Article by the High Representative, Carl Bildt:"Bosnia:Brave Words, Feeble Action"

George Soros has done a great deal of good for Bosnia through his Foundation. But he makes the mistake of shooting at the pianist when he expresses his anger that implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement has not yet brought Mr. Karadzic to the Hague.

I was hoodwinked by Karadzic, he says, when Karadzic handed over all his presidential powers and functions to the woman who is now the Acting President of Republika Srpska.

In no way. As I have made it clear time after time, I will not be satisfied until Mr. Karadzic one way or the other turns up in the Hague to answer the charges against him.

But in the absence of any instruments to arrest him and send him there, I have been trying to do whatever is in my powers to limit his influence, marginalize him and gradually squeeze out of the positions from which he can exercise influence in the Republika Srpska. In fact I know of no attempts which have been made to achieve anything regarding Mr. Karadzic's position over the past few months apart from those made by me or my office. Others have been making bold statements to the media – but there has been little or no attempt to follow them up with serious action on the ground.

The truth is that some serious steps have been taken. Karadzic was forced to leave public office as was demanded by the Lyon Summit. We are determined to ensure that he does not use his position in the SDS party or his influence on the media to use state television as an instrument of propaganda and defiance

for him. We know that he feels squeezed and harassed – although he clearly takes some delight in the way the international media describe him as all-powerful and spoiling for a fight.

I can assure him and anyone who cares to know that I will use all the powers within my grasp to force him step by step down the road that will take him to the Hague. But I am not commander of any military forces or police formations within Bosnia.

When George Soros, with a phrase that is becoming increasingly common, says that IFOR is becoming unpleasantly reminiscent of the UN Protection Force in avoiding confrontation, he is taking aim at another pianist.

The essence of UNPROFOR's problem was that the diplomats in New York were allocating tasks that they then deprived UNPROFOR of the means to carry out. It was easy for the members of the Security Council to pass a resolution on the creation of safe areas in Bosnia, but when the resolution had been adopted they refused to provide the troops necessary to make the areas safe in any sort of sense. The tragedy of Srebrenica was created in the capitals of the members of the Security Council. The combibation of brave words and feeble action is always an invitation to disaster.

We are now in danger of creating the same situation again. Brave words in Washington or other places, but no sign of the means for the men or the women on the ground to turn them into reality. These words sound marvellous when uttered, and make good headlines for a while. But in the Bosnian Serb strongholds their only effect is to demonstrate impotence and ineffectiveness.

I am not the pessimist that Mr. Soros and others sometimes are concerning the chances of implementing the Dayton peace accords. The difficulties ahead are enormous – look at the

peace processes in the Middle East or Northern Ireland for comparison. But given a sufficiently robust and sustained involvement by the international community over the years to come – certainly well beyond December of this year – I believe it can be done.

Then we will have to avoid the mistake of the UN period. We must be prepared to match our words with our actions. If we are not ready to do so, we had better stay silent. We must deliver on what we promise, and not promise more than we are able – or willing – to deliver.