

Ideology and War in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992-95:
Evidence from the Tribunal



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Abstract

This thesis relies on evidence from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia to argue that systematic ethnic violence occurred during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and Herzegovina because of the implementation of extreme ideological visions promoted by top political leaders. The first section demonstrates how Serb and Croat nationalist politicians in Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia determined to create expanded mono-ethnic states as Yugoslavia collapsed in 1991-92. The second section illustrates how institutions dominated by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and the Croatian government led by Franjo Tuđman sponsored the military campaigns conducted by Bosnian Serb and Croat forces, which attempted to realise the visions imagined in 1991-92. The final section reveals how in 1994-95, leaders from Croatia and Serbia shifted their short-term strategies towards Bosnia for pragmatic reasons, and while the Croatian leadership succeeded in forcing Bosnian Croat nationalists to abate their separatist campaign, Milošević's efforts to pacify the Bosnian Serb leadership failed and Radovan Karadžić's regime continued to pursue its state-building programme until its defeat in summer 1995. Although both Milošević and Tuđman yielded their pre-war ambitions in the face of battlefield outcomes and international pressure, this thesis argues that both leaders regarded the peace agreements they signed as temporary compromises on their long-term ambitions. The words of top political decision-makers reveal the ideas and reasoning that inspired programmes to homogenise multi-ethnic Bosnia and divide it between Serbia and Croatia.

In memory of Ahmet Pašić

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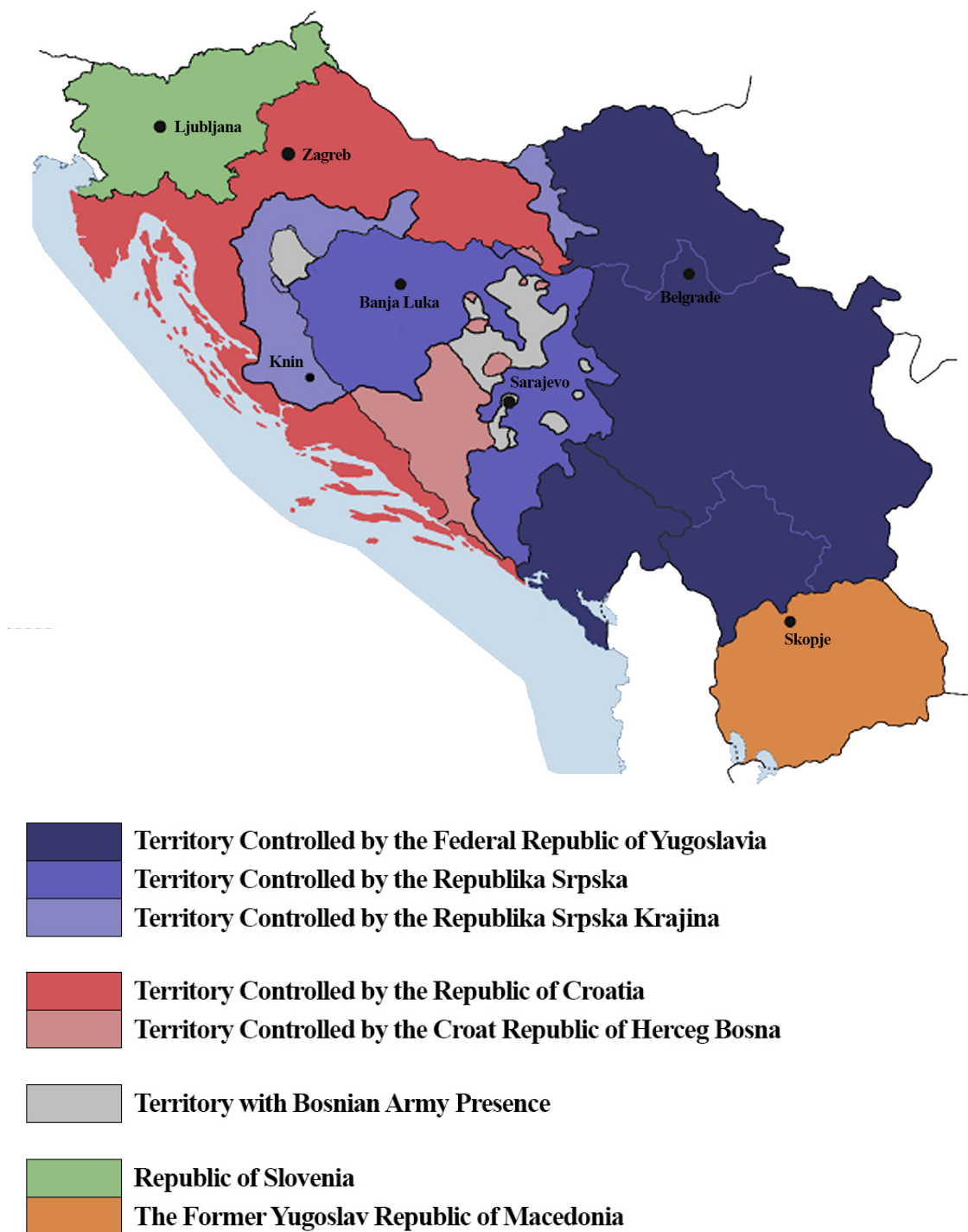
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Former Yugoslavia at War, May 1993¹



¹ Adapted from: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Former_Yugoslavia_2006.png. Created by Paweł Goleniowski. Licensed through the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

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List of Abbreviations

The following are the most common abbreviations used by scholars and parties at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Abbreviations are formed from the original language unless an abbreviated form of an English translation is in common use.

HDZ	Croat Democratic Union (<i>Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica</i>)
HDZ BiH	Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (<i>Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine</i>)
HV	Croatian Army (<i>Hrvatska Vojska</i>)
HVO	Croat Defence Council (<i>Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane</i>)
HZ Herceg Bosna	Croat Community of Herceg Bosna (<i>Hrvatska Zajednica Herceg Bosne</i> ; November 1991 – August 1993)
HR Herceg Bosna	Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna (<i>Hrvatska Republika Herceg Bosne</i> ; August 1993 – February 1994)
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
JNA	Yugoslav People's Army (<i>Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija</i> ; until May 1992)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
RS	The Serb Republic (<i>Republika Srpska</i>)
RSK	The Republic of the Serb Krajina (<i>Republika Srpska Krajina</i>)
SAO	Serb Autonomous Region (<i>Srpska Autonomna Oblast</i>)
SDA	Party of Democratic Action (<i>Stranka Demokratske Akcije</i>)
SDC	Supreme Defence Council
SDS	Serb Democratic Party (<i>Srpska Demokratska Stranka</i>)
SRJ	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (<i>Savezna Republika Jugoslavija</i> ; Serbia and Montenegro from May 1992)
SFRJ	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (<i>Socijalistička Federativna Republika Jugoslavija</i>)
SVK	Serb Army of the Krajina (<i>Srpska Vojska Krajine</i>)

UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
VJ	Army of Yugoslavia (<i>Vojska Jugoslavije</i> ; from May 1992)
VRS	Army of Republika Srpska (<i>Vojska Republike Srpske</i>)

Introduction

We are not supporting any military action in Bosnia and Herzegovina ... We were not provoking or supporting any hostilities. – Slobodan Milošević, President of Serbia¹

The Republic of Croatia led a legal and legitimate war of defence and liberation, and not of aggression or conquest against anyone, in which it defended its territory from Greater Serb aggression within internationally recognised borders. – Homeland War Declaration, Croatian Parliament (Sabor)²

On 24 November 1995, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman returned to Zagreb following almost two weeks of peace negotiations at Dayton, Ohio, which marked the end of three-and-a-half years of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tuđman told members of his government and representatives from the Bosnian Croat leadership: ‘Gentlemen, we have succeeded!’³ Twelve days later, after his return from the same negotiations, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević informed his subordinates in Belgrade: ‘We have simply succeeded!’⁴ The matching conclusions reached by two supposedly rival leaders reveal much about their attitudes towards Europe’s bloodiest conflict since the Second World War. As champions of ethnic and territorial partition, both Tuđman and Milošević had sought to enlarge their states at their neighbour’s expense. Although the settlement agreed at the end of 1995 preserved both the sovereignty and the pre-war borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the leaders of Croatia and Serbia still claimed victory. While they had reason to maximise their wartime achievements to their zealous followers, they had indeed succeeded in destroying Bosnia’s multi-ethnic communities, as well as the ideas of a civic community, effective governance, and a common life for its peoples in the foreseeable future.

¹ Undated remark, likely made in 1992, quoted in ‘Programme 4: The Gates of Hell,’ in *The Death of Yugoslavia* BBC Documentary Post-Production Script, (London, 1995), p. 1.

² *Narodne Novine: Službeni List Republike Hrvatske*, ‘Deklaracija o Domovinskom Ratu,’ 13 October 2000. Accessed on 4 August 2015 at: <http://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/274008.html>.

³ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-PP892.P35, pp. 28-29.

⁴ 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, pp. 5-6.

The disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s led to conflicts that disrupted almost fifty years of peace on the continent. In Yugoslavia, as elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe, multi-party elections followed the collapse of communism. The success of nationalist political parties throughout the federation's six constituent republics put Yugoslavia's nations on the path to first political and then violent conflict. The decentralised state structures made secession an appealing option for leaders from Croatia and Slovenia, who argued that yet weaker ties among the republics or even independence would ameliorate the economic and political crises that had plagued Yugoslavia since the 1980s. Slobodan Milošević, the powerful Serbian politician, contended that centralisation would address grievances raised by his supporters and Serb intellectuals.⁵ By summer 1991, the forces that advocated a united and equitable Yugoslav state had slid to the margins.

A ten-day series of skirmishes between Slovenian forces and the Yugoslav federal army followed Slovenia's declaration of independence on 25 June 1991 and a much more intense six-month conflict erupted in Croatia in July 1991, pausing in January 1992. Yet the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (henceforth Bosnia) that began in late March 1992 became the bloodiest, most complex, and destructive conflict that emerged from Yugoslavia's collapse. Nationalist leaders from Bosnia's three ethnic communities launched competing state-building projects: Serb and Croat nationalists sought to divide Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia, while the Muslim-dominated Sarajevo government attempted to keep the

⁵ A note on terminology: I use the terms 'Serb,' 'Croat,' 'Bosniak,' or 'Muslim' as adjectives denoting ethnic groups, and I use the terms 'Bosnian,' 'Croatian' 'Serbian' as adjectives referring to the geographical entities Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and Serbia. For example, a Croatian Serb is a Serb from Croatia; a Bosnian Croat is a Croat from Bosnia; a Serbian politician is a politician from Serbia.

republic intact.⁶ Rival nationalist movements fought to claim contested territories for their group while expelling others. From March 1992 until December 1995, an estimated 100,000 civilians and military personnel lost their lives; between 25,000 and 50,000 women became the victims of rape; and fighting displaced about 2.2 million people (out of a pre-war population of 4.37 million).⁷ Seventy per cent of wartime expulsions took place between March and August 1992.⁸ The war triggered the first military actions taken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) recognised the July 1995 Srebrenica massacre as Europe's first instance of genocide since the Second World War.⁹ The war profoundly redefined Bosnia's demographic composition as ethnically mixed villages, towns, and cities became substantially homogeneous in a short period of time.

This thesis draws on new evidence in order to contribute to our understanding of the war in Bosnia and to explain why the conflict occurred in the brutal way that it did. Although myriad monographs and articles have emerged on the subject since the beginning of Yugoslavia's collapse, few scholars have had the opportunity to draw on the sources cited in this thesis. In the course of investigating and prosecuting the highest ranking political and military officials involved in the Bosnian war, the Office of the Prosecutor at

⁶ In September 1993, political leaders and intellectuals from Bosnia's Muslim community voted to adopt the term 'Bosniak' as the noun to replace the term 'Bosnian Muslim' or 'Muslim by nationality' used during the socialist period. The purpose of the change was to strengthen the identity of Bosnia's Muslims as a national group in addition to a religious community. The sources generally refer to Bosnian Muslims, and indeed that is how most Bosnian Muslims referred to themselves throughout the period under analysis, so for clarity and consistency I use the term 'Bosnian Muslim' throughout this thesis.

⁷ For a collection of reports on demographic changes in Bosnia during the war, see E. Tabeau (ed.), *Conflict in Numbers* (Belgrade, 2009). Accessed 6 August 2015 at: <<http://www.helsinki.org.rs/doc/testimonies33.pdf>>

⁸ M.J. Calic, 'Ethnic Cleansing and War Crimes, 1991-95,' in *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies*, C. Ingrao and T.A. Emmert (eds.), (West Lafayette, 2013), pp. 126 and 138-141.

⁹ Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstić Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-98-33-T, 2 August 2001. Accessed 6 August 2015 at: <<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/krstic/tjug/en/krs-tj010802e.pdf>>, pp. 188-242.

the ICTY amassed a formidable repository that includes top-secret transcripts and orders revealing the wartime perspectives and instructions of decision makers. By studying the tribunal's evidence, I have analysed the war from the points of view of top political leaders from Serbia and Croatia, above all presidents Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tuđman, as well as the highest-ranking officials of the Bosnian Serb and Croat wartime regimes, including Radovan Karadžić and Mate Boban. Almost all of the transcripts and other documents cited in this thesis were classified 'Top Secret' by the institutions that created them, and many of the candid comments made by political leaders behind closed doors contrasted with their contemporaneous public statements.

This thesis endeavours to understand the forces that strove to carve homogeneous states out of ethnically mixed Bosnia, namely the Bosnian Serb and Croat nationalist elites. The evidence indicates that Bosnian Serb and Croat nationalist leaders worked extremely closely with, depended on, and often followed the directions of their sponsors in Zagreb and Belgrade. From the beginning of the conflict until summer 1995, Bosnian Serb forces enjoyed an upper hand over their adversaries; from September 1992, they controlled some 70 per cent of the pre-war Bosnian republic. Bosnian Croat forces held much of Western Herzegovina, where ethnic Croats formed a majority, as well as large portions of Central Bosnia. Despite representing Bosnia's largest ethnic group (at 43.5 per cent of the republic's population in 1991), Bosnian Muslim forces controlled the least territory and, with certain notable exceptions, struggled against Bosnian Serb and Croat militants until later stages of the conflict. This thesis focuses on Bosnian Serb and Croat leaders and their partners in Belgrade and Zagreb because those two sides represented the more powerful belligerents, controlled the most territory during the war, committed the most atrocities, and

devoted the most resources to altering Bosnia's demographic landscape. The Bosnian Serb leadership under Radovan Karadžić and the Belgrade elite that supported his regime receive the most attention in this thesis because of the decisive military superiority of their forces throughout most of the war and their considerable (though not complete) success in achieving the division of Bosnia. The Bosnian Serb authorities, despite lacking international recognition for their state, had the greatest capacity to implement their agenda.

The subjects of the thesis are political and military leaders themselves. They determined which laws to adopt and enforce, which military objectives to campaign for, and which international agreements to accept or reject; therefore, there is no doubt that top leaders deserve attention from scholars. Although recent historiography tends to focus on lower-level perpetrators and their motivations, this thesis adopts a more traditional 'top-down' perspective. While there is much that we can still learn from those who waged and experienced the war on the ground, the lack of concrete knowledge about what political and military leaders knew and ordered has been a void in debate about the war. It is not enough to rely on public statements and to infer intent from outcomes. We need to review leaders' frank and confidential discussions in order to decipher why they directed the organs of their states to pursue certain policies, and in particular why they conducted their state-building campaigns in a manner that incurred such a massive human cost. Moreover, the various arguments that political and military leaders invoked when debating among themselves, as well as their reactions to developments on the ground and in the diplomatic arena, reveal a much more nuanced understanding of how they waged the war and why.

Although some scholars have asserted that political elites from Croatia and Serbia propped up their ethnic satellite states in Bosnia and sought to annex portions of the pre-

war republic between themselves, the evidence adduced in this thesis illustrates the extent to which leaders in Zagreb and Belgrade bolstered and guided Croat and Serb leaders in Bosnia. The evidence confirms that the campaigns championed by Bosnian Serb nationalist leader Radovan Karadžić and his Bosnian Croat counterpart Mate Boban relied almost entirely on resources originating from Serbia and Croatia respectively. The reason why Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević supported the division of Bosnia was because they shared the firm ideological conviction that the peoples in former Yugoslavia and particularly in Bosnia should live in separate, homogeneous states. When Tuđman and Milošević realised that their ultimate goals could not be achieved during the conflict, they sought to create conditions for a future partition of Bosnia. The firm denials of Serbia's and Croatia's intervention in Bosnia by their leaders during the war in Bosnia make the reality of these countries' involvement even more striking.

Theory and Methodology

The following chapters are informed by scholarship on ideology, nationalism, and ethnic violence. I define ideology as a set of principles or values based on a specific interpretation of the past and present that inspire adherents to create a political programme aimed at benefiting a specific group. The concept of ideology is invaluable for understanding how movements like those involved in the Bosnian war competed for power and attempted to implement their visions. Michael Freeden's distinction between core and peripheral ideological values helps us to understand better nationalist movements such as those in Bosnia. Freeden emphasises the difference between key principles, which

ideological leaders will not compromise on, and marginal positions subject to change.¹⁰ Other scholars of ideology such as Karl Mannheim and John B. Thompson theorise how leaders project idealised utopias as the goal of their movements and order social and historical time by selecting certain events (and omitting many others) to construct a narrative that an ideology's subscribers consider relevant to their present circumstances. This thesis seeks to examine Serb and Croat nationalist ideologies by identifying historical events that political leaders considered relevant and explaining how their contemporary political interpretations led to the formation of political programmes aimed at creating idealised or utopian states at the expense of other social groups.

Nationalism characterised mainstream Serb and Croat politics during the 1992-95 conflict, and Ernest Gellner provides a compelling and precise definition of this often invoked yet vague concept. Nationalism is 'a theory of political legitimacy' based on the principle that ethnic and political boundaries must correspond.¹¹ Gellner explains that nationalism becomes a movement when the 'nationalist principle' is violated, adding that 'nationalist sentiment is the feeling of anger aroused by the violation of this principle, or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment.' The principle can be breached if an ethno-national state fails to include all the members of the appropriate nation; if the state includes them all but also some outsiders; if it both fails to include all members of the right nation and includes some of another; or if a given national group lives divided among a number of states, with no state serving as a homeland. All these scenarios occurred among the warring sides during the Bosnian war. Although religion also divided Bosnia's three

¹⁰ M. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford, 1996). Also see Freeden's concise and informative *Ideology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2003).

¹¹ A. Finlayson, 'Nationalism,' in R. Eccleshall (ed.) *Political Ideologies* (London and New York, 2003), pp. 97-111.

ethnic groups, the 1992-95 conflict stemmed from the different national identities – which emerged over time based on religious distinctions – and the attempts to create states founded on those separate identities.

As Gellner highlights, the most unacceptable violation of the nationalist principle occurs when the ruling class belongs to an ethnic group other than that of the nationalist's nation, which is precisely the fear shared by nationalists of different stripes in Bosnia.¹² In such a case, nationalists develop an argument built upon three premises: that a nation exists with a distinguishable character; that its interests and values take priority over all others; and that the nation must be as independent as possible.¹³ As the evidence in this thesis demonstrates, Serb and Croat nationalists sought to destroy multi-ethnic Bosnia, thereby ensuring that members of their ethnic group did not become a minority in another ethnic state. Moreover, Bosnian Serb and Croat nationalist leaders sought to homogenise the territories under their control and link them to Serbia and Croatia, thereby fulfilling the nationalist principle by aligning state and demographic borders.

For Serb and Croat nationalists in the Bosnian war, the primacy of the nation formed the core ideological value that led to state-building programmes and defined normative behavior. The acceptance of nationalism as the paramount value by powerful Croat and Serb leaders led them to create and implement policies that would undermine multi-national state institutions and replace them with mono-ethnic or nationally defined institutions. The goals and plans highlighted in this thesis demonstrate the link between nationalist utopian idealism and action on the ground based on specific (competing) political, state-building goals. The acceptance of Gellner's nationalist principle by decision

¹² E. Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 1-2.

¹³ J. Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago, 1994), p. 2.

makers allowed them to legitimise their aims and actions. Nevertheless, as this thesis demonstrates, accepting a nationalist ideology does not negate an adaptable political programme or strategy. The figures analysed in this thesis pursued their main ideological goal, achieving the nationalist principle, even when some compromised under pressure.

Scholarship on ethnic violence, which is closely related to nationalism studies, also provides invaluable tools for understanding the war in Bosnia. Michael Mann's seminal *The Dark Side of Democracy* outlines the rationale adopted by belligerents in an ethnic conflict. Mann argues that in modern democratic systems, the 'dark side of democracy' emerges when the majority tyrannises a minority. According to Mann's theory, two conditions are required for political conflict to lead to war: first, distinct movements representing two or more ethnic groups must claim part or all of a territory as part of their state; and second, their territorial claims must have a conceivable likelihood of achievement. Violence can lead to systematic cleansing if one of the following situations occurs: either the less powerful side decides to fight believing that aid will come from the outside; or the stronger side believes it has such military and ideological superiority that it can remove undesirable populations at little risk to itself.¹⁴ Extreme nationalist violence is justified from the perspective of perpetrators because they consider themselves victims of the opposing group and defenders of the nationalist principle. Mann claims that ideological killers 'believe in the righteousness of murderous cleansing' because 'murderous means are justified by higher goals.' He adds that 'the most common ideological motive to self-righteously justify killing as self-defence. The killer protests that he is really the victim.'¹⁵

¹⁴ M. Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 2-3, 6-7, and 31.

¹⁵ Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, p. 27.

Adhering to extreme nationalism means accepting a normative framework that accepts violence as a tool for realising an ideological vision.

Although Mann uses the war in Bosnia as one of his case studies, his focus is on perpetrators on the ground; however, as the evidence in this thesis demonstrates, many of his observations about the rationale behind ethnic violence are reflected in the words of political leaders who are themselves removed from violence. This thesis aims to answer one of the crucial questions Mann seeks to answer about perpetrators, except that I ask it about top leaders: ‘What did they think that they were doing?’¹⁶ The answer, as this thesis demonstrates, is that top Serb and Croat leaders sought to create new, homogeneous, states with ideologically determined boundaries, and that they pursued that goal with a disregard to the high human cost.

Another field that informs this thesis is scholarship on Nazi Germany. Historical analyses of Nazism, especially theories about the escalation of measures against ethnic outsiders, the use of euphemisms when initiating atrocities, and the construction of a murderous environment illuminate facets of the war in Bosnia. Texts by Mark Roseman and Christopher Browning in particular demonstrate how a regime with complete power and commitment to realising the nationalist principle articulated by Gellner can produce a highly charged ideological environment where it becomes socially acceptable to commit violence against certain groups – Jews in the case of Nazi Germany and local minorities in the Bosnian war.¹⁷ Like Adolf Eichmann, the leaders analysed in this thesis ‘never killed

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 188.

¹⁷ M. Roseman, *The Villa, The Lake, The Meeting* (London, 2002); and C. Browning, *Fateful Months* (New York, 1985).

any human being,' but they played a pivotal role in the deaths of thousands.¹⁸ They knew their policies would lead to the destruction of thousands of lives, and they ignored that cost.

The following chapters draw on scholarship about ideology, nationalism, and ethnic violence in order to explain the formation of ideological programmes and wartime aims at the outset of the conflict and attempts to implement nationalist visions in subsequent years. Unsurprisingly, in a conflict with three belligerent sides (four if one includes Fikret Abdić's Autonomous Province/Republic of Western Bosnia), as well as on-going involvement by international negotiators and even military forces like NATO, developments on the ground did not unfold in the manner any of the belligerents had intended. When the time came to adopt a shift in strategy, more pragmatic voices in decision-making circles needed to rely on ideological rhetoric and values in order to persuade their interlocutors to adopt a different approach. Therefore, interpreting the mechanics of ideology, the values embedded in nationalism, and the dynamics and rationale of ethnic violence are essential to understanding top-level decision making at all stages of the war.

To track, decipher, and analyse the initial ideological vision, wartime implementation, and strategic shift by Serb and Croat leaders and forces, this thesis relies on evidence from the ICTY that has entered the public domain in recent years. Since 1993, officials from the Office of the Prosecutor investigated alleged war crimes in order to collect sufficient evidence to issue indictments and prosecute accused war criminals from the region. In the course of their investigations, researchers achieved remarkable access to numerous state archives in former Yugoslavia, and obtained copies of the most confidential documents and transcripts created by authorities involved in the 1992-95 conflict. A major factor behind their success was Article IX of the 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement, which

¹⁸ H. Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (London, 1965), p. 22.

stipulated that the state signatories, including the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and the Republic of Croatia, had ‘an obligation to cooperate in the investigation and prosecution of war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law.’¹⁹ The assembled super-archive in The Hague holds records from various institutions that investigators accessed through requests for assistance and cooperation agreements, as well as search and seizure operations. These institutions include: the State Archives of the Republic of Croatia, the Archives of the Croatian Intelligence Service, the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina Archives, the Archives of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Intelligence-Security Agency, the Bosnian Federation Ministries of Defence and Internal Affairs Archives, the Archives of the Army of Republika Srpska, the Archives of the Serbian State Security Service, the Archives of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Archives of the Army of (the Federal Republic of) Yugoslavia, the United Nations Archives in Geneva and New York, as well as many smaller institutions. This thesis relies on items from almost all of the archives listed above. It is a rare and fortunate opportunity for a historian to study confidential state documents so recently after their creation.

The tribunal’s archive boasts more than a million documents and thousands of hours of video and audio footage, yet only those items that have appeared as exhibits during trials have become accessible to the public. The evidence cited in this thesis includes only those documents used at the tribunal as trial exhibits. I became familiar with the collections held by the ICTY when I worked as an analyst in the Office of the Prosecutor in 2011-12. The vast majority of the materials held at the tribunal remain confidential due to agreements between the ICTY and governments from former Yugoslavia; the future of the evidence not

¹⁹ General Framework for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 21 November 1995. Accessed on 6 August 2015 at: <<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rls/or/dayton/52577.htm>>.

used at trial remains uncertain, although it is possible that it may become available once the tribunal ceases to hear cases. Most of the records that have become accessible to scholars outside the tribunal appeared in trials during the last decade – some used in this thesis as recently as September 2014 – while others are expected to emerge as the tribunal completes its final cases. Fortunately for historians, trial exhibits that contain a wealth of revealing material are accessible through the tribunal’s Court Records Database, which will continue to be updated until the final trials are complete.²⁰ Although I rely on evidence from a number of cases, the three major transcript collections I have analysed are the Croatian Presidency Transcripts, the Transcripts of the National Assembly of Republic Srpska, and the Records of the Supreme Defence Council of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

In many cases, the excerpts I cite are portions of longer speeches. I have endeavoured to contextualise speeches appropriately, without misrepresenting their authors. Unless otherwise indicated, my references are to the official English-language translations provided by the tribunal, which in general I found reliable and idiomatic. I have compared translations to original documents when they are available and have edited the English language versions for clarity, grammar, and punctuation.²¹ Both official translations and digital versions of the original documents I reference can be accessed on the tribunal’s Records Database by referring to the exhibit numbers I provide. Many documents can be accessed at present, although some have not yet been uploaded, especially those from ongoing trials. In order to devote as much text as possible to analysis, I have abbreviated

²⁰ The online database can be accessed at this link: <http://icr.icty.org/>.

²¹ The disintegration of a common language paralleled Yugoslavia’s collapse. While language policy remained controversial in certain intellectual circles, ‘Serbo-Croatian’ was broadly accepted as the name of the primary language spoken in four of the SFRJ’s republics. At the time of writing, four languages have ‘officially’ replaced Serbo-Croatian in the region: these are Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Serbian. For the sake of simplicity and impartiality, I follow the ICTY practice and refer to ‘Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian,’ or BCS.

my footnotes to include only the date, case, exhibit number, and page number(s). The full title of each transcript can be found in the bibliography. I do not include page numbers when I refer to a document in full or if the document is less than three pages in length.

Although almost all of the transcripts and other documents cited in this thesis were classified as top secret upon their original production, some are more reliable and revealing than others. Many transcripts, especially those from Tudman's office and the SRJ's Supreme Defence Council, feature candid conversation. Yet there are few examples of leaders ordering their subordinates to commit crimes; military figures used euphemistic language, for example 'mopping up,' to refer to ethnic cleansing; and often assembly deputies used hyperbolic rhetoric in order to establish their ideological credentials among their peers. Personal ambition, rivalries, and other priorities also demand a critical reading of these sources. Milošević in particular exercised caution and hardly ever expressed radical opinions, despite his power and control over other Serb leaders and institutions that supported and committed atrocities. Most participants recognised that discussion of war crimes was better left off the record. While it is possible that other, more aggressive and intent-revealing discussion occurred and the evidence does not exist or has not been uncovered, it is also possible that such conversations never took place. Almost all of the figures quoted in this text focused on their own ethnic group's interests and framed their actions – even to themselves – as defensive and reactive.

From Law to History

It is thanks to the ICTY's existence, investigations, and trials that scholars can study the war from the perspective of those who waged it; but as the tribunal approaches the completion of its work, the time has come for historians to begin theirs. It will take many

years for scholars to exhaust their review of the evidence available to the public and it will take many more to study the remainder of the evidence currently inaccessible by tribunal outsiders. Scholarly research will help us move beyond a moral and legal evaluation of nationalist leaders and instead help us understand what they attempted to achieve and why. The Nuremberg trials provided historians of Nazi Germany with a rich source of evidence that drove the scholarship of one of humanity's darkest periods. Thanks to similar legal processes, historians of former Yugoslavia now have an opportunity to do the same.

Most of the political and military figures discussed in this thesis were tried at the ICTY the 'Joint Criminal Enterprise' mode of liability, an evolved form of the Nuremberg-era common (criminal) plan and conspiracy concept. In the indictment of Radovan Karadžić, the prosecution alleges that, along with other Serb political and military figures, the Bosnian Serb nationalist leader participated in:

[A] Joint Criminal Enterprise to permanently remove Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat inhabitants from the territories of BiH claimed as Bosnian Serb territory by means which included the commission of the following crimes charged in this indictment: genocide, persecution, extermination, murder, deportation, and inhumane acts (forcible transfer).²²

In a major case involving the Bosnian Croat leadership, the judgement convicted Jadranko Prlić and his collaborators of attempting to create:

A Croat-dominated entity on the territory of Bosnia, to one day link it to Croatia, and to ensure Croat domination by bringing about population movements through persecution, deportation, and forcible transfer.²³

²² Prosecutor v. Radovan Karadžić (Indictment), IT-95-5, 19 October 2009. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at: <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/karadzic/ind/en/markedup_indictment_091019.pdf>, pp. 4-5; others named in the indictment include: Momčilo Krajišnik, Ratko Mladić, Slobodan Milošević, Biljana Plavšić, Nikola Koljević, Mićo Stanišić, Momčilo Mandić, Jovica Stanišić, Franko Simatović, Željko Ražnatović (aka Arkan), and Vojislav Šešelj.

²³ Prosecutor v. Jadranko Prlić *et al.* Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-04-74-T, 29 May 2013. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at: <<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/tjug/en/130529-4.pdf>>, p. 2.

It is logical for lawyers to consider the furtherance of criminal activity as the basis for joint criminal enterprise cases, but this focus on criminal acts loses sight of the overall ideological ambition pursued by nationalist leaders. To answer historical questions that prosecution has left unexplained, this thesis explores the creation of the would-be states, the reasoning behind their existence, the campaign to secure their borders, and the attempt to homogenise their populations. This is a history of the Serb and Croat joint criminal enterprises that drove the war in Bosnia.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the ideas that led to atrocities, to identify those who developed and advocated those ideas, and to demonstrate how those ideas informed military campaigns. By studying the rhetoric and decision-making of the Bosnian Serb and Croat leaderships, it is possible to create a narrative that explains what they were trying to do. Understanding the rationale of perpetrators – or more precisely, of those who created an environment where committing crimes against certain groups became acceptable – is a necessary step to explaining why the war erupted, why ethnic cleansing characterised the conflict, and why some leaders rejected peace agreements while others decided to compromise on their nationalist principles.

Perhaps just as crucially, historians can illuminate realities about the war that the tribunal's judgements have failed to capture. The tribunal's judges did not convict some of the most important figures in the conflict: men who made decisions that had a direct effect on the capacity of military forces to commit violence. Slobodan Milošević died in March 2006, just months before the ICTY's trial chamber would have issued its judgement in his case. Croatian President Franjo Tuđman died in December 1999 and his close associate and

Others named in the judgment include: Franjo Tuđman, Gojko Šušak, Mate Boban, Bruno Stojić, Slobodan Praljak, Milivoj Petković, Valentin Čorić, and Berislav Pušić.

Croatian Defence Minister Gojko Šušak died in May 1998; although neither had been indicted, the May 2013 judgement in the Prlić *et al.* case named Tuđman and Šušak as members of the joint criminal enterprise to remove non-Croats from Central Bosnia during the war.²⁴ Notwithstanding the compelling evidence and convictions at trial, the appeal acquittals of the highest-ranking generals from Croatia and Serbia to face indictment – Ante Gotovina and Momčilo Perišić – appear to exculpate the wartime authorities of those two states from crimes against humanity committed in Croatia and Bosnia.²⁵ Yet, as their own words cited in this thesis demonstrate, they played a critical role in waging the war in Bosnia; they ensured the necessary weapons reached their partners in Bosnia and they shared the ideological commitment to divide Bosnia on ethnic lines between Croatia and Serbia.

Literature Review

Although a flurry of journalistic and scholarly literature emerged as Yugoslavia collapsed in the 1990s, little of it has drawn on the tribunal's illuminating evidence. The following is a review of published and unpublished works that inform our understanding of Yugoslavia's disintegration and the wars that followed. Many of the texts make assertions similar to the arguments made in this thesis, but few scholars have had access to the documents cited here that provide compelling evidence of what some observers suspected

²⁴ Prosecutor v. Prlić et al (Trial Chamber), IT-04-74-T, Judgement Volume IV, 29 May 2003. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at: <<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/tjug/en/130529-4.pdf>> pp. 1-27.

²⁵ The trial chamber had initially sentenced Perišić to 27 years imprisonment and Gotovina to 24 years; the appeals chamber acquitted both men on all charges and ordered them released. Prosecutor v. Ante Gotovina et al Judgement (Appeals Chamber), IT-06-90, 16 November 2012. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at:

<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/gotovina/acjug/en/121116_judgement.pdf>;

and Prosecutor v. Momčilo Perišić Judgement (Appeals Chamber), IT-04-81-A, 28 February 2013. Accessed on 3 November 2014 at:

< http://www.icty.org/x/cases/perisic/acjug/en/130228_judgement.pdf>.

during and since the war. A major problem evident from a literature analysis is the lack of evidence on the perspective, reasoning, and intention of the leaders of belligerent sides.

Two texts stand out as providing the best narratives of the conflict. The first is the accompaniment to the BBC documentary, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, by journalists Laura Silber and Alan Little.²⁶ Even though the authors completed the documentary and monograph before the battling sides made peace in December 1995, Silber and Little's work remains one of the most accurate, reliable, and accessible narratives available on the war. The Central Intelligence Agency's meticulous military history of the war, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, also provides a thorough and detailed analysis of the various belligerent forces and key battles.²⁷ Both works are cited throughout this thesis to contextualise the discussions held among leadership circles, which knew about developments on the ground and in the diplomatic arena, but often did not mention them in discussion.

Several key collaborative works tackle the issues that led to political and military conflict in former Yugoslavia. *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991-95* (2001) edited by Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić comprises essays by political leaders, military personnel, scholars from former Yugoslavia and abroad, and journalists in order to address some of the key questions about the conflict.²⁸ This work is invaluable because of the personal experiences shared in its chapters, but it does not provide insights into the perspectives of the elites responsible for the conduct of war from the Bosnian Serb or Croat sides. Another source is Sabrina Ramet's *The Three Yugoslavias* (2006), which places the conflict, among other notable events in the history of Yugoslavia, within a century of

²⁶ L. Silber and A. Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London, 1995).

²⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, *Balkan Battlegrounds* (Philadelphia, 2003).

²⁸ B. Magaš and I. Žanić (eds.), *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1991-95* (London, 2001).

political and ideological developments. A third monograph that explores the many possible explanations for Yugoslavia's collapse is *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe* (2008) edited by Lenard J. Cohen and Jasna Dragović-Soso, which consists of chapters authored by leading scholars on the region.²⁹ A further useful monograph is the scholars' initiative *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies* edited by Charles Ingrao and Thomas A. Emmert; the second edition appeared in January 2013. Although the first edition became the object of heated criticism,³⁰ the second edition is a more reliable source of facts and figures about the conflict, and is a serious attempt at establishing a foundation of knowledge about the conflict among scholars from former Yugoslavia. These joint projects contend that Serbian and Croatian leaders bolstered the breakaway Serb and Croat states in Bosnia, but they do not attempt to explain the war from the perspectives of leaders like Milošević, Tuđman, Karadžić, or Boban.

Another substantial source of knowledge about the conflict are documents produced by and for the tribunal that are available online. Almost all the judgements of accused war criminals at the ICTY include a review of historical and political precursors to violence.³¹ The historical context provided in judgements does not attempt to provide a thorough scholarly treatment, but instead reviews specific details relevant to the case at hand. However, detailed expert reports also informed both prosecution and defence cases and many of those reports entered the public domain as exhibits when their authors testified at

²⁹ L.J. Cohen and J. Dragović-Soso (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe* (West Lafayette, 2008).

³⁰ J. Glaurdić, 'Review Essay: "Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies: A Scholars' Initiative," C. Ingrao and T.A. Emmert (eds.),' *East European Politics and Societies*, 24/2 (2010), pp. 294-309.

³¹ For example: Prosecutor v. Momčilo Krajišnik Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-00-39, 27 September 2006. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at:

< <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/krajisnik/tjug/en/kra-jud060927e.pdf> >, pp. 16-50.

various trials.³² Patrick Treanor, Ewan Brown, Bill Tomljanovich, and other experts drafted reports that informed the writing of this thesis.³³ Many of the expert reports created for trials are specific in their focus and were intended to assist the judges in understanding the historical background. Moreover, either the prosecution or the defence commissioned the reports for the purpose of furthering their cases, yet they do provide thoughtful and thorough examinations and are cited throughout this thesis.

One of the main historical experts for the prosecution at the ICTY is Robert J. Donia, who authored several key analyses and who is one of the few scholars to have published a monograph that builds on the tribunal's sources. Donia has testified at fifteen war crimes trials, including that of Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, and prepared numerous expert reports, including *Excerpts from the Assembly of Republika Srpska*, which provided a valuable resource for the chapters in this thesis about the Bosnian Serb political leadership. Donia's collection of excerpts is one of the few tribunal-commissioned documents to be published, although Donia does not provide an interpretation or explanation of the excerpts he compiled.³⁴ Yet Donia's *Radovan Karadžić: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide* (2015) marks the beginning of a new stage in scholarship about the war – one that will feature increased utilisation of the tribunal's resources.³⁵ I received a copy of the manuscript in September 2014, after I had completed my research, but I have

³² There are many more reports on the tribunals hard drives that, for various reasons, were not used as evidence during any trials, and thus are not available outside the tribunal.

³³ P.J. Treanor, 'The Bosnian Serb Leadership, 1990-92,' 30 July 2002, Krajišnik-P64; E. Brown, 'Military Developments in the Bosnian Krajina, 1992,' 27 November 2002, Brđanin-P2416; B. Tomljanovich, 'The Governing Bodies and Organs of Herceg Bosna and their Functioning, 1992-94.,' Prlić-P09545.

³⁴ R. Donia, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske, 1991-96* (Sarajevo, 2012). I am aware of only one other tribunal-commissioned report to be published, C. Ribičić, *Geneza Jedne Zablude* (Zagreb, 2000), which appeared in the Kordić case.

³⁵ R. Donia, *Radovan Karadžić* (Cambridge, 2015).

endeavoured to engage with the text, which examines some of the same material I do. I have highlighted points of disagreement with the author. The only other work that offers an interpretation of a major tribunal collection, in particular the Supreme Defence Council transcripts, is *Neizgovorena Odbrana* by Momir Bulatović, a close wartime ally of Milošević and the former president of Montenegro, who drew selectively on the council's records to present Milošević in a favourable light.³⁶ Although Donia's biography of Karadžić has a narrower focus than this thesis, it is a work that also bolsters the argument that political elites – in this case the Bosnian Serb leadership – conducted the war in order to realise a radical ideological vision. This thesis argues that Belgrade authorities played a much more important role in the Bosnian Serb war effort than Donia recognises.

Franjo Tuđman, the wartime president of Croatia, is yet to feature as the subject of a biography in English and few monographs exist on Croatia's role in the Bosnian war. Darko Hudelist's 2004 biography in BCS of the Croatian president is a thorough and serious treatment of a controversial figure.³⁷ Although Hudelist provides many insights into Tuđman's life and times, he – like most of the other authors referred to in this section – did not have access to the tribunal's sources and he focuses on Tuđman's life before the 1992-95 war in Bosnia. One popular work that acknowledges Tuđman's ambitions towards Bosnia is Marcus Tanner's *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War*, but its scope is broader and it is intended for a general audience.³⁸ While the ICTY compiled collection has not received a thorough analysis in English (or in BCS to my knowledge), Predrag Lucić annotated minutes of the meetings held in the Croatian president's office during the war, which were

³⁶ M. Bulatović, *Slobodan Milošević: Neizgovorena Odbrana* (Podgorica, 2006).

³⁷ D. Hudelist, *Tuđman* (Zagreb, 2004).

³⁸ M. Tanner, *Croatia* (New Haven, 1997).

published under the title *Stenogrami o Podjeli Bosne*.³⁹ These records form the basis of my analysis of the Bosnian Croats and Zagreb's role in the conflict. Like Donia's collection of excerpts, these transcripts were printed without interpretation.

The role of Serbian state organs in the Bosnian war, and the part of Slobodan Milošević in particular, have been the subject of much more study than that of Croatia and Franjo Tuđman. As the highest-ranking state official indicted by a war crimes tribunal since the Nuremberg trials, Milošević's life has featured as the subject of significant biographies. Often cited as the first major Milošević biography, *Milošević: Portrait of a Tyrant* by journalists Duško Doder and Louise Branson describes the communist apparatchik turned Serb nationalist as a power hungry dictator prepared to wreak havoc so long as it meant remaining in power.⁴⁰ Former ICTY spokesperson Florence Hartmann's *Milošević: la diagonale du fou* went further and accused Milošević of encouraging and enabling the Bosnian Serbs in their ethnic cleansing campaign.⁴¹ Lenard Cohen's meticulous *Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević* covers Milošević's pre-war career, his interpersonal relationships, and the international pressures that influenced his regime.⁴² Slavoljub Djukić and former US State Department official Louis Sell also assigned Milošević responsibility for the Yugoslav federation's destruction in their treatments of the Serbian president's reign.⁴³ Of all the Milošević biographies, Adam LeBor's *Milošević: A Biography* devotes the most attention to his relationship with the Bosnian Serbs and builds the argument that Serb leaders east and west of the Drina River shared unification-oriented

³⁹ P. Lucić, *Stenogrami o Podjeli Bosne* (Split and Sarajevo, 2005).

⁴⁰ D. Doder and L. Branson, *Milošević* (New York, 1999).

⁴¹ F. Hartmann, *Milošević* (Paris, 1999).

⁴² L. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom* (Boulder, 1999).

⁴³ S. Djukić, *Milošević and Marković* (Montreal, 2001); L. Sell, *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (London, 2002).

goals.⁴⁴ With the exception of LeBor who cites trial transcripts, none of Milošević's biographers made use of the ICTY's materials. Almost all of these monographs rely on media reports and memoirs. When the world's interest in Milošević peaked at the turn of the millennium, the most incriminating materials were still locked in Belgrade archives.

There are also many general works about former Yugoslavia's collapse, which advance the argument that Belgrade fuelled the Bosnian war. Robert Thomas, relying mostly on media reports, examined the influence politicians like Milošević – as well as other hardliners like Vojislav Šešelj and Vuk Drašković – exercised during Bosnia's first multi-party election in 1990.⁴⁵ In *Serbia: The History of an Idea*, Stevan K. Pavlowitch explored the various incarnations of the Serbian nationalist programme in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and touched upon the struggle over the role of pan-national leader that was contested by Bosnian Serb wartime President Radovan Karadžić and Milošević during the war.⁴⁶ Susan L. Woodward in *Balkan Tragedy* places Yugoslavia's collapse and the war within an international context and highlights economic factors that destabilised Yugoslavia.⁴⁷ Works by Noel Malcolm, Christopher Bennett, Branimir Anzulović, James Gow, and Norman Cigar underline Belgrade's support to the Bosnian Serbs and emphasise the genocidal strategy undertaken by Serb nationalists to create a new state and remove non-Serbs from their territories.⁴⁸ Another invaluable analysis of Serb nationalism is provided in Darko Hudelist's *Moj beogradski dnevnik* and in particular the role and

⁴⁴ A. LeBor, *Milošević* (London, 2002).

⁴⁵ R. Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s* (New York, 1999).

⁴⁶ S. K. Pavlowitch, *Serbia: The History of an Idea* (New York, 2002).

⁴⁷ S. L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* (Washington, 1995).

⁴⁸ N. Malcolm, *Bosnia* (London, 1994); C. Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse* (New York, 1997); B. Anzulović, *Heavenly Serbia* (New York, 1999); J. Gow, *The Serbian Project and its Adversaries* (Montreal, 2003); and N. Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia* (College Station, 2005).

character of Serbian writer and political figure Dobrica Ćosić.⁴⁹ As with the Milošević biographies, when discussing the early 1990s, these scholars refer to newspapers and other media sources.

Thus, although many monographs have appeared about the war and discussed the roles of Bosnia's neighbours, very few scholars have had the opportunity to consult systematically the documents created by the belligerent regimes. This thesis takes a broader scope than Donia's biography of Karadžić and uses the tribunal's evidence to understand the similarities and differences between the Serb and Croat nationalist state-building projects during the war in Bosnia. Most importantly, I expose the point of view of top Serb and Croat wartime leaders, in their own words.

Thesis Approach and Structure

Close examination of the evidence indicates that the main reason why Belgrade- and Zagreb-based leaders supported the Bosnian Serbs and Croats during the war was their shared intention to create Greater Serbian and Greater Croatian states. Bosnian Serb nationalist politicians – most of all Radovan Karadžić and Momčilo Krajišnik – led a movement to conquer as much territory as possible in Bosnia and link it to Serbia while preventing the Sarajevo-based government from functioning. Bosnian Croat politicians, namely Mate Boban and Jadranko Prlić, spearheaded a similar campaign to break Croat-claimed territories from Bosnia and annex them to Croatia. Although both the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats enjoyed military support and other resources from their sponsors in Belgrade and Zagreb, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman exercised far greater and more direct control over Bosnian Croat leaders than Milošević did over Karadžić and his circle.

⁴⁹ D. Hudelist, *Moj beogradski dnevnik* (Zagreb, 2012).

The contrast between Tuđman's and Milošević's control over their Bosnian partners is evident from the Croatian president's ability to force the Bosnian Croat elite to compromise on its initial wartime objectives and the Serbian president's failure to persuade the Bosnian Serb leadership to do the same. The Serb side initiated the war in Bosnia, controlled the most territory for the longest period of time, and committed the majority of the atrocities. Accordingly I have devoted most attention in this thesis to studying Karadžić's regime in Bosnia and its relationship with the Milošević-led Belgrade leadership.

In the interest of treating adequately the formation and execution of Serb and Croat nationalist programmes, I adhere to certain thematic and periodic boundaries. Except for references in the Origins chapter and where unavoidable, this thesis limits discussion of the war in Croatia and the Croatian Serb war effort. Of course, the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia were closely linked and the 1991 war in Croatia raised ethnic tensions in Bosnia, while the military defeat of the Croatian Serb regime in August 1995 led to a reverse in the balance of power in Bosnia. Nevertheless, in order to focus on the war in Bosnia, my analysis of developments in Croatia is limited. For similar reasons, I have restricted my discussion of the pre-conflict political developments in Yugoslavia to the next chapter and devote the remainder of the thesis to the years 1992-95. One of my main aims is to explain what conditions Serb and Croat leaders intended to satisfy before accepting peace, and therefore the war years require the closest attention.

This thesis is organised into the Introduction and Origins chapters, three chronological sections comprising three chapters each, and a Conclusion. The Origins chapter (Chapter 1) reviews the political and ideological debates from the inter-war and socialist periods that contributed to the emergence of nationalism as the dominant political

ideology in Yugoslavia in the late 1980s. The first chapter also highlights historical entities and periods, like the 1939-41 Banovina of Croatia and the Second World War, which served as powerful sources of memory for Croat and Serb nationalists as they forged their political programmes in the early 1990s. Although it is not the focus of this thesis, an examination of the Sarajevo-based Bosnian (mostly Muslim) wartime government, its leadership, and its ideology is also provided in the Origins chapter. The military position of the Sarajevo government led by Alija Izetbegović and its politics are provided for the benefit of balance and context, especially to demonstrate the extent of the validity of Serb and Croat nationalists' fears of a radical Islamic threat to their respective ethnic groups.

The first section, Vision, covers the months immediately before the outbreak of violence and the first twelve months of the conflict, ending at about March 1993. This section examines the months before fighting broke out to establish the aims of the warring sides at the outset of the conflict. Chapter 2 addresses the formation of the Bosnian Serb nationalist wartime objectives and their ideological foundations. The second chapter argues that the specific historical interpretation presented by Karadžić and his followers was important in the formation of their military campaign. Chapter 3 illustrates the ideological convictions of Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, the Zagreb elite, and their Bosnian Croat agents. The third chapter demonstrates the commitment of the majority of the Croat political leadership in Croatia and Bosnia to the dismemberment of Bosnia and the separation of its peoples. Chapter 4 examines transcripts from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's Council for Coordination of Positions on State Policy, which was attended by Serb politicians and generals from Bosnia, Serbia, and Montenegro who agreed to pursue the creation of a single Serb state. The fourth chapter establishes that in 1992 and early

1993, Belgrade elites knew about the extreme measures adopted by Bosnian Serb authorities and tried to develop a common strategy to achieve the ultimate goal of state unification.

The second section, Implementation, illustrates the process of realisation between March 1992 and 1994 of the future imagined in the first section. Chapter 5 demonstrates how the Bosnian Serb nationalist ideology formed the backbone of military campaigns, including the invasion of territories in Northern Bosnia and ethnic cleansing throughout the country. Chapter 6 establishes how and why the Belgrade-based government led by Milošević bankrolled the Bosnian Serb war effort. Chapter 7 reveals how the Bosnian Croat leadership in Mostar and Grude endeavoured to conquer by force territories corresponding to the borders imagined by Tuđman and to expel non-Croats from areas under the control of its forces. The evidence referenced in the second section of this thesis illustrates the highly ideological nature of decision-making by military personnel following the direction of nationalist politicians who together created an environment where crimes against civilians of ethnic groups other than their own became acceptable.

The third section, Adjustment, examines how pressure from the international community and military developments on the ground forced the Croatian and Serbian leaderships to shift their strategies in Bosnia, and covers developments that occurred from March 1993 until December 1995. Chapter 8 discusses Tuđman's decision to abandon his plan to annex parts of Herzegovina and Central Bosnia to Croatia, examines his removal of Mate Boban from the leadership of the Bosnian Croat breakaway state, and explains why the Bosnian Croat leadership struck a peace and cooperation agreement with the Sarajevo government. Chapter 9 studies the Bosnian Serb leadership, which refused to abandon its

quest to split from Bosnia and join Serbia, rejected peace agreements, and suffered military setbacks in summer 1995 to the extent that Milošević assumed negotiating power from Karadžić. Chapter 10 analyses Slobodan Milošević's determination to sever political – but not military – ties with the Bosnian Serb nationalist leadership, and also addresses why the Serbian president came to favour a peace agreement in Bosnia. In both Chapters 9 and 10, an understanding of ideological principles and rhetoric is crucial to explaining the dynamics among Zagreb and Belgrade leaders on the one hand, and their dependants in Bosnia on the other. The third section of this thesis argues that even though Milošević and Tuđman adopted a more pragmatic approach than their Bosnian partners, they did not abandon the goal of creating expanded Serb and Croat states, but instead deferred the realisation of that ambition to the future.

This thesis has a number of appendices, which are referred to throughout, but the reader may find the first three useful to review even before proceeding to the first chapter. Appendix A is a timeline of the conflict that includes notable political and military developments between 1990 and 1995. Appendix B, the *Dramatis Personae*, provides a brief biography of the principal figures quoted and mentioned in this thesis. Appendix C is a map of Bosnia divided into its pre-war municipalities with each municipality coloured according to its relative ethnic majority in 1991. The third appendix is useful not only for geographic purposes, but also because the ethnic distribution, as revealed in a census conducted only a year before the war, inspired competing nationalist claims (i.e. the various sides asserted their right to municipalities where they formed a majority).

To my knowledge, no analyst or scholar outside the tribunal has systematically reviewed the evidence collected in this thesis, compared the Serb and Croat nationalist

approaches to the war, and reached the same conclusions about the relationship between the Belgrade and Zagreb leaderships and their Bosnian proxies. While my argument that Belgrade and Zagreb supported the Bosnian Serbs and Croats in order to further the creation of Greater Serbian and Croatian states is a familiar one, the words of top Croatian and Serbian leaders confirm beyond a doubt long-held suspicions. The evidence I have reviewed proves that the Serbian and Croatian states made possible the Bosnian Serb and Croat military campaigns – both of which were characterised by atrocities. My research also demonstrates the complete control exercised by Tuđman over Bosnian Croat nationalist leaders and the deceptive nature of Milošević's blockade against the Bosnian Serb regime after summer 1994.

My research indicates that the pressure exerted by the international community succeeded in forcing Tuđman and Milošević to change their approach to Bosnia and to begin supporting arrangements that would leave the republic's pre-war borders intact. Yet the evidence also reveals that Milošević's political divorce from Karadžić and Tuđman's removal of Boban did not mean that the Serbian and Croatian leaderships had abandoned the plan to expand their states. Instead, Tuđman and Milošević both adopted long-term strategies that involved settling for peace while laying the foundation for a future ethnic partition of Bosnia. In many ways, the behaviour of political leaders during this conflict represents a clash between nationalist fantasies and the brutal realities of war. Serb and Croat nationalists had dreams of realising utopian state-building projects, but the atrocities committed in furtherance of those dreams, as well as military setbacks that stifled their fulfilment, heightened international pressure that guided the belligerents towards peace though not to reconciliation or the abandonment of divisive long-term goals.

Chapter 1: The Origins of Bosnia's Contested Future

*Why should I be a minority in your state when you can be a minority in mine?*¹

The aim of this thesis is to understand the ideologies and programmes of the political forces that attempted to divide Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia. Yet throughout the war, Serb and Croat nationalist leaders faced opposition from Bosnian – primarily Bosnian Muslim – political elites who sought to keep Bosnia intact. The nationalist forces that fought to link Bosnian territories to Croatia and Serbia did not appear suddenly in 1992. This chapter identifies the factors that set the foundation for ethnic crisis in Bosnia in the decades before the war and also illustrates the political positions of those who, for their own ideological reasons, hoped to separate Bosnia from Serbia and Montenegro in 1992 and keep it intact. The historical and political context, especially of the years immediately before the war, as well as the policies of Bosnian government leaders, formed the backdrop to Serb and Croat nationalist campaigns. In order to understand their positions in the following chapters, it is essential to recall the broader historical context as well as the position of the Bosnian government in Sarajevo during the war. Karadžić, Milošević, Tuđman, and other leaders often invoked historical events, as well as real and anticipated actions by their opponents, in order to justify their actions. The following analysis of key ideological developments in the twentieth century that pre-dated the resurgence of ethnic nationalism in Yugoslavia and Bosnia in the late 1980s is not meant to be exhaustive; rather,

¹ Quote attributed to Vladimir Gligorov in the preface to S.L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy* (Washington, D.C., 2005).

it is intended to situate the 1990s nationalist programmes in their relevant political and historical frameworks.

Historical Context, 1918-80

While the institutions of the socialist state played an important role in Yugoslavia's collapse, in order to understand why they came into existence it is crucial to look at communist Yugoslavia's predecessor. The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes emerged from the ruins of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires in 1918 and achieved recognition at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Representatives of the three founding nations created a constitutional monarchy, with a capital in Belgrade, under a Serb royal family.² Before the First World War, only Serbia and Montenegro had secured independence, which Serbian leaders confirmed at the 1878 Congress of Berlin after a half-century of uprisings against the Ottomans.³ Serbia's borders expanded following victories during the 1912-13 Balkan wars. The impoverished and politically unstable Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes suffered political tensions in the 1920s centring on issues of national inequality and involving frequent royal interference in political affairs. In 1929, King Aleksandar I renamed the country the 'Kingdom of Yugoslavia,' organised it into nine non-national *banovine*; and assumed dictatorial powers. Instability persisted into the 1930s as the dictatorship persecuted the opposition and police cracked down on political moderates as well as radicals. In 1934, a Macedonian extremist working on behalf of the Croat extremist Ustasha organisation assassinated the king when he visited Marseille. In order to ameliorate criticism of Serb hegemony by non-Serb – primarily Croat – political

² C. and B. Jelavich, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States* (Seattle, 2000), pp. 300-305.

³ Serb nationalists in the 1990s recalled Ottoman rule as a period of occupation and national suppression, and considered the nineteenth century uprisings a source of inspiration.

leaders, the authorities created a Croatian Banovina in 1939 by merging two existing majority-Croat *banovine* and adding other Bosnian territories to the new entity.⁴ The 1939 Banovina borders served as a precedent for Croat nationalists seeking to expand Croatia's borders in the 1990s, as discussed in the third chapter of this thesis.

The Second World War reached Yugoslavia's borders on 6 April 1941 and Axis forces overran and divided the country within weeks. Germany and Hungary annexed northern territories, Italy collected segments of the Adriatic coast, Bulgaria and Albania received large portions of the south and east of the country, and a puppet government in the remnants of German-occupied Serbia governed from Belgrade. Most of what is now Croatia and all of Bosnia formed the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* – NDH) ruled by the fascist Ustasha movement. In addition to Jews, Roma, and anti-fascist Croats and Muslims, the Ustasha regime concentrated on removing Serbs, the most populous non-Croat group, from the NDH. The regime led by Ante Pavelić implemented a policy to completely rid the state of Serbs west of the Drina River and north of Sava River. Although a series of laws and policies aimed at killing and otherwise removing hundreds of thousands of Serbs from NDH controlled territory, the simplified interpretation of expelling a third (to Serbia), converting a third, and exterminating a third of the Serb population lived on in the popular imagination.⁵ Hundreds of thousands of victims died in violence that was both random and systematic, including at death camps like Jasenovac, Jadovno, and Stara Gradiška. Bosnian Serb nationalists in the 1990s would invoke the memory of the Ustasha terror in order to justify their state-building project as defensive pre-emption.

⁴ A political history of the inter-war period is provided by I. Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia* (Ithaca, 1984).

⁵ J. Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1941–1945* (Palo Alto, 1975), pp. 380–415.

Two resistance movements emerged to fight the Axis: the royalist Chetniks led by Colonel Draža Mihailović of the interwar Yugoslav army, and the communist-led partisans headed by Josip Broz Tito. While the Chetniks were overwhelmingly Serb in nationality, the partisans drew on other nations as well to fight for their cause. Mihailović's Chetniks became a Serb nationalist movement and committed crimes against non-Serbs, primarily Muslims, and collaborated opportunistically with the Germans and their allies.⁶ The two forces fought the occupying powers as well as each other, with Tito's partisans proving more effective, eventually winning Churchill's backing. While the partisans also received support from the Soviets – whom they saw as their mentors and principal allies – Tito's forces largely liberated Yugoslavia on their own, which meant that unlike in other Eastern European states, no Soviet troops remained in Yugoslavia after the war. During the post-war years, Tito's regime commemorated the Second World War as a victory by multi-ethnic anti-fascists (the partisans) over fascists and quislings (the Ustasha and the Chetniks).⁷ The communist authorities also played down atrocities committed in 1945 by the partisan forces, notably at Bleiberg against NDH officials and troops as well as civilian refugees, which Croat nationalists would recall in the 1990s to undermine the socialist narrative of the Second World War,⁸ and at Kočevski Rog in Slovenia against diverse anti-communist forces. Serb and Croat nationalists in the 1990s affixed the Ustasha and Chetnik

⁶ For Chetnik ideology and atrocities, see Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, and M.A. Hoare, *Genocide and Resistance in Hitler's Bosnia* (New York, 2006).

⁷ S. Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias* (Bloomington, 2006), p. 162; and R. Jambrešić-Kirin, 'Politička sjećanja na Drugi svjetski rat u doba medijske reprodukcije socijalističke kulture,' in L. Čale Feldman and I. Prica (eds.), *Devijacije i promašaji: Etnografija domaćeg socijalizma* (Zagreb, 2006), p. 166.

⁸ V. Pavlaković, 'Flirting with Fascism: The Ustasha Legacy and Croatian Politics in the 1990s' in *The Shared History: The Second World War and the National Question in Yugoslavia* (Novi Sad, 2008), pp. 114-144.

labels on each other and enthusiastically denounced the multi-ethnic ideology espoused by communists across Yugoslavia.

The communists established post-war Yugoslavia as a united state based on the socialist principle of equality among peoples. Tito's authorities organised the country as a federation of six republics with approximate historic and ethnic borders. The notable exception, in ethnic terms, was Bosnia, which had no ethnic majority and comprised Serbs, Croats, Bosnian Muslims and small numbers of other groups. The state's founders sought to correct the perceived injustices of the interwar kingdom's rulers by recognising the national distinctness of the ethnic groups inhabiting Yugoslavia and by rejecting the interwar principle – advocated by some – of Yugoslav unitarism: the idea that the Yugoslavs formed one people, which opponents criticised as a cover for Serb hegemony.⁹ After the 1948 'split with Stalin,' when the Cominform association of communist states expelled Yugoslavia for failing to adhere to Soviet-dictated structural changes, Tito's ideologues acquired another model to oppose. In 1966, after the removal of Aleksandar Ranković, Tito's erstwhile right hand man who favoured a more integrated state, Yugoslav socialism shifted towards decentralisation. By opposing interwar unitarism and developing a local alternative to Soviet-led internationalism, Tito's chief ideologue Edvard Kardelj crafted the ideological framework for the 1974 constitution that radically weakened the central state and even granted the republics the right to secede. Yugoslav socialist leaders insisted that they could best counter nationalism and separatism by strengthening the role of

⁹ Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia*, pp. 406-407; D. Djokić, '(Dis)integrating Yugoslavia: King Alexander and Interwar Yugoslavism,' in D. Djokić (eds) *Yugoslavism* (London, 2003); and D. Jović, *Yugoslavia* (West Lafayette, 2009), especially pp. 62-68.

republics within the federation rather than centralising the state.¹⁰ The constitution's architects attempted to address the 'national question' in Yugoslavia by granting sovereignty to both the republics and peoples¹¹ – which would prove contentious as the country collapsed in the 1990s, and nowhere more than in multi-ethnic Bosnia.

The League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez Komunista Jugoslavije* – SKJ) derived its legitimacy to rule from the partisan victory in the Second World War. Together with the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (*Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija* – JNA) and president-for-life Tito, the league's monopoly of political power ensured that nationalism remained subdued. These three institutions formed the pillars that kept Yugoslavia united and functioning. The 1974 constitution created a system whereby citizens voted for delegates at the republic level – who, of course, all came from the League of Communists – and those delegates in turn selected representatives for the federal assembly.¹² Representation flowed from the bottom up, and the system functioned thanks to the guiding hand of the SKJ. When Tito died in 1980, he was replaced by a rotating presidium of representatives from each of Yugoslavia's six republics and two autonomous regions who each served as chairperson for a year. The ideological determination to develop a socialist state that rejected interwar Yugoslavism as well as Soviet communism, while accommodating

¹⁰ The other guiding principle of the 1974 constitution was the Yugoslav socialist concept of 'self-management,' which envisioned workers making decisions about their labour and setting their own targets. Self-management contrasted with Soviet top-down centralised control. D. Bilandžić, *Historija Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije: Glavni Procesi 1918-1985* (Zagreb, 1985), pp. 454-457.

¹¹ *Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia* (Belgrade, 1974), pp. 53-54 and 79-80. For a discussion of this ambiguity see J. Đorđević, 'The Creation of the 1974 Constitution of the SFRJ,' in R. Goldwin and A. Kaufman (eds.) *Constitution Makers on Constitution Making* (Washington D.C., 1988), p. 193.

¹² V. Dimitrijević, 'The 1974 Constitution and the Constitutional Process as a Factor in the Collapse of Yugoslavia,' in P. Akhavan and R. Howse (eds.), *Yugoslavia, the Former and Future: Reflections by Scholars from the Region* (Washington, D.C., 1995), p. 55.

national aspirations to some extent, had weakened the central state and strengthened the republics. In the 1990s, separatists would trigger the constitutional provisions to legalise independence, while the decentralised structure created an insurmountable obstacle for forces trying to keep Yugoslavia together.

Yugoslavia's specific position in the Cold War also inspired another institution that proved critical as violence approached in the 1990s. As a leading Non-Aligned state steering a course between the capitalist West and Soviet-dominated East, Yugoslavia's leaders had prepared for a possible invasion from either side. Following the 1968 Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, the communist authorities created the 'Territorial Defence' system, which provided a framework for resistance in the case of a foreign attack. Public buildings such as town halls stored small arms and ammunition that local men – who participated in annual training after their mandatory military service – could use to fight a partisan-style war in the event of the state's collapse. The purpose of the system was to defend against a potential invasion as well as to deter one; moreover, Yugoslavia's Territorial Defence forces were intended to work alongside the JNA.¹³ In the early 1990s, the various warring sides would draw on Territorial Defence stockpiles to arm themselves and turn against each other, as well as against the federal army.

A Crisis of Legitimacy, 1980-87

Tito's death in 1980 represented the collapse of one of the three pillars that sustained socialist Yugoslavia. The SKJ and the JNA inherited Tito's legacy and endeavoured to keep the country together during the unstable 1980s. A year after Tito's death, riots erupted in Kosovo, where ethnic Albanians comprised the majority of the

¹³ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 47-48.

population. The protestors demanded more rights and for Kosovo – an ‘Autonomous Region’ according to the 1974 constitution – to gain republic status. The army broke up the demonstrations violently.¹⁴ In 1986, a major shockwave reverberated through Yugoslavia after a draft memorandum leaked from the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences. Numerous Serbian academics had signed the document, which criticised the decentralisation of the 1974 constitution and lamented the position of Serbs in Yugoslavia, suggesting that the status of Serbs in Croatia was barely better than during the Ustasha regime. The text pointed to the ‘physical, political, legal, and cultural genocide perpetrated against the Serb population of Kosovo and Metohija’ and denounced the ‘ideological indoctrination’ of the Serb nation.¹⁵ At the time, it represented a powerful critique of the socialist nationalities policy, coming from a non-communist institution, and from the elite of Yugoslavia’s largest, most dispersed, and historically dominant group.

Nationalist critiques of Yugoslavia and communism among the intelligentsia gained momentum in the 1980s. Perhaps the most influential member of the intellectual elite to lend his voice to the nationalist cause was Dobrica Ćosić, who would later play an important role in establishing Serb nationalist parties in Croatia and Serbia, and who also served as president of the rump Yugoslavia from June 1992-93. Several themes emerged during the 1980s, including bringing to the forefront the fate (and legacy) of Kosovo and challenging the official interpretation of the Second World War, notably the issue of Serb suffering.¹⁶ A clash between Slovene and Serb writers also foreshadowed the political crisis

¹⁴ Jović, *Yugoslavia*, pp. 171-197.

¹⁵ Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences, ‘Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) Memorandum, 1986,’ *Making the History of 1989*, Item #674: <http://chnm.gmu.edu/1989/items/show/674> (accessed September 21 2014, 12:45 pm).

¹⁶ J. Dragović-Soso, *‘Saviours of the Nation’: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London and Montreal, 2003).

over the nature of the Yugoslav union later in the decade and in the first years of the 1990s.¹⁷ Intellectuals revived themes that the communist authorities wished to keep subdued and later endowed nationalist parties with a sense of academic (and non-communist) legitimacy through their backing.

The 1980s saw a dramatic economic downturn in Yugoslavia that affected the lives of ordinary citizens and exposed the vulnerability of the socialist economy. A fragmentation of the economy had accompanied the decentralisation of the state and the implementation of the self-management system meant that ideology trumped practicality when it came to determining economic policy. Stagflation set in after 1979, when high unemployment and inflation coupled with a low economic growth rate.¹⁸ Yugoslavia's economic woes culminated in dramatic hyperinflation peaking at 25,000 per cent in 1989.¹⁹ Economic troubles highlighted the differences in development between Yugoslavia's wealthier regions (like Slovenia) and its poorer regions (like Kosovo). Yugoslavia had increased its foreign debt in the preceding decades, particularly the 1970s, and like elsewhere in the world, the International Monetary Fund demanded structural reforms in exchange for more funds.²⁰ The substantial welfare state and decentralised economy struggled as the authorities implemented the required restructuring that exacerbated problems until Prime Minister Ante Marković's reforms in 1990, which brought down unemployment, stabilised the currency, and improved wages. Yet the economic crisis

¹⁷ J. Dragović-Soso, 'Intellectuals and the Collapse of Yugoslavia: the End of the Yugoslav Writers' Union' in D. Djokić (ed.) *Yugoslavism* (London, 2003).

¹⁸ E. Žižmond, 'The Collapse of the Yugoslav Economy,' in *Soviet Studies* 44/1 (1992), pp. 101-112.

¹⁹ Jović, *Yugoslavia*, p. 354.

²⁰ Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, pp. 45-80 and D. Vojnić, 'Disparity and Disintegration: The Economic Dimension of Yugoslavia's Demise' in P. Akhavan and R. Howse (eds.), *Yugoslavia, the Former and Future: Reflections by Scholars from the Region* (Washington, D.C., 1995), 102.

underlined differences among the Yugoslav republics and bolstered nationalists' arguments for a radical solution to their constituent peoples' problems.

Slobodan Milošević's rise to power in Serbia in the mid-1980s reintroduced nationalist themes into mainstream Yugoslav politics. Milošević climbed the rungs of the communist establishment in Serbia as the protégé of Ivan Stambolić, the leader of the League of Communists of Serbia. In April 1987, he travelled to Kosovo to meet with local communist leaders when a clash broke out between local Serbs and the predominantly ethnic Albanian police. Milošević famously sided with the protesters by promising that 'no one should dare beat them,' thereby criticising the police, legitimising the Serb protestors' demands, and sparking controversy in the autonomous region. The incident received huge coverage from state media in Serbia. Two years later, Milošević visited Gazimestan in Kosovo, where hundreds of thousands of Serbs had gathered to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, a clash that ended in victory for the Ottomans over a Serb-led coalition. Although most of his speech adhered to the standard Yugoslav communist rhetoric, Milošević also famously announced to the crowd, 'Six centuries later, we [Serbs] are again engaged in battles and are facing battles. They are not armed battles, although such things cannot be excluded yet.'²¹ Through effective political manipulation – well analysed by his biographers – Milošević rapidly ascended to the height of power in Serbia.²² His loyal supporters organised protests throughout Yugoslavia, primarily in Serbia, Montenegro, and the Autonomous Regions of Vojvodina and Kosovo, as part of an 'anti-bureaucratic revolution.' The ostensible purpose of the protests was to remove inept bureaucrats from their positions, but the demonstrations took on a nationalist air and their

²¹ Silber and Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 37-39 and 70-73.

²² For example, L. J. Cohen, *Serpent in the Bosom* (Boulder, 2001), pp. 43-140 and L. Sell, *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Durham and London, 2002), pp. 39-64.

effect was to replace officials with those loyal to Milošević.²³ Pressure from the protests resulted in a thorough political reshuffling and within a few short years Milošević's allies held the top posts in Vojvodina, Kosovo, Montenegro, and of course Serbia itself, which meant that Milošević controlled four of the eight seats on the federal presidium. Rather than maintaining the delicate ethnic balance championed by Tito, Milošević pursued a course to recentralise Yugoslavia, with only Serbia's dominance and Serb interests on his agenda.

