

Interview with Ratko Mladic

Ratko Mladic, now at The Hague facing charges of genocide, has largely been silent since his recent arrest. Back in 1995, however, he gave a candid interview explaining his side of the Srebrenica story, which RT can now reveal.

After more than 10 years in hiding, today Mladic looks more like an ill old man than the person who was allegedly responsible for the largest mass murder in Europe since WWII.

In 1995, just one month after the Srebrenica massacre and three weeks after The Hague Tribunal pressed charges against Mladic, a Western TV crew managed to meet with the general for an interview. But despite the obviously high level of importance and the exclusivity, the interview was never aired.

The tapes remained in Bosnia and Herzegovina in private archives and only now is the conversation being released to the public after RT managed to gain access to the materials.

(...)

Currently, prosecutors at The Hague Tribunal are thinking about dividing the process against Ratko Mladic into two parts – Srebrenica in one separate trial and other war crimes the former general is accused of in another. However it is unclear exactly what the condition Mladic's health is. Any information on that is made public only with his prior consent. According to his relatives, he is suffering from the effects of a stroke and had several heart attacks. Recently Mladic had hernia surgery and even refers to himself as "a very sick person". The Tribunal's chief prosecutor, Serge Brammertz, openly stated that the defendant's health could deteriorate, which may affect the Tribunal's ability to complete the trial.

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CNN: *In the long history of the Serbs, how would you describe the current crisis caused by this huge number of refugees from the Republic of Srpska Krajina?*

RM: Have we started our interview?

CNN: *Please start for the conference.*

RM: All right. The Serbian people have lived in the territories they have now been driven out from for centuries. Very old monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church are situated in the territory of the Republic of Srpska Krajina. Some of them are more than a thousand years old. The Serbian people are the oldest people who have settled here and have inhabited these places. There's appropriate historical and scientific evidence of that. The exodus of the Serbian people from their centuries-old hearths may be one of the biggest tragedies in the history of the Serbian people in general. Perhaps, it can even be measured to the tragedy of 1915 when the Serbian army had to leave Serbia during World War I. But thanks to assistance from allied armies after four years of bloody war the Serbian army returned to its hearths. This tragedy is even more tragic because unfortunately it's happening in the end of the 20th century. Sadly, but it's not happening in front of the eyes of the world community or international public: we have been isolated and demonized because of the blockade and couldn't tell the world about our tragedy and our suffering in this war and the huge exodus of the Serbian people. We don't want sympathy; we just want the world to see the truth.

CNN: *Why were the general's forces not able to go to the aid of the Krajina Serbs and prevent their tragedy?*

RM: We gave them as much help as we objectively could at that moment. I will be quite open to say that Croatia and its armed units have been present in the former Bosnia & Herzegovina ever

since the war broke out there. The arms embargo wasn't observed. On the contrary, some countries of the world community did everything to arm the Croat-Muslim forces; separate countries sent highly-qualified experts to train their army and helped them plan and carry out their military operations. Unfortunately, the bad image of the Serbs and the Serbian people in general created by some media outlets has led to an unequal and biased approach to the sides in the conflict by part of the world community who took the side of the Croats and Muslims, who actually started this bloody war in the territory of the former Yugoslavia. A UN resolution was grossly violated in the eyes of the world community and international public and a country which was the co-founder of the League of Nations and one of the founders of the United Nations was destroyed without any reason.

CNN: How likely is it that the Krajina will ever be retaken? What plans does he (Mladic) have to get the Krajina back?

RM: I will not only allow myself to give an exhaustive answer to this first question but will also answer the next one.

The center of power which stands behind the entire crisis in the former Yugoslavia and continues its disintegration has demonized the Serbian people and has encouraged the forces who withdrew from the former Yugoslavia by means of violent secession; until today these forces have been given all kind of support, unfortunately, not only in the media. They have been supported politically, diplomatically, economically and, sadly, militarily. I don't have to tell you that not only threats and ultimatums but also rude force was used against us, unfortunately, not only by NATO but also, and that is particularly painful, by countries who were Serbia's traditional allies when cataclysms happened in the world during WWI and WWII.

