

Interview: Carl Bildt, High Representative in BiH in Pale TV

Ilija Guzina: welcome to our show.

Mr. Bildt: thank you very much.

Ilija Guzina: in the last two months you made a lot of remarks about our television. You have had some tough words too. How do you feel tonight among us?

Mr. Bildt: I was here a few of months ago, at the beginning of this year and had the possibility of speaking directly, which your television then did in a very fair and open way. Subsequently I had my complaints concerning your news programmes which I think were rather propagandistic. Sometimes you did not give people from the RS correct information on what was happening. So I naturally appreciate especially this possibility to be here tonight.

Ilija Guzina: thank you. What do you think about giving the viewers their chance to put questions tonight?

Mr. Bildt: absolutely.

Ilija Guzina: but they will ask harder questions, tougher questions than we do.

Mr. Bildt: well the ordinary people often have hard questions for the politicians, and I think it is our task, and also for the representatives of the international community to try to answer them. Sometimes we can, sometimes we cannot.

Ilija Guzina: thank you then. We will tell our viewers the telephone numbers. They can call and ask Mr. Bildt questions. Mr. Bildt, the last couple of days you have visited a lot of countries, you have attended many meetings where the fate of the nations and peoples in this area was discussed. Have you anything encouraging that you would like to say to the people from the RS?

Mr. Bildt: the international community is determined to stay on and help with the full implementation of the Peace Agreement. And we are determined to act until the common institutions of BH are set up. This, of course, is the pre-condition for many or all the problems that ordinary people have. If you speak about the economy, or if you speak about missing persons, or if you talk about the rights of refugees, all this depends on the setting up of the common institutions. And that is, I think, equally the message both for the RS and for the federation, for all people here.

Ilija Guzina: when do you think those common institutions will be established?

Mr. Bildt: that is a good question. When the three members of the presidency met for the first time they agreed they should have set up the council of ministers by October 30th, and since then, as you know, they have had some problems meeting with each other. There have even been some difficulties to establish telephone connections between them. But I hope that this is not going to delay the setting up of the common institutions. This is so clearly in the interest of everyone. I would sincerely hope that within the next few weeks we have the common institutions starting to operate. And it will take some time for them to really start acting on, let us say, the economic issues. They must start talking with the world bank, with the European Commission, and with others concerning the reconstruction programme for next year for all of the country. And there are lots of difficult issues that they must deal with, in the parliamentary assembly, on citizenship and immunity and other legal matters. But if the goodwill is there from all sides I think it can be done in a couple of weeks.

Ilija Guzina: you mean all three sides?

Mr. Bildt: I mean all three sides. There is an expression, at least in my language and in English, it says it takes two to tango. In this case it takes three to tango. And we, from the international community make this clear for the three. Although, of course, it was Mr. Krajisnik who did not come to the meeting in Sarajevo that we asked him to do. It was a step back for the RS.

Ilija Guzina: can you realise the psychological brake on the Serbs, the fear to return to Sarajevo, to the Sarajevo

from which they were expelled? I was expelled from Sarajevo. I have spent all my life in Sarajevo, I lived there, I worked there in television, together with Muslims and Croats. If I had not run away I would have been killed. And I was not a member of any military unit. Can you understand that fear and that rejection among Serbs dating from their departure, for their coming to the city?

Mr. Bildt: I can, but, at the same time, we must see the emotions on the other side as well. There were 11000 people killed in Sarajevo by artillery and bombardment from the Bosnian Serb army there. A lot of people there are saying why should we allow representatives from the RS to come here and share our power, since they were the ones who killed our mothers, and fathers, and our children. But what we are really saying to yourselves and others is that the war is over. It was a very, very difficult war for everyone. And the sooner the politicians really start to work together and understand that they are no longer enemies, that their history is history, and the future is something that you have in common, will have in common, the sooner you should start to work together, the better it would be.

But, of course, it is difficult. I said that when I was here last time. We discussed European history and all of the difficulties that there have been between people who fought wars against each other: Russians and Poland after the massacre in Katyn, French and Germans after all of the bad experiences over the past 100 years, and if we go back to my part of the world where Danes, and Norwegians, and Swedes, and Finns, and Russians used to kill each other - none of this was easy. The entire tendency in Europe is for people work to together for integration, solving problems together. And the RS and BH is part of the world, a part of Europe. That means that everyone must work together for the future.

Ilija Guzina: we will try not to go back to the war. But I have to say one thing and I was moved to do that by this number of 11000 killed Sarajevans. Ilidza is also a part of Sarajevo. About 3000 Serbs were killed there. And Ilijas is also a part of Sarajevo. There were also about 2000 Serbs who were killed there. And Grbavica is also a part of Sarajevo, there were also some Serbs killed there but that is not important.

Mr. Bildt: well one thing is important. You can go around to the different parts of Sarajevo, to the different parts of Bosnia and you can look at the cemeteries, and you can see when people were killed, sometimes you also see when they were born, 5 years-old, 3 years-old, 10 years-old, 20 years-old. The common message to come out of all of these cemeteries and all of these graves is - it must never happen again. And the message to the politicians must be - work together to prevent this from ever happening again to generations of Serbs, or Muslims, or Croats, or whomever because nothing can resolve it.