Towards Collapse, 1987-91

The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe fundamentally altered Yugoslavia's domestic and international circumstances. While Tito and the communists had carefully navigated international relations during the Cold War, following the Soviet Union's collapse socialist Yugoslavia no longer served as a valuable potential ally for the East or West. Moreover, coupled with economic crisis at home, the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe left the post-Second World War system in Yugoslavia discredited. The SKJ's claims to legitimacy stretching back to wartime victory seemed outdated and irrelevant. League officials realised that the European trend favoured political authority stemming from popular and free elections.

Sensing communism's pending collapse, would-be leaders began to form new political organisations. Historian and former JNA general Franjo Tuđman founded the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* – HDZ) in 1989, while Jovan Rašković established the Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka* – SDS) in Croatia in 1990. Bosnian Croats and Serbs formed their own branches of these parties shortly thereafter. The first multi-party elections took place throughout Yugoslavia

²³ Jović, *Yugoslavia*, pp. 308-312.

at various points in 1990 and only at the republic level; nationalists ascended to power throughout the country. In April 1990, the former leader of the League of Communists of Slovenia, Milan Kučan, who favoured a loose Yugoslav association if not outright independence, won the presidential election in Slovenia with 58.6 per cent of the vote.²⁴ The Croatian electorate brought Franjo Tuđman's HDZ to power in April 1990; the nationalist party received 41.5 per cent of the popular vote but 55 out of 80 seats in the Croatian assembly.²⁵ Elections elsewhere in Yugoslavia occurred later in the year: Serbian voters elected Slobodan Milošević, who already controlled the state and party apparatus in Serbia, president with 65 per cent of the vote in December 1990, while his ally Momir Bulatović received 76.1 per cent of votes in Montenegro.²⁶ Nationalists also won the November 1990 elections in Bosnia and formed a coalition among the Bosnian branches of the SDS, HDZ, and the predominantly Muslim 'Party of Democratic Action' (*Stranka Demokratske Akcije* – SDA).²⁷ Western-oriented, reformed communist, and other generally pro-Yugoslav parties also contested the elections but they failed to mobilise voters and challenge nationalist parties.

The rise of nationalists and the removal of the SKJ as a political factor in Yugoslavia represented an important step towards the state's collapse. Among the republics there emerged a deep division over the future of the country: wealthier republics like Slovenia and Croatia favoured further decentralisation and a loose Yugoslav confederation, whereas Milošević's bloc pushed for a dominant role for Serbia in a more centralised

²⁴ D. Nohlen and P. Stöver (eds.), *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook* (Baden Baden, 2011), p. 1793.

²⁵ I. Grdešić, M. Kasapović, I. Šiber, and N. Zakošek, *Hrvatska u izborima 1990*, (Zagreb, 1991).

²⁶ Nohlen and Stöver, *Elections in Europe*, pp. 329-330.

²⁷ N. Andjelić, *Bosnia and Herzegovina* (London, 2003), pp. 188-211.

Yugoslav federation.²⁸ Leaders from Macedonia and Bosnia, who favoured preserving Yugoslavia but also feared Serbian hegemony, proposed compromises. Yugoslav politics in 1990-91 were characterised by intense negotiations whereby Milošević pushed to expand his control over Yugoslavia, while Kučan and Tuđman attempted to weaken the federation's ties and moved towards independence.

The declarations of independence by Slovenia and Croatia on 25 June 1991 marked the physical and legal disintegration of Yugoslavia. The divided JNA leadership – heading the only remaining institutional pillar committed to preserving Yugoslavia – found itself in an awkward position. On the one hand, the army's *raison d'être* was to keep Yugoslavia intact; but on the other hand, the civilian leadership refused to give it authorisation to maintain order by force. After a series of clashes between Slovene territorial defence forces and the JNA, known as the ten-day war, the increasingly Milošević-influenced federal army withdrew from Slovenia on 7 July 1991.²⁹ Violence had already occurred in Croatia between Serb militants and Croatian police in March and April, but following the proclamation of independence by Zagreb in June, the fighting escalated to war between the JNA and Serb paramilitaries supported by Milošević on one side, and Croatian forces loyal to Zagreb and Tuđman on the other. Serb militants and elements of the JNA attempted to link Serb-majority territories, whose leaders proclaimed they wished to remain in Yugoslavia, as well as parts of southern Dalmatia and eastern Slavonia.

In summer and autumn 1991, Serb forces and the JNA shelled several Croatian cities, including Dubrovnik, which drew international condemnation. Fighting in the town

²⁸ D. Jović, 'The Slovenian-Croatian Confederal Proposal: A Tactical Move or an Ultimate Solution?' in L. J. Cohen and J. Dragović-Soso (eds.) *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe* (West Lafayette, 2008), pp. 249-280.

²⁹ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 41-78.

of Vukovar close to the Serbian border also attracted global media attention as heavy artillery shelled the mixed Serb-Croat town and massacres by Serb paramilitaries came to light. The fighting ended with a ceasefire that came into effect in January 1992, although local clashes resumed in 1993. UN peacekeepers deployed to Croatia to supervise the ceasefire. The Croatian Serb leadership based in the town of Knin controlled about thirty per cent of Croatian territory, which it called the *Republika Srpska Krajina* (RSK). The JNA withdrew from Croatia into Bosnia and Serbia in January and February 1992.³⁰ During the war, Croatian forces armed themselves using TO caches in Croatia, while non-Serb recruits and officers withdrew from the JNA. The conflict in Croatia between the JNA and Serb militias against Croat forces polarised opinion in neighbouring Bosnia, where many realised that the federal army sided with Serb nationalists and would not respect Croatia's declaration of independence.

Alija Izetbegović, the SDA, and the Sarajevo Government

The 1991 war in Croatia heightened tension in Bosnia and exposed deep divisions in the awkward nationalist coalition that governed the republic since its 1990 multi-party election. According to the SDS-HDZ-SDA agreement, the Bosnian Muslim leader of the Party of Democratic Action, Alija Izetbegović, became the chairman of the presidency of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³¹ Izetbegović's party had formed in 1990 when nationalist parties were illegal in Bosnia – hence its innocuous name – yet the SDA's organisational composition and voter base were almost entirely Bosnian Muslim.

³⁰ For a narrative of the 1990-91 war in Croatia see Tanner, *Croatia*, pp. 221-298 and *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 79-116.

³¹ Izetbegović became president even though his fellow SDA member Fikret Abdić received more votes for the presidency position allocated to a Bosnian Muslim. Abdić's reasons for not assuming the role remain unclear. Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 211.

Like the SDS and HDZ, Izetbegović's party appealed to only one of Bosnia's three ethnic groups; moreover, aside from their ethnic orientation, the three parties espoused almost identical political programmes.³² The SDA sought to revive the religious character of Bosnia's Muslim community, which had largely secularised during 45 years of communist rule. Like the other two nationalist parties with which it ruled, the SDA espoused an anti-communist outlook and sought to correct perceived historical injustices committed by the communists, as well as Bosnia's other two peoples, against Muslims. The SDA programme emphasised the distinctiveness of Bosnia's Muslims from Serbs and Croats in a religious, national, and linguistic sense. In Bosnia's first multi-party election, the SDA and its leader appealed to more Bosnian Muslim voters than moderate alternatives.

The deeply religious Alija Izetbegović, who co-founded and led the SDA, was a lawyer and dissident before the 1990s. In the 1960s, he wrote a political pamphlet entitled 'The Islamic Declaration,' in which he called for a united Islamic community from Morocco to Indonesia. In his declaration, Izetbegović argued for the necessity of Islam as the basis of state and society and argued that non-believers should be respected, 'so long as they remain loyal.' He cited the incompatibility of Islam with non-Islamic institutions, prescribed that only those with impeccable Islamic upbringing control the media, and called for the abolition of alcohol, prostitution, 'pornography of the spoken word,' casinos, night clubs, and 'all other forms of entertainment incompatible with the moral tenets of Islam.'³³ At his 1983 trial, Izetbegović defended himself by pointing out that nowhere in his pamphlet did he call for violence nor mention Yugoslavia, and that the pamphlet only

³² Andjelić, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, pp. 164-166.

³³ A. Izetbegović, 'Islamic Declaration,' Krajišnik-D260.

discussed ‘Muslim majority’ countries.³⁴ Nevertheless, the court sentenced Izetbegović to five years in prison for conspiring against the state. In 1991 and early 1992, along with HDZ leaders, he moved Bosnia towards independence from Yugoslavia, a course bitterly opposed by Serb nationalists in the Bosnian assembly. As war approached and after it erupted, Serb and Croat nationalists would often paint Izetbegović as a religious fanatic and cite his ‘Islamic Declaration’ as evidence of a plan to Islamicise Bosnia.

Political tension during the war in Croatia resulted in the covert formation of paramilitary units in Bosnia representing the three ethnic groups. A branch of the SDA led by Sefer Halilović formed the ‘Patriotic League’ a majority-Muslim clandestine organisation that prepared for war should it arrive in Bosnia.³⁵ Another formation called the ‘Green Berets’ also emerged from the ranks of the SDA membership.³⁶ However, throughout 1991, Izetbegović continued to put his faith in the JNA, trusting that it would serve as an impartial arbiter among Bosnia’s ethnic groups, and thus the Patriotic League received less party support than comparable HDZ- and SDS-affiliated militias. Nevertheless, in February 1992, Halilović ordered the Patriotic League to ‘harmonise its regional actions and develop a plan for the defence of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Muslim people.’³⁷

At around the same time, Izetbegović signed a Directive for the Defence of Sovereignty, which identified the enemy as the Sixth Corps of the JNA on Bosnian soil, the SDS militias, and extreme forces of the HDZ. The directive stated that the enemies’ fundamental objectives aimed at:

³⁴ A. Izetbegović, *Inescapable Questions* (Nairobi, 2003), pp. 33-34.

³⁵ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 130-168.

³⁶ M. A. Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed* (London, 2004), pp. 57-58 and *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 131-132.

³⁷ 7-8 February 1992, Krajišnik-D29.1, p. 3.

The division of the territory of Bosnia and its attachment to the primary states [Serbia and Croatia]. The realisation of this aim will be brought about in two phases: in the first phase the creation of national confederal units in Bosnia, and in the second, their attachment to Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia.

In addition to appealing to the ‘progressive world,’ Izetbegović also envisioned assistance arriving from the Sandžak, Kosovo, and Macedonia – all areas in Yugoslavia with large Muslim populations.³⁸ Although Izetbegović repeated his intention for Bosnia to remain a civic state, his popular base and strategy became increasingly Muslim-oriented as 1992 progressed.

The political crisis escalated to violence rapidly in 1992. Serb deputies had boycotted the Bosnian assembly in Sarajevo since October 1991 and proclaimed the ‘Republic of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina’ on 9 January 1992 on the territory of four Serb-controlled, self-proclaimed ‘Serb Autonomous Regions’ (*Srpska Autonomna Oblast* – SAO). On 9-10 November, Serb authorities had conducted a poll in the SAOs in which 96 per cent of the (primarily Serb) population had voted to remain part of Yugoslavia. On 29 February and 1 March 1992, the Sarajevo government held a referendum on Bosnia’s independence in areas under its control. 64 per cent (of the total Bosnian population) voted to separate from the Yugoslav federation.³⁹ The European Community and the United States recognised Bosnia’s independence on 7 April. Bosnia’s international recognition would serve as a major asset to the Sarajevo government during the war, while the nascent Serb republic’s failure to achieve acknowledgement of its state

³⁸ 25 and 27 February 1992. Krajišnik-D120.1, pp. 4-6.

³⁹ The electoral turnout statistics conform to demographic proportions: Serbs made up about 34 per cent of Bosnia’s population in the 1991 census and that figure approximately corresponds to the number of citizens who did not participate in the independence referendum. These figures suggest that almost every eligible elector voted in either the Serb-organised referendum to stay in Yugoslavia or the Bosnian government’s independence referendum.

structures led Serb leaders to continue fighting, rejecting peace agreements that denied them a separate state, independent from Sarajevo.

Despite mustering some resistance when the Serb nationalist onslaught began in March and April 1992, the Patriotic League proved incapable of responding to Serb militants, who quickly overran territories in northern and eastern Bosnia. It is evident that the fears expressed about the Patriotic League and the Green Berets in subsequent chapters of this thesis by Serb and Croat nationalists were unfounded, if only because of the league's lack of organisation and support from Bosnian state structures. After the rapid advance of the Army of Republika Srpska (*Vojska Republike Srpske* – VRS) in spring 1992, the Bosnian government based in Sarajevo lost control of most of the country. The VRS's speedy and brutal conquest of much of Bosnia came thanks to the SDS's thorough military preparation before the war and the JNA's large-scale transfer of weaponry to Serb authorities. What became the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Armija Bosne i Hercegovine* – ABiH) emerged from the pre-war Territorial Defence units under the government's control, the Patriotic League and the Green Berets, and police from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Although the ABiH had more manpower than the Serb republic's army, the September 1991 UN arms embargo meant that no nation could (legally) export arms to the territory of former Yugoslavia, which granted the VRS a major advantage over the poorly armed force loyal to Sarajevo. Throughout the war, Izetbegović delivered speeches in which he claimed to fight for a united, multi-ethnic Bosnia, and thus attempted to build a multi-ethnic army.⁴⁰ And indeed, at its inception, the ABiH included significant numbers of Serbs and Croats, and even counted several Serbs and Croats among

⁴⁰ Reprinted in Izetbegović, *Inescapable Questions*, pp. 131, and 136-138.

its leadership. Nevertheless, the vast majority of fighting-age Serb and Croat men who participated in the conflict fought for Serb or Croat forces.

In spring and summer 1992, the Muslim-Croat political alliance that had made independence possible led to military cooperation, as units of the ABiH and the Croat Defence Council (*Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* – HVO) fought against Serb forces, yet the union turned hostile before long. Three major factors led to direct clashes between the HVO and the ABiH, much to the benefit of Karadžić and the VRS. As subsequent chapters will demonstrate, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman controlled the HDZ apparatus in Bosnia and while he advocated a united Bosnia and Herzegovina in public, his subordinates in Bosnia anticipated – and worked to create – an opportunity to annex Croat-controlled territories to Croatia. The consolidation of power and institutions in Croat-held parts of Bosnia, proclaimed on 18 November 1991 as the ‘Croat Community of Herceg Bosna,’ emerged during the autumn and winter of 1992 and 1993 as another major challenge to Sarajevo’s authority. The massive influx of tens of thousands Bosnian Muslim refugees from Serb-controlled territories into Central Bosnia also strained the Croat-Muslim political and military alliance.⁴¹ The rapidly changing demographic makeup of Central Bosnia, where some towns had had slight Croat majorities before the war, meant that Croat nationalist claims to those areas weakened.

Another factor that led to fighting between the two sides, as discussed in Chapter 7, came from an unexpected source: the international peace plan proposed in January 1993 by envoys Cyrus Vance and David Owen. The plan would have divided Bosnia into ten administrative units, of which three would have been under Croat control. The Croat leadership enthusiastically welcomed the proposed settlement and set about implementing it

⁴¹ C. R. Shrader, *The Muslim Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia* (College Station, 2003), p. 65.

before the leaders of the other two sides agreed. The HVO moved to subordinate ABiH units in 'Croat' territories under the peace plan, which led to fighting between the two forces.⁴² By February 1993, the ABiH and HVO engaged in full war against each other as Serb forces consolidated control in their conquered territories.

The Muslim-Croat war raged throughout 1993. The conflict featured extensive destruction of the ethnically mixed town of Mostar and the razing of its iconic bridge by HVO forces. It also resulted in a number of atrocities committed by the ABiH against ethnic Croats and by the HVO against Muslims. The conflict ended in March 1994 with the signing of the Washington Agreement by Alija Izetbegović on behalf of the Bosnian government and Franjo Tuđman, the president of Croatia. The agreement dissolved the Croat separatist entity in Herzegovina and created a 'Federation' comprising administrative 'cantons' in territories controlled by Croat and Bosnian forces in southern and western Bosnia. The Washington Agreement also confirmed the homogenisation of the ABiH into a force with mostly Muslims in its ranks. During the Muslim-Croat war, many ethnic Croats had left the ABiH and joined the HVO, while even fewer Serbs – a negligible number – remained with the ABiH. In 1993, Islamic influences became more common in the Bosnian Army.⁴³ After the Washington Agreement, although the HVO and ABiH formed a joint command under the banner of the Defence Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croat and Muslim units fought separately. And while Izetbegović continued to champion multi-ethnic Bosnia in public, the SDA and Islamic doctrine increasingly dominated the army.⁴⁴

⁴² *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 189-191.

⁴³ For example, the ABiH 3rd Corps distributed instructions on Islamic religious observance to soldiers Instructions for Muslim Soldiers. 9 February 1993, Hadžihasanović-DK16E.

⁴⁴ Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, p. 130.

Croat and Serb nationalists were not the only ones to challenge Izetbegović's authority. Fikret Abdić, the Bosnian Muslim and pre-conflict SDA politician who had handed the Bosnian presidency to Izetbegović in 1991, abandoned the Sarajevo government in 1993 and returned to Velika Kladuša, his home in northwestern Bosnia, where he enjoyed widespread popularity among the predominantly Muslim population.⁴⁵ In September 1993, Abdić proclaimed the 'Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia' and struck peace deals with Serb and Croat nationalist authorities in the following two months. Together with the HVO and especially the VRS, Abdić's troops fought against the Bosnian army and brutalised POWs loyal to Sarajevo. Abdić ruled his fiefdom until August 1994, when it collapsed during successful military operations launched by the ABiH.⁴⁶ With the help of the Croatian Serb army, Abdić returned and challenged the ABiH for control of the northwestern town of Bihać in July 1995, precipitating the signing of the Croatian-Bosnian 'Split Agreement,' which authorised the Croatian Army to engage in Bosnia.

The role of foreign Muslim fighters known as the mujahedin in the Bosnian war remains contentious. Estimates of the number of foreign fighters who came from North Africa and the Middle East to 'help their Muslim brothers' and 'wage jihad' range from four hundred to four thousand.⁴⁷ Shrader alleges that the fighters came at the open invitation of the Bosnian government, whereas the ICTY trial chamber observed that the fighters appeared to have come on their own initiative under the cover of humanitarian

⁴⁵ The local economy in Velika Kladuša depended on Abdić's *Agrokomerc* agriculture cooperative. Abdić enjoyed close political connections with Bosnian Muslim leaders in the 1980s, and Abdić's conviction for fraud in 1987 created a major political scandal. Nevertheless, locals in the Velika Kladuša area credited Abdić for raising them from poverty and largely remained loyal to him during his wartime vicissitudes.

⁴⁶ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 187-189 and 244-246.

⁴⁷ Prosecutor v. Enver Hadžihasanović and Amir Kubura. Judgement (Trial Chamber), Case IT-01-47-T, 15 March 2006. Accessed 7 August 2015 at: < http://www.icty.org/x/cases/hadzihasanovic_kubura/tjug/en/had-judg060315e.pdf>, pp. 115

missions in summer 1992.⁴⁸ While the number of mujahedin and status of their invitation remain unclear, the extent of atrocities they perpetrated does not. Radical Islamic fighters committed a series of crimes against Serb and Croat military personnel and civilians during the war. An 'El Mujahed' detachment of the Bosnian Army was created on 13 August 1993, although the ABiH had maintained a close relationship with foreign mujahedin fighters since they arrived in Central Bosnia in the second half of 1992. The mujahedin fought with the ABiH against Serb and Croat forces in Karaula and Visoko in 1992; on Mount Zmajevac in April 1993; in the Bila Valley in June 1993; in Teslić in October 1994; and on Mount Ozren in summer 1995.⁴⁹ Yet even after the formal subordination of foreign fighters into the ABiH, the mujahedin detachment engaged in particularly deplorable, criminal conduct, including kidnapping, physical and psychological harassment, and ritual murder and decapitation of non-Muslim civilians and POWs.⁵⁰ The inclusion and toleration of extremist units from abroad reflects the SDA-led government's considerable military weakness throughout the war; but it also constitutes evidence of the ideological commitment beneath Izetbegović's Islamic orientation.

Other units of the ABiH were also implicated in crimes against non-Muslim civilians. At the Čelebići prison that operated from May to December 1992, hundreds of Serb detainees from Konjic suffered torture and inhumane treatment at the hands of the HVO and officers of the Bosnian Ministry of Internal Affairs; 13 lost their lives.⁵¹ A

⁴⁸ Shrader, *The Muslim-Croat Civil War*, p. 51 and Hadžihasanović and Kubura Judgement,, pp. 114-116.

⁴⁹ Hadžihasanović and Kubura Judgement, pp. 142, 149, and 186.

⁵⁰ Prosecutor v. Rasim Delić. Judgement (Trial Chamber), Case IT-04-83-T, 15 September 2008. Accessed 5 August 2015 at: < <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/delic/tjug/en/080915.pdf> >.

⁵¹ Prosecutor v. Zejnil Delalić et al. Judgement (Trial Chamber), Case IT-96-21-T, 16 November 1998. Accessed 7 August 2015 at: < http://www.icty.org/x/cases/mucic/tjug/en/981116_judg_en.pdf >.

thorough study is still needed to ascertain the fate of Sarajevo's substantial pre-war Serb community, which had almost ceased to exist by 1996. Sympathisers of the wartime Sarajevo government argue that Serb civilians left for the safety of Serb-controlled territories, whereas Serb institutions allege that Muslim forces exercised a campaign of ethnic cleansing against Sarajevo's Serbs.⁵² It is clear that Izetbegović tolerated criminal gangs in Sarajevo for part of the war, namely those led by Mušan Topalović Caco and Ramiz Delalić Čelo, who harassed, robbed, and killed non-Muslims during the war. The Sarajevo authorities finally clamped down on the two mobsters, who the government had previously recognised as leaders of the ABiH's 10th Mountain and 9th Motorised Brigades respectively, in October 1993.⁵³ In northeastern Bosnia, using the town of Srebrenica as a base, Naser Orić's forces conducted looting raids to collect food for the Muslim population in the enclave. In the process, Orić's troops destroyed at least fifty Serb villages with no military value, forcing thousands of civilians to flee. Orić's subordinates also confined, tortured, and killed some detainees at the Srebrenica police station while the structure was under their control in 1992 and 1993.⁵⁴ ABiH units from the 9th and 10th brigades and the 2nd Independent Battalion killed dozens of Croat civilians, including women and children, during Operation 'Neretva-93' in Grabovica and Uzdol during September 1993. During the Muslim-Croat war in 1993 and early 1994, ABiH units attacked the HVO in the towns of Kakanj, Zenica, and Travnik, killing hundreds of civilians and plundering non-Muslim

⁵² A collection of victim statements was published in Belgrade in 1996. D. Bojić (ed.), *Stradanja Srba u Sarajevu* (Belgrade, 1996).

⁵³ Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, p. 98.

⁵⁴ The trial chamber found that Orić exercised responsibility over the Muslim officials at the police station, but it did not find sufficient evidence to determine that he held effective control over the Muslim armed groups that attacked Serb villages. Prosecutor v. Naser Orić. Judgement (Trial Chamber), Case IT-03-68-T, 30 June 2006. Accessed 7 August 2015 at: < <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/Orić/tjug/en/ori-jud060630e.pdf>>.

property. ABiH detachments also destroyed Croat and Serb property with no military value, destroyed almost 200 villages, terrorised non-Muslims, and executed HVO soldiers after their surrender.⁵⁵ While units of the ABiH clearly committed crimes, the scale of atrocities perpetrated by Muslim forces amounts to a distant third, after those perpetrated by Serb and Croat forces. Whether or not it had the will to conduct systematic ethnic cleansing, the ABiH lacked the power or capacity.

How much truth lies in allegations – as illustrated in the material examined in this thesis – by Serb and Croat nationalists who claimed that Alija Izetbegović sought to Islamicise Bosnia and make non-Muslims second-class citizens? Izetbegović's declaration expressed his ideology: it imagined an ideal state in which Islamic law and custom trumped Western conventions. His opponents insisted that his wartime desire for a united, multi-ethnic Bosnia was a ruse to advance Muslim domination. While Croat and Serb nationalists made their dreams for homogeneous states explicit, there is insufficient evidence to infer that Izetbegović planned the same for part or all of Bosnia. Although there is no doubt that Izetbegović appealed to and championed the cause of Bosnian Muslims and sought to Islamicise *them*, he did not issue a call to expel or convert non-Muslims. It may be objected that, with the Bosnian capital under siege, and loyal forces scattered, Izetbegović did not have the opportunity to create an Islamic state in Bosnia. Yet, whatever his 'ultimate intentions' may have been, he did not seek to implement – within the territory under government authority – the radical programme his opponents accused him of harbouring. The opportunity to conduct massive ethnic cleansing came in September 1995, when the united Bosnian and Croatian armies defeated VRS forces and approached the Serb

⁵⁵ Hadžihasanović and Kubura Judgement.

stronghold of Banja Luka. However, under great pressure from the United States, Izetbegović ordered his advancing forces to halt – as did Croatian President Franjo Tuđman.

Throughout the war, ideological friction mounted between two incompatible tenets of the Sarajevo leadership's ideology: the public political commitment to a multi-ethnic and united Bosnia on the one hand, and swelling Bosnian Muslim nationalism coupled with non-Muslim desertion on the other. Despite pressure to accept peace plans that proposed ethnic partition, namely the Carrington-Cutiliero Plan in March 1992 and the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan in August 1993, Izetbegović resisted dividing Bosnia along ethnic lines. Ironically, following a series of victories in 1995 against the primary force seeking to split Bosnia, the VRS, Izetbegović accepted the existence of a Serb 'entity' in Bosnia as part of the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Section I

Vision

Chapter 2: The Bosnian Serb Path to War, October 1991-May 1992

The first goal is separation from the other two national communities – separate states. Separation from those who are our enemies and who have used every opportunity, especially in this century, to attack us, and who would continue to do so if we were to stay together in the same state. – Radovan Karadžić, 12 May 1992¹

The war in Croatia brought Bosnia to the threshold of violence. Following Croatia's independence referendum in May 1991, Croatian Serb separatists backed by elements of the Yugoslav Peoples' Army (JNA – *Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija*) carved out the Republic of the Serb Krajina (RSK – *Republika Srpska Krajina*) from areas with sizeable Serb majorities and expressed their intent to remain within Yugoslavia. Many Serbs from Bosnia responded to the JNA's call to fight in Croatia against the independence-driven Croatian forces, while Bosnia's eligible Croat and Muslim recruits mostly stayed at home, as did Serbs who opposed intervention.

The political crisis in Bosnia intensified as the war in Croatia sowed even deeper divisions among Bosnians. On the one hand, the JNA ostensibly fought to keep Yugoslavia together on behalf of all of its peoples; on the other hand, newsreels showed the outnumbered JNA relying on Serb nationalist irregular forces in municipalities like Vukovar. Yugoslavs of different ethnicities watched on their television screens as artillery shells bombarded the small town while bearded Chetnik paramilitaries marched alongside JNA officers. Most Bosnian Serb nationalists considered the Yugoslav and Serb causes as one and the same. Yet as news of atrocities in Croatia spread throughout Yugoslavia, non-Serbs in Bosnia increasingly viewed both the Yugoslav federal government and the JNA as Milošević-dominated institutions, interested in promoting Serb interests exclusively.

¹12 May 1992. Karadžić-P00956, p. 13.

Fighting in Croatia accelerated Bosnia along its path to independence and disintegration. Slovenia and Croatia's international recognition by the European Economic Community in January 1992 meant that Yugoslavia no longer existed. Bosnia's non-Serbs found themselves in a rump Yugoslav state with an increasing Serb majority: the delicate ethnic balance crafted by Tito and his disciples had shattered. Bosnian Serb politicians had observed the precarious position Croatia's Serbs found themselves in and thus planned what their response would be, should their republic, in which Serbs formed a minority, decide to pursue the same route to independence as Croatia and Slovenia. But Bosnia's demographic organisation was much more complex than Croatia's, where Serb separatists managed to link several contiguous communities to form their budding republic. Bosnia's Serbs – and Croats and Muslims – were spread throughout Bosnia, with many villages, towns, and even neighbourhoods ethnically mixed. If pro-independence Bosnian leaders – who formed a majority in the republic government – decided to split the Bosnia from Yugoslavia, the main Bosnian Serb nationalist party would need to decide how to respond.

This chapter tracks the ideological and political development of the Bosnian Serb leadership, particularly that of pre-war psychiatrist Radovan Karadžić and his Serb Democratic Party (SDS – *Srpska Demokratska Stranka*). October 1991 – May 1992 was a crucial period because the party's nationalist ideology became more extreme and fostered a radical agenda to 'solve' what the leadership perceived to be its constituents' problems. With the war in Croatia and Bosnia's imminent declaration of independence in the foreground of political discussions, Bosnian Serb politicians envisioned their path out of the crisis guided by the 'nationalist principle,' which holds that the ethnic nation and the

state must be congruent.² The principle that Serbs should live in a single, homogeneous state formed the ‘core,’ non-negotiable tenet of Bosnian Serb nationalism.³ Although the war began in late March 1992, this chapter includes materials extending to May because that is when the Bosnian Serb nationalist leadership held a key parliamentary session and outlined its agenda for establishing a new Serb state from which non-Serbs would be expelled.

Serb delegates from the Bosnian parliament’s upper and lower chambers began to congregate independently from Bosnia’s Muslims and Croats in autumn 1991. The inaugural session of ‘The Assembly of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina’ met on 24 October 1991, and numbered 83 delegates: 72 from the nationalist SDS and 11 from parties in the political centre or left. On 9 January 1992, when Serb leaders decided to cease cooperating with Bosnia’s central authorities, the assembly proclaimed ‘The Republic of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina.’ War began in the northeastern town of Bijeljina with an unprovoked attack on unarmed civilians in late March and spread during April. On 12 August 1992, the assembly voted to change the name of the self-declared state to Republika Srpska (RS). From 1991 until 1996, Momčilo Krajišnik served as the assembly’s speaker and Radovan Karadžić as the RS’s president. Although several SDS deputies served as prime minister during the war, Karadžić maintained his position as the supreme commander of the armed forces and chief negotiator for the Serb side until he ceded that authority to Slobodan Milošević in late August 1995. No general election took place until September 1996.

² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, p. 1; and Finlayson, ‘Nationalism,’ pp. 97-111.

³ M. Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory*; M. Freeden, ‘Political ideology at century's end,’ *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 5/1 (2000), pp. 5-15; M. Freeden, ‘Fundaments and foundations in ideologies,’ *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 10/1, (2005), pp. 1-9.

As leading Bosnian Serb politicians made clear, the Bosnian Serb war effort rejected civic statehood and individual rights in favour of mono-ethnic state building and the affirmation of collective rights. Karadžić's government viewed non-Serbs as historical enemies who had destroyed Yugoslavia and would attempt genocide against the Serbs unless the RS's forces took pre-emptive action. Assembly delegates stated that violating established laws and norms was justified by the extreme vulnerability of their position. In the name of self-defence, Karadžić's regime sought to remove non-Serbs permanently from its new state, which the leadership intended to link with Serbia proper.

While the Bosnian Serb ideology had no guiding text or manifesto, the assembly's meeting on 12 May 1992 amounted to the regime's Wannsee conference. On that date, Karadžić outlined the six strategic objectives upon which Bosnian Serb authorities based their subsequent wartime political and military decisions. These objectives formed the political programme that the leadership intended to realise upon securing territorial control. The Bosnian Serb leadership's first priority was to separate from Bosnia's other two ethnic groups and to seize certain vital areas claimed by RS leaders. The six strategic objectives became a euphemism for conquest and ethnic cleansing. Absorbing certain areas considered vital by RS leaders— including Muslim-inhabited municipalities — became essential in a war that Karadžić presented as a struggle for survival.

Constructing Enemies

The Croat-Serb conflict in Croatia enabled Serb nationalists in Bosnia to stoke fears of a resurgent Ustasha movement. References to the Ustasha, and to Serb suffering during the Second World War, allowed assembly delegates to link their sense of victimhood with a purported threat presented by Muslims and Croats as Yugoslavia collapsed. During the

Second World War, the Ustasha had an unambiguous approach towards Serbs: convert a third, expel a third, and kill the remaining third.⁴ Aleksa Buha, a pre-war philosophy professor who would become the RS's foreign minister during the war, associated cooperation between non-Serb parties in Bosnia's multi-ethnic parliament with the Ustasha's terror tactics:

Everything they adopted, they adopted in our absence. This way their next decision could well be to drive away a third of the Serb people, to Islamicise and Catholicise another third, and to kill the remaining third.⁵

In December 1991, shortly after the Vukovar siege ended, a delegate stated that there must be 'a strong Serb army;' the Yugoslav army needed 'to undergo a rapid transformation, as soon as possible, in the fight against the Ustasha.'⁶ Delegates often invoked the genocide committed against the Serbs in the Second World War in order to warn of the danger from 'certain enemies of ours who have risen once again,' as another delegate put it.⁷ Speaking after the war, an SDS minister from Bihać reminded his colleagues 'between 1941 and 1945, a terrible genocide occurred: 12,000 Serbs from the Krupa municipality were killed in that war.'⁸ Delegates recalled the memory of the Second World War in order to contextualise and dramatise the political crisis and revive the fear of atrocities against Serbs.

According to the assembly's speakers, history taught that Serbs should not trust their neighbours. At the assembly's first session in late October 1991, the delegates hosted a minister from the republic of Serbia, Stanko Cvijan, who stated that Yugoslavia's other peoples had deceived the Serbs and undermined (the former socialist) Yugoslavia. He

⁴ For accounts of the Ustasha's administration and terror, see Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia*, pp. 233-415, especially pp.380-415.

⁵ 26 January 1992, Karadžić-P01349, pp. 31-32.

⁶ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 26.

⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

⁸ 1-2 April 1996, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 210-211.

added that Serbs had had to wait fifty years to honour victims from the Second World War genocide and explained that as Yugoslavia's most populous group, Serbs would 'never again link their destiny with other nations,' presumably in order to avoid further deceit.⁹ Months later, when Serb forces controlled almost 70 per cent of Bosnian territory, Karadžić articulated his view of the outbreak of fighting in Croatia and Bosnia:

Many of our people were killed, mostly the powerless and elderly who were unable to escape from the Ustasha knives, but the majority of Serbs were saved... the majority of Serbs did not experience what the enemy had planned for them.¹⁰

One of the SDS's most outspoken, radical, and prominent members, Vojo Kuprešanin, outlined his opposition to cooperation with other ethnicities: 'I am against any kind of joint institution with Muslims and Croats. I personally consider them to be our natural enemies ... we can never live together again.'¹¹ The Bosnian Serb leadership popularised the suspicion that non-Serbs harboured murderous ambitions and sought to revisit atrocities of the Second World War by splitting new states from former Yugoslavia and thereby breaking Croatian and Bosnian Serbs off from Serbia proper. The perception that non-Serbs posed a threat fostered an agenda of separation not just from the republic, but also from Bosnia's other peoples.

Fighting between Croatia's Serb and Croat communities brought elected Bosnian Serb deputies closer to adopting violence as a way to resolve the crisis in Bosnia. One of the SDS's most vocal officials, Radoslav Brđanin, did not shy away from extolling the use of force in December 1991:

Since Europe apparently understands only force, I think that force must be responded to with force. Thus, I urge us to stop pledging ourselves to Serbdom and instead I call upon Serbs in Sarajevo, Romanija, and Northern Bosnia to heed the call for mobilisation so that we can defend our western border. Once we have

⁹ 24 October 1991, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰ 24 and 26 July 1992, Karadžić-D00092, p. 13.

¹¹ 25 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, p. 37.

secured our borders, Europe will accept the facts! ... We are not threatening anyone's integrity, or his or her freedom, but we have to defend our own freedom at any cost.¹²

SDS member Radoslav Unković shared his preparedness to fight only weeks before the war reached Bosnia: 'Who can demarcate the borders of the Serb people? No one has the right to do so. We do not recognise those borders. We shall recognise them only when Serb weapons have had their say. And Serb weapons will soon have their say, rest assured. If Alija [Izetbegović] sacrifices peace, I shall sacrifice my life.'¹³ With blame laid on others and an eagerness to retaliate, the assembly heard calls for war.

Bosnian Serb politicians also expressed fears that Bosnia's Croats and Muslims had powerful allies abroad with whom they plotted against the Serbs. A representative criticised Muslim and Croat leaders for deriding the SDS's desire to link with Serbia, while emphasising the Croats' 'ties to Germany and other foreign lands of Germano-Hungarian origins.' He added that Bosnian Muslims took cues from Turkey and even claimed 'Iraq is closer to our Muslims than Serbia is to Serbs from Bosnia.'¹⁴ Another assembly member praised Serb forces in Croatia for 'not yielding in the face of fascist invasion' and stated that by sending troops to fight in Croatia, Serbs from the northwestern Bosnian region of the Krajina fought 'not only against the Ustasha Croats, but also the Germans, Austria, Hungary, and other evil forces.'¹⁵ Like its extremist predecessors in some of the countries assembly members recalled, Karadžić's regime considered itself alone against the world.

¹² Romanija is a mountain and region in Bosnia close to Sarajevo. 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 23.

¹³ 11 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 160-161.

¹⁴ 9 January 1992, Karadžić-P01347, pp. 38-39.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

Destroying the Civic State

Squarely rejecting the notion of civic nationality, Bosnian Serb politicians emphasised that statehood and citizenship flowed from ethnicity. Buha argued that non-Serbs in Bosnia had forgotten that the nation formed ‘the fundamental unit of individual and collective life,’ and had instead ‘started advocating civil society instead of national society.’¹⁶ Radovan Karadžić, who in November 1991 received the assembly’s permission to negotiate with Bosnia’s other two peoples, explained that due to mutual suspicion, the Serb side should pursue as much institutional separation as possible from the other two peoples. Instead of having a single central government, Bosnia should be divided into three administrative jurisdictions, one for each ethnic group.¹⁷ Nikola Koljević, who in December 1991 served as the Serb representative to the Bosnian presidency, stated that the best way to maintain peace was through ‘pacification and separation’ and the creation of a tripartite Bosnia.¹⁸ As Karadžić explained by analogy, ‘in the plant world, there are plants that cannot grow side by side. They have to be separated to flourish.’¹⁹ In the half-year preceding the conflict, Serb nationalist leaders committed to the principle that administrative and ethnic borders should correspond.

The Serb leadership feared minority status in a civic or multi-ethnic state. Two years later, Karadžić explained why his followers rejected a civic state in late 1991 and early 1992:

It seems that the first proposed constitutional principle forever removed the very element for which the Muslim side had in fact started this war, namely a unitary Bosnia of the civic type. The Muslim side advocated a civic state counting on their birth rate and large numbers. Had we accepted the Muslim proposal, the statehood

¹⁶ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 9.

¹⁷ Which the February-March 1992 Lisbon talks envisioned. Ibid., pp. 40-41.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁹ 27 March 1992, Karadžić-D00304, (BCS) p. 12.

of the Serb people would have been lost forever and we would have become a national minority in an Islamic society. The fate of *dimije* – second and third rank citizens of non-Islamic extraction in Islamic societies – is well known. We also know it from our own experience in those municipalities where Muslims constituted an ethnic majority.²⁰

In other words, the RS leader held that a civic state could never function because Karadžić suspected that Muslims would always outvote the less numerous Serbs.²¹ At the RS assembly's constituting session in October 1991, its president Momčilo Krajišnik stated that the Bosnian constitution had no mechanism to prevent outvoting by two groups against a third. He further accused 'the Croat-Muslim coalition' of violating the republic's constitution to prevent national equality for Serbs.²² Karadžić and Krajišnik assumed that Bosnia's other peoples shared the same collective consciousness they encouraged among Serbs, and thus from their perspective a unitary civic state served as a cover for Muslim domination and Serb subjugation.

RS leaders contended that Bosnia's Muslims and Croats manipulated joint institutions to plot against Serbs prior to April 1992. One RS minister, Mićo Stanišić, claimed that the 'Croat-Muslim coalition' abused Bosnia's Ministry of Internal Affairs to distribute weapons in non-Serb areas. For Stanišić, even the idea of a unified ministry was 'a manipulation aimed at misleading Serbs.'²³ Krajišnik also suggested that the Bosnian ministry was 'frantically equipping and arming in order to create a separate [non-Serb] army in Bosnia.' In December 1991, Krajišnik complained that non-Serbs outvoted Serbs in certain municipalities, that Serbs had no rights, and could not achieve anything; but added

²⁰ The use of the term 'dimije' is either an error by Karadžić or a mistranscription in the original transcript. The term 'zimije' (from the Turkish 'zimmi' and Arabic 'dhimmi') refers to non-Muslims with subordinate but protected status under Muslim rule. 19 January 1993. Karadžić-D00115, p. 5.

²¹ 24 October 1991, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 140-141.

²² Ibid., pp. 24-25.

²³ 24 March 1992, Karadžić-P01354, p. 6.

that in areas under Serb control ‘we are imposing our will on them too, I must admit.’²⁴ Likely Karadžić and Krajišnik considered the European Economic Community-organised independence referendum in April 1992 as precisely the type of dominant voting a non-Serb coalition would exercise in a civic state.

In late 1991 and early 1992, before Bosnia’s declaration of independence and the beginning of war, the SDS strategy was to undermine the multi-ethnic Bosnian state. Krajišnik told the nascent Serb assembly that ‘we must destroy the bureaucratic approach of centralised Bosnian authorities; our goal is to decentralise republican funds... so only limited contributions are paid to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.’²⁵ At the same December 1991 session, Milorad Skoko argued that the assembly needed to create parallel ministries to exercise authority over municipalities with Serb majorities.²⁶ What mattered was Serb control. Duško Pejović, another SDS delegate, argued that in Serb-controlled municipalities, Yugoslav federal laws (i.e., those passed by Serb-controlled authorities in Belgrade) must be enforced, whereas laws passed at the republic level in Sarajevo must be blocked.²⁷ Undermining a multi-ethnic and civic state like Bosnia was crucial because, according to Kuprešanin, ‘Yugoslavia, Bosnia, those ideas are just sand in the eyes of the Serb people.’²⁸ In other words, multi-ethnic states only served to suppress the Serb people, whereas a mono-ethnic Serb state could fulfil the ambitions of assembly members.

Karadžić’s party maintained that Bosnia needed to collapse because the SDS’s core ideological principles demanded that a state’s authority derive from an ethnically defined nation. As Krajišnik noted in November 1991, ‘it is essential that the Serb people organise

²⁴ 11 December 1991, Karadžić-D00084, p. 17.

²⁵ 21 November 1991, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 120-121.

²⁶ 11 December 1991, Karadžić-D00084, p. 29.

²⁷ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 44.

²⁸ 15 February 1992, Karadžić-P01351, p. 27.

themselves into one legal and state entity, one common state,' adding that a constitutional commission should be created to ensure this goal becomes a reality. He insisted on the creation of a commission with the mandate 'to clearly differentiate the interests of the Serb people from those of other peoples in Bosnia.'²⁹ Demonstrating Michael Mann's argument that ethnic cleansing can flow from a perversion of democracy – that is, majority tyranny – Karadžić commented in December 1991: 'We are not afraid of the democratic transformation of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina;' in other words, that the SDS was prepared to ensure that the (ethnic Serb) majority prevailed in the remains of Yugoslavia.³⁰

A New Foundation

During the war, delegates reflected back on how they had undermined Bosnia's institutions in the last months of 1991 and early 1992. In September 1992, delegate Jovo Mijatović explained that the process of 'destroying a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina' accelerated when Serb authorities declared 'Autonomous Areas' and 'rounded off' or linked them. Before declaring independence from Bosnia, 'we had a municipal army, municipal police and municipal administration – a state within a state.'³¹ Appendix D illustrates these regions, which merged in January 1992 to form the Republic of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Years later, in April 1995, Karadžić explained how the SDS and its allies had prepared for the conflict in 1991-92:

At the moment the war began, in the municipalities where we were a majority, we had municipal power, we held it firmly, and we controlled everything. In the municipalities where we were in a minority, we set up secret governments, municipal boards, assemblies ... where we were in a minority – 20 per cent or 15

²⁹ 21 November 1991, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 27-29.

³⁰ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 19.

³¹ 14-15 September 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 134-135.

per cent – we set up a government and a brigade; a unit, no matter what size, but there was a detachment and a commander. The JNA helped as much as it could here and there.’³²

In this excerpt Karadžić refers to the so-called ‘Variant A and B’ instructions, circulated confidentially among SDS personnel in late December 1991, which directed SDS officials to form ‘Crisis Staffs’ and to organise the takeover of municipal authorities – including the police and Territorial Defence units – in areas where ethnic Serbs formed a majority (Variant A) and where they formed a minority (Variant B).³³ Controlling local administrations and severing their links with the Bosnian state became an important and effective means of establishing a parallel authority in anticipation of an armed conflict.

As the political crisis grew more acute, the assembly shifted from undermining Bosnia to creating new institutions. In March, Rabija Šubić – a non-SDS delegate and one of the only non-Serbs in the assembly – claimed that parallel government organs must be established to protect Serbs in Serb-majority municipalities.³⁴ Miroslav Vještica, an SDS deputy from Bihać, went further:

We must urgently establish a Serb Ministry of Internal Affairs, we must establish national defence, our Serb army, which is already there on the ground, we just need to transform it into what we need to have. In addition to this, we must urgently establish our own money transfer system. Following all this, we must take possession of all our Serb territories, physically, with our own territorial defence, our Serb police.³⁵

A parallel system already existed *de facto* by March 1992, as Vještica boasted that republic authorities had not entered Serb-majority municipalities like Mount Grmeč because ‘we have taken over.’³⁶ Dragan Kalinić, a physician from Sarajevo, stated that before announcing a Serb constitution, Bosnian Serb officials needed to visit the municipalities

³² 15-16 April 1995, Karadžić-P00970, p. 145.

³³ 19 December 1991, Brđanin-P25, pp. 1-8.

³⁴ 18 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 126-127.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

they controlled to determine whether sufficient structure existed in order to exercise sovereignty.³⁷ The assembly appreciated that the self-proclaimed Serb government needed to function by 6 April, the date they knew Bosnian authorities planned to declare independence.³⁸ Karadžić agreed:

Newly created municipalities must establish their organs as soon as possible, have their stamps made, and start to work. The police, that is, our organs must be positioned at the border. If it is our street, then [it's our] street. No one else is allowed to cross the street without the control and approval of our organs. Freedom of movement would, of course, be granted, but they [presumably non-Serbs] must not enter our areas with armed forces or anything else that would threaten our territory, our municipalities. This also includes vans with money or anything else.³⁹

The SDS president added that instructions on how to '[ethnically] divide the police, take the resources that belong to the Serb people, and take command' would be delivered to the relevant authorities in the coming days⁴⁰ – timing was crucial as the assembly appreciated it must not appear to make the first move.

From October 1991 to May 1992, the Bosnian Serb leadership presented its strategy as a reaction to its opponents, suggesting that Bosnian Serb policies evolved in retaliation. In December 1991, Karadžić claimed the Serb side did not want war, which would only lead to the destruction of hundreds of towns and result in population homogenisation. He stressed that the Yugoslav federal authorities should 'prevent secession by Bosnia and thereby secure peace.'⁴¹ A careful reading of this statement indicates that Karadžić suggests war is likely if secession took place; in other words, if Sarajevo proclaimed independence, the Serb side would have little choice but to declare war upon the Bosnian government. In March 1992, Karadžić commented on a letter sent to the assembly by the Croatian Serb

³⁷ 15 February 1992, Karadžić-P01351, p. 34.

³⁸ 18 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 128-129.

³⁹ 24 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 128-129.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

⁴¹ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 39.

representative in Washington DC who had written to inform the assembly that in America there was a perception that Serbs wanted war. Karadžić used the opportunity to extol the virtue of reaction: ‘There is a big difference between being attacked and us threatening we shall use war to prevent the introduction of a centralised government ... at this point they do not dare to cross over into our territory ... If they cross over, they are aggressors, offenders trespassing on our territory.’⁴² The tactic in the months preceding the war required careful positioning and anticipation of Muslim or Croat political announcements.

By underlining the reactive character of their actions, the Bosnian Serb leadership attempted to portray its politics as defensive, which in turn fostered the sense among Serb politicians that Serbs were in danger. Karadžić articulated his pre-war strategy succinctly a year later, in a 1993 assembly session:

You will remember the way we were making moves when we were with Izetbegović. Each of our moves was caused by some move by Izetbegović. By doing so, we have been justified all this time in the eyes of the international public and in the eyes of Muslims throughout Bosnia. They do something, and then we do something.⁴³

Although it is highly doubtful that many Bosnian Muslims or members of the international public mentioned by Karadžić would have agreed with him, RS Minister without portfolio Jovan Čizmović sided with his leader: ‘We are compelled to react in this manner; we must complete the task of organising the Serb people in areas where we are a majority.’⁴⁴ Karadžić further recalled how at the beginning of the war, his party waited for Alija Izetbegović to make a mistake before executing a predetermined move, ‘so that the Muslims would curse his mother and not ours.’⁴⁵ The Serb nationalist leadership decided to

⁴² 27 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 160-163.

⁴³ 27-29 August and 30 September 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 329.

⁴⁴ 11 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 126-127.

⁴⁵ 17 January 1994, Karadžić-P01387, p. 77.

act under the pretext of pending Muslim-Croat domination. At the eve of war, on 27 March 1992, Karadžić urged his deputies to activate the secret crisis staffs in their municipalities, to take control over the socialist-era Territorial Defence units, and to engage retired and reserve officers. Karadžić stressed that mobilisation needed to take place for defensive purposes and that Serb institutions should strive to maintain peace.⁴⁶ By ostensibly approaching the political crisis in a reactive manner, Karadžić and his followers hoped to mask their ambitions.

But even ‘reacting’ required the violation of existing laws. Because Bosnian Serb leaders contended that the impending conflict would represent a struggle for their people’s very existence, they openly disregarded regulations they deemed restrictive. SDS deputy from Derventa, Milovan Bjelošević, criticised the pre-war assembly’s legal advisors for cautioning the Bosnian Serb leadership:

Let us start from the fact that Macedonia does not want to be with us and that the Muslims do not want to be with us. The fact is that we must create our own state. Regardless of whether it will be called Greater Serbia or the United Serb Lands, a segment of that state will also be Serb Bosnia and Herzegovina. It does not have its own constitution but it rejects the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, esteemed lawyers, draft our constitution and do not waste our time by telling us that the existing constitution does not allow us to do what we want to do.⁴⁷

Pre-war law professor and SDS deputy from Sarajevo, Mitar Miljanović, also agreed that, given the circumstances, general rules should be disregarded:

I want to remind you that the position ‘Serb-owned land shall enjoy the highest level of protection by the Republic of the Serb people and that it may not be wrested from them in any way,’ in spite of my efforts, did not get included into the Bosnian constitution. The position that this land is a crucial element has been confirmed by the writing of *Muslimanski Glas* [a Bosnian Muslim nationalist publication], in which economists – retired university professors – explicitly claimed that our calculations of how much land we can claim to own were absolutely incorrect. It is all written there: professor, doctor, and so on; and they

⁴⁶ 27 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 132-133.

⁴⁷ 26 January 1992, Karadžić-P01349, p. 24.

also rely on some sort of science to back their claims. On Saturday I shall propose a bill on land, a very short one. I ask for your support. *Let us just ignore any legal norm and choose a different starting point because this is a struggle for survival, these are not times for Roman or any other systems of law.*⁴⁸

This passage indicates a fear that Muslims would usurp territory Miljanović considered rightfully Serb. Moreover, no delegate proposed that Serb authorities engage existing Bosnian institutions to prevent such a threat from materialising. SDS delegates held the position that they could not trust the existing civic state to represent Serbs. The assembly demonstrated its readiness to ignore existing laws and state structures. Perhaps most importantly, the Bosnian Serb leadership emphasised that the stakes could not be higher in their political contest with Bosnia's central authorities.

The Plan

Prior to the war, Serbs in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and elsewhere in Yugoslavia lived in one state and the mission of the Bosnian Serb assembly was to ensure that all Serbs continued to live in one state. To further that policy at the prospect of Bosnian independence, on 9 January 1992, the assembly proclaimed the Republic of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Professor Milutin Najdanović stated:

With today's enactment we are taking one more step towards our vow that all Serbs shall live in one state ... If we were to create a hierarchy of our aims, there is no doubt that establishing a united state area comprising the territories where Serbs are the majority would be at the top. That would be our absolute minimum. Any option that fragments the unity of this area is unacceptable! (Applause) ... It is clear that it is impossible for a nation to exist for an extended period without a state. Today it must be crystal clear to every Serb: a third, new, or rump Yugoslavia will be the type of state that will preserve the essence of the ethnicity of the Serb people, or it will be an exclusively Serb state. Should our concessions to others hamper the integration of the Serb people for a third time, and should they prevent the recovery of the Serb national being and its return to its own roots ... let nobody tell me that the homogenisation of the Serb people is a process that has been completed. More time is needed for all Serbs to grasp why they are Serbs and what their common interests are. A new federation, confederation, or even association of states may

⁴⁸ Emphasis added. 18 March 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 38-39.

therefore be formed, but the Serb unit in any of these combinations must be united.⁴⁹

And while Yugoslavia seemed like a viable option for keeping Serbs in one state, the inclusion of other ethnic groups was not desirable to the RS leadership. The Yugoslavia that these leaders claimed to approve would bear little resemblance to the multi-national state of that name. Krajišnik explained to the assembly: 'We don't need the relics of Yugoslavia that no one else wants. We accept Yugoslavia as a Serb state, but not as a Yugoslavia that needs to include Macedonia, Slovenia, and Croatia. I am not interested in Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serb people should now be more united than ever before.'⁵⁰ Karadžić seemed to agree with that plan when he claimed 'there is not a single Serb who has rejected the ultimate strategic goal of the Serb people: to live in a single state or an association of states.'⁵¹

But following Slovene and Croatian independence, as well as the 1991 war in Croatia, it became clear that keeping Yugoslavia together was impossible. Moreover, the aspiration to remain in Yugoslavia no longer represented an effective argument for the Bosnian Serbs at crisis negotiations mediated by the European Community representatives. Karadžić explained:

Until two or three months ago we were hoping to be able to play the 'Yugoslav card' and to refer to 'the Yugoslav army,' 'Yugoslavia,' 'legality,' etc. But this is slipping out of our grasp. That is why we started on another track: A Serb Bosnia and Herzegovina, our sovereignty, our army. We are preparing the constitutional framework to immediately, and on the basis of the negotiations in Lisbon, to have a national guard, to have our own police force, to have a government, to turn the Yugoslav army into the army of Serb Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁵²

⁴⁹ 9 January 1992, Karadžić-P01347, pp. 15-17.

⁵⁰ 25 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 36-37.

⁵¹ 27 March 1992, Karadžić-D00304, (BCS) p. 12.

⁵² 28 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 72-73.

With no interest in preserving multi-ethnic Bosnia and a strong enthusiasm for connecting Serb-claimed territories in Croatia and Bosnia, the Bosnian Serb leadership constructed a plan to resolve its dispute with Bosnia's non-Serbs for good.

Even before committing to violence, Karadžić and other assembly members hoped for lasting ethnic division. In December 1991, the RS president stated:

War would destroy our communities, which have always lived both separately and together. Throughout history, including during the Turkish occupation, we have always had Latin, Serb, and Muslim quarters. Relations among them have at times been friendly and at times they lived autonomously and at other times ... separately. And I do not see why we could not achieve that again in a peaceful way.⁵³

An obvious problem facing any agenda to 'separate' communities was the fact that many areas, especially urban centres, were ethnically mixed. Nenad Veselinović had a proposal: 'Plainly speaking, we need to break up existing municipalities where Serbs are not a majority.' He went on to explain that if an existing town did not have a Serb majority, Serb areas within it should be detached and linked with nearby villages 'to form a large, nice, Serb municipality.'⁵⁴ Assembly delegates referred to this process as 'regionalisation,' a term they used to describe the process of splitting Serb neighbourhoods from multi-ethnic municipalities and linking Serb areas to form new administrative entities.⁵⁵ However, even if this plan succeeded, the new territorial units would remain within Bosnia, often detached from one another, and in close proximity to Muslim and Croat communities.

Defining 'Serb areas' proved a difficult task. As one can see in Appendix C, pre-war Bosnia was greatly mixed. Two or three ethnic groups evenly divided many areas. The assembly invoked several – often conflicting – arguments to rationalise entitlement to as much territory as possible. In addition to areas where Serbs formed a relative majority, the

⁵³ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 40.

⁵⁴ 11 December 1991, Karadžić-D00084, p. 15.

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 15-16.

assembly determined that towns and villages where Serbs once made up a significant population should also be included in the new state. Goran Zekić, an SDS Board Member from Srebrenica where Serbs formed a minority, made this argument in December 1991:

We need to be particularly aware of another issue – genocide against the Serb people [in the Second World War], because many areas were depopulated thanks to those certain enemies of ours who have arisen once again. That crime must not be allowed to benefit anyone. This is particularly true in the case of the Bosnian Krajina, and more specifically the area of [Mount] Kozara and some other areas where our community is a majority, but only just. And this is all because of genocide.⁵⁶

In 1992, Muslims formed the majority in the Bosnian Krajina communities that Zekić referred to. Just six months after he spoke, Serb forces would expel tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims from the area and raze whole towns surrounding Mount Kozara. Perhaps the most pressing questions facing the delegates of the RS Assembly was what territories should belong to the new Serb state and what to do with non-Serbs in those territories.

How did the Bosnian Serb leadership view non-Serbs before the war? Serb nationalist leaders considered their political and later military conflict with Bosnia's Croats and Muslims as a struggle for survival. In January 1992, RS assembly delegate Vladislav Vukić exclaimed that the Serb people 'must defend themselves with force against force.' He added that the Bosnian Krajina, an area with a relative Serb majority, 'makes the Turks and Croats quake in their boots.'⁵⁷ On the very brink of the war, Karadžić spoke in exalted, almost metaphysical terms:

We did not need to agree upon an objective. The objective was inscribed deep within us. It is holy in the sense that it derives from God and was not placed there by human hand. This is a goal that the Serb people feel and harbour within themselves and that they will not desist from no matter how difficult the times may be. We agreed upon our tactics and on practical steps, but we did not have to reach

⁵⁶ 21 December 1991, Karadžić-D00086, p. 18.

⁵⁷ Serb and Croat nationalists used 'Turk' as a pejorative term to describe Bosnian Muslims, Slavs who converted to Islam during the Ottoman period. The use of this term is meant to cast Bosnian Muslims as foreigners. 9 January 1992, Karadžić-P01349, pp. 56-57.

an agreement on the most far-reaching strategic goals. Everyone had the same thought and this is the surest guarantee that it derives from the most profound being of the Serb people, from the most profound core of every Serb.⁵⁸

Karadžić's goals and strategy involved a radical reorganisation of Bosnia. Speaking to the last joint session of the multi-ethnic Bosnian parliament on 5 October 1991, Karadžić had argued that its Muslim and Croat representatives should not take Bosnia closer to independence from the rump Yugoslavia. In his speech, the Bosnian Serb leader revealed an ominous attitude towards the impending conflict and made a prediction about the fate of Bosnian Muslims should violence erupt:

I plead with you to fully understand that what you are doing is not good. The road that you are choosing for Bosnia and Herzegovina is the same highway to hell and suffering that Slovenia and Croatia have already taken. Do not think that you will not take Bosnia and Herzegovina to hell and the Muslim people *perhaps to extinction*. Because if there is a war, the Muslim people will not be able to defend themselves.⁵⁹

Karadžić's enormous advantage in resources put him in the position of being able to threaten the destruction of another Bosnian community.

The initial violence that led to war broke out in Bijeljina in late March 1992 and spread to the rest of the country in the following weeks. By the beginning of May, any hopes for a peaceful resolution to the political dispute that had shattered Yugoslav and Bosnian society had evaporated. By the end of August, Bosnian Serb forces, namely the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS – *Vojska Republike Srpske*), controlled more than 70 per cent of Bosnia. Between April and August, ethnic cleansing became a policy of Serb forces. In that short period, more than 70 per cent of the atrocities committed during the three-and-

⁵⁸ 27 March 1992, Karadžić-D00304, (BCS) p. 9.

⁵⁹ Emphasis added. A segment of his speech is available at: <http://youtu.be/ACHkmW8NGJU> and the quoted portion begins at 3:25 mark of the link. It is also available at Karadžić-P29. Hitler made a similar 'prediction' in 1939 when he said that a world war would lead to the 'annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe.' Hitler 'Prophecy' Speech to the Reichstag, 30 January 1939. Last accessed on 7 August 2015 at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/genocide/hitler_audio.shtml>.

a-half year long conflict were perpetrated. No single order or document exists that provides an unambiguous order to exterminate non-Serbs. However, an RS assembly transcript does elucidate Karadžić's vision for a new Serb state in Bosnia. On 12 May 1992, Karadžić delivered a speech at the Bosnian Serb Assembly and outlined his six strategic objectives for the war and the creation of an independent Republika Srpska, contiguous to Serbia, and rid of non-Serbs. 12 May was the Bosnian Serbs' equivalent of the Wannsee conference, but unlike at Wannsee, the Bosnian Serb regime's major figures all attended.

At the 16th Session of the RS Assembly, Radovan Karadžić voiced his vision for the war and set Bosnian Serb forces on their mission to permanently remove non-Serbs from Serb-claimed areas. The transcript of this session is one of the most significant documents for understanding the conflict. Karadžić outlined his regime's peripheral ideological values stemming from the nationalist principle, which together formed the wartime political programme. Although the RS president stopped short of calling for the mass murder of non-Serbs, he made clear that the new Serb state – the borders of which he delineated – would not be inhabited by Bosnian Muslims and Croats. Speaking at length, Karadžić placed blame for the outbreak of hostilities on the other national groups in Yugoslavia and Bosnia, as well as on the international community. The RS president referred to the unfavourable position suffered by Serbs in the twentieth century, especially during the Second World War and the post-war socialist regime. He explained that the Serb side had wanted peace and a political solution to the current crisis, but that the Croats and Muslims had forced his hand.⁶⁰ With his context established, Karadžić outlined the six strategic objectives, 'in order of importance.'

⁶⁰ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, (BCS) p. 6.

The primary objective demanded the destruction of multi-ethnic coexistence in Bosnia:

The first goal is separation from the other two national communities – separate states. Separation from those who are our enemies and who have used every opportunity, especially in this century, to attack us, and who would continue to do so if we were to stay together in the same state.

Considering the pre-war demographic makeup of Bosnia illustrated in Appendix C, it is evident what a radical proposal this objective represented. Karadžić did not explain how his government intended to achieve this goal. While there was no explicit call for mass murder, there was also no mention of Serbs relocating or a population exchange. It was simply the goal: a state without Others.⁶¹

At the 12 May 1992 session, Krajišnik emphasised the importance of the first objective:

I would just like to offer an explanation, since I have also taken part in adopting these goals ... The first goal is the most important one, and in relation to all other goals, all other goals are sub-items of the first one. Have we finally decided to separate from the other two national communities? We can part from them if Bosnia and Herzegovina is torn into three parts ... We shall say that wherever there were Serbs is Serb territory. That represents the mobilisation of the entire Serb people. We shall, in an organised and fair manner, provide our people with a roof over their heads. Resettle them if need be, we shall not put them in a genocidal position.⁶²

As before the war, the perceived threat of genocide that had provided the impetus to undermine Bosnia served as a springboard to war. Moreover, Krajišnik's comment that 'wherever there *were* Serbs is Serb territory' opened the possibility to claiming almost any part of Bosnia. Krajišnik's proposal to 'resettle them if need be' seemed to suggest the possibility of moving Serbs from one area to another. Did Karadžić's followers consider a

⁶¹ One of the key texts about the war, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, misstates the first strategic objective as 'Separate the Bosnian Serbs from Bosnia;' whereas the transcript indicates that the Serbs should separate – or perhaps be separated from – the other two national communities. This is a fundamental distinction, as Karadžić does not suggest that Serbs should move elsewhere, nor is he solely discussing separation from a state, but separation from peoples.

⁶² 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, (BCS) pp. 41-42.

Greek-Turkish style population exchange? While a minority opinion, some delegates suggested a population exchange before the war. For example, Milutin Najdanović informed the assembly:

The Serb people must be prepared for territorial exchanges, for population relocation. The familiar tune of ‘the betrayal of the Serb people’ is easily invoked these days. Regardless of the pain, the global goals of the nation must take priority ... we must be prepared to exchange some bits ... the new Serb state must not be a geographic monster in which one part cannot communicate with another like Bangladesh.⁶³

However, as subsequent chapters of this thesis demonstrate, the Serb military and political leadership proved unwilling to give up any conquered territory and this resulted in the rejection of several peace agreements and prolonged the war. Krajišnik himself, despite this comment in May 1992, would become one of the most stalwart opponents of demands to cede territory during peace negotiations.

What precise areas would compose Karadžić’s state? While the regions outlined in his 12 May speech represented his regime’s ultimate territorial ambitions, Karadžić relied on the existing infrastructure developed during the preceding year in the form of the Serb Autonomous Regions. The core halves of the Serb state corresponded roughly to the areas in Appendix C where ethnic Serbs formed relative majorities: Bosnia’s northwest region centring on Banja Luka, the Bosnian Krajina; and its northeast region, Semberija, centring on Bijeljina. Claiming these territories reflected an appeal to the principle that a relative Serb majority was sufficient for inclusion in the new state. However, even these ‘majority Serb municipalities’ had substantial non-Serb populations. For example, only 49 per cent of residents in the city of Banja Luka (excluding neighbouring villages) identified as Serbs in 1991, whereas 55 per cent of the entire municipality (including neighbouring villages)

⁶³ Probably he had in mind East and West Pakistan before the partition. 25 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 214-215.

identified as ethnic Serbs. The case of Bijeljina was even more pronounced: ethnic Serbs made up only 28.7 per cent of the town itself, but 59.2 per cent of the municipality including villages.⁶⁴ Making these municipalities ‘Serb’ would involve an influx of rural inhabitants and an exodus of a large part of the centre’s urban residents.

As evident from a study of the demographic distribution illustrated in Appendix C, a state-builder hoping to link these two regions would have an obvious problem: the green and red patches between the two blue areas had majority Muslim and Croat populations. The ‘division’ of Serb-claimed territories spurred the second strategic objective articulated in Karadžić’s 12 May speech: the establishment of a connection between Krajina and Semberija. Karadžić needed a strip of territory to connect the eastern and western halves of his state. Moreover, and just as importantly, by establishing a Serb ‘corridor’ through Croat- and Muslim-majority areas, the Serb-claimed territories in Croatia and Bosnia could forge a continuous link to Serbia proper.

Connecting to Serbia provided the inspiration for the third strategic objective: ‘the elimination of the Drina River as a separation between two worlds. We are on both sides of the Drina and our strategic interest and living space are there.’ In other words, Karadžić did not want the river to be a boundary between Serbia and the RS. What is more, he imagined that his people deserved additional territory to fulfil their potential. A glance at Appendix C demonstrates an obstacle to this plan: Zvornik, Bratunac, Srebrenica, Višegrad, Goražde, and Foča – all these municipalities along the Bosnian bank of the Drina River had Muslim relative majorities. Although Karadžić noted the possibility of Muslim enclaves existing within this territory, he emphasised that ‘the belt along the Drina must essentially belong to

⁶⁴ Krajišnik-P954; Banja Luka pp. 46-47 and Bijeljina pp. 52-53.

Serb Bosnia and Herzegovina.’ Achieving this goal was essential in order to link the RS to Serbia and to create an enlarged Serb state.

The fourth objective specified that the Una and Neretva Rivers should be borders of the RS, the fifth objective emphasised the division of Sarajevo, and the sixth strategic objective imagined access to the sea for Republika Srpska. In his speech, Karadžić explained his rationale for laying siege to Sarajevo. The RS president explained that the battle for Sarajevo would prevent ‘even the illusion of a Bosnian state.’ He went on:

Alija [Izetbegović] does not have a state while we have part of Sarajevo. He has no government, no assembly, no functioning [state], because the most important thing for Alija is to create an illusion for the world that there is a state and that we are terrorists.

To paraphrase, the reason why multi-ethnic Sarajevo had to be destroyed and its civilian quarters shelled was because the Bosnian Serb leader did not want any form of multi-ethnic state to even appear to exist. The siege of Sarajevo had its origins in a political and military strategy, both determined by nationalist ideology.

Central to determining which parts of Bosnia would constitute the RS was the assembly’s interpretation of the consequences of the Second World War and its derived sense of victimhood. While deliberating a constitutional amendment in September 1992, Krajišnik articulated a principle that underscored the six strategic objectives:

The territory of the republic comprises Serb ethnic areas including regions where genocide against the Serb people has been committed.⁶⁵

Delegates passed the above amendment to the RS constitution unanimously. This amendment rationalised the takeover of municipalities with Serb minorities, such as Prijedor and Sanski Most. The policy contrasted with a statement by Karadžić in February 1992, before the war, when he said, ‘I think it is necessary for us to say: areas where we are

⁶⁵ This statement refers to the killing of Serbs by the Ustasha during the Second World War. 14-15 September 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 40-41.

a majority are ours. With one of our partners [Bosnian Croat nationalists] we have agreed that where they constitute a relative majority we shall define the areas as theirs, and where we constitute this relative majority, that's ours.'⁶⁶ Other RS assembly delegates, however, argued that areas 'that were once ours but were lost due to genocide and migratory movements' should be adjoined to the new Serb state in Bosnia.⁶⁷ For example, Karadžić identified the area between Kozara and Grmeč, both in the Prijedor municipality, as an area where 'nothing can belong to anyone but us, because genocide was committed there [during the Second World War], Serb people have been killed there and the number of Muslims grew 50 per cent because of the genocide and not because of some kind of natural development.'⁶⁸ According to the delegates' reasoning, historical crimes justified contemporary territorial acquisition.

Conclusion

During the 1991 war in Croatia and until May 1992, Bosnian Serb leaders escalated their rhetoric and took concrete steps to form a separate state. By using historical suffering as a reference – most notably the Second World War – Karadžić, Krajišnik, and others rationalised the foundation of a state built on the nationalist principle. Delegates at the RS assembly explicitly rejected the concept of 'civic' states like Bosnia, and even Yugoslavia, as they laid the political and military foundation for the creation of Republika Srpska. The imperatives of linking with Serbia and homogenising the territories in Bosnia under their control became arguments for war, as delegates competed to establish their nationalist *bona fides*. While delegates' contempt for non-Serbs is evident from the transcripts, what is

⁶⁶ 15 February 1992, Karadžić-P01351, p. 20.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

⁶⁸ 28 August 1995, Karadžić-P00988, p. 70.

striking is their lack of concern for how this political programme would be realised. The six strategic objectives called for the complete demographic reorganisation of Bosnia. Like the participants at the Wannsee Conference, Karadžić did not explicitly call for the mass murder of non-Serbs. His language was Serb-centric. Yet the plan contained no proposals for further negotiations with leaders from other ethnic groups, Serb withdrawals, or even population exchanges. At the very least, Karadžić's May 1992 speech contained a rationalisation for forced removal that would involve hundreds of thousands of non-Serbs. In the assembly sessions when delegates planned the formation of the RS, there was almost no discussion about the violence and human cost inherent in creating such a state.

The Bosnian Serb leadership considered its task historical and justified. Like the perpetrators studied by Michael Mann, political figures who themselves would never kill anyone nevertheless rationalised their decision-making by invoking self-defence and necessity. But one could hardly describe the authors of the speeches cited in this chapter as bureaucrats unaware of the consequences of their actions or their role in a much larger machine. These figures, most of all Karadžić and Krajišnik, exerted considerable effort to make their fantasy real. By dehumanising the Other and glorifying their own cause, Bosnian Serb nationalists managed to suppress the reality of their pending three-year-long campaign against Bosnia's non-Serbs.

