

Mazowiecki resigns U.N. post, blasts 'hypocrisy' over Bosnia

by Umberto Pascali

On July 27, United Nations Human Rights Special Investigator Tadeusz Mazowiecki resigned following the conquest by the Greater Serbians of the U.N.-protected safe zones of Srebrenica and Zepa in eastern Bosnia. The resignation signals the beginning of the end for the U.N. gang of bureaucrats led by U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and U.N. Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi. Mazowiecki's courageous act marks a condemnation without appeal for the U.N. gang and its British sponsors.

Two days before, on July 25, the special International Tribunal on War Crimes in Former Yugoslavia had indicted and issued arrest warrants for the leaders of the Greater Serbians (see *Documentation*), including Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic, and Milan Martic. These war criminals were protected by Boutros-Ghali and U.N. mediator Lord David Owen, and the ones the U.N. forced Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic to "negotiate with."

Mazowiecki explained to *EIR* the reasons for his decision (in the interview below). The last straw for the former Polish prime minister, was a conference in London in which the U.N. bosses and the representatives of the "international community" accepted the slaughter of Srebrenica and de facto gave the green light to the Serbs for the subsequent conquest of Zepa. He stressed: "I believe the Bosnian people have the right to arm and defend themselves." In the resignation letter to Boutros-Ghali, Mazowiecki wrote that "any statement about the defense of human rights loses its credibility in the absence of a consistent and courageous attitude on the part of the international community and its leaders."

"I cannot take part in a fictitious process of defending human rights," he wrote, referring to the overrunning of the two safe areas that the U.N. had solemnly committed itself to defend. The London Conference on Bosnia had "accepted the fall of Srebrenica and resigned itself to the fate of Zepa." This is "unacceptable." He said that the decision to resign was the consequence of the "horrendous tragedy which has beset the population of those 'safe havens' guaranteed by international agreements. . . . The very stability of the international order and the principles of civilization is at stake over the question of Bosnia. [The fall of the two enclaves] constitutes a *turning point* in the situation."

Mazowiecki then spoke to reporters who were crowding the U.N. offices in Geneva, who were shocked that a high

U.N. official resigned over principles. "We fought in Poland against a totalitarian system in the hope of another Europe. How can one imagine that the children of the men and women we are abandoning today can create the Europe of tomorrow? We are hypocritical as far as Bosnia is concerned when we are claiming to defend it but in reality we are abandoning it."

The former Polish prime minister attacked U.N. Special Envoy Akashi and his "I don't take sides" attitude by name, according to German radio. This was the attitude that confronted Mazowiecki every time, starting in 1992-93, he would present a report on Serbian atrocities to U.N. officials. His final report on violations of human rights, which will be made public in the immediate future, documents acts of terror and atrocities "on an enormous scale."

Mazowiecki told the Argentine daily *Página 12* some of the details of the atrocities committed by the Greater Serbians against the population of Srebrenica. "I have still in mind, for example, what I was told by a woman that was evacuated from Srebrenica to Tuzla [after the conquest of the safe area]. At a certain point some Serbian soldiers got on the bus. One of them took a five-year-old child who was traveling with her by his neck. He cut his throat with a knife and said that he was going to decapitate the child if the women who traveled on the bus did not immediately give them all the money they had. . . . Another example: A nurse traveling with a convoy of 70 wounded from Potocari (near Srebrenica) reported that the vans that transported the victims were stopped by Serbian soldiers. All of them were forced to leave the cars. They were shot. Only those whose legs had been amputated were spared. The nurse also reported to have seen persons with their noses and ears cut, as well as human bodies mutilated of their heads and their arms and legs. I have seen a lot of atrocities, but never of such extreme magnitude."

Serbs and Bosnians thank Mazowiecki

One of the first letters the Polish leader received, arrived from Serbia. Its signer was Vera Webel Tatic, president of the Center for Anti-War Action in Serbia, one of the leaders of the resistance against the Belgrade regime of Slobodan Milosevic. The letter, made available to *EIR*, reads in part: "Dear Sir: We received information about your resignation. . . . We do regret it, but we are not surprised. During our meeting, when our delegation complained about the activities

and attitude of the U.N., you agreed with us and accepted our complaints.

