

RECORDED!

MINUTES

of the conversation conducted by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo TUDMAN, with representatives of Herceg-Bosna, held in the Presidential Palace on 10 November 1993

Commenced at 0930 hours.

PRESIDENT:

Tell me briefly the gist of your conversation with Stoltenberg and the Serbs.

Mate BOBAN:

With Stoltenberg – humanitarian aid, there are also ideas to continue negotiations. Morris from the UNHCR and his associates were there, he brought them along. We confirmed our thing and so far it has not been violated once – 87 convoys. I only asked that every fifth convoy be allowed for the Croats.

PRESIDENT:

I heard that on television.

Mate BOBAN:

There is nothing more.

... in our electric power industry, and so forth.

PRESIDENT:

All right, by the way, that bridge in Mostar who destroyed it?

Mate BOBAN:

It was fired on such much before, and there were terrible rains, that it collapsed on its own.

PRESIDENT:

Are we going to be accused again?

Mate BOBAN:

The word this morning is that there's no way of knowing.

JUKIĆ:

The Muslims will accuse us. The international /community/ says it doesn't know who is responsible, and they have retracted some of their statements. They reported the following: a great tragedy has occurred. The old bridge has collapsed, it is urgently necessary – it has collapsed – we have the original of what they said, a radio is urgently needed . . . with Sarajevo, at 1400 hours urgently and call the main person for the entire republic, for Information and Propaganda and the military police, this fellow of theirs from Mostar /as printed/.

Dr. Mate GRANIĆ:

I have a proposal – the most important thing is what the Spanish battalion will say as the most authoritative. Therefore, my proposal

is that someone who is the most trustworthy go immediately, someone who has a connection. Their statement is of the utmost importance. To have that information, to have everything, because if they give good information that that is an exception, because otherwise on CNN . . .

PRESIDENT:

Between us, the destruction in the military sense, to whose advantage is it?

Mate BOBAN:

Ours.

JUKIĆ:

It's my opinion that we should go for the collapse. So we'll say that it was the destruction or collapse of the bridge, since the rain damaged it and so on, /we should make an accusation/ against war events and the complete destruction of all assets in Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that those who provoked and are continuing the war are the ones who can't, it is impossible to simply approach facilities and therefore the assembly in Mostar is being destroyed and so forth.

Jadranko PRLIĆ:

It is absolutely beyond our control, that is well-known. The line is 300 metres in front of it. Therefore, there is no way that our men reached the bridge.

(Voices: grenades, and so forth).

PRESIDENT:

All right. Let's go on.

RECORDED!

TRANSCRIPT

of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr Franjo TUĐMAN, with Minister of Defence Gojko ŠUŠAK and General Janko BOBETKO, held on 23 November 1993 in the Presidential Palace

Commencement at 1000 hours

Chaired by: Dr Franjo TUĐMAN, President of the Republic of Croatia

PRESIDENT:

Gentlemen, three brief questions: the situation in the Bosnia and Herzegovina theatre of war.

JANKO BOBETKO:

This morning and at night I talked from Pidriš down there, from the position itself, and the situation is as follows: there is still deeper snow, another 20 cm, and that is another circumstance that is a minus. Secondly, TOLE has left the position because of sickness and has not been there since yesterday, he has been replaced by CRNAC, who has to be assigned and appointed, so that someone can hold this front, there are three men – one, two are from HQ, one is Nojko MARINOVIĆ, who have helped, who are helping to stabilise that part of the front as far as possible, but the situation is as follows: they have withdrawn earlier organised in the woods that they control they us and we them – they are, that is, in that part of Vranica, and these are their

JANKO BOBETKO:

What is in the town is in the bunkers inside. That is a whole system of fortifications /that has been/ made. As I said, one has to go from house to house, and not stop here, but go on in deeper. They are here, and precisely the house by house system, and we have to take these two dominant elevations, get to these possibilities and these resources so that we can /?take/ these elevations, 7, 8 and 6, and this, some green grove /?Zeleni Gaj/ or other, that is what holds Vakuf itself, that is it. It is necessary to come up a bit closer, and to create a new operation.

PRESIDENT:

Mr Minister, and Mr General, here with Gornji Vakuf we have experienced a political and military failure. Minister, you yourself know that today one of the Joint Chairmen asked in this context if we could, and if we would, take control of Gornji Vakuf, and I gave you the task, and it was not done, and in this way we have been militarily and politically compromised, and we have given, we have confirmed, in this way, the judgements that militarily we are not even up to the Muslims in this area. This is a fiasco. Who ordered the bridge in Mostar to be destroyed, and why?

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

(Rustling of paper, nothing can be heard.)

...

PRESIDENT:

They have been showing /it/ on European televisions for four days and two days Croatian units shelling it and accordingly

please determine who ordered it and why, and there will be dreadful political damage this has inflicted on us, that they be relieved and punished, and see whether they can even be court martialled.

A written report about this please.

Thirdly, how, Minister of Defence, and Chief of the Main Headquarters, could you have issued such an order confirming that Croatia is waging war, that it is directly involved, and I constantly emphasise that you should have built all this up as something voluntary, that these are volunteers who have left the Croatian Army, who fight there under HVO command, and here you are appointing the Main Headquarters. Minister of Defence of Croatia and Chief of the Main Headquarters...

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

Can I see that?

PRESIDENT:

You don't know that?

JANKO BOBETKO:

That is a proposal that I obtained for those people.

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

Who prepared this?

PRESIDENT:

You don't know?