We know that practically all of the people agree with this but then it is also very difficult to take the steps that are necessary in order to start to work together and review all that happened. There is peace in Europe today because, immediately after 1945, there were statesmen who said - reconciliation, work together. Churchill talked in 1946, immediately after the war, about Germany as a partner and the German people as democrats and partners in Europe, and then De Gaulle and Eisenhower in Germany - they shook their hands over the battlefields. And that is of course the spirit of working together and reconciliation that is desperately needed in your country. When I say this, then I say this with great respect. All of the problems, and the feelings that some things would be difficult are understandable - but there is only one way for the future.

Ilija Guzina: I have to go back to the near past. Do you think that there is such a nation that wants the war? I am sure that neither Serbs, nor Muslims, nor Croats wanted to have war. Lord Carrington warned that it is not the right time to wind up Yugoslavia and that this could cause war. Why did Europe not obey him?

Mr. Bildt: what Lord Carrington and others said was that the forces of nationalism were extremely dangerous, extremely wild. What he was afraid of here was, of course, that nationalism was going to be strong, that it was going to cause war. We had President Milosevic in Serbia, Yugoslavia, who was very clearly playing on national sentiments. The same goes in Croatia with President Tudjman. It was easy to see the problems there were in Bosnia. Regardless of the history, I think the lesson to be learnt was that nationalism that can easily lead you to war. The important thing now is to discuss the future. And what can be done in order to avoid this happening one year from now, 10 years from now, 20 years from now.

Ilija Guzina: you say very interesting things so I cannot ask you something I intended to do. It seems that you provoke me by your answers, of course, in a positive sense. If you say that Tudjman or anyone else was the participant and held a part of guilt for the war why are they not blamed for that guilt then? Maybe they started to be good afterwards?

Mr. Bildt: it depends. Nationalism is, to a certain extent, healthy – I am proud of my own nation. But if, in spite of the fact that you are proud of your own nation, you direct that into aggressive feelings against other peoples and other nations and you say that we are going to create our own state only for our own people, nationalism becomes destructive and dangerous and often leads to war.

Ilija Guzina: who said that?

Mr. Bildt: I am saying that. A lot of people have said that before me.

Ilija Guzina: who said in the area of the Former Yugoslavia that they wanted to create their own country and that there would be no place for Serbs in that country?

Mr. Bildt: a lot of people said that. This is only for Serbs, this is only for Croats, this is only for someone else and that is the philosophy that, as we know, we see the consequences of in cemeteries, in burned down houses, and no one really has benefitted from this philosophy.

Ilija Guzina: you avoided a response to my question in an elegant manner.

Mr. Bildt: no I did not.

Ilija Guzina: you have said what needs to be done in order to create the common institutions. Everything you have said tonight does not step outside the framework of the Dayton Peace Agreement and everything is to the benefit of Serbs and the other two nations. Why then are you threatening us with reintegration?

Mr. Bildt: let us go back to the history of Europe. Of course, Europe is more united in the economic sense now than it was before 1914. In order to have peace you must have reintegration. I see virtually no possibility of helping the economic and the social situation of BH without economic reintegration. People trading, co-operating, travelling, living where they want to live, having their right to private property, respecting the political structures of the Peace Agreement. If you are trying to have walls like it was in Berlin, barbed wires through half of Europe, it will just not work. I very, very strongly believe in European integration, and in this part of Europe there is no difference.

Ilija Guzina: of course, nobody wants to have walls nor barbed wire. You have mentioned the example of your country and its neighbours. That happened about a century and a half ago, maybe more. You talked about problems in relations between Russia and Poland, France and Germany. All those countries first established their own integrity and then they started to reintegrate into a unified Europe. Serbs have nothing against such a path. The whole world is trying to divide Israelis and Palestinians. After they divide them, after they know to whom belongs what, then they will turn to each other. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Bildt: no, I think that we are trying to get the Palestinians and Israelis to work together. Most of the very large number of Palestinians that are in the Gaza strip are dependent upon being able to work in Israel. If you talk about my own country or other countries in Europe they are certainly rather mixed, increasingly mixed. We have a very large number of Swedish speakers living in Finland. We have even larger numbers of Finnish people living in Sweden. We have I think every eighth person in Sweden coming from another country. Of course, there are problems sometimes but the advantages of co-operation and integration are far, far greater than the problems. I have said this before, in medieval times everyone was trying to set up his own small state and fighting wars against each other and waving their flags. Now, what we are trying to do is to have structures of integration and co-operation. I am absolutely convinced it will take a long time but this is the way forward for the RS, for BH for all of this part of the Europe. There is a long way to go, but this is the right road.

Ilija Guzina: we would be happy to have co-operation first with Sweden and then with the federation and to integrate with them.

Mr. Bildt: friendship starts at home. You are living in this country together and you cannot be friends with the people that are far away, if you are not friends with the people that are nearby. War is something that is always very, very near you, and peace will have to be very, very near you in order to be real peace. You can make peace with New Zealand but who will be happy about that if you have war in your own neighbourhood.

Ilija Guzina: we had a difficult history, a very difficult one. I am not so sure whether we had all those fights because we hated each other so much, or because others forced us to do so, but that quantity of hatred and such wounds cannot be healed so soon. Otherwise, we all believe that this is the final peace, and that there will be no more war.