Chapter 3: The Croat Expansionist Programme, June 1991 - September 1992

... Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be taken as something God-given that must be preserved, and especially we must not forget how harmful it is. Because of the creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia has been put in an impossible situation regarding its territory. Regarding administration, not to mention defence, we cannot establish an independent Croatia such as it is. – Franjo Tuđman, Meeting with the delegation of the HDZ BiH and officials of the Republic of Croatia, in Zagreb, 27 December 1991¹

There are striking similarities in the ideology and approach of Serb and Croat nationalists before the war in Bosnia and at its outset. Franjo Tuđman, the first president of the Republic of Croatia, planned and directed the Bosnian Croat war effort. The evidence indicates that Tuđman served as the undisputed leader of Bosnian Croat nationalists, with whom he sided against moderate Croats in Bosnia and those from his own party who advocated preserving Bosnia. Tuđman and his followers adopted a similar nationalist policy towards Bosnia as did the Bosnian Serb leadership: ethnic separation on the ground and division of the pre-war Bosnian republic between Croatia and Serbia.

Transcripts of candid and highly confidential meetings in Tuđman's office before the war in Bosnia and at its outset reveal that the Croatian leader favoured the collapse of Bosnia and the annexation of Croat-majority areas by the Republic of Croatia. As discussed in the previous chapter, Serb nationalists began to create parallel state institutions in 1991 as Croatian troops clashed with the JNA. Some leaders from the Bosnian wing of Tuđman's Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica* – HDZ) determined to do the same. On 12 and 18 November 1991, five weeks after SDS representatives had walked out of the Bosnian assembly in Sarajevo, the Vice President of the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ BiH) Mate Boban announced the implementation

¹ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 56-57.

of the ‘centuries-old dream’ to create a Croatian state and proclaimed the Croat Community of the Posavina and the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna (*Hrvatska zajednica Herceg Bosna*, henceforth Herceg Bosna).² At its inception, Herceg Bosna consisted of 30 municipalities with Mostar as its capital. As they did with the Republika Srpska, authorities in Sarajevo denounced the new Croat entity as illegal.³ Although Franjo Tuđman stated that the creation of the two Croat communities did not reflect an intention to separate from Bosnia,⁴ the evidence indicates that that outcome formed the goal shared by the Croatian president and the majority of the HDZ BiH leadership.

In meetings in Tuđman’s office from June 1991 until September 1992, the Croatian president and his followers articulated their ideological ambitions towards Bosnia. Discussions from two meetings in particular, held on 8 June and 27 December 1991, are highlighted in this chapter because both featured intense discussion about the future of the Croatian state. Tuđman held the earlier meeting on the eve of war with the JNA and just two weeks before his government declared independence from Yugoslavia on 25 June 1991. The 27 December meeting took place four days after Croatia received international recognition from Germany, which proved a major boon to the aspiring state’s international standing. During these two meetings and at others, Tuđman supported the collapse of Bosnia and the annexation of the self-declared Croat communities by the Republic of Croatia.

The Croatian president considered multi-ethnic civic states like Yugoslavia and Bosnia inimical to his state-building project. Like the Serb leadership in Bosnia, Tuđman

² Prlić *et al* Judgement, Vol I, pp. 183-184; 3 July 1992, Prlić-P00302; and September 1992, Prlić-P00078.

³ 18 September 1992, Prlić-P00505.

⁴ 18 November 1992, Prlić-P00080, pp. 1 and 46.

and his followers adhered to the nationalist principle: the state and ethnic boundaries needed to align. While Tuđman's government benefited from certain advantages over the Serb side, it also faced different challenges. Unlike Serb leaders – from both Republika Srpska and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) – Tuđman enjoyed international recognition for his state, which provided a major diplomatic advantage during the war years.⁵ The Croatian state did not, however, exercise effective authority over its entire territory. The leadership of the Serb breakaway state Republika Srpska Krajina, which controlled a fifth of the Republic of Croatia's recognised territory, denied Zagreb's authority and hoped to maintain a state union with Serbia, Montenegro, and Republika Srpska. The great predicament for Tuđman and his fellow HDZ party leaders throughout the war became how to extend Zagreb's authority over the Serb-controlled territories ruled from Knin, while at the same time breaking off Croat-claimed territories in Bosnia and connecting them to Croatia.

Tuđman's expansionist project faced further obstacles. Unlike the Serb leadership, which except for a few notable exceptions endorsed the Serb nationalist programme, among Bosnian Croats there existed deep divisions on the question of whether to preserve Bosnia. Some Bosnian Croat political leaders within Tuđman's own party argued that Bosnia needed to emerge from the war intact. In the preceding political crisis and in the first months of the conflict, Tuđman and other Croat leaders considered the war in Bosnia a critical battleground for the future of the Croatian state and people. As Croat leaders discussed their optimum wartime outcome, Tuđman sided with the more extreme nationalists in the HDZ BiH and supported their efforts to break multi-ethnic Bosnia, divide

⁵ Germany recognised Croatia's independence in December 1991, the European Economic Community recognised it in January 1992, and the United Nations followed in May 1992.

communities along ethnic lines, and link Croat-majority areas to the Republic of Croatia – with no consideration to the human cost of achieving such a new reality.

Interpreting Circumstances and Forming Ideological Ambitions

Tuđman and his followers opposed preserving Yugoslavia following the HDZ's rise to power in Croatia. Speaking on 8 June 1991, when the future of the Yugoslav union remained uncertain, the president of Croatia invoked history to criticise any future Yugoslav union:

It is unacceptable for us to speak about a third Yugoslavia ... among our population a third Yugoslavia is out of the question. As an idea, as a state, as a concept, Yugoslavia is buried as far as the spiritual essence of the Croat people is concerned. There can only be an association of sovereign states on Yugoslav territory ... Furthermore, it was created as the SHS State, not as Yugoslavia, and was then imposed as a dictatorship. Yugoslav socialist internationalism has also been used up; therefore, our people would not accept a third Yugoslavia, so let us not delude ourselves into thinking that it is possible and compromise ourselves.⁶

The only option for any form of Yugoslavia to survive, according to Tuđman, 'would be if it is transformed into a union of Yugoslav republics, an alliance of Yugoslav republics, an alliance of Yugoslav states.'⁷ By preserving 'some kind of community of sovereign states,' Tuđman suggested that there could be 'a peaceful solution to the Croat-Serb conflict.'⁸ Even Bosnian Croat leaders like Stjepan Kljuić, the president of the HDZ BiH in 1991 who later hoped to preserve Bosnia, harboured no intention of remaining in a rump Yugoslav union: 'We prepared ourselves, and although the Serb side warned us that if we did that it meant war, for every honest man the choice between surrendering to Montenegro and

⁶ The SHS Tuđman refers to is the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, which existed from late October until December 1918 when it voted to join the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. 8 June 1991, Naletilić-P892.P1, pp. 14-15.

⁷ Ibid., p. 2.

⁸ Ibid., p. 12.

Serbia or Bosnia's independence was no choice.’⁹ HDZ leaders in 1991 pushed for Yugoslavia’s collapse, considering it an imposed framework.

Yet in 1991, as the European Community forged closer ties, the United States and Western European countries preferred to keep Yugoslavia intact. In October 1990, along with the Slovene political leadership, Tuđman’s government backed a proposal to create a Yugoslav confederation closely modelled on the European Community. However, the other Yugoslav republics and autonomous regions rejected the plan, which may have represented an attempt to peacefully separate the Yugoslav republics over time.¹⁰ Eight months later, Croatian Prime Minister Franjo Gregurić raised the problem of dividing a multi-ethnic country while Europe moved in the opposite direction: ‘The European Community has moved from economic towards political integration, while we [Croatia in Yugoslavia], as it is, must preserve some elements of economic links, but no political links, or just reduced to a minimum.’¹¹ Tuđman echoed the concern, but suggested that any comparison between the European Community and Yugoslavia needed to remain cosmetic or presented in a pro-independence light: ‘As for modelling after the European Community... It is clear that when we mention the European Community, we do so in order to be acceptable to Europe... The European Community is the European Community, but in Europe you also have Italy, Germany, and France and England and all the others.’¹² In fact, the Croatian president warned against placing too much faith in the European Community and framed its support for the pro-Yugoslav politician Ante Marković as misguided:

⁹ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 2.

¹⁰ D. Jović, ‘The Slovenian-Croatian Confederal Proposal: A Tactical Move or an Ultimate Solution,’ in L.J. Cohen and J. Dragović-Soso (eds.), *State Collapse in South-Eastern Europe* (West Lafayette, 2008), pp. 249-280.

¹¹ 8 June 1991, Naletilić-P892.P1, p. 9.

¹² Ibid., p. 10.

Let us be realistic, let us not get carried away with this as some all-saving and forever all-solving model of the European Community ... Furthermore, as much as this European Community recommends a unified Yugoslavia to us, as much as they support [Ante] Marković, and as much as Marković steers a policy of preserving Yugoslavia and – supposedly – securing equal interests, we have seen, for example in the speech of Prime Minister Gregurić, how the representatives of the republics reach an agreement about the free circulation of goods, respect for federal laws, etc., and then the following day Serbia adopts – actually the confiscation of Croatian enterprises.¹³

Thus, Tuđman considered following the European Community's suggestion to keep Yugoslavia intact only if it meant through an 'association of sovereign states' and as a sovereign state it could determine whether 'to enter into any form of association, to be independent in Europe, either in the European Community or outside it.'¹⁴ Although Croat leaders knew they would need Europe's support to secure their independence from Yugoslavia, politically they sought to reject both the multi-national European model as well as advice from European representatives.

In 1991, Croat nationalists considered the contemporary situation as one in which historic goals could be achieved. Welcoming guests from the HDZ BiH to a meeting, Tuđman commented that they would discuss 'an issue currently of the greatest importance for Croatia;' later in the session the president added, 'these moments are too crucial historically for us to play and allow any personal views.'¹⁵ Miro Lasić, a representative of the HDZ BiH leadership, lauded President Tuđman, highlighted the historic nature of the Croat nationalist cause, and ideologically contextualised the time in which they lived:

First, I must say that I have always felt myself to be a Croat from Bosnia and Herzegovina - I stress the 'from' [because] I belong to a single and indivisible Croat people. And our circumstances today are an historic opportunity to create a Croatian state. King Tomislav did this a thousand years ago and created a Croatian kingdom. Providence has today endowed President Tuđman with an opportunity to

¹³ 8 June 1991, Naletilić-P892.P1, p. 11.

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

¹⁵ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 1 and 70.

give Croats the Republic of Croatia. This is an undeniable fact. We must know that we are a rather tragic people, which has been able to achieve this once in a thousand years. King Tomislav and President Tuđman are two milestones in Croat history from time immemorial until now. I think that not even the territory of Croatia is important. The only thing history will record is Croatian statehood. And we are a generation to which God has given this grace. We must be grateful for this grace: I am personally happy and proud for having lived through these historic events and having taken part in them under President Tuđman's leadership. So the creation of a Croatian state is the essence. We are receiving it with great and serious sacrifices by the Croat people. This obliges us to quell our individualities and be a whole, to put it simply. Unfortunately, the reality we were thrown in compels us in these historic moments to be sober and worthy of the Croat people's history.¹⁶

But the Croatian president did not share Lasić's view that the state's territory was not so important: 'Just as we have taken advantage of this historic moment to establish an independent, internationally recognised Croatia, I believe that it is time that we take the opportunity to gather the Croat people within the widest possible borders.'¹⁷ Dario Kordić, one of the top political and military leaders of Herceg Bosna, supported Tuđman's ambition and claimed that his expansionist vision enjoyed popular support: 'The Croatian people in the region of Travnik live with the idea of joining the Croatian state and they are ready to do so at all costs. The young men are teeming with the Croat spirit ... Although this was a sad Christmas because of the destruction of Croatia, it was the most Croat Christmas in this part of Bosnia since the [Second World] war.'¹⁸ Several months before war in Bosnia, HDZ leaders from Zagreb and Bosnia eyed Croat-majority areas in Bosnia and discussed these territories in the context of Croatia's future borders.

Before the war, Tuđman made his opposition to Bosnia's continued survival clear. He framed Bosnia's historical existence as a detriment to the Croat people:

History has shown that Bosnia is no solution for the Croat people. First of all,

¹⁶ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 27-28.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 43.

gentlemen, let us not forget that it was created in the colonial conquests of an Asian power at the expense of the Croat people and territories between the 15th and 18th centuries. All colonial creations throughout history fell, both in Africa and Asia. Bosnia and Herzegovina did not exist between the two [world] wars. The communists invented it and put it back on the map after World War II ...

The Croatian president considered Bosnia an obstacle to the sustainment of a Croatian state:

... Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be taken as something God-given that must be preserved, and especially we must not forget how harmful it is. Because of the creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia has been put in an impossible situation regarding its territory. Regarding administration, not to mention defence, we cannot establish an independent Croatia such as it is.

Moreover, Tuđman believed that if Bosnia remained united, Croat populations in the country would dwindle:

... What is the future of the Croatian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina? I have cited already how from 24 per cent we fell to 17 per cent [of the total population]. Mr. Vlašić from Travnik said that in Travnik we dropped from 56 per cent to 37 per cent. Be certain that if Bosnia and Herzegovina survived, within ten years this would acquire even more horrible proportions. The Muslims are counting on demographic expansion, both with their birth rate and their plan to bring in 500,000 Muslims from Turkey and other places. Therefore, the survival of Bosnia as an independent and sovereign state, even if possible, is in any case against the interests of the Croat people and makes impossible the normal territorial establishment of the Croatian State, and creates conditions for the disappearance of what remains of the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina ...¹⁹

In other words, the Croatian president blamed the existence of Bosnia for past and present problems facing the Croat people and warned that should it continue to exist, it would have fatal consequences.

Tuđman drew on the past to inspire his state-building project. The 1939-41 Banovina of Croatia provided the ideal historical precedent for Tuđman's Croatia. In an argument with Bosnian Croat politician Stjepan Kljuić, who favoured the preservation of

¹⁹ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 56-57. Tuđman made similar comments about Bosnia's existence creating a detriment to Croatia in his *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe* (New York, 1981), p. 113.

Bosnia, Tuđman stated ‘it is no accident that in the preamble to the Croatian Constitution we also mention the Banovina of Croatia.’²⁰ In his exchange with Kljuić, the Croatian president claimed, ‘the state of Croatia cannot survive such as it is, but a Croatian state with the borders of the Banovina could, not to mention if these borders were improved on.’²¹ Appendix E illustrates the Banovina borders imposed over Bosnia’s pre-war municipalities; these correspond approximately to areas where ethnic Croats formed relative majorities, as evident from Appendix C. Before the war in Bosnia, Tuđman made no secret of his expansionist aims among his subordinates and of his conviction that the restoration of the 1939 Banovina borders would represent the best outcome for Croat nationalists in the pending conflict.

Despite his comment about ‘improving on’ the Banovina’s borders, Tuđman appreciated that the 1939 boundaries represented the limit of Croatia’s territorial ambitions and recognised that the presence of non-Croats hindered the expansionist cause. Tuđman considered the Banovina borders preferable to those of the other major twentieth century precedent, the 1941-45 fascist Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* – NDH), which included all of Bosnia: ‘even if somebody gave us a border on the Drina, what would you do with two million Serbs and as many Muslims — what kind of Croatian state would that be? What future would it have?’²² He made a similar observation in September 1992: ‘Clearly, we cannot include all Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina... If

²⁰ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 60-61. During the war he repeated the same comment: ‘On the Bosnia and Herzegovina question, we have stated in the preface or as lawyers say, the preamble, to the Croatian Constitution one point: that the preservation of Croatian statehood also implies the Croatian Banovina. This remark was not lightly made, on the spur of the moment, or just in passing, but rather on the basis of the assessment of historical facts.’ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, p. 30.

²¹ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 63.

²² Ibid., pp. 56-57.

they gave us a border on the Drina with two million Muslims and one and a half million Serbs, whose state would that be?’²³ Thus, Tuđman sought to balance his two ideological aims: expanding the Croatian state and promoting its homogeneity.

HDZ BiH leaders created Herceg Bosna in December 1991 with the intention of delineating a territory that could join the Republic of Croatia in anticipation of Bosnia’s disintegration. About three months before war in Bosnia, Mate Boban reported to Tuđman and the Zagreb leadership about developments among the Croat nationalist communities in Western Herzegovina and Northern Bosnia:

Something new exists called the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna and the Croat Community of Posavina in the north of Bosnia. This idea was embraced, in this sense, as a framework for the expression of the political will of the Croat people whose most prominent voice is the Croat Democratic Union. The people have placed their full trust in the leadership, setting up Croat communities that represent the political, cultural, and economic characteristics of the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Should Bosnia and Herzegovina remain an independent state without any ties with the former disintegrating, or any future, Yugoslavia, or should Bosnia itself disintegrate, the area where 650,000 Croats live would implement internationally recognised democratic methods proclaiming this to be independent Croat territory, which will join the state of Croatia but only at such a time as the Croatian leadership, in whom our people until now have placed their complete trust, should decide that that time had come.²⁴

Ignac Koštroman, the secretary of the HDZ BiH, congratulated the Zagreb leadership for achieving the ‘historical objective’ of independence and international recognition of the Republic of Croatia. Koštroman explained that the decision to establish Herceg Bosna ‘serves as the legal basis for the entry of this territory into the Republic of Croatia.’ Furthermore, as Koštroman elaborated, the leadership of Herceg Bosna recognised the authority of Croatian president ‘to promote the interests of Herceg Bosna among international entities and during inter-party and inter-republic agreements on the

²³ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 38-39.

²⁴ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 10.

establishment of the final borders of the Republic of Croatia.’²⁵ Appendix F illustrates the self-proclaimed Croat communities.²⁶ The Herceg Bosna leadership considered joining the Republic of Croatia an ideal solution to the crisis and subordinated itself to Tuđman.

Koštroman also reported on ‘conclusions’ adopted by Herceg Bosna’s leadership, which reflected a Croat equivalent to the ideological programme adopted by the Republika Srpska leadership. Signed by Dario Kordić, Božo Rajić, and Mate Boban, the conclusions represented Bosnian Croat nationalist policy at the end of 1991. The leadership had judged that the Bosnian Ministry of the Interior aided what it called ‘the Serb army’ (at the time still the JNA) and revoked Alija Izetbegović’s authority to speak on behalf of Bosnian Croats because his lack of action had ‘in effect facilitated the army’s attack on the Republic of Croatia.’²⁷ Moreover, the leadership determined that if Bosnia somehow survived the political crisis, Herceg Bosna representatives would only participate in such a state in the event of a confederal agreement or cantonal division of the country. The meeting attendees ordered Herceg Bosna deputies in Yugoslav federal organs to withdraw because ‘Yugoslavia has been nothing but a tomb for the Croat people who have finally cast off their chains;’ and added that members of the Bosnian republic assembly from Herceg Bosna should no longer serve as deputies so long as the assembly was chaired by Momčilo Krajišnik, ‘a supporter of the Greater Serbia programme.’ In addition to instructing its representatives to withdraw from other institutions, the conclusions also ordered the authorities of Dobretići, a Croat majority village in the majority Muslim municipality of Skender Vakuf, to break off from the larger municipality and apply to join Jajce or Travnik

²⁵ 27 December 1991, pp. 12-13 and 17.

²⁶ When compared to Appendix C, it is apparent that although most of these municipalities had relative Croat ethnic majorities, all of them did not. Moreover, some, namely those in Central Bosnia, even had Muslim majorities.

²⁷ Note that in the previous chapter Serb delegates blamed the same ministry for helping Croatia.

– Croat majority municipalities – effectively initiating a ‘rounding off’ process similar to that implemented by the Republika Srpska leadership.²⁸ Anticipating the collapse of both Yugoslavia and Bosnia, Herceg Bosna authorities ordered their agents to withdraw from the institutions of those larger entities and bolster the sovereignty of Herceg Bosna.

The Croat nationalist leadership awaited the disintegration of Bosnia and the absorption of large parts of Bosnian territory with enthusiasm. Tuđman announced at one meeting that the sovereignty of Bosnia ‘is such that not only do we not have to advocate it, we must not even raise the issue openly;’ in the event of Bosnia’s collapse, Croatia would absorb both the HZ Herceg Bosna and the Croat Community of the Posavina, ‘but also, for geopolitical reasons, Cazinska and Bihaćka Krajina which would satisfy almost ideally Croatian national interests.’²⁹ Dalibor Brozović, a high-ranking HDZ official and close advisor to Tuđman, stated that the largely homogeneous Western Herzegovina region ‘would become part of Croatia in a partition.’ The achievement of this ideological goal ‘would, most certainly, be a relief for the largest part of the Croat population and something that would be closest to their hearts and an ideal solution for a multitude of practical and all other problems in their lives.’³⁰

Serb Nationalists: Friends and Foes

Despite their confidence in Bosnia’s looming collapse, before the war and during its first months, the Croat leadership appreciated that it needed to officially support Bosnia in order to ensure that Serbs appeared as the principal aggressors in the conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia. Tuđman explained:

²⁸ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 14-17.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 20.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 22.

During the talks, we supported the position of preserving a sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina because the Greater Serbian policy raised the issue of Serb areas in Croatia. Therefore, it would have been politically unwise for us to raise the issue of demarcation of borders in Bosnia and Herzegovina ourselves.³¹

Tuđman elaborated that at pre-war negotiations ‘we did not want to be the ones to raise the issue of borders’ but a division of Bosnia remained probable because ‘Serb policy is striving to create Greater Serbia.’³² Before Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia, the Croatian president argued that it had already lost its sovereignty and that Croat leaders planned to secede:

We said that for tactical reasons, we were in favour of a sovereign Bosnia so long as it existed. But there is no longer a sovereign Bosnia. The Serbs have split off. The Bosnian government has no authority over Serb areas, and these Serb areas, and not only the Serb areas of Bosnia, all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is involved in the war against Croatia. Its territory and the Serb population are against Croatia. That is a fact. Therefore, why are we speaking of a sovereign Bosnia? Why are we speaking of a sovereign Bosnia, when Serb representatives are taking part in Belgrade in the creation of Greater Serbia? ... What our friends did with these communities of Herceg Bosna and Posavina, it was not a mistake. It derives from our general policy. When the Serbs were breaking away, the Croat areas had to be organised, for self-defence, if they should be physically threatened.³³

When the war began, the Croatian president stated that he had withstood pressure to change his policy and risked Croatia becoming ‘labelled as yet another aggressor.’³⁴ In a manner similar to that of the Bosnian Serb leadership, Tuđman also championed the virtues of ‘reaction’ and ‘self-defence’ while framing the other side as aggressive.

Tuđman considered the Bosnian question central to the crisis between Serbia and Croatia and acknowledged that he shared the same perspective as Serb nationalists who sought to divide Bosnia. Before the war in Bosnia, Tuđman explained, ‘the solution [to the Yugoslav crisis] lies in the partition of Bosnia ... I think we shall achieve it because this is

³¹ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 18-19.

³² Ibid., p. 19.

³³ Ibid., pp. 57-58.

³⁴ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 27-28.

equally in the interests of Serbia and Croatia, while the Muslim component has no other option than to accept this solution.³⁵ And as the Croatian president put it more broadly, ‘all the problems of the Yugoslav crisis, which is in fact a crisis of inter-ethnic relations, a crisis of relations among the republics, are reflected in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’³⁶ Tuđman agreed with Serb nationalists that Bosnia’s contemporaneous and historic borders could not continue to exist because they did not align with ethnic boundaries:

In the beginning, the Serbs said that if there was to be a confederal alliance, they could not accept the current borders, they considered them administrative, because three million [Serbs] lived outside Serbia, in Bosnia and Croatia. Of course, there aren’t three million, but two million Serbs living in Bosnia and Croatia. So this is the reality that we cannot overlook. Also, gentlemen, if we opt for Croatia’s independence, either within an alliance or total independence, Croatia’s borders, such as they are today, are absurd, they are impossible, in the sense of administration and trade, let alone any kind of protection. Therefore, from our point of view no less than from the Serb, there is the problem of – there is a need to find an essential solution to the problem, because the establishment of Bosnia, the borders of Bosnia after World War II, are historically absurd, a resurrection of a colonial creation from the period between the 15th and the 18th centuries.³⁷

He added that ‘if we come to an agreement about this important contested matter between Croatia and Serbia, that is, Bosnia and Herzegovina, if we achieve realistic borders for the Republic of Croatia and if this problem of Serbs outside Serbia is solved so that Serbia is satisfied, then we can work on Serbia accepting such a foundation for an association which would be also acceptable to us and to others, or total disassociation.’³⁸ Tuđman’s analysis indicates that he adhered to the fundamental nationalist principle, as did Serb nationalists, which demanded that ethnic and administrative borders correspond, and thus he favoured splitting multi-ethnic Bosnia.

On 8 January 1992, the Croatian President hosted a meeting with representatives

³⁵ 8 June 1991, Naletilić-P892.P1, p. 9.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

³⁷ 8 June 1991, Naletilić-P892.P1, p. 4.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

from his government, Herceg Bosna, and the vice-president of the Republika Srpska, Nikola Koljević, who together in a congenial tone expressed their shared commitment to the nationalist principle and the division of Bosnia.³⁹ The two sides agreed on numerous issues and indicated their shared suspicion of Bosnian Muslims. The Croatian Minister of Defence Gojko Šušak pointed out that while Bosnian Serbs and Croats had Serbia and Croatia to look to, Bosnian Muslims ‘have nowhere to go, [Bosnia] is the homeland, and it is only a matter of time before one of the two other peoples is treated as a national minority.’⁴⁰ Koljević raised the ‘great danger, a common danger ... the creation of an Islamic republic;’ because if Bosnia became such a country, then there would be an influx of Muslims from countries like Libya, Iran, Turkey, and Iraq, which the RS vice-president described as ‘strongly fundamentalist nations.’⁴¹ Tuđman’s advisor Franjo Boras added:

[A state] with Alija [Izetbegović] at the head, a sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina as a civic state ... would ensure the pre-eminence of the Muslim people in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the gradual eradication of the two other peoples, especially the Croat people, who form a minority there.⁴²

Both sides also agreed that the international community opposed the creation of an Islamic state in Bosnia. Koljević informed those present at the meeting that the German ambassador had said ‘Croats and Serbs would represent good firemen for the isolated Muslims and could prevent them from linking up transversals;’⁴³ to which Tuđman replied, ‘Europe and

³⁹ Both sides agreed at the beginning of the meeting that the public should not know about the discussion, but at the end of the meeting Tuđman added ‘we should not make this public until further notice ... However, the leadership of the Serbs in Bosnia should be acquainted with them and I think that it is normal for you to brief Milošević, as he is now the President of Serbia.’ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, pp. 1 and 51.

⁴⁰ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, p. 12.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 4 and 28.

⁴² Ibid., p. 35.

⁴³ The ‘green transversal’ was a term used by Serb and Croat nationalists when referring to the territory in former Yugoslavia populated by Muslims, namely Bosnia, the Sandžak, and Kosovo. Serb and Croat nationalists claimed that Muslim forces sought to link these three territories, thereby creating a ‘green transversal.’

the world are afraid of what you call the green transversal and the creation of an Islamic [state] in Europe. So that they may even be inclined for a division between Croatia and Serbia in order to [avoid] having a separate Muslim [state].’⁴⁴ Hoping that together they might obtain the world’s support, the two sides reconfirmed their mutual and reciprocal visions.

Republika Srpska Vice President Nikola Koljević emphasised the areas where he believed Serbs and Croats shared the same point of view. Koljević echoed Tuđman’s sentiments from an earlier meeting, when the Croatian president stated that dividing Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia would ameliorate the crisis:

We propose a tripartite community ... An independent Bosnia does not suit us at all, because it brings us and we think the Croat people into a situation where we are separated from our motherlands ... Therefore, we propose confederal status for Bosnia, at least as the first stage in which, if one views it constructively, the Croat national community and the Serb national community could have open confederal ties with Croatia and Serbia.⁴⁵

The RS vice president explained that the solution should offer a ‘surplus of sovereignty’ for each ethnic group according to the Swiss system; and as for areas where peoples are ‘in contact,’ Koljević suggested, ‘it would be constructive to discuss a gentlemen’s agreement,’ hinting at a population exchange.⁴⁶ A united Bosnian state in the form of a federation would not be acceptable to the RS vice president, because, as Koljević appealed to his hosts, ‘it seems completely natural to us that the Croat parts of Bosnia should have far stronger institutional ties with Croatia. (Interjection: than within Bosnia and Herzegovina).’⁴⁷ Yet because of the events in Croatia in 1991, Tuđman worried whether the JNA would approve

⁴⁴ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, p. 37.

⁴⁵ Ibid., pp. 6-8.

⁴⁶ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

an ethnic demarcation of Bosnia;⁴⁸ anticipating this concern, Koljević assured his Croatian hosts that the Yugoslav Army would accept division of Bosnia into three states.⁴⁹ With these proposals in mind, the two sides looked for a solution to their conflict.

At the meeting, the Croat leadership and the Bosnian Serb vice president agreed to explore the option of a peaceful separation. Franjo Boras, a Croat member of the Bosnian presidency, explained that he had drawn up maps based on the last census in order to reorganise municipalities. Josip Manolić, a senior Croatian politician and advisor to the president, added that the purpose of the administrative reorganisation was to ‘homogenise’ certain areas. Koljević agreed that homogeneity represented a common goal and informed the meeting that Bosnians of different ethnic groups had already begun moving and exchanging property. The RS vice president argued against what he called the ‘political card’ that indicated it was impossible to divide Bosnia, adding, ‘nothing is impossible.’⁵⁰ Ignoring centuries of cohabitation among Bosnia’s peoples, Koljević asserted that it was once ‘natural’ to have separate Croat, Serb, and Muslim areas, ‘but this natural occurrence was destroyed,’ presumably by communist authorities, and the time had come to separate and form new municipalities.⁵¹ Koljević further suggested that both Serb and Croat leaders appreciated that ‘pacification could be attained through separation.’⁵² For a start, the meeting participants accepted Šušak’s idea that Bosnian television should be divided into three channels, one for each ethnic group.⁵³ Koljević suggested creating an agency to arrange exchanges of property and population, observing, ‘the term homogeneity was

⁴⁸ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 21.

⁴⁹ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, pp. 39-40.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 13.

⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 22-23.

⁵² Ibid., p. 5.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 46.

vilified in Yugoslavia. Why should it be so terrible for people to live with people who are closest to them?' Tuđman agreed with the exchange proposal and cited a historical precedent, 'Wherever national problems so conceived emerged as they did with us, that was resolved, from World War I and World War II, that was brought to a conclusion by exchanges.'⁵⁴ The amicable, top-secret meeting concluded with no concrete plans but a shared commitment to divide Bosnia along ethnic lines just months before war.

The Croat leadership appreciated that it needed to come to an agreement with the Serbs and even recognised that the Serb war effort, in a way, aided its cause. Because the Yugoslav Army supported the Serb policy, Tuđman evaluated that the prospects for 'a sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina are nil.'⁵⁵ Tuđman emphasised that although Croatia needed to defend itself against Serb imperialism, the Croat leadership needed to build relations that promoted mutual interests, 'even if that means a large-scale organised resettlement of populations.'⁵⁶ Thus, Serb nationalism and nationalists, while serving as the official opponents of Croat nationalism, also, ironically, aided the Croat nationalist cause because they fought against a unified Bosnia and agreed with the principle that different ethnic nations should live in separate states.

Yet despite their similar ideological aspirations, Tuđman, his followers, and even pro-Bosnia Croat leaders expressed a profound suspicion of Serbs. Stjepan Kljuić, who favoured preserving the territorial integrity of Bosnia, warned in December 1991: 'There are still about 31 per cent of Serbs in our area [Croat majority regions in Bosnia] and they still have about 60 per cent of influence in public life.'⁵⁷ Kljuić also complained about Serb

⁵⁴ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, p. 32.

⁵⁵ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 18.

⁵⁶ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁷ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 4.

dishonesty at negotiations: ‘No, no, those sons-of-bitches won't commit; they will not come out and say: “Let us divide it – you get this, we get that.” No, they won't do that. Instead they say, “Where five per cent of the population is Serb, that's Serbia.”’⁵⁸ Dalibor Brozović warned against trusting Serbs in Western Bosnia, because after ‘65 years of experience’ he had learned he ‘cannot trust the majority of those people at all.’ Moreover, Brozović doubted whether Croat policies could prevent Serbs in Western Bosnia from supporting Croatian Serbs in Knin who drove a ‘wedge in the heart of Croatia’ with the support of Belgrade and the army.⁵⁹ Miro Lasić suggested it might be possible to reach an agreement with the Muslims, but he warned against Serbs offering deceptive gifts. As an example, Lasić pointed to the case of Ante Trumbić, one of the Croat founders of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918, ‘a man of great education and intelligence,’ who had allowed himself to be ‘tricked’ by his Serbian counterpart, Nikola Pašić.⁶⁰ Although they shared a similar nationalist ideology and agreed on the plan to partition Bosnia, the Croat political elite still saw their Serb counterparts as adversaries.

The Croat-Serb nationalist clash was unavoidable, given that the Zagreb elite assessed the Serb expansionist project as constituting the primary threat to its own project of Croatian expansion. At a time when it appeared that Bosnia might remain in a union with Serbia and Montenegro, Lasić lamented that Croats in Bosnia were divided from Croatia and emphasised that they had to get out of ‘Serboslavia.’⁶¹ Lasić, who a year later became a member of the Bosnian presidency, also announced that he would ‘rather be a clerk for President Tuđman than a prime minister in Sarajevo ... but I can tell you that people in

⁵⁸ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 9.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 29.

villages, on the land, they will not move and we will stay with our people, who will become an ethnic minority in Serboslavia or directly under the Serbs.’⁶² At a key December 1991 meeting, Ignac Koštroman told Tuđman and other Croat leaders what the HDZ BiH had concluded at a meeting earlier that week:

The Croat Community of Herceg Bosna hereby declares the Serb and Montenegrin military-Chetnik-occupying-wild-criminal and destructive army unwelcome and unneeded in the territories of Herceg Bosna. In the future, we will tolerate no provocation whatsoever, demanding its immediate withdrawal from the territory of Herceg Bosna.⁶³

The president of the HVO from Bosnian Posavina described Serbs as a ‘militaristic people;’ Mile Akmadžić, a high-ranking Herceg Bosna official, claimed that Serbs nourished the idea of Greater Serbia, with a border from Karlobag to Vitrovitica, adding ‘no one is free in Sarajevo’ as Serb artillery bombarded the city.⁶⁴ Despite adhering to the same nationalist principles and sharing the desire to prevent a civic, multi-ethnic Bosnia from surviving, Croat nationalists realised that their conflict with Serbs in Croatia would extend to Bosnia.

Tuđman Sides with the Hardliners

In discussions over Bosnia’s fate in 1991, Tuđman clashed with members from his own party who advocated preserving Bosnia’s integrity. Tuđman and Ivan Markešić, the secretary of the HDZ BiH, argued over the future of Bosnia in 1991. Markešić stated that following a discussion with church leaders, he ‘completely backs a united, sovereign, and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina’ and that it ‘is the best solution for the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’ He explained that his main reason for this were the tens of thousands of Croats living in towns like Banja Luka, Zenica, Tuzla, and Sarajevo who lived outside Herzegovina and Posavina in areas not contiguous with Croatia. Tuđman retorted

⁶² 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 32-33.

⁶³ Ibid., pp. 12-13.

⁶⁴ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 17-19.

that with Serb representatives shunning Sarajevo in favour of Belgrade and their own institutions, an integral Bosnia had already become impossible, to which Markešić responded that adopting such a position would enable Serbia to expand into Bosnia for the first time.⁶⁵ The Croatian president insisted that no state could hope to control all areas where its ethnic kin lived, ‘but if we create a Croatian State with such a territory that it can survive, then the Croats who remain in what is left of Bosnia will have a base and they will have guarantees from the Croatian State and through international conventions.’⁶⁶ Stjepan Kljuić stated that Croats should fight for Bosnian sovereignty first, and only if Serbs split territories from Bosnia, should Croat leaders seek an agreement with the Muslims and link the remnants of Bosnia to Croatia through a confederation.⁶⁷ Both sides of the argument were nationalist, but already in December 1991 Tuđman appeared more prepared to settle for Croat majority areas – which corresponded to the Banovina borders – than did other HDZ BiH leaders who expressed concern for areas where Croats formed minorities.

The rift between Croat politicians as to whether they should attempt to preserve Bosnia or advance its collapse threatened HDZ unity. Miro Lasić lamented the lack of cohesion in the HDZ BiH, claiming ‘we are tearing ourselves apart from the inside,’ and appealed to Tuđman to resolve the dispute.⁶⁸ Božo Rajić, a HDZ BiH vice-president, identified the source of the conflict:

There are different views on various problems and avenues for their resolution. Some do not accept with enthusiasm or oppose the concept of [creating] Croat communities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are saying that the establishment of these communities is not in line with the policy of the HDZ and Croat interests in general ... The second opinion maintained by the opponents of [the first] political path, whose position of course will go forward as dictated by circumstances, is the

⁶⁵ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 49-51.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 61.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 30-31.

unconditional promise of unifying these areas with the Republic of Croatia.⁶⁹

In other words, a segment of the party opposed creating new ethnically based Croat entities, while the other part – which Rajić placed himself in and appeared assured of its success – focused on linking these Croat communities with the Republic of Croatia. Tuđman sided with the nationalist-separatist wing of HDZ BiH, telling Kljuić, ‘The time that you mentioned before has come: Croats cannot join Serboslavia.’ The Croatian president elaborated:

... The general policy was to preserve sovereignty until a certain moment, so long as it was convenient for Croatia. Now it is no longer convenient. So, what they did is exactly what you are saying – Croats do not want to join Serboslavia. Therefore, this is the road we need to take to achieve a Croatian State that will be better in every respect.⁷⁰

In December 1991, Tuđman made it clear that his preference was for the self-proclaimed Croat communities in Bosnia to join Croatia, and he did not support those members of his party who sought to preserve Bosnia’s unity.

Just like Bosnian Serb nationalists, HDZ leaders distrusted notions of a united civic state because they believed Muslims would dominate it. A HDZ BiH representative identified only as Barač observed: ‘Whether we like it or not, the Muslims have matured and created a nation. They do not accept the idea of dividing Bosnia according to the [Banovina] precedent of sixty years ago.’⁷¹ Mate Boban declared that he also ‘wants the Croatian borders of 50-60 years ago,’ but accepted that Muslims had ‘become a people’ with their own firm positions.⁷² Martin Udovčić, a member of the HDZ BiH presidency, explained that Muslims rejected the plan to divide Bosnia; he further informed his collaborators that young Muslims had ‘grown up conscious as Muslims’ and that they

⁶⁹ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 34-35.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 65-66.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷² Ibid., p. 25.

opposed joining the Herceg Bosna and Croatia. Udovčić anticipated conflict between the two ethnic groups.⁷³ Dario Kordić ridiculed the Muslims' 'honest intentions of a civic republic' and labelled the leaders of the main Muslim party 'Islamic fundamentalists;' he also claimed that the vice president of the main Muslim party had stated that Bosnian Muslims considered their home Turkey, dreamed of establishing a 'jamahiriya state,' and anticipated becoming an ethnic majority in Bosnia.⁷⁴ Zdenko Čosić, another member of the HDZ BiH presidency, argued that Croat leaders should try to find allies among Muslims, but of course not to engage with any who favoured 'a unitary Bosnia or a jamahiriya or whatever...'⁷⁵ Tuđman considered the Muslim 'aim to make Bosnia a state of citizens' as 'translating to an Islamic state.'⁷⁶ By January 1992, even before the war broke out, Zvonko Lerotić deemed that 'the civic principle of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been abolished.'⁷⁷

Conclusion

In 1991 and early 1992, the Croat nationalist political elite from Croatia and Bosnia led by Franjo Tuđman advocated the ethnic division of Bosnia and the eventual annexation of Croat-claimed territories to the Republic of Croatia. Tuđman sided with the more radical and separatist members of his party in Bosnia against those who tried to reason that Bosnia should be preserved. He and his supporters on this matter opposed the concept of a united, multi-ethnic Bosnia, viewing it – like a miniature Yugoslavia – as a failed attempt at a multi-ethnic state. Just as Croat nationalists believed Serbs had and would again dominate any Yugoslav union, they feared Bosnian Muslims would control a united Bosnia in a

⁷³ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 39-41.

⁷⁴ The deriding use of the term 'jamahiriya' is a reference to Muammar Qaddafi's dictatorial system of government; the term translates to 'state of the masses.' Ibid., pp. 44-45.

⁷⁵ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, p. 24.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

⁷⁷ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, pp. 47.

similar manner. While Tuđman realised that he shared the same ideological principles as the Serb nationalist leadership – recognising as much in his January 1992 meeting with Koljević – and further appreciated that he would one day need to make peace with Serbia, he regarded the Serb state-building project as antagonistic to his own. Although the Bosnian Croats never formed a specific political agenda like the Bosnian Serbs' six strategic objectives, they created 'Croat Communities' in Herzegovina, Central Bosnia, and the Posavina with the purpose of joining them to the Republic of Croatia in the near future. Policy over Bosnia's future divided the HDZ BiH between those who favoured and those who opposed its integrity and sovereignty; Tuđman backed those who sought its collapse. Tuđman and his followers viewed their times as historic and found in history a model for their contemporary state-building project. The borders of the 1939 Banovina of Croatia, as articulated by Tuđman, became the optimal goal for Croat policy in Bosnia.

What is striking about the discussions from Tuđman's office in 1991 and early 1992 is the complete lack of concern for how the 1939 Banovina border could be achieved. Just like Bosnian Serb leaders who expressed their views in the RS assembly, Croat nationalists recognised that their goals were unacceptable to the other two ethnic groups in Bosnia; therefore, they tacitly accepted violence as the indispensable means for achieving their ambitions. In the months before the war, both Croat and Serb nationalists expressed little concern for the human cost their ideological programmes would entail. As is evident from the discussions in his office, the Croatian president was the architect of the Croat nationalist programme in Bosnia. The question needs to be addressed: did Serbian President Slobodan Milošević serve the same role for the Bosnian Serbs?

Chapter 4: A Serb Divide Emerges, August 1992 - May 1993

What is important is that life in that future Bosnia becomes impossible and that everyone understands that, so that they rush off to their original provinces. This is a strategic goal to which we should aspire ... Everything else is then a matter of technique, including breaking up Bosnia into three parts. – Serbian Foreign Minister Vladislav Jovanović to confidential meeting of Serb representatives, 9 January 1993.¹

While Franjo Tuđman attempted to unite the Bosnian Croats around the plan to break Bosnia, the Belgrade leadership allowed the Bosnian Serb regime to design and implement its own separatist campaign. There is no question that Slobodan Milošević rallied Serbs across Yugoslavia to the nationalist cause in the late 1980s, but when it came to war, the Serbian president's approach was quite unlike his Croatian counterpart's. The evidence demonstrates that Milošević and other Serb leaders based in Belgrade did not press Karadžić and his deputies for the immediate territorial division of Bosnia. Yet Milošević and other Serbian leaders did nonetheless support the Serb expansionist project in crucial ways, as this and following chapters reveal. This chapter explores the strategic divergence that emerged among Serb leaders after the war had begun.

The difference between Serbian and Croatian approaches to the war sprung from their varying circumstances in 1992. Throughout 1991 and before the war in Bosnia in late April 1992, Belgrade advocated preserving Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, the political elite from Serbia solely promoted Serb interests and dropped the socialist language of brotherhood and unity as the months passed. But after Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia had all achieved international recognition by May 1992, it became clear that the Yugoslav union had no future. While in 1991 Croat nationalists plotted to resurrect the

¹ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) pp. 19-20.

1939 Banovina, Serb leaders needed to create a new, post-Yugoslav agenda. As the second chapter illustrated, under Karadžić's leadership the Bosnian Serb assembly conceived of the six strategic objectives, but unlike the Bosnian Croats, a leader in a neighbouring sponsor republic did not direct them. What is more, Croatia was a state at war, with a fifth of its territories occupied, while Milošević had no violent conflict in his own republic. Therefore, much more was at stake for both Franjo Tuđman and Radovan Karadžić than for Slobodan Milošević.

The evidence shows that the withdrawing JNA, controlled from Belgrade, provided essential support to the Bosnian Serbs during a crucial period at the beginning of the war. Thanks to the JNA's organisational and materiel assistance, the Bosnian Serbs embarked on the war immensely better armed and prepared than their adversaries. However, as this chapter demonstrates, a series of meetings in the latter half of 1992 and early 1993 among Serb leaders from Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia and Montenegro, which formed the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (*Savezna Republika Jugoslavija* – SRJ), reveal that the Serbian leadership in Belgrade did not share Tuđman's drive to divide Bosnia in the immediate future. Before exploring the factors that deterred an even more aggressive role in the war by the SRJ, it is necessary to grasp the main features of the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs' proposal for an immediate territorial merger. By then evaluating the domestic and international pressures facing the SRJ leadership, it is possible to appreciate why the Serbian and Montenegrin council members would not adopt the Bosnian and Croatian Serb leadership's position. The Belgrade political elite's enthusiasm to achieve the shared ideological goal was tempered by a pessimistic assessment of its environment and the

mounting costs to Serbia and Montenegro, which explain why Milošević and his followers proposed a long-term approach to building an expanded Serb state.

JNA Withdrawal and VRS Genesis

Serb nationalism spread through the JNA ranks in 1991 during the war in Croatia and accelerated as Bosnia approached violence in 1992. The JNA 5th Corps, which operated in an area of responsibility corresponding to most of Bosnia, revealed its leanings by adopting a different approach to Serb and non-Serb paramilitaries as Serb nationalists took over municipalities such as Banja Luka, Bosanska Krupa and Prijedor in April 1992.² When Serb paramilitaries blocked off roads in Banja Luka – as they did in Sarajevo – 5th Corps officials negotiated with Serb authorities to have the roadblocks removed, but when Muslim paramilitaries raised barricades, the Corps dispatched military police before Serb paramilitaries stormed the village and prompted a large number of Muslims to move out.³ Serb JNA recruits began to harass non-Serbs, leading the 5th Corps to note ‘individual cases of indiscipline on the part of some conscripts, alcohol, involuntary manslaughter and harassment of citizens warn us that we must pay more attention to this problem than before.’⁴ Moreover, personnel from the 5th Corps distributed weapons to Serb-controlled Territorial Defence units and compromised the JNA’s peacekeeping role.⁵ As in Croatia, non-Serbs in Bosnia became distrustful of the increasingly pro-Serb JNA.

The JNA was in an awkward position in Bosnia, from the beginning of the war in Croatia until spring 1992 – a position made more complicated by the onset of Serb nationalism within its ranks. On 10 December 1991, the SFRJ Federal Secretariat issued a

² 27 April 1992, Brđanin-P1470.

³ 11 May 1992, Brđanin-P1655.

⁴ 15 April 1992, quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 63.

⁵ 14 May 1992, Brđanin-P1787B.

directive indicating the JNA's aims in the current crisis: 'The protection of the Serb population, a peaceful resolution of the Yugoslav crisis, and the creation of conditions in which Yugoslavia may be preserved, for those peoples who wish to live in it.'⁶ This directive represented a fundamental shift in priorities for the federal army, whose leadership considered itself most responsible towards a single ethnic group, and then Yugoslavia's other inhabitants. On 3 April 1992, Momir Talić, then still an officer in the JNA, expressed a similar sentiment: 'By their eight-month struggle, the soldiers of the 5th Corps have saved the Serb people of Western Slavonia from being exterminated by the Ustasha, they have liberated and captured Serb territories in this part of Croatia ... [We] will ensure that the Banja Luka Corps remains a reliable defender of all nations and nationalities in the Bosnian Krajina.'⁷ As it had done in Croatia, however, the JNA sided increasingly with the ethnic group that it perceived to be pro-Yugoslav, while offering ostensible support to non-Serbs.

Yet siding with one group contradicted the principle of defending and representing all of Yugoslavia's nations and nationalities, which was the JNA's *raison d'être*. With the rise of ethnically exclusive institutions, pro-Yugoslav JNA officials did not know what to do and sought guidance: 'Since the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was proclaimed, speculation has started regarding the future of the Banja Luka Corps. We urgently need the position of the Supreme Command regarding the place and role of the JNA within the context of current developments.'⁸ On the one hand, the multi-ethnic officer corps – including pro-Yugoslav Serbs – did its best to maintain peace; on the other hand, some officers committed themselves to Serb nationalism. One such officer, a Captain Garić

⁶ 10 December 1991, Brđanin-P1576.

⁷ 3 April 1992, quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 17.

⁸ 7 April 1992, quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 21.

from Doboj, spoke at the 12 May 1992 assembly session and denounced the defiance of some of his colleagues from the JNA's 5th Corps:

Until recently they [Serb soldiers] refused to join us in the barracks because the commander was a mujahedin, but now I am the barracks commander, they know what kind of person I am, and still they refuse. We have put up the Serb flag, and on our caps, too – and I have suggested that we wear the *šajkača* [a traditional Serb cap] instead of berets, because *šajkača* can be politically justified to the world as traditional Serb caps, and we should introduce them. The Serb who refuses to come under the Serb flag and under a *šajkača*, we will show that Serb the way to Istanbul, Teheran, just as we did to the mujahedin. Goodbye to him and we do not need him. Let us make that clear.⁹

Shortly after 12 May 1992, the JNA 5th Corps transformed into the Krajina Corps of the VRS, and any pretence of the army representing non-Serbs disappeared.

Before the JNA withdrew, Serb nationalists hoped that it would become a Serb army. The 1991 war in Croatia Serbianised the Yugoslav Army, as non-Serb recruits refused to report when called up and non-Serb officers were fired, forcibly retired, or quit.¹⁰ In February 1992, Vojo Kuprešanin expressed the hope that the JNA would evolve into a Serb army:

As for the JNA, up to this point I really did believe in the JNA. The JNA is made up 99 per cent of Serbs, Serb reservists. Are we still to go on accepting this JNA, which is withdrawing from Macedonia, in the tens of thousands, while the UN is coming here to us in Krajina to look after the Serb people? I increasingly doubt it, and personally think that this JNA numbers enough men [and must] develop into a Serb army ... It is my personal proposal that we should proclaim the army in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is made up of 90 per cent Serb officers and 99 per cent Serb reservists, a Serb army.¹¹

Years later, in 1995, Karadžić recalled the process that allowed Serb forces to gain the upper hand at the beginning of the conflict:

Distribution of weapons was carried out thanks to the JNA. What could be withdrawn was withdrawn and distributed to people in Serb areas, but it was the SDS that organised the people and created the army. Together with the police, those were the armed forces of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; they

⁹ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00965, p. 32.

¹⁰ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, p. 98.

¹¹ 15 February 1992, Karadžić-P01351, p. 27.

liberated and created the space [for us]. In some places with the help of the JNA, in others without the help of the JNA, and in yet others, without JNA knowledge, since Huso and Uso [Muslim nicknames] were commanding the JNA at that time, and what happened? We made various calculations and agreements with [SR] Yugoslavia, we decided to set up the Territorial Defence, the Serb brigades, which were indeed led by the SDS, but not as a party army, but as a people's army because no one could lead an illegal brigade and confront the Green Berets ...¹²

However, Milovan Bjelica, an executive member of the SDS's governing committee, claimed at the end of 1994 that the JNA had not in fact not been so cooperative, and that SDS members essentially needed to steal arms: 'The SDS carried out all the activities regarding preparation and organisation of people for defence. Since we realised that there had been a big betrayal by the JNA, we had to collect the weapons from their warehouses. SDS activists played a very important role.'¹³ So whether the JNA voluntarily handed over weapons or the SDS 'collected' them, arms from the Yugoslav Peoples' Army reached Serb militants.

The transfer of manpower and adoption of the JNA's structure by the Army of Republika Srpska (*Vojska Republike Srpske* – VRS) was further supplemented by the SDS takeover of the local Territorial Defence units. A crucial step towards developing an armed force was forming an organisational structure with links to weapons. On 15 April 1992, the Presidency of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina ordered all Serb municipalities to connect the Territorial Defence units under their control into an armed force for the self-proclaimed state.¹⁴ A VRS report analysing the army's successes in 1992 acknowledged 'the development of the self-organising municipal and regional units on the basis of Territorial Defence units under the political and patriotic influence of the Serb Democratic Party [SDS]. These units provided protection for the Serb people against Muslim-Croat

¹² 15-16 April 1995, Karadžić-P00970, pp. 145-146.

¹³ Quoted in *Srpsko Oslobođenje*, 27 December 1994 (Pale).

¹⁴ 15 April 1992, Brđanin-P153.

forces, which were growing and becoming ever more brutal.¹⁵ Local Serb authorities formed so-called Crisis Staffs, which functioned as local governments during the period when Karadžić and his followers established parallel institutions in the autonomous regions they intended to separate from Bosnia. Each municipal Crisis Staff considered it a critical responsibility to support the local Territorial Defence unit.¹⁶ When Karadžić and his followers proclaimed the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Crisis Staffs and Territorial Defence units in SDS-controlled municipalities formed the nucleus of the state and army.

It was thus a combination of the JNA's aid and the resources of the pre-war Territorial Defence units that enabled Karadžić's regime to enjoy such superiority in the early months of the conflict. Indeed, an internal JNA report dated 20 March 1992 detailed how the JNA had distributed more than 51,900 weapons to Serb volunteers in Bosnia.¹⁷ As the JNA formally withdrew from Bosnia into Serbia and Montenegro in May 1992, some 1,800 officers remained to join the emerging VRS.¹⁸ The JNA, as it crumbled, rationalised the decision to leave Bosnian-born Serb officers in Bosnia:

A very high percentage – over 80 per cent – of members of JNA units in Bosnia and Herzegovina are of Serb nationality and would not under any circumstances subordinate themselves to a Bosnian and Herzegovinian leadership containing no representatives of their own people. Nor can they withdraw to the territory of Serbia and Montenegro, for they were mostly born and live in Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁹

By the end of 1992, the VRS comprised over 250,000 troops, with more than 500 tanks, 500 to 600 field artillery pieces, 400 to 500 heavy mortars, and an air force with 20 fighter-

¹⁵ April 1993, Brđanin-P2419, p. 10.

¹⁶ 25 June 1992, Brđanin-P1265.

¹⁷ Karadžić's SDS distributed an additional 17,298 firearms. 20 March 1992, Perišić-P00185.

¹⁸ 9 December 1992, Perišić-P00788, p. 18.

¹⁹ 29 April 1992, quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 15.

bombers. The ABiH fielded 100,000 men in 1992, but only had 40,000 to 50,000 small arms and very few heavy weapons at the beginning of the war.²⁰ These initial advantages provided the VRS with the means to build momentum in the early months of the war and overpower opposing forces.

Several key developments finalised the death of the JNA in Bosnia and the birth of the VRS. The first was the appointment by the SFRJ Presidency of General Lieutenant Colonel Ratko Mladić as deputy commander and chief of staff of the JNA's 2nd Military District, which included almost all of Bosnia, on 25 April 1992. Later in the war, Karadžić would claim that the decision to transfer Mladić from Knin followed a request that Karadžić had made to JNA General Milutin Kukanjac.²¹ The second was the (as yet unofficial) establishment of the VRS Main Staff on 3 May 1992, which followed a visit to Banja Luka from the Chief of the Federal Secretariat for National Defence, Blagoje Adžić.²² Another was the order by the SFRJ Presidency for members of the JNA with Bosnian origins who served in different parts of Yugoslavia to return to Bosnia and for those already in Bosnia not to leave the republic as the federal army withdrew.²³ The last step was the RS assembly delegates' unanimous decision to establish the Army of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to appoint Ratko Mladić as the commander of the army's Main Staff.²⁴ The JNA completed its withdrawal process on 20 May and on the same day the authorities of Serbia and Montenegro announced that the rump Yugoslavia's armed forces would be known as the Yugoslav Army (*Vojaska Jugoslavije* – VJ). The

²⁰ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 141-143.

²¹ 15 and 16 April 1995, Karadžić-P00970, p. 146.

²² 2 May 1992, Brđanin-P629; April 1993, Brđanin-P2419, p. 11.

²³ 7 May 1992, Brđanin-DB266B.

²⁴ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00965, pp. 2-3.

following day, Mladić ordered a general mobilisation in Serb-controlled territories.²⁵ The JNA, and thus the Belgrade government, played a crucial part in setting up the Bosnian Serb war machine, but what kind of support would the Belgrade-based leadership of Serbia and Montenegro extend to the Bosnian Serbs following Yugoslavia's collapse, Bosnia's international recognition, and the JNA's withdrawal?

A meeting of Serb leaders just weeks before full war in Bosnia foreshadowed the split that would later emerge among them. At an expanded session of the SFRJ presidency in March 1992 attended by Croatian and Bosnian Serb leaders, Serbian and Montenegrin officials expressed concern about the unfavourable international political situation.²⁶ Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, some figures on the presidency believed that the United States wanted to establish a leading role as the dominant power in the region. Nevertheless, the JNA generals made it clear that they expected the Bosnian Serbs to fight for separation from an independent Bosnia, when JNA chief Blagoje Adžić announced: 'There will be a political solution or war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. If we have no other choice, let it be Lebanon.'²⁷ Before the war, Karadžić held the view that remaining in an independent Bosnian state would 'be hell.'²⁸ But when he pressed the Belgrade leadership to acknowledge the Bosnian and Croatian Serb-held territories as integral parts of Yugoslavia, the Serbian representative to the SFRJ presidency Borisav Jović suggested a confederated Bosnia with a connection to the 'motherland' as a solution to the crisis.²⁹ Jović's proposal anticipated Belgrade's position at the Coordination Council.

²⁵ 21 May 1992, Brđanin-P1597.

²⁶ 2 March 1992, Milošević-P596.7, pp. 14, 32, 49-50, and 88-90.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 16-18.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 132.

Seeking Common Ground

Shortly after his election as SRJ president in August 1992, writer Dobrica Ćosić established the State Council for the Coordination of Positions on State Policy (henceforth, Coordination Council) in order to provide a forum for Serb leaders from Croatia, Bosnia, and Serbia to devise a joint strategy and end the conflict much in the same way that Croatian President Franjo Tuđman attempted among Croat nationalists. The council met eight times between August 1992 and April 1993 to debate the best approach for negotiations with UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance and European Union representative Lord Owen.³⁰ By the time the Coordination Council began to meet, the Bosnian Serbs had already committed a series of well-publicised atrocities – addressed in the following chapter – which affected how Belgrade leaders approached the joint discussions.

At the first five meetings, SRJ political and military leaders met alone to discuss the various obstacles that prevented them from declaring an immediate union with the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and the Republic of the Serb Krajina in Croatia. In January 1993, leaders from the two entities travelled to Belgrade for the council's final three meetings. The Bosnian Serbs represented by Radovan Karadžić and Belgrade officials led by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević dominated the discussions. As the transcripts make evident, there was clear agreement among the Serb leaders as to the final goal, although the question of how to move forward drove a wedge between the Serbs from west of the Drina River and their Belgrade counterparts.

³⁰ The settlement proposed by the two diplomats became known as the Vance Owen Plan. The proposed peace agreement envisioned a division of Bosnia into ten units – three for the Serbs, three for the Muslims, two for the Croats, one mixed Croat-Muslim entity, and Sarajevo as a special status area. The Serb side would have received about 50 per cent of Bosnia's territory. See Appendix G for a map of the proposed division.

The Republika Srpska delegates advocated immediate unification of Serb territories. Supported by fellow RS politicians and RSK representatives on the Coordination Council, Karadžić pointed to the mistakes of the past that had resulted in contemporary difficulties. At the Coordination Council, Karadžić argued against a step-by-step approach towards unification, saw any kind of unitary Bosnian state as a disaster for the Serb people, and pushed for a ‘big move’ to protect military gains.³¹ RS Assembly President Momčilo Krajišnik and RS Deputy Prime Minister Nikola Koljević conveyed their desire for Serb unification at the expanded Coordination Council sessions. Krajišnik informed the joint council that the RS Assembly had decided that a crucial moment had arrived and it was possible to integrate the Serb territories to form a united country.³² He added that insistence on a unitary Bosnian state would perpetuate the conflict. Koljević introduced the idea for representatives from the Serb states to meet in an ‘Assembly of Serb Lands’ as a step towards political consolidation.³³ Koljević further called for the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in Belgrade to coordinate educational, cultural, and professional harmonisation throughout the Serb territories in order to strengthen ‘a sense of togetherness.’³⁴ The sooner these initiatives became realised, the more Serb leaders outside Serbia would feel that progress on unification, their ultimate goal, was taking place.

A sense of having missed opportunities in the past persuaded the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs that unification with the core, Serbia, needed to take place at the earliest possible moment. Karadžić argued that the JNA should have remained on the borders of Serb-claimed territories in Croatia and fought for a Serb state instead of evacuating to

³¹ 18 August 1992, Milošević-P469.42, (BCS) p. 46.

³² 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 7.

³³ Ibid., (BCS) p. 17.

³⁴ 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) pp. 74-75.

Serbia and Montenegro.³⁵ Zdravko Zečević, the RSK Minister of Foreign Affairs, emphasised that unification represented the Croatian Serbs' only hope for survival.³⁶ RSK Assembly President Mile Paspalj agreed:

At this moment, if we integrate now, they can hit us from the right, from the left, but what will happen? No one will even think of hitting nine to twelve million Serbs. In order for us to survive here, we as Serbs outside the SRJ, we have to get that moral strength [from knowing] that we are in a common whole.³⁷

He further emphasised that it had become exhausting to protect Croatian Serb territory and that people in Knin, the RSK stronghold, kept asking him about the final goal.³⁸ The fear of missing another chance to unify made Serbs outside Serbia think they could lose their states if they waited longer.

Karadžić argued that the SRJ itself would benefit from unification. He threatened that should the RS or the RSK collapse, more than two million refugees would 'stampede' into Serbia.³⁹ The best course of action would be to make a 'surprise move' and stun the international community by declaring a united Serb state, and then defending that state's borders with a combined military force.⁴⁰ As Karadžić appreciated, such a decision would reveal the SRJ's involvement in the conflict to the world and its commitment to the self-declared Serb states in Croatia and Bosnia.

In similar sentiments as those raised in the Bosnian Serb assembly, the Bosnian Serb leaders expressed how a multi-ethnic Bosnian state meant disaster. Krajišnik told the council that a unified Bosnia 'was completely unacceptable' and that 'chaos would ensue' should RS politicians have to participate in a government with Bosnian Muslims and

³⁵ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 13.

³⁶ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 17-18.

³⁷ Ibid., (BCS) p. 62.

³⁸ Ibid., (BCS) p. 19.

³⁹ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 14.

⁴⁰ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 17 and 75-76.

Croats.⁴¹ Karadžić regarded accepting the Vance Owen Plan as a complete defeat. As the RS president related to Milošević, returning to the Bosnian government ‘would mean Bosnia and Herzegovina is a state.’⁴² Any form of Bosnian statehood, no matter how decentralised and partitioned, meant an outright loss for Karadžić and his party. At a moment when the VRS controlled more than 70 per cent of Bosnian territory, the RS president was not prepared to submit to a peace agreement that deprived his regime of its ultimate goal.

Karadžić and Koljević also employed economic arguments in an attempt to convert their Belgrade collaborators to their approach. Karadžić alleged that the Vance Owen Plan would give the majority of natural resources and urban centres to the other sides.⁴³ Koljević agreed and added that employing an economic argument in negotiations would strengthen the Bosnian Serb claim for territories under their control where Serbs did not form a majority.⁴⁴ By demanding resources, the Serb side could justify keeping areas they had conquered and give the impression that they did not rely on the national argument alone. At the end of their first meeting, Karadžić appealed to the SRJ politicians and generals not to adopt a long-term approach to Serbia’s expansion.⁴⁵ The Bosnian Serbs, who had committed to their state-building programme in earnest, had little regard for the pressures on the SRJ and could not understand Belgrade’s reluctance to move towards territorial merger.

Without hesitation, top SRJ leaders confirmed that the ultimate wartime aim was to create Greater Serbia. SRJ President Dobrica Ćosić announced that the Serb political goal

⁴¹ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) pp. 15-16.

⁴² Ibid., (BCS) p. 78.

⁴³ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 60-61.

⁴⁴ 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) pp. 25-26.

⁴⁵ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 135.

‘was life in one state or in a union of states.’⁴⁶ His senior advisor, Svetozar Stojanović, also told the Bosnian Serbs at one of the joint meetings not to doubt, ‘not even for a second,’ that the strategic aspiration was to form a single state.⁴⁷ What is more, despite retaining ‘Yugoslavia’ in the country’s name, SRJ leaders acknowledged that they embarked on the construction of a new state and not a continuation of the former (multi-ethnic) socialist federation.⁴⁸ Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović reminded the Bosnian and Croatian Serbs that all the Serb territories needed to develop ‘a greater connection.’⁴⁹ The Serbian and Montenegrin council members assured their guests that they shared their vision for the future.

The Coordination Council transcripts indicate that in 1992 Belgrade sent funds and extended other forms of support to bolster Bulatović’s ‘greater connection.’ SRJ Prime Minister Milan Panić asked the council to come up with a position so that they no longer financed the Bosnian Serbs, thereby acknowledging that Serbia and Montenegro had done so thus far.⁵⁰ While denying that any arms reached the Bosnian Serbs from the SRJ, Milošević informed the council that state organs sent humanitarian aid to the RS.⁵¹ The VJ Chief of Staff Života Panić also suggested that the Belgrade-based council members arrange for volunteers to travel to Bosnia and assist the Bosnian Serb war effort, although he emphasised that the VJ should not participate in the conflict.⁵² Perhaps most importantly, Belgrade’s official stance towards the war, namely that ‘the SRJ supports any end to the

⁴⁶ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 66.

⁴⁷ Ibid., (BCS) p. 55.

⁴⁸ 11 August 1992, Milošević-P469.41, (BCS) pp. 18-51.

⁴⁹ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 43.

⁵⁰ 18 August 1992, Milošević-P469.42, (BCS) p. 16.

⁵¹ Ibid., (BCS) p. 47.

⁵² 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) pp. 34.

hostilities that all three sides agree upon' was disingenuous.⁵³ Milošević and the other council members knew that the RS leadership would not accept any agreement that failed to grant them separation from the Bosnian state. As the war raged in its first year, the SRJ leaders looked for ways to lend their assistance to the Bosnian Serbs without compromising their own position.

Perhaps the most indicative example of unison with the Bosnian Serbs was the SRJ leaders' commitment to the principle of ethnic division and the strengthening of the Bosnian Serbs' claim to self-determination. Expressing attentiveness to international opinion, Milošević explained that legal recognition of Bosnia's three 'constitutive peoples' would buy the Serb side time and ensure that ethnic division persisted after the war.⁵⁴ Karadžić reported to the council that Serbs in the RS had accepted the idea that they would never recognise the government led by Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegović.⁵⁵ The Serbian Foreign Minister Vladislav Jovanović stressed that Serb leaders needed to realise ethnic homogeneity:

... The territorial link with Serbia and Montenegro, in other words with Yugoslavia, has to be ensured in an indisputable way that is not transitory. But, what is more important is to make the territory that we get nationally homogeneous as soon as possible, but not by means of ethnic cleansing and so on. Ethnic cleansing is an imputation. So, we should use the peacetime process of exchanging inhabitants, in other words, migration and immigration, which will flow.⁵⁶

Responding to that suggestion, Karadžić noted that to a great extent the RS had achieved ethnic homogeneity, citing as an example the town of Zvornik where before the war Serbs

⁵³ 2 November 1992, Milošević-P469.45, (BCS) p. 4.

⁵⁴ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) pp. 39-41.

⁵⁵ 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) p. 2.

⁵⁶ On ethnic cleansing, original text states: 'Etnička čišćenja su podmetanja ...' The verb 'podmetati' means to invent something that will cause problems or difficulties to someone in an indirect way. Ibid., (BCS) p. 24.

had made up half of the population and at that moment formed 100 per cent.⁵⁷ Jovanović also raised the ‘danger’ of Muslims settling in Serb areas and ‘spoiling’ the contemporary – ethnically separate – demographic organisation of Bosnia.⁵⁸ Summarising the sixth session’s arguments, Ćosić concluded that the council had reached a consensus that ethnic homogenisation, the will of the people (self-determination), and the existing situation (ethnically cleansed territory), would strengthen the Serb position at peace negotiations.⁵⁹

The SRJ leaders maintained their association with the Bosnian Serbs fully aware of the atrocities the latter had committed in pursuit of the RS’s formation during the first nine months of the war. Before Milošević orchestrated his political downfall, Milan Panić acknowledged that the SRJ assisted the Bosnian Serb war effort and appealed to his fellow council members to halt such activities.⁶⁰ Stojanović recognised at the council that the VRS had surrounded Sarajevo.⁶¹ VJ Chief of Staff Života Panić also announced that one of the Serb commanders in Sarajevo was a criminal but he could do nothing to remove him.⁶² According to Bulatović, the RS prime minister Vladimir Lukić had advised SRJ officials to ‘ethnically cleanse the Sandžak and kill the Muslims there’ and to do so ‘as soon as possible for the Muslims are not to be trusted. They will stab us in the back, they will mine our railroad, and so on.’⁶³

⁵⁷ 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) p. 21

⁵⁸ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 28.

⁵⁹ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 64-66.

⁶⁰ 18 August 1992, Milošević-P469.42, (BCS) pp. 47-48.

⁶¹ Ibid., (BCS) p. 71.

⁶² Ibid., (BCS) pp. 93-94

⁶³ 12 March 1993, Perišić-P02692, pp. 31-32.

Yet in the joint meetings Milošević denied that Serbia condoned ethnic cleansing, and when the discussion turned to camp detainees Ćosić changed the subject.⁶⁴ On the rare occasions that the council did mention atrocities, Jovanović's main observation was that knowledge of crimes committed by Serb forces contributed to a negative perception of Serbs in the world.⁶⁵ At one of the joint meetings, Karadžić advised his RSK counterpart to invade Croatian government-held territory and exclaimed, 'for every person killed by a sniper, you should kill ten Croats. That is the only solution. You have the right to retaliate.'⁶⁶ On another occasion, Karadžić complained about how Vance and Owen had cunningly forced him to sign an agreement to protect human rights.⁶⁷ While Milošević and Ćosić's statements suggest that they considered it wise not to discuss such matters on the record, it is evident that all council members remained well informed about the atrocities committed in areas controlled by Bosnian Serb authorities.

The Serbian and Montenegrin council members also shared the Bosnian and Croatian Serb leaders' concerns about the importance of linking the three Serb territories. The Posavina 'corridor,' which provided a physical connection between Croatian and Bosnian Serb-held territories and Serbia proper, was not awarded to the Serb side in the Vance Owen map, as evident in Appendix G. Karadžić argued that the Serbs could not live without the Posavina region, and an RSK representative on the council also pointed to the corridor's importance as a link holding together the three Serb territories. Milošević and Bulatović emphasised the importance of the final map, and Milošević agreed with Karadžić

⁶⁴ 17 September 1992, Milošević-P469.44, (BCS) p. 68; 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 132.

⁶⁵ 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) p. 81.

⁶⁶ Karadžić likely had in mind the Croatian Army's incursion into RSK controlled territory in early January 1993. 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 92.

⁶⁷ Ibid., (BCS) p. 76.

that the RS must insist on the Posavina area.⁶⁸ The shared concern for the Posavina corridor, where ethnic Serbs formed a minority, indicates that the SRJ leaders did have expansionist ambitions for the future and sought to maintain a geographical connection between their state and other Serb territories.

The demands of public opinion in Serbia, reinforced by the opposition in Belgrade, meant that leaders like Milošević and Bulatović could not waver in their support for Serb nationalist leaders outside Serbia lest they risk their grip on power at home. Moderate parties supported ‘protecting Serbs’ outside Serbia, whereas more extreme organisations, like Vojislav Šešelj’s Serb Radical Party, pushed for more aggressive action against non-Serb forces in the violence that followed Croatia’s and Bosnia’s declarations of independence. When the war in Croatia paused at the beginning of 1992, Desimir Tošić’s Democratic Party and the more nationalist Party of Serb Renewal led by Vuk Drašković, united in their opposition to Milošević by contending that under his watch, Serbs had become the biggest losers in Yugoslavia’s collapse.⁶⁹ Prime Minister Milan Panić also became increasingly critical of Milošević throughout 1992, blaming him for Serbia’s international isolation and sanctions. Nevertheless, Milošević soundly won the December 1992 Serbian election by running on the defiant platform ‘Serbia is not for sale!’ – i.e. to a foreign power. His Socialist Party, as well as Šešelj’s Radicals, trounced the opposition.⁷⁰ After appealing to nationalist themes and collaborating with extremists who demanded Greater Serbia, Milošević was unable to abandon Serbs outside Serbia and their active campaign to forge a link across the Drina.