As for your second question, we, the Serbs, will never abandon our land because our land is our most sacred thing. This land is irrigated with Serbian blood. The Serbian people in the Republic of Srpska Krajina survived the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian empires and didn't leave their hearths. It means that those empires who are historically described as ruthless didn't evict the Serbian people from their land unlike the contemporary fascist armada of the Ustasa of President Franje Tujman and his sponsors and regrettably by some countries of the world community who had played a dirty role in all those events.

CNN: Let's talk about the strength of the Croatian army. How is he planning to return the Krajina? What is his plan?

RM: The Croatian army has never presented and will never present any serious military force without the support of its sponsors and some countries of the German bloc with Germany at the helm. Only with the help of international mafia and criminals did they manage to arm themselves with huge amounts of weapons and ammunition from the depots of the former Soviet army left over in the territories of East Germany and the Warsaw Pact countries. I wish if I could from your TV screen warn the world community that those forces have embarked on a very dangerous path because I am absolutely confident that not a single people involved in fighting in this territory actually needs weapons and ammunition. I am sure that I am sharing the opinion of all the warring parties, which is that in this territory we shouldn't fight for foreign interests and the interests of world centers of power. Sober-minded people should be sent to these territories, people who can contribute to establishing peace, can end the war, return us to a normal life and rebuild the destroyed villages and towns because the Balkans is a strategically vital area for Europe and the whole world, and even a war breeze, let alone a hurricane, poses a threat not only to the peoples who inhabit the Balkans but to the whole world, the centuries-old history of this planet and particularly the history of the peoples who lived and are still living in the Balkans.

CNN: Does it mean he will try to take it militarily? Are plans under way already to retake the Krajina?

RM: If any plans were in question, then it would have been impossible for us to seize what's ours; we could have only liberated that land. We are meeting for the first time and prior to that I didn't

even know that you exist as a human being on this planet. This is my shortcoming. But I would like you to inquire whether the Serbian people or I, as the Chief of Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska, have a single soldier or a single piece of military hardware in the territory of any other country or any foreign people. I would answer you, "No, we don't!" because my people have never been occupiers. The Serbs have never, including in this recent war, conquered or occupied other people's territories. The Serbian people didn't declare or start that war. On the contrary, the Croat-Muslim coalition declared a war on the Serbian people in 1991 and 1992. Several weeks ago we announced a military situation to defend ourselves from the Croat-Muslim forces and their world sponsors who had brought paid murderers from Iran and some Western countries to this territory. Let me tell you just one more thing to inform you. I once said that all weapons, except submarine and nuclear arms, produced in the world had been tested on our people until recently. I don't know whether you as a CNN journalist will dare to publish what I am going to say now but if I were you I would have done that in the interests of peace. I personally witnessed how F-16 aircraft and other planes were dropping bombs on us. What hurt us most at that time was not so much that our children were dying under those bombs but the unreasonable decision of the successors of the those ancestors from America who fought shoulder to shoulder with our fathers and grandfathers in the First and Second World Wars against the common evil. Then, the ancestors of those whom they are now supporting sat in trenches from the opposite side and fought together with Austro-Hungarian hordes and Hitler. Unfortunately, this is one of the delusions of the world and also one of the tragic truths of this hard and gloomy war in which many parties are involved.

CNN: In the midst of that terrible refugee crisis and everything that happened to the Krajina Serbs in the past week, at the same time there's a lot of talk coming out of Washington about Srebrenica and what happened there? Surveillance photos allegedly show mass graves of Muslim men? Thousands of Muslim men are missing by all accounts. Are there mass graves outside Srebrenica? What happened to the thousands of Muslim men and boys who are missing?