Mr. Bildt: I think you are right when saying that this will take time. It is very obvious that what happened here in 1940 is still in the memory. All this is true and important. But equally true and even more important is that the longer you delay starting to overcome it, the longer the time it will take. The more bitter the memories, the more important it is to work together for the future.

Ilija Guzina: we can agree on that. Now we have to hear one of our viewers.

- there are three questions. A man from Zvornik asks do you know about the 500 year long history of Serbs under Turkish rule and all the deaths they inflicted. Then do you know who fought during the war from 1941 to 1945, who fought against Serbs. And, since you participated in the Dayton Peace Agreement you know all about the boundaries that were settled and do you know which part is RS territory now? Why do you let Muslims go there and settle?

Mr. Bildt: the answer to the first two questions is yes, I know the history. And there are different ways of looking at it but the most important thing is to create the future. This is not the only country, not the only place in the world that has a complicated and brutal history. But you should never let history block your future. Do not repeat all the mistakes of the past. Third question: it is a very important part of the Peace Agreement that people have the right to their own private property, their houses, and the right to return home. This is something that your own government has agreed in principle. And I am quite certain that you are interested in having your property, your right to live wherever you want. And if there are people who want to return to their houses, to build those houses, why should anyone stop them from doing that? I know that such attempts are being made but I find that indefensible. And I am sure that you would agree if someone deprived you, that might have happened with your house, your property that you should have your right to go back and have your house, have your property.

Ilija Guzina: do you think it is normal to return and resettle to your homes with guns and bombs?

Mr. Bildt: no, no it is not only not normal, but it is not right, and these particular cases that you are talking about now, IFOR took the weapons and we have taken weapons from some people. There were some weapons taken from the RS police a couple of days ago that were also illegal. IFOR is taking a very, very firm line on that but if someone has a house or if that house has been destroyed, no one is living in it, and that person wants to go back to start to rebuild that house that, of course, should be allowed and it is allowed. We have had a meeting in my office in Sarajevo today between the federation and the RS on this. And I think we have been discussing in a rather constructive atmosphere, how this could be done. No one wants any problems. Everyone wants to safeguard the rights of individuals.

Ilija Guzina: do you not think it is normal first to apply to the Serb police and to state, yes I am going to rebuild my own house?

Mr. Bildt: not necessarily to the police, but we have a procedure now with the international commission and the UNHCR, their office for refugees, in order to verify ownership of houses and there the RS authorities have the possibility to participate.

Ilija Guzina: but if it happens that the representatives of the RS have no right to go to that particular village to check who came, to see whether that person used to live there before, do you not think that means to infringe on the competences of the RS parties?

Mr. Bildt: but they have that right. They will have the right

Ilija Guzina: no one doubts any of those competences.

Mr. Bildt: the RS police will have the possibility to be there, of course. There is IPTF as well. And then, within this commission when the applications were made to go back and established the ownership the RS authorities will be there. It is sometimes difficult because papers need to be found on both sides but the procedure is most certainly open to the RS authorities.

Ilija Guzina: now I will ask you one question that was considered as very important in the last few days by Serbs. Mr. Petar Jovanovic asks that too. How is it possible that still on the international level the RS and the whole of the BH union is represented only by Muslims? Should not Mr. Krajisnik go to those negotiations with Mr. Izetbegovic too? Can you realise that the Serbs immediately think that something was done against them?

Mr. Bildt: the reason for this is of course that it would have been much easier if Mr. Krajisnik had come to the meeting of the presidency, where these questions should have been discussed. Mr. Krajisnik was at the first meeting and that was good. But then he refused to come to the second meeting and we have prepared a long agenda questions including that of the foreign politics. And we want these questions to be discussed by President Izetbegovic, President Krajisnik, and President Zubak and for them to agree on what to do. But if President Krajisnik is sitting in the Hotel Panorama in Pale refusing to go to Sarajevo, then of course we come to a rather stupid situation. And as long as he is doing that he cannot complain that he is not a part of process. We want him to be a part of process. He and others must be prepared to meet, and discuss, and talk, and agree. So I think, Petar Jovanovic in Doboj is absolutely right. I think he should call the Hotel Panorama in Pale.

Ilija Guzina: why do you not make some compromise?

Mr. Bildt: we have been trying.

Ilija Guzina: in what sense?

Mr. Bildt: we have been trying all sorts of meeting places. But it has been very difficult.

Ilija Guzina: for example?

Mr. Bildt: a number of them, but I cannot go into detail. But at the end we have said that really President Izetbegovic, President Krajisnik, and President Zubak, they should be able to talk and agree themselves. If they do not agree and we call them to the meetings that is not really the way it should be. We are now establishing a telephone line between Mr. Krajisnik and Mr. Izetbegovic and I hope they have talked to each other. They can talk directly, they do not need to talk through Mr. Bildt all the time.

- another phone call. Lady from Trnovo sent some greetings, then she had two questions. One is connected to incidents that are happening on the corridor from Trnovo to Lukavica, there were several incidents. The last one happened on sept. 6th when two passengers were taken away, one lady citizen was wounded. IFOR was looking without acting and paramilitaries of Alija Izetbegovic took those passengers towards Igman Mountain. So do you acknowledge that incident and when will those men be back and where are they hidden, in what secret prisons? Second question: why is IFOR escorting those vehicles heading towards Gorazde and passengers from the federation side to Gorazde but not passengers from this territory heading somewhere else?