⁶⁸ 21 January 1993, Milošević-P469.39, (BCS) p. 57; and 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 35.

⁶⁹ J. Gow, *The Serbian Project and its Adversaries*, pp. 67-70.

⁷⁰ R. Thomas, *The Politics of Serbia in the 1990s*, pp. 119-135.

Agreement on the ultimate goal and pressure on the Belgrade leadership to adhere to the tenets of Serb nationalism held together the joint deliberations. An ideological commitment to the Greater Serbia concept enforced the partnership among the leaders of Serb-controlled territories. But this shared vision did not mean that the leaders from Serbia and Montenegro could agree on a short-term strategy with their visitors, especially when it came to upcoming peace negotiations. The SRJ leaders' strategy did not harbour the same sense of urgency as that of the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs.

The SRJ Counterproposal

Despite the general ideological agreement with the Bosnian Serbs, the SRJ leadership faced immense pressures to delay unification. Concerns about the SRJ's internal security, growing global scrutiny, as well as the prospect of controlling the Bosnian Serb leadership, weighed on Milošević and the other SRJ council members. Based on its assessment of the domestic and international situation, the Belgrade leadership advocated settling for peace and accepting a Bosnian state in the short-term. However, Milošević and his associates considered the hostile climate as temporary. They anticipated that one day, when circumstances became more favourable, the Serb representatives would achieve what the Belgrade leadership judged it could not in 1992-93.

In the first year of the war, fighting in Bosnia and Croatia was not the only security concern on the council's agenda. Most pressingly, the SRJ leaders needed to find a way to control swelling ethnic Albanian nationalism in Kosovo. Milošević firmly opposed the internationalisation of the Kosovo question and worried that pursuing UN recognition – not only for an expanded Serb state but also for the SRJ – might come with a set of onerous

conditions.⁷¹ Milošević feared that if the UN required Belgrade to grant Serbian areas with large non-Serb populations a ‘special status,’ this would reduce Serbia to its pre-1912 borders and the state would lose everything.⁷² The Serbian president’s rejection of the proposal to grant non-Serbs like Kosovar Albanians a greater stake in public life reflected his application of nationalist ideology to addressing internal problems; moreover, it indicated a judgement that he could not take political risks by seeking a compromise with Kosovar Albanians.⁷³ Života Panić also told the council that in addition to Kosovo, two other ‘crisis areas,’ multi-ethnic Vojvodina and Sandžak, needed ‘to be under continuous and full control to avoid any provocation or armed rebellion, because that would call for an armed intervention against Yugoslavia.’⁷⁴ Belgrade leaders, therefore, expressed grave concern about areas with large non-Serb populations and fretted that the international community might exploit these weaknesses. If a Greater Serbian state could ever come to exist, the army needed to secure Serbia and Montenegro’s internal stability at all times.

In the summer and autumn of 1992, international media coverage of the former Yugoslavia tended to identify the Serb side as the chief culprits.⁷⁵ The Belgrade leadership also acknowledged that public opinion had turned against the Serb side. Serbian diplomat Ilija Đukić told the council that Europe wanted to prevent the creation of Greater Serbia.⁷⁶ Milan Panić informed Milošević that the world saw him as a guilty party in the conflict and suggested that it would be better for Serb interests if Milošević did not represent the SRJ at

⁷¹ 17 September 1992, Milošević-P469.44, (BCS) pp. 30-33.

⁷² Ibid., (BCS) p. 33.

⁷³ 11 August 1992, Milošević-P469.41, (BCS) pp. 21-22.

⁷⁴ 18 August 1992, Milošević-P469.42, (BCS) p. 74.

⁷⁵ M. Thompson, *Forging War* (Luton, 1994).

⁷⁶ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 31.

peace negotiations.⁷⁷ Despite proclaiming that he was ‘proud of trying to preserve his country,’ in January 1993, Milošević also made it clear that he did not want the world to view the VJ as an occupying force in the Balkans.⁷⁸ With the Vance Owen peace negotiations on the horizon, Milošević knew that global perception meant everything. If the Belgrade leadership endorsed unification with the Serb regimes in Croatia and Bosnia prematurely, it would fail to gain international recognition for Serbia no matter what its borders.

Another reason why the council expressed concern about international public opinion, in addition to needing support for UN recognition, was because Belgrade leaders feared further economic sanctions – on top of those established in September 1992 – and even a NATO attack. Milan Panić repeated to the council that removing sanctions was his main priority.⁷⁹ His successor, Radoje Kontić, told the council that if the world placed a full blockade on Serbia and Montenegro, they would be ‘done in three months.’⁸⁰ The council noted that the UN could impose sanctions on non-member states.⁸¹ In fact, the international community attempted to influence the SRJ by offering to remove sanctions in exchange for Belgrade’s recognition of Croatia and Bosnia, and threatened further embargos if Milošević failed to convince the Bosnian Serbs to accept the Vance Owen Plan.⁸² To make matters more ominous, Života Panić reported to the council that British and American aircraft carriers had moved into the Adriatic and had begun conducting aerial reconnaissance

⁷⁷ 18 August 1992, Milošević-P469.42, (BCS) pp. 29-31 and 49-52.

⁷⁸ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 75.

⁷⁹ The UN imposed an embargo on former Yugoslavia in September 1991. 3 September 1992. Milošević-P469.43, (BCS) pp. 45-48.

⁸⁰ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 121.

⁸¹ 17 September 1992, Milošević-P469.44, (BCS) p. 47.

⁸² 2 November 1992, Milošević-P469.45, (BCS) p. 3.

missions over SRJ airspace.⁸³ The Serbian and Montenegrin leaders knew that their resources could not sustain a long-term conflict, certainly not one against the might of NATO, and realised that in order to secure what the Serb side had gained, peace needed to arrive soon.

Although the Bosnian Serb and Belgrade leaders remained partners throughout the war, the VJ top brass voiced doubts about whether it could keep the Bosnian Serbs in line. The VJ Chief of Staff Života Panić informed the Coordination Council that Karadžić could not be controlled, and an attempt to take away Bosnian Serb weapons would mean war between the VJ and the VRS.⁸⁴ He also relayed to the Coordination Council that the VRS, which controlled most of Bosnia, should withdraw from some areas and allow non-Serb refugees to return.⁸⁵ For Karadžić's regime, giving up territory remained out of the question, and this point formed a major fissure between the two parties.

With these pressures in mind, the Serbian and Montenegrin council members attempted to persuade the RS leaders to confirm through diplomacy what they had taken by force. Milošević told the expanded council that a diplomatic option existed to prevent the further suffering of the Serb people and to find a solution for Serbs to enjoy freedom and equality. He criticised Karadžić's dichotomy of big and small moves and stressed that the Vance Owen maps aligned with Serb goals, noting that only minor adjustments remained necessary.⁸⁶ Bulatović also extolled the diplomatic option and presented the proposed peace plan as an opportunity to take a major step towards eventual Serb unification.⁸⁷ From the

⁸³ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 4.

⁸⁴ 18 August 1992, Milošević-P469.42, (BCS) p. 91.

⁸⁵ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 3.

⁸⁶ Ibid., (BCS) p. 36.

⁸⁷ Ibid., (BCS) p. 44.

SRJ officials' perspective, the Bosnian Serbs had already secured sufficient territory and the Serb side needed to confirm those gains in international law.

According to the Belgrade leadership, the moment for unification had not yet arrived. Milošević told the council that they needed more time. International circumstances would change and allow them to invoke the justifying principle of self-determination in the future.⁸⁸ Ćosić echoed Milošević's sentiments. International factors would evolve in the Serbs favour, he told his peers, 'maybe not in a few months, not to mention a couple of years, but we will have more favourable circumstances with the international community.'⁸⁹ The SRJ president explained how present and future Serb leaders could only accomplish a united Serb state, a long-term goal, by phases. Milošević added that the Serb side could dupe international negotiators by settling for peace and ethnic coexistence for the time being.⁹⁰ As Ćosić put it, 'we must not make a mistake and make a decision that threatens our goal.'⁹¹ Buying time would enable the Serb side to achieve the final goal one day, when they had more sympathetic allies abroad, instead of rushing and jeopardising all their gains by rejecting peace.

Major Belgrade political figures on the council insisted that the long-term approach was viable because Serb representatives could break up the Bosnian state in the future. Jovanović stated that once ethnic division was finalised, Bosnia would collapse:

What is important is that life in that future Bosnia becomes impossible and that everyone understands that, so that they rush off to their original provinces. This is a strategic goal to which we should aspire ... Everything else is then a matter of technique, including breaking up Bosnia into three parts.⁹²

⁸⁸ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) pp. 34-38.

⁸⁹ Ibid., (BCS) p. 68.

⁹⁰ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 69-72.

⁹¹ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 65-67.

⁹² Ibid., (BCS) pp. 19-20.

The key to diplomatic victory, Milošević explained, was insistence on the principle of constitutive peoples for the post-war Bosnian state, which would extend equal rights to all ethnic groups. According to Milošević's logic, such a constitutional framework would lead to a 'dead end' and make self-determination – for all three ethnic groups – a feasible alternative.⁹³ As Bulatović put it, if Bosnia existed on the basis of constitutional parity of its three ethnic groups, then Serbs would have 'a lever to break up Bosnia and Herzegovina from the inside.'⁹⁴ Čosić agreed and added that post-war Bosnia should not be a long-lasting state.⁹⁵ The young prime minister of Montenegro, Milo Đukanović, admitted that Bosnian statehood was less than optimal, but pointed out that a state with such a complicated structure as Vance and Owen proposed would have no prospect for survival. The Serb territories would achieve the final goal step by step.⁹⁶

Milošević attempted to persuade his visitors that in many ways they had already accomplished the goal of creating an expanded Serb state. In a revealing speech at the first joint meeting, the Serbian president identified the disagreement between the Serbian and Montenegrin leaders and their western collaborators by summarising his side's argument:

Paspalj said that there has to be unity of the Serb people. We *de facto* have that because objectively and based on all our relations – political, military, economic, cultural, and educational – we have that integrity. The question is how to get recognition of our unity, actually to legalise our unity. How to turn the situation, which *de facto* exists and could not be *de facto* endangered, into being *de facto* and *de jure*? Accordingly, the road, which would lead us to *de jure*, leads through a small labyrinth. We would never allow for a change in the *de facto* situation, but through the small labyrinth we would achieve some things, if not in half a year then in a year, if not in a year then in two years. What do we gain? We gain that we

⁹³ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) pp. 40 and 70.

⁹⁴ Ibid., (BCS) p. 78.

⁹⁵ Ibid., (BCS) p. 68.

⁹⁶ Ibid., (BCS) pp. 93-94.

would have fewer casualties and in that way we save our people. We have to sacrifice everything for the people but the people themselves.⁹⁷

Milošević elaborated that he did not see the RS's existence in a post-war Bosnian state as an obstacle to its eventual unification with Serbia. To the Serbian president, institutions did not matter: 'I do not care at all if we have one or three republics. They are together and it is certain that they will be together later on. It is certain that they will not divide themselves into six but that those three will become united.'⁹⁸ With confidence, Milošević hoped to relieve the Bosnian and Croatian Serb leaders of their concerns and to delay the unification of the Serb territories.

Milošević's speech is indicative of his dominance of the Coordination Council and Serb politics in general. Ćosić's wartime diary provides insight into Milošević's control over the SRJ state, Serbian media, and the Serb nationalist programme.⁹⁹ The power of Milošević's Socialist Party made the rump Yugoslavia a '[single] party state' with Milošević, the 'autocrat,' at its head.¹⁰⁰ The former SRJ president described how Milošević orchestrated Ćosić's appointment as head of state and how he also proposed Milan Panić for the post of the SRJ's first prime minister.¹⁰¹ The tension between Panić and Milošević is evident in the transcripts of the first four council sessions, and Ćosić alleges that Milošević's deputies, along with members of the extremist Serbian Radical Party led by Vojislav Šešelj, toppled Panić's government in February 1993.¹⁰² In his diary, Ćosić remarks that his own downfall resulted from the Milošević-Šešelj partnership that turned

⁹⁷ 9 January 1993, Milošević-P469.40, (BCS) p. 69.

⁹⁸ Ibid., (BCS) p. 70

⁹⁹ Dobrica Ćosić, *Piščevi zapisi, 1992-93* (Belgrade, 2004), pp. 192-193, 217-218, and 399.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., pp. 209 and 267.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp. 61 and 77.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp. 146 and 154.

against him after Ćosić crossed the SRJ's real authority, Milošević.¹⁰³ But what is most important is that despite their personal disagreement, Ćosić believed that Milošević advanced the unification of the Serb territories. Ćosić recounts an instance when he suggested giving up the campaign for a single Serb state, to which Milošević responded, 'Don't worry, Dobrica, for the future of Serbia we will surely win.'¹⁰⁴ Along with the statements given at council discussions and his silence on atrocities when meeting with Karadžić, these observations confirm Milošević's commitment to the Serb expansionist cause, notwithstanding his advocacy of a peace agreement in Bosnia.

Conclusion

The Coordination Council transcripts reflect the Serbian and Montenegrin leadership's support of the Greater Serbia ideology, but also reveal the complexities behind Belgrade's position. On the one hand, the Serb side in the Bosnian war repelled enemy forces and controlled more territory than its self-determination justification could warrant. On the other hand, the Belgrade leaders expressed awareness of the lack of international support for their nationalist state-building project. Without recognition for their state, Serbian and Montenegrin leaders could not hope to restore normal diplomatic and economic relations with the rest of the world. Serb nationalists did not have the same degree of agreement about the process of realising their programme as did Croat nationalists.

Creating Greater Serbia was the ultimate aim, but the leaders of the three Serb entities had different priorities. For the Belgrade leadership, a united Serb state represented a best-case outcome that need not be secured in the short term. The Bosnian and Croatian

¹⁰³ Ćosić, *Piščevi zapisi*, pp. 217-218, and 400.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 307.

Serb leaders, however, regarded forming such a state an unconditional necessity; the existence of their regimes depended on unification. Moreover, as the next section will demonstrate, the extreme violence perpetrated by Serb and Croat forces in Bosnia compromised their leaders, and increased the pressure on them to achieve victory. Because of their political vulnerability following the disclosure of atrocities, the Croatian and Bosnian Serb leaders emphasised their maximalist position that foresaw only two options: either the Serb states unite, or entities west of the Drina cease to exist. By employing this argument, Karadžić and others hoped to wring as much support as possible from Belgrade.

The methods employed by Bosnian Serb forces to achieve the six strategic objectives in 1992, discussed in the next chapter, explain the Belgrade leadership's reluctance to tie its fate to that of Republika Srpska, notwithstanding its pre-war commitment to preserving a single state for all Serbs. While Tuđman pushed for splitting Bosnia in 1991-92, Milošević appeared more open to its continuation as an interim solution to a crisis receiving global attention. Nevertheless, he failed to condemn the actions taken by Bosnian Serb forces and institutions over the first nine months of the war and, like Franjo Tuđman, shared the vision of dividing Bosnia along ethnic lines between Croatia and Serbia according to the nationalist principle.

Section II

Implementation

Chapter 5: Realising the Strategic Objectives, May 1992 - December 1993

People and peoples are not pawns, nor are they keys in one's pocket that can be shifted from here to there ... – Ratko Mladić, speech to the RS assembly, 12 May 1992¹

Despite the strategic floundering among the Bosnian Serb leaders and their Belgrade sponsors, the VRS set about realising the six strategic objectives and creating the conditions for merging a homogeneous Serb state west of the Drina River with Serbia. The core value that defined Serb nationalism was the conviction that Serbs must live in one state without significant numbers of other ethnic groups; but with Serbs dispersed throughout Bosnia and much of former Yugoslavia, and with millions of non-Serbs living among them, this 'ideal environment' was far from reality. At the behest of the political leadership, the VRS set out to change Bosnia's existing demographic makeup despite the high human cost. First and foremost, the army assisted in achieving the first strategic objective, the separation of Serbs from Bosnia's other two peoples, which translated to expelling non-Serbs from Serb-claimed territory. Ratko Mladić and his generals then determined their military operations in order to secure the new state's borders and achieve the remaining strategic objectives.

The army leadership's mission to realise the six strategic objectives promoted an environment in which it became acceptable to commit crimes of any kind against non-Serbs. Republika Srpska institutions came to regard all non-Serbs as enemies, especially men who could join rival armed forces. Moreover, in the traditionalist and patriarchal culture shared by many Bosnians of all ethnicities, humiliating, injuring or killing men would amount to a fatal blow against the broader community. The army's attitude towards non-Serbs is crucial

¹ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, p. 37.

because it is through the army that the RS state exercised its monopoly of (what the leadership considered) legitimate violence. As Weber emphasised, the agencies that monopolise the use of violence in a territory ‘are the state;’² thus, the VRS’s execution of state-sanctioned violence reveals what the political and military leadership considered to be right, wrong, legal, and illegal.

Mladić, the Army, and the Six Strategic Objectives

At the 12 May 1992 RS assembly session, after Karadžić and several other delegates spoke, Lieutenant General Ratko Mladić addressed the gathered delegates and guests. As the commander of the newly declared Bosnian Serb army charged with realising the six strategic objectives, Mladić appreciated the gravity of the situation before him. He expressed the view that Serbs were ‘winners in war, losers in peace,’ echoing the nationalist aphorism that Serb forces had fought on the victorious side in both World Wars only for other ethnicities to undermine Yugoslavia during peacetime.³ Yet among those present at the assembly, Mladić was perhaps the only speaker to voice caution:

Those who think that we can keep whatever our tanks and our soldiers can reach, those times are long gone ... if we take something in this war that is not ours, we need to keep hold of it so that in political negotiations we can get those things that were ours and that we cannot get in some other way.⁴

Alluding to the first strategic objective, Mladić highlighted the inherent difficulty in waging a war against a ‘people’ at large and instead suggested a more focused attack:

People and peoples are not pawns, nor are they keys in one’s pocket that can be shifted from here to there ... I would like to make one suggestion here that we

² Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*, pp. 3-4.

³ The Serb nationalist writer and June 1992-93 SRJ President, Dobrica Ćosić (1921- 2014), is credited with the authorship of this phrase.

⁴ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, p. 36. However, Mladić felt differently in 1994 ‘... “Ours” is what our soldier holds. And there is no doubt or compromising about it.’ *Novi Glas*, 1 March 1994 (Doboj).

adopt such a wisdom that we are against the war but that we will fight if attacked, and that we do not want a war against the Muslims as a people, or against the Croats as a people, but against those who steered and pitted those peoples against us.⁵

We cannot ‘cleanse’ nor can we have a sieve to sift so that only Serbs remain, or that the Serbs fall through and the rest leave. Well that is, I will not, I do not know how Mr Krajišnik and Mr Karadžić would explain that to the world. People – that would be genocide.⁶

These comments reveal a preparedness to fight and present the Serb leadership’s actions as reactive. Mladić’s comments also suggest that at the beginning of the war he did not (explicitly) view *all* Muslims and Croats as his army’s enemies. Yet, as the second excerpt reveals, the VRS commander named the enormity that would unavoidably be perpetrated by separating the Serbs from Bosnia’s other peoples.

Accordingly, Mladić proposed that the Serb leadership keep its intentions secret. The Bosnian Serb general’s – surprisingly candid – comments suggest that he anticipated that the world would denounce the programme his troops prepared to embark upon:

And please, let us not only put our minds into what we are doing, let us also think thoroughly about it, and that we not allow everything that we have in mind to be evident. This thing that we are doing needs to be guarded as our deepest secret. And what our representatives appearing in the media, at political talks and negotiations, are going to say; they need to present our goals in a way that will sound appealing to the ears of those who we want to win over to our side, without being detrimental to the Serb people.⁷

Having issued his appeal for discretion and denial, Mladić then employed the same apocalyptic rhetoric as the regime’s political zealots:

... The head of the dragon of fundamentalism lies beneath our hammer ... The enemy has attacked with all its might from all directions. And it is a common

⁵ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, p. 37.

⁶ Ibid., p. 39.

⁷ The ICTY’s translators transcribed the first sentence as ‘And please, let us not only put our minds into what we are doing, let us also think thoroughly about it, and let us be cautious about when to keep mum.’ The statement appears in the original transcript as: ‘... i molim vas da ne samo mislim šta radimo već da duboko promišljamo i da nam ne bude sve što nam je na umu da nam je na drumu.’ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, p. 38.

enemy, regardless of whether it is the Muslim hordes or Croat hordes. It is our common enemy. What is important now is either to throw both of them out employing political and other moves, or to organise ourselves and throw out one by force of arms, and we will be able to deal with the other ... We are creating an army which will defend, successfully, the legacy our fathers have left behind and protect our children from the conquering ambitions of Nazi mercenaries.⁸

Mladić's commitment to the ideals of Karadžić's regime did not waver, although he seemed to understand that atrocities would occur as his forces attempted to create the reality on the ground that Karadžić and his followers imagined. On 21 May, after the VRS Main Staff issued a general mobilisation, Mladić ordered his officers to brief all conscripts on the six strategic objectives.⁹

Throughout the war, the army's top generals expressed their commitment to the strategic objectives, which guided the formation of campaigns. In summer 1993, Major General Milenko Živković of the Drina Corps informed a local periodical: '[Our] military objectives are mostly accomplished. The chosen representatives of the Serb people have been fighting the final battle for political and nation-building goals.'¹⁰ The Chief of the VRS General Staff, Major General Manojlo Milovanović, told an SDS newspaper: 'Our army has, so far, achieved four strategic goals, or rather tasks. It completed all four tasks and allowed the political leadership of the country to function. We created a foundation, whether we are recognised or not, so everyone knows we exist and from this base we can go to peace talks.'¹¹ Mladić himself expressed commitment to the first strategic objective, ethnic separation, in the VRS's official periodical:

A part of our people was blinded by the idea of togetherness, brotherhood and unity, and lived with the illusions that the storm of war would quickly calm which, unfortunately, claimed many lives, in particular so in the cities and villages with a

⁸ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, pp. 39 and 45.

⁹ 21 May 1992, Brđanin-P204b.

¹⁰ *Naša Rijec*, July and August 1993 (Bratunac).

¹¹ *Novi Glas*, 1 February 1993 (Doboj).

majority Muslim and Croat population.¹²

The deputy commander of the VRS, Milan Gvero, endowed the conflict with an epic character, as did the political leadership before and during the war:

The present generation of Serbs is aware that it is predestined and forced to fulfill the centuries-long dream of its ancestors to give form to myths, ideals and wishes ... Our battle hinges on, and we will succeed if the following comes to be: agreement in the goals of our struggle; agreement between government and army leadership; agreement between governmental and military authorities on all levels; agreement in the idea that our struggle is unique, unfinished, that we must endure until the end, to the desired peace and freedom.¹³

Using rhetoric similar to that of political leaders, the elite of the VRS committed to the spirit of the six strategic objectives and the long-term goal of a mono-ethnic, expanded Serb state.

Indoctrinating the Army

The Main Staff ensured that the ideological instructions from the 12 May meeting spread throughout the armed forces. Just two days after the 16th RS Assembly session, the top leaders of the Krajina Corps met and discussed the strategic goals and the creation of the VRS.¹⁴ During summer 1992, as the VRS rapidly solidified its control over stretches of Bosnia and expelled non-Serbs from them, both instructions from the Main Staff¹⁵ and reports back to the Main Staff¹⁶ referenced the objectives. A report prepared for the Main Staff reflects how VRS officers saw their mission completely in line with the ideology that had spurred the objectives:

¹² Note that 'Brotherhood and Unity' was a slogan of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia before the war that promoted the policy of multi-ethnic coexistence. *Srpska Vojska*, 21 April 1993 (Official VRS Periodical).

¹³ *Naša Riječ*, 12 January 1993 (Bratunac).

¹⁴ 14 May 1992, Brđanin-P51b.

¹⁵ 19 November 1992, Brđanin-P2552, pp. 1-8.

¹⁶ For example, a Krajina Corps report on the state of morale noted ethnic separation had not yet occurred because of resistance from other ethnic groups. 14 June 1992, Brđanin-P385.

The objective of our operations, battles, and engagement in the past period has been to defend the Serb people against genocide by Muslim-Croat forces, to protect the property and the cultural heritage of the Serb people, liberate territories which are ours, diffuse enemy forces over a broad area and gradually break the enemy's power and/or break up his forces and take over the initiative and create conditions for undertaking decisive offensive operations in order to defeat his forces and expel them from areas which have always belonged to us, while at the same time preventing massive losses among our own forces.¹⁷

Soldiers at the lowest level received instructions alluding to the strategic objectives; for example, a June 1992 1st Krajina Corps report on the security situation acknowledged the policy of ethnic separation and noted the exodus of a section of the Muslim and Croat population, adding that those departing would not be allowed to return. The report included instructions that officers should disseminate it to all soldiers of the Krajina Corps.¹⁸ Another report that commanders shared with their soldiers emphasised that the overall objective of the Serb people was 'the liberation of all Serbs who live in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and then uniting them with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and other Serbs on the territory of former Yugoslavia.'¹⁹ The army leadership ensured that even the lowest ranking soldier knew the programme.

VRS instructions invoked the idea that Serbs faced the threat of genocide to persuade soldiers that they fought a defensive war. Internal documents often claimed that the VRS 'protected Serbs from genocide.'²⁰ Key terms that appeared frequently in army instructions and reports included 'defence,' 'liberation,' and claims to lands that were 'rightfully Serb.'²¹ Other reports alleged that genocide was actually taking place; for example, a Krajina Corps report from June 1992 stated: 'The soldiers must be warned to stay alert, since well trained and specially equipped sabotage groups of up to fifty men are

¹⁷ April 1993, Brđanin-P241, p. 7.

¹⁸ 1 June 1992, Brđanin-P380.

¹⁹ 20 August 1992, Brđanin-P2420.

²⁰ For example, 31 August 1992, Brđanin-P1572.

²¹ For example, 21 May 1992, Krajišnik-D49.

infiltrating from Croatia, with the task of stoking the flames of war, attacking vital facilities, and committing genocide against the Serb people.²² In one of the Main Staff's primary directives to all army units in August 1992, it stated:

Before the expiration of the agreed cease-fire, the enemy began offensive operations that were especially evident following the agreement reached between Tuđman and Izetbegović, whose objective was to break up the Army of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and subjugate and eradicate the Serb people ... In their operations so far, the enemy have brought in more substantial forces to the less defended positions that they had reconnoitred in detail beforehand, and during the attacks they mercilessly went after the Serb population and captured members of the Army of the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were liquidated with bestial torture unheard of in history.²³

In May 1992, the VRS instructed units to collect photographs, video and audio recordings, as well as witness statements to 'document the enemy's crimes for the public at home and abroad and for international institutions.' However, in October 1992 the Krajina Corps' daily bulletin demanded a 'greater and more convincing presentation to the world of the genocide against the Serbs, whatever that might cost,' because 'when we had to document the enemy's crimes for the public at home and abroad and for international institutions, it turned out that we did not have convincing testimonies and documentation.'²⁴ The leadership sought to exaggerate the threat posed by Bosnia's other ethnic groups in order to motivate Serb troops.

Some military documents included sentiments as radical as comments made in the assembly before and during the war. The threat posed by other ethnic groups, according to a report by the Assistant Commander for Morale of the Krajina Corps, could not have been more extreme:

Plainly speaking, the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina has found itself in

²² 1 June 1992, Brđanin-P380.

²³ 3 August 1992, Krajišnik-P892.73.

²⁴ 22 May 1992, Brđanin-P523; and quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 150.

conditions of total war; on the one hand, against Muslim and Croat fundamentalists; and on the other, against international fascism and also against all international institutions that have introduced an international blockade without precedent in the history of mankind ... No one will ever destroy or conquer our lands or stamp out the seeds of freedom and our determination that the Serb people shall live where they choose, and there is no such force that can make them live together with former brothers who rape Serb girls, roast and torture our soldiers and conduct genocide on behalf of fascism and Western democracy and their national identity.²⁵

This interpretation, present among officers who likely expressed it to subordinates, clearly intended to portray Muslims and Croats – particularly soldiers – as diabolical. Moreover, lumping Muslim and Croat fundamentalism with fascism and Western democracy reflects the notion that the VRS fought against larger forces in a David-versus-Goliath struggle to survive, similar to the mythological portrayal of the Battle of Kosovo and nineteenth-century Serb rebellions that promoted a sense of martyrdom.

Associating the West and the ‘international community,’ which indeed became increasingly critical of the Serb side as the siege of Sarajevo began and reports of concentration camps emerged in summer 1992, bolstered the leadership’s victimhood narrative and further prompted claims of ‘defence,’ ‘reaction,’ and even ‘international conspiracy.’ In addition to the general ‘West,’ Germany and the United States received trenchant criticism. An analysis of international negotiations included the conclusion: ‘Countries of the European Community have stuck their oars in, and especially the so-called German bloc of countries that have had centuries-long aspirations to dominate these areas,’ while another observed, ‘... the predominant attitudes of England and France towards the Serbs were slightly more balanced and less accusing, while those of Germany and America were more severe, discrediting, and accusatory.’²⁶ VRS officers also charged

²⁵ It is unclear what the author intended ‘international fascism’ to refer to but it is possible the use of this term is used in an attempt to link the VRS’s struggle with that of the successful (albeit multi-ethnic) partisan resistance from the Second World War. 15 July 1992, Krajišnik-P1033.

²⁶ 21 May 1992, Krajišnik-P892.58.1.

international aid organisations with anti-Serb bias and alleged that the international community planned a military intervention against the Serbs.²⁷ One document connected domestic and foreign adversaries succinctly, arguing that Western leaders left the Serbs alone to fight a common enemy:

It is the minority population in certain places that is in the most difficult situation. Every day we are facing genocide of innocent Serb civilians throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. The most tragic situation is that of the Muslim population, which has been misled through nationalist propaganda and pushed into mutual extermination with the Serbs. Under the leadership of Alija Izetbegović, these people are relying on a coalition with the Croats, but in fact what is happening is that Western European countries are using the Serbs to deal with Muslim fundamentalism on the territory of the Balkans and that the Muslims are deluded by a 'holy jihad.' Because they are deluded, in certain places there have been unnecessary armed clashes and bloodshed, and numerous families have lost their nearest and dearest, their homes and everything they need to survive. The embittered and enraged Ustasha and Green Berets are using every mistake we make as a pretext for revenge.²⁸

This revealing excerpt merges many of the standard Serb nationalist principles: threat of genocide, blame on others in Bosnia and abroad, while Serb wrongdoing is justified and responses by others are also denounced.

Bosnian Krajina 1992 – The First Strategic Objective

Between April and August 1992, most of the expulsions that took place during the entire conflict occurred.²⁹ As military expert Ewan Brown noted in his report at the ICTY, the VRS enjoyed complete military supremacy over non-Serb resistance in many areas.³⁰ A large number of the atrocities against civilians took place in the Bosnian Krajina, the country's northwest region bordering Croatia. In September 1991, authorities in SDS-controlled areas had proclaimed Serb Autonomous Regions, including the Autonomous

²⁷ 3 September 1992, Brđanin-P2425, p. 2.

²⁸ 20 June 1992, Brđanin- DB196.

²⁹ Calic, 'Ethnic Cleansing and War Crimes,' p. 126.

³⁰ Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, pp.138-139.

Region of Krajina, which later joined to form the RS.³¹ This section explores internal VRS documents – as well as some public statements by Talić – to demonstrate how his forces adopted the Serb nationalist ideology.³² Similar language and reasoning as evident in the Krajina Corps' instructions and reports appeared in documentation belonging to other VRS Corps throughout Bosnia.

When the JNA's Banja Luka 5th Corps became the VRS's 1st Krajina Corps, one of the first decisions was to accelerate the transition to a mono-ethnic institution, in line with the first strategic objective, which had already begun. On 8 April 1992, the JNA 2nd District regular combat report included a comment that non-Serb officers faced pressure to join the SDS or to resign and that the party had threatened to remove them if they did not leave voluntarily.³³ At the 12 May session, the president of the Autonomous Region of Krajina Crisis Staff Radoslav Brđanin complained about the presence of Muslims in the Banja Luka Corps:

How can anyone still believe it is right to have a Muslim teaching political classes in the Banja Luka Corps? I do not think it is ... I am less of a chauvinist than many believe. I merely have a high degree of national awareness and I believe that in conditions of war, once it is proclaimed, the entire economy, all war planning, all guarding of facilities must be put in the hands of Serbs ... I have also proposed that we give most of the leading positions to people from the areas where Serbs are a minority. They know how the mujahedin are and what the Ustasha are like.³⁴

Removing non-Serbs from army posts became a policy in the weeks following the 12 May assembly session. The following excerpt is taken from a Krajina Corps report with the instruction to share its contents with all troops:

The AR Krajina Assembly has taken all possible measures to remove from important posts those that have failed to meet their obligations, who have boycotted

³¹ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, p. 123.

³² By April 1993, the 1st Krajina Corps had formed 24 light infantry brigades with an average of around 1,200 troops each. April 1993, Brđanin-P2419, p. 3.

³³ 8 April 1992, Brđanin-P2554.

³⁴ 12 May 1992, Karadžić-P00956, p. 29.

all earlier mobilisations or unfairly treated Krajina fighters ... Most of the officials relieved of office are Muslims and Croats, but there are also some Serb degenerates.³⁵

Even those non-Serbs who remained in the JNA when it became the VRS realised their positions were untenable:

After the actions in Kozarac, Ključ and Sanski Most, some conscripts of Muslim nationality have asked to be released from their units. They express their dissatisfaction with the massive destruction of their towns.³⁶

By June, almost all remaining non-Serbs in posts of authority lost their positions. The VRS Main Staff ordered, 'All superiors of Muslim and Croat nationality must be sent on leave immediately and referred to the army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia where their status will be resolved.'³⁷ One combat report commented on the negative effect on morale that occurred after officers removed Muslims and Croats who had fulfilled their assignments but had nowhere to go and could not return to their communities.³⁸ Another June 1992 report commented: 'The purging of officers on an ethnic basis remains a topic of discussion because of the danger that it may very soon result in deficiencies in the units, but it is proceeding in the spirit of the order received.'³⁹ In July, General Mladić ordered that non-Serb officers who had proven themselves in combat and signed solemn loyalty oaths and written statements could remain in active military service.⁴⁰ But by the end of summer 1992, few non-Serbs held positions of authority.

The events in the Bosnian Krajina in 1992 demonstrate that the RS asserting its control and the implementation of the first strategic objective went hand in hand. Bosnians of all ethnicities had become increasingly fearful in early 1992, and many individuals began

³⁵ 26 May 1992, Brđanin-P2152.

³⁶ 31 May 1992, Brđanin-P2422.

³⁷ 9 June 1992, Brđanin-P1583.

³⁸ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 56.

³⁹ 13 June 1992, Brđanin-P383.

⁴⁰ 16 July 1992, Brđanin-DB271.

to collect arms in anticipation of what might happen next. In the first days of May, even before full scale attacks on non-Serbs throughout the Bosnian Krajina, the army reported that local people were panicking and fleeing certain areas.⁴¹ An early step in the ethnic cleansing process in the Krajina was to demand (primarily non-Serb) paramilitaries and individuals in possession of weapons and ammunition to surrender their firearms, otherwise searches and confiscations would follow.⁴² When the main deadline passed with few weapons turned in, Serb authorities (both the VRS and the Ministry of Internal Affairs) entered non-Serb settlements under the pretext of searching for illegal weapons and then forced non-Serbs to leave.⁴³ Documents from the Ključ municipality illustrate the procedure:

1st Infantry Brigade (Krajina Corps): If the Muslims do not surrender their weapons by 27 May 1992 at 1200hrs, the battalion will carry out a mopping up operation.⁴⁴

Ključ Crisis Staff: All citizens have to hand over illegally acquired weapons between 1200 and 1400 hours at the Ključ police station, the TO headquarters or collection point otherwise vigorous measures will be implemented to carry out disarmament, which could have disastrous consequences for the security of both people and property.⁴⁵

And indeed, VRS units followed up on the threats: because ‘Muslim extremists had failed to hand in their weapons,’ the Muslim population of the area of Lišnja village in Prnjavor municipality has been ‘expelled.’⁴⁶ The rhetoric of ‘self-defence’ from the RS assembly translated to the military’s ‘mopping up’ operations.⁴⁷

⁴¹ 2 May 1992, Brđanin-P629; 5 May 1992, Brđanin-P900; and 7 May 1992, Brđanin-DB273.

⁴² 4 May 1992, Brđanin-P1533; 8 May 1992, Brđanin-DB47.

⁴³ 11 May 1992, Brđanin-P1406; 15 May 1992, Brđanin-P637; 15 May 1992, Brđanin-P2393; 15 May 1992, Brđanin-P1190; and 22 May 1992, Brđanin-P2098.

⁴⁴ 28 May 1992, Brđanin-P924.

⁴⁵ 28 May 1992, Krajišnik-P759.C.

⁴⁶ 2 June 1992, Brđanin-P657; 3 June 1992, Brđanin-P950.

⁴⁷ An expert report prepared by military analyst Ewan Brown outlined the process that often characterised the takeover of non-Serb settlements. Serb forces would surround a village prior to engagement and then react to a relatively low-level incident with a show of overwhelming military

The ‘turning-in weapons’ approach soon gave way to less deceptive means of separating ethnic groups. Attacks on non-Serb villages followed a similar pattern: an ultimatum to surrender a day or two before an attack, then shelling of civilian and any military structures, followed by an infantry incursion.⁴⁸ An example from Bosanski Novi illustrates the VRS’s standard operating procedure in the Krajina region:

In Bosanski Novi, after military attacks on Muslim villages in the Japra valley in early May, a large number of villagers were forced to Blagaj Japra village. Later, on 9 June 1992, members of the Bosanski Novi Territorial Defence and the military police assembled a railway train made up of 22 closed [cattle] wagons into which about 4,000 inhabitants from Blagaj Japra and the surrounding area were placed. These people were to be sent to Central Bosnia and the train was dispatched through the 1st Krajina Corps zone to the area of Dobož where it was secured by the military.⁴⁹

Generally there was little to no resistance to the Serb attacks with most operations completed in less than three days.⁵⁰ The army conducted its mission to achieve the first strategic objective efficiently.

VRS documents reflect how the army increasingly came to consider all non-Serbs, particularly non-Serb men, as potential enemies. Reports and instructions often identified Croats as Ustasha and Muslims as ‘extremists,’ ‘mujahedin,’ or ‘Green Berets,’ a Bosnian Muslim paramilitary group.⁵¹ One revealing combat report illustrates the blurring of the lines between Muslim military personnel and civilians:

force. Often officers would issue deadlines for non-Serbs to turn over their weapons – and indeed many non-Serbs had armed themselves in anticipation of just such an event. Following the deadline – whether locals handed in arms or not – Serb forces would shell villages, often to the point of destruction, and then divide the population. Men would be detained at internment camps and women and children would be put on buses or forced to march towards non-Serb controlled territories. Extensive looting, sexual violence, and killing would also often characterise the takeover of a non-Serb settlement. Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 61.

⁴⁸ For example, the attack on Kozarac: 27 May 1992, Brđanin-P1587.

⁴⁹ 15 August 1992, Brđanin-P2423.

⁵⁰ In Prijedor the attack on Hambarine started on the 23 May and was completed by the following day, 24 May 1992, Brđanin-P1414. The VRS overran Kozarac between 25 - 27 May. 27 May 1992, Brđanin-P1587.

⁵¹ For example: 16 July 1992, Brđanin-P2207; 21 May 1992, Brđanin-P1597.

Green Berets pulling out of Večići village fell into our ambush. 40 of them were killed during the clash and another 20 members of the so-called BH Army were captured. Another 150 members of the Green Berets, mostly women and children, surrendered in the evening hours. Among the captured were three soldiers of the VRS who were captured in Kotor Varoš. The remaining forces were broken up and the search for them is underway.⁵²

The VRS allowed the women and children to escape to Travnik, but following the conquest of Večići, a 'brutal massacre' of the Muslim men took place because some VRS soldiers had fallen during the operation.⁵³ Moreover, the army was thorough in its effort to round up its enemies:

It is assessed that in the broader Prijedor area there are about 100 rebels, broken up into smaller groups of five to ten people, hiding in basements, woods, and underground shelters. They are most often detected either attempting to pull out or searching for food. If they do not surrender, they are eliminated.⁵⁴

Reports referred to massacres of 'Green Berets' captured by the Krajina Corps. In another case, 'extremists' refused to surrender and attempted to fight their way through leading to the death of one VRS soldier and the wounding of several others; in the same operation more than 150 'extremists' were killed in combat.⁵⁵ Other reports from the Krajina Corps unit noted 'extremists' had been 'eliminated.'⁵⁶ The army did not hesitate to use violence in order to remove resistant non-Serbs, by harassment or execution.

As a result of the physical threat posed by Serb forces, as well as the psychological pressure to leave the consolidating Serb-exclusivist state, non-Serbs attempted to leave the RS and this is indicated in the VRS's internal communications. Numerous documents make reference to the exodus of non-Serbs from the Bosnian Krajina. For example, a 13 August combat report noted 'there are a growing number of requests for an organised moving out

⁵² 4 November 1992, Brđanin-P2301.

⁵³ 4 November 1992, Brđanin-P2302.

⁵⁴ 6 July 1992, Brđanin-P1431.

⁵⁵ 5 November 1992, Brđanin-P2303.

⁵⁶ 6 July 1992, Brđanin-P1432; 2 August 1992, Brđanin-P1448; and 26 July 1992, Brđanin-P397.

of Muslims and Croats from the entire area of the Autonomous Region of Krajina' and another report from September observed 'a growing number of people are moving out and leaving the town of Banja Luka in an organised manner.' Some non-Serbs insisted on the opportunity to leave: 'The Muslim and Croat population is ever louder in its demands to leave the territory of the AR Krajina, particularly from Kotor Varoš and Prijedor,' and 'requests to move out from the Muslim and Croat populations have intensified.'⁵⁷ A 29 August report highlighted the unease non-Serbs felt about the VRS: 'Command is stressing they have noticed that the population is departing from the villages of Avramovina, Cerik and Grabov Gaj in large numbers, not trusting our army to protect them.'⁵⁸ Between May and August 1992, tens of thousands of non-Serbs decided to leave Serb-controlled areas.⁵⁹

As one report makes clear, the VRS intended ethnic separation to last:

A portion of the Muslim and Croat population is moving out, and the Region of Bosnian Krajina has issued a decision to facilitate such departures providing that the Serbs from Central Bosnia and places with predominantly Muslim and Croat populations are also allowed to move out. Those departing will not be allowed to return.⁶⁰

Within a span of several months, the first strategic objective, to separate Bosnia's peoples, became a reality. The extreme violence perpetrated by the VRS achieved its intended effect.

The military's wholesale adoption of Serb nationalism and the six strategic objectives created a murderous environment for non-Serbs. There were numerous incidents of Serb conscripts – sometimes under the influence of alcohol – harassing and even killing non-Serbs.⁶¹ A VRS Main Staff order from June 1992 warned that some Serb soldiers and civilians used the context of the war to settle pre-war scores, which had resulted in

⁵⁷ 10 July 1992, Brđanin-P1469; and 28 July 1992, Brđanin-P1444.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 115.

⁵⁹ 28 July 1992, Brđanin-P1444; 30 July 1992, Brđanin-P2228.

⁶⁰ 1 June 1992, Krajišnik-P892.38.1.

⁶¹ 6 December 1992, Brđanin-P2429; 8 September 1992, Brđanin-P319.

‘casualties, massacres and looting,’ and ‘risked dragging army units into local (personal) conflicts.’⁶² A number of reports made reference to the injury and murder of civilians, sometimes by other civilians.⁶³ For example, ‘a rebel group of ten Green Berets members and three prisoners of war were liquidated in Turjak village;’ another stated that in the Bosanska Gradiška region reprisals were taken against the local Muslim population and that several buildings were destroyed and six people were killed.⁶⁴ Muslim houses were set on fire and there was shooting in the village of Šamac, after the killing of 13 VRS soldiers.⁶⁵ The state authorities may not have ordered these killings, but they condoned them.

Reports about ‘discipline problems’ in the VRS reveal the degree of the danger that non-Serbs faced in spring and summer 1992. On 4 June, the VRS Main Staff ordered: ‘Through command-and-control measures and efficient checks, prevent unnecessary demolition and destruction, criminal actions by individuals and groups, unauthorised behaviour, and inhumane treatment of prisoners of war and civilians.’⁶⁶ Another letter indicated:

In our recent letters, we have repeatedly emphasised the need to prevent retaliation against innocent people (looting, torching, destruction, and maltreatment) ... Such occurrences are not and must not be part of the standard conduct of members of our army because they tarnish the reputation and moral profile of the Serb soldier. We cannot allow improper and retaliatory behaviour and treatment of innocent and helpless people simply because they are not Serbs ...⁶⁷

Although reports about massacres sometimes mentioned that investigations would follow, these rarely resulted in disciplinary action. A December 1992 Krajina Corps combat report referenced an incident concerning five members of a Sanski Most infantry brigade who

⁶² Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 52.

⁶³ 28 March 1992, Brđanin-P606.

⁶⁴ 24 June 1992, Brđanin-P2172b.

⁶⁵ 16 August 1992, Brđanin-P2000; and 17 August 1992, Brđanin-P2239.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 92.

⁶⁷ 23 June 1992, Brđanin-DT10.

killed seven Croat civilians, including three women. Five of the civilians died in their homes and the other two were killed while cutting firewood. The men were held for a month in December 1992 before a prosecutor released them back to their unit on the grounds that there was no further reason to hold them. The perpetrators were never tried.⁶⁸ While it is possible that the above quoted excerpt from the Main Staff is sincere, it is unlikely that following up on crimes against non-Serbs formed a high priority for wartime RS institutions, especially the army.

The lack of distinction between extremists and ordinary civilians led to the establishment of concentration camps, which facilitated the physical separation process envisioned by the first strategic objective. One report complained that the removal of non-Serbs did not proceed expeditiously enough:

The Muslim organisation in Kotor Varoš is initiating negotiations on modes of migration from that area. People have also moved away from other areas, while in Banja Luka the authorities are not sufficiently organised in implementing this model for the removal of the enemy.⁶⁹

Towns like Kozarac and Hambarine with large Muslim populations resisted the encroachment of Serb forces for a short time but became overwhelmed. The killing of two Serb policemen close to Prijedor prompted an invasion of the towns by the VRS. A report indicated:

Troops under the command of the Prijedor area cleared Hambarine and Kozarac and completely destroyed one ZNG unit (Black-shirts, foreign mercenaries, and legionnaires). These troops have arrested more than 2,000 Green Berets who are now in Omarska, 135 of them are in Stara Gradiška prison, and about 5,000 in the village of Trnopolje.⁷⁰

Considering the small size of these settlements, it is probable that many of the men from

⁶⁸ 6 December 1992, Brđanin-P2429.

⁶⁹ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 111.

⁷⁰ 1 June 1992, Brđanin-P1588.

both towns must have qualified as Green Berets and been sent to camps.⁷¹ For their achievement, the main unit involved with the operation to take Hambarine and Kozarac received praise from General Talić for ‘the skill and courage they had demonstrated. They are an example of how one should act while defending the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.’⁷² Moving non-Serbs from their towns and villages and into camps formed part of the plan to expedite the separation process.

A consequence of the detention camps was to collect – or ‘concentrate’ – non-Serbs before expelling them from an area permanently.⁷³ Most camps were improvised; for example, a sawmill was used in Kotor Varoš,⁷⁴ and a sports stadium became an internment centre in Bosanski Novi, although detainees would often first be interrogated at local police stations.⁷⁵ Conditions at the camps were abysmal, with a dysfunctional water system for over 3,000 detainees at Manjača,⁷⁶ random terror and killing during attempted escapes at Keraterm,⁷⁷ and deaths during prisoner transfers.⁷⁸ By conducting mass arrests, police and military forces loyal to the RS could round up thousands of non-Serb men and remove them from their homes.

Yet even the military authorities on the ground recognised that the ‘extremists’ posed little threat. A Krajina Corps security report from August noted: ‘By processing the

⁷¹ In 1991 Hambarine had 2,876 residents, 2,768 of whom identified as Muslims. Kozarac had 4,045 residents, 3,740 of whom identified as Muslims.

⁷² 1 June 1992, Brđanin-P380B.

⁷³ For discussion of the meaning and origin of the term ‘concentration camp,’ as well as a discussion about how Bosnian Serb-run camps qualify, see D. Campbell, ‘Atrocity, memory, photography: imaging the concentration camps of Bosnia – the case of ITN versus *Living Marxism*, Part 2,’ *Journal of Human Rights* 1/2 (2002), pp. 149-151.

⁷⁴ 8 July 1992, Krajišnik-P529.298.1.

⁷⁵ 15 August 1992, Krajišnik-P96.1.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 105.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 89.

⁷⁸ 7 August 1992, Brđanin-P1535.

war prisoners in the Manjača POW camp we realised that a certain (quite large) number of them, according to incrimination, do not deserve to be treated as prisoners of war (they did not have weapons, they did not participate in combat, they were not in uniform, etc).⁷⁹ Another report stated: 'Tensions are still present in the Kotor Varoš, Ključ, Sanski Most and Prijedor areas because of a large number of arrested citizens for whom there is no evidence or criminal reports that they participated in the armed rebellion.'⁸⁰ When the authorities did release prisoners, for example from Manjača, they did not allow them to return to their homes but instead sent them to Croatia where they became refugees. An anecdote relayed in a Corps report captured the atmosphere in December 1992:

The release of prisoners of war from Manjača is proceeding as planned, noting the following: at 1555 hours, a convoy of buses with 1,008 prisoners crossed the Sava river bridge in Gradiška. On its way, the convoy was stopped because in Klačnice village a barricade had been set up by some of the inhabitants of Laktaši municipality in order to attack the convoy. After General Kelečević talked to the assembled people, they dispersed and the convoy passed through safely, apart from stones being thrown in Laktaši. This resulted in broken windows on two buses.⁸¹

Another report stated: 'Due to the presence of a large number of angry troops who are on the fronts where their comrades are getting killed every day, at this moment no form of protection can be organised for these returnees.'⁸² An effect of the mass arrests and camps was to facilitate the expulsion process.

The VRS's programme to remove non-Serbs from the Krajina proceeded even though it created practical problems for Serb authorities. One report indicated how the expulsion policy backfired:

The most difficult situation concerns the Muslim and Croat refugees in the area of AR Krajina, their security and the provision of food. The attempt to expel them to Central Bosnia failed because of transportation difficulties and their resistance to

⁷⁹ 6 August 1992, Brđanin-P892.41.1.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 108.

⁸¹ Quoted in Ibid., p. 109.

⁸² 22 August 1992, Brđanin-P719.

leaving their homes. This is giving rise to vindictiveness and revenge and is resulting in the enemy closing ranks.⁸³

The expulsion of non-Serbs prompted many refugees to join forces fighting against the VRS. One report indicated 'attacks on all areas of the Serb Republic and the Republic of Serb Krajina may be launched very soon, especially after the exodus of the majority of the Croat population and a part of the Muslim population from Banja Luka and other towns,'⁸⁴ and another noted: 'Pressure, requests, and organised emigration on the part of the Muslims and Croats from the wider area of Krajina are increasing, although some do return in an organised manner and join the enemy ranks.'⁸⁵ What is more, an unsigned Krajina Corps report from 22 August, two weeks after the internationally publicised revelations by British journalists, illustrated what kind of treatment camp inmates received and the problems that subsequently arose:

All are now washing their hands regarding camps and reception centres, attempting to pass responsibility for issuing orders for the mass execution of civilians in the camps and centres on to someone else. This has become particularly noticeable since the visit of foreign reporters to Prijedor, more precisely to Omarska and Trnopolje. Forged documents about this are even appearing ... One thing is certain: we are already starting to feel the cost of the needless spilling of Muslim blood. There is information that Muslims driven out of the municipality of Prijedor, and those who fled to the other side, but who had done nothing against the Serb Republic before, are now taking up arms in Croatia and joining the war against us. Several such persons were captured in Gradačac. In addition to this, Muslims who were either driven out of or fled from Prijedor to Croatia now attack everything that is Serb, and the Serbs in Croatia have thus gained fanatical enemies, bequeathed to them by the civilian and military authorities of Prijedor.⁸⁶

This analysis indicates knowledge of both the extreme violence and killing that occurred at the camps, as well as the questionable criminal status of the interned non-Serbs. By summer

⁸³ 14 June 1992, Krajišnik-P892.90.1.

⁸⁴ 13 August 1992, Brđanin-P2427; 6 September 1992, Brđanin- P421.

⁸⁵ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 112.

⁸⁶ 22 August 1992, Krajišnik-P892.85.1

1992 the VRS and other organs of the Serb republic had almost entirely achieved the goal of separation from the other two peoples within Serb-claimed territory.

The military's actions were complemented by the civil authorities, which did their best to ensure that expelled non-Serbs would not be able to return. Departing Muslims and Croats had to 'de-register' their property and grant Serb authorities control over it.⁸⁷ Some refugees could only take a fixed amount of 300 German Marks and warehouses were devoted to storing moveable property.⁸⁸ When Serb forces took Jajce, a town where 82 per cent of the population was non-Serb before the war, members of the army and their families moved into some of the many vacated houses. A similar phenomenon occurred in Sanski Most. Hundreds of houses were allocated to soldiers of the 6th Krajina Brigade and some flats were given to families of killed Serb soldiers.⁸⁹ These kinds of policies served to reward those loyal to the new regime and to also ensure that non-Serb refugees, should they ever attempt to return, would find their homes occupied and their property gone.

Posavina Corridor – The Second Strategic Objective

One of the most important steps towards implementing the Serb nationalist programme and establishing an expanded Serb state was creating a 'corridor' to connect the Krajina and Semberija regions. Bosnia's pre-war demographic distribution undermined Karadžić's plan to link Serb-claimed territories because they were not contiguous. As evident from Appendix C, the two areas in northwest and northeast Bosnia that had relative Serb majorities were separated by a strip centring on the town of Brčko, in a region called

⁸⁷ 29 June 1992, Krajišnik-P892.91.1.

⁸⁸ 28 July 1992, Krajišnik-529.354.1;

⁸⁹ Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, pp. 116-117.

the Posavina, which had an ethnic Croat majority.⁹⁰ It fell to the VRS to establish a physical connection between Republika Srpska Krajina, Republika Srpska, and Serbia proper by realising the second strategic objective.

Serb nationalists were hard-pressed to justify claiming the Posavina. Karadžić noted the difficulty, recognising that Croat nationalists had historic claims not unlike his own: ‘That area will be the hardest to deal with because the HDZ lays historical claims to it because of the Banovina ...’ Nevertheless, Karadžić managed to find an argument to support his desire to include the Posavina in the RS: ‘60 per cent of the territories there are held by Serbs who make up 40 per cent [of the population]. We will have to reach some kind of compromise there and make some adjustments so that this corridor can be ours.’⁹¹ Brđanin was less inclined to persuade non-Serbs in former Yugoslavia and the international community to recognise RS claims, but he also emphasised the corridor’s importance: ‘Simply, there is no agreement [with non-Serbs] regarding Brčko. [But] there is no RS or RSK without Brčko. We have to say to the world that we are not in a military mood, but the world must know the following: every Serb will become a kamikaze in defending Brčko.’⁹² Both at the assembly and in military documentation, the pragmatic assertion that control over the corridor was a necessity for the Serb state to exist featured more prominently than other arguments.

The military leadership understood the significance of the corridor for the Serb nationalist project. On 12 May 1992, Mladić proclaimed: ‘What is our goal? To have a corridor, one to Serbia; my goal and our goal should be to have a state of our own where we

⁹⁰ During the war and in the course of war crimes trials, the corridor is referred to as the Posavina Corridor, the Brčko Corridor, or even simply the corridor interchangeably.

⁹¹ 25 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 50-51.

⁹² 10-11 May 1994, Karadžić-P01390, p. 27.

have left our mark, the bones of our fathers, and that is the goal we must fight for ...’⁹³ Upon the outset of ‘Operation Corridor’ in June 1992, General Momir Talić explained why the campaign was so important for the Serb nationalist cause: ‘Our forces have been tasked with the liberation of Serb areas ... The second purpose of this operation is to open a corridor towards Serbia. In this way we shall secure the area of the Krajinas.’⁹⁴ In his order to conduct the operation, Talić stated that units must ‘stress the importance of control over the relevant areas in terms of the provision of supplies and the survival of the Serb people in the Bosnian Krajina and the RSK ...’⁹⁵ From the point of view of the Krajina Corps commander, creating a contiguous, expanded Serb state would preserve the existence of his ethnic group.

Serb forces managed to establish a narrow corridor in the Posavina and thereby achieved the second strategic objective in summer 1992. Mladić himself congratulated VRS troops for ‘successfully breaking through, widening, and mopping up the Posavina corridor.’⁹⁶ A Krajina Corps combat report indicated that the units shared the leadership’s enthusiasm for the campaign:

The combat morale of units is relatively stable. This is confirmed by the many soldiers who would like to make a breakthrough towards the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The idea of having the Serb Republic constituted as [part of] a joint state of all Serbs throughout former Yugoslavia and a readiness to prevent the spread of an armed conflict to the area of AR Krajina are immediately evident.⁹⁷

Shortly after the successful operation, Mladić insisted that broadening the corridor should

⁹³ 12 May 1992, Perišić-P00188, p. 43.

⁹⁴ Talić uses the plural to refer to the Bosnian and Croatian Krajina regions. Video entitled ‘Preparation of the action and takeover of the Odžak municipality by the Serbian military’. Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 140.

⁹⁵ 9 June 1992, Krajišnik-P892.13.1.

⁹⁶ 2 July 1992, Krajišnik-P892.62A.1.

⁹⁷ 17 June 1992, Krajišnik-P194.1.

form a top priority for the VRS.⁹⁸ Upon the rapid completion of the corridor operation, Talić gave a television interview and reiterated the importance of the corridor as espoused by the six strategic objectives:

On behalf of the soldiers, I would like to thank you for the congratulations sent to the heroes. I would like to remind you that these are not just the soldiers of the 1st Krajina Corps, but also from the Republic of Serb Krajina who fought equally courageously and heroically, shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers of the 1st Krajina Corps. You know that we have achieved our aim of linking up with the East Bosnia Corps and further on with Mother Serbia. We say this with pride because we know that the people wish for the same as we do here, the liberty of the Serb people, and for the Serb people to fight for their freedom ... This is the first war in which we are not at odds with one another, which means that they have realised, that it is the Serb people and the leadership at their head, they have realised that we must be united in realising our common goal.⁹⁹

Talić's appeal to Serb unity, linking with Serbia proper, and maintaining a connection with the RSK echoed the ideological vision of the political leadership. Moreover, his reference to Serbs 'not at odds with one another' adopted a tone of historical importance that the RS's political leadership also shared. There is little doubt that Talić harboured a similar political, historical, and ideological outlook as did his superiors Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić.

Yet the VRS's control over the corridor remained tenuous throughout the conflict and required a disproportionate commitment of resources in order to keep secure.¹⁰⁰ Aleksa Milojević, the RS minister for reconstruction and development, highlighted the precarious nature of the VRS's control, 'The corridor of five kilometres in Brčko is a very thin stalk on which an entire state hangs ... We have to maintain that if we are thinking about future development and a prosperous Republika Srpska. A corridor, the shortest way, and a highway, and the infrastructure link between those two directions ... We are risking too

⁹⁸ 14-15 September 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 58-59.

⁹⁹ Quoted in Brown, *Military Developments in the Bosanska Krajina*, p. 143.

¹⁰⁰ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 146-147.

much on a thin stalk, the five kilometres worth of corridor.’¹⁰¹ Mladić’s Chief of Staff Manojlo Milovanović agreed and suggested that the achievement of the strategic objectives depended on protecting the corridor: ‘If we lose the corridors, we have lost the country. Therefore we cannot give them [the enemy] a chance. The greatest pressure is on the Posavina corridor, but they will almost certainly not succeed in cutting it off. Our army has, so far, achieved four strategic goals, or rather tasks. It completed all four tasks and allowed the political leadership of the country to function.’¹⁰² The hope for eventually creating an expanded Serb state depended on maintaining control over the corridor and expanding it as much as possible.

Sarajevo: a Symbolic and Military Target

Just like campaigns against the enclaves, the siege of Sarajevo formed a critical part of the Bosnian Serb regime’s wartime strategy for military and ideological reasons. While it seems that conquering the entire city did not become a priority, the siege did figure as part of an overall military strategy as imagined at the 12 May 1992 session, when Karadžić remarked: ‘The fighting in Sarajevo keeps the fighting far away from the Krajina, far away from the Semberija, far away from the Drina, far away from all those areas, where we could possibly have conflicts with Muslims.’¹⁰³ Karadžić referred to the siege of Sarajevo as a ‘question of the [Serb] people’s survival’ and told the assembly: ‘The Sarajevo battlefield has created [our] state, we cannot detract from the importance of anyone’s actions, but had the Sarajevo battlefield broken down, they [the ABiH] would have reached the Drina and cut across the corridor, there would not be a Krajina, nor the Republika Srpska Krajina, nor

¹⁰¹ 12 August 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 72-73.

¹⁰² 1 February 1992, *Novi Glas* (Doboj).

¹⁰³ 25 December 1993, Perišić-P00781, p. 14.

Herzegovina, nor anything ...’¹⁰⁴ On 14 May 1992, the head of the JNA’s 1st Partizan Division – soon to become the VRS’s Sarajevo Romanija Corps – convened a meeting with the Serb chairmen from the Sarajevo area municipalities. General Stanislav Galić proposed to ‘implement the decisions from the meeting in Banja Luka [of 12 May 1992], but to submit them to the commands of units and municipalities; and to hold the present positions and defend them without war.’ Galić’s proposal received a unanimous endorsement from the mayors.¹⁰⁵ The assembled leaders did not discuss how to achieve the Banja Luka programme without resorting to war, and the fifth strategic objective, dividing Sarajevo, quickly became the outline for the siege of the city.

The siege of Sarajevo bolstered the leadership’s narrative of the war as a historic struggle against a growing number of enemies. Before the bombardment began, the SDS organised barricades in an attempt to resist the government’s plan to declare independence from Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁶ When thousands of Sarajevans marched for peace – and Serb militia shot several protestors – Karadžić responded: ‘We warned what would happen in the event of demands for an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina ... Northern Ireland would be like a holiday camp compared to Bosnia.’¹⁰⁷ After the siege began, condemnation from international observers and representatives of peacekeeping missions followed. Major General Lewis Mackenzie, the commander UN peacekeepers in Bosnia in 1992, told Karadžić that the UN held him responsible for attacks on civilians; Lieutenant General Phillippe Morillon, Mackenzie’s successor, informed Karadžić that killing unarmed people in front of TV cameras and international observers was folly; Lord David Owen, the

¹⁰⁴ 30-31 December 1993, Karadžić-P01383, pp. 134-135.

¹⁰⁵ 14 May 1992, Galić-P3683.

¹⁰⁶ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, p. 125.

¹⁰⁷ *The Times*, 3 March 1992 (London).

European Community's envoy, reprimanded Karadžić by calling the shelling of Sarajevo a disgrace; but the Serb position remained the same.¹⁰⁸ Condemnations from foreign representatives had the same effect as denunciations that followed the discovery of concentration camps: a strengthened conviction that Serb forces struggled for survival against a world of enemies.

Accusing the other side of atrocities supported the Bosnian Serb nationalist narrative of victimhood and bolstered the regime's self-defence argument. On 12 May 1992, Mladić advised the assembly:

We should not say: 'we will destroy Sarajevo;' we need Sarajevo. We are not going to say that we are going to destroy the power supply pylons or to turn off the water supply. No, because that would get America out of its seat ... Therefore, we have to wisely tell the world, it was they [the ABiH] who were shooting, who hit the transmission line and the power went off, they were shooting at the water supply facilities, there was a power cut at such and such a place, we are doing our best repairing this, that is what diplomacy is ...¹⁰⁹

And indeed blaming the other side for atrocities committed against non-Serbs became the leadership's standard response. Early in the war, Karadžić insisted: 'More than 600 Muslim snipers were distributed on top of buildings in Sarajevo to introduce a "state of terror"... We don't have snipers, only they have snipers.'¹¹⁰ When asked in an interview about snipers in Sarajevo killing civilians, Karadžić responded: 'We are not close enough to be able to do so. It is cowardice.' When pressed further about what was happening to the people who died, Karadžić insisted, 'No, [it is] only the Muslims, who do so because they kill everything that moves. The fact is that coexistence with the Muslims is impossible, as is the case elsewhere in the world.'¹¹¹ However, in an interview with the Belgrade

¹⁰⁸ *The Washington Post*, 23 June 1992 (Washington, D.C.); *The Washington Post*, 23 November 1992 (Washington, D.C.); and *United Press International*, 19 December 1992 (Washington, D.C.).

¹⁰⁹ 12 May 1992, Perišić-P00188, p. 42.

¹¹⁰ *The Independent*, 31 July 1992 (London).

¹¹¹ *Madrid ABC*, 17 January 1993 (Madrid).

magazine *Nin*, Mladić admitted to personally having ‘done a bit of shooting’ with soldiers stationed at Sarajevo’s Jewish cemetery, a notorious sniping outpost held by Chetnik paramilitaries who had accepted subordination to the VRS.¹¹² Throughout the conflict, the VRS denied committing atrocities while it attempted to keep the ABiH as concentrated as possible at breaking the siege.

Yet the siege of Sarajevo’s longevity and intensity undermined the plan to divide the city into Muslim and Serb halves because the shelling prompted the city’s Serb residents to flee to Serb-controlled areas.¹¹³ Krajišnik held a radical view about the future of Sarajevo: ‘The outlook for Sarajevo,’ said the RS assembly president, ‘is such that in the future it will be a unified town but a Serb one completely. The Muslims will have to look for a capital outside of Sarajevo, somewhere else. That is the natural course of things. This town will belong to Republika Srpska in its totality.’¹¹⁴ Karadžić expressed a similar sentiment:

Sarajevo is not in the Muslim state, it is in the Serb state because everything around it is Serb, and we keep everything. We are not going to cede a single footstep. If we would cede a single footstep on their pressure we would [effectively] give up. Therefore, there is a greater chance that Sarajevo will become entirely Serb than become entirely Muslim. The most probable option is to divide Sarajevo and create two cities.¹¹⁵

Yet General Đukić of the Sarajevo Romanija Corps interjected to inform the RS president about the new reality: ‘I have to say, and I am saying this so it would be easier for you to make conclusions, the majority of Serbs have left Sarajevo.’¹¹⁶ Even when a military campaign achieved its objective, ideology managed to obscure decision makers’ view of

¹¹² *NiN*, 18 February 1994 (Belgrade); also available at Perišić-P00333.

¹¹³ Internal factors also pressured Serbs to leave Sarajevo. See Chapter 1.

¹¹⁴ *Srpsko Oslobođenje*, 23 November 1994 (Pale).

¹¹⁵ 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 122.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 122.

the situation on the ground.

The Assembly Approves

The RS assembly condoned the army's actions in the war because members knew that separation could only take place by destroying ethnically mixed areas. Karadžić explained why Muslims needed to leave even areas where few Serbs lived: 'There are 500-600 Serbs south of Bihać. That is all. And we have preserved 250,000 places of living space where Muslims used to live.'¹¹⁷ The Bosnian Serb leadership believed Serbs needed more space and thus the removal of non-Serbs needed to be expedited. SDS deputy from Mostar and president of the Commission for National Defence, Branko Simić, summarised what he called a 'serious political issue' facing RS authorities:

The problem is the displaced non-Serb population. There are no specific criteria or legal acts about it in Republika Srpska. Terrible chaos unfolded in the wake of our inappropriate approach to this – in my view – serious political issue. I do not know what you think about it. I think that there should be as few of them [non-Serbs] as possible among us. We should enable them to go away as soon as possible, and wish them a pleasant trip. However, due to the lack of proper legislation, there appears an impression that we are preventing them from leaving.

Simić continued to suggest solutions to this dilemma that prevented authorities from creating a Serb-only state:

I think that the Banja Luka municipality did the best thing. Only three documents are required for those of non-Serb background to move out of Banja Luka. The Ministry of National Defence adopted 14 legal acts concerning displacement ... On the other hand, some military commands impose their own criteria. Some Serb municipalities even charge a bridge toll. For instance, in Bosanska Gradiška, Muslims have to pay 100 German Marks per person to cross the bridge. Gentlemen, if only the RS had enough money, we would pay them to go away.¹¹⁸

This speech reveals an indifference to the final destination of non-Serbs forced to leave their homes. Another delegate identified the Muslims living in Livno, a town in Western Bosnia populated mostly by Croats, as descendants of some of the worst Ustasha

¹¹⁷ 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 80.

¹¹⁸ 3 April 1993, Karadžić-P01369, pp. 34-35.

perpetrators during the Second World War, and therefore a Serb aim should be to ‘scatter them.’¹¹⁹ The military leadership interpreted these instructions and implemented them to create a ‘new reality’ to discuss at negotiations.

Self-ascribed victim status, which propelled Serb leaders to launch their state-building project in 1992, led Karadžić and his followers to regard their side as the main casualty during a war in which their forces enjoyed the upper hand. Delegates invoked enemy horrors to justify their military campaigns. In the early months of the war, Trifko Radić cited terrors by Muslims and Croats: ‘We are at war, we are surrounded, we are being attacked every evening, we have no other choice but to shell and destroy towns.’ He also hinted at the threat of an Ustasha resurrection: ‘They infiltrate, kill and commit genocide ... nine people were killed and then mutilated with knives. Every day they kill our people because they are such crafty and cunning swindlers.’¹²⁰ In September 1992, Radić stated: ‘We have been without water for five months ... in Sarajevo the UN is contacted when the city doesn’t have water for two hours. That’s why I told President Karadžić and Prstojević [head of the Ilidža municipality outside Sarajevo] to cut off the water supply. If we don’t have water, let them die as well.’¹²¹ The SDS deputy from Bihać, Miroslav Vještica, referred to ‘balije’ – a derogatory term for Bosnian Muslims – ‘provoking and harassing’ Serbs,¹²² suggesting that retaliation was just and necessary. At the beginning of the conflict, Vještica denounced harassment against Serbs to justify violence, even though Serb authorities implemented the same discriminatory policies in areas under their control:

I must remind you all that only 24 per cent of the population of Bosanska Krupa are Serbs. There are 14,500 of us and there are 47,000 Muslims. As our president said,

¹¹⁹ 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 99.

¹²⁰ 12 May 1992, Perišić-P00188, p. 48.

¹²¹ 14-15 September 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 180-181.

¹²² 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 176.

we in the Serb Municipality of Bosanska Krupa did not want the war, but there was nothing else we could do. One could not live longer in Bosanska Krupa with all the insolence, military exercises, and many other things; with forcible take-overs of firms with guns in hand, with every single Serb thrown out of his job in Bosanska Krupa, with not one Serb teacher wanting to sign an oath of loyalty, as a matter of fact, not one Serb in the municipality of Bosanska Krupa [signed a loyalty oath]. That is why we were forced to go to war, gentlemen.¹²³

The ideological prism through which the Bosnian Serb leadership viewed the war placed blame on others, and cast Serb forces in a defensive light.

During the war, assembly representatives encouraged atrocities against Bosnian Muslims and Croats. For example, the RS Health Minister, Dragan Kalinić, believed that eliminating the enemy's access to emergency services could help the Serb side win the war:

... Knowing who our enemies are, how deceitful they are, how they cannot be trusted until they are physically, militarily destroyed and crushed, which, of course, implies eliminating and liquidating their key people. I do not hesitate in selecting the first option, the option of war ... Those who plan the Sarajevo operation, the liberation of Sarajevo or the destruction of enemy forces in Sarajevo, will have to decide what to do with the medical facilities. And let me tell you this right now, if the Military Hospital falls into the hands of the enemy, *I am for the destruction of the Koševo hospital so that the enemy has nowhere to go for medical help.*¹²⁴

Kalinić's speech mentions both politicide – the destruction of an elite or 'key people' – and general destruction. Kalinić was both a medical doctor and a former staff member of the Koševo hospital, the largest and most modern medical facility in Bosnia before the war. Although elected in 1990 as a member of the multi-ethnic Reformist Party, by 12 May 1992, Kalinić expressed sentiments as radical as some of his SDS colleagues. The hospital suffered artillery strikes throughout the war, but it functioned and served Sarajevo's military and civilian injured.