RM: I can tell you that in April-May 1993 an agreement on Srebrenica was signed. It clearly defined it as a safe demilitarized area where no armed military could be present except for the UN soldiers. We in Republika Srpska cooperated with the UN soldiers and rendered assistance to the civilian Muslim population which peacefully stayed in Srebrenica, Zepa, Gorazde, Sarajevo and Bihac for three years. But instead of disarming the Muslim formations, as they had committed themselves to doing under the agreement on Srebrenica signed by me and General Morillon, the United Nations forces turned those safe areas into terrorist and fundamentalist bases from where our villages and towns were attacked. Muslims from Srebrenica and Zepa burnt down more than 200 Serbian villages around those two places and massively killed and massacred all the Serb civilian population in many other villages. Through our contacts with the other side and particularly with UNPROFOR commanders and appropriate international institutions held at the level of the government, president and the Chief of Staff of the army of Republika Srpska, we warned that the Muslim formations should be disarmed and that the entire safe area should be completely demilitarized which was not done.

CNN: What happened to the Muslim men and boys who are missing?

RM: Let me give you a broader explanation. I appreciate your journalistic curiosity but I would like you to listen to the entire genesis behind this matter so that you could have a clear picture because outright questions and short and fragmentary answers can create a wrong picture in the media, especially on television. They can be abused and misused, which has been done many times in this war to our disadvantage. Starting from 1993 we haven't taken a single action against Srebrenica or Zepa despite watching how the Muslim side was being armed. Sometimes they even used helicopters to airlift weapons and other combat hardware from Iran. We shot down one such helicopter on the outskirts of Zepa two or three months ago. What happened in Srebrenica and Zepa would never have happened if the Muslims hadn't launched an attack from Srebrenica and Zepa which was part of their offensive to liberate and lift the siege of Sarajevo. The Muslims attacked the enclave of Sarajevo, also a safe area, though it was not defined as such by any kind of agreements

of the two parties. The Muslim attack was carried out exactly from the exclusion zone on Mounts Igman and Bjelasnica from which Republika Srpska had pulled out its forces in 1993 and which had been in confidence handed over to peacekeeping forces with the intention to prevent the presence of both our and Muslim forces. But the Muslim forces used that situation to their advantage. The world media, including your respected channel, followed the Muslim offensive in and against Sarajevo and as far as I know you didn't take an active stance or condemn that Muslim offensive launched from the exclusion zone to the safe area of Sarajevo.

CNN: With respect to the general, though, why can't he answer the question about Srebrenica? With respect to the general but the world wants to know why these mass graves exist, if there are surveillance photos, and what happened to the Muslim men and boys?

RM: Yes, of course. With even greater respect to him I would ask him to be a little bit patient and listen to what I am going to tell him because I am going to tell the truth about how exactly all that happened; even science cannot refute these facts because what I am saying and what I am going to tell you was recorded on camera. So one day you and the whole world are going to be rightly informed.

In the midst of the biggest and heaviest fighting near Sarajevo, the Muslims of Srebrenica and Zepa launched large-scale terrorist attacks from Srebrenica and Zepa on June 26 and 27 on the eve of the Serbian holiday of Vidovdan. They set the village of Visnjica on fire...

(pause) ...The cameraman had to change the track.

RM: ...the media has unlimited power, great power and it's good if they learn more about these events.

As far as I can see this cameraman is very patient and charming.

CNN: We can talk to the general the whole day if he gives us the time.

RM: I am not going to have the time to talk to you the whole day but I hope that one day we will have an opportunity to talk under different circumstances in happier and more peaceful times. If the equipment is ready and if I give a command, we can go on. I think that I've stopped at Visnjica.

(the end of pause – the track is changed)

RM: They massacred everybody they captured alive and killed several of our soldiers in the villages of Visnjica and Banja Luchica. We retaliated with a counteroffensive in that area. We took maximum precautions to avoid casualties among civilians and representatives of the UNPROFOR, given the fact that NATO aviation was pounding air strikes at us, including civilian targets on the outskirts of Srebrenica and Zepa. We successfully finished that operation near Srebrenica and Zepa. With the help of the soldiers of the Dutch battalion, the representatives of the world community who were present in Srebrenica, and representatives of the UNPROFOR forces who were present in Zepa, and thanks to the personal engagement of General Smith and General Nikolai and my own engagement, we created an opportunity for all the civilian population to arrive in Srebrenica-Potocar and checkpoint No2 in Vocanica in Zepa, without being forced as it was stipulated by the agreement. At their request, the civilians could be evacuated to any other place they wanted to. We evacuated them to the Kladnja region. We registered all persons fit for war who had gathered there, the civilian population and those who had surrendered their arms. We immediately asked the International Red Cross and UNPROFOR to mediate their exchange for our (Serb) civilians whom the Muslims had been holding hostage since 1992, even before the war broke out, and a huge number of civilians from the Muslim-controlled territories near Tuzla, Zenica, Mostar and Zagreb whom they had rounded up during the war, and also Serbian soldiers and officers who were driven into captivity during the war. Unfortunately, they didn't give a positive answer to our gesture of goodwill, and we expect the world community to exert pressure on them and make them carry out the swap along the principle of "person per person" or "all for all" in accordance with an agreement reached by state commissions. Part of the male population from Srebrenica who had committed