Mr. Bildt: the lady from Trnovo is absolutely right, there is a problem there. There have been incidents. In this particular case that was mentioned, a car was shot at, IFOR was not there on this spot it was there very rapidly with an ambulance and I think they even rescued someone there and took him to the hospital. There were some arrests on both sides in this area, and the IPTF is aware of this and it is working on this case. But I think that the problems that are there are very difficult and need to be discussed by the presidency and between the federation and the RS representatives because the people from Trnovo should have the possibility of going to Lukavica without any problems, at the same time as people should be able to go from Sarajevo to Gorazde without any problems.

It is said that IFOR is escorting everything to Gorazde but that of course is no longer the case. In the beginning that was the case, on the way to Rogatica, but now things are working much better. There have been incidents of stone throwing in Rogatica, there also have been incidents of stone throwing on Serbs travelling along the Drina through Gorazde. We are trying to take actions on all those cases and things have somewhat improved. The problems of the Trnovo and Lukavica area should be discussed by the new government and common presidency and they should take the decisions.

Ilija Guzina: what will happened with those men who suffered, who were arrested before the new government starts to function? Can't you do anything?

Mr. Bildt: yes, we can do a lot. The police authorities have the duty to co-operate with the IPTF and give all of the information on those cases to the IPTF, and IPTF is following in trying to get those people released. We have a number of cases on the federation side that we are very concerned about, we have some people who have been arrested in this very area by the RS police that we are also concerned about. But overall, this habit of arrests is a very bad one.

Ilija Guzina: there is one more question which every ordinary Serb would ask. It was from Mr. Nenad Kostic from Jahorina. How is it possible to establish peace when Muslims start getting arms and weapons. Are they going to attack us tomorrow or after IFOR leaves this area?

Mr. Bildt: I think there will be a military force here for quite some time to make certain that there are no military threats and that people do not need to fear military action. But then to the direct question about the arms: the Peace Agreement established the level of arms. We are trying to get that as low as possible but within those levels, of course, both the federation side and the Serb side have the right to modernise their armies. In terms of heavy weapons, we, of course, know that there were far more on the RS side. There were tanks and artillery from the ex Yugoslav army.

And in most of these areas, for example tanks, there are far more on the RS side than on the federation side. And what is now happening on the other side must not disturb the balance. And I can say personally that I would like to have as few arms as possible. Do not spend money on tanks and artillery. It is far better to spend it on schools for children, or money for the pensioners, or the hospitals, for they were also inflicted by the war. I am saying that to the federation side and I am saying it to this side.

Ilija Guzina: you should say that to those who are more powerful, who have money and who offered Muslims the weapons. I think that even the population of the federation will be very grateful to you in that case. They would certainly like more to have factories than weapons.

Mr. Bildt: it is true. I think they do. But of course the reality of the situation was that there was a far greater number of tanks and artillery, helicopters, aircraft on this side. And even if, when I see some of these moving along the country, even if a lot of these look rather old fashioned by now, it is still a lot, and in my personal opinion far more than should be here on both sides, or rather on three sides.

Ilija Guzina: regarding Serbs you can be pleased, we are not going to have another war, except if we are attacked. Next question. A man from Bijeljina who says he lost his only son during the war, he asks you how long you are going with those theoretical approaches and how do you comment on the Muslims settling in RS territory? What would happen to Serbs if they decide to go to the federation side?

Mr. Bildt: we have such examples, of course and we are trying to help in all sorts of ways that we can. I asked, just before I left the office now, about the present state of applications for people to get their houses, Serbs who left Sarajevo. We are trying to help in 300 or 400 such cases right now. We had on Sunday, I think, 400 persons who went from Banja Luka to Titovo Drvar, were trying to, but they were stopped by the Bosnian Croat police in this particular case, and that is, of course, completely unacceptable. These are people who have their houses in Drvar and they wanted to go back sometime, perhaps only to look at their houses, to see what was left there, visit the cemeteries where their families might be buried. And we will help them to come back, see if they want to live in their houses. The same right, of course, applies to someone returning from Bijeljina or Sarajevo, Zenica, Prijedor, Sanski Most, Livno. Not everyone might wish to come back but than people must have the right, as individuals, to decide.

Ilija Guzina: one more question, that is very important and a very frightening one for Serbs: the issue of Brcko. In the Dayton Agreement the Serbs got less of the country than was first prescribed, they lost Sarajevo and 250 000 Serbs lived in Sarajevo before the war. Now the issue of Brcko is open, can you realise to what extent they would feel unsafe, Serbs from the West part of the RS, if Brcko is not theirs? Are you not afraid of a new possible exodus and new departures to Serbia, if the issue of Brcko is to be resolved in some other manner?

Mr. Bildt: I agree, I am. There has to be a solution that will satisfy both sides. There are various interests to consider and these are no less important than those in Banja Luka. At the same time there is the right of return for people who wish to return to Brcko, and if you look at the town itself, if I remember it right, there were 52% of Muslims before the war. There is also an interest of the Tuzla region's industry which depends upon those ties. This is an area where we must find a solution that addresses all the interests and where we can work together. I have been saying that to every RS representative that I have met, that they must work actively within the arbitration tribunal. Mr. Popovic who is your representative has gone away for a long time. I find that strange because if he has a strong interest to defend he should be there to defend it. I would encourage the RS to be very strong and active within the arbitration tribunal, for the federation side is. And then, you see, the search for a solution will be very, very difficult and bound to cause problems.

