

Radovan Karadzic gives exclusive interview to RT

After months of negotiations, RT has finally been allowed an interview with wartime Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, who is being tried in The Hague for mass murder during the Bosnian war of 1992-1995.

RT: You claim your human rights were violated during your arrest. In what way? Why would a tribunal that claims to protect human rights use the methods you suggest?

Radovan Karadzic: I have indeed filed a motion in which I contended that my arrest violated my rights by failure of those in Belgrade who captured me to inform me of the reasons for my arrest, to allow me contact with the outside world, and to promptly bring me before a judge. I was kept for three days without knowing who my captors were. I thought they were maybe bounty hunters trying to collect the US\$5 million reward. I asked them to send a message to let people know I was OK, but they refused. I was not allowed to contact anyone during that period. I was not taken before a judge in Belgrade until the fourth day. I am disappointed that the Tribunal failed to uphold my rights on this issue.

RT: Many have claimed that the tribunal is massively one-sided. In your opinion, what is the real aim of the proceedings?

RK: I am trying my best to defend myself under very difficult conditions. We will have to wait and see what kind of trial I receive before knowing the real aim of the proceedings.

RT: Richard Holbrooke continues to deny a deal you say you made with him back in 1996 guaranteeing your immunity. You have complied with it by disappearing from public life – why do you think the agreement was broken?

RK: Either Holbrooke never intended to honor the agreement, only to obtain a short-term victory by getting me out of office, or he lacked the clout to see that the agreement was honored in the face of the clamor for my prosecution by other actors. There are no any doubts for the people involved that the agreement existed, and it was concluded that the only missing step had been the Security Council resolution on the subject, which still may have happened. Otherwise, no peace would be possible to reach in the future without a prior resolution.

RT: What purports to be the text of the agreement was published in the newspaper "Glas Jasnostil". It says the US could unilaterally pull out of it. Do you think that's what happened? Why would they do that?

RK: The alleged written agreement with the signatures of Holbrooke and myself was a false document. And not by anyone close to me, since my signature was forged too.

RT: Serbian authorities gave you up to your captors. Do you feel betrayed by the country you fought for?

RK: I don't feel betrayed by Serbia because they never promised me they would not arrest me. I don't know what things they had to deal with because I am not in their shoes. If there was a valid reason d'etat, and if it would help Serbia and Republika Srpska for me to be arrested, I would not object. I am afraid they did not get back anything for me, so it seems to me that I was squandered out from the stand point of the interest of Serbia. Anyway, I do not object to facing my destiny – all of this is a fight for my people.

RT: What are your expectations? Will you be able to fight for your rights in this court?

RK: This judicial system is completely different from the one that I was familiar with. In our system there is an "investigating judge" who does an investigation both for the prosecution and defense, and during that phase they co-operate and influence a procedure, while in "common law", a prosecutor does his own, and a defense its own investigation. It is a defense responsibility to appropriately inform the Chamber in the course of trial, and therefore to be well-prepared. The defense needs enough time and resources to do that, and also the co-operation of different countries is needed to obtain relevant documents. Some of them are co-operating, and I am grateful to them. Some are not, and I am grateful to the Chamber for an understanding of the defense needs, and recommendations to those countries and some other good decisions, among which is this possibility to answer your questions.

RT: Do you believe Serbia has lost Kosovo forever?

RK: I never say forever. There is a story in my country: A man was saying to his own meadow, "Oh, my meadow, you are all mine, forever mine." And the meadow responded, "Don't be foolish, I was owned by a hundred blind-in-one-eye owners, let alone those not blind. You change, I stay." The Jews are back in the Jerusalem, as they prayed for two thousand years. And Kosovo is the Serbian Jerusalem.

RT: What are the chances of Serbia joining the European Union and NATO anytime soon?

RK: Serbia should join Europe immediately, but no one should join NATO. NATO is like an old tool that is more trouble to keep than it is worth to maintain. NATO is using Russia to scare Europe and taking European money. But Russia is also a part of Europe – they need each other in peace. It would be much better if the entire world joined NATO and called it the United Nations Army, or dismantle it.

RT: Serbia wants to join the EU. However, a number of EU countries have recognized Kosovo's independence. Isn't this a paradox, a contradiction?

RK: There are many contradictions in Serbia's relations with EU countries, but that has not hindered integration with Europe. Serbs and Serbia are not really an objective of Western imperial intentions and we should not over-estimate our own significance. But this crisis has served as preparation for the forthcoming events. Serbia and the Republika Srpska were a sort of voodoo doll for Russia. Our Western friends from two world wars were stabbing us and thinking of Russia. They suspect us of being potential Russian allies, but by pressing us, they are pushing us even closer to Russia. We always liked Russia for its culture, but now they are saying that Russia is the only way out for us. Besides that, the Western imperial enterprise is stereotypically blinded by the Russian danger, although Russia had never intended to conquer Europe, which is now a dormitory of retired people, students, and unemployed. Meanwhile, there are many other countries like China and India growing bigger by bigger, but the West's obsession with Russia is causing the Serbs detriment.

Napoleon wanted to make a unified Europe, but thought to first take over Russia and failed. Hitler even had an agreement with Russia, but he wanted to stop by and conquer Russia before he continued with his further campaign in Europe. A Russian writer said that Russia can't be understood by the mind, and I would add that it can't be owned by arms. Others should not make this mistake, since Russia needs Europe too and is willing to trade on a fair basis. Serbia has always been European. It would be great if we joined Europe without these kinds of humiliations, bombardments, blackmails and finally attempts to impose the unacceptable price of giving up Kosovo. Otherwise, we share all European values and it would not be difficult for us to get along with Europe. Serbian people living throughout Europe are very integrated without any cultural problems, and they are very prominent in their own professions.

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