atrocities on the Serbs fought their way to Tuzla, Kladnja and some even towards Serbia that day, evidently for fear of revenge for the atrocities that they had committed. They were apparently convinced that the Muslim forces from Tuzla who had launched a counter-attack from the opposite direction would save them: they must have thought that they were strong enough to open the way to Tuzla. Fierce battles were waged there and both sides suffered severe losses. Part of the Muslim forces fought their way to Tuzla as was emphasized by their television. Their commandant Rasim Delic said that very soon he would reform the 28th or the 38th division from Srebrenica. Just think, an entire division formed in a safe area.

I understand that as a journalist you should show interest in this matter on behalf of the United States and the American public. But I cannot understand why neither the United States nor American journalists are posing a question how it became possible that an Islamist fundamentalist division armed with weapons from Iran could be formed in a safe area which the world community had been protecting by its forces to guarantee no military presence there. I've recently asked one of your colleagues named Peter from CNN what America will do if it discovers at least one terrorist on its soil? He replied that they would try to catch him. To my question what if he puts up resistance... ..By the way, what did you do with the person who fired blank cartridges at the White House? Did you take him to court? What happened to that person, Sir?

CNN: We put him in jail and I imagine he will be in jail for a very long time.

RM: No, it's not true. He was killed in the street in front of TV cameras. You are asking about a division of terrorists from Srebrenica while I am interested in just one terrorist who staged that silly action and fired shots in the vicinity of the White House. Your country is big, and you are a big television station. The whole world listens to you. You raise serious questions, and I am urging you to tell people the truth. What would you do if a division of ten or twelve thousand people armed with weapons from Iran were being formed in Los Angeles or any small town in the United States? Would you come to interview me or would you stay in Los Angeles?

CNN: The world wants to know what happened in Srebrenica. Can he simply tell us? Is he saying that the Muslims who disappeared were fighting the Serbs and were killed in a combat? Are they being held as prisoners or have they been released in an exchange of some kind?

RM: I think that most of them fought their way into a Muslim-controlled territory, which Rasim Delic eventually told the Muslim parliament and said that he would form a division in Srebrenica in no time. One small part of them surrendered. They who surrendered were handed over or will be handed over to the International Red Cross under our control. Some of them certainly died. Both their and our people died. You can ask representatives of international organizations who were present in Zepa about that. We buried their dead in Muslim graves in that territory. We...

CNN: Do you mean there were no executions and there are no mass graves?

RM: Only those who died in battle were buried. For hygienic reasons their bodies had to be collected and buried in appropriate places until the warring parties did agree to exchange the remains of the dead with each other.

CNN: So, possibly, that is what these surveillance planes have seen?

RM: First and foremost, your plane stories and your American stories that you know what's going in the Universe, in the air, in a human head, in the soil and on Earth are not quite true. I wouldn't wish to answer any provocative questions in order not to arouse the interest of the world public in some sad issues because at this moment there are many more important questions related to Srebrenica and Zepa or the fate of Muslim terrorists.

CNN: What are your plans for Gorazde and Sarajevo?