Ilija Guzina: I think you have realised the complexity of our problem. Are the people you met aware that without Brcko there will be no Republika Srpska, as it was envisaged in the Dayton Peace Agreement, and that it will represent a new catastrophe especially for the Serb people? When I go out at 10 pm and I head towards Banja Luka I want to feel safe, the same as inhabitants of the federation want to feel safe travelling from Tuzla to Sarajevo. If Brcko is not Serb, no one will stay in the Western parts of the RS. Who will be responsible for that?

Mr. Bildt: I think that practically everyone, in the international community is aware of the problem of this area. And you need, as I have said, is to combine RS interests and the interests of the federation side. And one day I hope you will find that there is a far easier way to get to Banja Luka than to go all the way up through Brcko. I think some good things are happening up there. You have probably seen the Arizona Market up there, people up there meeting, talking, trading, exchanging goods. There should be a possibility of finding a solution, I hope.

Ilija Guzina: I hope that it will be found. What about that part of territory which was not given to the RS to which it is entitled?

Mr. Bildt: that is a misunderstanding that is often heard in the debates, this 49 - 51. The 49 - 51 was the contact group plan and if I remember it right, it was rejected by the RS. In the Dayton Peace Agreement we never used the

Ilija Guzina: the Peace Agreement gave us less.

Mr. Bildt: but the Peace Agreement did not fix any percentages, there was discussion of quality and quantity. The contact group plan was exactly 49 - 51. This is for the RS as it is now very, very little, but somewhat, less, yes. But most people that I have heard from the RS side consider this map better, and that was your negotiating position or President Milosević, to be precise. And President Krajisnik was there too.

Ilija Guzina: those are my presidents and I cannot say anything against them except that they did a good job. I am joking, of course. We have another question.

Viewer: you have declared yourself good in knowledge of our history and you know that Europe tried several times to create a state here but none of those states lasted more than 50 years. So, I do not want another European failure brokered in my generation, and I think we are the same generation, only you are coming from a rich country and I am a refugee. I have no job and I have not inherited anything. Do you believe in reincarnation and do you believe in the possibility to be born as a Serb and then understand as following: I believe that it will happen

Mr. Bildt: That I would be born as a Serb? Well, someone said to me I was likely to be reborn as a fly, I do not understand why. My task is to understand everybody who is living here. No solution can work unless it is acceptable to everyone. And that is, I think, the thing that I think the lady who had the question should also understand - that there can be no solution here that is not acceptable to all of the people living in the area. And only a solution that is acceptable will bring peace. It is difficult as we said before to create peace against each other. You can only create peace with each other. And, to repeat what I have said, history is complicated in all countries, but we must create the future. When I listened to the election campaign here in September, and I think I can say this for almost everyone - I heard politicians speaking about the past. And I think I have never been to a country where the word future figures as seldom in political speeches as it does here. I hope at the elections in two years time people will discuss more the future than the past.

Ilija Guzina: who do you think will win the next elections in two years time?

Mr. Bildt: I think, I hope I am right, those politicians who offer a vision of the future and co-operation and start to talk about the problems that are there for ordinary people. I see all of the people who are in an enormously difficult situation, I see all of the young men and those of my age who have been demobilised from the army and now have nothing to do. And I see all of the farms that have been destroyed in this war, all of the houses that need to be rebuilt. And I think that those politicians who would say convincingly to the people that the past is the past, now we have to look at the future, we must do it together: this is your chance. It might have been that the last elections were too soon after the war for that to be possible. And there was still too much of the feelings coming up from the past. But in two years time I hope it would be possible.

Ilija Guzina: still those who were elected by the people, those are the best.

Mr. Bildt: well, I wish that was the case. I know several other countries where the best were not elected but that is another question. It was the choice of the people, yes, and as such must be respected.

Ilija Guzina: you speak about consequences of the war and they are really terrible. You speak about poverty and that is very big but this people can bear it. When are you going to give some money to the RS?

Mr. Bildt: that is one of the great tragedies of this year. In our plans, which were made at the beginning of this year, we had planned for couple of years, I think, the sum of 5,4 billion US dollars for the whole of BH. More than half of that was for the federation side. For two reasons: the war damage is larger and the population is larger. But there is a fair share for the RS – billions of dollars. If we look at this now, the roughly 1 billion us dollars that we will spend by the end of this year, or 1,4 billion, so far 1,5 % has been spent in the RS. But when we invited your members to Brussels in April we said to the government of the RS: come, we want to discuss with you how we should spend your money in your country and help you. What we got was an explosion of nationalist rhetoric and you stayed at home.

Two months later the government of the RS accepted to come to the conference in Florence on exactly the same terms. But then they had missed the enormous opportunity in terms of economic aid. I remember I said to everyone, to representatives of the RS, you know what is the damage that you are doing to your country by staying away. The world wants to help you but you do not want to be helped. And I said, you complain about the sanctions but you are imposing sanctions on yourself. Now we are sort of in the same situation or we could be.

