THE LATEST CRISIS IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

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THURSDAY, JUNE 8, 1995

The commission met, pursuant to adjournment, in room 340 of the Cannon House Office Building, Washington, DC. at 12:30 p.m., Honorable Christopher H. Smith, chairman, presiding.

Commissioners present: Christopher H. Smith, Chairman; Hon. Alfonse M. D'Amato, Co-Chairman; and Hon. Benjamin L. Cardin.

Also present: Dr. Haris Silajdzic, Prime Minister of Bosnia.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN SMITH

Chairman SMITH. The Commission on Security and Cooperation hearing will come to order. I want to welcome everyone to this Helsinki Commission hearing. Our witness today is Dr. Haris Silajdzic, Prime Minister of Bosnia- Herzegovina, who has been in that position since October 1993. Prior to that, he served as Bosnia's Foreign Minister.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for being here. We are looking forward to your testimony. Let me express my condolences and deepest sympathy on the recent death of your successor in the Foreign Ministry and his colleagues who were killed while leaving Bihac.

Our hearing, ladies and gentlemen, is entitled ``The Latest Crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina,'' and that, perhaps, deserves some elaboration. First, the last 2 weeks are viewed as a time of crisis more by the international community than by the Bosnian people. Serb militants have brazenly attacked U.N. posts. Like terrorists, they have taken peacekeepers hostage. They shot down an American plane carrying out a mission fully sanctioned by the United Nations. Now we have word that the pilot has survived that crash, and that's good news indeed. But, for the civilians of Sarajevo, Gorazde, and elsewhere in Bosnia, this is no new crisis. The same crisis which began 3 years ago continues with shelling, sniping, and ethnic cleansing that rarely let up. People are dying each and every day.

Second, this is only the latest crisis. There have been other periods of crisis for the international community in this conflict—the failure of peace plans, the disagreements over how to respond. The United States and our allies may muddle through this crisis in the same way they have on previous ones—by tinkering with the international effort that is inherently flawed and then forgetting about Bosnia until the inevitable next crisis rears its ugly head.

I mention these two points because they reflect what is wrong with our policies toward Bosnia-Herzegovina. The United States has focused so much attention on maintaining a presence in Bosnia and maintaining good relations with our allies in Russia that we ignore what is supposed to be our actual mission: to protect the people of Bosnia from genocide and a terrible aggression. And the administration focuses so

much on the immediate crisis of the day, that the United States has developed no long-range plan of where we want to go and what we want to do to get there.

Sooner or later, this has to change. Otherwise, we will continue for a fourth and a fifth year the tragic errors of the last three. We seem to have an agreement in Congress that we will soon debate on the issue of lifting the arms embargo. That issue may actually be engaged in the House later today, although it's more likely to be within the next couple of weeks as we move on a separate bill. I may be the prime sponsor, or the chairman of the House International Relations Committee, Mr. Gilman. But I can assure you, Dr. Silajdzic, that we are moving to put the House on record, and I do believe when we go on record, it will be in favor of lifting the arms embargo.

Dr. Silajdzic, we look forward to your testimony. We are honored to have you here. Frankly, on a very personal note, I don't know how you keep your hope and optimism relative to the international community, which time and again has been a bitter disappointment to this member, to members of our Helsinki Commission, and certainly to your government.

There is an aggressor in Bosnia. It happens to be the Serbs, and the Bosnian Serbs. And I think it's about time we dealt with that in a way that is commensurate with the problem at hand and not try to treat it as if we are neutral. There is an aggressor, and there is a victim. The arms embargo continues to penalize those that have been attacked—that is to say, your people.

I'd like to welcome you and ask you to make whatever comments you would like to make at this point.

STATEMENT OF DR. HARIS SILAJDZIC, PRIME MINISTER OF BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Before I comment on what you have just said, let me express my great satisfaction on behalf of my government also, that the American pilot, whose plane was shot down in Bosnia, is safe today and that the rescue operation was successful.