RM: I think that you are a journalist and not an officer. If you are a journalist then you must be asking this question just out of the art of putting questions. If you are an officer then you are asking it for lack of knowledge. Perhaps, you don't expect me to expose my plans in front of the CNN

cameras. These are secondary issues probably of a global nature. I expect you to ask questions about peace and ways of ending the war. And yet I wouldn't wish to owe you an answer to the question about Gorazde and Sarajevo. The status of Gorazde is clearly defined. There, a circle of three kilometers in diameter was demilitarized. Unfortunately, the Muslims didn't honor that and deployed another Mujahideen division outside that circle. They couldn't enjoy the protection of the international peacekeeping force because the peacekeeping force was not supposed to protect armed Islamist fundamentalist divisions because they were supposed to guard peace. Those who pledged to guarantee security at the level of the Security Council and the United Nations should see to it that these forces are disarmed and that peace be established there both for the Muslim and Serbian people. Also, normal communication and use of communications should be guaranteed in the valley of the Drina River because it has strategic importance for the Serbian people. This is also true of Sarajevo. I think that these and many other problems of this region should be solved at the negotiating table through political and diplomatic dialogue and by sober-minded heads who know what they want to do and what it would be logical to do, who know what is fair to do on the basis of a common approach in compliance with international law and the United Nations charter instead of solving these problems by means of arms and their stockpiling in this region. Perhaps you think that the stockpiling of weapons here and the training of your guys to fly F-16 and F-18 planes provide security for America...But I am more inclined to believe that weapons are a horrible product of human brain and that war has been a terrible phenomenon through centuries of human history. If you asked me, I would have banned all peoples of the world from using and pronouncing these two words. I would also disagree that weapons should be produced as plastic toys for children. It may seem strange to you but I would join those generals from the past and present who, unfortunately, felt on their own skin just as I did that no one wants peace more than soldiers and generals. I am not telling you that because I've tested the high-tech weapons from many countries on us. I am not saying that out of fear. I've been at war for the fifth year running and to use a sport jargon I am in a very good shape to wage a war. We don't have any other choice except defending our people. But my message to humanity, if it hasn't yet learnt a lesson from the wars in Vietnam, the Middle East, the Persian Gulf and Chechnya, is that it should learn from this terrible civil, religious and regional war in which some great powers are also involved – and must end this war. They should sit down at the negotiating table and solve all disputable issues by peaceful means.

CNN: Let's talk about peace. How soon can this war end?

RM: I am not a fortune-teller and I don't make any forecasts. That's why I wouldn't set any concrete dates or deadlines. This question should be raised at the United Nations Security Council and great world power centers. Unfortunately, some of them have provoked and have been orchestrating this war. It goes on with greater or lesser intensity and is getting more complicated. As for me, I think that this war can end very quickly if the world community demands, neutrally and honestly, that all warring parties in this territory, on the basis of science, human conscience and sober mind, recognize that the Serbian people, who have had states in these territories for centuries have the right to have what was taken away from them by unwise decisions and resolutions. Our state which we had had for thousands of years was taken away from us and was given to other peoples who have never had it in history. Let's say the Slovenes and the Croats, and now some separate forces in the United States would like to create a Muslim country in the Balkans with the help of Alija Izetbegovic. I cannot believe either as a human being or as a general that the United States has decided to create a small Iran in Europe. Let it wash its shameful face for imposing a blockade on us. Against the background of an officially proclaimed embargo on arms imports into this territory, the Croats and the Muslims have been arming themselves with planes, helicopters, tanks and ships and have more ammunition than interventionist rapid reaction forces. Perhaps some of them have now come to their rescue because twenty days ago they didn't have anything. Can you imagine that we cannot get the fuel to transport three thousand homeless people from the Republic of Srpska Krajina to safer places in Serbia and Republika Srpska in Bosnia, or we cannot get medicine for the old and disabled or baby mix for babies that are dying en route. What right have

they got? If I were a journalist like you, please forgive me for my question but I am not sure that you will dare to ask it, I would have asked them what right did they have to impose a blockade on the Serbian people, and if it's really right from the legal point of view that the Serbian people, who have had a state for centuries, now do not have a state that is recognized by the world community. I've recently seen a report on CNN about the lives of some tribes on the banks of the Amazon River and from the Kalahari Desert, about those Pygmies who are still living in tribal societies, but the only things they say about the Serbs are some stupidities about mass rapes. They are demonizing the Serbs and that has got nothing to do with reality. Let me tell you that in 1993 your media reported and recorded, you can find those shots in your archives, how during a war between the Muslims and the Croats we made it possible for the Croats to save their population and their forces in our territory. We sheltered their women and children and even soldiers and officers in our territory and transported them from the regions of Zepa and Usor to the territory of Herceg Bosna. There were about 30,000 of them. In one day alone we transported 904 armed soldiers and officers.

