian civil war wounded were received and taken care of in Croatia, tens of thousands of Muslim refugees were received, they were accommodated in Croatian hotels and a huge help was given to them.

Because of all those facts it's very wrong to claim that Croatia was the aggressor on Bosnia and Herzegovina and that Croats and Croats from Bosnian and Herzegovina were organized in a criminal undertaking against Muslims with the goal of their ethnic cleansing and annexing parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia.

The accusations that president Tuđman and the Croatia government pursued the politics of the division of Bosnia, i.e. that president Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević talked about and agreed upon the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina are completely unsubstantiated. President Tuđman and the Croatian government firmly supported the international politics towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia was the only one who accepted all international plans on so called division of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Exactly that expression "division of Bosnia and Herzegovina" enables great manipulation, because it wasn't about the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina but its inner organization in order to ensure, also with the territorial organization, the equality of all three constitutive nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Serbs, Bosniaks- Muslims and Croats.

Different plans of the international community existed for reorganization, i.e. as it was called: inner division of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In more than two years the international community made four propositions for the territorial reorganization of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first proposition of the European community in March 1992 was named after the Portuguese diplomat Cutilier – Cutilier Plan.

The second plan was made in January 1993 in the name of United Nations and the European community and was called Vance-Owen Plan.

And the third plan, from August 1993, was the plan of the United Nations and the European community and was called Owen-Stoltenberg Plan.

The fourth plan, in July 1994, was made by a group of world powers (USA, USSR, Germany, France and Great Britain) and was called Proposal of the Contact Group.

All those plans in some way "divided" Bosnia and Herzegovina either to three federal units: Croatian, Serbian and Muslim, or to cantons that would again be organised based on the national criteria.

All those plans were accepted only by Croats and Croatia, and they attempted to act according to those plans. The Serbian side rejected them because they believed that they are stronger in the military sense and that they will impose their solutions using military force. Muslims formally accepted it but de facto refused it.

Only after the "Storm" and the victory of the Croatian Army, the liberation of a big part of Croatia and liberation of considerable part of Bosnia and Herzegovina using joint military action of Croats and Muslims the prerequisites for the end of the war and the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement were created.

However since the international community using political pressure stopped the victorious Croatian-Muslim Army in its intention to cause a complete military defeat of the Great Serbian aggressor, since using the pressure of the international community Republic Srpska was created as the ethnically pure Serbian quasi-state on the 49% of territory ethnically cleansed from Muslims and Croats, the Dayton Peace Agreement was a huge concession for the aggressor with all the consequences of the instability that haven't been solved until today. The Dayton Peace Agreement accepted the results of the ethnic cleansing and the Republic Srpska which was created using criminal ethnic cleansing and expulsion of hundreds of thousands Croats and Muslims from the 50% of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

With the Dayton Agreement the Serbian aggressors got the best deal, and then Muslims, and finally Croats got the worst deal.

That's why it's absurd to claim today that Tuđman and Croats divided and partitioned Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croats were the biggest losers because their number was cut in half comparing to the pre-war situation.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina war participated armies of the biggest countries of the world. The most important international institutions were active here. That's why it is incomprehensible that it's possible to accuse Croatia that despite of all those forces it was the important factor that divided and partitioned Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It's actually true that from Bosnia and Herzegovina aggression against Croatia was committed and not vice versa. Croatian cities along the river Sava were shelled for years. They were destroyed with thousands of wounded and killed people, civilians.

As the vice president of the War government I considered that Croatia had the right to defend itself, to create the military alliance with Muslims and to defeat the Great Serbian aggressor. I considered it to be legitimate that Croatian Army intervenes in Bosanska Posavina and prevents the systematic killing of civilians by shelling of Croatian towns from that part of Bosnian and Herzegovina.

I requested that not only on the sessions of the government and the Supreme Council of State, but also in the media.

I believe it's interesting, i.e. that it is useful in order to find out the truth to cite in detail my article in "Globus" dated June 19th 1992 titled "Croatia has to intervene in Bosnia".

Here are those extracts:

CROATIA HAS TO INTERVENE IN BOSNIA

GLOBUS, June 19th 1992

EXCLUSIVE

Why did the government of the Republic of Croatia offer the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina the agreement on the joint militant action against the Serbian aggressor

TUĐMAN AND IZETBEGOVIĆ MADE A WAR ALLIANCE!

The ultimate militant task of the Croatia and Bosnian and Herzegovina: with all forces to prevent the establishment of the territorial corridor between Serbia, Banja Luka and the occupied areas of Croatia! If it's not successful the Croatian state will be exposed to the deadly danger...

If Bosanska krajina and the occupied territory in Croatia, from western Slavonia to Knin and Zadar, stay isolated for a longer time in the traffic sense, Serbia and Serbs will have to capitulate!

To win the war and break the aggressive Great Serbian politics, whose goal is to create the great Serbia by taking the territory of other nations and countries, it is necessary with all available means to render impossible the establishment of the territorial corridor of Serbia and Banja Luka, and in this way also with the occupied areas of Croatia, from the part of the Zadar district, over northern Dalmatia, northern Lika, Banija and Kordun, to Bosanska krajina and western Slavonia. This is understandable, because if Bosanska krajina and the occupied territory in Croatia, from western Slavonia to Knin and Zadar, stay isolated for a longer time in the traffic sense, Serbia and Serbs will have to capitulate. That's why it is understandable that before the end of the war a special and deciding fight will be indented in order to

establish the territorial corridor and connect Serbia over northern Bosnia with Banja Luka and occupied areas.