Let me immediately comment on that and say that even that one young man in harm's way is one too many, because, in Bosnia, we know how to die for our country. We do not want American, French, British, or any other boys to die in Bosnia. We can do that. The problem we have is that we do not have means to defend ourselves. So I am here today to talk about the arms embargo, which we believe to be not only illegal but also immoral, and after 3 years, I must say inhuman.

I'm here because we in Bosnia believe in the basic fairness of American society and that America will gather the strength to correct the mistake and injustice done to my people 3 years ago when we were rendered unable to defend our country and our territory and our people.

As you know, Mr. Chairman, the arms embargo has been imposed by the international community upon us by the Security Council. Had we heeded such requests to capitulate, to not defend ourselves, I would not be here today. There would be no Bosnia. There would be one great fascist Serbia. That is why today I will try to explain why we want this arms embargo to be lifted, and especially why we want the United States of America to lift the arms embargo—and I will say that immediately: We do not want— we do not believe—that Americans would like to go

down in history as imposing arms embargo on victims. I'm sure that most Americans don't even know what is going on, don't even know that their government is imposing an arms embargo on a country that is a victim of genocide.

Now allow me, Mr. Chairman, to try to quote you from your latest hearing of the 6th of April, when you said that despite the absence of the smoking gun, like the files that the Nazis left to document the Holocaust, what has happened in Bosnia is genocide.

Now, if we all know that it is genocide and it is still going on in Bosnia, how come the United States Government still imposes and applies an arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina? That is something we do not know how to answer. That's a question we cannot answer. And if you know the answer, Mr. Chairman, please help me explain it to my people when I go back to Bosnia. Why is America, the country of justice and democracy, imposing an arms embargo on an unarmed people? I cannot explain that to them. And I would ask the administration today or tomorrow to try help me explain to my people why. What have we done to this country to justify an arms embargo that is killing us? They say that the Serbs will overrun the rest of Bosnia if we lift the arms embargo. The answer is: Why wouldn't they do that right now? What's holding them back? Certainly not their reputation. It's our soldiers and our brave young men that are keeping them back.

They also say that we cannot use arms. We need training and so forth. We do not need training after 3 years of intensive fighting with death; with the superior army; tanks; aircraft; big guns; hunger; thirst; torture; concentration camps, et cetera. We say that we do not need much training. If friends would supply us with arms, we would solve the problem ourselves because the postponement and containment brought nothing but failure.

May I say, Mr. Chairman, that it's now obvious that the philosophy and concept of the arms embargo is actually a concept of containment, so whatever spills into Bosnia is OK as long as it does not spill out of Bosnia. So far the international community has been very successful.

As far as lifting the arms embargo, as I said, we know the arguments against: the war is going to spread wider, it will affect other areas, so contain the fire. It looks like we are being sacrificed for world peace, like we are being offered on a plate to this mutant of fascism/Stalinism, and that Bosnia is being sacrificed for world peace.

We do not believe that containment will solve this. We do not believe that containment, the concept of containment, would stop the problem of war spreading into other areas. It's exactly the opposite. As I said, the message is out that it's a free for all. All dictators— unfortunately there is no lack of dictators in the world— will take heart and do what they want to do. And unfortunately, because of Bosnia we are going to see, especially east of Bosnia up to the Caucasus, in the very near future a lot of troubles.

Now we say for former Yugoslavia this could have been stopped in Vukovar, Croatia before it came to Bosnia. I'm afraid in a couple of years we are going to say this could have been stopped in Bosnia. That is what I am afraid of. So we believe that keeping the arms embargo up on Bosnia is rewarding the aggressor, is helping the aggressor. And keeping the status quo now, after the aggression, is helping the aggressor for the second time, just because some people in the U.N. cannot

differentiate between a victim and an aggressor. And that's not a lack of ability to differentiate between good and evil. There is no neutrality in the case of genocide, Mr. Chairman.

When I hear your officials say that they don't want the United States of America to take sides in Bosnia, to become a combatant there, we understand that perfectly well. I'm not talking about the righteousness of that, but I am talking about understanding that. It is a sovereign right to choose whether your nation will intervene or not.