“Actually, your agreement with our view on this issue was the basis for your resignation. We see your resignation as a revolt of a man of humanity and morality and that of a fighter who does not make compromises vis-à-vis the inert and bureaucratic organization of the U.N., which inevitably must be transformed as soon as possible, especially after the shame and dishonor they called on themselves in Bosnia. We express our regret that this transformation started with your resignation and *not* with the resignation of Mr. Yasushi Akaishi, who was the one secretly negotiating with the criminals; the fact was referred to in your report. The same applies to Mr. Boutros-Ghali, who approved these secret negotiations. We think about the immoral trade between the [kidnapped] soldiers of Unprofor in exchange for the U.N. tolerance of mass expulsion of refugees from Bosnia.”

On July 31, the Bosnian President Izetbegovic expressed his feelings to Mazowiecki in a personal letter: “We in Bosnia understand your decision to resign as the expression of authentic dignity and the unbreakable conscience of an intellectual. By refusing to participate in the chorus of indifference toward clear crimes and toward unexpressible human suffering, you are encouraging our determination to defend truth and justice despite everything. . . .”

Interview: Tadeusz Mazowiecki

Without a shakeup, no peace in Bosnia

Tadeusz Mazowiecki became prime minister of Poland in August 1989, the first non-communist prime minister in 45 years. He was chairman of the Democratic Union (now the Freedom Union), a post-Solidarity party. He is currently a deputy in the Polish Parliament. He was interviewed on July 31 by Umberto Pascali and Anna Kaczor-Wei.

EIR: Would you agree that the policy of the leadership of the United Nations toward the Bosnian Serbs reminds one of Neville Chamberlain toward Hitler in the 1930s?

Mazowiecki: I do not know why you refer only to the leadership of the United Nations. I think that the U.N. can do only as much as is decided by the states which can make decisions, and at the moment the U.N. is a sort of a whipping boy. The U.N. is not a force on its own, and it can do only what the decisive countries say. Of course, I have a critical view of the long-term policy of the main leaders of the U.N., because

it has certain shortcomings. But I could express the same kind of criticism toward not only the U.N., but also the leaders of many countries.

EIR: How will the situation in Bosnia develop now?

Mazowiecki: I do not make forecasts and I am not a prophet: I think that peace is the goal, but only a just peace. However, I think that we have reached the point at which negotiations and a just peace cannot be accomplished without some shakeup, because the side of the Bosnian Serbs has signed various agreements—for example at the first London conference—but it has not fulfilled them. We have reached a point that this group [the Bosnian Serbs], I would say, is blackmailing the whole international community, and, without a shakeup, there will be no peace there, no just peace.

EIR: What do you think about the recent statement by Pope John Paul II, who condemned what is going on in Bosnia? You talked about a shakeup, what do you mean by this?

Mazowiecki: I know the statement of the pope you referred to, and I can say that it reflects the pope’s great concern, which I am familiar with, and secondly, his awareness that this is a threat to certain basic principles of our civilization. I also think that we have reached the point at which this war is no longer only being conducted against Bosnia, but against certain principles of the international order.

Concerning the second part of your question, I will answer it the following way: The most important problem, in my opinion, is that the main western democratic countries be able to finally establish a unified and consistent stand. What I think is the worst, is this cacophony of voices which took place at the conference in London, and, frankly speaking, throughout those three years, when somebody said—for example, the American President—that there is a need for a decisive reaction, immediately you could hear a voice of some American general saying that an intervention is not possible. And the other way around: When somebody from the military forces would say that there is a necessity for a more decisive reaction and another kind of mandate, then politicians would respond in the spirit of, “We do not want to die for Sarajevo.” We have a situation in which a small group of people, namely, Serbian leaders in Bosnia, are shaking superpowers. I can only say that without a unified stand, without a consistent stand, without a certain determination, there will be no peace there.

EIR: Is there anything else you would like to say?

Mazowiecki: I would like to add that I treat my resignation precisely as a protest against that helplessness and against the reconciliation with this helplessness. I think that we have reached a very dangerous point and that the international community cannot treat this as some sort of exotic matter which is far away from them, because the principles of international coexistence have been threatened.