I saw that Minister Kontic was on your television yesterday, and discussed different plans that are there from the European Union and world bank that helped the RS. That is true, that is very good. But if the common institutions are not set up then you could be blocked. And I sent some people to minister Klickovic on Friday and said that every day this game is going on that there are no meetings, we lose time because now we must discuss plans for the next year. If there is a blockade on the common institutions we cannot go forward with this and that would be bad. I hope this can be sorted out as soon as possible because otherwise it is going to be bad for everyone. We have been trying to get the RS as part of the structure of economic help and co-operation.

Ilija Guzina: do you realise that one of our great scientists tried to explain to Tudjman the need for Serbs to have their own identity in the framework of Croatia. He said that Serbs were a strange, even mad nation. Identity is more important for than money. Why is it a problem to write down on the table that this is the delegation from the RS and everything would be settled?

Mr. Bildt: this is exactly we did in Florence.

Ilija Guzina: that is why we came to Florence.

Mr. Bildt: yes, but that was exactly how it was in Brussels. What you refused in April you accepted in June, but you lost the money. I am supposed to be polite to everyone but if I can make an exception, this was a stupid policy.

Ilija Guzina: I hope that you will help the Serbs to get some money. We here at Pale TV need some money, a billion at least, since we will have better co-operation in the future. Then you should help us.

Mr. Bildt: we are primarily trying to promote independent television.

Ilija Guzina: we are independent television.

Mr. Bildt: well, sort ofÖ

Ilija Guzina: we are more independent than others. We are just a little Serb nationalist.

Mr. Bildt: well, that is not quite true, you know that. I remember I have had discussions with your journalists who said that they cannot broadcast anything that is not sanctioned by the political leadership.

Ilija Guzina: I was a part of that leadership.

Mr. Bildt: but television must broadcast information that is sometimes critical of the leadership.

Ilija Guzina: do you believe that we did not ask anyone if you could be with us tonight. Do you think it would be

possible to have a talk show in Sarajevo television without the leadership knowing about that?

Mr. Bildt: I do not know. The person who offered me this particular program was President Plavsic but that is irrelevant.

Ilija Guzina: that is a strange coincidence.

Mr. Bildt: it could be a coincidence. But I have had programmes like this on Bosnian television, tough questions, tough debates, that is what I like.

Ilija Guzina: there are more tough questions. All so far were easy ones. Do you think are you popular among Serbs?

Mr. Bildt: no. Well, that is not a relevant question.

Ilija Guzina: how do you mean it is not relevant?

Mr. Bildt: the relevant question is, of course, that people who want peace respect the work that is done by the international community. When I travel I try to talk to ordinary people. That is what they say to me. They say: do more. They are not satisfied with things, they want more work on missing persons. I often meet the families of missing persons in Banja Luka, for example. And they want the international community to do more in terms of social and economic help. But most people understand that peace depends on the international community for the time being.

Ilija Guzina: you are the first politician who does not like to be popular.

Mr. Bildt: well, I would not say that. I have had that question in Sweden as well. Politicians who are going only for immediate popularity often become populists. And that is never very effective for the future. I would rather be respected because people would know what we are doing and our determination to do it, and for which interests, that is the interest of the Peace Agreement, we are doing it. We have listened to people in the RS and they respect us. Sometimes love, sometimes not, but respect. And that is important.

Ilija Guzina: but the thing I told you in my office will happen to you. When you return to your country and then again start to be a grand politician, then you will write books about Serbs as Lord Owen and many others are doing now who started to speak differently as soon as they left this area.

Mr. Bildt: do you know what book I would like to write?

Ilija Guzina: which?

Mr. Bildt: I would like to write a book about Srebrenica. Who was really responsible for what happened there last year. And such a book could be, I think, very much in your interest because until the responsibility for this is established there will be a dark shadow on so many things. But at the same time as I would like to write a book, I have a secret hope and that is that there will be someone in the RS who will write it first. You or someone else.

Ilija Guzina: of course, I will write my own opinion.

Mr. Bildt: but this is not opinion but truth.

Ilija Guzina: my truth.

Mr. Bildt: there is not my truth or your truth, but the truth.

Ilija Guzina: and absolute truth. But if you are going to write a book about Srebrenica do not forget that between Bratunac and Srebrenica there are some burnt Serb villages, where there are some collective mass graves, pictured even by CNN and there are Serb families buried in those mass graves.

Mr. Bildt: I would like to write about Srebrenica from the very beginning, starting with the silver mines in the Roman times because Srebrenica was important in the history of this region even before the war. And what happened there at the end of war was, of course, the great mystery that must be cleared up - who was responsible, who ordered the massacres that happened in June and July last year. There are a number of things that must be cleared up before we can move forward. That is for you, but there are other questions. I think you

should try to find out, make public and say who was responsible, name those who have to answer to that. I mentioned before Katyn. If you remember that was when Stalin massacred the Polish officers in the last world war.

Ilija Guzina: it happened in 1941.

Mr. Bildt: it took quite some time for the truth to be established officially. And when it was done it lifted the burden. And the same went, of course, for other cases like Auschwitz and other places connected with European history. It is really primarily up to those people themselves to do it, to show that there are those who did mean things but there are others who are not in favour of those and who reacted against them. I hope that someone will write this book.

Ilija Guzina: I would tell you something that you can remember and after you discover the truth of Srebrenica you will see that what I am going to tell you is the truth. If there were really some massacres in Srebrenica then you can be sure and I can prove it to you that it was not ordered by a person who was accused for that.