Now we understand that perfectly. But we do not understand why that same government would deny us our sovereign right and our sovereign choice, because to have your own choice is a privilege, and there is an obligation then to respect other people's choices. Nobody knows what's best for us.

If you can help us, fine. If you can't help us, don't stand in our way. This is the message from Bosnia, because it's been too long. It's been 3 years. We lost 200,000 people, 17,000 of them children. Now, right now, in Sarajevo, in which 10,000 people—1,500 of them children— were killed during the last 3 years—right now, that capital is besieged. There is no way to bring in food supplies. There is no electricity. There is no gas, and there is no water—just like 3 years ago.

And the United Nations, UNPROFOR, has been fully authorized and explicitly authorized to open the routes for humanitarian convoys, by Resolution 776, I believe. But they failed to do that. They failed to call for NATO air strikes. They failed to consider multilateral lifting of the arms embargo. They failed to maintain security— international security—and peace, as provided by the United Nations Charter.

Mr. Chairman, my government has accepted the peace plans of the international community, although it's a very unjust plan. It is a plan that rewards genocide, but we have accepted that in the name of peace.

Now that plan has been on the table for 1 year now for the Serbs to accept. They did not accept it. Our country, our people, are threatened by extinction. We have no means to defend ourselves. Whatever we have is very little. We therefore fully and unconditionally seek the termination of the arms embargo. We do not call it unilateral because 100 countries will join the United States of America if the United States of America leads. They will join you because they know that's the right thing to do. They know that the arms embargo is illegal, and they want the United States of America to lead.

Expressing that request, Mr. Chairman, I would like to briefly mention the legal basis for our request, although we think it's self-evident. As you know, and I would like to emphasize the fact, the arms embargo has been imposed upon the request of Yugoslavia, of the Belgrade regime. So they had enough arms to do what they wanted to do; they wanted the rest of us not to be able to acquire arms. That is what happened. Why would the United States Government—let me use this phrase—buy that? I don't know. So that happened on September 25, 1991, of course under Chapter 7.

But we believe that the United Nations arms embargo against the former Yugoslavia to the sovereign and independent state of Bosnia-Herzegovina is a violation of international law. I repeat. It is a violation of international law. Your government, Mr. Chairman, is breaking the law. And I do not know why. What are the incentives to do that? If you know, please tell me; that will help me explain that to my people when I go back. I'm here because of them.

Member states enforcing the arms embargo do so in violation of Bosnia's right to self-defense. That is No. 1. The U.N. Convention on Genocide, that is No. 2, and numerous United Nations Security Council and United Nations General Assembly resolutions. Member states of the United Nations, of which of course the United States is a member, should therefore make an explicit and unilateral declaration of the invalidity of the arms embargo and take action accordingly.

We believe, Mr. Chairman, that the United Nations Security Council is the supreme body of the United Nations, talking about the resolutions. And resolutions adopted by the Security Council under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter are considered binding under international law. The Security Council actions are not, however, above international law, and as recognized by the United Nations Charter, those resolutions are only valid so long as they are consistent with the principles of justice and international law. I'm sure, Mr. Chairman, that you do not view genocide in Bosnia as consistent with the principles of justice and international law.

Types of international law that constrain Security Council actions include the inherent right of states independent of positive law, rights of states enunciated in the Charter of the United Nations, multilateral treaties, and conventions considered in force in subsequent Security Council resolutions.

So we believe that the inherent right to self-defense is the preeminent right of international law and may not be abridged by actions of the Security Council.