Moreover, assembly members openly acknowledged that their forces conducted ethnic cleansing. Speaking about the early weeks of the war in Sarajevo, SDS

¹²³ 12 May 1992, Perišić-P00188, p. 24.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

representative from Sarajevo's suburbs Nedjeljko Prstojević claimed that following an encouraging visit by Karadžić, Serb authorities in the Ilidža municipality 'retained their control over the territory, and even extended their control in some areas, driving Muslims out of areas where they had actually been a majority.'¹²⁵ Delegates approved of non-Serb expulsions from Prijedor, an area with a relative Muslim majority where a number of notorious detention camps operated. Srđo Srdić, an RS assembly member representing the area, boasted about recent developments:

Prijedor was the only green municipality in Bosnian Krajina. If we had been listening to you, we would still be green today; we would still be Krupa, and Prijedor wouldn't be Prijedor. We fixed them and sent them in packing where they belong. (Applause)¹²⁶

The support for crimes against others solidified the Serb delegates' shared conviction that there could be no going back to multi-ethnic Bosnia. Trifko Radić expressed a popular position: 'Believe me when I say that we cannot live together anymore. I don't know under what conditions we could live together now. I have to be honest and say that they caused much evil to us, but this time we did not cause less evil to them either.'¹²⁷ These excerpts reveal a complete indifference towards the fate of non-Serbs, but also reflect the perceived righteousness of the Bosnian Serb nationalist cause. Past evil justified present evil: a perceived necessary process in a long struggle that could only conclude with permanent separation as part of any settlement.

Conclusion

The army and other Republika Srpska institutions implemented the six strategic objectives in an expedient and effective manner. 'Separating from Bosnia's other two

¹²⁵ 24-26 July 1992, Karadžić-D00092, p. 67.

¹²⁶ 'Green' likely means having a Muslim majority. 24 November 1992, Karadžić-P01105, pp. 116-117.

¹²⁷ 8 January 1993, Karadžić-P00921, p. 68.

peoples' became a euphemism for expelling non-Serbs. As the war progressed through its first months, the line between enemy combatants and civilians quickly blurred as thousands of non-Serb men, many of whom had not engaged in any military activity, found themselves in camps run by Republika Srpska authorities.

Securing the Posavina corridor, an area where ethnic Serbs formed a minority, is a testament to the political and military leadership's intention to link Serb-claimed territories in Bosnia and Croatia with Serbia proper, thereby creating Greater Serbia. As is evident from comments by VRS leaders, the military elite subscribed to the ideology espoused by Karadžić and his supporters. The military leadership ensured that the Bosnian Serb army became appropriately indoctrinated. Moreover, the political elite clearly condoned – indeed celebrated – the VRS's achievements.

While the VRS 'succeeded' in achieving the first two strategic objectives with striking speed and ferocity, the creation of new realities came with a cost. Serb credibility at the negotiating table would suffer greatly as news of atrocities spread around the world. Karadžić's regime compromised itself in the eyes of the international community, which would discourage Belgrade from becoming even more involved in the conflict. Obvious incrimination and association with atrocities would not hinder the drive to create an expanded Serb state. On the contrary, Karadžić and his followers would become even more confident of the righteousness of their cause. There was no going back after summer 1992. And despite the well-publicised atrocities and its desire to maintain deniability, the Belgrade leadership would do its part to ensure the Bosnian Serb war machine kept functioning.

Chapter 6: Fuelling the War, June 1992 – July 1994

The general objective of the armed forces: defend the territorial integrity of the Serb states west of the Drina and Danube rivers and the SRJ; protect the Serb people from genocide; liberate parts of Serb territories with Serb majorities; create conditions for the establishment of a single state of the Serb people; prevent the creation of Greater Croatia, and a compact Islamic state on the territory of former Yugoslavia. – Directive for the Use of the VJ, the VRS, and the SVK, 24 November 1993.¹

How did the Belgrade authorities respond to the VRS's campaign to achieve the six strategic objectives? Although the transcripts of the Coordination Council examined in Chapter 4 demonstrate that the Republika Srpska and Belgrade leaderships did not agree on how best to achieve their common goal, evidence from the SRJ's top military decision-making body, the Supreme Defence Council (SDC) – comprising of the SRJ president, the presidents of the SRJ's two constituent republics, and also attended by the Yugoslav Army chief of staff, the prime minister, and the minister of defence² – proves that the Belgrade political establishment led by Slobodan Milošević sponsored the Greater Serbia expansionist programme. The stenographic transcripts and minutes from the SDC's monthly meetings indicate that Belgrade extended as much aid as it could to the VRS, at great expense to the Serbian state and society. Military equipment, ammunition, personnel, and other forms of assistance reached the VRS from Belgrade-controlled institutions on a regular basis.

At its inception in June 1992, the SDC met in parallel with the Coordination Council. However, unlike the ad hoc Coordination Council, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia established the SDC as a permanent institution. From June 1992

¹ 24 November 1993, Perišić-P00215, p. 7.

² 'Constitution of SRJ', *Official Gazette of the SRJ*, 1/1 (1992). Perišić-P01186, p. 27.

until July 1994, the council served as a forum where Belgrade leaders devised methods to conceal their involvement in the Bosnian war while lending as much assistance as possible to the Bosnian Serb regime. The transcripts highlight the extensive aid sent to Republika Srpska from Serbia and Montenegro, and also demonstrate that the Belgrade leadership supported the Serb unification programme, albeit in the long term.³

The evidence reveals the full extent of the disingenuousness of Milošević's promise to the international community to send only humanitarian relief to the Bosnian Serbs. Instead, the transcripts reflect a close relationship between the Yugoslav Army (VJ) and the VRS. The records indicate that the SDC coordinated the structure of the two forces with such care that they functioned in many ways as a single army. Karadžić and his entourage did not rely on the SRJ to supply just a portion of their war effort; they conducted the war entirely thanks to Belgrade's assistance. Classified as state secret, the SDC transcripts demonstrate how Milošević and Momčilo Perišić, Života Panić's successor as VJ Chief of Staff as of August 1993, provided aid with the aim of building an integrated Serb army. The SRJ leaders hoped that their assistance would lay the foundation for eventual Serb unification. The transcripts demonstrate the restrictions limiting Belgrade's – and more precisely the VJ's – open involvement in the Bosnian conflict. Notwithstanding the pressures from sanctions and the threat of the war's expansion to Kosovo or Sandžak (territories under direct Serbian control with Muslim majorities), Serbian and Montenegrin top political and military leaders cemented their commitment to the Serb expansionist programme by taking enormous risks to prop up the VRS.

³ Robert Donia comments that he found the SDC transcripts 'of limited value' for his biography of Karadžić (*Radovan Karadžić*, p. 20). As will become clear, I do not share his evaluation of these transcripts.

A Military Objective: Creating Greater Serbia

The SDC sessions indicate that the VJ adhered to Serb nationalist principles. The shared political goal to create a state for the Serbs dictated military planning. Adhering to expansionist ambitions, the SDC justified its aid to the VRS and considered the Bosnian Serb force an extension of the Yugoslav Army. Indeed, the SDC envisioned the eventual amalgamation of the Serb armies into a compact force to fight for the Serb people throughout former Yugoslavia and move the Serb territories towards unification.

The Bosnian Serbs informed Belgrade officials about their plans to expand Serbia's borders. On 31 March 1993, Mladić wrote to Života Panić, then the head of the VJ, to request assistance and explained how he understood the relationship between Serb forces:

The Main Staff [of the VRS], since its establishment, believed that the [SVK, VRS and VJ] were only separate elements of the combat disposition of a single army. We consider this assumption to be the legal basis for the obligatory engagement of members of the [VJ] regardless of their place of origin in the units of the [VRS] and its combat operations, and the engagement of those whose roots are in the [RS] a moral and patriotic act and an obligation.

Mladić also requested Panić to obligate VJ personnel from 'the former Bosnia and Herzegovina' to join the VRS, to remove those who refused to do so, and to ensure that those VJ personnel already in the VRS receive the same treatment as VJ personnel in Serbia and Montenegro.⁴ At a meeting on 13 December 1993, SRJ and RS leaders met in Belgrade, where Karadžić briefed his sponsors on the six strategic objectives. The RS president explained the importance of 'separating' Bosnia's peoples, eliminating the Drina as a border between Serb states, and dividing Sarajevo.⁵ By this time, Perišić had replaced Panić; Milošević confirmed that the VJ's new chief of staff would 'give everything that

⁴ 31 March 1993, Perišić-P01529.

⁵ 13 December 1993, Perišić-P02933, pp.1-2.

does not jeopardise the readiness of units here [in Serbia and Montenegro].’⁶ Perišić himself promised ‘we will help with weapons’⁷ and set about establishing a system to regulate Belgrade’s aid to the Bosnian Serb nationalist campaign, effectively fulfilling what Mladić’s 31 March letter proposed. Half a year later, Karadžić confirmed that cooperation among Serb forces and the VJ ‘has been good and correct.’⁸

Affirming the ideals stipulated in the Coordination Council, the new head of the VJ declared his commitment to Serb unity. From Perišić’s perspective, the SRJ needed to coordinate the transfer of manpower to the VRS because ‘this is a single people’ and anyone who disagreed ‘should not be in the army.’⁹ Perišić viewed Bosnian-born officers who did not want to fight for the VRS as deserters unprepared to defend their homes.¹⁰ If a reluctant officer did not want to go to the RS to fight and ‘defend his people when they are the most threatened,’ when would he?¹¹ Perišić proposed forcibly retiring VJ officers born in Bosnia who refused to transfer to the VRS and had more than 30 years of service.¹² Although there is very little evidence that Perišić issued direct orders to the VRS, like Milošević he referred to the VRS’s advances using the pronoun ‘we’ and the possessive form ‘our.’¹³ During NATO’s bombing of Serb positions surrounding Goražde, in Eastern Bosnia, Perišić hoped the attack would unify the Serb people and motivate them to respond ‘in the national interest of the Serbian and Montenegrin peoples.’¹⁴ Like the SRJ officials at

⁶ 13 December 1993, Perišić-P02933, p. 5.

⁷ 14 December 1993, Perišić-P02934, p. 1.

⁸ 15 March 1994, Perišić-P02940, p. 8.

⁹ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, pp. 35-36; and 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 5.

¹⁰ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 33.

¹¹ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 5.

¹² 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 35; 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 18; 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00731; 21 July 1994, Perišić-P00785, p. 20.

¹³ 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, pp. 6 and 12.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

the Coordination Council, the SRJ's new military leader viewed the conflict in neighbouring Bosnia as a common struggle that transcended formal international boundaries.

From the SDC members' perspective, one people should have one army, and thus they sought to establish as close a working relationship as possible between the Yugoslav Army and the VRS. The small number of former JNA generals in the Bosnian Serb army prompted a VJ major general to suggest that the council invite Bosnian Serb leaders to Belgrade to determine what support the Bosnian Serb army could receive from the SRJ.¹⁵ Throughout the war, Perišić often tallied total personnel by adding the armies of the VJ, VRS and SVK (Serb Army of the Krajina – *Srpska vojska Krajine*) in order to calculate 'our' aggregate power.¹⁶ To demonstrate his dedication to the RS, Perišić presented the needs of the VRS alongside those of the Yugoslav Army when requesting the council grant more funds to the military.¹⁷ The SDC decided to approve support to the VRS in March 1993, but this authorisation merely formalised an existing practise.¹⁸ Perišić also insisted that officers serving in the VRS receive the same welfare benefits as they would if stationed in Serbia and Montenegro.¹⁹ According to the 'one people – one army' principle, the SDC justified its aid to the Bosnian Serbs, and indeed, after the war, Perišić stated in an interview that during the war, Serbs had 'one single army'.²⁰

¹⁵ 9 December 1992, Perišić-P00788, pp. 18-20.

¹⁶ There were 16,000 VJ officers in the VJ, VRS, and SVK; as well as 13,000 NCOs; 12,000 contract soldiers; and 24,000 civilian employees. In total about 73,000 paid active VJ personnel in SRJ, RSK and RS. 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, pp. 52-53.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 4-5.

¹⁸ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 6.

¹⁹ 25 December 1993, Perišić-P00781, p. 19.

²⁰ [Documentary film Transcript] Perišić-P02879, p. 27.

Adherence to the nationalist state-building programme also required an effort to homogenise the VJ, even though the SRJ had a substantial number of non-Serb inhabitants. Perišić updated the council on the ethnic makeup of the VJ personnel ranks, identifying non-Serb officials by name and commenting on their trustworthiness.²¹ Bulatović mentioned that as early as June 1991, there existed an ‘unwritten order’ to remove Albanians and Muslims from combat units.²² When a number of non-Serbs completed the VJ’s military academy, the SDC did not know what to do: if they sent the new officers to the VRS, the Bosnian Serbs ‘would kill them;’ but if command did not deploy them, there could be hostility from ‘our people’ who had left for the front.²³ The policy to create a nation-state for an ethnically dispersed population resulted in the exclusion of the SRJ’s non-Serbs, who comprised 35 per cent of the population (including Kosovo) according to the 1991 census, and created a practice of ignoring a significant portion of SRJ citizens.

The SDC formalised its commitment to the long-term strategy articulated by the SRJ leaders in the Coordination Council. The ‘Directive for the Use of the Yugoslav Army (VJ), the Army of the RS (VRS), and the Serbian Army of Krajina (SVK)’ codenamed ‘Drina,’ signed by the SRJ federal president and SDC president Zoran Lilić in November 1993, outlined in plain terms the SRJ’s dedication to the Serb territories’ struggle for existence. The order frames the wars in Croatia and Bosnia as an attack aimed at preventing the ultimate goal:

Two new Serb states are determined to fight the war imposed on them in order to defend their republics and establish conditions for the creation of a single state of the Serb people.²⁴

²¹ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, pp. 7-18.

²² 23 July 1992, Milošević-P667.3.1, p. 12.

²³ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 41.

²⁴ 24 November 1993, Perišić-P00215, p. 1.

The general objective of aggression is to break up the SRJ and prevent the creation of a single Serb state in the Balkans ...²⁵

The role of the VJ, in accordance with the positions established in the Coordination Council, was to lay the foundation for a common state:

The general objective of the armed forces: defend the territorial integrity of the Serb states west of the Drina and Danube rivers and the SRJ; protect the Serb people from genocide; liberate parts of Serb territories with Serb majorities; create conditions for the establishment of a single state of the Serb people; and prevent the creation of Greater Croatia and a compact Islamic state on the territory of former Yugoslavia.²⁶

In the event of foreign aggression: implement the plan of preserving the territorial integrity of the Serb states. Second stage ... by the unified use of armed forces of the Serb people, crush and defeat enemy forces and create conditions for establishing a single state of the Serb people.²⁷

The directive further elaborates on the precise movements Serb forces would execute to coordinate their activities in the event of a severe escalation of the conflict, and in particular in the case of foreign engagement. Repeated references to ‘creating the conditions for establishing a common state’ echo the gradual plan, as articulated at the Coordination Council. The directive anticipated the planned merger of Serb forces into one coordinated army that would fight for a common goal. This highly ideological document offers insight into why the SDC viewed support for the Bosnian and Croatian Serb armies as a strategic investment in Serbia and Montenegro’s future. Unlike discussions at the council, the directive was not a debate about policy; the directive contained precise instructions to realise the Greater Serbia programme.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

²⁶ 24 November 1993, Perišić-P00215, p. 7.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

Promoting Force and Building One Army

The SDC went to extraordinary lengths to prop up the Serb territories outside the SRJ and to ‘create the conditions for establishing a common state.’ Allocating funds, transferring VJ officers, finding recruits and sending weapons formed the basis for the Bosnian Serb war effort. As the head of the VJ, Perišić ordered his subordinates to ‘improve the coordination and cooperation with the Army of the Serb Krajina and the Army of Republika Srpska,’ and instructed his officers to meet with representatives from the two Serb armies in order to determine ways to extend manpower, materiel, and economic assistance.²⁸ Perišić also threatened that those officers who refused to carry out these instructions would be dismissed.²⁹ The VRS’s firmest supporters on the SDC, Perišić and Milošević, advocated support to the Bosnian Serbs because they considered it a necessary means in order to complete the first phase of the plan.

SDC leaders harboured no reservations about spending massive sums to achieve their final objective through the use of force. Perišić told the council in June 1994 that ‘we,’ meaning the VRS, ‘have almost completely realised our objectives with weapons.’³⁰ When discussing budgets, Perišić presented the cost of supporting the VRS alongside expenses for the VJ, attaching equal importance to both. His proposed military budget for 1994 included a VJ total and a larger ‘grand total’ that included the costs of the other two Serb armies.³¹ On another occasion, he informed the council that by January 1994, the SRJ had spent US \$437 million on the RS and RSK war efforts. This figure did not include the transfer of

²⁸ 27 September 1993, Perišić-P01626; 26 October 1993, Perišić-P00878.

²⁹ 27 September 1993, Perišić-P01626.

³⁰ 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, p.6.

³¹ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, pp. 4-5.

material reserves, which he claimed equalled US \$1.2 billion.³² In January 1993, the RS and RSK submitted daily requests for equipment and arms.³³ In July 1993, the deputy chief of staff of the VRS, Manojlo Milovanović requested more than a million bullets and more than a thousand shells and rockets, explaining: ‘[we] spent huge quantities of material that we cannot replenish from our own sources.’³⁴ In May 1994, Karadžić wrote to Perišić directly to inform him of the VRS’s needs:

Our army is exhausted and stretched out over a long front line. But the shortage of every type of ammunition cannot be overcome except through the provision of ammunition. At some military lines, our soldiers are awaiting enemy infantry attacks with one or two ammunition clips in [their] automatic rifles.³⁵

To ensure the smooth distribution of funds and materiel to the VRS, Perišić requested that the SDC grant him authority to dispose of Yugoslav army assets; of course, the council approved his demand.³⁶ The council spared no expense to assist the VRS.

The VJ provided enormous quantities of weapons and ammunition that enabled the VRS to maintain its control of more than half of Bosnia. Selected evidence from winter 1993 and spring 1994 highlights the kind of deliveries the VRS received from across the Drina, often on Perišić’s direct orders:

Date	Weapons
12 November 1993	800,000 bullets; 2,000 rifle grenades, and 50 rocket launchers ³⁷
22-23 November 1993	5,400 rounds for 7.9mm M75 sniper rifles and 60,016 universal 7.62mm rounds; ³⁸ 30,000 rounds for Browning firearms; 50

³² Note that the VJ bought weapons with American dollars, so the SDC kept track of VJ costs using the same currency. Ibid., p. 5.

³³ Života Panić added that the VJ gave enough equipment to form an entire corps. 10 February 1993, Perišić-P00771, pp. 27-28.

³⁴ 18 July 1993, Perišić-P02915.

³⁵ 15 May 1994, Perišić-P02766.

³⁶ 7 February 1994, Perišić-P00782, pp. 53-54.

³⁷ 19 November 1993, Perišić-P01269.

³⁸ 22 November 1993, Perišić-P00574.

	rockets; ³⁹ 60 mines; ⁴⁰ 2000 grenades; ⁴¹ 300 mortar shells; ⁴² 800,100 rounds; ⁴³ 296 self-propelled gun rounds; and 192 howitzer rounds ⁴⁴
24 November 1993	150,000 machine gun heavy rounds; 500 rockets; 960 hand grenades; 30 'modified' hand grenades ⁴⁵
25 November 1993	2,000,000 bullets; 1,727 mortar shells; ⁴⁶
December 1993	721,250 rounds, 2,000 76mm cases, 27,130 grenades, 900 shells, 50 mines, 100 rockets, 85 Osa rocket launchers, 300 charges for rocket launchers, 3,000 basic charges and 350 fuses ⁴⁷
December 1993	1,525,600 rounds and 20,192 rockets, ⁴⁸ as well as other orders of 12,000 bullets ⁴⁹
December 1993	70,200 rounds and 600kg of hydraulic oil ⁵⁰
December 1993	170 artillery rounds for D20 Howitzers and 130mm guns ⁵¹
31 March 1994	1,181,491 rounds of various kinds and 5,000 rounds for anti-aircraft guns ⁵²
22 May 1994	3,353,000 bullets and 1,400 shells ⁵³

A VRS Main Staff report analysing combat readiness in 1994 estimated that in that year alone, the VRS had received about 25,878,862 infantry bullets and 7,569 shells, among other ammunition, from the VJ.⁵⁴ Although the evidence reveals only a window into the materiel supply system, the sheer volume of weapons and ammunition indicates that the VJ took its role as the VRS's supplier seriously.

Sending Yugoslav army officers born in Bosnia to fight for the VRS was one of the most important ways by which the SDC propped up the Bosnian Serb war effort. Perišić

³⁹ 22 November 1993, Perišić-P00581.

⁴⁰ 23 November 1993, Perišić-P00571.

⁴¹ 23 November 1993, Perišić-P00575.

⁴² 23 November 1993, Perišić-P00577.

⁴³ 23 November 1993, Perišić-P00578.

⁴⁴ 23 November 1993, Perišić-P00576.

⁴⁵ 24 November 1993, Perišić-P00582.

⁴⁶ 25 November 1993, Perišić-P00583.

⁴⁷ 28 December 1993, Perišić-P00877.

⁴⁸ 17 December 1993, Perišić-P01262.

⁴⁹ 10 December 1993, Perišić-P01261.

⁵⁰ 23 December 1993, Perišić-P01263.

⁵¹ 13 December 2008, Perišić-P00505.

⁵² 31 March 1994, Perišić-P01270; and 14 April 1994, Perišić-P01265.

⁵³ 22 May 1994, Perišić-P01272.

⁵⁴ 17 February 1995, Perišić-P01214, pp. 19-21.

issued an internal VJ directive ordering all officers born in Bosnia to transfer to the VRS.⁵⁵ On 10 November 1993, Lilić ordered Perišić to regulate the transfer of VJ members born in Croatia and Bosnia and to ensure that they enjoyed all the rights and privileges of VJ personnel while deployed outside of Serbia and Montenegro.⁵⁶ The evidence reveals several instances of high-ranking Republika Srpska officials, including Karadžić and Mladić, requesting the reassignment of VJ officers they identified by name to the VRS.⁵⁷ By June 1994, the number of VJ personnel active in the VRS and SVK amounted to 10 per cent of the VJ's total force.⁵⁸ Perišić considered the total annual salaries of almost US \$27 million justifiable and a 'great help' to the Croatian and Bosnian Serb armies.⁵⁹

To avoid drawing attention to the transfer scheme, which Milošević noted violated international law, Perišić devised a false paper trail to provide legal cover for the transfers. Perišić explained his idea to the SDC in the following manner:

We've solved the problem as follows: there's the 40th Training Centre and all officers of Republika Srpska who appear on our lists are there. An officer is appointed there as per the formation elements and the like, but he in fact works in Republika Srpska ... They have all the rights as if they were in the Yugoslav Army here, with regard to everything, *except they are physically absent; they're at the front.*⁶⁰

The 'training centre' later became known as the '30th personnel centre' and functioned throughout the war as an assignment location for VJ officers who in reality fought in Bosnia.⁶¹ Perišić recognised there was 'no solid legal framework' for a transfer scheme and worried that the VJ could come under local and international (legal) scrutiny, but described

⁵⁵ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 35.

⁵⁶ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00731.

⁵⁷ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 5; 25 April 1995, Perišić-P02519; and 23 May 1995, Perišić-P02518.

⁵⁸ Perišić stated that of those 10 per cent, 7.42 per cent went to the VRS and 2.62 per cent to the SVK. 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 46.

⁵⁹ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, p. 52; 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 46.

⁶⁰ Emphasis added. 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 19.

⁶¹ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 32.

his proposed system as ‘the only possible solution... given the current circumstances, the position of the [SRJ and VJ] and fulfilment of the request of the Main Staffs of the VRS and SVK’.⁶² He further elaborated:

These are personnel issues related to officers in the VRS and SVK. We have 3,612 people there whose status has not been regulated under the new law ... And in order to avoid having anyone criticise us, we have devised a temporary formation in the VJ. We appoint them here; they are not actually here but are performing their duties over where they are stationed ... We must create a stronghold so that the General Staff can work on these issues to a certain extent within the spirit of the law, even though this is not entirely in conformity with the law. But we cannot see a better solution.’⁶³

The following table indicates the numbers of personnel in the Croatian and Bosnian Serb armies on Belgrade’s payroll:

Number of Personnel

Date	VRS	SVK	Total
11 October 1993			3,612 ⁶⁴
10 November 1993	2,477	1,192	3,669 ⁶⁵
25 December 1993			7,233 ⁶⁶
7 June 1994	4,173	1,474	5,647 ⁶⁷
11 July 1994	4,173	1,474	5,647 ⁶⁸
27 September 1994	4,614 ⁶⁹		
18 January 1995	4,346 ⁷⁰		
21 November 1996	4,846 ⁷¹		

⁶² Undated, Perišić-P01872.

⁶³ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 32.

⁶⁴ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 32.

⁶⁵ Perišić said that six days later 561 more men would go to the SVK and 205 to the VRS. 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 5.

⁶⁶ 25 December 1993, Perišić-P00781, p. 19.

⁶⁷ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 46.

⁶⁸ VRS: 1,358 officers, 863 NCOs, 1,652 civilians, and 300 contract soldiers. SVK: 275 officers, 242 NCOs, 253 civilians, and 4 contract soldiers. 11 July 1994, Perišić-P00784, p. 7.

⁶⁹ 2,634 officers, 1,688 civilians, and 292 contract soldiers. 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, p. 88.

⁷⁰ 2,664 officers and NCOs, 1,682 civilians. 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, p. 45.

⁷¹ 1,311 officers, NCOs 2,354, 1,719 civilians. 21 November 1996, Perišić-P00800, p. 5.

These personnel formed the elite of the VRS officer corps and among their ranks were almost all of the VRS's top commanders.⁷² In July 1994, Perišić reported that the system 'functioned very well in practice so far.'⁷³ The SDC considered the personnel centre system sufficient legal cover for officers who retained their VJ benefits and served in the VRS.

The officers who went to the VRS through the 30th Personnel Centre, as well as many others who stayed behind as the JNA withdrew, received their salaries from the VJ. Because the VJ continued to compensate so many VRS officers, the council verified rank promotions issued by the VRS Main Staff and adjusted personnel payments accordingly. In order to distribute the appropriate salaries and benefits, the SDC devised a system to compensate more than 3,000 VJ personnel in the Bosnian and Croatian Serb armies.⁷⁴

Perišić viewed promotion confirmation through a nationalist lens:

By verifying we give them moral support. It is not only a question of housing or of some existential matter. They are people who are securing peace for us with their struggle. I am in favour, and that is why I proposed it, that they should get that because it is a huge motivation for them. By that we acknowledge that they have really done what they have done.⁷⁵

Verification removed the pitfall of officers holding different ranks in the VRS and the VJ and receiving pay for the lower VJ rank. In the case of Miroslav Brkić, a logistics base commander who coordinated aid to the VRS and SVK, the council had no qualms about approving his promotion.⁷⁶ However, to prevent the SDC from functioning as a 'rubber stamping body' for the VRS, Milošević asked for Perišić to discuss proposed promotions

⁷² See Appendix H for a list of notable VRS officers on the VJ's payroll. 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 40.

⁷³ 21 July 1994, Perišić-P00785, p. 20.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 38.

⁷⁵ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 23.

⁷⁶ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 12.

with Mladić before the SDC approved the new ranks.⁷⁷ Involving Mladić in the process followed the standard military practice of a commanding officer confirming promotions of lower-ranking officers with their immediate superior. Adhering to the chain of command allowed the SDC to remind the VRS leadership of Belgrade's authority. This system, which functioned from November 1993 until the end of the war, highlights the fact that the council's endeavours to synchronise the structures of the Yugoslav army and the VRS intensified during the war, when Belgrade was ostensibly pressuring the Bosnian Serb leadership to compromise its position in peace talks brokered by international envoys.

The SDC also assisted Bosnian Serb forces by rounding up conscripts who had either found themselves in Serbia or Montenegro after the SFRJ collapsed or had fled from Bosnia during the war. Perišić reported to the council that at least 19,765 men who had completed their military service but did not respond to the call-up resided in Serbia and Montenegro.⁷⁸ Milošević described these men as 'deserters' and opposed the idea of them 'wandering around Belgrade and Serbia' while real patriots volunteered to fight.⁷⁹ When Perišić asked for the assistance of the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs in rounding up the conscripts, Milošević approved the request.⁸⁰ Once the authorities identified individual conscripts, they 'provided transportation' to a receiving centre in the RS that Milošević had arranged with Karadžić and Krajišnik.⁸¹ Belgrade authorities produced and issued RS and RSK call up papers – marked with RS and RSK stamps – and informed the conscripts

⁷⁷ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, pp. 39-40; 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, pp. 18-24; and 11 July 1994, Perišić-P00784, pp. 45-51.

⁷⁸ 25 December 1993, Perišić-P00781, p. 14.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸¹ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, pp. 39-40.

accordingly.⁸² Perišić told the council that the VJ conducted the transfers because some conscripts were not ‘true and good citizens’ and required detainment and immediate transport.⁸³ Tolerating the use of force to relocate unwilling men to the front, an action SDC members knew violated international conventions, exemplifies the council’s eagerness to pursue all possible avenues to aid the VRS.

The SDC further ordered the Yugoslav army to train recruits to fill the ranks of the VRS’ officer corps. Bulatović recommended training VRS officers and non-commissioned officers at VJ academies.⁸⁴ In the 1994-95 academic year, the SDC anticipated 180 RS and RSK students would attend the VJ military academy and 60 more would enrol in the military high school. The council agreed that the SRJ should pay all their expenses.⁸⁵ In June 1994, Perišić reported that 208 students had completed their military education – 143 from the RS and 65 from the RSK – and suggested that the VJ deploy the ethnic Serbs from their ranks.⁸⁶ The SDC viewed the training of a new generation of elite Serb officers as an investment in the future. If events progressed according to plan, the young men deployed to the RS and RSK armies would one day fill the ranks of a combined Serb force.

The SDC transcripts also reveal that on at least one occasion a VJ unit conducted an operation within Bosnia. In a February 1994 session, Bulatović accused Perišić of having ordered the Belgrade Parachute Brigade to execute a landing in Bosnia during which a Montenegrin member of the unit was killed. According to Bulatović, the men had no clue as to where their mission would take them. He stated that the brigade members never would have agreed to participate had they known the mission details beforehand. Perišić argued

⁸² Ibid., p. 43.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 89.

⁸⁴ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, pp. 23-24.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

⁸⁶ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, pp. 40-41; 25 December 1993, Perišić-P00781, p. 16.

that if the unit had known in advance, its members probably would have agreed to the deployment, thereby acknowledging that the unit did not undertake the operation with full knowledge of the mission specifics. Despite this admission, Milošević interceded on behalf of Perišić and stated that ‘it wasn’t so horrible’ if the men went voluntarily – which it seems they did not – and added that no units remained outside the SRJ.⁸⁷ Milošević’s defence of Perišić suggests that he knew about this operation beforehand. The incident reveals that Perišić – and possibly also Milošević – presumed the authority to organise such an action without the SDC’s prior approval. The brigade’s deployment is yet another example of the VJ chief’s willingness to circumvent conventional military practices – even to bypass the state constitution – to aid the VRS.

In addition to supplying weapons and army personnel, the SDC granted medical and legal assistance to the RS. Until January 1994, the SRJ had tended to ‘all the wounded’ from the RS and RSK at no charge.⁸⁸ The Military Medical Academy Hospital in Belgrade treated so many soldiers who had sustained injuries fighting in Croatia and Bosnia that in April 1995 Perišić commented the hospital was ‘overstretched’ and later ordered a military barracks to provide the hospital with more beds.⁸⁹ At a later session, Kontić reported that 23 million Yugoslav Dinars allocated in the SRJ budget to refugees in fact went to treating the wounded from the two Serb territories and providing medical assistance to injured veterans.⁹⁰ The commander of the VRS Sarajevo Romanija Corps, Dragomir Milošević, as well as the commander of the Drina Corps, Radislav Krstić, both received treatment for

⁸⁷ 7 February 1994, Perišić-P00782, pp. 56-60.

⁸⁸ 10 and 13 January 1994 Perišić-P00791, p. 60.

⁸⁹ 2 March 1995, Perišić-P00719, p. 3; 16 March 1995, Perišić-P02865; 2 November 1994, Perišić-P0779, p. 9; and 30 May 1994, Perišić-P00908.

⁹⁰ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 23.

injuries at the Belgrade military hospital during the war.⁹¹ On top of those costs, the SRJ also sent military judges and lawyers to the RS and RSK to fix the ‘broken’ legal systems in the two Serb-claimed territories.⁹² The concern for upholding the RS judiciary, as well as the readiness to treat injured soldiers, indicates how comprehensive the SRJ’s aid to Bosnian Serb war effort became during the war.

With almost no resources of its own, the VRS became entirely dependent on the SRJ to continue fighting. Perišić confirmed that the presidents of the two territories could not wage war without the SRJ’s help. According to the VJ chief, the RS government had not allocated any funds in its budget for the army and relied solely on the SRJ to meet its demands.⁹³ If the SDC ceased its support to the VRS, Perišić argued, Bosnian Serb forces would begin to lose territory and their enemies would win the war. The SDC discussed an arrangement whereby the RS would compensate the VJ for its supplies, but despite agreeing to the terms, the RS never paid for the materiel it continued to receive, nor did it pay any border customs.⁹⁴ The RS and RSK defence ministers threatened Perišić that unless their armies received more assistance, the SRJ would bear the responsibility for their fate.⁹⁵ Ratko Mladić attested to the importance of the VJ’s assistance when he informed the RS assembly, on 15 April 1995, that 47.2 per cent of infantry ammunition, 34.4 per cent of artillery ammunition, and 52.4 per cent of anti-aircraft ammunition came from VJ ‘aid.’⁹⁶ As Mladić identified no other source of ammunition, his statistics were likely gross underestimates. Indeed, a VRS report from November 1993 had indicated that other than

⁹¹ 9 July 2001, Perišić-P00822; 2 January 1995, Perišić-P00907.

⁹² 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 24; 7 February 1994, Perišić-P00782, pp. 44-45.

⁹³ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 38.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp. 42-44; 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 8.

⁹⁵ 11 July 1994, Perišić-P00784, p. 39.

⁹⁶ 15 April 1995, Perišić-P00312, p. 51.

the SRJ, the Bosnian Serb army had no external resources.⁹⁷ The fact that Perišić campaigned for increased VRS assistance throughout the war, telling the SDC ‘we have to help them somehow,’ attests to his commitment to preserving the RS.⁹⁸

A Covert Process

Serbian and Montenegrin leaders feared discovery of their involvement in the war, which they knew violated international law, and they took measures to conceal their activities. At its second session, Milošević explained to the SDC that interference in independent and UN-recognised Bosnia and Croatia constituted aggression under international law.⁹⁹ Bulatović admitted to his colleagues that if the order to send officers to the VRS ever became public knowledge, the SRJ would fall under sanctions for ten years.¹⁰⁰ The SDC members also acknowledged that the system for transferring personnel to the front lines needed to be kept a well-guarded state secret.¹⁰¹ Council members also agreed that no documents should mention that a VJ officer’s refusal to transfer to the VRS when ordered to do so would result in the termination of service.¹⁰² While maintaining all the support systems, the SDC attempted to keep its orders executed covertly because it appreciated the great risk its support entailed.

While deliberating how to conduct their secret operations, the council members considered potential pitfalls. Perišić insisted on the threat of force whenever transferring VRS conscripts because he worried that if VJ officials served a Bosnian-born conscript

⁹⁷ November 1993, Perišić-P01251.

⁹⁸ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P0776, p. 38.

⁹⁹ 10 and 18 August 1992, Milošević-P667.2, pp. 6 and 13.

¹⁰⁰ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 36; Bulatović expressed his reservations about the ‘delicacy’ and ‘sensitivity’ of the personnel centre system and seemed concerned it would become uncovered. Ibid., p. 33; and 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 21.

¹⁰¹ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 19. Milošević said to Perišić about the outline of the system: ‘Only a single copy of this should stay with you.’ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 33.

¹⁰² 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, pp. 18-21; 1 December 1993, Perišić-P00744, p. 2.

with papers and left, the recruit could go to foreign media and say, ‘they’re claiming that they’re not helping, but in fact they are.’¹⁰³ At one session, Lilić objected to including the clause ‘who are in the VRS and SVK’ in the paperwork for officer promotions and Perišić assured the SRJ president that those words would not appear on the documentation.¹⁰⁴ And although Perišić came up with the idea of stamping conscript notices with VRS and SVK insignia, Helsinki Human Rights Watch still sent Bulatović a letter deploring the VJ’s involvement in serving call-up papers.¹⁰⁵ The SDC’s innovative practises indicate both its awareness of wrongdoing in the eyes of the world, and a willingness to defy international norms.

One of the most brazen examples of the SDC’s dedication to supporting the Bosnian Serbs came just before NATO’s action around Goražde in April 1994. Before the Goražde crisis, the VJ secretly transferred equipment to VRS bases in Banja Luka, Koran, Bileća, and Bijeljina.¹⁰⁶ VJ military supplies travelled in civilian buses that avoided border crossings monitored by UNPROFOR and reached the VRS via the vital Posavina corridor.¹⁰⁷ Shortly before the intensification in fighting around Goražde, the SDC discussed sending the Bosnian Serbs an anti-aircraft missile system after rejecting a VRS request for fighter planes. Milošević suggested that once the current ‘commotion’ drew to a close, the VJ would transfer the missiles.¹⁰⁸ Hesitant as he often was at SDC sessions, Bulatović expressed doubt that the VJ could execute such the delivery without being caught, to which Perišić responded, ‘They can. There is a closed bridge [over the RS-SRJ border]

¹⁰³ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 33; and 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, pp. 22-23.

¹⁰⁵ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, p. 43; 7 February 1994, Perišić-P00782, pp. 54-55.

¹⁰⁶ 29 February 1996, Perišić-P00075, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Perišić Judgment, p. 298.

¹⁰⁸ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, pp. 29-30.

that no one is checking.’¹⁰⁹ The SDC delayed its decision to send the missiles once the operation over Goražde began.¹¹⁰ Yet even prior to the NATO action, the SDC realised that reconnaissance planes flew above the region and monitored activity along the Drina River.¹¹¹ The boldness and lack of risk aversion exemplified at these SDC sessions proves its complete defiance of international pressure.

Supporting the VRS drained the SRJ budget and weakened the VJ’s battle preparedness yet the SRJ carried on sending supplies. Although the Belgrade leaders decided that their support should not jeopardise the VJ’s defence capabilities, they continued to do just that. The council’s decisions indicate that despite their reservations, the SDC members determined that they channelled funds to ‘their’ army as they equipped the VRS. According to their ideology, the VRS fought on behalf of the Serb nation, and thus the SRJ paid up. But the pressures encouraged the SDC to favour a prompt conclusion to the war, so long as it meant a favourable outcome for the RS. Securing a Serb state on Bosnian territory was precisely what ‘establishing the conditions’ for a single Serb state referred to.

The high quantity of aid from the SRJ to the RS is even more striking when one considers how much pressure the international community exerted on Belgrade. Commitment to the Serb expansionist programme helps explain why the SDC continued its support to the Bosnian Serbs under the backdrop of international embargos. Since the war in Croatia had begun, the governments of the rump Yugoslavia functioned under sanctions, and the international community threatened further isolation for the SRJ throughout the

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 30.

¹¹⁰ 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, pp. 11-15.

¹¹¹ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 30.

war.¹¹² UNSC Resolution 713, passed in September 1991, established an embargo on weapon deliveries to the former Yugoslav states. Resolutions 757 and 787 in 1992 called for increased sanctions, including the suspension of all imports and exports between UN member states and the SRJ, as well as prohibiting Belgrade's access to any financial resources.¹¹³ Limited access to external resources coupled with the concern about the war spreading across the Drina River and into Serbia. How could the VJ maintain its preparedness if Belgrade financed two wars while under extreme economic pressure?

The answer is that it could not. The SDC struggled to keep up the VJ's minimum arms requirements while propping up the Bosnian and Croatian Serb armies. The council knew that if the war continued past January 1994, the continued provision of weapons and ammunition would drain VJ stocks below the tolerable minimum.¹¹⁴ In March 1994, Perišić informed the SDC that should the VJ need to fight a war, it had enough reserve supplies for only ten days of battle.¹¹⁵ The source of the problem, as Perišić explained, were the wars in Croatia and Bosnia:

Our reserves of wartime supplies which we are now spending ... are bringing us into a situation where our combat capacities are declining, and we can't even help these two republics ... Each day we are using up our reserves but we are not getting a normal inflow of funds; and, secondly, we are helping the armies of the republics of the Serb Krajinas.¹¹⁶

Milošević proposed that the SDC should continue supplying the VRS, but argued against depleting the SRJ's cache, further claiming that that would amount to irresponsible leadership. He argued that support for the VRS must come from somewhere other than VJ

¹¹² Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 196, 277 and 337.

¹¹³ Treanor, *Belgrade Leadership and the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia*, pp. 36, 46, and 57.

¹¹⁴ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, pp. 3-5.

¹¹⁵ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 6.

¹¹⁶ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, pp. 5-6.

reserves.¹¹⁷ Perišić suggested procuring funds so that arms manufacturers could produce more supplies, thereby relieving VJ stockpiles.¹¹⁸ The SDC discussed a new financing scheme through which the VRS would compensate the VJ for ammunition.¹¹⁹ Perišić pushed for a final decision and framed the depletion of supplies as endangering support for the RS and RSK, not just the VJ.¹²⁰ Despite these concerns for Serbia and Montenegro's security, the SDC never relinquished its aid. In fact, rather than decreasing aid, the SDC increased the VJ's budget, after Perišić advised 'it is not possible to send supplies across the Drina from our reserves. But that leads to the conclusion that a budget of additional funds for this purpose should be considered.'¹²¹ It appears that throughout the war, the Yugoslav army hovered just above collapse as the council found means to keep maintaining the VRS.

In order to prevent the total collapse of the VJ and the Bosnian Serb war machine, the SDC sought to confirm through diplomacy what the Bosnian Serb army had taken by force. Consistent with the SRJ position at the Coordination Council, Perišić proposed diplomatic engagement with all sides in the conflict to legitimise the spoils of war through international recognition.¹²² Milošević also endorsed the idea of using negotiations to end hostilities at a moment when '*our* forces control 72 per cent of the territory.'¹²³ Milošević emphasised that lifting the SRJ's sanctions must accompany any peace agreement in Bosnia.¹²⁴ Bulatović echoed his colleagues' words and suggested that Milošević himself

¹¹⁷ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, pp. 41-42.

¹¹⁸ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 8.

¹¹⁹ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, pp. 83-84; 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 18.

¹²⁰ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, p. 8; 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, pp. 5-6.

¹²¹ 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, pp. 9, 23-32; 21 July 1994, Perišić-P00785, p. 15.

¹²² 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, p. 6.

¹²³ Emphasis added. Ibid., p. 12.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

should represent the Serb side in future negotiations.¹²⁵ Staying true to the long-term approach articulated by Milošević to the Bosnian Serb assembly in January 1993 (Chapter 4), the SDC looked to end the conflict while the VRS enjoyed an overwhelming military advantage.

In early May 1993, Ćosić, Milošević, and Bulatović travelled to Jahorina in RS territory to persuade the RS Assembly to accept the Vance Owen Plan. At a closed session of the assembly, the Serbian president delivered a speech similar to the one he had given months earlier at the Coordination Council:

The question was asked, which I find unacceptable: Are we giving up on our goal? I tell you no! We are not giving up on our goal ... The question is whether the [Vance Owen] plan represents a way towards the final goal. The goal has been completed in many aspects ... it represents a way towards the ultimate goal ... We should employ our heads more and we should spill a little less blood. You know that we intend to stabilise the entire unified area of the economy, in which the Serb lands shall belong economically, culturally, educationally, and in every other aspect ... Do not tell us that you feel abandoned because that is not fair. This assembly must have the courage to realise its goal in new circumstances, based on something firm enough to realise the goal.¹²⁶

Yet Milošević was not able to sway the RS assembly to adopt his position. The assembly delegates confirmed an earlier (unanimous) decision that rejected the proposed Vance Owen map and thus the entire peace proposal.¹²⁷ Karadžić would not consent to giving up 20 per cent of the RS's territory and remaining in a Bosnian state framework. The fundamental disagreement about linking the Serb territories immediately or sometime in the future only drove Milošević and Karadžić further apart as the war entered its second year, but it did not halt the aid Karadžić's regime received from Belgrade.

Perišić invoked the threat of the war spreading to the SRJ to promote pan-Serb interests and thereby justified further aid. As the VJ chief explained to the SDC, if the Serb

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 14.

¹²⁶ 6 May 1993, Karadžić-P01370, pp. 96-97.

¹²⁷ Treanor, *The Belgrade Leadership and the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia*, pp. 58-60.

territories were not defended, the SRJ would become ‘significantly jeopardised. And they certainly cannot be defended without our assistance in weapons and military equipment.’¹²⁸ Perišić developed the argument that helping the RS kept the fight outside Serbia and Montenegro: ‘If we are indifferent to their [Bosnian Muslim] activities inside and outside the enclaves, they will take the firestorm of war to the SRJ by land.’¹²⁹ When Perišić submitted his requests for RS funding in January 1994, he reminded the council that the likelihood of war spreading to the SRJ had increased since the previous year.¹³⁰ Indeed, during the 1994 Goražde crisis, the proximity of the enclave to the Drina River brought NATO bombers almost within SRJ airspace.¹³¹ Perišić attempted to persuade the council to send the VRS anti-aircraft artillery:

It would be used solely for the defence of the SRJ rather than for their defence. But, if anything happens, they will be downing planes on their territory and no one could accuse the SRJ.¹³²

The idea to relocate VJ air defence units to the RS-RSK-SRJ border and to guard the valuable Posavina corridor also emerged as an option for protecting ‘our territory.’¹³³ In January 1994, Perišić told the council: ‘We cannot abandon Ratko and the others – they are asking for extremely expensive ammunition that they use to fire on land targets. Why? Because it is very effective...’¹³⁴ Even training mattered: ‘If we stop helping them in the area of instruction, the financing of trained personnel and materiel assistance for certain combat operations, they’ll start to lose territories ... This means we have to help them

¹²⁸ 7 February 1994, Perišić-P00782, p. 53.

¹²⁹ 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, p. 8.

¹³⁰ 10 and 13 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, pp. 4-5.

¹³¹ 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, p. 8.

¹³² 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 30.

¹³³ 15 April 1994, Perišić-P00777, p. 9; 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 42.

¹³⁴ 10 January 1994, Perišić-P00791, p. 56.

somehow,’ and ‘we can’t leave them to their own devices.’¹³⁵ The perceived threat to the SRJ, as Perišić articulated it, formed an important part of his argument to continue supplying the VRS.

The SRJ position became more complicated as the war continued and compounded the burden of arming the VRS. What began as an ideological ambition that all Serbs should live in one state had evolved into an inextricable military union. Moreover, as its international standing worsened, the SDC needed to keep the fight in Bosnia and thus arming the VRS, even to the detriment of the VJ, furthered Serbia and Montenegro’s interest as well as the pan-Serb agenda.

Conclusion

The SDC transcripts highlight the Serbian and Montenegrin leadership’s involvement in the military campaign to create an expanded Serb state. Perišić, Milošević, and other SDC members agreed that force was an acceptable means of pursuing that goal. Perišić tied the SRJ’s security to victory in Bosnia and tolerated the weakened capacity of the VJ as the cost of bolstering the VRS. Improving relations with the internationally recognised governments of Bosnia and Croatia would have bolstered the security of the SRJ, yet the SDC’s refusal to accept the territorial integrity of Serbia and Montenegro’s neighbours testifies to its expansionist intentions. Instead of halting its assistance and thereby bringing the conflict to a speedier close, the Belgrade leadership bankrolled it.

The VRS’s campaign, characterised by ethnic cleansing, would not have been possible without Serbia and Montenegro’s assistance. The SDC acknowledged that reality during multiple sessions, and Perišić relayed such sentiments to the council from his

¹³⁵ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, pp. 38-39.

meetings with Bosnian Serb officials. Karadžić relied on the Yugoslav army for funds, equipment, and ammunition, which he used to realise his six strategic objectives. The vital VJ aid contributed to the destruction of Bosnia's multi-ethnic pre-war makeup and helped create a homogeneous Serb territory contiguous to Serbia. The Belgrade leadership knew about the crimes committed by the VRS although it continued to provide essential aid. A sense of fighting for a common cause – in other words, an expanded Serb state – underwrote Belgrade's support.

And yet the Belgrade leadership advocated secrecy and evidently worried that its contribution to the war effort would be exposed. The fears expressed by leaders like Bulatović expose his consciousness of illegality. What is more, the caution highlighted by Belgrade leaders indicates that Serbian and Bosnian Serb interests did not quite align. Even though it made the war possible, the Belgrade leadership sought to obfuscate its support for the VRS – and, unsurprisingly, to the crimes that it committed – preferring not to cast the same shadow as the Bosnian Serb leadership did.

Chapter 7: Building the Banovina, September 1992 – Summer 1993

*The existence of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been endangered. As a people we have to defend our home: every house and every church. We have to defend ourselves if we want to stay at the same place where our fathers, our ancestors, and we were born. – HVO Mobilisation Order, 30 June 1993.*¹

Zagreb adopted an even more direct role supporting Bosnian Croat nationalists than Belgrade did supporting Republika Srpska. Like their Bosnian Serb counterparts, Bosnian Croat nationalist leaders also embarked on a radical drive to realise their ideological vision. The meetings held in Franjo Tuđman's Zagreb office in 1991 set the foundation for a brutal campaign aimed at extending Croatia's borders at Bosnia's expense. Although Serbs remained the official enemy for the Bosnian Croat leadership, its forces primarily engaged the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABiH) in 1993, when the Croat leadership decided to launch its expansionist campaign. Croat forces and the ABiH maintained a shaky alliance in the first nine months of the war as they struggled against Serb forces' rapid conquest of Bosnia, but even in 1992 Croat and Bosnian Muslim political elites followed different agendas. Their ideological and strategic incongruity intensified and led to an all-out war in January 1993 that lasted until the early months of 1994. During that conflict, Croat forces implemented two ideological ambitions forged in Tuđman's office: securing Croat control over territories corresponding to the 1939 Banovina of Croatia and homogenising the population in those areas. Like his Serbian counterpart, Franjo Tuđman used the resources at his state's disposal to support the nationalist cause and annex parts of Bosnia.

Unlike Milošević, who preferred to let his Bosnian Serb collaborators determine the specifics of the state-building campaign, Franjo Tuđman adopted a deliberate and active

¹ 30 June 1993, Prlić-P03038.

role in designing and directing the Croat nationalist ideological programme, although he also attempted to conceal his (and the Croatian state's) involvement. Tuđman instructed his Bosnian Croat subordinates on military tactics, transferred officers from the Croatian Army (*Hrvatska Vojska* – HV) to Bosnian Croat forces, and even engaged the HV on Bosnian soil. The evidence makes plain Tuđman's authority over Herceg Bosna's top leaders – all members of the Bosnian branch of Tuđman's HDZ – his central part in the Bosnian war, and his enthusiastic drive to recreate the 1939 Banovina of Croatia.

On 8 April 1992, two days after the international recognition of Bosnia's independence, the presidency of the Croat Community Herceg Bosna (HZ Herceg Bosna) announced the creation of the Croat Defence Council (*Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* – HVO), with Mate Boban as its president, which would serve as the 'supreme body for the defence of the Croat people in Herceg Bosna' throughout the war.² On 10 April, Mate Boban declared the HVO the sole legitimate military force on Herceg Bosna territory and subordinated all crisis staffs and territorial defence units in areas controlled by the HVO Main Staff.³ Despite some clashes with Sarajevo-loyal forces in 1992, the HVO and the ABiH fought together against Serb forces during the first nine months of the war.

The 1993 war between Croat forces and the ABiH took an immense human toll. Although the ABiH also committed crimes against Croat civilians, the violence conducted against Bosnian Muslim civilians by the HVO in service of an ideological programme became systematic. The leadership of the HDZ, under instructions from Tuđman, seized territory in Bosnia contiguous to Croatia and expelled non-Croats from it. In areas under

² 8 April 1992, Prlić-P00152. The Croat Defence Council (HVO) was the name of the Herceg Bosna armed forces, but the organisation, including its sub-units at the municipal level, also had leadership 'councils' with presidents, vice presidents, and other officials. These military figures worked in tandem with leadership figures from the civilian government of Herceg Bosna.

³ 10 April 1992, Prlić-P00154; 15 May 1992, Prlić-P00206; 10 April 1992, Prlić-5D04271.

their control, Croat nationalist political and military authorities ‘Croatised’ institutions in anticipation of a merger with Croatia. The institutions controlled by Bosnian Croat leaders like Mate Boban, the president of Herceg Bosna, Jadranko Prlić, the prime minister of Herceg Bosna; and others, pursued policies that systematically discriminated against Muslims in order to pressure them to leave the self-declared HZ Herceg Bosna (renamed the ‘Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna’ in August 1993). Officials from the breakaway Bosnian Croat entity placed extremists in positions of authority in order to implement the expulsion campaign. Herceg Bosna authorities conducted mass arrests of Muslim men and detained thousands in concentration camps as part of a system designed to make Herceg Bosna for Croats only.

While the Serb wartime project aimed at connecting the Krajina and Semberija via a ‘corridor’ in the Posavina and claiming the Drina River’s western bank, Croat nationalists also had an ideologically inspired territorial design. As discussed in Chapter 3, Tuđman repeated his dream to recreate the short-lived interwar Croatian Banovina and emphasised its importance. Re-establishing the Banovina borders could come only at Bosnia’s expense and the pursuit of this central ideological goal dictated the conduct of Bosnian Croat forces loyal to Boban, Prlić, and therefore Tuđman. Yet developments in 1993 – both battleground outcomes and international reactions to atrocities – prompted the Herceg Bosna leadership to abate its drive in Central Bosnia and consolidate its control in territories with clear Croat majorities, namely in Herzegovina. The shift in strategy resulted in an intensification in efforts to expel Muslims, particularly from Mostar, the largest city in Herzegovina, and also a deliberate plan to force Croats from Central Bosnia into Western Herzegovina in order to boost Croat numbers.

Road to Conflict

Despite harbouring analogous nationalist and separatist desires in 1991 and 1992, HDZ leaders added their voices to those criticising Karadžić's initiative to create Republika Srpska and separate it from Bosnia. In April 1992, the HVO fought with forces loyal to the Bosnian government against the JNA in places like Mostar and Sarajevo. After the JNA withdrew from Bosnia in May 1992, the HVO and ABiH divided Mostar, with the HVO dominating the western bank of the Neretva River and the ABiH controlling the eastern bank. Cooperation between the two sides broke down in June 1992 and the HVO began a campaign against Mostar's non-Croats that intensified in 1993. Ethnic cleansing by Serb forces in northern Bosnia prompted tens of thousands of non-Serbs to flee abroad or elsewhere in Bosnia. In September 1992, only two weeks after his appointment to the Council of Defence of the Republic of Croatia by Tuđman, Slobodan Praljak raised the problem of the demographic changes in Bosnia with the president, explaining: 'Unless we evict those people from there we will not have a majority.'⁴ Praljak also warned that 'conflicts between Muslims and Croats would not be possible to avoid entirely,' because Muslim leaders 'advocated a civic and unitary Bosnia.'⁵ The influx of large numbers of Muslims into Central Bosnia raised tensions between Croat and Muslim authorities; by summer 1992, Croat nationalist leaders could see the fragile demographic balance turning in favour of the Muslim side.

Yet even before the 1993 war against the ABiH, HVO leaders expressed their desire to recreate the 1939 Banovina and cooperated with Serb nationalists to do it. In a 5 October 1992 clandestine meeting with the head of the VRS, Ratko Mladić, Praljak told the Serb

⁴ 26 September 1992, Prlić-P00524, p. 10.

⁵ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 14-15.

general: 'The goal is the Banovina of 1939; if not, we'll continue the war.'⁶ At another meeting the same month, Praljak told Mladić, 'We're on a good path to compelling Alija [Izetbegović] to divide Bosnia.'⁷ Looking back at the war, in a 1996 interview with the BBC, Praljak discussed conflicts with Muslim forces in autumn 1992: 'At the time of the conflict in Prozor, or the conflict in Vakuf, or the conflict in Travnik, we were strong enough to take a territory that could become the Banovina ... but we did not have permission to strike first ... We would have been proclaimed aggressors just like the Serbs.'⁸ Thus, in the first year of the war, the Bosnian Croat leadership refrained from launching its separatist campaign and left destroying Bosnia to Serb forces.

Herceg Bosna authorities concentrated on 'Croatising' territories under their control. In June 1992, Petković reported that the remaining tasks for the HVO included 'establishing Croat rule over all municipalities.'⁹ For example, in Mostar, where the HVO controlled the western bank of the River Neretva, local authorities introduced Croatian currency, state institutions adopted the Croatian language and Latin alphabet,¹⁰ the state introduced a flag with the Croat crest,¹¹ renamed Džemal Bijedić University the University of Mostar that would use solely the Croatian language,¹² renamed streets to celebrate Croat nationalist heroes and themes,¹³ and adopted the Republic of Croatia's education curriculum.¹⁴ At a joint session of the HVO and Herceg Bosna leaderships on 31 May, the

⁶ 5 October 1992, Prlić-P11376.

⁷ 26 October 1992, Prlić-P11380.

⁸ Undated Transcript, Prlić-P09258, p. 4.

⁹ 26 June 1992, Prlić-P00279.

¹⁰ C. Ribičić, 'Constitutional-Legal Analysis of the Establishment and Functioning of the Croat Community (Republic) of Herceg Bosna,' (1999), Naletilić-PP869, p. 25.

¹¹ November 1992, Prlić-P00772.

¹² November 1992, Prlić-P00714.

¹³ 24 February 1995, Prlić-P08538.

¹⁴ March 1992, Prlić-P00128, pp. 34-36.

top political and military leaders agreed that ‘adequate measures and activities must be taken in order for the military-security and political situation to improve so that the town of Mostar becomes the political, cultural, and scientific centre of the HZ Herceg Bosna.’¹⁵ Creating Croat exclusive institutions and introducing Croat symbols, as opposed to shared or neutral representations, formed part of the programme to create a state for Croats only.

Yet as the Republika Srpska expanded and consolidated its territorial control, the presence of Muslims who fled the VRS posed new problems for Bosnian Croat leaders. Ivo Komšić, a relative political moderate, claimed that Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić intentionally ‘flooded’ Central Bosnia with Muslim refugees in order to instigate a conflict between Croat and Muslim armed forces.¹⁶ Ivan Markešić, an HVO leader from Ključ, informed Tuđman that Muslims from elsewhere in Bosnia had migrated and changed the ‘ethnic blood profile’ of the region so that in future elections Muslims would be a majority and ‘all Croat effort and lives’ would have been lost for nothing.¹⁷ Due to recent developments, Mile Akmadžić warned, Croats throughout Bosnia had become afraid of Muslims and their ‘population explosion.’¹⁸ Praljak argued that Croat areas in Bosnia such as Bugojno, Travnik, and Mostar experienced an ‘ethnic occupation’ by Muslim refugees from the Krajina, and added that they had built a huge army while avoiding fighting against the Serbs.¹⁹ Muslim refugees from the Krajina, ‘extremists,’ came to Busovača in Central Bosnia ‘to kill Croats in this little town,’ said the president of the Busovača HVO, Zoran Marić. Like Praljak, Marić claimed that Croats fought against the ‘Serbo-Chetnik

¹⁵ 31 May 1993, Prlić-P02575.

¹⁶ 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, pp. 51-53.

¹⁷ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, p. 47.

¹⁸ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, p. 6.

¹⁹ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, p. 40.

aggression,' while the Muslims focused on fighting Croats.²⁰ Refugees expelled by Serb forces made it more difficult for Croat nationalists to maintain majorities in the towns they claimed, especially in Central Bosnian towns like Busovača, and thus undermined the plan to break certain regions off Bosnia and link them to Croatia.

While tensions had existed from the outset, the catalyst for war between the HVO and the ABiH came from an unexpected source: the Vance Owen Peace Plan. The plan presented on 2 January 1993 in Geneva proposed decentralising Bosnia into ten provinces: three Serb, three Croat, three Muslim and designating Sarajevo as a 'special status' province. At the time, Serb forces controlled almost all of Northern and Eastern Bosnia except for the Srebrenica, Žepa, and Goražde enclaves and the town of Sarajevo itself. While the Izetbegović government at first rejected the proposal on the grounds that it confirmed the ethnic cleansing of the previous year, Izetbegović signed the agreement on 25 March 1993. The Serb leadership stalled on its decision for months. Agreeing to the plan would have meant giving up the hard-fought Posavina corridor and therefore denying a contiguous link among Serb-controlled territories in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. After several months of delay by their elected officials, Serb voters rejected the Vance Owen Peace Plan in a referendum held on 15-16 May 1993. While the peace plan never came to fruition, it changed the dynamic of the war, especially between Croat and Muslim forces.

For Bosnian Croat nationalists, the Vance Owen Peace plan came as an opportunity too good to pass over, regardless of whether the other two warring parties refused to accept it. Provinces three (Posavina), eight (Mostar), and ten (Travnik) designated by the plan as 'Croat' represented what Croat nationalists must have considered an optimal internal division of Bosnia. The plan envisaged granting Mostar and the Posavina, two Croat-

²⁰ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, p. 15.

majority areas contiguous to Croatia, to future Croat authorities and even a significant part of Central Bosnia with much lower Croat populations according to the 1991 census. With increasing pressure brought on by the influx of Muslim refugees into Central Bosnia, Boban and Prlić appreciated they needed a settlement soon in order to claim mixed municipalities like Travnik, Gornji Vakuf, Fojnica, and others as ‘Croat.’

There is no doubt that the Vance Owen provinces appealed to the majority of the Bosnian Croat nationalist leadership because of their approximate correspondence to the 1939 Croatian Banovina borders (see appendices E and G). As discussed in Chapter 3, the Croat nationalist leadership considered the Banovina borders optimal because they corresponded to a demographic distribution they considered favourable; in other words, such borders would include mostly Croats and relatively few Serbs and Muslims. At an HVO meeting on 2 April 1993, General Praljak explained:

There is no policy that can enable us to have everything ... the fastest way for Croatia to go down would be to have a state territory extending all the way to the Drina ... in such a Croatia, Croats (around 49 per cent) have nothing to seek. That is a classic case of stupidity ... Now we have got what we want. The homogenisation of our population continues. We can only fence off what is ours and build there our own space and our own state.²¹

Praljak alluded to an issue that would divide even the right wing core of the HDZ BiH: the Vance Owen provinces still left some territories with significant Croat populations in the provinces of other ethnic groups. For example, Vareš, which had a slight Croat majority according to the 1991 census, would have become part of a Muslim province. Despite such imperfections, the Vance Owen Peace plan presented an acceptable outcome to the conflict for the majority of Croat nationalist leaders.

²¹ 2 April 1993, Prlić-P01788.

At a 15 January 1993 meeting with Izetbegović in Zagreb, Tuđman expressed his satisfaction with the plan, while the Bosnian president responded that the proposed internal division was unacceptable. Perhaps more importantly, Izetbegović stated that he did not think the agreement meant the HVO and the ABiH would have to withdraw from each other's provinces.²² Yet on the same day that Izetbegović and Tuđman met in Zagreb, and just two weeks after the peace plan's presentation, the HVO issued an ultimatum, calling for the withdrawal of HVO forces from the plan's 'Muslim' provinces, and demanded the withdrawal of the ABiH from 'Croat' provinces.²³ HVO Main Staff co-commander Milivoj Petković's order on behalf of the HVO Main Staff reflected the forces' new priorities:

Raise combat readiness to the highest level; include all armed members of the Croat people in HVO units ... keep only two shifts on the front line facing the Chetniks and keep all other forces in full readiness to intervene towards the Muslim forces; disarm and isolate all Muslims in HVO units who refuse to follow our orders ...²⁴

Officials followed up on the ultimatum by blocking access to the Croatian border for the ABiH,²⁵ restricting the movement of Muslims in Croat-controlled municipalities,²⁶ and threatening violence if the ABiH units did not submit to HVO authority.²⁷ In letters written in the second half of January 1993, Prlić justified the HVO's actions by pointing to the Muslim extremists' 'plan to take control;' their 'use of terror to bring about the exodus of Croats;' and by accusing them of abandoning the struggle against the 'Serb-Chetnik aggressor.'²⁸ The series of orders issued by the HVO leadership in January 1993 prompted war between Croat forces and the ABiH.

²² 15 January 1993, Naletilić-P01158, pp. 11-12, 22, and 48-50.

²³ 15 January 1993, Prlić-P01146.

²⁴ 15 January 1993, Prlić-P01135.

²⁵ 20 July 1992, Prlić-P00335; and 27 January 1993, Prlić-P01327.

²⁶ 16 January 1993, Prlić-P01163; and 17 January 1993, Prlić-P01174.

²⁷ 15 December 2006, Prlić-P09803; and 25 January 1993, Prlić-P01305.

²⁸ 18 January 1993, Prlić-P01197; and 18 January 1993, Prlić-P01184.

The War for the Banovina

Following the January 1993 ultimatum to the ABiH, the HVO began conducting mass arrests of Bosnian Muslim men and placing them in concentration camps. In a report covering the period January to June 1993, HVO officials informed the Main Staff that police and military authorities had detained 6,000 POWs, the vast majority identified as members of the ABiH, and placed them in internment camps.²⁹ Like the Bosnian Serb authorities, Herceg Bosna officials failed to distinguish military personnel from civilians and came to see Muslims, especially Muslim men, as potential enemy combatants. An HVO intelligence report sent to the main staff about the Gabela and Heliodrom detention centres indicated that ‘nothing was done to separate’ different categories of detainees, adding ‘members of the ABiH have not been separated from civilians who have been brought “for various reasons”’³⁰ The mass round ups included large numbers of civilians, including women, children, and the elderly who posed no threat.³¹ Berislav Pušić, the chief of Herceg Bosna’s Service for the Exchange of Prisoners, as well as the commander of the HVO Military Police Valentin Ćorić, knew that the HVO detained Muslim civilians along with soldiers.³² A colleague quoted Pušić saying that all Muslims ‘should be taken to third countries’ and that he was ‘pleased’ to hear about the death of Muslims’.³³ Petković himself toured a school in Sovići where the HVO detained boys as young as 13 and men as

²⁹ 10 July 1993, Prlić-P03351, p. 7.

³⁰ 18 November 1993, Prlić-P06729, pp. 3 and 5.

³¹ 13 May 1993, Prlić P02315; Undated, Prlić-P02163; 23 September 1993, Prlić-P05328; 16 December 1993, Prlić-P07209; 17 December 1993, Prlić P07216; 18 November 1993, Prlić-P06730; 10 May 1993, Prlić P02258; 27 February 1998, Prlić-P10038, p. 3; 5 July 1993, Prlić-P03190; 9 July 1993, Prlić-P03344; and 12 March 1999, Prlić P09728.

³² 4 May 1993, Prlić-P02187, pp. 19, 35, 38-39, 41, and 51; 13 December 1993, Prlić-P07148, p. 13; 22 June 1993, Prlić-P02266.

³³ 12 December 1993, Prlić-P07143, p. 9.

old as 70.³⁴ He later ordered the release ‘of all detained civilians in Doljani and Sovići.’³⁵ But the main reason why Muslims, especially men, could not remain free stemmed from their ‘capability to fight for the ABiH,’ as Prlić explained to international representatives.³⁶ Mass detainments flowed from a perspective that dictated all individuals falling under a certain broad category could become enemy soldiers.

HVO organs engaged detainees in dangerous, degrading work. Prison authorities forced Muslim detainees to recover wounded HVO troops from no man's land; to build, fortify, and repair HVO positions on the front line; to build bunkers; to approach at gunpoint the front line and throw explosives at ABiH positions; to build pontoon bridges across the River Neretva; to clear a path for an HVO tank to attack the ABiH; to dig protective trenches for artillery pieces; to erect sandbag defences in areas exposed to fire; to carry explosives through the sewer system into ABiH territory; and to act as human shields.³⁷ Praljak’s subordinate ordered the use of ‘balija,’ a disparaging term for Bosnian Muslims, for forced labour.³⁸ Petković, the chief of the HVO's Main Staff, ordered prisoners to fortify the front lines.³⁹ HVO reports recognised how dangerous the work was: ‘Our old practice that prisoner-captives make shelters, and are later exchanged, is being repeated.’⁴⁰ Deaths would occur as a result of abuse at camps,⁴¹ and even the Heliodrom

³⁴ 4 May 1993, Prlić-P02187, 1:04:09-1:11:10.

³⁵ 4 May 1993, Prlić-P02182.

³⁶ 23 July 1993, Prlić-P03673; A military police report also indicated that ‘for security reasons Muslims aged between 18 and 60 were detained.’ 10 July 1993, Prlić-P03347.

³⁷ Prlić Judgement, Vol II pp. 213-227, 431-441, 469-478, and 498-506; Vol III pp. 28-36, and 57-68.

³⁸ 8 September 1993, Prlić-P04877.

³⁹ 20 July 1993, Prlić-P03592; 8 August 1993, Prlić-P04039.

⁴⁰ 4 February 1993, Prlić-P01418.

⁴¹ An HVO report covering July 93 to March 94 lists 139 occasions when prisoners used for labour were killed, wounded, mistreated or escaped. 12 August 1994, Prlić-P08428.

warden wrote to inform his superiors that prisoners died during forced labour.⁴² A report for the Herceg Bosna defence department revealed that over 6,000 mostly Muslim men were held in HVO detention centres and that officials had engaged large numbers of them to work.⁴³ Yet the violence did not reflect arbitrary terror; the camp system had an important purpose in service of the broader goal to homogenise Herceg Bosna.

The HVO authorities allowed Muslim detainees to leave the camps if they received 'letters of guarantee' promising to leave Herceg Bosna upon release.⁴⁴ Letters of guarantee would be forwarded by the prison warden to the HVO Office of Exchange headed by Berislav Pušić, who had the authority to sign for the release of prisoners if he was assured that the prisoner would leave Herceg Bosna for a third country. The Republic of Croatia Office for Displaced Persons and Refugees (ODPR) was directly involved in this plan and agreed to issue transit visas so deported Muslims could pass through Croatia.⁴⁵ The head of the Mostar HVO Valentin Ćorić provided instructions on the release and deportation procedure, which the HVO military police applied uniformly at all major HVO detention facilities.⁴⁶ The HVO letter of guarantee system sent Muslims from HVO camps to countries all around the world.⁴⁷ Yet deportation was not limited to those possessing letters of guarantee. During 18-20 July 1993, some 800 Muslims were expelled from Mostar. These victims consisted of Muslim prisoners released from the Heliodrom who were given only a few hours to return home, gather their families, and depart Herceg Bosna on buses bound for third countries. In order to leave the Heliodrom, the prisoners had been required

⁴² 6 January 1994, Prlić-P07498; 10 July 1993, Prlić-P03351.

⁴³ September 1993, Prlić-P04699; and 7 August 1993, Prlić-P04008.

⁴⁴ 21 August 1993, Prlić-P10187; 22 August 1993, Prlić-P10190; and 20 July 1993, Prlić-P03573.

⁴⁵ 4 November 1993, Prlić-P06436; and 22 November 1993, Prlić-P06816.

⁴⁶ 19 August 1993, Prlić-P04297; 19 August 1992, Prlić-P04299; 22 August 1993, Prlić-P10190; 21 August 1993, Prlić-P10187; and 21 August 1993, Prlić-P10188.

⁴⁷ 22 November 1993, Prlić-P06816; and 4 November 1993, Prlić-P06436.

to sign a document disingenuously entitled 'Request for assistance in obtaining a transit visa for the Republic of Croatia for going abroad.'⁴⁸ The system worked efficiently: HVO forces would detain Muslim men – some of whom had fought against them and others who had not – they would arrest and humiliate them, and then offer the detainees the opportunity to leave detention if they took their families out of Herceg Bosna, thereby facilitating the aim of homogenisation.

