

Truce, Reintegration of Croatian Territory and Peace

Croatian transcript:

I onda je došlo to primirje, i onda je se rat preselio u Bosnu, i u Hrvatskoj je bilo povremenih incidenata, prekida primirja, povremenog, onako, terorističkog pucanja na gradove koji su bili u dometu artiljerije do '95, kada je 2. ili 3. maja iliti svibnja '95. bila Operacija Bljesak, to je u sjevernoj Hrvatskoj se, sa dijela teritorije protjerala ta neka srpska vojska koja je bila okupirala taj dio. Naravno, mislim, oni su tamo... Tamo je bilo puno srpskog stanovništva, pa su oni poslani tamo da štite te Srbe koji su tamo živjeli, tako da kako se povukla vojska, povukli su se i civili skupa s njima, i ovaj...

Kao nekakvu osvetu za to je tada raketiran Zagreb, to je bio prvi i jedini slučaj da je glavni grad Hrvatske, Zagreb... Ma nije jedini, bilo je raketiranja iz aviona početkom rata. Ali, znači tog 3. svibnja '95. je nekoliko onih velikih raketa sa „zvončićima“ – to bi se zvalo *cluster bomb* na engleskom – ispaljeno. Bilo je desetak mrtvih u Zagrebu, civila, prolaznika, i ovaj... I onda je konačno, hajmo reći, oslobođenje Hrvatske uslijedilo akcijom Oluja, koja je bila u 8. mjesecu negdje, 5.8, 8.8, ne znam, u 8. mjesecu '95, gdje je najveći dio te Republike Srpske Krajine – vraćamo se znači, sve je povezano; sve što mi vama pričamo je povezano. Republika Srpska Krajina, kao ta je li marionetska, jedna od tih srpskih zemalja koje su trebale tvoriti neki savez srpskih zemalja. Sad to improviziram, ali tako su otprilike zvučali ti planovi, ovaj, Akademije nauka.

I, tu je nakon par dana, nakon ogromnog zbjega civilnog stanovništva taj dio, ovaj, reintegriran pod nadzor hrvatske države, i Zapadna Slavonija kao taj treći dio. Tu je već uz veliko prisustvo međunarodnih snaga dogovorena neka mirna reintegracija, jer je Srbija tada već javno... Dotad je mislim na tim tajnim susretima Tuđmana i Miloševića vjerojatno bilo dogovora i oko ovih prethodnih akcija, a oni su bili tajni, a za taj dio teritorije koji se postupno kroz godinu-dvije reintegrirao u hrvatsku državu, to je izvršeno bez vojnog nasilja, jer je više i država Srbija, tadašnja Savezna Republika Jugoslavija, bila i službeno digla ruke od toga, od tih ambicija da to osvoji i zadrži kao svoj teritorij. I tako, to je jedna ta bremenita i teška, i na momente vrlo mučna priča o postanku hrvatske države.

English translation:

Then the truce was reached, and the war moved on to Bosnia. There were occasional incidents in Croatia where the ceasefire was broken sporadically with terrorist shelling of cities and towns which were within the range of [Serb] artillery until 1995, when on May 2 or 3, 1995, Operation Flash took place in Northern Croatia, where the Serb army which occupied the area was forced to withdraw. Of course, I mean, they were there because... There was a large Serb population living there, so [the Serb army] was sent there to

protect those Serbs who lived there, so when the army withdrew, the civilians withdrew as well.

Zagreb was shelled as some sort of retaliation. It was the first and the only time that the capital of Croatia, Zagreb... Not the only time, there were a few airstrikes at the beginning of the war. But on May 3, 1995, several of those large rockets with bomblets - or what would be called "cluster bombs" in English - were fired on Zagreb. There were about ten casualties, civilians, passers-by, and...

The final liberation of Croatia took place with the Operation Storm in August, somewhere around August 5 or August 8, 1995, where the largest part of this Republic of Serbian Krajina¹ - And we're back to the Krajina, you see, everything is connected - which was one of several puppet Serb states which were supposed to form some kind of a union of Serb states. I'm paraphrasing, but those were the general plans of the [Serbian] Academy of Sciences [and Arts]².

In any case, a few days later, after a huge number of civilians fled from that area, the area was reintegrated into the Croatian state, as well as Western Slavonija as the third [renegade] state. In the case [of Western Slavonija], a peaceful reintegration with a large presence of international military forces was agreed upon. There must have been agreements during the secret meetings³ between Tuđman⁴ and Milošević⁵ on previous military actions, but when it comes to that part of the territory, it was gradually reintegrated into Croatia within a year or two without any military violence because Serbia, which was then called Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, officially gave up on their

¹ Republic of Serbian Krajina (BCS: *Republika Srpska Krajina*) was an internationally unrecognized renegade state in the territory of Croatia. Backed by Serbian politicians and military, it was formed in 1991 in the Eastern area of Croatia bordering Western Bosnia. The Republic of Serbian Krajina was one of several satellite states which were a part of a plan for the Greater Serbia (see footnote below).

² Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, or SANU, is considered to be the place of origin of the Serbian nationalist plan for the Greater Serbia, a country which would include all Serbs living in one unified territory, spreading from Eastern Croatia in the West to Macedonia in the East. This plan, known as the SANU Memorandum, was published in 1986, inciting the rebirth of the Serbian militant nationalism and anti-Serb sentiment.

³ The speaker here refers to a number of secret meetings between Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević from 1991 to 1995, where the two leaders of countries at war met and discussed the division of territory in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

⁴ Franjo Tuđman (1922-1999) was a Croatian politician and an ex-Yugoslav army officer who was the first president of Croatia and the war-time commander of the Croatian Army. Several statements, including those by officials of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia in The Hague, imply that had Tuđman lived longer, he would have been indicted for war crimes against Serb civilians in Croatia.

⁵ Slobodan Milošević (1941-2006) was a Serbian politician and the war-time president of Serbia, and later, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. He died during his trial for war crimes, including genocide, against Croats, Bosniaks and Kosovar Albanians in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo at the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia in The Hague.

ambition to seize it and keep it as their territory. So, that would be the complicated, difficult and at times very disturbing story of the foundation of the Croatian state.

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