I will stop here——

Chairman SMITH. No, no, don't stop. Excuse me. I want to interrupt for 1 second. Mr. Hoyer's amendment on lifting the arms embargo was just offered as a second degree amendment on the floor, so I must go over and join in the debate. The co-chairman, Senator D'Amato, will take over. Hopefully we'll have success in the very near future. And then Commissioner Ben Cardin will also be joining the floor debate. Please excuse our absence. But I thank you for your eloquent statement, Dr. Silajdzic. Your candor at each of these hearings, the honesty that you bring, and the power of your words and of your case hopefully will not be lost on the American people, because I think they, too, will be shocked over time as they learn that we have engaged in what from an international point of view is illegal. The arms embargo is well-meaning folly engaged in by the international community. But today you raise the stakes, I think, when you point out that perhaps Bosnia is being sacrificed in the name of world peace and containment, and if Bosnians die, so be it. I think that's inhumane and immoral, as you pointed out, and hopefully we can begin to rectify it.

I'd like to yield to Mr. Cardin.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

Mr. Cardin. Thank you. Mr. Prime Minister, we apologize for the poor showing by Members of Congress. Obviously this is an important issue because, as you speak, the issue of lifting the arms embargo is on the floor of the House.

Welcome back to Washington. We appreciate your candor and your aggressiveness in representing the views of your people. I join you in being outraged at the international community's response during the

past several years to what has happened in your country. We should have taken much stronger measures. We have allowed the destruction of your people and your land. That is not right. You have correctly predicted what would happen in your country if the international community failed to respond. I agree with you that international law dictates that we lift the arms embargo and give you the opportunity to defend yourself.

I also applaud you for moving forward with peace. As you indicated, the peace agreement that you signed in many respects rewarded the aggressor. Yet you were willing to go that extra step toward peace, and the Serbs were not so willing. You have been the victim of the Serbs' unwillingness to move forward in peace.

I applaud your efforts and hope that our country will do what is right: lift the arms embargo and give you the opportunity to defend yourself. In addition, I hope that the international community will respond in an appropriate manner and change the course that it has taken in the past. I thank you again for your presence here.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Thank you.

OPENING STATEMENT OF CO-CHAIRMAN ALFONSE M. D'AMATO

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Mr. Prime Minister, I came to listen to you and let me say, I hope that yours is an auspicious day, one that culminates with some substantial action. I have supported Senator Dole's resolution as an original cosponsor, S. 21. The companion bill, which basically lifts the one-sided embargo, is on the floor being debated right now, as you know. So your appearance could not be more timely.

I'm not going to replow all the ground, but it seems to me that people have a right to defend themselves. It is immoral not to permit people to have that right. What we see is an embargo that, as well intended as it might have been (I don't think anyone is going to dispute that maybe the world community saw this embargo as a method by which to deescalate), that it has not been the case. The Bosnian Serbs have continued to attack. Repeatedly, over and over and over, to the point of ad nauseam, to a point where reasonable people have a right to feel that the Serbs are not interested in a peace process that the world community has been urging. So, having reached that inescapable conclusion, I believe that time for action is now.

I am also reaching the conclusion that the administration has taken up the failed policy of a previous administration that just did not want to look at what was taking place realistically. They would rather sit around a table, carry on negotiations, draw up peace plans, and see these plans not adhered to, and then say, well, we've been trying. So, it seems to me that, notwithstanding the general proposition that we should not introduce weapons of destruction into a tumultuous area, that has been a failure, a complete failure. And there's no light at the end of the tunnel.

I applaud your resolve, your determination, and your understanding that it is as a practical matter impossible for the United States to lend itself to committing land troops in that area. The American people will not support it. I have to tell you I would not be supportive. But I think yours is an understanding—you're not making a moral judgment, and I appreciate that—that I certainly would have to say is more than reasonable. And when the people say, let us defend ourselves, help us give

the weapons— give us the necessary weapons and tools to minimize, to minimize the kind of barbaric attacks that continue, why, this is a logic that is irrefutable.

Now, does that mean that we have to deal with the ground troops for the U.N. who are there at the present time? Yes.

Does that mean that they have to be extricated or placed in positions where they are not going to continue falling victim to being held hostage? Yes.

Will that pose some problems? Yes. But in the fullness of time, I believe it will end this uneven assault on basically unarmed or ill-armed men and women.

So I am strongly supportive. I am going to be urging our Senate leadership to move sooner rather than later. I think when we demonstrate by way of commitment that we're going to allow people to defend themselves, we may have a better chance for a peace process. There will be no peace process, no real peace achieved if we continue doing business as usual.