CNN: I think that your desire for peace is sincere. You can see that. How do you feel about being branded as a war criminal?

RM: I am going to answer this question now. I've expected that because all of you who come from western countries have clichés in your heads and ask similar questions.

CNN: You are a military man. So I believe you.

RM: I am going to answer your question. Let me continue. You are trying to influence me in a very cultured and intelligent way. I mean you and other of your male and female colleagues who have posed me such questions. But they were framed like pictures on a wall to fit in into some political dimensions or meet editorial wishes.

While we were fighting near Vares, we gave shelter to 25,000 Croatian wives and children and we enabled the Croats to take their armed units from the areas of Kiseljak and Vitez to rescue their people in Vares. We enabled their soldiers and officers after the Muslims had defeated them near Vares to leave that territory and safely walk with weapons in their hands to the region of Stoca where we handed them over to the Croatian side, even though they had committed some crimes against our people. In the region of Butojna and Mount Komar we received more than ten thousand of their soldiers and officers whom we later handed over near Kupres to Livno so that Croatia could attack that same Kupres several months later – just like Grahovo, Glamoc and the Republic of Srpska Krajina through which we had handed over their people to them. Then, in 1993 during the fighting in the vicinity of Srebrenica and Zepa we must have been the only army in the world to make it possible for the Muslims to evacuate in one day 495 wounded soldiers and officers from Srebrenica and 202 from Zepa by helicopters provided by the UNPROFOR. That number kept rising because the evacuation lasted for several days. In April 1994, about 753 Muslim officers and soldiers were evacuated by UN helicopters even though the NATO aviation was pounding us with bombs near Gorazde and killed our medical personnel in one village: the doctor and medical nurses from in the village of Gack. You can go there and film it to be convinced that I am telling the truth. Now, let's get on to your second question.

I have partly followed that accusation of The Hague Tribunal launched against me.

I am a person who belongs to my people with all my heart just like my ancestors. My people or I were not the first to start that war. So neither my people nor its leadership, or me as a general, have declared war on anyone as yet. That war was declared on us and started by those who, unfortunately, in 1914 and 1941 together with the foreign troops of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and Hitler's fascist hordes started slaughtering the Serbian people and throwing them into pits. I am defending my people with all my heart and all my skills from extermination because it was attacked by the Croat-Muslim armed formations against the will of a larger part of the Croatian and Muslim populations, I have no doubt about that, and on the instructions from the world power centers that wish to "Germanize" and "Islamize" the Balkans and Europe.

I don't recognize any trials except the trial of my own people. I don't need to defend myself because these idiotic accusations have come from those centers which have been churning out lies through PR and similar organizations creating such chaos in these territories that the world community doesn't know, doesn't see or simply doesn't want to see a way out of all this. Since you are a big country I will tell you the following: it doesn't matter for me how long I am going to live, it's important for me what I will be able to do for my people during my lifetime and how much I can contribute to saving them from all that terrible suffering from those who have attacked them and from those who support our adversaries and have great might.