It seems that, in spite of all the hesitation and manoeuvring from the Muslim and Croatian side, the processes started developing well. Muslims and their leadership realized that they have to change the politics “don’t shoot” into “defend yourselves”, that the Croats are their allies and that without the Croatian Defence Council and its fight “Bosnia would already fall with a whisper”, i.e. that the Croats are not fighting against Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but for the preservation of the undivided state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The agreement in Split between CDU (Croatian Democratic Union) and PDA (Party of Democratic Action) was the turning point, but the tuning point reached by the change of state in practice, because Croats and Muslims started fighting together even before the agreement and despite the arguments and misunderstandings in the leadership of CDU and PDA.

The Croatian government even crossed Rubicon the other day and in its conclusions said what it had to say and what it had the right to say and what no one can question. In the conclusions of the Croatian government actually the joint fight was offered to the legal and legitimate government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was already in a way a theme of the talks in Split between CDU and PDA. The Croatian government suggested to the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to commonly, on all areas, and even military, works on the area of northern Bosnia, i.e. Herzegovina, so in the border areas of the two states, in order to render impossible the realization of the main military goals of the enemy in the valley of the rivers Sava and Neretva, because those goals were equally oriented against the Bosnia and Herzegovina state as well as the Croatian state.

Croatia had the duty to defend from destruction its towns and villages along the river Sava, that were being destroyed for months by the common enemy from Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. to defend Dubrovnik and other areas being destroyed by the common enemy of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina from Bosnia and Herzegovina. So, the response of the two sovereign states, two governments, presidents Tuđman and Izetbegović, whose joint declaration has the historical meaning for both nations, is legal and legitimate, and no one can question it, and no one can complain, because it’s the question of the defence alliance.

In the meantime the situation of the front lines started changing. Croatian and Muslim forces liberated also a big part of northern Bosnia, the right river bank of Neretva, they advance on many front lines that create the unique front on the border of Bosnia and Herzegovina in northern Bosnia and Dalmatia and Herzegovina. The communications were cut and connections of Serbia with Bosanska krajina and the occupied areas of Croatia. The conflicts in Serbia started, the change of politics is requested, and the change of leadership, the resignation of Milošević is requested. The economic blockade begins to work. The political situation is getting more difficult, the economic and social misery in greater. One can already detect riots. However, before the final outcome, it is necessary – because there is no other solution – to military win against the Serbian force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because general Mladić and Chetniks, who committed so many crimes, have no other way out then to continue the war until the end, although probably they already see themselves as defeated and that they can’t finally win and realize their goals.

If this is successful, if the last Serbian advances are stopped, then the end of the war is very near, because the Serbian Bosnian “state” and occupied areas in Croatia, because of economic and other difficulties and isolation, will simply fall apart and have to ask for the salvation in capitulation.

The Croatian Defence Council and its Council have the historical responsibility and historical obligation to establish a new power, to organize life, to bring back the refugees, to be ready for defence and with joint forces of Bosnia and Croatia achieve the final victory. If new,

additional and integral measures are not undertaken there is a danger that the enemy realizes its goals in northern Bosnia.

From everything that was said it's obvious that the end of the war is near, that we are close to victory, but in chess terms, it is necessary to play equally well even the last move before the enemy is checkmated.

Even today I believe that I was right. However, president Tuđman believed that Croatia has to listen to the international community and that it had to implement strictly the politics of the international community.

Because of that he criticised me fiercely in his report, in fact in his Epistle on the joint Session of the Parliament Council on June 26th 1992.

On that last session of the Parliament on the eve of the new elections, when addressing the Parliament and the Croatian public, president of the Republic Dr. Franjo Tuđman in his speech epistle, said among other things:

But regarding the international political position of Croatia, I consider it necessary to draw the attention to the need of utter seriousness and responsibility in pursuit and interpretation of our state politics from all the institutions and individuals in civil and military authorities. I was especially stimulated to say that after the yesterdays meeting with the chief of the European commission on the ex-Yugoslavia, lord Carrington, who in the presence of his co-workers (minister De Beauce, ambassador Wijnaendts and Cutilier and the others, and I was accompanied by the minister Škrabalo and head of the office Šarinić) showed his opinion that the statements of the members of the Croatian government about the military alliance of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the engagement of the Croatian forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and especially as he expressed himself the "offensive" of the Croatian Army in the area of Drniš, suggest that Croatia is for the prolongation of the war, that it violates the armistice and prevents the implementation of the Vance Plan. That allegedly threatens the entire plan of UNPROFOR and keeps encouraging also the discussion about the guilt of Croatia, so, according to the opinion of representatives of some states, raising sanctions also against us should be considered. About similar initiatives reported also Šeparović, the chief of our mission in the United Nations. All that suggests, on one hand, that despite our recognition we have to keep counting with the factors unfavourable for Croatia, and on the other hand we can't allow that thoughtless actions make our position more difficult and even question the results that we have achieved with determination and the utter common sense of our politics.

As the result of this criticism the same day I resigned on the post of vice president of the government of democratic unity because I could not implement the politics I do not agree with.

I'm saying all this in order to prove not only that Croatia was not the aggressor on Bosnia and Herzegovina but also that the Croatian politics headed by the president dr. Franjo Tuđman was the important unavoidable factor in the realization of the international politics towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, i.e. that without Croatia that politics would suffer a complete failure and fiasco.

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