So I want to share that with you, and I want you to proceed with the observations that you'd like to make.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Yes, Mr. D'Amato. I agree with you that there must be a measure to everything. I have come here time and again. I have testified a number of times here. Three years, three difficult years passed, and it's time to say enough is enough. There must be an end to all this.

As I said, I have a problem understanding why the United States of America would join those who made this mistake of imposing the arms embargo upon a country, a victim of fascist aggression. It is very difficult to explain to our people. And I hope that your government will correct this mistake as soon as possible.

As you noticed, 3 years ago it was well-intentioned, maybe a technical mistake, but after 3 years of genocide and with the prospect of more genocide in Bosnia- Herzegovina, the arms embargo is clearly an instrument of genocide. And no government—especially no democratic government, and especially not the United States government—should, in my mind, insist upon the arms embargo after it has been proven a total failure because it brings no result; it brings death and misery and destruction. If that is the case that the arms embargo brought only misery and destruction, that it helped kill innocent people, let's hope that the lifting of the arms embargo will bring peace.

That is the logic. Because the balance of power, as you know, kept our postwar peace; for 50 years now we have peace in Europe because of the balance of power. A vacuum brings war—this is the experience of history—and a balance of power brings peace. If the international community, including the United States of America, is not ready to step in to restore the balance, then we should be allowed to defend ourselves, to restore the balance and bring peace.

So let me assure you, Mr. D'Amato, that we ask for lifting of the arms embargo not to make war but to make peace, because the arms embargo failed to bring peace.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Congressman Smith, the chairman, was going to put to you a question as it relates to your contacts with the administration, our administration. I understand that you have requested a meeting with the White House, with the president. Has the White House responded to your request?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. I think yes, I don't have that in front of me, but I'm going to see the vice president on Friday.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. You're going to meet with the vice president on Friday?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Yes, that's right.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. In your contacts with U.S. officials, have you seen any sign that the administration is studying seriously the lifting of the embargo, or have they continued to oppose this?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. I must say that not only have I seen that they are very serious about it, but it's also very painful for them, too. But what I don't understand is the extent to which their decisions are influenced by the failed policies of Europe. That is something I do not understand.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Well, let me in fairness suggest—and let me pursue a line of questions first before I make an observation, because I want to hear from you.

In your opinion, has the reluctance to consider lifting the arms embargo, has the opposition to lifting the embargo decreased at all, or has it remained the same, or is it still adamant as it relates to the NATO allies and the European Community in general?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. If I understand well your question——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Have you seen any change in attitude as it relates to lifting the embargo from the European Community?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Yesterday, coming to Washington via London, I had an opportunity to meet with Douglas Houg, the British foreign secretary, working with Douglas Hurd, and he brought me Mr. Hurd's letter and discussed the situation with me. And unfortunately, I must say that I detect a retreat to the old positions. Mr. Douglas Hurd says in his letter that they are not in favor of changing the mandate of the United Nations, that they are in favor of the new cessation of hostilities, and in short, it is the same position, more of the same. I call it the big status quo now—with the rapid-deployment force maybe a more robust status quo, but a status quo that leads to the existing situation and that is clearly, clearly in favor of the Serbs.

What is more, we are told that if the arms embargo is lifted, we cannot hope for air cover. I must say that is surprising to me because it looks like we are practically forced to accept a kind of capitulation there in order to remain the beneficiary of the international community's good will. That is something I don't understand.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Let me ask you this. Whom do you believe at the U.N. is the driving force? Is it Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali? Is he the driving force, or who is it?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. The driving force is the member countries.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. The member countries.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Exactly.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Which member countries in particular——