Mr. Bildt: that is interesting because if you say that you know that it was not ordered by someone who was accused for it then you are saying that you know who order this.

Ilija Guzina: I do not know.

Mr. Bildt: and then it is you - the man who should write a book. I do not know, you know.

Ilija Guzina: I was sitting with the person whom you accused for hours in those days and I know very well all telephone calls and all conversations, all ordersÖ the Serb priority in those days was to defend the Western boundary.

Mr. Bildt: yes, it should have been.

Ilija Guzina: because the Croats attacked and there was great concern about Knin. The accused person had no connections with Srebrenica.

Mr. Bildt: what you are saying is logical. That was militarily what needed to be done. Someone ordered something to someone to do the massacres, andÖ

Ilija Guzina: you should check it.

Mr. Bildt: I would, but you know far more than I do. So, why don't you publish everything that you know? If people have been innocently accused why should they have been unable to say that the international community should figure out who really was responsible. And in fact that is very much in your own interest.

Ilija Guzina: I said that I know who was not responsible. A question that can also be put to you by all Serbs. We realised that you got a task to remove President Karadzic from the political scene, but Serbs resent you for saying a lot of tough words about him. It would be a good idea if you met that man, among other things because of that book.

Mr. Bildt: we will see. I hope, as I said, that someone else will write a book before me. That task was not really, of course, a task that was in the Peace Agreement. Which is fairly natural. It is in most countries. In my country, if a politician in a leading position is accused by a court, if he is accused of a crime of a serious nature then he has to step down from political function until the court decides if he is guilty or not. That is a fairly natural principle. That is in the peace accord. But then, of course, when the court has decided: guilty, or not guilty, then it is another situation, or it is also possible for a person, in this particular case in the Dayton Peace Agreement, to have a public office, if the person co-operates with the court in order to defend himself, and that, I hope, will happen.

Ilija Guzina: it is our proverb: a tough word can kill better than a bullet.

Mr. Bildt: sometimes.

Ilija Guzina: we have some other questions but we have another viewer on the line. Shall we first start with this one? First he proposes to you to find some time and visit the Arizona Market and talk with ordinary Serbs about some ordinary topics, and also when you mentioned those crimes and massacres in Srebrenica, he offered to give

you a book on some crimes that were done towards Serbs. Since you are a politician, you will not be angry if he says that you spend so much time in Alija Izetbegovic's cabinet that all you have talked tonight came from that cabinet, the same ideas, and you have forgotten to mention that Mr. Krajisnik offered 6 possible meeting sites and that you only accepted Izetbegovic's site. Second question is related to Brcko: our representative Popovic will start negotiating when they start to negotiate about the real conflict and that means the Inter Entity Boundary Lines and not the city of Brcko itself. And then again he offered you to meet him and talk with him and he said that the international community can stay here for 20 years if they want but after that Muslims will attack us because they want to be masters of the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Bildt: it was an interesting proposal to go to the market - yes, I have already been there but I would be happy to come back. But on the other issues I think it would be very good if Mr. Popovic could be active on Brcko. Because if you want to defend the interests of the RS, you must defend them actively within the framework of the tribunal. And of course I am quite used to this and sometimes I find it somewhat amusing when I am sitting here in Pale now that some people are saying that I am spending all my time in Mr. Izetbegovic's cabinet and then I go to Sarajevo and of course you know what they are saying there - Mr. Bildt is spending all his time with Mr. Krajisnik, or Mr. Zubak. The truth is of course that I should spend more time with all of them. There are some other things I should do including talk to ordinary people, whether in Arizona Market or in Rogatica or wherever I could be.

But more seriously the questioner asked if Mr. Krajisnik offered six different sites and if I decided what had been proposed by Mr. Izetbegovic. This is not true. President Izetbegovic wanted a different place and we from the international community, the contact group, when President Izetbegovic, President Krajisnik and President Zubak failed to agree, we asked them to come to three meetings - the first one was the hotel Saraj, which not everyone liked as a matter of fact, no-one liked, but they came. The second was the national theatre that not everyone liked either. It was decided by us. And the third meeting was going to be on the territory of the RS in the Sarajevo area. It was not popular with everyone either, so it was venues decided by the contact group, the international community and myself. We did not negotiate that with Mr. Izetbegovic, with Mr. Krajisnik, with Mr. Zubak.

Ilija Guzina: OK - Mrs. Smilja Petrovic from Gacko said that the Muslims made a list of 3,000 persons, Serbs, accused for war crimes. She asks whether under such circumstances it is possible to build something common. It seems that each tenth Serb is a war criminal.

Mr. Bildt: yes, and there are such lists also on this side and we are very much against this and there is of course a very great risk with such lists. That they are done more on political grounds than on legal ones, and that there are arrests and things like that which create a climate of uncertainty. That is why we have said the questions of war crimes to be dealt with by the international tribunal that one should not be allowed to arrest people for war crimes who have not been approved by The Hague tribunal. So we are saying to the authorities on the federation side, and on this side, the issue of war crimes is for the international tribunal and is not a question for the local authorities.

Ilija Guzina: but how did it happen that the majority of those who were accused by the ICTY are Serbs?