The evidence indicates that, like the RS authorities, Herceg Bosna organs began to consider all Muslims enemies in their quest to create an ethnically pure Banovina. In September 1992, Praljak told Tuđman that Muslims 'should stay at the borders, have dysentery or whatever, just at the borders.'⁴⁹ While the evidence demonstrates that atrocities committed by the HVO occurred in autumn 1992, for example in Prozor,⁵⁰ they accelerated after Petković's January ultimatum. Reports from HVO commander Željko Šiljeg indicated that entire villages suffered destruction: 'Most buildings in Donja Hrasnica have been burned down or demolished. There is no civilian population left in Gornji Hrasnica and Donja Hrasnica.'⁵¹ The line between Muslim civilians and military personnel disappeared:

Following armed clashes in the villages of Doljani and Sovići, all members of the ABiH and some civilians were detained and questioned. We have 422 women and children in total and 25 military recruits. 94 military recruits were also sent to Ljubuški. So far, seven military recruits who had been killed have been buried and they were members of the ABiH in Sovići. After the cessation of hostilities in the area, all Muslim houses were torched, and two mosques destroyed according to the orders of senior commanders ...⁵²

⁴⁸ 28 July 1993, Prlić-P10052.

⁴⁹ 11 September 1993, Prlić-P00466, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁰ 26 October 1992, Prlić-P00653.

⁵¹ 23 January 1993, Prlić-P01277; 30 January 1993, Prlić-P01357, pp. 1-11.

⁵² 23 April 1993, Prlić-P09790.

During the peak of violence in the Lašva valley, in Central Bosnia, Petković reported to the political leadership that ‘parts of the HVO’ had ‘committed terror acts against [Muslim] civilians and destroyed a great number of housing facilities, and in fact some settlements were completely burned down.’ Petković added that HVO troops had killed approximately 250-300 Muslim civilians, ‘there are a lot of women and children among the people who were killed ... more than 60 Muslim houses were burned down, men captured and women and children left in those burned areas.’ Muslims were ethnically cleansed in the Vitez-Busovača area, with ‘250 Muslims ... expelled from those two places ... these events will cause great damage to us.’ Petković emphasised in a report that once the HVO took over villages, they would burn them down and kill ‘uncontrollably.’⁵³ The conduct of HVO forces in their 1993 campaign to consolidate control over ‘Croat’ areas and realise their homogeneity occurred through extreme violence and murder.

Failure and Escalation

June 1993 marked a shift in strategy for the HVO’s annexation programme; rather than attempting to confirm Herceg Bosna’s control in all areas in Central Bosnia where Croats lived, the leadership decided (and was forced) to focus on the narrower 1939 Banovina borders. Military developments on the ground necessitated a shift in priorities: in the first week of June, the HVO lost the key Central Bosnian town of Travnik to the ABiH and on 16 June it lost Kakanj. Successful incursions by the ABiH in June led to massive losses for the HVO; by the end of July, the HVO had lost control of more than 3,700 square kilometres, or more than a quarter of the total territory claimed by Herceg Bosna. In addition to Travnik and Kakanj, in early summer 1993 the HVO also lost its presence in the

⁵³ 23 April 1993, Prlić-4D01078.

Konjic, Jablanica, Fojnica, Zenica, and Bugojno municipalities, effectively restricting the control of Herceg Bosna authorities to Herzegovina.⁵⁴ In the middle of this two-month-long disaster, the HVO leadership decided to escalate its measures against the non-Croat population in the territories that it did control.

The HVO and Herceg Bosna leadership adopted the same life-or-death approach to the war as did the Serb leadership. Announcing a general mobilisation on 30 June 1993, the HVO leadership provided an assessment of its current circumstances:

Hidden at the beginning and revealed since, the intentions of the Muslim leadership and its army to compensate for defeats they suffered from the Serb aggressor and their historical frustrations, by conquering the historical territories of the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also have been confirmed in Mostar ... HVO positions have been attacked, civilians have been terrorised and killed, Croats and their descendants are being exterminated. The existence of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been endangered. As people we have to defend our homes, every house, and every church. We have to defend ourselves if we want to stay at the same place where our fathers, our ancestors, and we were born. The reason for this is that after the Muslim soldiers have passed (and there are many mujahedeen and foreign mercenaries among them), only graves, demolished houses, and mined churches remain. Brother Croats, in this crucial moment for our people, the only thing that can allow us to survive, is the utmost patriotism and higher goals of Croat survival where our homes were built for centuries.⁵⁵

Like Serb nationalist rhetoric, the text places Croats as victims, recognises the times and struggle as historic, and warns that unless the action prescribed by the leadership is implemented, 'extermination' will follow.

Yet even in spring 1993, Praljak had hinted at the plan to move Croats from outside Western Herzegovina into the Herceg Bosna core when he said that 'Croats living outside Croat territories will have a hard life' and 'if the Croat people don't want to move into and inhabit their own territory, then we have gained nothing.' When asked about municipalities like Vareš, a municipality with a slight Croat majority surrounded by Muslim-majority

⁵⁴ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, p. 207.

⁵⁵ 30 June 1993, Prlić-P03038.

municipalities, Praljak said, 'There is no policy that can enable us to have everything. If you think there is, tell us.'⁵⁶ The HVO vice president, Krešimir Zubak, advised in April 1993 that the HVO 'work specifically on the evacuation of the Croat people in an organised manner from Zenica as well as from other areas towards Travnik and Vitez.' In June, the process accelerated. On 12 June 1993, the HVO moved 1,500 Croat civilians from Travnik to Western Herzegovina. On 15 June 1993, the leadership of the HVO met in Mostar and concluded: 'A proposal was made to the Presidency of the Herceg Bosna and the HVO Supreme Commander to adopt a decision to pull out all military units from areas outside the designated Croat provinces, together with the Croat inhabitants living there. To this effect, demand cooperation and assistance from UNPROFOR and the UNHCR.'⁵⁷ The purpose behind the programme to move Croats into Western Herzegovina was to bolster the Croat population in the area contiguous to Croatia and minimise the front line.

Indiscriminate mass arrests occurred in June 1993, when the HVO began to consider every Muslim male between 18 and 60 a potential enemy. On 30 June 1993, Petković ordered the HVO: 'In units where you still have Muslim soldiers, disarm and isolate them. Isolate all able-bodied men in Muslim-inhabited villages in your area of responsibility, and leave women and children in their houses or apartments.'⁵⁸ Reports back to the Main Staff in the following days indicated that units had begun to carry out instructions efficiently.⁵⁹ An analysis prepared in mid-July 1993 by Herceg Bosna's

⁵⁶ 2 April 1993, Prlić-P01788.

⁵⁷ 13 July 1993, Prlić-P03413; 22 June 1993, Prlić P02900; and 15 June 1993, Prlić-1D01668.

⁵⁸ 30 June 1993, Prlić-P03029; 30 June 1993, Prlić-P03019; 2 July 1993, Prlić-P03128; and 3 July 1993, Prlić-P03149.

⁵⁹ 'One platoon was engaged in collecting persons of the Muslim faith in Stolac ... so far about 1,300 persons apprehended and brought in from the municipalities of Stolac, Čapljina, Mostar, and Neum on 30 June and 1 July' (1 July 1993, Prlić-P03075); 'For the purpose of more efficient implementation of the order on bringing in Muslim conscripts, reinforcement was sent to all

intelligence service highlighted the ‘ill treatment of Muslims’ that had occurred for months and revealed that the Defence Department and HVO main staff received daily reports about the situation, but also added ‘perhaps some individuals bury their heads in the sand and want to avoid responsibility.’⁶⁰ A December 1993 report indicated that a number of people detained during the summer 1993 round-up posed no threat: ‘The first people to be released should be those who fall within the humanitarian category; i.e. the elderly, women, and children.’⁶¹ The purpose behind the measures was to score nationalist victories that furthered the ideological goal while HVO forces suffered defeats on the battlefield.

The Herceg Bosna leadership’s commitment to the Banovina map is perhaps most evident when examining the fate of the Croat civilians of Vareš. The municipality of Vareš, which in 1991 had just a 41 per cent Croat majority, fell well outside the 1939 Banovina territory and into what would have become a ‘Muslim’ province according to the Vance Owen Peace Plan.⁶² After the fall of Kakanj to the ABiH in mid-June, thousands of Croat civilians had fled to Vareš. On 18 August 1993, Jadranko Prlić wrote a letter to the HVO president in Vareš instructing the local HVO to evacuate ‘Croat women, children, the old and the sick’ from Vareš to Western Herzegovina. The letter also instructed the HVO to secure consent from the ‘S’ side to cross their territory and reach Herzegovina.⁶³ The ‘S’ side, which apparently Prlić could not bring himself to write out in full, could only refer to

checkpoints, especially to those leading towards Muslim-inhabited places, because it can be expected that many would try to hide, which would make the arrest more difficult ... In the afternoon, six buses with Muslims were brought from the Heliodrom ... Crime: there were neither reports on criminal activities nor arrests related to them’ (2 July 1993, Prlić-P03121); and ‘All Muslims in the 18 to 60 age group who were stopped [at a traffic checkpoint] on that occasion were taken to the detention unit in Dretelj’ (4 July 1993, Prlić-P03170).

⁶⁰ 17 July 1993, Prlić-P03516; and 18 November 1993, Prlić-P06722.

⁶¹ 13 December 1993, Prlić-P07124.

⁶² See Appendix G.

⁶³ 18 August 1993, Prlić P04282.

the Serbs. The Vareš HVO leadership objected, evidently interpreting the instructions as part of a broader programme to persuade all Croats to abandon Vareš. In its response to Prlić, the Vareš HVO leadership indicated that the Vareš Croats ‘were firm in their decision’ to stay, adding that ‘all other solutions ... would be interpreted ... as betrayal ...’ Another letter on 15 September 1993 from the Vareš HVO authorities addressed to the top Herceg Bosna leadership, stated that Vareš formed ‘an absolutely sovereign part of Herceg Bosna’ and that ‘bitterness’ had developed over ‘a devious policy afoot which is attempting to force them [the population] to leave their hearths.’⁶⁴ The Vareš HVO, which considered itself fully loyal the Bosnian Croat nationalist programme, saw that the leadership did not regard the situation in the same way.

Nevertheless, the campaign to bolster the Banovina and Vance Owen borders, while abandoning territories outside them, continued. The 6,000 Croats who had taken refuge in Vareš from Kakanj left Vareš on 20 October 1993 for Herzegovina and Croatia. Refugees who reached Croatia met with a Bosnian embassy official who later testified:

I don’t want to use the word ‘expelled.’ I spent the entire day with them, and I asked them how it came about that they came to Croatia from Bosnia, and their explanation was that they had received information from the HVO according to which a large-scale attack was being planned and that the Mujahedin would arrive with long white beards and that they slaughter people right away as soon as they enter an area, and following advice from the HVO they agreed to leave the country in an organised fashion and come to Croatia.⁶⁵

None of the refugees confirmed seeing the mujahedeen. Several days later, an HVO unit led by Commander Ivica Rajić committed a massacre in Stupni Do, in the Vareš municipality, killing at least 37 people, raping women, and burning down all the houses. A protected

⁶⁴ Prosecutor v. Jadranko Prlić *et al.* (Prosecution Public Redacted Final Trial Brief), Case IT-04-74-T, 1 April 2011. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at:

< <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/custom5/en/110401.pdf> >, pp. 97-99.

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 97-99.

witness identified as an ‘HVO insider’ testified that ‘the HVO attack on Stupni Do took place because an incident was needed to create a situation that would force the Croat community to move out of Vareš.’ Indeed, following the attack the Stupni Do, the ABiH did attack Vareš, while the HVO announced over loudspeakers: ‘You must leave, you must leave, the Muslims are coming,’ and so the Bosnian Croat community finally fled.⁶⁶ The HVO forced the Croat community out of Vareš because of the difficulty of maintaining control of a Croat enclave surrounded by Serb and Muslim forces and communities, the unlikelihood of connecting Vareš to the core Herceg Bosna municipalities in Herzegovina, the fact that Vareš fell outside both the 1939 Banovina border and the 1993 Vance Owen Peace Plan Croat provinces, and the reality that Herceg Bosna leaders wanted to boost Croat numbers in Herzegovina by occupying property left by expelled Muslims.

Property appropriation, as well as the rampant destruction of Muslim religious and cultural structures, took place in areas under HVO control. In October 1992 and January 1993, Petković reacted to reports that HVO forces torched Muslim houses by ordering officers to prevent such conduct by all means, citing ‘great problems in foreign media’ that such conduct would result in, and also ordered troops not to abuse civilians or POWs, steal, or destroy religious buildings.⁶⁷ Yet only days after Petković’s January orders, HVO intelligence reported that UNPROFOR Colonel Stewart had ‘repeatedly appealed to us to stop the destruction of the town [Gornji Vakuf].’⁶⁸ On 10 May 1993, Bishop Ratko Perić wrote to Petković to condemn the destruction of the 400-year-old Balinovac mosque in Mostar and pleaded to Petković to stop ‘the Croat side’ from destroying Islamic facilities

⁶⁶ Prlić Final Brief, pp. 97-99.

⁶⁷ 31 October 1992, Prlić-P00679; 30 January 1993, Prlić-P01357.

⁶⁸ 24 January 1993, Prlić-P01277.

and monuments.⁶⁹ After the war, the Mostar Mufti prepared a report in which he listed 53 demolished and 22 damaged mosques in Herzegovina.⁷⁰ Civilian property became a target for the HVO and looting occurred after operations.⁷¹ The HVO Defence Department determined on 13 May 1993 that ‘all movable property and real estate of Muslims who had emigrated’ had become ‘spoils of war.’⁷² The HVO military police planned to seize the apartment keys of ‘abandoned flats’ in Mostar and place stickers on doors to indicate homes for seizure.⁷³ Yet in rural areas, HVO units often torched houses as the HVO’s own intelligence reports indicate.⁷⁴ While battles over mixed villages often resulted in damage to property, one witness observed that in Sovići, only Muslim houses had burned down and ‘not one Croat house had been destroyed.’⁷⁵ Like VRS campaigns elsewhere in Bosnia, the HVO adopted measures intended to send a message that Muslims should leave and not return.

The HVO military police, which would normally investigate alleged misconduct of the armed forces it belonged to, solely investigated crimes committed against Croats, and in fact participated in crimes against Muslims. A Reuters report indicated that the HVO’s military police seemed more concerned about covering up the destruction of the mosque in Ljubuški than finding the perpetrators;⁷⁶ and in fact the military police’s own report indicated that a mosque, as well as other Muslim structures in the Ljubuški area, had been

⁶⁹ 10 May 1993, Prlić-P02264.

⁷⁰ Undated, Prlić-P08939.

⁷¹ 8 July 1993, Prlić-P03308; 11 July 1993, Prlić-P03382; and 18 August 1993, Prlić-P04274.

⁷² 13 May 1993, Prlić P02372.

⁷³ 30 September 1993, Prlić-P05518; 1 October 1993, Prlić-P05554.

⁷⁴ 27 June 1993, Prlić-P02977; and 31 July 1993, Prlić-P03831.

⁷⁵ Prlić Final Brief, p. 306.

⁷⁶ 13 May 1993, Prlić-P02358.

demolished, but indicated that civilian police would investigate.⁷⁷ Yet the military police itself looted;⁷⁸ conducted mass arrests – for example, the ‘entire population’ of Medine village;⁷⁹ and in general only investigated crimes committed against Croats and their property, rather than by the HVO.⁸⁰ An HVO intelligence report revealed that ‘in Prozor, the military police is the strongest by numbers, with 134 military policemen who don’t answer to anyone for their “work,” who raid villages, loot, torch and so on. We have pointed to the problems with the above-mentioned several times already, but nothing has been done about the matter.’⁸¹

The Herceg Bosna authorities adopted numerous administrative measures intended to facilitate the expulsion process. On 10 June 1993, the Prlić government ordered a full mobilisation of all males of military age inhabiting Herceg Bosna, an order that extended to Muslim inhabitants. Failure to comply included criminal and financial penalties, including seizure of property.⁸² Yet on 30 June, Petković ordered HVO units to ‘disarm and isolate’ Muslim soldiers still active in the Croat armed forces.⁸³ The law on identification required all inhabitants to obtain Herceg Bosna credentials to show to authorities upon request. Failure to obtain identification meant one ‘could not enjoy displaced person status and must leave the municipality.’⁸⁴

The law on housing also allowed the authorities to appropriate property considered ‘abandoned;’ any citizens who failed to claim their property within seven days of the

⁷⁷ 16 May 1993, Prlić-P02412.

⁷⁸ 2 June 1993, Prlić-P02961.

⁷⁹ 8 July 1993, Prlić-P03302.

⁸⁰ 9 August 1993, Prlić-P04058, pp. 7 and 13-14; 26 September 1993, Prlić-P04699, p. 26.

⁸¹ 15 July 1993, Prlić-P03458.

⁸² 10 June 1993, Prlić-P02707.

⁸³ 30 June 1993, Prlić-P03029.

⁸⁴ October 1992, Prlić-P00553; Tomljanovich, ‘The Governing Bodies and Organs of Herceg Bosna and their Functioning, 1991-94,’ pp. 55-56.

termination of the state of war would no longer have the right to claim it.⁸⁵ The housing law had a disproportionate effect on Muslims who had fled towns like Mostar during the conflict. Herceg Bosna authorities recognised the purpose of the housing law: to accommodate expelled (Croat) refugees.⁸⁶ By allowing Croats who had fled Central Bosnia to live in houses and apartments belonging to Muslims, the authorities bolstered the homogenisation programme and made it more difficult for Muslims to return. The authorities further compounded pressure on Muslims to leave by restricting the amount of humanitarian assistance available to refugees and delaying shipments, which often denied aid to more than ten thousand people at a time.⁸⁷ These measures put Bosnian Muslims in a vulnerable position, where they could easily become victims of systematic harassment and exhortation by officials seeking to build a state without them.

Herceg Bosna authorities created the Office for Exiled and Displaced Persons and Refugees (ODPR) to facilitate the ethnic homogenisation process. Established in December 1992, the HVO government charged the office with accommodating (Croat) refugees in Herceg Bosna territory.⁸⁸ But the ODPR did more than find space for expelled Croats; as minutes from a Herceg Bosna government meeting on 8 February 1993 reveal, ‘the ODPR is required to organise the departure of expelled persons [i.e. Muslims] from Posušje to Romania.’⁸⁹ The ODPR reported on its progress throughout 1993: by 12 July, 50,000 Croat refugees had settled in Herceg Bosna, a 100 per cent increase in the number of settlers.⁹⁰ At the beginning of 1994, the ODPR briefed the government on the demographic changes that

⁸⁵ July 1993, Prlić-P03089.

⁸⁶ 5 July 1993, Prlić-1D01669; 4 December 1993, Prlić-P07035, pp. 5-6, and 24.

⁸⁷ 6 September 1993, Prlić-P04822.

⁸⁸ December 1993, Prlić-P00846; Tomljanovich, ‘The Governing Bodies and Organs of Herceg Bosna,’ p. 56.

⁸⁹ 8 February 1993, Prlić-P01439, p. 5.

⁹⁰ 12 July 1993, Prlić-P03394.

had occurred during the bloody Croat-Muslim conflict of the past year: while the Croat population remained consistent in Ljubuški, Čapljina, Široki Brijeg, and Stolac, the Muslim population of Stolac had declined from 8,101 to zero in ten months.⁹¹ An HVO report on the ‘Expulsion of Croats’ indicated that between June and December 1993, 22,461 Croats had relocated to Herzegovina from Central Bosnia ‘in an organised manner.’⁹² In the Croat-controlled half of Mostar, the number of Muslims had declined from 43,464 to 9,850 between March and December 1993, while the number of Croats increased from 29,105 to 36,968. The report emphasised that Croats ‘need to stay in the capital of their state, in Mostar.’⁹³ During the Prlić trial, the prosecution’s demographic expert Ewa Tabeau testified that by 1998, only 25 per cent of non-Croats still lived in their 1991 homes in the core eight Herceg Bosna municipalities.⁹⁴ The expulsion of Muslims and the influx of Croats in Herceg Bosna reflected exactly the policy discussed in Tuđman’s office in 1993. When Tuđman emphasised that Stolac fell within the Banovina borders, Anđelko Marković added, ‘there are no Muslims there,’ and explained that Stolac had become populated with ‘our refugees.’⁹⁵ In November 1993, Prlić told Tuđman: ‘We must move closer to rounding off territories ... including moving the population from those areas and concentrating it in certain directions that we think could become and remain Croat areas. We would like this solely in the pragmatic sense.’⁹⁶ Herceg Bosna leaders remained true to their word.

⁹¹ 27 August 2008, Prlić-T31475.

⁹² 4 January 1994, Prlić-1D01829.

⁹³ 6 January 1994, Prlić-P07500.

⁹⁴ 23 August 2007, Prlić-T21528.

⁹⁵ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P10.

⁹⁶ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12.

Croatia Sponsors Herceg Bosna and the HVO

The Croatian state and especially its army played a crucial role in the campaign to extend the Republic of Croatia's borders into Bosnia and to homogenise Herceg Bosna. Conscious of the obvious inconsistency of demanding Croatia's territorial integrity while supporting Croat separatism in Bosnia, Tuđman explained to Croatian and Herceg Bosna officials in September 1992 why Croatia's support for the Bosnian Croat national cause in a war he called 'illegal' must remain secret.⁹⁷ The Croatian army officials and the leadership in Zagreb used the euphemism 'Southern Front' to refer to Bosnia, as Tuđman instructed:

Be very careful when filling out death certificates so that in the case of a person killed in the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, one writes 'Southern Front' and not the exact place of death. The matter is that this has been happening and is still happening ... some people are indicating the name of the place of death as for example Mostar, Bugojno, or other places.⁹⁸

Yet the authorities failed to keep 'Southern Front' operations secret. A 11 September 1993 report from the Osijek Military District to HV headquarters informed the military leadership that considering the high number of casualties, civilians resented their sons deploying to Bosnia and added 'everyone in Nova Gradiška knows where the "Southern Front" is' and that it has 'particularly negative connotations.'⁹⁹ A protest occurred the following day, when parents and relatives entered the military compound and refused to allow vehicles to leave claiming they could only do so 'over their dead bodies.' The locals demanded 'someone from superior command explain why their sons and husbands have to die for Herzegovina while Bosnians and Herzegovinians [deserters] are walking around Croatia.'¹⁰⁰ A revealing report from the 175th Brigade of the HV, dated 7 January 1994,

⁹⁷ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5. pp. 69-72.

⁹⁸ 22 November 1993, Prlić-P06797.

⁹⁹ 23 July 1993, Prlić-P03667; and 15 July 1993, Prlić-P03466.

¹⁰⁰ 12 September 1993, Prlić-P04979.

indicates that the 116 troops refused to board coaches destined for Jablanica, a contested zone between Croats and Muslims in Bosnia, and that those who did removed their HV insignia at the border. The poor attempt to keep the 'Southern Front' a secret reveals the leadership's consciousness of the illegality of its actions.

Despite failing to keep the Croatian government's initiative clandestine, the HV's organs bolstered the HVO. On 16 April 1992, Tuđman appointed General Janko Bobetko, as commander of the Croatian Army in the 'Southern Front'.¹⁰¹ Croatian General Ante Gotovina admitted in a 1999 meeting with Tuđman that he had served as the commander of the Livno HVO in 1992 before the HV called him back to Croatia, where he commanded the Split Operative Zone.¹⁰² In an HVO report dated 26 June 1992, Petković credited the HVO's 'astonishing success' in southeast Herzegovina to the 'assistance of considerable HV forces and equipment.'¹⁰³ The Croatian president himself specifically ordered the engagement of the HV in Bosnia in 1993 when the HVO fought to secure the Banovina borders.¹⁰⁴ As early as April 1992, the HV had a command post in Grude, from where HDZ officials conducted most Herceg Bosna government business.¹⁰⁵ Throughout the war, a number of HV officers served in the HVO;¹⁰⁶ the Croatian Army stationed units in Herceg Bosna controlled territory;¹⁰⁷ it coordinated attacks with the HVO against 'Chetniks' and

¹⁰¹ 10 April 1992, Prlić-P00156.

¹⁰² 13 April 1999, Naletilić-PP892.P36, p. 36.

¹⁰³ 26 June 1992, Prlić-P00279.

¹⁰⁴ For example: 22 October 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P11, pp. 1-2, 3-6, 9-10, 12, 40-42, 53, 56; 6 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P13, pp. 5-7, 20-21; and 23 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P15, pp. 9-15.

¹⁰⁵ 16 April 1992, Prlić-P00162.

¹⁰⁶ 5 August 1993, Prlić-P03979; 10 December 1992, Prlić-P00891; 6 January 1993, Prlić-P01067; 8 June 1992, Prlić-P00241; 3 May 1993, Prlić-P02176; 24 July 1992, Prlić-P00345; 14 July 1992, Prlić-P00332; 28 August 1993, Prlić-P04594.

¹⁰⁷ 24 March 1993, Prlić-P08112; 15 February 1994, Prlić-P07884; 9 March 1993, Prlić-5D005381; and 4 August 1993, Prlić-P03949.

Muslims;¹⁰⁸ and the HV provided extensive logistical and materiel support.¹⁰⁹ Gojko Šušak, the Croatian minister of defence, requested fifty volunteers from the HV to form a brigade and assist the HVO, which the Croatian Army Main Staff approved.¹¹⁰ Years after the war, in 1999, Tuđman and others worried that the ICTY would uncover the HV's true role in the Bosnian war, with Tuđman lamenting that the indicted Petković 'knew too much.'¹¹¹

The Croatian Army supported Herceg Bosna by extending financing to the HVO and providing military aid. The Croatian Ministry of Defence paid billions of Croatian dinars and hundreds of millions of German marks between October 1992 and January 1994 to ensure the functioning of Herceg Bosna administrative organs and the HVO.¹¹² The Croatian Air Force chief Imra Agotić reported to Tuđman that his pilots violated the UN Security Council's Resolution 816 by conducting flights at night undetected. Croatian planes flew over 190 flights over Bosnia in 1993, 105 over Herceg Bosna, transporting 700 wounded soldiers, 50 tons of cargo and freight, and 1,300 individuals. During twenty flights to Vitez, in Central Bosnia, Agotić claimed, 'a million and six hundred thousand rounds were transported. That is what kept them going.'¹¹³ By providing essential financial and materiel support, the HV and the Croatian leadership enabled the HVO to pursue its ideological campaign.

¹⁰⁸ 15 July 1993, Prlić-P03466.

¹⁰⁹ 16 May 1992, Prlić-P00211; 20 November 1992, Prlić-P00785; 27 June 1993, Prlić-P02975; Undated, Prlić-P03071; 7 July 1993, Prlić-P03258; 30 July 1993, Prlić-P03818; 12 December 1993, Prlić-P07135; 25 March 1994, Prlić-P08118.

¹¹⁰ 19 August 1993, Prlić-P04295.

¹¹¹ 13 April 1999, Naletilić-PP892.P36, pp. 34-45.

¹¹² 31 August 1992, Prlić-P00098; 18 October 1992, Prlić-P10291; 23 October-28 November 1992, Prlić-P10674; 15 December 1992, Prlić-P00910; 17 November 1992, Prlić-P10290; 20 January 1993, Prlić-P01241; 20 January 1993, Prlić-P01243; 21 January 1993, Prlić-P01245; and 18 November 1993-14 December 1993, Prlić-P07173.

¹¹³ 6 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P13, pp. 12, 15, and 26.

Perhaps even more importantly, the Croatian Army aided the Herceg Bosna state building project by engaging on the ground in Bosnia. Janko Bobetko, the HV's Chief of General Staff, reported in October 1993 that the 5th Brigade had withdrawn from Vinkovci (in Croatia) and transferred to Gornji Vakuf (in Bosnia) adding that there was a strengthened battalion in the Gornji Vakuf area with about 700 men.¹¹⁴ When discussing the 'fragmented' and 'undisciplined' HVO forces,¹¹⁵ Tuđman told Bobetko 'we have sent General Roso down,' and Bobetko responded that the men active in the Bugojno area (in Bosnia) were from the Zagorje region in Croatia and needed to be relieved.¹¹⁶ In unambiguous terms, Bobetko explained how the ammunition supply from Ploče, in Croatia, reached Mostar and other places in Herzegovina.¹¹⁷ In another discussion, Bobetko reported on an elite unit with 780 men and artillery sent to Bosnia and Tuđman warned Roso to do everything he could to preserve the future borders of the Croatian state when fighting against Muslim forces, which Tuđman described as 'fanatical.'¹¹⁸ There is no doubt that the Croatian Army engaged on the ground during a period when its leadership denied its presence.

The simple reality is that Croatian and Herceg Bosna top leaders considered the two forces as part of one army. Gojko Šušak defended himself from a criticism that he had not done enough to support Croat forces in Bosnia by making it clear that he did not distinguish between supplying forces Croatia and Croat-claimed areas in Bosnia:

I am not giving anything from the budget of the Ministry of Defence, Vitez, Osijek, Gospić and Ljubuški, let me be clear on that. Whatever is at the disposal of the Ministry of Defence, that is equally distributed between Šamac, Derventa, Osijek,

¹¹⁴ 22 October 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P11, pp. 3-4.

¹¹⁵ 23 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P15, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., p. 6.

¹¹⁷ 22 October 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P11, pp. 6-7.

¹¹⁸ 6 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P13, pp. 29-30.

Vukovar, Vitez and all other municipalities involved ... The president is saying that this is historical, and since it is historical, if we calculate, without including anything else, only the weapons, 100 million dollars is a small number in comparison to what we have sent to these territories [in Bosnia].¹¹⁹

At another meeting, Šušak stated: 'Praljak and Stojić are organising in the south everything in their power. [Bobetko] and I have done here everything that we could.'¹²⁰ Šušak also reported on the military situation on Bosnian battlefields; for example, the defence minister revealed that in Vitez, Croat forces fought only with explosives and that they did not have rifles, artillery, or tanks.¹²¹ The link between the Croatian Army and the HVO was so close that Vladimir Šoljić, Herceg Bosna's minister of defence, considered it appropriate to comment: 'As all of you here know, the HVO is, practically speaking, only a part of the armed forces of Croatia.' He added:

I think that a fortunate, a good combination has been found here and that it functions without any major problems. All decisions are taken and implemented mostly from one place in what is by now the customary and practiced way. This has been particularly evident of late, and so we have some of the battlefields almost mixed together ... That is certainly a good thing, and of late eight thousand HVO soldiers are, practically speaking, under the direct command of commanders from Croatia, specifically the military district of Split ... Only the battlefields in Brčko, Žepče, Posavina, Mostar, etc., are overseen more immediately and directly by us, so this system works well.¹²²

The transcript discussions reveal that Tuđman remained very well informed about the military situation in Bosnia, that the Croatian Army and Bosnian Croat forces worked together, and that Tuđman's ministers extended vital support to the HVO.

The Croatian leadership realised its campaign would and did involve war crimes, yet throughout the conflict insisted Croat forces acted justifiably in defence. Before the war, Boban lamented that Croats made up only 55 per cent of the population in Herceg Bosna's

¹¹⁹ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, p. 43.

¹²⁰ 27 January 1993, Prlić-P01325, p. 9.

¹²¹ 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16, p. 3.

¹²² 24 August 1995, Naletilić-PP892.P34, pp. 26-27.

founding municipalities but added that by ‘cleansing border areas’ that percentage could rise to 65 per cent.¹²³ Franjo Boras, a HDZ member of the Bosnian presidency, explained that the internal organisation of Bosnia would be determined through ‘the war option,’ because of Serb and Muslim policies; Boban agreed ‘the war was imposed on us; therefore, we accepted a defensive war of the Croat people.’¹²⁴ Brkić reported that the Muslim part of Mostar ‘has been destroyed;’ while Dominik Sakić from Zenica reported that Croat forces in his area ‘have done some very dirty work hiding behind the Croatian coat of arms,’ which ‘benefited the Bosnian Army.’¹²⁵ Anđelko Marković, an HVO representative from Stolac, worried about Muslim media reporting on ‘monuments, mosques, bridges and everything else,’ which could create negative consequences for Croatia.¹²⁶ An unidentified representative from Busovača defended the conduct of Croat forces by announcing that ‘in places where we didn’t bare our teeth’ Muslims invaded.¹²⁷ Šušak also defended the globally condemned Croat forces: ‘Let’s get something straight. Where the HVO is, that constitutes state authority because there is no other authority... it’s wartime; there are no laws.’¹²⁸ Dario Kordić reported to the council: ‘During their aggression on Croat territories in Bosnia, 180-200 [thousand] Croats have been expelled by the ABiH, while about 75,000 Muslims have been expelled by the HV [sic].’¹²⁹ The president himself said that ‘those idiots who pulled down the bridge’ in Mostar should be tried in court, but explained if it had not been for such (extreme) individuals ‘we would not have been able to defend

¹²³ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-PP892.P2, p. 21.

¹²⁴ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 9-10.

¹²⁵ 17 September 1992, *Stenogrami o Podjeli Bosne*, p. 217; and 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, p. 4.

¹²⁶ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P10, p. 4.

¹²⁷ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7. pp. 18-19.

¹²⁸ Ibid., pp. 45-46.

¹²⁹ 24 August 1995, Naletilić-PP892.P34, p. 29.

ourselves from the Serbs or Muslims.’¹³⁰ The criminal conduct of Croat forces, though embarrassing for the leadership in the international press, served a purpose in line with Tuđman’s goals.

Throughout his meetings with Bosnian Croat leaders, Tuđman established himself as the absolute Croat authority. When Mate Boban, the president of Herceg Bosna, met with Tuđman, the Croatian president called Boban by his first name, Mate, but Boban always addressed Tuđman as ‘Mr President.’¹³¹ When European Community negotiators David Owen and Cyrus Vance attended a meeting with Tuđman and Boban, Tuđman led the discussion and Boban did not challenge any of the Croatian president’s assertions.¹³² At another meeting, Boban claimed: ‘There is no document addressed from any Croatian area to me or our services that has not been transmitted to President Tuđman or Minister Šušak.’¹³³ Tuđman would instruct the Herceg Bosna leadership to accept agreements,¹³⁴ he would make decisions about HVO policy without representatives’ presence,¹³⁵ he would move and appoint HVO generals,¹³⁶ and instruct Herceg Bosna leaders that ‘we have to ensure the compactness of Herceg Bosna territory.’¹³⁷ Tuđman told his National Security Council to follow Prlić’s proposals in January 1993; in other words, he agreed to the forced implementation of the Vance Owen Peace Plan. Praljak insisted: ‘I explained to military policemen, and a lot of them were killed up there, what the position was that I brought from

¹³⁰ 15 December 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P17, p. 7.

¹³¹ 15 September 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P9; and 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16.

¹³² 20 January 1993, *Stenogrami o Podjeli Bosne*, pp. 255-269.

¹³³ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, pp. 46-47.

¹³⁴ 15 September 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P9, p. 13.

¹³⁵ 23 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P15, pp. 7-27.

¹³⁶ See 22 October 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P11.

¹³⁷ 6 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P13, p. 3.

Zagreb and how it was to be implemented.’¹³⁸ At the presidential meetings, no Herceg Bosna leader challenged the Croatian president.

Tuđman considered the political and later military conflicts in Bosnia in 1992 and 1993 a struggle for the future boundaries of the Croatian state. Tuđman did not like Croatia’s socialist-era ‘croissant shape,’¹³⁹ calling the state’s communist-era borders ‘unnatural.’¹⁴⁰ The president of Croatia had an uncompromising, future-oriented rationalisation for supporting Bosnian Croat forces:

Several months ago, I told you about the situation and issued tasks to the Minister of Defence Mr Šušak and General Bobetko, [regarding] our help and our engagement in Herceg Bosna. I told them that this was where the future borders of the Croatian state will be determined. That is when I pointed out that it was very important that they defended the positions and the territory the HVO held.¹⁴¹

The president reprimanded his ministers for not fulfilling his instructions effectively:

Gentlemen, based on the problems that you have solved at the Ministry and the Main Staff, and from the things that I learned from reports from the field, you did not take seriously enough what I said about securing the borders of the Croatian state by our engagement. Consequently, you should have sat down, engaged land forces and the air force to secure what I said should be secured. This means that you should not just complain that the command is not organised well enough down there, or capable enough, but propose how we should defend what we should have defended and how should keep Prozor, take control of Gornji Vakuf and Bugojno ... this is something of strategic importance not only for the present but for the future of the Croatian state.¹⁴²

Tuđman demanded that each HV unit active in Bosnia have a political officer who could explain to soldiers ‘what our present engagement in Bosnia means, that these are the borders of the Croatian state for the following centuries.’¹⁴³ Tuđman repeatedly emphasised that the ‘problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the problem of the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina but it is also a problem of the Croatian State and its

¹³⁸ 27 January 1993, Prlić-P01350; and 2 April 1993, Prlić-P01788.

¹³⁹ Original BCS term is ‘kifla.’ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P10, pp. 25-26.

¹⁴⁰ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, pp. 27-28.

¹⁴¹ 22 October 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P11, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴² Ibid., pp. 40-42.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. 57.

future.’ Describing it as a ‘knotty issue,’ Tuđman reminded his subordinates that they must ‘keep in mind the strategic interests of importance for the future of the Croatian people and Croatia in general, including the question of its borders,’¹⁴⁴ and also referred to the struggle as determining the ‘borders of the Croatian state in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’¹⁴⁵ Using the strongest possible terms, Tuđman instructed his military personnel to prioritise securing Croat territory in Bosnia for the sake of the state’s borders.

Conclusion

In 1993, Franjo Tuđman attempted to recreate the 1939 Banovina of Croatia through his Bosnian Croat surrogates. Although HDZ BiH leaders had declared the existence of the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna in November 1991, it was not until more than a year later that they attempted in earnest to break their would-be province of Croatia from Bosnia. The ideological programme espoused by Croat nationalists mirrored that of the Bosnian Serbs. Like their counterparts in Republika Srpska, Herceg Bosna authorities created exclusivist institutions and pressured ethnic outsiders, primarily the more numerous Bosnian Muslims, to move out of territories under HVO control. The evidence reveals the extent to which the Croatian state propped up Herceg Bosna. Cash, arms, logistical support, and even the direct engagement of the HV aided the Bosnian Croat nationalist agenda. While Tuđman, like Milošević, attempted to keep his state’s involvement a secret, it appears that Croatian state organs, especially the army, were even more directly involved in the Bosnian war than were Serbian institutions.

Battlefield defeats, primarily to the ABiH, influenced the measures Herceg Bosna leaders took towards achieving their goals. Losing ground in June and July 1993 solidified

¹⁴⁴ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵ 6 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P13, p. 18.

the leadership's determination to focus only on the 1939 Banovina and Vance Owen borders; in other words, to abandon its fight for territories in Central Bosnia, including Vareš. Yet pressure mounted on Tuđman, the architect of the Bosnian Croat campaign, to make changes. The brutality of the HVO did not go unnoticed and the evident hypocrisy of his policy towards Croatian and Bosnian sovereignty became evident. The attempt to cast Serbs as Bosnia's executioners worked up to a point, but the similarities between the VRS's and HVO's ideologies and methods became undeniable. The confusion between military personnel and civilians, ethnic cleansing, detention camps, and cultural destruction all cast the HVO in the same light as the VRS. With more control over the Bosnian Croats than Milošević over his proxies, would Tuđman force the Herceg Bosna leadership to stem its expansionist campaign?

Section III
Adaptation

Chapter 8: Tuđman's Bosnia Compromise, Autumn 1993 – December 1995

Gentlemen: we've succeeded. We've succeeded in getting not just Herceg Bosna; what we had we've got – We can say this among ourselves – half of Bosnia, if we're good at governing it; if we govern cleverly ... as I said, half of Bosnia will be pushed in a pro-Croatia way, as it was before. – Franjo Tuđman, Meeting with the representatives of the HR Herceg Bosna and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Zagreb, 24 November 1995¹

Despite the extensive aid supplied to the HVO and the ideological conformity among the Zagreb political establishment and the dominant wing of the Bosnian Croat leadership, various factors pressured Tuđman to compromise on his nationalist principles towards the end of 1993. From the beginning of the war, Tuđman faced the dilemma of how to extend his state's authority to territories in Croatia controlled by Croatian Serb rebels, while at the same time linking large parts of Bosnia to the Republic of Croatia. As he remarked in September 1993, 'the question above all others is how to preserve the Republic of Croatia and how to gain as much as possible in Bosnia and Herzegovina.'²

Tuđman realised from the outset of the conflict that maintaining international support for his cause would prove decisive. However, atrocities perpetrated in the process of homogenising and securing Herceg Bosna-claimed territories earned Tuđman global condemnation. Yet as evident from Appendix I, which shows the battle lines at the beginning of 1994, the HVO's brutality had failed to recover the territories lost in June 1993 to the ABiH, as discussed in the previous chapter. Pressure from abroad forced Tuđman to find a scapegoat for crimes committed by Bosnian Croat forces that implemented the Croatian president's ideological vision and enjoyed military support from

¹ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, pp. 28-29.

² 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, pp. 10-12.

his army. While Tuđman had enough support to pursue the Banovina border in 1992 and early 1993, internal party criticism coupled with denunciation of hypocrisy by the opposition increased as the HVO suffered dramatic territorial losses to the ABiH. Moreover, the exodus of Croats from Bosnia to Croatia and the increasing problem of HVO deserters also undermined Tuđman's expansionist programme.

For pragmatic and strategic reasons, Tuđman decided to abandon his plan to annex parts of Bosnia and instead make peace with the Bosnian Muslims in order to join forces against the common enemy, the VRS. The change in policy that led to the 1994 Washington Agreement reflected a revised nationalist strategy: by entering into a federal/confederal arrangement with Izetbegović, Tuđman expected to dominate half of Bosnia while at the same time appeasing the international community, which the Croatian president believed wanted him to prevent the creation of an Islamic state and 'Europeanise' the Bosnian Muslims.

International Reprimand

Following increasing scrutiny from abroad, the Croatian leadership, like its Serb counterpart, considered itself an underdog in the conflict and believed it fought against the interests of larger forces. Šušak stated that Croatia's drive for independence had violated the post-Second World War peace in Europe, adding 'Yugoslavia functioned as far as [Europe] was concerned.'³ Tuđman explained that Germany, 'our best friend,' supported the Muslims and ran television reports about Serbs killed in the Second World War because of its 'Third Reich complex' and sought to disassociate itself from Croatia, which Croatia's

³ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, p. 53.

critics claimed represented a continuation of the NDH.⁴ After the HVO committed crimes against Muslims in Central Bosnia, Tuđman received demands from France, Germany, and the US to grant Sarajevo concessions or else risk Croatia's guest status at the European Council Assembly.⁵ Tuđman suspected the US in particular wanted to keep Bosnia together and forge a 'tampon state' based on Croat-Muslim cooperation.⁶ Tuđman also worried about sanctions from the UN, whose officials had informed him that Zagreb did not do enough to pacify Bosnian Croat forces.⁷ He knew that even though Croatia achieved international recognition, no nation would support it militarily.⁸ Tuđman understood why: 'It's difficult for international factors to grasp these problems of ours. If someone is under the impression of multi-cultural and multi-ethnic America, then it is hard for him to grasp that it cannot be like that here too.'⁹ While Croatia may have had a great diplomatic advantage over its Serb nationalist opponents because of its UN recognition, the Zagreb leadership appreciated that an expansionist programme faced many opponents abroad.

Although the Croatian state extended as much aid as it could to Herceg Bosna and the HVO, Tuđman and his followers endeavoured to hide their involvement in the Bosnian conflict. Tuđman recognised that the Croatian Army had violated international law: 'When we talk about the Bosnian Posavina, we must admit that we used the Croatian army to try to prevent the establishment of the corridor between Eastern and Western Bosnia ... We had to get involved illegally, so to say, so that our forces were in the Bosnian Posavina against the will of the Muslims.' The Croatian president appreciated the risk he took when sending

⁴ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, pp. 29-31; and 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, pp. 32-34.

⁵ 15 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P9, p. 1.

⁶ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

⁷ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, pp. 6-7.

⁸ Ibid., p. 14.

⁹ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, p. 73.

his army on such campaigns: 'If our military forces, the Croatian Army, had tried to prevent the existence of that corridor at all costs, which was impossible, our position in the international talks would have been extremely difficult and we would have been considered an aggressor in Bosnia.'¹⁰ Tuđman realised that he needed to maintain Croatia's status as a victim in the conflict.

Because the Croatian president supported the Bosnian Croat nationalist cause, he decided to disguise Croatian assistance, and censured his subordinates when they failed to do so. Recalling the criticism after the 1991 clashes in Gospić, Croatia, where Croatian forces destroyed several Serb villages and killed numerous inhabitants, Tuđman became especially wary about involving his troops in Bosnia and suggested that for political reasons Croatian Army units be withdrawn and replaced with volunteer forces.¹¹ In November 1993, Tuđman criticised his ministers for appointing HVO officials directly, reminding them that his instructions specified that soldiers active in Bosnia must be volunteers who left the Croatian Army.¹² Tuđman expressed anger at his ministers, namely Šušak, for issuing a written order appointing General Ante Roso to the command of the HVO main headquarters, 'pursuant to a command of the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of Croatia, the President of the Republic.'¹³ Tuđman recognised that if the international community had solid proof of Croatia's involvement in Bosnia, the consequences would jeopardise his government's diplomatic position.

The Croatian leadership condemned war crimes because they damaged Croatia's reputation in the sensitive and vital international arena, but not on moral grounds. After the

¹⁰ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, p. 17.

¹¹ SDC members in Belgrade had the same idea. 22 October 1993, Naletilić-P892.P11, pp. 40-42.

¹² 23 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P15, pp. 7-8.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 7-16.

massacre at Stupni Do in October 1993, Tuđman scolded the Bosnian Croat leaders because an issue of the American magazine *Newsweek* led with a story about Croat forces killing Muslims and added that the US had mentioned events in Vareš, the area where Stupni Do is located, in a UN resolution condemning ethnic cleansing.¹⁴ The Croatian president argued that ‘criminal phenomena’ ascribed to himself and Šušak needed ‘to be stamped out’ because they damaged Croatia’s reputation, which compromised ‘the future of the Croatian state.’¹⁵ Tuđman expressed his displeasure at the ‘fiasco’ caused by the destruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar on 9 November 1993: ‘they have been showing it on European television for four days ... there will be dreadful political damage inflicted on us.’¹⁶ He complained of ‘the whole world: Europe, America, and the UN’ being ‘on his back.’¹⁷ Boban offered a weak alternative to explain the destruction of the 400-year-old Ottoman structure:

Tuđman: All right, by the way, that bridge in Mostar, who destroyed it?

Boban: It was fired on so much before, and there was terrible rain, that it collapsed on its own.

Tuđman: Are we going to be accused again?¹⁸

Boban also heard criticism from Tuđman and Šušak who complained ‘murders [occurred] all over the place’ in Mostar and not a single person faced charges, which the international community used as a reason to push for international administration for Mostar.¹⁹ Atrocities committed in furtherance of the nationalist programme spurred bad press that encouraged Tuđman to change his approach.

¹⁴ 10 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P14, p. 10.

¹⁵ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, p. 41.

¹⁶ 23 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P15, pp. 7-8.

¹⁷ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, pp. 35-36.

¹⁸ 10 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P14, p. 17.

¹⁹ 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16, pp. 26-27.

Tuđman received letters and reports about HVO atrocities, some from prominent Croats, that compounded the pressure the Croatian president faced from the international community to change his approach to Bosnia. Tuđman heard a detailed and incriminating oral report on the organisation and conduct of HVO forces in the Stupni Do area.²⁰ Mate Boban defended Ivica Rajić, the commanding officer of the troops involved in the massacre, as a ‘professional soldier’ who conducted ‘our policy,’ and added that Rajić had expelled UNPROFOR and the UNHCR from the site under Boban’s authority.²¹ The Herceg Bosna president also insisted that the village was a military stronghold and that only two or three of the victims were civilians, the rest soldiers.²² Yet an unsigned letter by a Bosnian Croat leader from the Vareš area denounced the massacre in Stupni Do committed by HVO commandos under Rajić.²³ The governments of the United States and United Kingdom also sent letters condemning the incident, with the Americans calling for Tuđman to ‘use his influence among the Bosnian Croats to prevent such incidents from occurring in the future.’ Tuđman informed his circle that those responsible must be removed from their offices and tried in court because the atrocity would ‘create a very negative image of Croatia’ among the international community.²⁴ In autumn 1993, opposition figures called for Tuđman’s resignation. They pointed out the hypocrisy of supporting Herceg Bosna’s separatist ambitions while demanding the territorial integrity of Croatia and denounced the re-

²⁰ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, p. 47.

²¹ 10 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P14, pp. 8-9.

²² 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16, p. 23.

²³ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, p. 8.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 19-20.

introduction of NDH-era symbols in Croatian public life.²⁵ Tuđman's critics in Croatia linked his policies towards Bosnia with Croatia's loss of credibility abroad.

Prioritising control of territory held by Croatian Serb nationalists forced the Croatian leadership to temper its policy towards Bosnia. Tuđman insisted that he could not negotiate with Croatian Serb leaders like Milan Babić or Milan Martić who 'believed Knin could be separated from the centre of Croatia ... due to geopolitical reasons, Croatia could not recognise that at any price,' and added that their views 'poisoned and impeded' a final agreement between Serbia and Croatia.²⁶ Tuđman also appreciated that he needed to take care what arguments he presented to the world when he demanded sovereignty over the Croatian Krajina and parts of Bosnia:

You all know, and most of you were probably present at the meeting in Zagreb, where I recommended a referendum in Bosnia and Herzegovina to decide on its independence, particularly bearing in mind the unity of interests of the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The purpose was to avoid the negative impact of the discussions concerning a possible division. This could have a negative outcome because the international community or some individuals in the international community, who might say that if we want to divide Bosnia, they will have to accept the requests coming from the Serbs in Krajina, who want to separate from Croatia.²⁷

Croat leaders worried about the consequences if the Republika Srpska Krajina in Croatia and the RS in Bosnia linked together.²⁸ Tuđman realised that he could not make the argument for preserving pre-war republic borders while calling for the annexation of Herceg Bosna.

Bringing the Croatian Krajina under Zagreb's authority became the Croatian president's top wartime goal. Tuđman referred to Serbs as his 'main opponent' in the war

²⁵ Perhaps the most notable example is the 20 September 1993 'Letter of the Six' signed by Ivo Banac, Chris Cviić, Vlado Gotovac, Slavko Goldstein, Vesna Pusić, and Ozren Žunec. Tanner, *Croatia*, p. 291.

²⁶ 8 January 1992, Naletilić-P892.P3, p. 49.

²⁷ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, pp. 2-3.

²⁸ 10 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P14, p. 6; and 14 March 1994, Naletilić-P892.P25, p. 3.

and counted on ‘support from the international community’ to regain Serb-held territory in Croatia.²⁹ Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granić considered ‘liberating occupied territories and the reintegration of UN protected areas a top priority. Of course, our strength, diplomatic and other, will depend on how much international support we get or at least that they don't stop us, and the establishment of the federation [in Bosnia] is one of the key points.’³⁰ The Croatian president regarded his policy towards the Croatian Serbs and Bosnia as linked:

We are working on creating conditions to return the occupied territories in Croatia, if we can with the help of the United Nations; if not, then by force. And in Bosnia and Herzegovina [we want to] achieve a partition with a new [Bosnian] Croat republic within the framework of a [Bosnian] union, but that union would obviously be temporary.³¹

In other words, adopting a tactful – but still expansionist – Bosnia policy would form an essential part of the strategy for gaining international support against the Republika Srpska Krajina.

Tuđman seemed convinced that securing the world's support would be difficult because of his belief that Serbs had powerful support abroad, particularly from ‘England and France.’ The Croatian president repeated that Serbs had ‘old alliances with France and England’ and believed that they could count on Europe to be on their side against the Muslims. The Croatian president cited global support for Serbs as a reason why Croatia could not offer more support to the Bosnian Posavina as the VRS established its corridor.³² Tuđman claimed that it was ‘well known’ that France and England supported Serbia, and said that the only reason why America and Germany supported the Muslims was because

²⁹ 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, pp. 67-68.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 52.

³¹ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, pp. 20-21.

³² Ibid., pp. 8-10.

they wanted allies in the world that they could count on ‘for oil and finance.’³³ Serbs could carry out their aggression, according to Tuđman, because they knew about the French and English policy against creating an Islamic state in Europe.³⁴ The Croatian president maintained his interpretation about French and British policy throughout the war and worried that those states worked against Croatia.

Pressure at Home

Bosnian Croats in the Republic of Croatia who avoided their military obligations in Bosnia created tension between Tuđman and his loyal HDZ BiH leaders. Shortly after coming to power, Tuđman’s government passed a law granting citizenship status to Bosnian Croats, which many men took advantage of in order to leave Bosnia and avoid fighting in the HVO. In September 1992, Tuđman commented on the ‘delicate situation’ the Croatian state found itself in because (officially) only volunteers could travel to Bosnia and the state could not force its citizens to fight in a foreign war.³⁵ A year later, an HVO commander asked Tuđman: ‘Is it possible to mobilise Posavina men and have them go back? We know well that in Croatia everybody has been issued *domovnice*, they have identity cards, walk around Zagreb, Slavonski Brod, Požega, and do not fight.’ To which Tuđman responded, ‘We are in a delicate position with our Croatian soldiers. We are at war but we must not say we are at war; however, we are sending them there.’³⁶ General Josip Lucić further complained about the idle young men in Metković, a town in Croatia just across the border from Herzegovina:

We have to find a way to find citizens of Herceg Bosna who have dual citizenship

³³ 15 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P9, p. 2.

³⁴ 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, pp. 36-37.

³⁵ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, p. 35.

³⁶ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, pp. 10-12.

but in reality are citizens of Herceg Bosna. We have to find a way to make them fulfil their obligation just like all the other Croatian citizens are obliged to respond to the call-up when called. A large number of people are obviously shirking their obligations.³⁷

The president stated ‘all we can do is appeal to volunteers ... [If we] force them, the United Nations will immediately get to them,’ and he warned that intelligence agents monitored the state’s activities closely.³⁸ Praljak claimed that there were over 12,000 deserters in Croatia and men on the ‘lines towards the Chetniks’ are ‘terribly exhausted.’³⁹ Boban threatened, ‘If they do not return to Bosnia within 24 hours under police escort, we will send our police, arrest, bind, and take them to Herceg Bosna.’⁴⁰ Tuđman, of course, would not tolerate such a bold action, but the discussion revealed the priorities held by the Croatian president: he would not jeopardise his own state to help the HVO.

Wartime demographic changes, the results of ethnic cleansing, worked for as well as against the Croat nationalist programme. On the one hand, Dario Kordić emphasised that the HDZ must insist on the right of displaced people to return to where they came from, because the presence of many Muslims in places like Bugojno, Vareš, Stolac and Čapljina kept coming up at negotiations; ‘these must be regarded as Croatian municipalities,’ argued Kordić.⁴¹ In other words, Kordić wanted Muslims to be able to return to their homes in areas Serb authorities controlled. On the other hand, as Tuđman explained, allowing Serbs to return to Croat territories would not be desirable: ‘About this problem of returning to Posavina: of course it would suit our interests if Croats returned there. But now, speaking strictly between us, it would not suit our interests if – assuming it is true that about 30,000

³⁷ 22 October 1993, Naletilić-P892.P11, p. 29.

³⁸ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, pp. 34-35.

³⁹ 5 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P12, p. 43.

⁴⁰ 8 March 1993, Naletilić-P892.P7, p. 35.

⁴¹ 27 March 1995, Naletilić-P892.P33, p. 4.

Serbs from Croatia have settled in Posavina already – those Serbs returned to Croatia, to Zagreb, etc.’⁴² While lamenting the exodus of Croats from Bosnia, Kordić also added, ‘As for the Muslims leaving, we shall not worry too much about that.’⁴³ The Croatian leadership preferred ethnic separation and welcomed developments that created a more homogeneous territory in their favour, while hoping to reverse the influx of non-Croats into Bosnian Croat territories.

What is more, the Croats who left Bosnia posed a major problem for those others who saw their state-building project undermined by an ever-decreasing population, which in turn mounted the pressure on Tuđman to make peace. Before the war, the president of the Croat Community of the Bosnian Posavina, Iko Stanić, insisted that if Bosnia became an independent country there would be a mass emigration of Croats.⁴⁴ Tuđman stated that it ‘was quite certain’ following the recognition of an independent Croatia that Croats would continue to emigrate from Bosnia to Croatia ‘in even greater numbers.’⁴⁵ In 1994, Prlić claimed that more than 300,000 Croats – over forty per cent of the pre-war population – had fled Bosnia.⁴⁶ Kordić also lamented the ‘constant departure’ of Croats from territories controlled by the Bosnian Army.⁴⁷ And although Tuđman also viewed the departure of Croats from warring Bosnia to more stable Croatia as a problem, he recognised that he needed as many Croats as possible to have Croatian citizenship so that they could vote and ‘probably assure us [the HDZ] a majority government.’⁴⁸ Prlić agreed that, considering future elections in Bosnia, ‘it’s important to maintain Croat majorities,’ yet he worried that

⁴² 27 March 1995, Naletilić-P892.P33, p. 25.

⁴³ 24 August 1995, Naletilić-P892.P34, p. 29.

⁴⁴ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, p. 26.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 18-19.

⁴⁶ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, pp. 17-18.

⁴⁷ 27 March 1995, Naletilić-P892.P33, pp. 5 and 8.

⁴⁸ 24 August 1995, Naletilić-P892.P34, p. 40.

Muslims intended to stay in Croat-claimed territories where they had settled during the war.⁴⁹

Tuđman's council discussed what it might do to slow the outward flow of ethnic Croats from Bosnia. The Croatian president instructed Bosnian Croat representatives not to 'allow' Croats to leave after the HVO had secured areas in Central Bosnia.⁵⁰ Tuđman explained:

We should do all we can to enable Croats to return, to return to Vareš and such places so we can have a majority in Croat municipalities, so that they can survive and secure a large number of Croats in Herceg Bosna, to return to Sarajevo ...⁵¹

Yet many of those who stayed in Bosnia did so because their livelihood depended on it. Prlić claimed that 'every Croat in Bosnia is a paid Croat' who received a salary as a soldier, policeman, educator, or doctor: '100,000 people are supported by the Herceg Bosna budget, with pensions, with everything together, with everything else, there are not very many left without a salary.'⁵² Kordić also spoke of the 'disaster' of young people, especially young men, from Bugojno in Central Bosnia moving abroad; he asked his colleagues to help create 'some sort of extra document' so that 'a Croat cannot leave.'⁵³ Prlić stated that beginning in January 1995, Herceg Bosna authorities would start providing benefits for pregnant women to stimulate the birth rate.⁵⁴ As the conflict pushed thousands of Croats out of Bosnia and into Croatia, Tuđman realised that he needed a solution soon before his claim to Bosnian territories disappeared.

⁴⁹ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, pp. 5-6.

⁵⁰ 2 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P28, pp. 27-28.

⁵¹ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, p. 39.

⁵² 2 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P28, pp. 27-28.

⁵³ 24 August 1995, Naletilić-P892.P34, p. 29.

⁵⁴ 8 January 1995, Naletilić-P892.P3, pp. 6-8.

Strategic Adjustment

At the end of 1993, Tuđman shifted his strategy, ending his drive to break Bosnia during the war, and began to try to dominate Muslim-inhabited areas of Bosnia through cooperation. By reaching an agreement, Tuđman hoped he could end the war with the Muslims and orient Sarajevo towards Croatia so Muslims could ‘survive.’⁵⁵ The Croatian president emphasised that Croatia ‘has to be seen to be siding with the Muslims, but we don’t want them to have their own state.’ Tuđman’s new approach did not represent a complete abandonment of his earlier ambition to separate Croat-claimed territories from Bosnia and link them to Croatia; instead, like Milošević, he adopted a long-term approach to dividing Bosnia:

Even if we have made both public and secret agreements with the Muslims and Izetbegović, and although cooperation between the Muslims and the Croats should be maintained, they are continuing with their operations. We have to pursue this agreement with them because of strategic reasons. At the same time, we have to secure Croatia's strategic territorial interests. With Izetbegović, what I am saying to you is of course for your ears only, we have made an agreement that such friendship is to be created between the Muslim Republic and the Republic of Croatia that ... there would be a confederation with Croatia. We also have an agreement with Abdić that if dissolution occurs, or rather when the dissolution occurs, that Western Bosnia should become an integral part of Croatia.⁵⁶

By means of an unequal partnership with the Muslim-controlled portion of Bosnia, and with the threat of Abdić’s secession from that portion, the Croatian leadership aimed to bring the Bosnian Muslim leadership to its side.

Before and throughout the conflict, Tuđman expressed his appraisal of international relations, which formed part of his rationale to make peace with Muslim leaders. Before and after the war, the Croatian president stated that the world powers worried about the appearance of an Islamic state in Europe and thought that America in particular would be

⁵⁵ 19 December 1993, Martinović-P892.P20, p. 8.

⁵⁶ 22 October 1993, Naletilić-P892.P11, pp. 2-3.

pleased to have Serbia ‘policing’ the Muslims.⁵⁷ In September 1992, after Bosnian Serb forces had conducted ethnic cleansing of hundreds of thousands of non-Serbs, Tuđman claimed that America ‘permitted’ Serb nationalist policy because it countered ‘the Muslim effort to create an Islamic state in Europe.’⁵⁸ By creating an arrangement between the Croats and Muslims, the international community could tackle ‘the most complex problem in the world’ and guarantee a Europeanisation of Bosnia through a link with Croatia; in other words, ‘the Croatisation of Bosnia.’⁵⁹ The Croatian president attempted to persuade his collaborators that the international community, though not necessarily supportive of Croat ambitions, firmly rejected a supposed Bosnian Muslim state-building project with even more fervour.

By building on this reading of international relations, Tuđman sought to persuade his loyal followers that Croatia could win the international community’s favour. The Croatian president came to accept that he had to reach an agreement with the Bosnian Muslims ‘because of international factors.’⁶⁰ But by making a deal with Izetbegović, he believed it would be possible to then ‘get rid of our main opponent and regain and liberate Serb-occupied areas peacefully and with the assistance of the international community.’⁶¹ Croat-Muslim cooperation would force the Serbs to ‘take a step back... and have no choice but to accept a truce.’⁶² Tuđman admitted that he did not know what the Americans wanted in the Balkans and suspected that perhaps they wanted Croatia to ‘finish’ the Serbs.⁶³

⁵⁷ 27 December 1991, Naletilić-P892.P2, pp. 60-61; and 27 March 1995, Naletilić-P892.P33, pp. 18-20.

⁵⁸ 17 September 1992, Naletilić-P892.P5, p. 35.

⁵⁹ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, pp. 35-37.

⁶⁰ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, p. 29.

⁶¹ 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, pp. 67-68.

⁶² 15 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P9, p. 8.

⁶³ 30 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P30, pp. 2-3.

Thanks to recognition by the Vatican, the US, the EC, Germany, China, and even Turkey – who Tuđman claimed supported Croatian policies rather than Sarajevo's – the Croatian president believed he could conduct prudent policies to ensure 'the survival of Croathood and defend the interests of Croatia in Bosnia.'⁶⁴ Therefore, Tuđman's interpretation of the current international climate, coupled with the battlefield losses suffered in summer 1993 when HVO attempted to expand Croatia's borders (Chapter 7), encouraged the postponement of the Croatian expansionist project and the move towards cooperation with the Bosnian Muslims.

In November 1993, Tuđman removed Herceg Bosna president Mate Boban because he needed to convince the international community that he was a reliable partner whom they could count on to pursue peace in Bosnia. In an awkward meeting when Boban attempted to save his position, Tuđman informed the Herceg Bosna leader that both the international community and other Bosnian Croat politicians blamed him for trying to break up Bosnia.⁶⁵ Tuđman denied installing Boban, although Boban insisted that he was Tuđman's obedient servant:

Tuđman: You see, Mate, that whole hue and cry against an independent Croatia, and accordingly, against Tuđman: "Tuđman created Boban, Tuđman appointed him, Tuđman created him, and he is carrying out Tuđman's policy there. And accordingly, Tuđman is to blame for everything, carrying that out via Boban." That was the general policy. Accordingly, I said – "I did not invent Boban, Boban grew out of the resistance to Serb aggression" (Interjection: and from his people, too.) Yes, of course, from Herceg Bosna.

Boban: Although that first thing is true.

Tuđman: It is not true that I installed you.⁶⁶

Considering Tuđman's control of the HDZ apparatus, in Croatia and in Bosnia, there is no

⁶⁴ 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, p. 13.

⁶⁵ 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16, p. 8.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 16.

question that Boban held his position because Tuđman allowed him to. Later in the same meeting, Tuđman informed Boban that despite his objections, the Herceg Bosna leader would have to go:

Yes, but Mate think about this: since, in the eyes of the world, the situation has been created that you are the one who is actually the barrier to the solution of this Bosnian problem, since it is in the interest of the West, public opinion ... Perhaps we had better head in the interest of that, to bring that to an end as soon as possible, to put down these accusations. Perhaps we ought to seek some solution to remove that pressure on you and on Croatian politics.

Boban attempted to persuade Tuđman to leave him in his role: 'Down there you won't have a problem while I am alive, your policy, there won't be any problem, Croatian policy.'⁶⁷ Nevertheless he accepted the Croatian president's decision: 'whatever you decide, I remain absolutely without a single word of objection ... your decision is firm and I am ready without complaint and without any personal frustrations...'⁶⁸ After Boban's removal, Tuđman decided to replace the office of the Herceg Bosna president with a presidential council; he determined the composition of the Herceg Bosna government.⁶⁹ When cautioned by his advisor Ivić Pašalić that the Herceg Bosna constitution provided for a president and not a presidential council, Tuđman retorted, 'Don't try to pull legal tricks. We are at war and just say that the function of the President will be carried out by the Presidential Council.'⁷⁰ What is evident from the fate of Mate Boban and the presidency of Herceg Bosna is that Tuđman had unrivalled power over Herceg Bosna; moreover, the Croatian president made Boban the scapegoat for his policy in Bosnia.

Yet Croat nationalist leaders expressed strong opposition to cooperation with the Sarajevo government because they feared becoming a junior partner in a new alliance.

⁶⁷ 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16, pp. 44-46.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 29 and 31-32.

⁶⁹ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, pp. 39-44.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 46-48.

Croatian Prime Minister Nikica Valentić claimed: 'I am not in favour of an ethnically pure state but likewise, and I have said so several times and I repeat it now, I am not in favour of a state where 30 or 40 per cent of Croatia's citizens will be of another nationality.'⁷¹ Even if they had to share a state with another ethnic group, Tuđman expressed his belief that Izetbegović appreciated 'the impossibility of preserving a unified democratic Yugoslavia in which one man would have one vote and so on, and that it was untenable in those conditions, given the inter-ethnic, religious and cultural differences,' implying that such a solution would not exist in post-war Bosnia.⁷² Tuđman's subordinates worried about a 'one-man-one-vote' political system and realised that, according to Prlić, Bosnia 'is seen in the world as the state of the Bosniak people.'⁷³ Kordić also expressed his displeasure at the prospect of participating in any international negotiations under the 'lily' flag of the Republic of Bosnia as accepted by the United Nations, 'because as far as Croats are concerned, this is a symbol that has caused bloodshed.'⁷⁴ Tuđman's push for cooperation with the Muslims, therefore, came as a result of practical strategy and not a desire for cohabitation or reconciliation.

Tuđman's attitude towards the Posavina reflected his shift to pragmatism and willingness to compromise on his nationalist ambitions. Tuđman relayed intelligence that indicated that 100,000 of the 140,000 Croats who had lived in the Bosnian Posavina before the war had fled and that Serb authorities had settled 40,000 Serbs in that area.⁷⁵ Ivo Živković, a member of Herceg Bosna's new presidential council, pointed out that 'no one in Bosanska Posavina would like to see a corridor, a Serb corridor, running through it,' yet

⁷¹ 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, pp. 70-72.

⁷² 30 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P30, p. 12.

⁷³ 24 August 1995, Naletilić-P892.P34, pp. 10 and 22.

⁷⁴ 27 March 1995, Naletilić-P892.P33, p. 10.

⁷⁵ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, p. 15.

he recognised the immense pressure facing Croat negotiators: 'We are aware that the international community will exert great pressure to give the Serbs this passage through Posavina.'⁷⁶ The Croatian president appreciated that this was a 'painful question' but he argued that it 'wouldn't be in our interest' if those Serbs returned; 'Therefore, from a strategic point of view ... it would be in our interest to settle those Croats from the Bosnian Posavina in Croat areas where they could best adapt and where we need them for demographic reasons.'⁷⁷

Tuđman came around to the prospect of abandoning claims to certain territories. Tuđman reminded his followers that no nation in the world had ensured that all of its inhabitants lived in a single state and that 200,000 Croats had already fled their homes during the war, adding, 'there will probably be another 100,000 of them.' And while 'it is awful for them,' those Croats would 'firm up the Croatian territory, here from Istria to Baranja, you understand, when we finish that, and so on. So every bad thing is not just bad, but we have to make use of it.'⁷⁸ After Tuđman forced Boban to resign and the discussion turned to appointing the new president of Herceg Bosna, Tuđman insisted:

Speaking among ourselves, he has to be sensible enough a man that he will realise perhaps, in an overall solution, that however much this Bosnian Posavina means to us politically and economically, but for the sake of a solution, if we get the border Novi Travnik – Busovača – Bihać, and if we get for it a cleansed Baranja, etc, that we can give up on the major part of Posavina. He has to be the kind of man who will think in a Croatian way, so that nothing arises.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Although it is doubtful that the international community did make such a demand, it is possible that Živković feared the Serb side would win such a concession should it offer to end the war in exchange, or perhaps that his home region would be used a bargaining chip as Croat and Serb representatives argued over the fate of the Serb-held Krajina region in Croatia. 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, p. 38.

⁷⁷ 21 September 1993, Naletilić-P892.P10, p. 24.

⁷⁸ 6 November 1993, Naletilić-P892.P13, pp. 19-20.

⁷⁹ 28 November 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P16, p. 48.

Tuđman's apparent willingness to give up the Bosnian Posavina, an area with a clear Croat majority before the war and once part of the Croatian Banovina, indicated that he recognised the practical limits to his state-building project. The Croatian president knew how important the region was to the Serb side, which needed the 'corridor' to link the self-declared Serb states to Serbia proper. By proposing to settle Croats from Bosnia in Croatia, Tuđman prioritised populating areas in the Republic of Croatia with Croats over extending his claims to Bosnia.

Yet Tuđman and his followers remained committed to ethnic separation on the ground whether Bosnia as a state remained intact or not. Boban told Tuđman it would be 'absolutely unacceptable' to let the 45,000 Muslims who lived in the 'Croat half' of Mostar return, as the peace agreements demanded.⁸⁰ His deputy Mile Akmadžić agreed that it would be better to partition Mostar 'than have 25 or 30 thousand Muslims.'⁸¹ The mayor of West Mostar, Mijo Brajković, asked Tuđman for his support for two or more municipalities as a solution for the Mostar crisis, explaining that a Croat municipality would guarantee Croat identity through the church, culture, education, and other measures. 'There will be more blood in Mostar if we do not take this road,' Brajković told the president, 'forget about brotherhood and unity, about mixing quickly, nothing will come of that.'⁸² Ivan Bender, a member of the Herceg Bosna presidential council also opposed coexistence following almost three years of fighting:

I myself, and the circles I move in, think that there is down there an inclination to only see the survival of the Croats in those areas in terms of the Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna. It would be a catastrophe for us to mention to our soldiers some kind of coexistence with the Muslims without complete separation. There is the

⁸⁰ 19 December 1993, Naletilić-PP892.P20, p. 3.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 5.

