

Karadžić Interview, 12 July 1995
SRT Footage

Journalist in the studio:

The guest of the News is the President of Republika Srpska... ...Doctor Radovan KARADŽIĆ. The Serb side guarantees full safety to all of those who are located in the Potočari reception camp, as well as to the members of the Muslim armed formations on condition that they surrender their weapons and themselves. Mr. President, what is the latest situation in Srebrenica?

KARADŽIĆ:

You are right in saying that Srebrenica is top news but it should also be. And as such, it's a complete example of the superiority of both the Serb weapons and the Serb Army, and at the same time an example of Serb generosity. Namely, UNPROFOR is present there all the time and we are giving it the possibility, if it deems necessary, to protect those civilians, to have the complete introduction... insight into what's going on. Not one civilian has been hurt, since the combat activities ceased. There is absolute peace and order. Our army is enabling the establishing of our civil authorities there because the Serbs were exiled from Srebrenica at the beginning of the war. Those Serbs are coming back now, from the neighbouring villages. There are already existing organs there, elected organs of the Municipal Assembly, the Serb organs. And there is now, as affairs settle down, an activity of the refugees who want to leave. In fact, the majority, the vast majority of these refugees declared that they wished to go to Tuzla. It is probable that some of them would declare that they want to go to ABDIĆ. And we are completely willing to satisfy their wish, as we have signed an agreement which states that each citizen has

the right to freely choose their place of residence, although we think that they do not need to go and they should not go. But one thing is certain: that place will never again be a terrorist stronghold of, as you said yourself before. Not a single armed man can ever be there again, except for the police. If they want to accept the authorities of Republika Srpska, and become its citizens, then they don't have to go. However, it turns out that the overwhelming majority wishes to go and they are mainly going to Tuzla.

Journalist in the studio:

Now I suggest that we watch the footage brought to us by the Serb Television crew from Srebrenica.

Reporter Snježan LALOVIĆ:

After great provocations and strong Muslim attacks here from Srebrenica, the members of the VRS (Republika Srpska Army) were forced to free this town. A crowd of civilians here are surrendering to the VRS, but the Muslim soldiers are in a panicked flight in the surrounding hills. So, that the operation of the liberation of Srebrenica is still ongoing.

Journalist in the studio:

On the other hand, the world media is manipulating with the difficult humanitarian situation in Srebrenica. Mr. President, what information do you have on the humanitarian situation in this town?

KARADŽIĆ:

First of all, it was never difficult because they would always present sixty thousand inhabitants. They would inflate the figures two to three times and in return receive great quantities of food, which they gave to their army, while it was fighting against us. This was a source of frequent tension between our army, UNPROFOR and UNHCR because we knew that this food was being misused. Secondly, our commissariat for refugees, as you can see, rushed in to help. Everyone can see that these people look well fed and

that there are no problems, at all. If you compared what happened in Western Slavonia, where the Croats were allegedly liberating, with what has happened in Srebrenica, where the Serbs are doing the liberating, there is such a difference that it is impossible to talk about war at all. Here, the inhabitants are being simply taken care of and, of course, if they want to stay they may. The humanitarian situation is being kept under control by our authorities, and we will certainly not allow the civilians there to suffer or bear any hardship, because we will share what we have with them. Because they are the people. They could have decided to be our citizens and, to put it simply, Muslim civilians were never our enemy and adversary. We were not fighting against them. And the same will be this time.

Journalist in the studio:

Muslim officials IZETBEGOVIĆ and SILAJDŽIĆ seemed confused today. They are blaming the United Nations and Jasushi AKASHI as the personification of the United Nations' indecisiveness, requesting that the United Nations and NATO return to Srebrenica the status of safe haven.

KARADŽIĆ:

Well, only we can return to Srebrenica the status of safe haven. It will only now be a safe haven because all those remaining in Srebrenica, as well as those who return – the Serbs, that is - will be safe. Up to now, no one was safe. According to the international law of war, a safe haven is an area on which two armies, two conflicting sides, come to an agreement, draw its borders and sign pledges that there will be no soldiers or arms there, that there will be civilians there who will enjoy the protection of both parties. That was not the case. None of the safe havens was demilitarised. Mr GHALI himself has said that the safe havens were

military strongholds for supporting operations against the Serb territories and the Serb people and this had to stop. This must stop in Bihać and in Tuzla, in Srebrenica and Žepa, in Goražde and Sarajevo. All six zones have to stop acting as buffers for attacks on Serb territories, the burning of Serb village and killing of Serb civilians. No one can force us into returning to Srebrenica the kind of status it had while it was a stronghold of the Muslim Army. This is out of the question. This is a war and we are one of the parties to the war. The United Nations must not under any circumstances become one of the parties to the conflict. If they did become a party to the conflict, that would be an open act of war against the Serbs and we would have to defend ourselves. I would also like to remind the entire international community of a particular hypocrisy: whenever, Muslim forces from these safe havens advance through the Serb territory, from Bihać, Tuzla, Sarajevo, and even from Goražde, the whole world applauds, but when the Serbs undertake counter-offensives and neutralise their opponents, then the world starts to wail and mourn over the losses. You can see that the Muslim civilians haven't lost anything, but the Muslim Army has. The message I would pass on to the International Community is to hurry up with the conference because the longer the war continues, the less flexible, the Serbs, will be. We were most flexible at the Lisbon Conference prior to the war. Every new day of war makes it harder for us to return any of the territory, and the factual state of affairs will indeed play a crucial role here. Accordingly, it would be better if they hurried up with the conference, removed the sanctions on Yugoslavia and brought us to the negotiating table

under identical conditions and resolved the crisis, instead of becoming actively involved against the Serb Army and the Serb people and Republika Srpska in political games.

They exclusively helped the Muslims. And the Muslims are ungrateful. If it hadn't been for UNPROFOR, they would have been defeated a long time ago. Even though it may sound paradoxical, UNPROFOR's presence prolonged the war. If UNPROFOR was not present here, the Serbs would have brought this war to an end. And I am that this war will only end with a complete Serb victory, although we wanted to separate from them, rather than defeat and incorporate them in our state. In the final analysis, Bosnia once belonged to the Serbs and it may happen that it will return, in its entirety, to Yugoslavia.