



First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Ivica Dacic, in response to a note sent by Croatia to Serbia protesting his statements made at the United Nations on Jasenovac, alleging that the Minister presented false information and fabrications, said that he was stunned by Croatia's outrageous reaction.

"Croatia was opposed to this exhibition in the first place. As a matter of fact, the exhibition should have been mounted by Croatia, not Serbia".

What is false about what I said? I made the statement and I take personal responsibility for it – first of all, I said that it was the only camp in Europe not run by Hitler's Germany but by Ustashi. Secondly, people were slaughtered there in the cruellest way imaginable.

In German-controlled camps, people were gassed to death. In this camp, there were virtually competitions among the guards as to who will slaughter more Serbs, Jews and Roma. It is a well-known fact quoted in the Croatian sources that in a single night a guard who slaughtered 1,360 Serbs by a special instrument "Serb-cutter", designed specially to slit their throats, was a winner. There were three camp survivors attending the exhibition who spoke about how children were massacred.

Since they sent the note by fax, I shall send them a list of the names of 20,000 children killed in Jasenovac and other concentration camps by registered mail. The least they can do is to keep silent to honour and respect the victims.

When I mentioned Plenkovic, I said that he visited Yad Vashem in Jerusalem where he stated that he was shocked by the Holocaust horrors saying "Never again". Truth be told, he only mentioned Jews.

Still, I need to recall that in Jasenovac it was mostly Serbs in addition to Jews that perished, just for being Serbs. The official policy of the Ustashi regime was to kill one third of Serbs, to convert one third to Catholicism and expel one third. This is what Mile Budak was saying and doing at that time. How many towns in Croatia have a street that bears his name?"

Additionally, for how long did the plaque erected in front of the Jasenovac camp, inscribed with "For home ready", stand there? Would it be possible that plaques inscribed with "Heil Hitler" or

"Sieg heil" be placed in front of Mauthausen or Dachau?" That is impossible!

I said that this exhibition was directed neither against Croatia nor anyone else, with the exception of criminals and those justifying crimes, finding excuses for, diminishing or casting a pall of relativity over, them.

As Plenkovic said "never again", therefore, if we wish never to see reoccurrence of such crimes, we should all take part in marking them; for this reason, I am appalled by such a protest note. It is simply incomprehensible that anyone could be angered, expecting us to apologize for organizing the exhibition on how we were slaughtered and murdered. This is truly utter hypocrisy and insolence.

Should this hamper the relations between Serbia and Croatia, I am ready to take the consequences, but I believe that it is of historical importance for the Serbian people that the truth about Jasenovac be heard at the United Nations.

I repeated several times that I was not referring to today's Croatia, but to the Independent State of Croatia, the greater Croatia, extending to Zemun, Novi Sad and Sabac. When was greater Serbia in existence at all? And when did it incorporate these territories?

Even today, all their statements contain references to greater Serbian aggression, while this was greater Croatian aggression, which included Bosnia and Herzegovina and a part of Serbia. One third of the Christian Orthodox population lived there, a million and 900 thousand people.

Not in a single sentence whatsoever did I mention the number of victims, for that is not a point of my present concern. Irrespective of whether the victims who fell prey to the Ustashi knife numbered 50, 100, 700 thousand or only ten, tribute should be paid to them in the same way as Croat or any other victims killed in any war are honoured by Serbia.

I do not understand why they recognized themselves. I said that my words were not directed against anyone, except for criminals or the ones who justified those crimes.