

Excerpts from Alija Izetbegović's Speech at the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 7th October 1993

“The international community has neither a defined policy nor a clear plan of political action to alleviate the transition from the communist structures that were in power for 50 years to the concepts founded on freedom and democracy...

The negative aspects of this problem are portrayed to the fullest extent in my country. It is clear to see that we are under pressure from surviving forces of communist aggression, and that the eradication of every chance for democratic development has taken place before the very eyes of Europe, America, and the world as a whole. This was effected by the use of force, involving mass murders of civilians, the elimination of every trace of civilisation and culture, and the barbaric tactics of burning and ravaging our country.

At the same time, this unprecedented violence is being used as an experiment for the political vivisection of our country. It is being carried out by the international community, which is evidently using Bosnia and Herzegovina as the testing-ground for various models of a post-communist state...

The first experiment was that of the London Conference. This concept, which sought to halt the aggression, was abandoned without even a single attempt to implement it. All that happened was that the war being fought over our land increased in intensity. There then followed an attempt to find in constitutional, legal and political reform a solution to an ever-deepening crisis. No one even tried to apply this solution, known as the Vance-Owen Plan. It was abandoned in order to be replaced by another, based on the flawed thesis that what was happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a civil war between three peoples, and that for this reason the only solution was territorial partition...As a result of this, the uncontrolled course of events continued, with renewed sufferings for the people.

Mr. President, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina face a choice today: either a just war of defence or an unjust peace. If the war continues, there is a heightened risk of the people suffering still further, and even of our nation's destruction. It could mean the deaths of thousands of people. An unjust peace is unacceptable, since it is based on a concept of ethnic partition and apartheid that is proven by history to be a failure...

And yet these unacceptable elements in the so-called peace plan being imposed on us are not merely of a philosophical nature. Firstly, any plan that legitimises genocide and promotes ethnic partition is far more likely to sow the seeds of further aggression and to light the fires of revenge. Secondly, any peace that pays no attention to the causes of the war will, at best, offer only temporary surcease, but not a true solution, which is now fundamental...

In conformity with its authority and responsibility, the UN Security Council should evaluate the Plan drawn up by Lord Owen and Mr. Stoltenberg, to determine how far it is consistent with the United Nations Charter and the numerous resolutions earlier adopted by the Security Council.

The Council cannot evade its responsibility by taking cover behind the often-repeated excuse: 'We shall accept everything that the three sides agree upon...' when one side, that of the victim, is under pressure from the real threat of mass starvation and genocide..."