Mr. Bildt: one of the reasons is of course that the Serb side have not co-operated with the Tribunal. It is only in the last few months that the RS government has started to hand over material to the Tribunal. Of course there were crimes committed against Serbs in this war. And of course they should be investigated by the international Tribunal. But again the Tribunal must have material coming from the authorities and must be able to interview the people to find out because those are the people who know things about atrocities against Serbs, of people that are now on the territory of RS. Things have been improved somewhat and the Tribunal will open an office in Bijeljina soon, and that will make it much easier for the Tribunal to deal with crimes against Serbs. And I know that they fully intend to do so.

Ilija Guzina: when will those who caused the secession from Former Yugoslavia be accused for war crimes and for causing this war?

Mr. Bildt: then you go for those politicians who were responsible for the war. That is essentially a political question. But what the Tribunal is interested in is primarily those who are responsible for crimes against the laws of war, crimes against humanity, and these have been defined in international law. They want to establish the direct responsibility. I think it is very much in an interests of everyone that this happens. As a matter of fact, there is very much interest in RS to have this clarified, who is innocent and who is guilty. I realise that there is a risk that people will say RS itself is guilty, which would be wrong and would not promote. Individuals are responsible - not nations.

Ilija Guzina: is it a crime against humanity, the eviction of 300,000 Serbs from Krajina ?

Mr. Bildt: well, I think the Tribunal will deal with that, in fact, I am sure they will - I know they will. And I am certainly known in Croatia for having made my views very well known about what happened in Croatia and Krajina I have been drinking Rakija (brandy) with the local women on the tractors on the highway to Belgrade in the days after that. I know that tragedy, and that is one among all of the tragedies that we had here.

Ilija Guzina: there are some easier questions. Mr. Krstovic from Banja Luka asks when Banja Luka is going to be open to air traffic?

Mr. Bildt: as soon as possible, I hope as soon as possible. This is a question of the air traffic regulations. But again it is necessary to come to work together between the federation side and the RS side to agree with this. Because it is a question of when the aircraft takes off from the airport, since you have an integrated air traffic control so that they can say the plane should go to Belgrade or to Zagreb, or Sarajevo. So I am fairly confident that once the common institutions are set up that will happen. I would very much like to be on the first commercial flight going to Banja Luka airport and I hope I do not have to wait a very long time.

Ilija Guzina: do you think that it is normal that air control over Banja Luka airport is done by Zagreb airport.

Mr. Bildt: that is the way it was done before the war. That was the dividing line between Belgrade and Sarajevo of their air traffic control. And now of course, there have to be new arrangements. And the new arrangements must be negotiated.

Ilija Guzina: move that line to the river Una.

Mr. Bildt: well, wherever. There are no rivers in the stratosphere. But there is a need to negotiate those lines.

Ilija Guzina: a viewer from Pale asks you what do you think about the statement of former US statesman, Henry Kissinger who said that Bosnia should be divided in three parts.

Mr. Bildt: well, I disagree with that, and I disagree strongly because I am quite confident it would not work. I think it would cause another war.

Ilija Guzina: Mira Petrovic asks are you aware that the union of the Croats and the Muslims is a false one.

Mr. Bildt: no, but it is a difficult one because they had a war as well, as we know. And they are gradually trying to make the federation work after that war. And we all know that is difficult. But it is starting to work. And for all of the difficulties that are there in the federation I think it points the way towards the future and it is possible to work together after war, without destroying the possibilities of each of the constituent peoples of BH. It is not easy - but possible. And it is moving forward.

Ilija Guzina: do you believe in Mostar, that Mostar is going to be a unified city.

Mr. Bildt: yes, I do. But it's going to take some time. Progress has been made, freedom of movement and things like that.

Ilija Guzina: how is it possible that Croats left sessions in Zenica, in Sarajevo and in some other places, speaking about cantonal assemblies.

Mr. Bildt: yes, because they're having some disputes over the percentage of influence. Take the Croats for example in the Sarajevo canton they want to be there and they want to have a large influence. They want to have 20% of the seats. Whether that is fair or not it's not for me to judge - it is more than what they had in the elections and I am quite confident that we will sort it out. Most of the cantons are now starting to work, as I said, not without difficulties. But one of the effects of the federation starting to work is that there is trade, economic links which means that the economic standards are much higher on the federation side. Now there are other reasons for that as well, but this is one of the reasons. That they establish trade and economic links with the outside world and inside the country. The same I hope would happen between the federation side and the RS side, and with Croatia and Yugoslavia and everywhere.

Ilija Guzina: if you talked to ordinary Croats from BH you could not but get an impression about their determination

to reintegrate with Croatia sooner or later. What do you think about that?

Mr. Bildt: well, there are those but if I talk with the leadership of the HDZ party, they want to work to make the federation a living reality. They have some differences of views on how the federation should be in certain aspects, but they know when they look at reality, the realities that are there, there is no alternative to that, partly because they want to have peace in the area, and partly of course because they see the all of the economic benefits coming from the federation.

Ilija Guzina: Mr. Bildt, what do you think, how long have we been talking.

Mr. Bildt: this is your TV station – not mine.

Ilija Guzina: we talked two hours! And I'm rather tired. I want to thank you for being our guest tonight and I expect you to be our guest again. But forget about those words such as Stalinist TV – we are a democratic TV – you will realise that.

Mr. Bildt: thank you for giving me this opportunity and I will be pleased to come back.

Ilija Guzina: thank you.

Office of the High Representative