

# DECALOGUE FOR ABANDONING BOSNIA

1.

*Be Neutral.* Even if to do so you have to lump together aggressor and aggrieved. Give the name *contenders* both to the family of peasants running for their lives across the fields and to the paramilitary group who rape them, flay them and cut their throats. Use the term *belligerents* to describe the defenceless population under attack as well as the regular army bombing them. Refer to the Serbian war in Bosnian and Croatian territory as a civil war, religious war or the Balkan conflict, never as a programme of conquests for the construction of Greater Serbia. Say that you want to disarm everybody to achieve peace and through the arms embargo help to maintain the strength of the strong and the helplessness of the poor.

*2. Insult the Victims.* Call the Bosnians *Muslims*, hinting at the danger of Islamic fundamentalism, and identify all of today's Croats with the Ustasi faction that ruled fifty years ago. Keep saying that in the Balkans hatred is ancestral, the cultures tribal, and the population barbarous since time immemorial. Repeat indignantly, "All the same; all of them savages!" Demand that everyone lays down their arms, including those who are defending their homes. Request the resisters to surrender to the tyrants. Accuse the victims of being made in the image of their executioners.

*3. Forget the Word "Genocide".* Don't mention the construction of a racial state for the first time in Europe since the Third Reich. Dismiss each day's murders with the "complexity" of the situation. Even though the reports by Mazowiecky for the UN Commission on Human Rights, those of the humanitarian organisations and even the voice of witnesses of the Nazi holocaust (Marek Edelman, Simon Wisenthal) tirelessly repeat that in Bosnia and Croatia genocide has been and still is going on, let it go in one ear and out the other. The newspapers you read will ignore it, the television broadcasts you watch will omit it. No politician in your country will mention the word. Erase it and it will disappear.

*4. Deactivate the Memory of Europe.* However much the 1,000 days of the siege of Sarajevo coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Tell anyone who tries to make a connection between the Munich Pact and the West's present refusal to halt the aggression that they are just feeding a guilt complex. Invoke the memory of a Europe founded on the "Never again!" to the crimes of the Holocaust and Nazism, saying that they have nothing to do with "ethnic cleansing" and the project for a Greater Serbia.

*5. Praise Humanitarian Aid at Whatever Price.* Even when the victims rebel against you, when those to whom you take blankets and rice ask you not to feed them, but to let them defend themselves. Even when humanitarian aid favours a displacement of the conflict and your chief concern, rather than the lives of the besieged population, becomes the safety



of your own soldiers. In the name of humanitarian aid, make hostages of your soldiers, make them allies and victims of the aggressors at the same time.

*6. Take Pleasure in Your Impotence.* Keep the UN intervention forces in a state of manifest vulnerability. Let the Serbian command demolish the idea of "security zones" along with everything else. Make a fool of yourself with your own blue helmets and stop obediently when your humanitarian convoys are held up. Play along with those who break truces, betray pacts, lie to the point of obscenity, and, if you should ever make a show of strength, make it funny: bomb an empty runway in the rearguard,

far from the front line where the tanks and cannons are crushing the Bosnian army and massacring the civilian population.

*7. Preach Tolerance to those Who Practise Genocide.* Go to Sarajevo if you must, but reduce the war to a confrontation between supporters of multiculturalism and supporters of homogeneity. Don't defend internationally recognized borders. Debase referendums for self-determination. Stir up confusion. Seek conciliation by any means. Have the defenceless and those who wield the knife sit down at the same table.

*8. Steep Yourself in History.* Faced with a shattered Bosnia, invoke former Yugoslavia. Don't look ahead. Don't think what needs to be done to avoid the ethnic cleansers falling upon Kosovo or Macedonia tomorrow. So as not to admit that your impotence is voluntary, find phantoms all around you: the spirit of Yugoslavia betrayed, the return of history, wildfire nationalism, German imperialism revived, America's anti-European strategy, the cunning of the Vatican.

*9. Create an Illusory World of Impossible Peace Plans.* Although you know that Serbs, Bosnians and Croats are fighting a long war, that they either sign or don't sign as part of military strategy, pretend that everything is about to be resolved with each newly designed map that leaves your desk. You know the aggressor is always peaceful, that he seeks the protection of your country and in the end leaves it up to you whether you collaborate or resist. Look for a "political solution" which is, after all, the acceptance of a Serbian military victory. Pretend that you have fallen for the story of the break between Belgrade and Pale, go along with Milosevic's abandonment of the Greater Serbia project, bow to the Serbo-Bosnian "parliament". And if ever anyone should say to you that it's all blind cowardice, accuse them of warmongering and challenge them to tell you how to win if they're so smart.

*10. Keep Quiet.* Hide your head under your wing. Stay in your armchair and contemplate the pictures of what you didn't want to see. Look on impassively at reality's revenge. Murmur, "Peace, peace", and you will get war, endless war. □

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