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Especially the five——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Pardon me?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. The five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. They are responsible for this. The United Nations may serve—sometime this organization may serve, well, as a fig leaf or a cover for the uglier face of the international community, because I do not believe that the United Nations leadership can make decisions on its own.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Do you believe that the United Nations peacekeeping force in Bosnia should go or stay?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. We have invited them. We want them to stay. If they insist upon leaving, we shall help them leave. That is all.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Well. You say on one hand that you would want them to stay. Let me then be a little more particular. It seems to me, Mr. Prime Minister, that this choice is going to be made either by yourself or the international community, but I want you to give me your opinion. If the choice is between the Bosnian people, your government, being able to get weapons to defend yourself, and the U.N. leaving, what choice would you make? Because it seems to me that what the European allies are saying, and the U.N. and the ground commanders are saying, that they are adamantly opposed to the introduction of weapons and lifting the embargo. They are saying that the introduction of weapons there, additional weapons, and maintaining U.N. forces there, that the two are not compatible. Do you believe that to be the case?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. I don't believe it's incompatible. I think that kind of choice, if I may use a term, is a little bit ugly. It does not reflect the spirit of the U.N. charter if you are talking about that, because the U.N. member states, individually or collectively, should come to help the victim country, the member country victim of the aggression. So that choice should not be an issue.

But if——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Mr.——

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Yes, if——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO.—Prime Minister, I want you to know that I recognize and want to congratulate you for the great restraint that you have exercised. I don't believe there are many people who could witness the savagery which is going on, the genocide, the horrible crimes, the victims, the loss of friends and family that you have seen and continue to see, day in and day out, for 3 years now. So, I make that a statement, and so I recognize your restraint, your incredible control under difficult circumstances. And indeed, your people are fortunate to have you leading them during this crisis.

Having said that, though, the reality of the situation, as I see it, is that if the arms embargo is lifted, as a practical matter, the U.N. will be extricated or will leave. This is the reading I get. Do you agree or disagree? We're talking about what's practical now; we're not talking about what's moral, what's right. And I share with you the fact that we could have and should have done much more before this situation got so out of hand. But we're here now. And so I want to understand, if the decision is that—as a condition for you getting arms, for us lifting the embargo, that the U.N. will withdraw, would you accept that?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Well, that is a very straightforward question——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. That is the nub of this whole matter. Because it just seems to me that there's no way that the United States unilaterally will lift the arms embargo in a meaningful way without their providing an opportunity for the U.N. forces on the ground to be extricated. Don't you see that as a reality? We're talking life-and-death issues now. We're not talking what we'd like to be.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. I am glad you talk about life and death, because that's what it's all about.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Yeah.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Life or death is the choice you say we have to make, and our choice is life. So it's arms. If they insist upon leaving, if they think it's incompatible to have arms and troops on the ground, then we choose life; that is, we choose——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. You want the right to defend yourselves. Dr. Silajdzic [continuing]. We choose the arms, of course.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. OK. And I mean just that I want it to be clear in this and understand——

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Well, I've been quite clear I think.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO [continuing]. When we vote, I want to know that I can say to my colleagues on the floor that I have gotten this, that there may be a terrible choice, that indeed if we go the route of lifting the arms embargo, that a choice will be made by others to then disengage because people will say that. And then they'll say, will the Bosnian people be better off or worse off if the U.N. withdraws?

And I want to be able to state that you have said that you would be supportive of lifting the embargo. If it's the status quo, you would rather not let that stay, that your choice would be to give you the ability to defend yourself and if the U.N. must leave, well then they must leave.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Yes.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Am I accurately reflecting your sentiment?

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Yes. That is right. Our choice is arms. If they have to leave, if they insist upon leaving, we will help them leave. I think my answer is quite clear. But let me—let me——

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. That is quite clear, and I think that goes right to the issue. You're saying the choice is to live, it's to defend yourselves, because no one else is doing it.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Right. May I comment on it, Mr. Chairman?

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Certainly.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Why I say it's an ugly choice, and I deliberately use this term again. May I proceed, Mr. Chairman?

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Yes, please.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. OK. So it is an ugly choice, because after 3 years of being hampered, to say the least, by the arms embargo, after defending ourselves against a superior army with our hands tied, after 3 years, our enemy won a big advantage, including 200,000 of our people killed. And I may be wrong, but I believe that the international community, including the United States of America and the British and French governments owe us something, because the genocide is partly caused because we could not defend ourselves, because of the arms embargo. So I think they owe us something.