I myself said that to General Smith and General Mayer and some other generals who had threatened us with bombardments. One of them was from your country. We are on our land and we are open to peace and cooperation with all the peoples and countries of the world. Neither the Serbian people nor I personally have any racial, religious or any other prejudices. The powers that be cannot take a decision to exterminate us because they are not going to succeed in doing that because our love of our homeland and desire to live are stronger than any weapons existing on this planet. We are going to survive and live because the suffering of the Serbian people in the Republic of Srpska Krajina has given us new and even greater strength than the suffering in Kosovo or the 1915 catastrophe when the Serbian army had to leave their homes and pull out to friendly Greece where it regrouped and reorganized and later liberated its motherland jointly with its allies. If you see any Serbian soldier or officer in the United States or any other country of the world who has come there on my order to stage a rebellion or overthrow the social system, you can be sure that I will voluntarily go to The Hague. I am also going to answer a question asked by your colleague Peter. He asked about rapes in Zepa. Let me apologize to a lady who is present here. In reply to his question I asked him to let me answer his question at the crime scene. I took him to one bus filled predominantly with women and children and also some men. He talked to those women. I wasn't present during their conversation. When he went out I begged him to give an answer to his own question. I asked him whether he would have raped any of those ladies he had seen on the bus. He replied, "Mr. General, any person who's going to ask you this idiotic question will be a crazy fool. After everything that I've seen there, I am surprised at you both as a person and general." I don't think he was hypocritical. I think he was sincere. You are from one country so you can talk to each other. I believe that you, a prominent journalist, has also come here with a picture which was a bit different from the one you are going to have after our conversation. Eventually, I would like to ask you that if you were General Mladic and so many of your people had been attacked and threatened, that the Mujahideens from Iran, Turkey and some Arab countries had cut the heads off both children and adults as was the case in Vlasic in 1993 and if your children had been killed by drug traffickers from some western countries, would you just sit idly or would you go out to defend your people? Would you wave your hands at NATO planes if they dropped bombs on you? Sir, with the help of powerful media you've convinced the whole world that the Serbs are savages because one of your planes came down on Serbian territory. President Clinton received that pilot as a hero. What right did he have to be in and over our country in the air space of the Serbian state? What threat did we pose to America? Did we threaten its sovereignty, integrity or did we simply reduce its role as a super power?

CNN: As a general and soldier in the rank, as a commanding officer and a soldier, if you knew a Serb soldier who has hurt or killed a woman or a child, how would you react to it?

RM: Every soldier who violates legal procedures based on international law and the law of the army of Republika Srpska, irrespective of the reason he commits an offence – the etiquette of the military profession or because of the task that has been assigned, will face the justice bodies of the Serbian Republic.

Let me tell you in the context of that sad scenario near Potocar in the outskirts of Srebrenica about an episode that was shot on camera. I may hand it over to the CNN one day. I spoke to those innocent women and children. I introduced myself to them. We had helped them with what we could. I told them how they were going to be evacuated. Then one lady of around thirty said

allegedly in her torment, “General Mladic, you are very good-looking on television but one wouldn’t believe how handsome you are in real life.” Though I don’t belong to handsome people, I am not, say, as handsome as you are. You bear these typical American features: broad shoulders and a smile on your face. So, I answered that lady, “Madam, don’t present compliments to me. They are already accusing me of rape. How will the world react to your words?” But she replied jokingly, “You don’t have to rape, you just say.” I think that such stupid stories were told about high-ranking officials in Republika Srpska. I cannot understand one thing: how come that television sets haven’t burst in shame because of the lies they are spreading. Sir, we all have higher education. There’s not a single military school that I haven’t finished. I’ve been working with people all my life. For your information they were all absolutely normal people who underwent regular medical checkups twice a year. It didn’t matter whether a recruit, a junior commander or an officer came to a military school, all of them had to undergo a medical examination twice a year. My family, my school and my life have taught me to tell the truth and to fight for the truth. If it hadn’t been for this war, I would probably never have seen what can be seen and what can happen and be found in human skin. And now, my dear journalists, let me provoke you, despite the fact that you are from CNN. You cheated the world, all of you who announced the decision of the Security Council to declare a village of Zepa, where there are only ten houses, to be a town. It has never been and will never be a town. The war in Sarajevo started when Muslim terrorists attacked a Serbian wedding; and started boiling when Muslim terrorists attacked a column of the former Yugoslav People’s Army on Dobrovoljacka Street, where Muslim terrorists in the presence of General McKenzie were shooting at unarmed civilians and soldiers sometimes even from UNPROFOR cars. The Muslims did everything and will continue doing everything to involve the world community, especially the NATO pact, to fight on their side and for their goals by staging various subversive and terrorist acts and offensives. One such example was an attack on a queue for bread in which they killed a huge number of Serbs and also some of their own people for the purpose of demonstrating that the tragedy was a result of Serbian artillery and mortar attack. Or let’s take the tragedy of Markalama. Only those who had planned and perpetrated those monstrous acts and also those who covered them in the media by cheating the whole world have stayed clean of any crimes. And now let me defend myself slightly from your noble attacks.