⁸² 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, p. 31.

possibility of a union of three republics, in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, separation and all this that must follow – it is my personal view that ... there is no possibility which can be implemented down below – some power which will compel a Croat to live with Muslims in those areas because so much evil has been committed that there can be no survival there ...⁸³

Krešimir Zubak, whom Tuđman had named president of Herceg Bosna's presidential council, agreed, 'after so much bloodletting and everything that happened, it is very difficult to remain in a joint state with the Muslims.'⁸⁴ Tuđman himself said that during negotiations the Croat side needed to emphasise that 8,000 Croats had died and 25,000 sustained wounds 'resisting Serb and Muslim aggression;' and since twice as many died fighting Muslims, 'how could people consent to remaining in a union with Muslims?'⁸⁵ Thus, even if Bosnia as a state emerged from the war, the Croat nationalist leadership opposed a multi-ethnic society.

The Washington Agreement

Signing the Washington Agreement on 18 March 1994 marked the end of Tuđman's ambition to annex parts of Bosnia in the immediate future and the beginning of a shift in strategy aimed at securing the territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia while dominating parts of Bosnia through new institutions. Tuđman realised that he could not secure the world's backing for Croatia's sovereignty while supporting the breakaway Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna. When Zubak and Bosnian Muslim leader Haris Silajdžić penned the treaty forming the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, they finalised a truce between Croat and Muslim forces and developed a framework for the cantonal division of the territories under their control. The agreement stipulated the federal government's responsibilities; provided a structure for the government, including the executive,

⁸³ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, pp. 13-14.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁵ 13 February 1994, Naletilić-P892.P24, p. 12.

legislature, and judiciary; divided other authorities between cantonal and municipal governments; and called for a unified military command.⁸⁶ By supporting the Federation's formation, Zagreb backed up its commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia. However, at the same time the Federation came into existence, Presidents Tuđman and Izetbegović also signed a 'preliminary agreement' on the creation of a confederation between the Republic of Croatia and the newly establish Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By planning a confederation between the Republic of Croatia and the Muslim-Croat Federation, Tuđman hoped to lay the foundation for Zagreb's control over half of Bosnia.

Tuđman attempted to persuade his nationalist followers that by forging confederal ties, Croats could dominate the Federation. Tuđman presented the agreement as a 'miracle,' which enabled an 'autonomous, sovereign, and independent Croatia to administer half of Bosnia.'⁸⁷ The Croatian president emphasised that 'there can be no federation without a confederation. This was my first condition for accepting the Washington Agreement.' He told representatives from Herceg Bosna that the confederation 'gives us half of Bosnia' and that Croats could 'now be completely equal and with the confederation – just between us here – the ruling people.' Tuđman stated that, in a united Bosnia with Serbs and Muslims,

... the Croat national identity would have no chance of surviving ... But in this federation, in a confederation with Croatia, it would have not just a chance, but there would be a prospect that this part, this half of Bosnia, would become completely Europeanised, which means Croatised.⁸⁸

Bringing Muslims under the state's umbrella did not pose a problem for Tuđman: 'Today they will receive a passport, tomorrow they will have a glass of wine with you and eat meat. In ten years, they will be Croats of the Muslim persuasion, do you understand? ... At least

⁸⁶ 18 March 1994, Prlić-4D01234.

⁸⁷ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, p. 34.

⁸⁸ 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, pp. 2-4.

they will not go along with Alija 's fundamentalism.'⁸⁹ Tuđman considered the Washington Agreement a step towards the de facto two-way division of Bosnia between the Croats and the Serbs:

Everyone is aware that a separation between the Federation and the Serb part has to happen, but no international player has the courage to say, 'the border should be such and such,' because it is not only a border between the Croats and the Serbs and the Muslims, but between the East and the West ...⁹⁰

Tuđman presented the peace deal with the Muslims as a step towards the achievement of the goal to create an expanded Croatian state and not as a setback.

Yet despite Tuđman's comments intended to allay concerns held by Bosnian Croats, representatives from Herceg Bosna expressed their deep misgivings about the Washington Agreement. Herceg Bosna's intelligence chief Ivica Lučić spoke bluntly: 'I'm not happy with the Washington Agreement. As a person from Ljubuški and Herzegovina, I was in favour of another option. I'm practically for a Greater Croatia. I wanted at least the Croatian Banovina, independent, fully, without any Muslims or Serbs, and so on.' Nevertheless, Lučić recognised that the ultimate national goal would have to wait:

It's clear that that's not feasible. It's clear that this Federation is now a historical necessity, the only thing possible ... Many people, at least in Herzegovina and in these parts here, think in the way I've just described. So, they're not at all happy about it ... but most of them realise that it is a historical necessity, that practically the alternative is, metaphorically speaking, Bleiberg.⁹¹

Bishop Ratko Perić of Mostar also criticised coexistence with non-Croats:

What bothers me the most is when they say that we Croats must carry the load – if you will pardon the expression – that we must allow the Muslims to climb on our backs again so that we can take them into Europe. Is that the joint life they mean, is that joint life? We had 70 years of joint life in Yugoslavia, so we know that it was

⁸⁹ 2 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P28, p. 28.

⁹⁰ 8 January 1995, Naletilić-P892.P3, pp. 1-2.

⁹¹ Bleiberg, in Austria, was the site of a mass execution of NDH soldiers and refugees by the partisans in the aftermath of the Second World War. 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, pp. 33-35.

slavery for us Croats and mastery in large measure for others who could rule over us. We were the slaves who had to move out, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are nowadays two or three million of us all over the world.⁹²

Herceg Bosna leaders decried the effective annulment of their state institutions. The Washington Agreement made no mention of Herceg Bosna and envisaged the division of the Federation into cantons. Kordić pointed out that the Federation ‘eclipses the Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna’ and emphasised the obvious: ‘There are some contradictions and defeatism is spreading among the people to the effect that, with the Federation and especially with the founding of cantons on the basis of parity in certain areas, these institutions of the Croatian Republic of Herceg Bosna will be lost.’⁹³ Prlić highlighted the strong emotional ties Croats had with Herceg Bosna, whereas ‘most Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not feel emotional towards [the Federation]... [We] do not feel it is our state.’⁹⁴ Kordić also added that while he had no doubts about the Croatian government’s eagerness to pursue a confederal arrangement with the Federation, ‘we doubt whether this is the position of the Muslim leadership because we consider that this signed provisional agreement on confederate relations is not a sufficient guarantee for the Croat people in Bosnia and Herzegovina.’⁹⁵ The Herceg Bosna leadership interpreted the agreement as representing the end of their aspiration to join Croatia.

Rebutting criticism that the Washington Agreement represented an unacceptable compromise on the HDZ’s nationalist principles, Tudman attempted to persuade his followers that the proposed federation-confederation arrangement actually represented a more genuine nationalist solution. Tudman argued that the Washington Agreement served

⁹² 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, pp. 25-26.

⁹³ 27 March 1995, Naletilić-P892.P33, pp. 2-3.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 14.

⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

as the best option while stressing that the alternative, the outright annexation of Herceg Bosna, would not fulfil long-term nation-building goals: 'The optimum solution would be if the Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna included what we wanted and what we defended at all costs, the Lašva Valley, and if we annexed it to Croatia. But in that case, half of the Croat national body politic would remain outside Croatia and such a large territory wouldn't be bound to Croatia.'⁹⁶ Therefore, because the Washington Agreement would bring more Croats under the state's auspices, 'objectively speaking, it is the most favourable solution in the further historical circumstances and therefore we cannot allow this solution to be compromised in our ranks in the name of some narrow view of the Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna.'⁹⁷ In other words, Tuđman tried to persuade his followers that the Washington Agreement was the real nationalist option because it would tie more Bosnian Croats to Croatia than would the annexation of Herceg Bosna.

The Washington Agreement and other concessions represented the Croatian president's attempts to win over the international community. Tuđman signalled the revision of his policy towards Herceg Bosna by removing Mate Boban, in order to appease the international community:

As you know, in order to protect Croatian national and state interests, and adjust our policies to the Western democratic world and the Vatican, we carried out some changes in the political leadership in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Furthermore, Tuđman demanded that atrocities halt so that world opinion would never again turn against Croatia:

I think that all of us here can agree that the Croats in Herceg Bosna and in the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina have accepted our policies, but some individuals have resisted them. Such resistance and behaviour jeopardise the implementation of

⁹⁶ Croat nationalists from Central Bosnia, namely Vareš, made this argument in autumn 1993, but Herceg Bosna authorities favoured abandoning those areas.

⁹⁷ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, pp. 38-39.

the Washington Agreement on the federation and confederation, and the implementation of the agreement on administering Mostar by the European Union. In this respect, I would ask that we clearly decide not to allow any wilful violation of human rights, any policies contrary to the Croatian policies in general, or policies that might discredit Croathood in general and Croatian state policies in particular through individual criminal actions.⁹⁸

Tudman explained that through its policies, Croatia had ‘won the trust of the leading international factors precisely on the issue of Bosnia,’ adding ‘the world also needs this kind of Croatia; America needs this kind of Croatia.’⁹⁹ The Croatian leadership expected that changing course in Bosnia sent a message to the world that Croatia pursued reasonable, peaceful policies.

Croatia needed friends abroad, according to Tudman, because abandoning the plan to split Bosnia would help the state establish its control over Serb-claimed territory in Croatia. The Croatian president accused his political opponents of attempting to discredit his government because of its ‘mistaken policy towards Bosnia because we didn't advocate an integral Bosnia and because we allegedly accepted the Washington Agreement in bad faith and that in fact we were against the implementation of the Washington Agreement.’ On the contrary, ‘precisely because of the correctness of our overall policy towards Bosnia we won friends and allies, including the leading world power, the United States of America on the one end of the world, and China, a world power on the other end of the world, and friendship with those European Union countries which are inclined to Croatia, such as Germany and some others.’¹⁰⁰ The Washington Agreement, and in particular the compromise on annexing Herceg Bosna, earned Croatia more allies around the world.¹⁰¹ The purpose of a formal commitment to the territorial integrity of Bosnia through the

⁹⁸ 12 September 1994, Naletilić-P892.P29, pp. 1-5.

⁹⁹ 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, p. 34.

¹⁰⁰ 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, pp. 61-62.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

Washington Agreement was to strengthen global support for Croatia's sovereignty, which remained in jeopardy in 1994:

Gentlemen, the correctness of our policy in Bosnia to the effect that it could be accepted by leading international factors was of crucial importance for strengthening internationally the autonomous and independent state of Croatia. Please understand this.¹⁰²

By committing to an integral Bosnia, Tuđman hoped to get the political support he needed to reclaim territories claimed by Croatian Serbs.

Tuđman accepted the agreement because he realised he needed to ensure that Croatia did not appear as an aggressor in the conflict, as he believed the Serb side did. 'If Croats hadn't accepted the federation proposal,' the Croatian president explained, 'we would have been labelled aggressors just like Serbia.'¹⁰³ HDZ BiH representative Mariofil Ljubić explained the importance of participating in Bosnian institutions:

The Assembly of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina represents the internationally recognised Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I think that our strength also partly lies in it. We need to work in it and make decisions through it because it gives us legitimacy in international relations, so that now that we're organising the Federation we can emerge much stronger as an internationally recognised factor as opposed to the Serb side who are still considered rebels.¹⁰⁴

By making peace with the Muslims, the Croat leadership believed it could allay criticisms that its forces also sought to divide Bosnia and thereby benefit from international support. Indeed, less than a week after signing the Washington Agreement, Croatia received a transfer of US \$125 million from the International Monetary Fund.¹⁰⁵ From the perspective of the international community, Tuđman anticipated, the Serb side would remain the sole aggressor in the conflict and thus the only obstacle to peace.

¹⁰² 31 May 1994, Naletilić-P892.P26, pp. 32-33.

¹⁰³ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, pp. 20-21.

¹⁰⁴ 11 June 1994, Naletilić-P892.P27, p. 17.

¹⁰⁵ Kolumbina Benčević, 'Bosnia Accord Paves Way for IMF Help to Croatia,' *Reuters* (20 March 1994).

The Path to Dayton

Abandoning the plan to expand Croatia's borders in order to secure the Croatian government's control over its territory succeeded. The key to reclaiming territories held by Croatian Serb authorities lay in Bosnia. By setting aside their bloody feud, the HVO and the ABiH began to cooperate against their common enemy, the VRS. On 14 September 1994, Tuđman and Izetbegović reached a key agreement by establishing a joint ABiH-HVO military command. In the coming year, several military actions would bring the conflicts in both Croatia and Bosnia to an end. The beginning of the end for the Bosnian Serb regime came in late November 1994, when the HV and HVO pushed back the front against the VRS 2nd Krajina Corps in the Livno Valley. A follow-up operation, 'Jump 2,' in early June 1995, resulted in the HV-HVO capturing the route to Bosansko Grahovo in the Livno Valley; controlling Bosansko Grahovo would leave the Croatian Serb stronghold of Knin exposed to attack from inland. In July 1995, Serb-held territories began to crumble. An attack by the Croatian Serb army and troops loyal to Fikret Abdić on the ABiH in Bihać on 19 July prompted Izetbegović and Tuđman to sign the 'Split Agreement' three days later, which permitted the Croatian Army to provide full assistance to the ABiH on Bosnian soil. A week later, the HV and HVO launched Operation 'Summer' and seized Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoč. On 4 August, the HV launched Operation 'Storm' and defeated Croatian Serb forces in just four days, destroying the Republika Srpska Krajina, as 150,000-200,000 Serbs fled Croatia.¹⁰⁶ With control of almost all of Croatia secured, the

¹⁰⁶ A UN Security Council report from 23 August 1995 estimated about 150,000 ethnic Serbs fled Croatia during the first weeks of the month; however, subsequent estimates by the UN as well as other international organisations reached 200,000. Elisabeth Rehn, the Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights in former Yugoslavia between 27 September 1995 and early 1998, testified that 180,000 likely represented the most accurate estimate of Serb refugees from

HV launched joint operations with the HVO and ABiH against Serb forces in September 1995, achieving successive victories against the VRS. A behind-the-scenes intervention by American diplomats halted the HV-HVO-ABiH advance towards Banja Luka. Appendix J illustrates the final battle lines. A ceasefire took effect on 12 October and negotiations for a final peace agreement accelerated.

Tuđman considered the Dayton Peace Agreement as building on the Washington Agreement. The peace agreement kept Bosnia united but introduced an internal division between two ‘entities:’ the Federation and Republika Srpska, as evident from Appendix K.¹⁰⁷ The Croatian president asserted that by keeping Bosnia together and by connecting Muslims and Croats in the Federation, they would prevent the formation of an Islamic state. Tuđman explained why the goal formed such a high priority for the international community: ‘The West ... didn’t want a Muslim state because it would become a base for Iran and terrorism, fundamentalism in Europe;’ therefore, the West needed Croats to keep that threat under control, ‘they consequently knew that they should give their support to allow that half of Bosnia to become a constituent part, one way or another, of both Croatia and the West.’¹⁰⁸ Over time, thanks to its links with Croatia, half of Bosnia would become ‘pro-Croatia, regardless of what that Muslim political leadership thinks ... the Federation has been brought into the situation where it is linked to Croatia, via Croatia to the West.’¹⁰⁹

Croatia. Prosecutor v. Ante Gotovina et al. Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-06-90-T, 15 April 2011. Accessed 6 August 2015 at:

http://www.icty.org/x/cases/gotovina/tjug/en/110415_judgement_vol2.pdf>, p. 903

¹⁰⁷ The contentious ‘corridor’ centring on the town of Brčko was settled by arbitration in 1997 when local and international negotiators agreed to establish the town as a ‘district’ outside the administrative authority of both the Federation and the Republika Srpska.

¹⁰⁸ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, p. 23.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

In this sense, Tuđman presented himself and in particular Croat leaders from Bosnia as those fulfilling ‘Western’ objectives in the Balkans by signing the Dayton Peace Agreement.

Tuđman considered his side victorious in the war. He reminded the Bosnian Croats of the extent of their victory:

Gentlemen: we’ve succeeded. We’ve succeeded in getting not just Herceg Bosna; what we had we’ve got – We can say this among ourselves – half of Bosnia, if we’re good at governing it; if we govern cleverly ... as I said, half of Bosnia will be pushed in a pro-Croatian way, as it was before.¹¹⁰

Moreover, Tuđman believed that international media had reached a consensus that Croatia had emerged from the conflict victorious:

So the situation we were in and the one we ended up in was such that the conclusion stands, that through this Dayton agreement – and all serious analysts, international, military and political analysts will tell you this, and the media are saying so too – that through this agreement and from this war, only Croatia has emerged as a great victor. The BBC and all of them, absolutely all of them – that’s the general objective evaluation in the world.¹¹¹

Victory in the war had come despite significant difficulties. For example, even at the end of the war, Tuđman insisted that ‘no one had wanted’ the Croatian state and that international negotiators had tried to preserve Yugoslavia. Now, ‘Croatia has become a major regional power that the great European powers and world have to reckon with,’ he exulted.¹¹²

Despite their evident disappointment and the looming dissolution of their self-proclaimed authorities, Tuđman thanked Herceg Bosna leaders for their contribution to the Croatian state’s cause. Tuđman told his loyal followers from Herzegovina:

... be proud that you’re from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Herceg Bosna, that you made a great contribution to the construction of the Croatian state, the defence of the Croatian state and the creation of Herceg Bosna, and, therefore, the Federation too, for without these successes it wouldn’t exist, you see, there wouldn’t have been

¹¹⁰ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, pp. 28-29.

¹¹¹ Ibid., pp. 21-22.

¹¹² Ibid., pp. 18-19.

any sign of that peace initiative of the United States and the peace conference, it wouldn't have been possible.¹¹³

Tuđman praised his loyal Bosnian Croat followers for claiming new territories: 'The Croat people also received territories that they didn't have, so Grahovo, not just Kupres, but Grahovo, Glamoč, Drvar, and Jajce, territories, then, that are of strategic interest for the Croatian state.'¹¹⁴ Anticipating that Croatia would come to dominate the Federation, Tuđman thanked his followers in Bosnia for expanding his state's sphere of influence.

Did Dayton mark the end of Croatia's expansionist ambitions? Prlić observed that 'politically, it's a question of whether the overall process will move and in what direction: in the direction of preserving Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single state, or towards some other possible settlements, only time will tell ...'¹¹⁵ Tuđman told his followers that they should treat Dayton as a final solution – implying it ended the prospect of a territorial merger or even an outright confederation between Croatia and parts of Bosnia – but he also assured them that 'should unfavourable circumstances arise, the Croatian state is behind you.'¹¹⁶ Indeed, the Croatian president's comments after Dayton suggest that he kept an eye on the future. For example, Tuđman emphasised the importance of organising cantons in Bosnia to the advantage of Croats in Bosnia and the Croatian state, 'so that if things are not right, you've got a Croatian army and you've got these cantons that can issue a decision that they're a constituent part of Croatia, if you will, I'm speaking openly.' While insisting that he supported the Federation and Bosnia as stipulated by Dayton, 'if circumstances were to turn out differently, then we have to create an organisation that would secure what we

¹¹³ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, pp. 28-29.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., pp. 2-4.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 27-28.

have achieved.’¹¹⁷ He also assured the Bosnian Croats that the Croatian state would support them if the situation changed in the future: ‘Don’t forget for a second that if it came to some situation, an unfavourable turn of events for Croatia, that we’ve got an army and we’ve got a canton arrangement that can be depended on and can issue decisions in the Croatian interest.’¹¹⁸ Although he did not predict the eventual collapse of Bosnia in November 1995, Tuđman promised to maintain Croatia’s interest in Bosnia.

Tuđman insisted that his efforts to appeal to the international community had succeeded. In a satisfied tone he announced: ‘For the first time, Clinton himself said there was aggression against Croatia. This is the first time that a Western official [said that].’ The Croatian president wondered if this would mean that Croatia could count on buying weapons at a discounted price. Tuđman admitted that the Americans had assisted him beforehand: ‘Let me remind you, we were under an embargo, while the CIA practically cooperated with our service, even going so far as to give us some technical material which they did not give others.’¹¹⁹ Several years after the war, one of Tuđman’s generals, Ante Gotovina, relayed to the president that ‘The Americans and others know well that our operations were carried out by the book and that the laws of war were observed.’¹²⁰ Although there is no explicit mention of foreign involvement or assistance during the operations in summer and autumn 1995 that led to the defeat of Serb forces, the transcripts suggest that US authorities knew about the operations in detail.

Conclusion

The Washington Agreement led to the dismantling of Herceg Bosna and the Dayton Peace

¹¹⁷ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, p. 23.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 26-27.

¹¹⁹ 13 April 1999, Naletilić-P892.P36, pp. 5-6.

¹²⁰ Ibid., pp. 28-29.

Agreement ended the prospect of a confederation between the Republic of Croatia and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As a signatory of both agreements, it would appear that Tuđman abandoned his nationalist goals. Yet the reality is that through his ardent support of Bosnian Croat nationalist politics and the HVO, Tuđman helped make possible the radical demographic changes that redefined the parts of Bosnia where his troops operated. Ethnic cleansing and other atrocities perpetrated by HVO troops as they secured Herceg Bosna's control over disputed territories left a lasting mark on communities in Central Bosnia.

Tuđman pursued the division of Bosnia until the HVO suffered serious losses against the ABiH, effectively losing the war for Central Bosnia, and it became apparent that he needed international assistance to extend Zagreb's control over the Republika Srpska Krajina. Following these developments and realisations, he needed to recognise the pre-war republic borders and renounce his claims on Croat territories in Bosnia. Reflecting at the end of 1995 on the last few years of war in Croatia and Bosnia, Tuđman identified the trade-off that he had faced and the decision he had made:

But you know, sometimes, for a man to survive, he has to allow not just his finger, but maybe his whole arm, or a leg, to be cut off, in order to survive. Well you know, this is for the Croat people, this that we've achieved ... while they [Croatian Serb rebels] were in Knin it was clear that the future of the Croatian state was not assured.¹²¹

Tuđman changed course in Bosnia in response to various pressures, but most of all to gain international support against the Croatian Serbs. Although the attempt to dominate half of Bosnia through a confederation failed, he did manage to emerge from the war with many of his nationalist ambitions accomplished. Croatia gained its independence, destroyed the

¹²¹ 24 November 1995, Naletilić-P892.P35, p. 30.

Croatian Serb state, and created a more homogeneous Republic of Croatia following the exodus of Croatian Serbs in summer 1995. These outcomes came as a result of departing from the plan to annex parts of Bosnia to Croatia.

Chapter 9: Karadžić Stays the Course, January 1994 - December 1995

We need time for a political solution and final separation. In the end, the best solution for Sarajevo is [for its Serbs] to move out and for us to find areas where we can accommodate people ... that solution will not lead us to the creation of a union but to division, because that is our first strategic goal. – Momčilo Krajišnik, RS Assembly, 17 December 1995¹

While the Zagreb leadership concluded that the goals it had set in 1991-92 would not come to fruition, the Bosnian Serb elite led by Karadžić refused to budge from the six strategic objectives. By the beginning of 1994, the VRS remained in control of much of Bosnia: the siege of Sarajevo continued despite intermittent ceasefires; the Žepa, Srebrenica, and Goražde enclaves held out against their assailants; and Bosnian Serb forces maintained their precarious hold on the narrow Posavina corridor. Little had changed on the ground since 1992. Moreover, the RS leadership faced the same problem that it had struggled with since the beginning of the war: how could it achieve international recognition for the RS?

The Karadžić regime's stubborn unwillingness to compromise on its goals prolonged the war and thereby allowed its opponents to form an alliance that eventually led to the VRS's defeat. Steadfast devotion to achieving the six strategic objectives prevented the Bosnian Serb leadership from accepting the two most serious peace plans prior to Dayton, the Vance Owen Plan (discussed January – May 1993) and the Contact Group Plan (discussed February – October 1994).² Both proposals had the backing of the SRJ, which

¹ 17 December 1995, Karadžić-P01418, p. 107.

² The Bosnian Muslim leadership rejected the pre-war Carrington-Cutileiro Plan, also known as the Lisbon Talks (discussed February – March 1992) and the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan, also known as the Invincible Plan (discussed July 1993). Both proposals outlined the division of Bosnia into three ethnic mini-states. For more on the peace plans and negotiations see *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 219-220, 276-290, 303-308, and 335-344; D. Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (London, 1996); J. Glaurdić, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (New Haven, 2011); V. Petrović, 'Relations Within Serbian Political Elites And The Collapse Of Vance-Owen Peace Plan For Bosnia

expected the UN to lift its sanctions against Belgrade should the warring Bosnians accept peace. And yet, despite the enormous pressure placed on it by both Belgrade and the international community, the Bosnian Serb leadership refused to accept peace conditions that would deny it a contiguous state, sever the Posavina corridor, and require RS authorities to hand over conquered territory to Bosnian Muslims and Croats. What is more, all the peace plans envisaged recognition of Bosnian sovereignty by the Bosnian Serbs, a condition Karadžić's followers refused to accept.

Unlike Herceg Bosna leaders, whom Tuđman forced to adapt, the Bosnian Serb leadership acted without bowing to Belgrade and refused to adjust its strategy. The evidence reveals that in 1994-95, RS assembly members clung to the same goals that they had espoused in 1991-92. During the last year of the war, RS officials rationalised ethnic cleansing and territorial conquest. Perhaps most importantly, atrocities in Sarajevo and the enclaves in summer 1995 that precipitated the defeat of the VRS occurred because of the Bosnian Serb leadership's steadfast commitment to the six strategic objectives. Rather than tempering its measures, the leadership escalated its use of violence to achieve the 12 May 1992 objectives. And even after the imposition of the Dayton Peace Agreement on an evidently dissatisfied assembly, its members reaffirmed their commitment to their wartime goals.

Removing Outsiders

More than two years after the 12 May 1992 assembly session, RS assembly members reminded each other about the purpose of the war: separation from Bosnia's other

And Herzegovina,' *Istorija 20. Veka*, 1/1 (2012), pp. 9-23; E. Mehanović, 'Cutileiro's Peace Plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina,' *Pregled: časopis za društvena pitanja*, 1 (2013), pp. 71-83; and D. Owen (ed.), *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Vance/Owen Peace Plan* (Liverpool, 2013).

two ethnic communities. Krajišnik reiterated this point when the assembly discussed the Contact Group Plan:

I am asking you, please, to support this, and that is, to create a state rather than some kind of union in which we would again have connections with Muslims and Croats and we would not be joined to Serbia and Montenegro.³

And he did so again shortly before the VRS's final push against the resilient Muslim enclaves in the Drina River Valley:

I'd like to say that this National Assembly notes that it has not changed its basic policy and goals. We want freedom and a state for the Serb people and complete separation for all time from Muslims and Croats.⁴

The supposed struggle for survival took a decisive tone in the assembly. Two and a half years into the war, in November 1994, SDS delegate Dragomir Kerović exclaimed:

Be certain – and God help us I hope I am wrong – if some day we are forced to definitively settle scores with the Muslims, it will be once and for all. We should not be afraid; there will be empty areas and it will be the same with Kupres now after the Croats have taken it. The Serbs did not stay in their embrace. If we take any Turk town in the future, like Sarajevo or Tuzla, the Muslims will not stay in the Serb embrace and areas will be created which will be ethnically clean.⁵

Kerović emphasised that any level of coexistence was impossible, but what is more striking is that his statement suggests the worst was yet to come. Even after the thorough ethnic cleansing perpetrated in spring and summer 1992, the delegates appreciated that they had not completed their task, because some areas – namely the Goražde, Srebrenica, and Žepa enclaves along the Drina River – remained outside the control of RS authorities.

Before the conflict, SDS members had denied criticisms from non-Serb and moderate parties that they set out to create 'Greater Serbia,' but as the war progressed some acknowledged the reality and adopted the term. In July 1994, as pressure mounted for the Serb side to accept the Contact Group Plan, SDS delegate Milenko Vojinović openly

³ 18-19 July 1994, Karadžić-P01394, p. 42.

⁴ 15 June 1995, Karadžić-P01410, p. 374.

⁵ 9-11 and 23 November 1994, Karadžić-P01402-P01403, p. 5.

recognised that ‘the world does not allow for a Greater Serbia. But it is a Greater Serbia because Serbia will get territories in Bosnia and Croatia, and it does not want to grant [to the other warring sides] territories where there is no Serb population [sic].’⁶ Karadžić added in November that the chance to create ‘Greater Serbia’ had not been squandered; instead, ‘the tug-of-war with the international community continues and every day we pull it a millimetre to our side.’⁷ As the war dragged on, RS leaders refused to make concessions to international moderators, confident of their ability to create an expanded Serb state because of the new realities they had created on the ground.

RS assembly delegates admitted Serb authorities had conducted ethnic cleansing in the process of pursuing their goal. In response to a complaint by another delegate that some non-Serbs maintained large apartments in Serb-held territory, Banja Luka SDS deputy Srđo Srdić announced: ‘They should have cleansed their municipalities, as we had done, and they would not have had any problems.’⁸ Jovan Spremo admitted that ‘many of our men’ – presumably Serb soldiers – ‘were arrogant and irresponsible, drank a couple of glasses of brandy and said, “let me throw one” and then sowed chaos by throwing hand grenades on civilians. Gentlemen, we never wanted to admit that those were our grenades.’⁹ Another delegate confessed that ethnic cleansing conducted at the beginning of the war could no longer take place on the same scale: ‘We succeeded in carrying out the homogeneous relocation of refugees at the beginning of the war. I think that we should be more flexible in reference to this issue because it is going to be increasingly difficult to relocate complete

⁶ 18-19 July 1994, Karadžić-P01394, p. 33

⁷ 30 December 1994, Karadžić-P01405, p. 154.

⁸ 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 161.

⁹ 15-16 October 1995, Karadžić-P01415, p. 38; and Mann, *Dark Side of Democracy*, pp. 242, 266, and 271.

villages in the forthcoming period.’¹⁰ But by the time the assembly heard those words, the cleansing of large parts of Bosnia under RS control had already taken place.

In general, the Serb assembly avoided open discussion about the destruction of cultural and religious sites; however, when a deviation from the law of silence occurred, speakers framed such actions as detrimental to the war effort. Speaking candidly in a closed session, SDS deputy from Laktaši Zlatko Kelečević pointed out that military actions against civilians and civilian structures did not help the Serb cause. He noted that the news that Croatian Serb forces had shelled Zagreb, a major event that featured indiscriminate shelling of civilian targets and seven casualties, ‘raised the hairs on his head’ because ‘Tuđman was given the justification to do what he wanted because we shelled civilians, destroyed churches and so on ... my God.’ Kelečević appreciated the damage targeting religious structures had inflicted on the Serb cause:

Next: the destruction of churches. Gentlemen, I would publicly disassociate myself from this, and I will request that the assembly disassociates itself from the destruction of churches despite the fact that they destroyed many of our churches. This is not the Serb way of thinking. Serbs have never been vandals. Serbs have never waged wars against buildings and churches. Gentlemen: a church is not just a Croat church; it is a church that belongs to the whole Catholic world. Let us not hurt the whole Catholic world unnecessarily. Never mind an act of vandalism, a mosque was destroyed and St John’s was destroyed in the war zone, and the world didn’t lift a finger. But here in Banja Luka, this is not a war zone, gentlemen. No war is being waged here, yet civilian buildings are being destroyed, not to mention that civilians are being killed, which certainly is not good.¹¹

Kelečević continued to list other mistakes the Serb side had made since violence engulfed former Yugoslavia including shelling cities like Dubrovnik and ‘robbing’ UN convoys. He ended with an appeal for a public relations media strategy to improve the RS’s image. Following the unusually frank speech, Krajišnik commented: ‘I think that ... Mr. Kelečević said what almost every participant here thinks, and I would like to thank him, even though

¹⁰ 24-25 March 1994, Karadžić-P01388, p. 267.

¹¹ 23-24 May 1995, Karadžić-P01425, pp. 17-22.

the truth is hard to bear sometimes.’¹² Statements like Kelečević’s indicated the heightened ideological tone of the debate within the assembly: a delegate needed to frame his criticism not in the form of a moral or legal argument, but as a nationalist declaration.

The RS president knew how to play down atrocities committed by Serb forces during negotiations. Karadžić mastered the invocation of the oft repeated but misleading maxim ‘all sides committed crimes.’ Karadžić knew he distorted the situation when he said: ‘They will challenge us because of ethnic cleansing, this and that; but we will say – Serbs have also been ethnically cleansed.’¹³ Although his army consolidated its control more quickly than rival forces, Karadžić constantly invoked a self-defence argument:

We were defending our territories in this war; we placed some lines as soon as the war started and sheltered the majority of our population that we managed to pull out from the Muslim and Croat territories behind these lines. During all that time we were willing to talk, we took part in the talks, we were very cooperative and the most cooperative when it came to the humanitarian issues – convoys – and we had the most disciplined army and police and we never took revenge. We performed only justified and purpose-serving military operations and went as far as the borders of our ethnic area. As for crossing the border of neighbouring areas, we used to do that rarely and for tactical defence purposes only.¹⁴

Moreover, the RS president emphasised that no authority outside his government could violate its sovereignty by prosecuting Serbs. Yet Karadžić made sure to distinguish the members of Bosnian Serb forces from criminals:

During this war, we have never depended on criminals. Our commanders are respectable officers and if they are not officers then they are one of us, our people. And when that is realised, it is clear that our army never committed any crimes; that is, the army never committed any crime and only an individual could have done that. But I doubt if someone from our army could do so; only an individual who is not in the army could have committed a crime.¹⁵

This confused delivery asserts that by definition one of ‘our people’ could not commit a crime, but even if someone did commit a crime, the criminal is ‘an individual,’ and thus it

¹² 23-24 May 1995, Karadžić-P01425, p. 27.

¹³ 18-19 July 1994, Karadžić-P01394, p 195.

¹⁴ 17 January 1994, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 189-191.

¹⁵ 2 April 1993, Karadžić-P01367, pp. 110-111.

seems outside the collective. This approach helps explain the hostility the RS regime expressed towards international mediators, UN peacekeepers, foreign journalists, and others who accused Serb forces of committing atrocities.

The Bosnian Serb leadership built on the pre-war narrative of historical suffering by labelling its state a casualty of a coordinated global assault, which in turn bred xenophobia. Karadžić told his colleagues in July 1992 that even though the ‘Great Powers’ had turned against his regime, ‘these forces shall nevertheless adjust to the power of the Serb people, their aspiration to live in their own state – that is, an alliance of states – or however else we want to live.’¹⁶ Fears of an international conspiracy increased throughout the war. Speaking about the embargo imposed on the RS’s partner, the SRJ, Karadžić claimed:

Items are being slipped to Serbia through the blockade and this is not done without America’s knowledge. What we are getting from Greece is not done without America’s knowledge. They are making us drink through a straw; [forcing us to] breathe through a straw because they need this crisis, this war, to go on. Clinton wants to destroy Europe, he wants to install NATO in our lands ... we are a blade of grass in the storm.¹⁷

Even the Russian Federation’s representatives in the Balkans, whom RS leaders had counted on as their traditional Orthodox and Slav allies, fell under suspicion: ‘...we should have treated Churkin differently... Churkin and Kozyrev are America’s men. They are not Russia’s and this will become obvious soon.’¹⁸ Karadžić further believed that Western European powers wanted to keep the Serbs and Croats in a unitary Bosnia so that they could prevent the existence of an Islamic state in Europe. The RS president added: ‘Although nobody in Europe will say it openly, this conflict was roused in order to

¹⁶ 24-26 July 1992, Karadžić-D00092, p. 18.

¹⁷ 23-24 May 1995, Karadžić-P01425, pp. 58-59.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 56-57.

eliminate the Muslims.¹⁹ As the war went on and the number of states sympathetic to the Bosnian Serb cause dwindled, the regime bolstered its sense of self-pity and martyrdom.

The Bosnian Serb leadership determined on May 1992 that the aim of the war was to redefine Bosnia permanently. Delegates, therefore, agreed that they needed to maintain the wartime demographic makeup of Serb-claimed territory after the conflict. Brđanin became angry during a discussion of the Vance Owen Plan, which would have allowed non-Serb refugees to return to their homes:

First of all, gentlemen, you cannot fool me that you believe in the greatest wonder of the world: that Brđanin could participate in the process of return of Croats and Muslims. I openly say from this floor that half of our towns would belong to the Muslims now if it were not for such fools like Brđanin and similar people ... I really got angry just now because of a few things, because you mentioned Muslims and Croats.²⁰

In Karadžić's words, 'we have created new realities.'²¹ This comment by the Bosnian Serb nationalist leader is perhaps his most direct expression of the mission his movement aimed to achieve: a comprehensive and permanent destruction of multi-ethnic Bosnia and the foundation of new political, military, economic, and cultural institutions.

Because Muslims no longer lived in certain areas, so the leadership's reasoning went, those territories belonged to the RS. For example, as Karadžić explained, 'Zvornik used to be 60:40 to the advantage of Muslims, but then Serbs from Zenica came, they occupied Kozluk [a neighbouring village], and the Muslims left for Europe and I don't know where else.' Turning his attention to the on-going discussions with European negotiators, Karadžić added:

And then those gentlemen asked us – who gives you the right to ask for Zvornik? We said that all of Bosnia was Serb land. That is history, but that's not what we're

¹⁹ 24-26 July 1992, Karadžić-D00092, p. 87.

²⁰ Note that Brđanin refers to himself in the third person. 31 May 1994 – 1 June 1994, Karadžić-P01392, pp. 46-47.

²¹ 9-11 and 23 November 1994, Karadžić-P01403-P01402, p. 30.

interested in now ... This war has created a new reality; there are now Serbs from Zenica in Zvornik. If you want to give Zvornik to the Muslims then you have to wage a new war in order to expel those Serbs back to Zenica.

Karadžić concluded his analysis with an appeal to the principle that the new forcibly created reality should hold in the future: 'We demand Zvornik according to this right. We use the same right to ask for our state.'²² In other words, according to Karadžić's reasoning, the RS deserved recognition because it reflected the demographic distribution achieved since the war broke out in spring 1992. The ethnic division realised since the beginning of the war needed to last and not be reversed by a peace agreement.

The reason why Karadžić rejected peace overtures was because of his inability to accept that in exchange for the recognition of some areas he claimed for his state, he would need to give up others. Karadžić never truly accepted this reality himself, which is why he failed to convince others in his regime when he raised the possibility. Bosnian Serb leaders found the prospect of ceding territories too painful, and that is why the war continued after summer 1992 when the Bosnian Serb army controlled most of Bosnia. Before the war, Karadžić considered the possibility of a Serb-Croat population exchange 'unrealistic.'²³ In July 1992, once the army had secured much of the territory Karadžić's regime claimed, the RS president raised the possibility of returning some territories:

... Our people are fully in favour of fighting, that is, peace [sic], because we do not have any further reason to fight. We have liberated almost everything that is ours, and in the final negotiations we might even return some territories and villages that do not belong to us. This is an issue that cannot be easily determined, but in essence, we are able to say that we have our own state, we have our soldiers on our borders, and our people are fully determined to live in this state.²⁴

However, returning territories could only come after the Serb state received recognition and confirmed its right to independence or union with Serbia. In a July 1992 speech, as global

²² 9-11 and 23 November 1994, Karadžić-P01403-P01402, p. 30.

²³ 28 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 214-215.

²⁴ 24-26 July, Karadžić-D00092, pp. 18-19.

media spread images of Serb atrocities and the shelling of Sarajevo, the RS president explained: 'Today we control all of our territories, and perhaps also some territories that will be given to other national communities once a deal is reached. Such territories cannot be handed over during the war out of security reasons; they may be handed over only after the international community guarantees peace and borders.'²⁵ Yet this idea remained unpopular among Serb nationalists in the first year of the war.

Two years later, Karadžić renewed his appeal to use conquered territories as bargaining chips in peace negotiations. In January 1994, Karadžić deployed nationalist rhetoric and invoked the glory of the medieval Serb kingdom to argue in favour of returning some land: 'We can consider ourselves the winners after occupying this land, since the land is now 100 per cent Serb. Therefore, even if we go down to around 50 per cent [of Bosnian territory], we should be more than happy and satisfied; it is Dušan's empire. If we are not happy because of [giving up] a stream or even because of a settlement, we will risk losing it all.'²⁶ He even suggested that the fact Serb forces encircled Sarajevo could be used as leverage to gain more territory in the Drina River Valley and thus achieve the six strategic objectives: 'We have to maintain the character of the kind of Berlin corridor in order to definitely divide Sarajevo and for our territories to become compact. Then we will [grant] them one square metre of the hill between Vogošća and Vis, and we will take away from them one square kilometre on the Drina.'²⁷ The Bosnian Serb leader appealed to the strategic objectives in an attempt to persuade his fellow delegates to consider turning over some territory:

²⁵ 24-26 July, Karadžić-D00092, pp. 13-14.

²⁶ 10 January 1994, Karadžić-P01385, pp. 110-111.

²⁷ 10-11 May 1994, Karadžić-P01390, p. 64.

Believe me, we are the winners so far comparing to what we could have got. We have achieved separation; the first strategic goal was separation, not occupation of 60 per cent of [Bosnia]. The second strategic goal was to get the land in one piece, inter-connected and we got the corridor, so that achieves that strategic goal.²⁸

Later in 1994, Karadžić reminded his deputies of the most important strategic objective in a renewed appeal to cede some territory during peace negotiations: ‘We know for sure that we have to give something up, that is clear beyond a shadow of a doubt, if we wish to achieve our primary strategic aim, which is to get rid of the enemies in our house, the Croats and Muslims, and not to be in the same state with them any more.’²⁹

Yet the Bosnian Serb leader could not persuade the RS assembly’s delegates to allow him to bargain with surplus territory at negotiations. Karadžić’s deputy, Biljana Plavšić, reminded the president that giving back conquered lands would not be so easy: ‘We have to create conditions for domestic military and forced emigration and we cannot do that without territory. We have to remind foreign countries how difficult it is to give up what has been conquered. The last thing that can be allowed is a compromise at the expense of conquered territories.’³⁰ In 1994, the vice president again stood against an approximately equal division of Bosnia, as the international community proposed:

As far as the map is concerned, of course, we cannot talk about the percentage and we should let it go. Maybe the issue of 49-51 per cent will cool off. I think that what we can do is to mark the spots on our territory that are the most important from economic and military strategic aspects, and we should not give up on them.³¹

Every wartime peace agreement required the Serb side to cede some territories, and delegates pointed out that doing so would contradict the six objectives. For example, poet and the RS’s representative in Belgrade, Gojko Đogo, observed:

²⁸ 10 January 1994, Karadžić- P00791, p. 111.

²⁹ 18-19 July 1994, Karadžić-P01394, p. 70.

³⁰ 24-26 July 1992, Karadžić-D00092, p. 39.

³¹ 10-11 May 1994, Karadžić-P01390, p. 54.

The suggested borders of the Vance Owen provinces were drawn with the intention of breaking apart ethnic Serb areas forever, as well as to make the Serb people permanently poor by taking away their economic resources and private property. According to that proposal, more than half of Serbs would remain in Muslim and Croat provinces as an ethnic minority, without a direct connection to Serbia and the two Serb Krajinas, without access to the sea, without mines and energy sources, without fields and road communications, and without churches and monasteries. In Serb provinces there is no future life without that.³²

It seems that the majority of Serb representatives agreed with Plavšić and Đogo. And despite his limited efforts to shift the Serb strategy at the assembly, Karadžić resisted international mediators' attempts to persuade the Serb side to give up territory.

Another obstacle that could have undermined the permanency of the new demographic reality was the lack of Serbs inhabiting the RS's expanding territory. Velibor Ostojić, an early member of the SDS from Foča, insisted that Bosnian Serb authorities needed to 'establish the geographic continuity of the Serb people in RS areas.' After removing non-Serbs, the RS government did not have enough citizens to populate the territories that had come under its control; as Ostojić explained 'we lack the population.'³³ Ostojić suggested 'stimulating the birth rate,' and Milutin Najdanović also believed 'the birth rate issue should be our priority, second only to the resolution of the state issue. We must do everything to motivate Serb women to bear children.'³⁴ Resettling Serb refugees from outside Serb-claimed territory also formed an important part of the population strategy. As the minister responsible for resettling (Serb) refugees put it, the state needed to develop new 'demographic politics' in order to ensure 'ethno-geographic continuity for the Serb

³² 2 April 1993, Karadžić-P01367, p. 76.

³³ 24-25 March 1994, Karadžić-P01388, p. 173.

³⁴ 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 213; and 25 February 1992, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 214-215.

people.³⁵ Serbs coming into the RS from elsewhere in Bosnia or Croatia needed to take the place of non-Serbs whom the regime had expelled in order to populate conquered territory.

Ensuring that non-Serbs did not return to RS-claimed territory formed as high a priority as resettling Serbs. SDS deputy from Rudo, Dobroslav Milinković, raised the danger of non-Serb returnees during an assembly debate over the proposed ‘Invincible Plan’ peace agreement:

Alija [Izetbegović] is offering and promising that everyone can go back to their own homes. Gentlemen, there is no Serb state in the Bosnian pot without gradual depopulation and relocation. If we want an ethnically pure Serb state, and we do, don't we? If we all know and emphasise that we cannot live with them, then we have to realise that these draft maps are offering exactly that and there has to be relocation.³⁶

At the beginning of 1994, former literature professor and SDS deputy from Sarajevo Vojislav Maksimović expressed even more extreme sentiments:

What I would really like to see is a firm attitude that Muslims and Croats will not be allowed to return to areas under our rule. Accordingly, we should not return to areas that will be under Croat rule ... I do not care if Muslims will live at all, where they will live, or whether they will have a country or not. I am not interested in that. The only thing I am interested in is my people and the territory where my people live. Therefore, any thought about having 500 or more Muslims within our future country is out of the question.³⁷

Maksimović articulated the Serb-centric character of the nationalist ideology that became refined during the war. All that mattered was that non-Serbs did not inhabit Serb areas, which clashed with the demand by negotiators to allow refugees to return to their homes.

Despite the mounting practical reasons to change its approach to the war, the RS leadership refused to compromise on the borders determined on 12 May 1992. Karadžić invoked the strategic objectives directly to inform the public about his ambitions; for example, the RS president told the *Novine Opštine Nevesinje*:

³⁵ 27 August – 1 October 1993, Karadžić-P01379, p. 213.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 33-34.

³⁷ 10 January 1994, Karadžić-P01385, p. 130.

Our assembly adopted six strategic objectives for this war and the third strategic goal is the Neretva River as a border; in other words, the territory on the left bank of the Neretva is Serb territory. We are not giving up on that and we will never give up and we will seek that politically or militarily because 44,000 Serbs live in Neretva Valley who are now fighting like lions to defend the rest of Herzegovina and they deserve to live in their homes. We also demand a piece of the sea, and the RS can only access the sea through Herzegovina ...³⁸

Even in late August 1995, just days before Karadžić ceded the authority to negotiate on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs to Slobodan Milošević, the RS president reiterated the importance of the strategic objectives:

It is our vital interest that the Una and the Sava become our borders; that the Drina be ours, for it is ours, it has been ours for centuries; that we get a part of Sarajevo, for all of Sarajevo used to belong to the Serbs; to get a part of the Neretva Valley; and to gain access to the sea. These are the six strategic objectives that our assembly adopted in 1992. They were revealed later on, it is no longer a secret. These are our goals and our nation is fighting to realise them, to realise such a state, and it has realised such a state. The international community must recognise that.³⁹

The regime's leaders could not accept the demand made by negotiators throughout the war that Serb authorities had to give up some of the territory the VRS had conquered. The six strategic objectives had become a contract.

Escalation: UN Hostages and the Srebrenica Massacre

Instead of adjusting its strategy, the growing perception that the Bosnian Serbs fought alone against the world led Karadžić's regime to escalate its measures and turn on foreign officials. On 24 May 1995, after Serb forces rejected UN ultimatums, Karadžić announced: 'If Smith [Lt General Rupert Smith, commander of the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia] orders air strikes against us, we will treat them [UN personnel] as enemies.'⁴⁰ The RS president kept his promise: on 27 May, after NATO jets fired on Serb positions in Pale because Serb forces failed to return four heavy artillery guns stolen from a

³⁸ *Novine opštine Nevesinje*, 27 May 1995 (Nevesinje).

³⁹ Serb TV Banja Luka (FBIS Daily Report AU240811195), 23 August 1995.

⁴⁰ *Agence France-Presse*, 24 May 1995 (Paris).

UN warehouse, the VRS retaliated by taking 377 UN peacekeepers as hostages. Serb soldiers tied UN personnel to flagpoles and Serb military installations in order to dissuade NATO from bombing VRS targets.⁴¹ Although Serb forces released and exchanged hundreds of the hostages in the following weeks, Karadžić threatened on 1 June that ‘if the major powers used force to free hundreds of UN hostages under Serb detention it would result in slaughter,’⁴² adding in another interview that ‘they [UN hostages] would be more easily released with a statement or a promise that the Serbs will not be bombed again.’⁴³ The RS president further added that the VRS moved prisoners around Serb-held territory, suggesting that any rescue attempt would be futile, and insisted that they would be freed once UN personnel withdrew from Bosnia.⁴⁴ By taking UN personnel hostage Karadžić demonstrated that no authority or degree of global condemnation would hinder his campaign.

After the hostage crisis subsided, Karadžić emphasised that he considered the controversial action a success. The RS president insisted that Serb forces would again take UN personnel as prisoners of war if the Security Council approved further NATO bombing.⁴⁵ When activity around the UN safe areas escalated in July and August 1995, Karadžić commented that the UN hostage taking had served as a warning to the world that his regime’s authority had to be respected.⁴⁶ Karadžić also provided revealing answers when asked about the incident in an interview after the war. UN soldiers ‘were not civilians ... their commanders gave the order to bomb Serbs,’ he said, emphasising:

⁴¹ *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 312-313.

⁴² *Reuters News*, 1 June 1995 (London).

⁴³ *Agence France-Presse*, 1 June 1995 (Paris).

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Srpsko Oslobođenje*, 8 June 1995 (Pale).

⁴⁶ *Srpski Borac*, 2 August 1995 (VRS Sarajevo-Romanija Corps).

... That was absolutely justified. Absolutely justified. Some of them were scouts, who led the bombers to their targets. As such they were not civilians. As such, they were not neutral UN people. As such, they were enemies.⁴⁷

His comments reveal that the RS president considered all those who placed obstacles before his state-building project as enemies. Moreover, at the RS assembly, Karadžić spoke about the effectiveness of taking peacekeepers as hostages and defended the practice:

We ordered the arrest, we didn't go into detail as to when they would be tied up, but it had a good effect; it was very shocking for the world. Now it's easy: when they ask us if that was a nice gesture, I ask if it's a nice gesture to bomb the Serb rear and frighten our children and old people to flee, then no one has a response. So, you don't reply with a response but with a counter-question and then they have nothing to say. As you know, this led to a horrible heating up, there were condemnations too, even from Yugoslavia ... Now any return of weapons is out of question because of this offensive, so that, in a way, we even somewhat benefited from this whole crisis.⁴⁸

NATO forces – attacking at the behest of the UN Security Council – continued to threaten to bomb Bosnian Serb positions if Serb forces failed to respect ceasefires or encroached on the safe zones in the Drina River Valley. Yet as Karadžić's comments indicate, the RS's political authorities had no intention of respecting international intervention if it hampered their ambitions.

The genocide at Srebrenica epitomised the consequences of the Serb nationalist project and demonstrated the leadership's preparedness to escalate measures to achieve its goals. It was inside what came to be known as the 'Srebrenica enclave' where the nationalist imagination clashed with reality to catastrophic effect, creating the worst atrocity in Europe since 1945.⁴⁹ Before the war, the Srebrenica municipality had a total of

⁴⁷ *Drentse Groningse Dagbladen*, 24 May 1997 (Groningen).

⁴⁸ 14-15 June 1995, Karadžić-P01410, pp. 343-345.

⁴⁹ Out of all the atrocities that occurred during the war in Bosnia, the Srebrenica genocide is probably the most notorious, and thus it is understandable that it has received significant attention from scholars, journalists, and other analysts. D. Rohde's *A Safe Area. Srebrenica* and C. Sudetic's *Blood and Vengeance* are the most informative dedicated works in English. The CIA's *Balkan Battlegrounds* provides a meticulous account of the events on the ground as they unfolded in the

36,292 residents; 24,930 (or 69 per cent) of whom identified as ethnic Muslims.⁵⁰ Although the Serb-controlled local Territorial Defence forces briefly held Srebrenica, on 10 May 1992 Muslim troops loyal to the Sarajevo government captured the town and drove out Serb militia. Until July 1995, as discussed in the Origins Chapter, ABiH forces under Naser Orić's command used the enclave as a base to launch attacks against the VRS and raided neighbouring Serb villages for food and supplies. Thousands of Muslims expelled from surrounding areas sought refuge in the relative safety of the enclave, even though Serb forces continuously besieged it and attempted to restrict the inflow of food and medical supplies. On 16 April 1993, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 819 declaring Srebrenica a 'safe area,' in an unsuccessful attempt to dissuade attacks on the enclave. Along with Goražde and Žepa, Srebrenica persisted as one of the few municipalities that resisted the expansion of Republika Srpska into the Drina River Valley. The campaign to achieve the strategic objectives, in addition to countering the threat posed by Orić's troops, formed the backdrop to the systematic execution of more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys in July 1995.

There are several documents that promoted a murderous climate in Srebrenica. The first key item, as discussed previously, is the transcript of the 12 May 1992 RS Assembly Session, when Karadžić explained the third strategic objective: 'a corridor in the Drina River Valley, that is, the elimination of the Drina as a border between two Serb states. We are on both sides of the Drina, and our strategic interest and our living space are there.' Nestled in the middle of the Bosnian bank of the Drina River, Srebrenica foiled the Serb nationalist goal to control both sides of the river. The second document is the VRS Main

first two weeks of July 1995 and G. Duijzings' chapter in *The New Bosnian Mosaic* engages with the relevant historical context and 'memory,' some of which is discussed in the following pages.

⁵⁰ Krajišnik-P954, p. 226

Staff's Directive for Further Operations Number 7, issued on 8 March 1995 to the commands of all VRS Corps. The document accused the West, particularly the United States, of manipulating peace negotiations to the detriment of the Serb side and of supporting Muslims and Croats. The instructions to the Drina Corps included the unambiguous instruction:

... The complete physical separation of Srebrenica from Žepa should be carried out as soon as possible, preventing even communication between individuals in the two enclaves. By planned and well-thought-out combat operations, create an unbearable situation of total insecurity with no hope of further survival or life for the inhabitants of Srebrenica and Žepa.⁵¹

Several weeks later, the RS's official news service announced, 'The Supreme Command of the Bosnian Serb Republic Army has declared null and void all UN Security Council resolutions,' which of course included the resolution declaring Srebrenica a safe area.⁵² Together these documents and decisions illustrate the importance of including the territory within Republika Srpska by creating an environment in which life seemed hopeless for non-Serbs, and demonstrate that Karadžić's regime did not recognise any higher authority that stood between it and the ultimate goal.

The physical removal of tens of thousands of Muslims took place after Srebrenica fell. On 9 July 1995, between twenty and thirty thousand civilians fled the UN compound to the neighbouring village of Potočari seeking shelter as shells fell on Srebrenica. After the VRS entered the town, panic spread among the Muslim civilians who had sought refuge there. Serb soldiers burned houses and threatened inhabitants. Random rapes and murders occurred, and civilians found corpses lying in public areas. On 11 July, a column of about ten to fifteen thousand men began to flee but many were captured in the following days.

⁵¹ 8 March 1995, Krstić-P425, p. 10.

⁵² *SRNA*, 29 May 1995 (RS Official News Service).

The VRS arranged for the transport of about 25,000 thousand women, children, and elderly to Bosnian government territory in Kladanj. The executions of thousands of Bosnian Muslim men, some who remained in the Srebrenica area and others who had attempted to flee, took place between 13 and 22 July 1995.⁵³

The rhetoric that characterised VRS internal communications as well as propagandistic declarations issued by the army leadership feature prominently in the documentation and footage from the July 1995 takeover. Upon Mladić's arrival in Srebrenica on 11 July, the VRS commander told cameras 'The moment has finally come to take revenge on the Turks here.'⁵⁴ A year earlier, Mladić had made similar comments to a Belgrade magazine, *Nin*, when he said: 'The Turks from Srebrenica also committed the biggest crime against the Serb people in crushing the insurrection against the Dahije [in 1804] ... Because of their extremism, we were forced to stop their barbaric actions and to punish them in kind for what they did in the past and what they are doing now.'⁵⁵ In July 1995, after conquering the enclave, Mladić made a similar reference to the 1804 uprising:

Here we are on 11 July 1995 in Serb Srebrenica, just before a great Serb holiday. We give this town as a gift to the Serb people. The time has come, after the Revolt Against the Dahije, for us to have our revenge against the Turks in this area.⁵⁶

In these comments, Mladić references the dahije, janissaries (possibly of Balkan origins) who had rebelled against the Sultan and executed Serb notables in the early years of the nineteenth century. The blind Serb poet Filip Višnjić, whose poetry was transcribed by Vuk Karadžić in the nineteenth century, remembers the subsequent resistance in his ballad 'The Beginning of the Revolt Against the Dahije.' Mladić's recollection of the poem's title as he

⁵³ Krstić Judgement, pp. 3-31.

⁵⁴ 11 July 1995 (Video), Krstić-P145.

⁵⁵ *NIN*, 7 January 1995 (Belgrade).

⁵⁶ Video 'Ratko Mladić in Srebrenica,' 11 July 1995. Accessed on 7 August 2015 at <<http://youtu.be/edFQTZpf8yM>>

entered Srebrenica is particularly ominous when one considers the final lines of the poem.

Thus spoke Đorđe to the Drina water:
'Drina water, O thou noble barrier,
Thou that partest Bosnia from Serbia!
Soon the day will dawn, O Drina water,
Soon will dawn the day when I shall cross thee,
Pass through all the noble land of Bosnia.'⁵⁷

This reference on the eve of the executions suggests that Mladić considered himself the leader of an epic battle against a historical enemy and fulfilling the ambition expressed in the final lines of Višnjić's poem. The perceived struggle against a historical foe encouraged a sense of transcendental timelessness.⁵⁸ With the Chief of the Main Staff of the VRS holding such a view, it is reasonable to conclude that mass killing of 'Turks,' no longer fell beyond the realm of militarily or socially acceptable behaviour as determined by the individual on the top of the power hierarchy.

Although less poetic, General Radislav Krstić, the commander of the Drina Corps, repeated the key ideological phrases that defined Serb nationalism in the months that followed the genocide. In October 1995, Krstić congratulated the Zvornik brigade – one of the units most active in the killings – for 'liberating centuries-old Serb territories from the hated enemy and preventing further genocide against the Serb people.'⁵⁹ Krstić highlighted the importance of the Drina River Valley, in the spirit of the third strategic objective, during an interview in November 1995:

⁵⁷ W.A. Morison, *The Revolt of the Serbs Against the Turks (1804-1813)*, (Cambridge, 1942), p. 72.

⁵⁸ I. Čolović, 'The Renewal of the Past: Time and Space in Contemporary Political Mythology,' *Other Voices*, 2/1 (2000), accessible online at: <http://www.othervoices.org/2.1/colovic/past.php>; and G. Duijzings, 'Commemorating Srebrenica,' in X. Bougarel, E. Helms and G. Duijzings (eds), *The New Bosnian Mosaic*: (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 141-166.

⁵⁹ 30 October 1995, Krstić-P745.

The Drina River Valley should remain Serb forever, while the eastern part of Republika Srpska and the Drina River would be an important meeting point for the entire Serb people from both sides of the Drina.⁶⁰

Like his superior officer Ratko Mladić, Radislav Krstić also adopted the ideological historical interpretation that created the strategic objectives and committed to achieving those goals.

Karadžić and Mladić followed the counsel of the VRS commander on 12 May 1992, when he warned, ‘this thing that we are doing needs to be regarded as our deepest secret.’ On 12 July, when the UN demanded Serb forces withdraw from Srebrenica, Karadžić said: ‘Srebrenica is our land ... The civilians there are safe because our army is very responsible.’⁶¹ After the killings concluded, Karadžić provided an explanation for why the number of Muslims in Srebrenica would decrease: ‘Unfortunately, very few Muslims can stay in Srebrenica because they are now beginning to realise that Srebrenica belongs to the Serb state. And since they have realised it, they wish to leave and live in a Muslim state.’⁶² Mladić similarly downplayed the human disaster that had just taken place: ‘I can freely say that the [Muslim] civilians were pleased when we arrived, because they had had enough of life in a closed enclave.’⁶³ On numerous occasions, Karadžić denied mass killings; for example, ‘Neither I nor General Mladić ordered any massacre and no massacre occurred in Srebrenica.’⁶⁴ Nevertheless, the RS president expressed approval of the operation: ‘I gave permission for that task to the General Staff and to General Krstić and I was very satisfied

⁶⁰ Undated, Krstić-P743.

⁶¹ *Agence France Presse*, 12 July 1995 (Paris).

⁶² *El Pais*, 16 July 1995 (Madrid).

⁶³ *Svet*, 22 July 1995 (Novi Sad).

⁶⁴ *Agence France-Presse*, 26 November 1995 (Paris).

with the speed at which he took Srebrenica.’⁶⁵ The focus, as throughout the war, was on the ambition to carve out a Serb state, regardless of the consequences.

Speaking in August and October 1995, after strategic losses to Croat and Muslim forces, Karadžić reflected on the Srebrenica operation and defended its necessity. Karadžić linked victory at Srebrenica with the loss at Glamoč and Grahovo, which had enabled the Croatian Army’s successful campaign against the Croatian Serb stronghold of Knin:

As you know, we were successful in Srebrenica and Žepa. There are no objections or remarks on that success. Of course, many stupid things were done afterwards, because many Muslim soldiers were wandering around in the woods and we suffered casualties then. Still, we did not suffer any casualties during the action. We had success in Žepa, though Žepa took us at least 15 days. We wasted a lot of time there so that we lost Glamoč and Grahovo in the meantime.⁶⁶

The civilian head of the army placed the blame for ‘stupid things’ on the other side but concentrated on the success of securing the areas at a minimal cost to Serb forces. Speaking at the assembly, Karadžić came closer to acknowledging what had happened at Srebrenica:

As the Supreme Commander, I stood behind the plan for Žepa and Srebrenica, mainly for Srebrenica, Žepa was implied. Gentlemen, we would lose the war if there were 90,000 armed Muslims in Žepa, we would lose the war. I personally supervised the plan without the knowledge of the General Staff without hiding but I happened to run into General Krstić and advised him to go straight into town and to pronounce the fall of Srebrenica, and later we will chase the Turks around the woods. I approved a radical task and I don’t regret it.⁶⁷

Later, when discussing an alleged incident involving the VRS’s spokesman at Srebrenica, Karadžić revealed his knowledge of the takeover’s gravity, but not his regret:

Lieutenant Colonel Milutinović has given information to foreign agencies. There is intelligence that he has sold information. I do not care if he took 25,000 German Marks or not, but he has given disastrous pictures to foreign agencies – pictures that could cost Mladić his life if they were presented in The Hague. They broadcast whatever they want and they have recorded corpses of women in the streets of Srebrenica after which they broadcast that on foreign media.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Telegraf International*, 23 August 1995 (Belgrade).

⁶⁶ 6 August 1995, Karadžić-P01412, p. 19.

⁶⁷ 15-16 October 1995, Karadžić-P01415, p. 88.

⁶⁸ 6 August 1995, Karadžić-P01412, p. 77.

At the assembly Karadžić claimed responsibility for the operation yet did not condemn the means used to integrate Srebrenica into the Serb state.

Permanent Separation

The Serb leadership's delays at the negotiation table caught up with it in summer 1995, and atrocities in Srebrenica and Sarajevo spurred international action against the VRS. As discussed in the previous chapter, the 1994 Washington Agreement ended the war between the ABiH and the HVO, and that peace turned into a formidable military alliance. Two American-backed operations in August 1995 overwhelmed the VRS. Between 4 and 8 August, the Croatian Army launched 'Operation Storm' and defeated Croatian Serb forces, which precipitated the collapse of the Croatian Serb entity except in eastern Slavonia. According to SRJ intelligence, Serb territorial losses amounted to more than 14,500 square kilometres and the flight of an estimated 250,000 refugees into the RS and Serbia. The Republika Srpska Krajina's collapse meant that 150 kilometres of new front existed along the RS's borders and, according to Belgrade's estimate, the defeat of the Croatian Serb army resulted in more than a billion dollars of weapons and equipment (provided by the VJ) falling into Croatian Army hands.⁶⁹

Atrocities committed by Serb forces prompted action by external forces that brought forward the end of the war. On 28 August, five shells launched from VRS positions hit the crowded Markale marketplace in Sarajevo – the second wartime attack on the market – killing 35 civilians and wounding 85 others.⁷⁰ Days after the marketplace shelling, NATO launched a massive aerial bombing campaign known as 'Operation Deliberate Force' on

⁶⁹ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P00764, pp. 3-9.

⁷⁰ D. Milošević Judgement (Trial Chamber), pp. 220-241.

strategic VRS positions in northern Bosnia and around Sarajevo.⁷¹ Coordinated advances by Croatian and Bosnian (Muslim) forces led to massive losses for the VRS, as the joint forces encroached on the Bosnian Serb *de facto* capital Banja Luka (see Appendix J for the final battle lines).⁷² The UN's commander in Bosnia, Rupert Smith, and the senior American negotiator Richard Holbrooke identified the fall of the safe zones and the second Markale bombing as 'the end of the line' that spurred 'long overdue' NATO action.⁷³ The Bosnian Serb leadership had no choice but to return to negotiations, and for the first time, they could not afford to walk out.

Negotiations at Dayton yielded, finally, a peace agreement. The plan allowed for the RS to exist as an 'entity' within a federalised Bosnia and created a weak central government with a tripartite presidency (see Appendix K for the map of Dayton Bosnia). Although Slobodan Milošević had inked the peace agreement in Dayton on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs – and his role will be addressed in the next chapter – RS assembly members vowed to continue their ideological struggle in peacetime. Just three days after representatives of the warring parties had formally ended the conflict, the RS assembly passed a declaration concerning territories ceded to the Muslim-Croat Federation at the negotiations:

Republika Srpska retains the right to use peaceful means and political measures in order to return under its sovereignty regions defined by the strategic goals, as well

⁷¹ Holbrooke, *To End a War*, pp. 101-102.

⁷² N. Cigar, 'Serb War Effort and Termination of the War', in B. Magaš and I. Žanić (eds.), *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995* (London, 2001), pp. 222-227; and R. Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York, 1999), p. 161; R. Smith, *The Utility of Force: The Art of War in the Modern World* (London, 2006), pp. 366-367.

⁷³ Ibid., pp. 364-365; Holbrooke, *To End a War*, pp. 102-103; also see C. Ingrao, 'Safe Areas', in C. Ingrao and T. A. Emmert (eds.), *Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies: A Scholars Initiative* (West Lafayette, 2009), p. 222.

as regions that have been acquired by the opposite side on the basis of genocide or of brutal conquest aided by the intervention of foreign powers.⁷⁴

The tone of post-war politics, thus, would not be characterised by a hope for reconciliation, but instead a reiteration of the same themes that had inspired and spurred the war.

The Dayton Peace Agreement, by granting the Sarajevo suburbs back to the federation, spoiled the leadership's plan for the fifth strategic objective, the division of Sarajevo. Speaking days after the signing of the peace agreement, Krajišnik reminded the delegates: 'The task of this republic and the first strategic goal is to separate from the Muslims and Croats and no one has the right to force Serb Sarajevo to remain in a joint state.' In December 1995, Krajišnik insisted that the possibility of Sarajevo existing as a juncture among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims 'was out of the question.' The RS assembly speaker concluded that the question that remained was 'where to move these people?' He further reaffirmed:

We need time for a political solution and final separation. In the end, the best solution for Sarajevo is [for the Serbs] to move out and for us to find areas where we can accommodate people ... that solution will not lead us to the creation of a union but to division, because that is our first strategic goal.⁷⁵

The post-war Bosnian state, composed of two constituent 'entities,' a Croat-Muslim Federation and the Republika Srpska, would rest on a divided foundation.

In early 1996, the leadership cemented its commitment to ethnic separation for all time. Nikola Koljević insisted that new political parties and media outlets active in the RS 'unambiguously declare their positions regarding the strategic goals of our struggle.'⁷⁶ Koljević also objected to cooperation with the UN-backed criminal tribunal in The Hague, especially handing over high-ranking figures:

⁷⁴ 17 December 1995, Karadžić-P01418, p. 3.

⁷⁵ 17 December 1995, Karadžić-P01418, p. 107.

⁷⁶ 21 February 1996, Karadžić-P01421, p. 93.

We signed in Dayton that we would cooperate with The Hague tribunal ... The only exceptions are the politicised and discriminatory demands of the tribunal regarding the president of Republika Srpska and the commander of the main staff, because they are not just people, but personifications of the goals and results of the struggle of the Serb people in the former Bosnia.⁷⁷

Ideological conformity and national cohesiveness trumped individual responsibility. As Koljević appreciated, the crimes Karadžić and Mladić stood accused of were committed in furtherance of the six strategic objectives. According to the firm ethno-nationalist ideology, the armed forces pursued these objectives ‘in the name of the people;’ by extension, all Serbs were responsible for their actions. Whatever Milošević may have agreed at Dayton, the leadership in the newly recognised Bosnian ‘entity,’ Republika Srpska, had little interest in cooperating with international institutions and reversing the changes it had imposed during the war.

The RS had gained almost the entire western bank of the Drina by force and had its claim confirmed in Dayton, but because many of the municipalities had had large Muslim populations, the authorities needed to supplement their claim with feet on the ground. SDS official from Bosanska Krupa, Gojko Kličković, stated that laws on abandoned properties and refugees and displaced persons needed to be implemented efficiently so ‘we will be sure to settle parts of the RS that are strategically most important to us.’⁷⁸ Other assembly members were equally candid about the disposal of property: ‘Regarding abandoned property: we are not distributing Serb property. What do you mean Croat and Muslim [property]? It is abandoned, so their treatment is the same as that of deserters.’⁷⁹ Karadžić focused on compensating Serbs who had entered the RS and distinguished compensation from stealing:

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp. 94-95.

⁷⁸ 18 May 1996, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, p. 227.

⁷⁹ 21 February 1996, Karadžić-P01421, p. 84.

We have to stand in front of our [Serb] refugee population and be responsible for property, that is to say, responsible for their settlement. It is very important that we compensate those [Serbs] who fled from Drvar as much as we can with the property that was abandoned by our enemies. Because if they hadn't been our enemies, they wouldn't have abandoned it.

However, although Karadžić wanted to grant non-Serb properties to Serbs, he demanded compensation for properties that Serbs had lost: 'We will then ask that our property which was abandoned in Drvar be compensated, in order for us to be able to compensate their [Muslim or Croat] returnee.' Yet the goal was not a fair trade. Karadžić continued: 'We have to make the law as complex as possible, or even get into an impossible situation where we cannot compensate it, and that we have to find a way to compensate it, but so that the [Serb] refugee population feels assured that it has received it and that the state stands behind it.'⁸⁰ The purpose of compensation and property settlements was to ensure that Serbs populated the RS and that non-Serbs stayed out.

Stevan Karamata, who visited the assembly from Belgrade, explained how utilising the RS's territory could fulfil national goals and further the strategic objectives. He appreciated that an increase in population and strategic habitation could reinforce the RS's claim on the territory in the future:

Only an increase in the birth rate, a rational distribution of the population, populating border areas and other uninhabited and inadequately inhabited areas, agricultural incentives aimed at keeping people connected to the land and encouraging them to cultivate every square foot of it, while relying on their own resources ... can ensure political and any other kind of independence and stability for the RS.⁸¹

Populating strategic areas, such as the Brčko corridor, also furthered the strategic goals. Boško Marčić, the RS assembly deputy from the strategic and contested town Brčko, argued that housing for (Serb) refugees was a basic humanitarian issue, but also a strategic

⁸⁰ 21 February 1996, Karadžić-P01421, pp. 27-28.

⁸¹ 17 August 1996, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 226-227.

one. He added that ‘we need every inhabitant, every child, every woman, every soldier in defence of the country. If we fill up the Brčko area, there will be no danger of anyone invading.’ Marčić further commented that thanks to his involvement in post-war negotiations, he observed that the Croats and Muslims had ‘not changed their tactics. They don’t even conceal their intention of us living together’⁸² – which, of course, contradicted the first strategic objective. Ensuring permanent separation from the other two peoples meant making it as difficult as possible for non-Serbs to return to RS areas, even though a provision in the peace agreement called for the right of return.