So this choice of ``arms or we leave'' is an ugly choice, I must say, not worthy of the international community. It is like, you know, we have given enough advantage to your enemy, if you want to neutralize that advantage, then we are leaving. It looks like the international community has chosen sides here. Unfortunately, it's the wrong side. If that is the case, if they put us in front of that choice, then I must say it's a choice not worthy of the international community, and that will be one more big disgrace after the old failure that we had in Bosnia.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Mr. Prime Minister, while that may be the case, realistically do you see the European countries agreeing to a lifting of the embargo without there also being an implementation of a plan to withdraw the U.N. troops? I'd like your observation. I respect your opinion. You've been attempting to get movement in these various

areas. Do you think it's realistic to think that the embargo will be lifted without the withdrawal of U.N. troops? That is not my sense. My sense of it is pessimistic. My sense is it will be the ugly choice that you spoke about.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Well, my observation will take more than two sentences to explain.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Certainly. I'd like to hear that.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. This is all about—you repeated the word ``realistic'' a few times, so we are talking here about realpolitik, and the realpolitik has the instrument and that instrument is force. So we are in the situation we are in because we did not use force. We had a realpolitik diplomacy that did not have the force in the background, that's why we are in this situation. Otherwise, it would have been perfectly possible for those troops to be on the ground and to have the arms embargo lifted—if there had been enough authority. The problem is there is a lot of power in the world and very little authority. The credibility is a problem. That's why we have the problem we have right now. And it will cost the international community, including the United States of America, a lot of men and resources to reassert the credibility and the authority in order to be able to live normally in this world. Somehow we failed to do it in the beginning, in 1992, when neo-fascism in Serbia was allowed to open concentration camps, rape 20,000 women, kill 200,000 people, only in Bosnia, not to mention Croatia, and so on.

We all knew that's a war of expansion, that ``Greater Serbia'' is being made out of Croatian and Bosnian territories, but we did not stop them. So the green light is still in front of their eyes. And that is why we are facing the choices we have, because our realpolitik is not founded in the instrument of realpolitik, and that is false.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Mr. Prime Minister, I understand you. I have great heartache, having seen what I believe could have been avoided. Certainly the death and the destruction could have been minimized had we linked the realization of force and backing up statements, rather than start and stop, rather than threaten and not follow through. We have created a situation that I believe could have been avoided, at least a lot of the pain and suffering.

Having said that, I want to wish you every success in your forthcoming meetings with Members of the Congress, with members of the media and the community, because this is an educational process. I wish you every success, particularly with your meetings with the administration and Vice President Gore. I hope that you will be able to convey to him, as only you can, the absolute necessity of giving you the opportunity, at the very least, of defending yourself, and that you urge upon him to use his position to bring about an administrative policy that will bring this into place sooner rather than later.

If we're going to follow that course of action, I think that we should do it sooner, as quickly as possible, so that you can have the ability to defend yourselves. I think it's a tragedy when people have to watch people be thrust into a horrible war; but I think the present situation is absolutely not one that can be countenanced, where you and your people are continually subjected to the overwhelming power that is being exercised against you. The world community is not willing to exercise the collective leadership that might stop this. It is obvious, at least to this

senator, that you are absolutely entitled to have that ability, and to make that decision of fighting for life as opposed to continuing in a situation that is just bringing death and destruction to your people.

I hope that God gives you the strength and the energy to continue. I hope that we can bring about a peace sooner, rather than later. And I thank you for sharing your thoughts with this commission and look forward to helping you and your people in any way possible.

Dr. SILAJDZIC. Well, thank you for your attention. Thank you personally for whatever you're doing for us. And I hope to see you next time in better circumstances.

Co-Chairman D'AMATO. Hope for it. Look forward to it. This Commission stands in recess. [Whereupon, at 1:45 p.m., the commission was adjourned.]