

Come back, Austria-Hungary, all is forgiven

Пише: Srdja Trifkovic
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My attention has been belatedly drawn to a news item over a month old: Valentin Inzko, the International High Representative of Bosnia-Herzegovina, has decreed that it is “[deeply deplorable](#)” that the Republika Srpska (RS) – the Serb half of the Balkan non-country – plans to help fund the defense of General Ratko Mladić at The Hague Tribunal.

“This is taxpayers’ money and this is also the money of the mothers of Srebrenica,” a visibly indignant Herr Inzko fumed: “I cannot imagine that an Austrian war criminal, a Nazi war criminal, would get financial support from the Republic of Austria... This is what is going on now and is deeply deplorable... [RS President] Dodik is really stretching the nerves of international community and also the nerves of really peaceful Bosniak community.”

In the Republic of Austria Nazi war criminals may well be denied financial support, but are not denied the honor of becoming Head of State, as the illustrious career of Dr. Kurt Waldheim von Kozara has shown.

Herr Inzko’s outburst came only days after Pope Benedict, among others, came out loudly in support of Croatia’s immediate membership in the European Union. Croatia is *salonfähig*, it appears, eminently clubbable at the Berlaymont... even though the Croatian government has gone out of its way to support, propagate and [organize legal teams](#) for the appeals of Generals Gotovina and Markač, who were already convicted by the Trial Chamber earlier this spring, and sentenced to a total of over fifty years in prison, at the self-same Yugoslav War Crimes Tribunal at The Hague.

Furthermore, it has been reported that Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor “has announced the strengthening of [Croatia’s] [diplomatic offensive](#) , with a team of experts that would help the generals’ defence as it prepares to appeal the verdict.” This means that Croatian officials, civil servants and diplomats will be mobilized and ordered, on government time, to try and exert political influence on a legal process concerning these two convicted war criminals.

The reason for Herr Inzko’s behavior may be in the simple fact that he regards General Mladić as guilty even though he is yet to be tried, and in the possibility that he sees the two Croatian

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The alleged transgression of Mr. Dodik pales by comparison. The resources devoted by the Zagreb Government to its “offensive” on behalf of Gotovina and Markaè are bound to exceed, by some order of magnitude, the paltry 50,000 euros the RS has set aside for Mladiæ and other defendants at the Hague. Yet nobody – least of all Bosnia’s Austrian Gauleiter – seems to find this odd, let alone “deplorable,” deeply or otherwise. Needless to say, many a mother, or wife, or daughter of the thousands of Serb victims of *Operation Storm* will also make an unwilling contribution to Ms. Kosor’s all-out state effort on behalf of Messrs. Gotovina and Markaè.

The reason for Herr Inzko’s behavior may be in the simple fact that he regards General Mladiæ as guilty even though he is yet to be tried, and in the possibility that he sees the two Croatian generals as innocent even though they have been convicted by the Trial Chamber. In his public statements he has referred, repeatedly, to Mladiæ as a “war criminal.” By doing so Herr Inzko has shown that the time-honored Western principle of assuming a defendant’s innocence until he has been found guilty does not apply to the denizens of the Balkan wilderness over which he is lording on a mandate from the “International Community.”

The Austrians of yore used to be capable of doing better than that. Even the perpetrators of the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo, almost a century ago, were given a reasonably fair trial by the Habsburg authorities. One of the accused was even given the benefit of the doubt regarding his exact birth date, which saved him from the noose.

As it happens, unlike Inzko’s “Bosnia” or the “International Community” keeping the Dayton-absurdity on life support, the black-yellow Dual Monarchy was a *Rechtstaat*.