

Article by the High Representative, Carl Bildt: "I Haven't Legitimized War Criminals"

Propaganda has been an instrument in the arsenal of diplomacy as long as this art has been known. But Bosnia and Herzegovina Ambassador Muhammed Sacirbey's April 30 article, "Dayton II is Overdue," on the peace implementation process in Bosnia contained a number of facts and accusations that were manifestly wrong and misleading.

I have never, since accepting the job of High Representative, given Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, who is an indicted war criminal, "undeserved legitimacy and status". My office does not on principle have any dealings with him or with Gen. Ratko Mladic.

When Mr. Sacirbey claims that I refer to Mr. Karadzic as "Mr. President," that flies in the face of reality in a way clear to anyone with knowledge of Bosnian developments during this year. And when he starts claiming that there are leaked letters from myself to President Milosevic he enters a fantasy world that ambassadors careful with their credibility should stay well clear of.

It is well known that Mr. Sacirbey is dissatisfied with the more assertive stance we have taken on implementation of the Dayton agreement on certain issues where we are less than satisfied with the performance of the Bosnian and Federation governments. This applies not least to the situation in the Sarajevo area, where they have yet to live up to their commitments.

But this in no way justifies his false accusations on matters as important as respect for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. The policy of the international community on the issue of those indicted for war crimes by the ICTY is clear, and is being actively pursued by the different actors in a number of different ways. That more needs to be done about Messrs. Karadzic and Mladic needs hardly to be debated.