What right have you got, as a person and journalist, I assume that you are a humane person if you are a journalist, to show so much interests in enclaves, be it Zepa or Sarajevo, and not to ask a single question how the Serbian people feel in ...enclaves that were imposed on them by the will of world powers, including your country, when we cannot bring in oxygen for old people who need it? And now let me ask you one question: are you happy or unhappy that monstrous sanctions have been imposed on the Serbian people in Republika Srpska and Serbia? I assure you that the current exodus (from Srpska Krajina) and this 600-kilometer-long column of refugees is the result of those monstrous decisions on sanctions against the Serbian people and their demonization. The world power centers are doing everything to stir things up in order to achieve their dirty goals to dominate the Balkans. The Balkans should be left in peace to the Balkan peoples, who should be helped to find a way out of this Golgotha.

CNN: Final question. Does he have any sense, as a soldier and personally, when this war is going to end? Yesterday, Vice-President Koljevic told us he thinks the fighting will stop next month. Does the general have any sense in himself, as a soldier, as a man of experience and a human being as to when this war is going to end?

RM: Professor Koljevic is a political person and he’s probably more informed than I am. He has political contacts around the globe.

CNN: Is that possible— that the fighting could end next month?

RM: Are you married?

CNN: I am married with two children.

RM: Have you ever quarreled with your wife in your life or during your marriage?

CNN: *No, never.*

RM: I don't believe you. I have quarreled with my wife. Sometimes those quarrels lasted for a long time...When we were young they were shorter. Now they are longer. You need great courage to start a war but much greater courage is needed to put an end to it. I am convinced that the Serbian people want peace and I am sure that the Muslim and Croatian peoples also want it. I am sure that with help from the world community and great powers it's possible to end this war and force Croatia to withdraw its armed forces from the former Bosnia & Herzegovina. If it hadn't had them there, there would have been no war in Bosnia & Herzegovina. We should sit down at the negotiating table and should solve all disputable issues on an equal footing in a short-term or long-term period because we are not against the Muslims or the Croats having their own state. But we don't want this state to be created even on a millimeter of Serbian soil.

CNN: *Is this possible so long as the Croats are in Krajina?*

RM: They ought to withdraw from the Republic of Srpska Krajina and a peacekeeping force should be deployed there to carry out its functions and re-establish the order that was there prior to the Croatian aggression. There's not a single Serb and there should not be a single person in the world community who would try to verify the Croatian occupation of any part of the Republic of Srpska Krajina.

CNN: *No peace unless the Croats withdraw from Krajina?*

RM: Let me tell you what. I would let those who had given the green light to the Croatian aggression against the Republic of Srpska Krajina to answer this question. I would tell you that we waged a war against the Turkish Empire for 500 and in some regions for 600 years until we liberated our hearths and the graves of our ancestors. For decades we fought against the Austro-Hungarian monarchy until we liberated our lands and for half a decade we fought against fascist Germany to do the same. Our ancestors fought better for our land than we do. Our land is sacred for us. We didn't go to Alaska, Greenland, the Malvinas or the Falklands or Vietnam. We have stayed here and will continue to live on our land. It would be better for all the warring parties if peace settles here as soon as possible. It would also be good for their sponsors and patrons: a boomerang always comes back. The winds of war need to subside.

Interpreter: *You should have the biography of General Mladic.*

RM: Only don't take it from me. I've met many prominent and fine people among the generals who held commanding posts in the former Bosnia & Herzegovina army or in the former Yugoslav army. They were of my age. It's my first war and some of my colleagues, I am not going to name them now, have more than twelve wars and countries behind their backs but they have never fought on their own land for they have never been attacked. As far as I am concerned, the route to The Hague is open to me.

CNN: *(Incomprehensible)*

RM: CNN has fewer questions than I have answers.

*27 August, 2011, TV-Novosti, Channel RT-TV
<http://rt.com/news/ratko-mladic-interview-full-185/>*