Conclusion

The leadership of Republika Srpska refused to compromise on the state imagined on 12 May 1992, even as it became apparent that the international community would not recognise either an independent Bosnian Serb state or one tied to Serbia. Rather than accepting any form of Bosnian statehood, the Bosnian Serb authorities merely escalated their measures to achieve the six objectives. Karadžić’s regime stunned the world by taking UN peacekeepers hostage – an act also rationalised by appeal to victimhood and self-defence – and by disregarding UN resolutions.

The VRS also persisted in achieving the third strategic objective by conquering the Srebrenica enclave, which according to Karadžić had contributed to the loss of Grahovo that in turn led to the Croatian Army’s invasion of Knin and the subsequent collapse of the Croatian Serb entity. The commitment to creating an environment of terror in Sarajevo, based on the early aim of undermining the civic Bosnian state and the military objective of pinning down the ABiH, led to the second market shelling that prompted decisive

⁸² 1-2 April 1996, *Iz Skupštine Republike Srpske*, pp. 226-227.

international military action against the VRS. Ideological fanaticism – commitment and escalation rather than compromise – led to military defeat. What is even more striking, as the following chapter reveals, is that Karadžić pursued his vision without Belgrade’s full political backing, but at its expense.

Chapter 10: Belgrade Adjusts its Agenda, August 1994 – December 1995

We have simply succeeded – Slobodan Milošević, 6 December 1995¹

Creating a Serb state in Bosnia could only take place through a strong army and so the SDC supplied Bosnian Serb forces, but the dispute over how to end the war drove the Belgrade and RS leaderships apart. Throughout the war, Karadžić harboured the conviction that the Serb territories should merge immediately, whereas the SRJ leaders doubted the united territories could gain recognition and preferred to accept a Bosnian state in the short term. As established in Chapters 4 and 6, Belgrade leaders did not regard accepting Bosnian statehood as a failure of their policy. On the contrary, they held that post-war Bosnia would not endure for long and that eventually it would disintegrate as the SFRJ had. So long as the RS received recognition in the post-war Bosnian state, Serbian and Montenegrin nationalists on the SDC considered the first phase of the plan complete.

Since ostensibly withdrawing the JNA from Bosnia in May 1992, the Belgrade leadership – most of all Milošević – continued to support the Bosnian Serb separatist cause while taking care not to incriminate itself. Although he provided the essential finance and weaponry that the VRS needed to wage the war, Milošević presented himself to the international community as a more moderate figure than Karadžić. To alleviate the pressures he faced at home – both economic and political – Milošević pushed the Bosnian Serb leadership to accept first the Vance Owen Peace Plan and then the Contact Group Plan, both of which Karadžić's regime rejected. In August 1994, once it became clear that the Contact Group Plan had no future, Milošević declared an 'embargo' on Republika Srpska, a

¹ 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, p. 5.

forced move designed to bolster the Serbian president's peacemaker credentials. However, as the evidence demonstrates, the SRJ continued to provide assistance to the VRS even after its declared blockade. What the embargo did represent was confirmation that Belgrade would not acquiesce to an immediate merger among the Serb states. Moreover, after August 1994, Belgrade attempted to persuade the Bosnian Serb leadership to see things its way by influencing the army, and not the political establishment. As the evidence reveals, the breakdown between Karadžić and Milošević did not indicate that the Serbian leadership had abandoned its expansionist programme; instead, Milošević and his circle began 'setting the foundation' to achieve the ultimate goal in the future.

Preventing Defeat

Although Belgrade and RS leaders agreed that the final goal was to establish an expanded Serb state in the Balkans, their disagreement about timing and short-term strategy intensified between the summers of 1994 and 1995. As the war dragged on, the pressure of sanctions and the cost of supplying the VRS took a toll on the SRJ. The SDC members concurred that the VRS had already achieved as much territory as it could through force and that the time had come to secure international recognition by settling for what they expected to be a temporary Bosnian state. The risk of losing Serb gains was too great to continue fighting. After Karadžić rejected the Contact Group Plan in August 1994, the SDC severed its ties to the RS political leadership, although it continued to arm the VRS. The enduring connection between the VJ and the VRS represented the council's commitment to the ultimate aim, as well as its attempt to influence the Bosnian Serb political elite via the army. Although the SDC failed to persuade Karadžić to end the war earlier, the council linked Serbia and Montenegro's fate to the survival of the RS.

Despite the SDC's consistent backing, close cooperation between the RS and the SRJ introduced new tensions into the relationship as the war dragged on. As Karadžić rejected peace plans, Bulatović raised concern about the high degree of ideological extremism in the VRS, and commented that it would be difficult to introduce that 'neo-Chetnik' ideology into the VJ.² The RS authorities also became increasingly demanding of their suppliers, which irritated council members. Perišić suspected that some VRS troops must have had three firearms each and complained that Ratko Mladić, the VRS commander, constantly asked for weapons.³ In 1994, Mladić requested US \$829 million for his army, an amount that exceeded the VJ's own budget.⁴ Milošević was furious when the RS attempted to bypass the SRJ Ministry of Defence to procure weapons and equipment directly from producers in Serbia and Montenegro.⁵ Not only did the RS authorities persistently demand more weapons and ammunition, they refused to share any of their idle equipment.⁶ These disagreements and the RS leadership's lack of willingness to provide reciprocal aid added to the pressures on the SRJ.

The VJ's stockpiles continued to dwindle, increasing the SDC's incentive to convince the Bosnian Serbs to end the war. Aiding the Bosnian Serbs had created a short supply of officers in the VJ.⁷ Materiel assistance further undermined the preparedness of VJ units and supply stocks to the point that Perišić's deputy described army reserves as 'critically low.'⁸ Unauthorised assistance to the Bosnian and Croatian Serb armies undertaken by VJ officers had depleted reserves to levels even lower than the SDC had

² 11 October 1993, Perišić-P00709, pp. 34-35.

³ 10 November 1993, Perišić-P00780, p. 6.

⁴ 16 March 1994, Perišić-P00783, p. 6.

⁵ 11 July 1994, Perišić-P00752, p. 2; 11 July 1994, Perišić-P00784, p. 41.

⁶ 7 June 1994, Perišić-P00776, p. 39.

⁷ 21 July 1994, Perišić-P00785, p.19.

⁸ Ibid., p. 8.

anticipated.⁹ In January 1995, the VJ only had enough supplies to fight a war for ‘2.5 to 30 days,’ a less precise range than the ten days estimated in early 1994.¹⁰ Even if the conflict did not spread to the SRJ, the Belgrade leadership counted on the threat of force to keep multi-ethnic areas like Vojvodina, Sandžak and Kosovo submissive. Milošević reported that Kosovo was the safest place in the SRJ because there ‘fear guarded the house.’¹¹ Practical concerns over maintaining internal security and preparing for the state’s defence clashed with the ideological commitment to support the VRS. Since the SDC’s perception of the international climate forced it to conclude that a long-term approach to building a single Serb state was the best strategy, a weakened army further encouraged the Belgrade leadership to push for peace in Bosnia.

The SDC members believed that the VRS had achieved the wartime aim of ‘establishing conditions’ for a future Serb state. Milošević explained that the Contact Group Plan, which abandoned previous cantonal federal models and granted the RS half of Bosnian territory, amounted to an unanticipated diplomatic victory.¹² The Serbian president argued that this offer would never have come had it not been for VRS military dominance throughout the war.¹³ According to his skewed interpretation – which reveals the Serbian leader’s eagerness to end the war – the Contact Group Plan ‘practically’ provided for confederation between the RS and the SRJ and ‘created the foundation for the Serb people to remain living in one state.’¹⁴ Bulatović also regarded it as a ‘basic truth’ that the Serb

⁹ 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, pp. 14-15.

¹⁰ 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, pp. 4-9.

¹¹ 13 April 1995, Perišić-P00795, p. 31.

¹² 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, pp. 36-39; 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 32.

¹³ 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, p. 14.

¹⁴ 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, p. 42; 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, pp. 30-31.

side had attained its goal and now needed to secure it.¹⁵ The SDC leaders exulted at the opportunity to legalise what the VRS had taken by force.

A major reason why the Contact Group Plan offer was so welcome to the SDC in July 1994 was that Milošević and the other SRJ leaders thought the risk of losing Serb gains in Bosnia had grown to the point that a great deal – perhaps everything – might be lost. Perišić and Bulatović both emphasised that as the Bosnian Serbs became increasingly isolated and their enemies acquired more arms, the RS would begin to lose territory.¹⁶ Giving up 20 per cent of Bosnia's territory at that moment would have meant securing 50 per cent indefinitely, instead of risking it all 'in a war of conquest' and ending up with nothing.¹⁷ Prolonging the conflict would cost more lives and the RS leadership would 'ruin everything' that the joint war effort had brought about.¹⁸ The SDC concurred: settling for peace confirmed a Serb victory.

The RS leadership's insistence on keeping the territory its army had conquered and the SRJ leaders' long-term approach clashed in summer 1994. On 3 August, instead of voting to accept or reject the peace plan, the Bosnian Serb assembly voted unanimously to hold a referendum on the Contact Group proposal. The following day, Milošević declared an economic and political embargo on the RS. In response, the Bosnian Serb assembly proposed the immediate unification of the Serb territories with Serbia and Montenegro and demanded that the SRJ respond within thirty days. Predictably, RS voters rejected the

¹⁵ 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, p. 56.

¹⁶ 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, p. 85; 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 35.

¹⁷ 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, p. 53.

¹⁸ 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 34.

Contact Group plan on 27-28 August, and the SRJ ignored the assembly's ultimatum to declare a single state.¹⁹ Milošević had had enough of the RS leadership's politics:

And all this happens after so much suffering. We endured everything, we went through all the sanctions and we came to the point when the entire international community says – All right, you are not the aggressors, half of Bosnia and Herzegovina is yours, and you have the right to merge with Serbia and Montenegro. They say – No, and we will take even more by force, we will prolong the war. That is what I call complete madness!²⁰

The plan did not provide for a merger with Serbia and Montenegro, yet Milošević's comments indicate his willingness to compromise after years of pressure and frustration. Once it became clear that the conflict had not reached its final stage, the international community called for observers along the RS-SRJ border, a demand that Belgrade leaders protested in light of their official blockade on the Bosnian Serb regime.²¹ The council members labelled the RS leadership selfish, irrational, and unrealistic.²² Rejecting the Contact Group Plan marked the end of cooperation between the SRJ and RS political leaderships for the following year.

Influence through the Army

The Bosnian Serb assembly's rejection of the Contact Group Plan and the subsequent embargo did not signify the halt of the SDC's aid to the VRS. After debating the future of the 30th Personnel Centre – and even seeming to disband it – the VJ continued to pay its officers in the VRS.²³ In September 1994, Perišić personally provided Mladić

¹⁹ Treanor, *Belgrade Leadership and the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia*, pp. 63-64.

²⁰ 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 33.

²¹ 9 August 1994, Perišić-P00755, p. 2.

²² 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, pp. 95-96; 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, p. 14.

²³ The SDC did decide to reduce VJ personnel salaries but reversed that decision six months later. 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, pp. 61-63, 87-88, 94-96, and 106; 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, pp. 44-56.

with cash to cover officers' salaries.²⁴ Transcripts from later sessions indicate that the PC transfer system continued to function until long after the war, as did the promotion verification scheme.²⁵ Other methods of support such as caring for the VRS wounded and educating young officers also persisted.²⁶ As early as September 1994, not even a month after the SRJ's 'blockade' went into effect, Mladić submitted requests for arms in the usual manner.²⁷ In January 1995, Mladić asked for more than 12 million bullets and 12,000 pieces of artillery: 'These are necessary for combat security and supplying units engaged in combat operations.'²⁸ In May 1995, he requested 10,000 mines and five tonnes of plastic explosives that he claimed units needed to conduct operations.²⁹ If a genuine embargo had existed, it appears Mladić ignored it.

The reality is that throughout 1994 and until summer 1995, the SDC continued to extend as much aid as possible to the VRS, although the council did consider the VJ's preparedness with more urgency than before.³⁰ In August 1995, the Serb Orthodox Bishop Irinej appealed to Milošević to lift the Drina blockade, to which Milošević replied 'the blockade is merely a formality ... aid flows daily.'³¹ A revealing report by Colonel Bogojević of the VRS 1st Krajina Corps dismissed rumors about the suspension of relations between the VRS and VJ: 'On the contrary, the relations between the VRS and VJ are still correct and have not been upset by the suspension of political and economic relations of the SRJ with the RS. There has not been a single case recalling VRS professional soldiers or

²⁴ 22 February 1995, Perišić-P00851; and undated, Perišić-P2770.

²⁵ 7 June 1995, Perišić-P00786, pp. 30-33.

²⁶ 9 December 1994, Perišić-P00793, p. 15; 13 April 1995, Perišić-P00795, p. 54; 12 September 1995, Perišić-P00798, p. 19.

²⁷ 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, pp. 81-82 and 83.

²⁸ 30 January 1994, Perišić-P02768.

²⁹ 12 May 1995, Perišić-P02781.

³⁰ 29 July 1995, Perišić-P00763, pp. 3-5.

³¹ 25 August 1995, Perišić-P00230, p. 11.

non-commissioned officers back to the VJ.’ Bogojević concluded that relations between the VRS and the VJ had in fact ‘improved’ since the declaration of sanctions.³² The VRS Main Staff also reported in January 1995 that ‘a great number of commands, units, and certain members of [the] VJ have selflessly offered us humanitarian aid and services that are extremely important for Republika Srpska defence.’³³ The following table reveals some of the shipments that reached the VRS from the VJ during the ‘embargo’ period:

Date	Shipment	Comment
27 February 1995	100 Contact Fuses for Howitzer Cannons	Ordered by Perišić ³⁴
2 May 1995	700 tonnes of fuel	Perišić stated was ready for pick up at customs office ³⁵
26 May 1995	10,000 mines and five tonnes of explosives	Perišić granted request by VRS Main Staff ³⁶
17 June 1995	350, 280 rounds; 567,000 bullets; 46 rockets	Supplied via the 30 th Personnel Centre ³⁷
19 June 1995	1,835,850 rounds of various calibres and 2,000 shells for heavy combat	Request issued by Mladić; Perišić ordered it ‘resolved’ ³⁸
22 June 1995	120,000 bullets and 1,850 shells	Requested by the VRS Sarajevo Romanija Corps because of the difficult situation on the front ³⁹
16 and 23 September 1995	1,046,035 bullets; 934 mortar shells; 150 rockets; 72 rounds for 64mm gun; 1,999 semi-automatic rifles; 50 machine guns; and 18 cannons	For the Eastern Bosnia Corps specifically ⁴⁰

³² 12 August 1994, Perišić-P02819.

³³ 15 January 1995, Perišić-P01211.

³⁴ 27 February 1995, Perišić-P01257.

³⁵ 2 May 1995, Perišić-P01316.

³⁶ 15 May 1995, Perišić-P00623; 26 May 1995, Perišić-D56; 30 May 1995, Perišić D57; 31 May 1995, Perišić-D58.

³⁷ 17 June 1995, Perišić-P00588; 18 February 1994, Perišić-P01009; 15 August 1994, Perišić-P00628; 22 June 1995, Perišić-P00589.

³⁸ 19 June 1995, Perišić-P00624.

³⁹ 22 June 1995, Perišić-P01225.

⁴⁰ 30 September 1995, Perišić-P01206.

A report prepared by the Republika Srpska Ministry of Defence that covered precisely the embargo period reveals how many weapons and ammunition the VRS received from August 1994 until November 1995 as ‘purchases and donations:’

61,590,737 rounds of rifle ammunition; 92,125 rounds of “[o]ther infantry ammunition;” 73,184 rounds of mortar ammunition; 14,615 rounds of artillery ammunition; 5,915 rounds of tank ammunition; 1,708 missiles; 298,593 items of “[anti-aircraft] ammunition and missiles;” 60 aerial bombs; and 108,995 items of “launch equipment and other NVO [weapons and military equipment].”⁴¹

Although the report does not reveal the source of the ‘purchases and donations,’ defence teams at the tribunal failed to demonstrate that the VRS received ammunition or weapons from any country other than the SRJ.⁴² The on-going aid proves that the SRJ’s blockade only reflected a political divorce from the RS political leadership, but in any way that would hamper the Bosnian Serb war effort, an embargo did not exist.

As they did before they established the embargo on the Bosnian Serb regime in August 1994, SRJ leaders denied that they aided the Bosnian Serb regime because they knew that doing so violated international law; their conduct reflects their commitment to the Greater Serbia cause. The UN Security Council had demanded that the SRJ not involve itself in the Bosnian conflict,⁴³ and imposed sanctions because Belgrade failed to remain neutral.⁴⁴ The Security Council asked the SRJ to maintain the closure of the border with Bosnia and to allow only food, medical supplies, and clothing for humanitarian needs to cross the border,⁴⁵ which Milošević falsely insisted was the case.⁴⁶ In a meeting with Serb

⁴¹ November 1995, Perišić-P01534, p. 5.

⁴² Perišić Judgement, p. 335.

⁴³ 15 May 1992, Perišić-P00201; 30 May 1992, Perišić-P00202; 10 June 1993, Perišić-P02473.

⁴⁴ Ibid., and 18 June 1992, Perišić P02434.

⁴⁵ 23 September 1994, Perišić-D25; 21 January 1995, Perišić-D26; 21 April 1995, Perišić-D27; 5 July 1995, Perišić-D28.

Orthodox Church leaders, Perišić explained that despite the ‘unfair sanctions imposed by the international community the SRJ has been assisting RS and the RSK in every respect (humanitarian, military, etc.) in order for the Serb people to successfully defend themselves and survive on their territory,’⁴⁷ and further promised to do everything in his power to continue helping the Serb people.⁴⁸ Although international monitors patrolled the border, the length of the Drina River and the mountainous landscape in some stretches of the divide between Bosnia and Serbia made it possible – if not easy – for shipments to pass incognito from Serbia into Serb-held territory in Bosnia.⁴⁹ From August 1994 until the end of the war, SRJ authorities lied about the authenticity of the embargo; for example, its ambassador to the UN Security Council, Dragomir Đokić complained to the council that his state ‘is constantly subjected to provocations and absurd allegations that it is supplying the Bosnian Serbs with military materiel.’⁵⁰ Although the SRJ leadership insisted its state did not meddle in the Bosnian conflict, its clear willingness to ignore the UN Security Council’s orders and to maintain a surreptitious supply of war materiel reflects its commitment to the nationalist programme.

The SDC continued to supply the VRS because it hoped to influence the Republika Srpska political leadership through the army. As Perišić once observed: ‘Our backbone over there is the army and we have to give them their mainstay and support.’⁵¹ After its break from Karadžić, the SDC issued a directive that officers assigned to the 30th Personnel

⁴⁶ 24 June 2003, Perišić-P02372, T. 22959-22961.

⁴⁷ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, p. 2.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁹ Testimony of Michael Williams, Perišić T. 6411.

⁵⁰ 21 April 1995, Perišić-P02484.

⁵¹ 24 January 1995, Perišić-P02783.

Centre, as members of the VJ, had to implement Belgrade's decisions.⁵² Although it appears that the SDC issued no immediate orders, this act reaffirmed the loyalties of personnel who found themselves in two armies that had opposing objectives. The SDC also decided to bypass Karadžić's inner circle and deal directly with Mladić.⁵³ Perišić often met in person with Mladić and attempted to persuade him to side with the SRJ, and at a January 1995 meeting, Milošević told Mladić that because the SRJ's reserves had become exhausted, the war needed to end as soon as possible.⁵⁴ Yet the council appreciated that its efforts to influence Karadžić and other RS politicians through the VRS were ineffective up until July 1994.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the SDC continued its aid to the VRS with the aim of securing army officers' loyalties, as well as furthering the expansionist programme.

As the war entered its final year, the VRS officer corps became an arena of contested allegiances. Bulatović and Perišić feared that Karadžić counteracted their influence in the VRS by appointing his own SDS loyalists to key posts in order to turn it into a 'Chetnik army.'⁵⁶ On 13 June 1995, the SDC discussed promoting twelve generals who belonged to the 30th Personnel Centre; Perišić supported the promotion of Milan Gvero, whom he described as 'an extremely positive person who is a cohesive force between the Republika Srpska Army and us.' Perišić also supported promoting Zdravko Tolimir, who had been 'much criticised, primarily by President Karadžić, because he stands in the way of

⁵² 9 August 1994, Perišić-P00755, p. 2.

⁵³ 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, pp. 28-36.

⁵⁴ 24 January 1995, Perišić-P02783; and 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, pp. 85-86; Milošević advocated this tactic: 9 December 1994, Perišić-P00793, p. 14.

⁵⁵ 21 July 1994, Perišić-P00785, p. 17; 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, p. 82; 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 36.

⁵⁶ 2 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 45; 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, p. 40; 13 April 1995, Perišić-P00795, p. 53.

exercising their in depth influence;⁵⁷ but he opposed the promotions of Stevan Tomić, Dragomir Milošević and Budimir Gavrić, who Perišić claimed held membership in Karadžić's SDS.⁵⁸ It is revealing that these men's political allegiances seemed more important, when discussing their promotions, than their performances in the field, which would earn several of them lengthy sentences for war crimes. Another problem facing the council was what to do with VJ personnel serving in the VRS who identified the political rift as a way out of the warzone. On the one hand, the SDC members felt that they should allow personnel who disagreed with Karadžić's politics to return to the SRJ; on the other hand, they did not want to withdraw the VRS's elite officers and hasten its collapse.⁵⁹ The solution to all these problems was to continue with business as usual. If the time came, the SDC reserved the authority to pull VJ personnel out of the VRS, but council members hoped that they could influence Republika Srpska policy through the army.

From an ideological perspective, the sense of obligation to support the Serbs in Bosnia and pursue the common goal remained high as summer 1995 approached. Perišić identified the fracture of the 'national being' as the worst possible consequence of the Serb side losing the war.⁶⁰ By failing to settle for peace, the RS leadership had demonstrated its defiance of the 'mother country' and had 'accepted the empty promises of those who wish to see the ruin of the Serb people.'⁶¹ The dispute between the two sides took on an ideological dimension and became a battle over who really protected Serb interests. In order to prevent what he anticipated could become a catastrophic loss of territory, Perišić presented various scenarios for a VJ response should the SRJ enter the war directly.

⁵⁷ 7 June 1995, Perišić-P00786, p. 31.

⁵⁸ 13 June 1995, Perišić-P00762, p. 5; Undated, Perišić-P01751.

⁵⁹ 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, pp. 67-68 and 74.

⁶⁰ 21 July 1994, Perišić-P00785, p. 7.

⁶¹ 22 November 1994, Perišić-P00226, p. 41.

Protecting the Posavina corridor that connected the Serb territories remained one of the top priorities in various planned offensives, as it had at the Coordination Council discussions.⁶² The SDC sought to avoid openly involving the VJ in the war, but it considered military options throughout the conflict should the situation compel deployment.

The SDC could not withdraw its support from the VRS because SRJ-RS interests were inextricable. Perhaps to scare his fellow council members to continue funding the VRS, Perišić described the potential disaster that would ensue should the RS collapse. If the VRS lost the war, Perišić envisioned that more than 100,000 refugees would seek protection in the SRJ.⁶³ Among their ranks would come armed and angry paramilitaries who could wreak havoc in SRJ areas with large non-Serb populations.⁶⁴ Moreover, the political opposition might conceivably take advantage of the chaos and accuse the government of abandoning their ethnic kin in Bosnia, thereby instigating internal uprisings and even civil war.⁶⁵ Milošević admitted that the SDC propelled the war when he told the council ‘sending ammunition is not a way to influence stopping the war.’⁶⁶ In the RS, Karadžić confirmed Belgrade’s on-going role when he told the assembly in May 1995 that he had received assurances from Serbia that the VRS ‘would be *allowed* to continue fighting.’⁶⁷ The various disaster scenarios required prevention at all costs, and thus the SDC did not cease propping up the VRS, despite favouring an end to the war.

The SRJ’s 1994-95 political dissociation from the RS leadership occurred because of a disagreement on when and how to achieve a single Serb state. August 1994 was a

⁶² 18 January 1995, Perišić-P00794, p. 4; 29 July 1995, Perišić-P00763, pp. 2-3; 12 May 1995, Perišić-P00749, p. 4.

⁶³ 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, p. 68.

⁶⁴ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P00797, pp. 9-11.

⁶⁵ 30 August 1994, Perišić-P00224, p. 16.

⁶⁶ 27 September 1994, Perišić-P00792, p. 103.

⁶⁷ Emphasis added, *Iz Skupstine Republike Srpske*, p. 53.

showdown over the precise dispute argued at the Coordination Council revealed in Chapter 4. Karadžić did not want to give up an inch of RS territory. The SRJ leaders held a more realistic assessment of the circumstances and wanted to end the war rather than gamble on the future of Serb territories. But the Bosnian Serbs had the SDC trapped. If aid stopped then the VRS would face defeat and that would mean even greater problems for the SRJ. With the SDC's approval, the VRS had won the war and yet the conflict went on. In August 1995, one of Perišić's worst-case scenarios took place and resolved the Serb disagreement in Belgrade's favour.

Applying the Long-term Strategy

Events in July and August 1995 brought an end to VRS military supremacy in Bosnia. The RSK's collapse in early August allowed Milošević and the SDC to impose their long-term state-building strategy on the Bosnian Serb leadership. As hundreds of thousands of Croatian Serb refugees poured across the Una River from Croatia into the RS, the Croatian Army followed close behind. The influx of refugees coupled with the advance of enemy forces brought Karadžić's regime to the brink of collapse.⁶⁸ The imminent invasion of the RS granted Milošević the political capital he needed to wrest authority away from Karadžić and reestablish himself as the chief protector of Serbs in the region. The SDC agreed that a VJ intervention would likely result in further losses for the Serb side, so diplomatic negotiations – to be led by Milošević on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs – were needed to salvage what territories remained under Serb control. By persuading international negotiators to recognise the RS as a constituent unit in post-war Bosnia, Milošević achieved the objective he had articulated at the Coordination Council in 1993.

⁶⁸ Cigar, 'Serb War Effort and Termination of the War,' pp. 222-227; and Holbrooke, *To End a War*, p. 161.

In summer 1995, VRS atrocities and losses galvanised international resolve to intervene in the war and increased pressure on Karadžić to settle for peace. The SDC did not discuss the mass killing that occurred in Srebrenica during its July and August meetings. The loss of Grahovo, in western Bosnia, to Croat forces in late July sent an ominous signal to Belgrade that the aspiring Serb states in Croatia and Bosnia had become more vulnerable than ever since their inception. On 29 July, the SDC decided to ‘immediately continue to extend certain assistance to the armies of the RS and RSK within limits that do not jeopardise the combat readiness of the VJ.’⁶⁹ Milošević acknowledged at the SDC that ‘America saved Banja Luka’ because of pressure put on the Croatian and Bosnian Muslim presidents to halt their forces before they overran the Bosnian Serb stronghold.⁷⁰ These developments allowed Milošević to impose his will on the Bosnian Serb leadership.

Although the November 1993 Lilić Directive called for VJ deployment to protect Serbs outside Serbia in the case of an attack like Operation ‘Storm,’ the SDC determined a military response would be futile. The council feared VJ deployment outside Serbia and Montenegro would grant Germany and other powers the justification to ‘punish the aggressor’ and invade the SRJ.⁷¹ Milošević reminded the SDC that the VJ could not enter UN-recognised Croatia and Bosnia, adding, ‘just look at how Iraq fared in Kuwait.’⁷² Among other possible scenarios, the SDC identified the following as a potential consequence of VJ deployment:

The possible involvement of the SRJ in war outside its territory would be a great risk because the great powers would confirm their claims about the alleged insincere peace policy of the SRJ; NATO hawks would opt for the massive use of

⁶⁹ 29 July 1995, Perišić-P00763, p. 4.

⁷⁰ 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, p. 13; and Holbrooke, *To End a War*, pp. 161-168.

⁷¹ 5 August 1995, Perišić-P00714, p. 3.

⁷² 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, pp. 25-26.

airpower against targets in the SRJ; foreign instigators of Shiptar [derogatory term for Albanians] and Muslim secessionists would request them to start an armed struggle; the Croat-Muslim coalition would be encouraged to launch a strategic offensive against the RSK and the RS and their possible success could prompt even an attack on the SRJ; the threat to the SRJ's security would be at a maximum.⁷³

Moreover, the SDC concluded that combined Serb forces stood no chance of victory.⁷⁴ As Perišić's deputy Blagoje Kovačević told the council: 'We should not among ourselves play patriots who fan totally unrealistic ambitions in order for the entire nation to pay the price later.'⁷⁵ Considering the VJ's depleted arsenal, the SRJ's negative international standing, and the increasing momentum of their enemies, the SDC rejected the idea of intervention in Croatia and Bosnia.

In order to achieve his diplomatic, strategic, and ideological goal, Milošević needed to remove Karadžić from the political scene. The SDC members framed the RS leadership's unwillingness to accept peace as a policy that countered the interests of all Serbs.⁷⁶ Refusing to accept a peace agreement had resulted in needless VRS casualties and a loss of territory.⁷⁷ Karadžić's decisions prior to the fall of Knin – such as his attempt to replace Mladić as head of the VRS and his choice to abandon strategic areas in western Bosnia – were so wayward that Milošević even mused that the RS president was colluding with Croatian President Tuđman to drag the VJ into the war.⁷⁸ But because Milošević needed authorisation from the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate on their behalf, he renewed his hitherto unsuccessful strategy to implement a change of RS policy through Mladić.⁷⁹ Mladić refused to sign an agreement yielding authority to negotiate on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs to

⁷³ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, pp. 7-8.

⁷⁴ Ibid., pp. 9 and 25-26.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷⁶ 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁷ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, pp. 24-25.

⁷⁸ Ibid., BCS p. 22, p. 25; 5 August 1995, Perišić-P00714, p. 3.

⁷⁹ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, p. 25.

Milošević and suggested a joint meeting of the feuding RS-SRJ political elites.⁸⁰ Before meeting with RS leaders face to face, the SDC members made it clear for the first time that any further military assistance would come only if the RS government agreed to accept and implement SRJ policy.⁸¹

The council concurred that tactful negotiations with the other warring parties represented the only hope for securing Serb territory in Bosnia and perpetuating the conditions for a future expanded state. At a SDC session in late August, its members concluded that it was in the broader Serb interest to pursue diplomatic and political avenues towards peace and prevent the SRJ from ‘being drawn into the war.’⁸² They hoped to counter the further loss of territory by asking the UN Security Council to declare eastern Slavonia in Croatia a safe area, yet Milošević pointed out the absurdity of this idea after the VRS takeovers of the Srebrenica and Žepa safe zones.⁸³ The Serbian president also made it clear that unlike Karadžić, he was prepared to settle for 49 per cent of Bosnian territory.⁸⁴ Mladić’s logic that ‘what a Serb soldier has acquired with his gun has to be retained’ was unacceptable to the SDC.⁸⁵ As Milošević had repeated many times during the war, 50 per cent of the territory for 30 per cent of the population was the maximum the Serb side could hope to have recognised by the international community.

At the August 1995 SDC sessions and in two meetings that month with RS leaders, Milošević insisted on the right to represent the Bosnian Serbs at the final negotiations. He blamed the leaders of the Serb territories for pursuing a reckless wartime strategy and

⁸⁰ 23 August 1995, Perišić-P00713, pp. 5-6.

⁸¹ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, p. 19.

⁸² Ibid., p. 10.

⁸³ Ibid., p. 19.

⁸⁴ 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, p. 6.

⁸⁵ 11 August 1995, Perišić-P02743, p. 29.

reminded them how he had backed the Contact Group Plan.⁸⁶ The council heard how the defeat had put the Serb people ‘further away from the ultimate goal’ because they had not accepted a peace plan earlier.⁸⁷ The SRJ leaders decided to dictate terms and threatened to sever ties with the RS if its leadership did not accept a peace plan.⁸⁸ Although it seemed the RSK was lost, Milošević repeated the same argument to Bosnian Serb leaders that he had put forward at the Coordination Council. The VRS had achieved the third strategic objective and eliminated the Drina River as a border between Serb states. That meant, in Milošević’s words, the two ‘made a compact territory’ and thus he implied that the *de facto* unity he referred to in 1993 existed.⁸⁹ Even with military defeat pending, Milošević promoted his view that institutions such as a post-war Bosnian state did not matter as much as the realised closeness between the SRJ and the RS.

After securing the right to represent the Serb side at upcoming peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, Milošević implemented the next step in the long-term strategy to establish a single Serb state in the Balkans.⁹⁰ He secured the continued existence of the RS, which the peace agreement allotted 49 per cent of Bosnian territory.⁹¹ Milošević returned to Belgrade victorious, telling the SDC ‘we have simply succeeded.’⁹² He noted that in defeat the RS received the same offer that the Contact Group had proposed a year earlier.⁹³ A Serb state existed where one never had in the past.⁹⁴ Milošević had even managed to sustain the ‘territorial integrity’ he referred to in the Coordination Council by retaining almost the

⁸⁶ 5 August 1995, Perišić-P00714, pp. 2-4.

⁸⁷ 11 August 1995, p. 18.

⁸⁸ 29 August 1995, Perišić-P00232, pp. 17-18.

⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 6.

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 16-18.

⁹¹ See Appendix K for the internal division of Bosnia agreed to at Dayton.

⁹² 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, p. 5.

⁹³ Ibid., p. 6.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 6.

whole western bank of the Drina River.⁹⁵ He also acknowledged that the Serb side won territories that had never had Serb majorities before, thereby cementing the results of ethnic cleansing.⁹⁶ Therefore, the SDC agreed that ‘it is imperative that we give the maximum contribution to the realisation of the Dayton agreement.’⁹⁷ From the Belgrade leadership’s perspective, a step towards unification had been taken.

The SDC transcripts reflect how Milošević snatched victory from defeat at Dayton. The collapse of the Republika Srpska Krajina ended Serb nationalist aspirations for territory in Croatia, but along with subsequent military actions, it altered the balance of power in Bosnia enough for Milošević to force Bosnian Serb leadership to endorse him as their primary negotiator. He consistently maintained the pretence that the SRJ and the VJ were not involved in the Bosnian conflict, he secured a contiguous connection along the Drina River between the RS and Serbia (the third strategic objective), and he secured recognition for the RS in a weak, ethnically divided Bosnia. Such an outcome ‘created the conditions’ for a single state one day in the future.

Conclusion

The SRJ leadership dominated by Milošević and the RS leadership shared a vision for a single Serb state in the Balkans. Top Serbian and Montenegrin politicians and generals approved of the use of force and extreme violence to consolidate Serb territory in Bosnia. Belgrade leaders believed that a piecemeal approach to unification favoured Serb interests in light of international opposition to their nationalist programme. When their efforts to persuade the RS leadership to adopt their stance proved unsuccessful, the SDC

⁹⁵ 6 December 1995, Perišić-P00234, p. 7.

⁹⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

attempted to sway the RS position through Mladić and the VRS. That approach also failed but the SDC continued to arm the VRS in order to prevent the collapse of the Bosnian Serb regime. As demonstrated by the evidence, Milošević did not exercise over Karadžić anything close to the degree of control that Tuđman held over Boban, and therefore could not simply remove Karadžić from power. After the RSK's collapse, Milošević imposed himself as the Serb representative at the final peace negotiations and settled for the outcome that he had advocated in 1992.

By August 1995, the fall of Knin proved both Karadžić and Milošević right about the dangers of delaying a strategic consensus. Over time, Zagreb- and Sarajevo-loyal forces gained strength and overcame the VRS's military might with a coordinated attack bolstered by NATO air support. The RS had won the war within months but could not formalise its authority before the rest of the world. Karadžić wanted Serb unification and refused to cede territory, Milošević was prepared to give up some land and accept a weak Bosnian state in the short-term, and the RSK collapsed in part thanks to the delay caused by the Karadžić-Milošević feud.

The dynamics of the RS-SRJ relationship render the term 'alliance' misleading. As the SDC members admitted several times – and as RS representatives themselves reported – a halt in assistance would have led to the RS's collapse. On-going military aid allowed Karadžić to reject peace proposals because he knew the VRS could keep fighting. The question of the SRJ's support to the RS was overtaken by events in summer 1995 – first Croatia's Western-backed military victory and then NATO's Operation 'Deliberate Force' – which put the SRJ in a position where it either had to intervene on behalf of the Bosnian

Serb regime or the RS would have to compromise on Belgrade's terms. At the end of August 1995, Karadžić could not afford to defy his suppliers.

The discussions in the Coordination Council and SDC sessions rarely touched upon atrocities. One explanation for this is that Milošević avoided using explicit terms when discussing military developments on the record. Even though all the SRJ records cited in this study were classified as state secret at the time the SDC's stenographers prepared them, the Serbian and Montenegrin council members knew better than to implicate themselves in atrocities. For the same reason, council members avoided using the term 'Greater Serbia,' an expression of ideological radicalism they knew the international community associated with aggression. It is clear the SDC considered it prudent to leave the obvious descriptive terminology unspoken, even though atrocities and expansionism characterised their planning.

Is it possible that Milošević and other Belgrade leaders were not genuinely committed to nationalist goals, but instead calculating politicians who used Serb nationalism to rise to power, only to abandon those principles and pursue peace once victory became uncertain? It is evident that pressure from more outspoken and aggressively nationalist forces within Serbia, as well as the threat of Serb refugees from Bosnia and Croatia pouring across the Drina River, kept Milošević and others on the nationalist path they followed as Yugoslavia collapsed. Yet pressure alone does not explain the enthusiasm and explicit rationale for support expressed by the SRJ leadership. The Serbian and Montenegrin leaders shared the same vision for the future as did the RS and RSK politicians, but they disagreed about the practical possibility of achieving it in their contemporary environment. Milošević and others correctly perceived that after the

atrocities committed by Serb forces in 1992 became known around the world, it had become improbable that the international community would recognise an expanded Serb state. A realistic assessment of the global political situation, the importance of preserving some semblance of deniability regarding involvement in the conflict, international sanctions, and the VJ's depleted military stockpiles all enforced the SRJ leadership's inclination to a long-term approach without diluting its commitment to 'creating conditions' for a single Serb state. As Milošević confirmed in a 2001 interview that 'we helped our people [Serbs in the RS and RSK] with all the resources we had at our disposal.'⁹⁸ At Dayton, Milošević achieved the result that he had prescribed in the first year of the war, before sanctions, pressure, and exhausted supplies brought the SRJ closer to economic collapse.

⁹⁸ Milošević made these comments while under detention by order of the Belgrade District Court for allegedly using state funds for personal benefit from 1994 to 2000. 2 April 2001, Perišić-P00322.

Conclusion

The determination of political and military leaders to realise their state-building projects made the 1992-95 war in Bosnia a nightmare for millions of people. Serb and Croat nationalists who committed to creating exclusivist nation-states from multi-ethnic Bosnia played a crucial role in rearranging the country's demographic structure. The evidence examined in this thesis reveals the historical and contemporary political perspectives that inspired the campaigns to carve out sections of Bosnia and connect them to Serbia and Croatia.

The first section examined how Serb and Croat leaders in Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia prepared to adopt aggressive strategies as it became clear that Yugoslavia would not survive. With the support of Belgrade and Zagreb, Bosnian Serb and Croat leaders created new institutions with the intention of linking territories under their control to Serbia and Croatia respectively. Radovan Karadžić's 'six strategic objectives' represented the most explicit ideological programme that aimed at creating a new demographic reality in Bosnia. Franjo Tuđman's unambiguous desire to recreate the 1939-41 Banovina of Croatia also set Bosnian Croat nationalist policy on an antagonistic course for the first eighteen months of the war. Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, though he assumed a less direct role in the management of his Bosnian proxies than his Croatian counterpart, committed to providing the Bosnian Serbs with the means to wage their war for ideological reasons. At the outset of the conflict, Serb and Croat leaders expressed a sense of victimhood and vulnerability that they invoked to justify embarking on their state-building projects. Nationalist leaders focused on promoting the interests of their respective ethnic groups and they ignored the potential consequences their programmes would have on those across the ethnic divide.

The second section discussed how the visions articulated at the beginning of the war translated to military action in subsequent years. The advantage held by Bosnian Serb forces coupled with the political and military leadership's ideological zeal led to disaster for Bosnia's non-Serbs. The six strategic objectives determined military operations, prompted the three-year-long shelling of Sarajevo, and inspired the harassment, expulsion, and mass killing of non-Serbs, most notably at Srebrenica in July 1995. Moreover, the constant invocation of the objectives, as well as their ideological underpinnings, by Bosnian Serb military leaders demonstrates the enthusiasm the army leadership expressed for the political programme articulated by Karadžić. The dramatic results achieved by Bosnian Serb forces led by Ratko Mladić would not have been possible without the steadfast financial and materiel support provided by Milošević's establishment in Belgrade.

Croat forces active in Herzegovina and Central Bosnia adopted a similar approach towards non-Croats as Serb forces did towards non-Serbs. Areas under the control of Herceg Bosna authorities became the sites of atrocities against Bosnian Serbs and Muslims, as leaders of the HVO pursued the ethnic homogenisation of their territories that they planned to link to Croatia. The similar approaches to expulsion adopted by Herceg Bosna and Republika Srpska authorities also reflect the common ideological principles nationalist leaders based their states on. While both the Bosnian Serb and Croat military leaderships espoused exclusivist nationalist programmes and engaged in violence through their pursuit, the number of atrocities attributed to the VRS reflects the scale and character of its ambitions and also its military superiority through most of the conflict.

The third section analysed the belligerents' ideological evolution (or lack thereof) as the war progressed. Thanks in large part to pressure applied by the international community,

Tuđman reluctantly decided to change course in Bosnia, abandoning his plan to annex Herceg Bosna and seeking to make peace with the Bosnian Muslims. The Croatian president's pragmatic approach led to the sacking of Bosnia Croat leader Mate Boban and the signing of the Washington Agreement in March 1994. However, as Tuđman's comments before and after the peace deal with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović indicate, he never abandoned his dream to expand Croatia's borders. The Washington Agreement reflected recognition that the ideological ambition to create a Greater Croatian state could not be achieved during the war, and by signing it Tuđman hoped to gain influence over the Bosnian Muslims and bring them under Croatia's control in the future. Milošević also realised that the international community had committed to the preservation of Bosnia's pre-war borders and attempted to convince the Bosnian Serb leadership to adopt a long-term approach to establishing Greater Serbia. The pressure applied against Milošević, coupled with his realistic assessment of broader global political circumstances, led him to urge Karadžić to settle for 'creating conditions' for the 'final goal.' Yet Karadžić and his followers refused to budge from the course they set in 1992. The Bosnian Serb leadership's failure to compromise prolonged the war allowed its enemies to become more powerful and achieve military victories, and resulted in Karadžić's replacement by Milošević as chief negotiator for the Bosnian Serb side. The capacity to compromise contributed to Croatia's victory over the breakaway Croatian Serb state, while Karadžić's recalcitrance led to his downfall. Milošević emerged from the war a relative moderate, relishing his victory.

Evidence cited in this thesis indicates that political leaders removed from physical violence instigated and shared the rationale for ethnic conflict expressed by perpetrators on the ground. While not directly committing any violent acts themselves, these leaders

established institutions charged with achieving ideological goals – for example, ‘the separation of peoples’ – thereby creating an environment where crimes against ethnic outsiders became acceptable. Nationalist authorities failed to punish perpetrators; in fact, expelling ethnic outsiders was not considered wrong in a legal or moral sense. The commitment to the national principle and creating homogeneous states independent of association with Others trumped conventional social rules. The heightened ideological atmosphere not only encouraged crimes against non-Serbs and non-Croats, it also created a political environment where those who advocated a shift in strategy needed to present their case within a nationalist programme. While Tuđman’s complete control over Herceg Bosna leaders allowed him to remove Boban and scrap Herceg Bosna in favour of the Federation, Milošević’s lack of direct authority and unwillingness to force the Bosnian Serb leadership led him to wait until the Bosnian Serbs suffered military losses before the Serbian president changed Serb policy. As Milošević reflected defensively almost a year after the conflict ended, ‘we never told them do this or do that – they did things the way they wanted.’¹ The SDC and VJ may not have ordered the VRS to undertake certain operations or to commit crimes, but those institutions did make the Bosnian Serb war effort possible and could have stopped it. Belgrade authorities never took action to prevent crimes or to punish VRS perpetrators after atrocities had taken place. The VJ leadership had legal authority over top VRS officers but took no steps to enforce adherence to the laws of war.

Tuđman and Milošević adapted and survived, while Boban and Karadžić lost their grip on power. A further irony is that with Milošević as the lead negotiator, the Serb side achieved a ‘better’ outcome at the final peace negotiations than at previous mediations by securing an almost contiguous single entity (with the exception of the Brčko District), as

¹21 November 1996, Perišić-P00800, p. 10.

well as the entire Drina River Valley. Izetbegović, whose forces finally managed to force the VRS into retreat, ended up accepting the existence of Republika Srpska at Dayton. No one seems to have ‘won’ in the Bosnian war except for Tuđman and Milošević, the paradoxical peacemakers.

The evidence that Serbia and Croatia sought to break and divide Bosnia is compelling. Transcripts of discussions from behind closed doors reveal that Tuđman and Milošević used the organs of their states to supply the authorities of their Bosnian proxy regimes with the means to commit crimes. While Tuđman and Milošević may have expressed concern for protecting members of their own ethnic group in the conflict – although both accepted the necessity of battlefield casualties – they articulated no remorse for the suffering of others. Nor can I recall any occasion when a significant decision-maker warned against a certain action because of the possible human cost. Serb and Croat nationalist leaders ignored the atrocities their forces committed. Although crimes occurred on a systematic scale, the rhetoric of Serb and Croat political leaders was self-centred. Concentration camps, mass killings, and cultural destruction only became topics of discussion when identified as the source of negative publicity in foreign media. Milošević’s death at trial, Tuđman’s death before indictment, and the acquittal of high-profile Serbian and Croatian military personnel do not exculpate their states from involvement in the Bosnian war. The evidence proves that the Croatian and Serbian states made war in Bosnia possible and that through their patronage leaders in Zagreb and Belgrade had means at their disposal to halt the violence. They simply did not want to stop it.

The words of Serb and Croat officials quoted in the preceding chapters also offer invaluable insights to students of post-war Bosnian history and politics. The Dayton Peace

Agreement recognised the Republika Srpska on 49 per cent of Bosnian territory and established a three-member presidency with one representative for each of the country's main ethnic groups. For both the Croatian and Serbian leaderships, accepting the peace agreement – the specifics of which they helped to negotiate – represented a continuation of long-term policies to divide Bosnia. To what degree has the post-war arrangement granted nationalists a lever to destroy Bosnia from within? Has the entrenchment of ethnic divisions in the constitution and governance of the state taken Bosnia to a dead end, as Milošević anticipated, and prevented it from functioning? Since the end of the war, the weak Bosnian state has struggled to reconcile the former warring sides and severe economic problems have hampered reconstruction and development. At the time of writing, Bosnian Serb nationalists openly advocate secession and refer to the Bosnian state as a hindrance to their development, while some Bosnian Croat nationalists call for the reestablishment of a Croat entity in Bosnia. Is it possible that Milošević and Tuđman's concept of a weak Bosnian state and a long-term plan to establish Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia remains alive? Considering these questions can help those interested in preserving peace in the Balkans recognise the ideologies competing for Bosnia's future.

Appendix A – Timeline

Adapted from *Balkan Battlegrounds*, pp. 1-40

1990

18 November First multi-party election in Bosnia; SDA-SDS-HDZ win 90 per cent of seats and form coalition

1991

25 March Milošević and Tuđman hold secret meeting in Karadorđevo to discuss Yugoslav crisis and allegedly partitioning Bosnia

25 June Croatia and Slovenia declare independence

27 June JNA begins operations against local TO in ten-day Slovenian conflict

June – December War in Croatia between Croat forces and the JNA and Serb paramilitaries

5 July European Community imposes arms embargo on former Yugoslavia

18 July Yugoslav Federal Presidency orders JNA to withdraw from Slovenia

September Serb Autonomous Regions (SAO) declared in Bosnia: SAO East and Old Herzegovina (12 September); SAO Krajina (16 September); SAO Romanija (17 September); SAO Northeast Bosnia (19 September)

25 September UNSC Resolution 713 imposes arms embargo on former Yugoslavia

15 October Serb members walk out of Bosnian Assembly in Sarajevo

24 October ‘Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina’ declared

9-10 November Bosnian Serb authorities hold referendum to stay in Yugoslavia

18 November HDZ branch in Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaims the ‘Croat Community of Herceg Bosna’

23 December Germany recognises Slovenia and Croatia

1992

2 January	UN-sponsored 'Sarajevo Agreement' establishes ceasefire in Croatia
9 January	Karadžić declares independence of 'Republic of Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina'
15 January	European Community, United States, and 14 other countries recognise Croatia and Slovenia
29 February	Bosnian government holds referendum on independence
1 March	Serb wedding party shot at in Sarajevo
3 March	Bosnian government declares independence from Yugoslavia; Barricades go up in Sarajevo
18 March	Serb, Croat, and Muslim leaders agree to Carrington-Cutileiro plan
28 March	Izetbegović withdraws signature from Carrington-Cutileiro plan
31 March	Fighting breaks out in Bijeljina; Serb paramilitaries including Arkan's forces take over town; violence against Muslim inhabitants and property follows
3 April	Fighting occurs in Mostar; attacks on JNA reservists
4 April	Izetbegović orders mobilisation of Bosnian Republic TO and police
5 April	Siege of Sarajevo begins; city divided; Grbavica, Ilidža, and Vogošća under control of Serb forces
6 April	Bosnian independence declared; Serb militia shoot peace protestors in Sarajevo from Holiday Inn
7 April	EC and US recognise Bosnian independence; Serb militants take over Višegrad; mass violence against Muslim inhabitants occurs, including thousands of murders
7 April	JNA and Serb forces take Kupres from Croat forces
8 April	Croat Defence Council (HVO) established in Grude by HDZ members as military force of Herceg Bosna
8-10 April	Takeover of Zvornik by Arkan's and Šešelj's paramilitaries

9-17 April	Serb forces defeat Muslim militia in Foča; mass violence occurs against non-Serb inhabitants; Foča becomes rape centre
10 April	Mate Boban declares Bosnian Republic Territorial Defence illegal on Herceg Bosna-claimed territory
10 April	JNA begins shelling Mostar
27 April	The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ), consisting of Serbia and Montenegro, created with proclamation of new constitution
2 May	Izetbegović detained by JNA at Sarajevo airport; the following day withdrawing JNA troops in Sarajevo shot at, at least six killed
6 May	Mate Boban and Radovan Karadžić sign Graz agreement, pledging to limit Serb-Croat conflict in Bosnia; agree to divide Mostar
8-10 May	Troops led by Naser Orić take Srebrenica from Serb forces
12 May	Serb Assembly approves wartime six strategic objectives; Ratko Mladić appointed Chief of VRS Main Staff
20 May	JNA formally withdraws from Bosnia
23 May	VRS attacks villages and towns near Prijedor, Sanski Most, Ključ
27 May	20 civilians killed and 100 injured as shell hits Sarajevo bread queue
30 May	UNSC Resolution 757 imposes economic sanctions on SRJ
31 May	Milošević's Socialist Party wins local and federal elections in SRJ
1 June	Karadžić turns control of Sarajevo airport over to UN
15 June	Dobrica Ćosić elected president of SRJ
21 June	HV-HVO expel Serb forces from Mostar during Operation 'Jackal'
24 June	VRS launches Operation 'Corridor 92' in Posavina region: Modriča falls 28 June; Bosanski Brod falls 6 October; three kilometre wide 'corridor' established southwest of Brčko
July-August	World media report on Bosnian Serb concentration camps in Krajina

2 August	Tuđman wins re-election and HDZ retains majority in Croatia
12 August	Bosnian Serb assembly votes to rename entity 'Republika Srpska'
18 September	Bosnian Constitutional Court declares 'Herceg Bosna' institutions illegal
9 October	UNSC Resolution 781 establishes no-fly zone over Bosnia
19-23 October	Fighting in Travnik, Prozor, and Vitez between Croat and Muslim forces
29 October	Operation 'Vrbas 92' concludes as VRS takes Jajce from HVO
December	VRS Operation 'Una 92' fails to seize Grabež plateau and southern bank of Una River in Bihać region against ABiH 5 th Corps
10 December	ABiH claims Mount Žuč, defending Sarajevo from VRS northern attack

1993

2 January	Vance Owen Peace plan presented; HDZ leaders accept
7-8 January	Naser Orić's troops attack Kravica village in Srebrenica; village looted and razed; civilians expelled. Similar attacks had taken place in Ratkovići (21 and 27 June 1992); Ježestica (8 August 1992); Fakovići (5 October 1992); and Bjelovac (14-19 December 1992)
15 January	HVO issues ultimatum to ABiH to withdraw from provinces designated to Croats in Vance Owen Plan
January – April	VRS launches Operation 'Cerska 93' to take Srebrenica enclave from ABiH; fierce fighting results in enclave contracting
8 March	EC ministers promise tougher sanctions if SRJ fails to push Bosnian Serbs to accept the Vance Owen Plan
25 March	Izetbegović signs the Vance Owen Plan
12 April	NATO patrols begin to enforce no fly zone
14 April	HVO attacks and occupies Prozor; ABiH-HVO fighting takes place in Gornji Vakuf, Fojnica, and Mostar; west side of Mostar declared Croat city and capital of Herceg Bosna

15 April	HVO reissues its demand for ABiH to withdraw, prompts fighting in contested Lašva Valley, Vitez, and Kiseljak
16 April	In Ahmići village HVO kill 120 Muslim men, women, and children
16 April	UNSC Resolution 819 declares Srebrenica first ‘safe area’
17 April	UNSC Resolution 820 imposes stiffer economic sanctions against SRJ, targeting trade
1-2 May	Karadžić reluctantly accepts Vance Owen Plan in Athens, pending referendum
6 May	RS assembly rejects Vance Owen Plan 51-2, with 12 abstentions
6 May	UNSC 824 declares Sarajevo and five other Muslim enclaves in Bosnia ‘safe areas’ under UN protection
8 May	Major HVO attack on ABiH-controlled east Mostar, repelled by 21 May
15-16 May	Bosnian Serbs reject Vance Owen Plan in referendum
25 May	UNSC Resolution 827 establishes an international tribunal to prosecute war crimes in former Yugoslavia
June - July	HVO loses Konjic, Jablanica, Fojnica, Travnik, Kakanj, Zenica and Bugojno to ABiH; total loss about 3,700 square kilometres, over quarter of Herceg Bosna-claimed territory
4 June	UNSC Resolution 836 authorises troops for the safe areas in Bosnia and permits them to use force to defend themselves
4 June	ABiH attacks Travnik, captures from HVO over following days
8 June	Rasim Delić assumes post as Commander of Main Staff of ABiH
16 June	ABiH captures Kakanj from HVO
16-17 June	Tuđman, Milošević, and Izetbegović meet in Geneva with UN and EC envoys Stoltenberg and Owen to discuss three-way partition
19-20 June	Krajina Serbs overwhelmingly vote in favour of unification with other Serb territories in referendum
25 June	SRJ parliament elects Milošević ally Zoran Lilić to replace ousted

	federal president Ćosić
30 June	ABiH captures northern suburbs of Mostar, Tihomir Mišić Barracks, a hydroelectric dam on the Neretva, and some northwestern Mostar neighbourhoods
30 June	Prlić orders HVO general mobilisation, begins mass arrests of Muslims
11 July	VRS takes Trnovo, linking Herzegovina Serb territories with rest of Republika Srpska
24 July	Slobodan Praljak replaces Milivoj Petković as HVO Commander
26 July	VRS completes Operation 'Joint Action' and widens the Posavina corridor by five kilometres
30 July	Bosnian government rejects the Owen Stoltenberg plan
1 August	VRS captures Mount Igman, key strategic point en route to Sarajevo, but pulls back by 19 August after NATO/UN pressure
13 August	<i>El Mujahedin</i> unit subordinated to ABiH 3 rd Corps; mujahedin fighters arrived in summer and autumn 1992 and had fought alongside ABiH before August 1993
28 August	Boban declares 'Croat <i>Republic</i> of Herceg Bosna'
14 September	ABiH launches Operation 'Neretva 93' targeting Croat enclaves in Lašva Valley and border of HB along Gornji Vakuf, Prozor, Jablanica, Vrđi, Mostar, and Buna
14 September	Uzdol massacre: ABiH soldiers kill 34 Croat civilians during rampage in village seven kilometres from Prozor
17 September	ABiH begins two-week failed attempt to break siege of Mostar
20 September	Milošević, Tuđman, and Izetbegović meet with Owen and Stoltenberg on the aircraft carrier HMS <i>Invincible</i> in Adriatic to discuss 'Invincible Plan'
27 September	Bihać citizens' assembly declares independence of Muslim enclave
22 October	Abdić concludes peace agreement with Bosnian Serb leader Karadžić in Belgrade; Milošević and the Karadžić recognise Abdić's 'Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia'

23 October	Stupni Do massacre: HVO soldiers kill at least 37 Bosnian Muslims and raze village
26 October	ABiH Operation ‘Trebević 1’ cracks down on gangs in Sarajevo led by Caco and Ćelo
3 November	ABiH attacks Vareš and HVO orders Croat civilian withdrawal
9 November	Old Bridge in Mostar destroyed by HVO
9 November	Ante Roso replaces Slobodan Praljak as Commander of HVO

1994

12 January	Tuđman announces that Boban will no longer attend peace negotiations
30 January	VRS Operation ‘Drina 93’ fails to sever line between Tuzla and Zenica
5 February	First Markale Marketplace bombing in Sarajevo: 68 killed and 200 wounded; UN calls for NATO intervention
8 February	Bosnian Croat leader Boban announces his resignation in favour of a Herceg Bosna collective presidency
23 February	ABiH Commander Delić and HVO Commander Roso sign ceasefire
28 February	US planes shoot down four Bosnian Serb aircraft violating the no-fly zone in NATO’s first ever combat mission
18 March	Izetbegović, Tuđman, and Bosnian Croat leader Zubak sign the Washington Agreement creating the Croat-Muslim Federation
29 March	VRS launches Operation ‘Star 94’ against Goražde enclave
10-11 April	First ever NATO ground strikes target VRS formations around Goražde; VRS takes UN peacekeepers hostage; 22 April VRS withdraws; enclave contracts
20 April	VRS attempt to widen Posavina corridor fails
13 May	Ministers from the Contact Group countries – United States, Russia, United Kingdom, and France – agree on new strategy for peace

6 July	The Contact Group presents its peace plan to the warring parties and gives two weeks to respond; Bosnian government accepts 18 July
3 August	The Bosnian Serb assembly votes unanimously to hold a referendum on Contact Group proposal
4 August	Milošević announces immediate political and economic blockade against Bosnian Serbs
20 August	Bosnian and Croatian Serb leaders sign a joint declaration calling for a unified Serb state
21 August	ABiH 5 th Corps enters Velika Kladuša, Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia collapses, Fikret Abdić and 10,000 refugees cross into Serb-controlled territory in Croatia
27-28 August	Bosnian Serbs reject overwhelmingly Contact Group plan in referendum
12 September	VRS Operation 'Breza 94' fails to take Bihać enclave
14 September	Izetbegović and Tuđman reach agreement on the creation of a Bosnian Muslim-Croat military command
27 October	ABiH expands Bihać enclave 250 square kilometres south and east
3 November	HVO-ABiH action takes Kupres from VRS
October – December	ABiH 5 th Corps defeats 2 nd Krajina Corps in Bihać; VRS responds and retakes all lost territory in Operation 'Shield 94'
29 November	The HV and HVO attack 2 nd Krajina Corps in Livno valley; push back front 10-12 kilometres to make room for future attack on Knin

1995

26 March	Karadžić orders general mobilisation
4 April	ABiH Operation 'Reach 1' takes Mount Vlašić from VRS
April 95	VRS Operation 'Spreč -95' fails to take east of Tuzla
May 95	VRS Operation 'Joint Action 95' fails to widen the Posavina corridor and remove the threat to Doboj

1 May	HV launches Operation 'Flash' attack across UN lines into UN Sector West/Western Slavonia; Krajina Serbs respond by shelling nearby Croatian towns and taking 122 UN personnel hostage
2 May	Krajina Serbs shoot rockets into downtown Zagreb and nearby Pleso airport in retaliation for the Croatian offensive in UN Sector West; Five killed and more than 100 injured
3 May	HV continues its push into Sector West/ Western Slavonia, seizing all strategic points; Tuđman declares victory
5 May	VRS launches Operation 'Flame 95' against Orašje as a response to Operation 'Flash' and expand corridor; fails by 10 June
24 May	UN officials issue an ultimatum to the warring parties in Bosnia to cease using heavy weapons around Sarajevo; VRS warned to return guns taken from UN depots by noon 25 May or face NATO airstrikes
25-26 May	NATO launches airstrikes against targets near Pale after Bosnian Serbs ignore ultimatum; VRS shells UN safe areas and takes UN troops hostage; VRS shells Tuzla, killing 71 and injuring 240
29 May	Bosnian Serb leaders rescind all prior agreements with the UN
31 May	Press reports indicate that VRS has taken 372 peacekeepers hostage since the 25-26 May NATO airstrikes
4-11 June	HV-HVO Operation 'Jump 2' in Livno Valley captures main valley pass: opens route to Bosansko Grahovo and then Knin
7-13 June	Bosnian Serbs release 258 UN hostages
15 June	The Bosnian Serb assembly votes to unite with Croatian Serbs
15-28 June	ABiH fails to lift siege of Sarajevo
11 July	Bosnian Serbs enter Srebrenica; over following ten days 7,000-8,000 Muslim men and boys are killed by VRS and Serbian forces; 29,000 reach Tuzla by 19 July
14 July	Bosnian Serb forces launch Operation 'Stupčanica 95' and take the Žepa safe area by 26 July; thousands expelled and town razed
19 July	Croatian Serb troops and Abdić open concerted attack on ABiH positions in the northwestern Bihać enclave
22 July	Tuđman, Izetbegović, and Federation leader Zubak sign the Split

	Agreement for Croatia to provide Bosnia military assistance against the Serb offensive in Bihać
24 July	ICTY indicts Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić for war crimes
25-29 July	HV and HVO launch Operation 'Summer' in Livno Valley and take strategic locations Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoč
26 July	Abdić proclaims Republic of Western Bosnia following Croatian Serb army's successful incursion into the Bihać enclave
4 August	Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić replaces Ratko Mladić as commander of the VRS
4-8 August 1995	HV launches Operation 'Storm:' on 5 August Croatian Army forces capture the Croatian Serb stronghold Knin, the RSK collapses, 150,000 -200,000 Serbs flee to Bosnia; RS faces new front as Croatia controls former RSK border
11 August	Karadžić reinstates Mladić as top military commander
14 August	Bosnian Serbs begin a new wave of mass expulsions of Croats and Muslims from Banja Luka
28 August	Bosnian Serb artillery round kills 37 civilians and injures 85 others near the Markale marketplace in Sarajevo
30 August	NATO forces begin Operation 'Deliberate Force' airstrikes against VRS targets near Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Pale, and Goražde
30 August	Karadžić reluctantly gives Milošević authority to negotiate for Bosnian Serbs
8-19 September	HV-HVO-ABiH launch Operations 'Maestral' and 'Sana' against VRS; HV-HVO capture Drvar, Šipovo and Jajce; ABiH takes Bosanski Petrovac, Bosanska Krupa, Donji Vakuf, and Ključ; joint action wins 4,000 square kilometres of territory from Serbs; tens of thousands of Serb civilians flee
10 Sept. - 7 October	Heavy VRS-ABiH fighting around Mount Ozren; ABiH gains 280 square kilometres and prevents VRS from reinforcing NW Bosnia
20 September	NATO suspends bombing after VRS agrees to move heavy weapons away from Sarajevo
8 October	HV-HVO launch Operation 'Southern Move' to take Mrkonjić Grad,

Prijedor, Banja Luka

10 October	ABiH seizes Sanski Most; HV-HVO-ABiH halt advance 20 kilometres from Banja Luka under American pressure
12 October	Ceasefire takes effect
12 November	Izetbegović, Tudman, and Milošević meet in Dayton, Ohio, for final peace talks

Appendix B – Dramatis Personae

Name	Position
Fikret Abdić	Born in Donja Vidovska, close to Velika Kladuša, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1939; became well-known in Yugoslavia for his involvement in the <i>Agrokomerc</i> scandal, which resulted in three years imprisonment; ran as an SDA candidate in the 1990 Bosnian election, winning one of two positions on the presidency reserved for Muslims; left Sarajevo for his native Bihać region in 1993 following a feud with Izetbegović, where he established the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia and allied with Croat and Serb separatists to fight against the Sarajevo-loyal ABiH.
Mile Akmadžić	Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1939; worked in the Bosnian presidency before the war and as advisor and chief of staff to Alija Izetbegović after 1990 election; became HDZ BiH vice president in November 1992; served as prime minister of BiH November 1992 – August 1993; held various posts in Herceg Bosna government after November 1993.
Tihomir Blaškić	Born in Brestovsko, Kiseljak municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1960; served as JNA captain before the war; became a colonel in HVO in 1992; promoted to commander of the HVO in August 1994; in 2000 sentenced to 45 years imprisonment for war crimes committed in Lašva Valley in 1993; sentence commuted to nine years on appeal in 2004.
Mate Boban	Born in Sovići, Grude municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1940; directed the <i>Napredak</i> Croat cultural organisation in the 1960s; served prison time for financial fraud in the 1970s; elected as HDZ delegate to BiH Council of Municipalities in 1990; elected first president of HZ Herceg Bosna in 1991; appointed first president of the HVO in April 1992; resigned presidency of HZ Herceg Bosna in August 1992; assumed presidency of HDZ BiH in November 1992; became president of HR Herceg Bosna in December 1993; resigned from leadership positions in February 1994; died following a stroke in July 1997.
Janko Bobetko	Born in Sisak, Croatia, in 1919; former JNA four star general; fell from authority following his support for the 1971 ‘Croatian Spring;’ appointed commander of HV in ‘Southern Front’ (Bosnia and Herzegovina) by Tuđman in April 1992; chief of staff of HV from November 1992 until July 1995 and commander during Operation ‘Flash;’ died in April 2003; named as part of ‘Joint Criminal Enterprise’ in May 2013 Prlić et al. guilty verdict.
Franjo Boras	Born in Vitina, Ljubuški municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1927; worked as a lawyer before the war and elected as one of two Croat representatives to the BiH presidency in November 1990 as an HDZ candidate; served on the Bosnian presidency until October 1993.
Radoslav Brđanin	Born in Čelinac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1948; worked as a civil engineer before the war; elected as SDS deputy to Bosnian Chamber of

	Municipalities in 1990; member of Bosnian Serb assembly at its inception in 1991; vice president of the SAO Krajina assembly and president of the SAO Krajina crisis staff in 1992; held various ministerial posts in the RS wartime government; sentenced to 32 years imprisonment for war crimes.
Aleksa Buha	Born in Ribari, Gacko municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1939; worked as philosophy professor in Sarajevo before the war; co-founded the Serb cultural society <i>Prosveta</i> ; elected SDS deputy to the BiH assembly in 1990; member of SDS Main Board in Sarajevo; one of founding members of RS assembly; authorised to negotiate for Serb people by RS delegates in November 1991; appointed RS minister of foreign affairs in March 1992.
Momir Bulatović	Born in Belgrade, Serbia in 1956; rose through communist apparatus in Montenegro as a close ally of Milošević in the 1980s; elected first president of Montenegro in December 1990; member of the Supreme Defence Council 1993-98.
Pavle Bulatović	Born in Kolašin, Montenegro, in 1948; served SRJ Minister of Internal Affairs 1992-93; became SRJ Minister of Defence 1993-2000; assassinated in Belgrade in February 2000.
Valentin Ćorić	Born in Paoca, Čitluk municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1956; worked for mining and manufacturing firms before the war; became commander of the HVO military police in May 1993; served as member of HZ Herceg Bosna presidential council from 1992; became minister of internal affairs for HR Herceg Bosna in November 1993; appointed to HR Herceg Bosna presidential council in February 1994.
Dobrica Ćosić	Born in Velika Drenova, Trstenik municipality, Serbia, in 1921; fought with partisans during the Second World War and held posts in communist apparatus in the 1950s and 1960s; became one of the most prominent Serbian writers in Yugoslavia; helped found Serb parties in Croatia and Bosnia in 1989-90; served as first president of the SRJ and president of the Supreme Defence Council June 1992-93; considered by admirers and detractors as Serb 'Father of the Nation,' died May 2014.
Zdenko Čosić	Elected as HDZ delegate from his hometown, Široki Brijeg, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1990; elected to HDZ BiH presidency in March 1991; became president of HDZ BiH executive committee in October 1992.
Milo Đukanović	Born in Nikšić, Montenegro, in 1962; elected prime minister of the Republic of Montenegro as close Milošević ally in 1991 and held post until 1998; as of August 2015, he is serving his fourth term as prime minister of Montenegro.
Stanislav Galić	Born in Goleš, Banja Luka municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and served as an officer in the JNA before the war; became commander of the VRS's Sarajevo Romanija Corps in September 1992; removed from head of Sarajevo Romanija Corps in August 1994; sentenced to 20 years imprisonment in December 1993 for orchestrating the sniping and shelling campaign against Sarajevo; the ICTY appeals chamber extended his sentence to life imprisonment in November 2006.

Alija Izetbegović	Born in Bosanski Šamac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1925; worked as a lawyer and activist before the war; published <i>The Islamic Declaration</i> in 1970, for which he was imprisoned for five years in 1983; one of founding members of the SDA; elected Muslim member of Bosnian presidency in 1990; served as president of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and commander in chief of the ABiH for duration of war.
Vladislav Jovanović	Born in Žitni Potok, Prokuplje municipality, Serbia, in 1933; worked as career diplomat in Yugoslav foreign service; served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the SRJ from July to September 1992 and from March 1993 to August 1995.
Dragan Kalinić	Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1948; worked as a medical doctor in Sarajevo's Koševo hospital before the war; elected in 1990 as a member of the Alliance of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia; joined Bosnia Serb assembly in October 1991; served as RS health minister from May 1992; remained active in politics after the war.
Radovan Karadžić	Born in Petnjica, Šavnik municipality, Montenegro, in June 1945 and moved to Sarajevo at age 15; studied medicine and practiced psychiatry before the war; spent eleven months in prison for fraud in 1984-85; co-founded Bosnian branch of SDS and elected president in July 1990; elected president of Serb National Council in October 1990; founded Assembly of Serb People of Bosnia in October 1991; directed establishment of Bosnian Serb institutions 1991-92; president of the presidency of the Republic of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina from 12 May 1992; appointed president of the RS and commander in chief of the VRS in December 1992 until 1996; evaded capture until 2008; tried for war crimes, including genocide, continues.
Stjepan Kljuić	Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1939; worked as journalist for Sarajevo newspaper <i>Oslobođenje</i> and Zagreb magazine <i>Vjesnik</i> before the war; appointed president of HDZ BiH by Franjo Tuđman in September 1990; received most votes among Croat candidates in the November 1990 Bosnian election; served on BiH presidency until October 1992 when he resigned; re-entered presidency in October 1993; founded Republican Party of BiH in June 1994; did not participate in Herceg Bosna institutions; testified against Croat accused war criminals at ICTY in late 1990s and early 2000s.
Nikola Koljević	Born in Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1936; worked as professor of literature at Sarajevo university before the war; elected as Serb member of Bosnian presidency in 1990; served as member of RS presidency in late 1991 until May 1992; appointed vice president of Republika Srpska in December 1992; committed suicide in 1997 while under investigation for war crimes.
Radoje Kontić	Born in Nikšić, Montenegro, in 1937; politician before the war; became prime minister of the SRJ in February 1993 and until May 1998.
Dario Kordić	Born in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1960; worked as a journalist before the war; served as HDZ operative in Busovača and Travnik in 1991; elected vice president of HDZ BiH in November 1992;

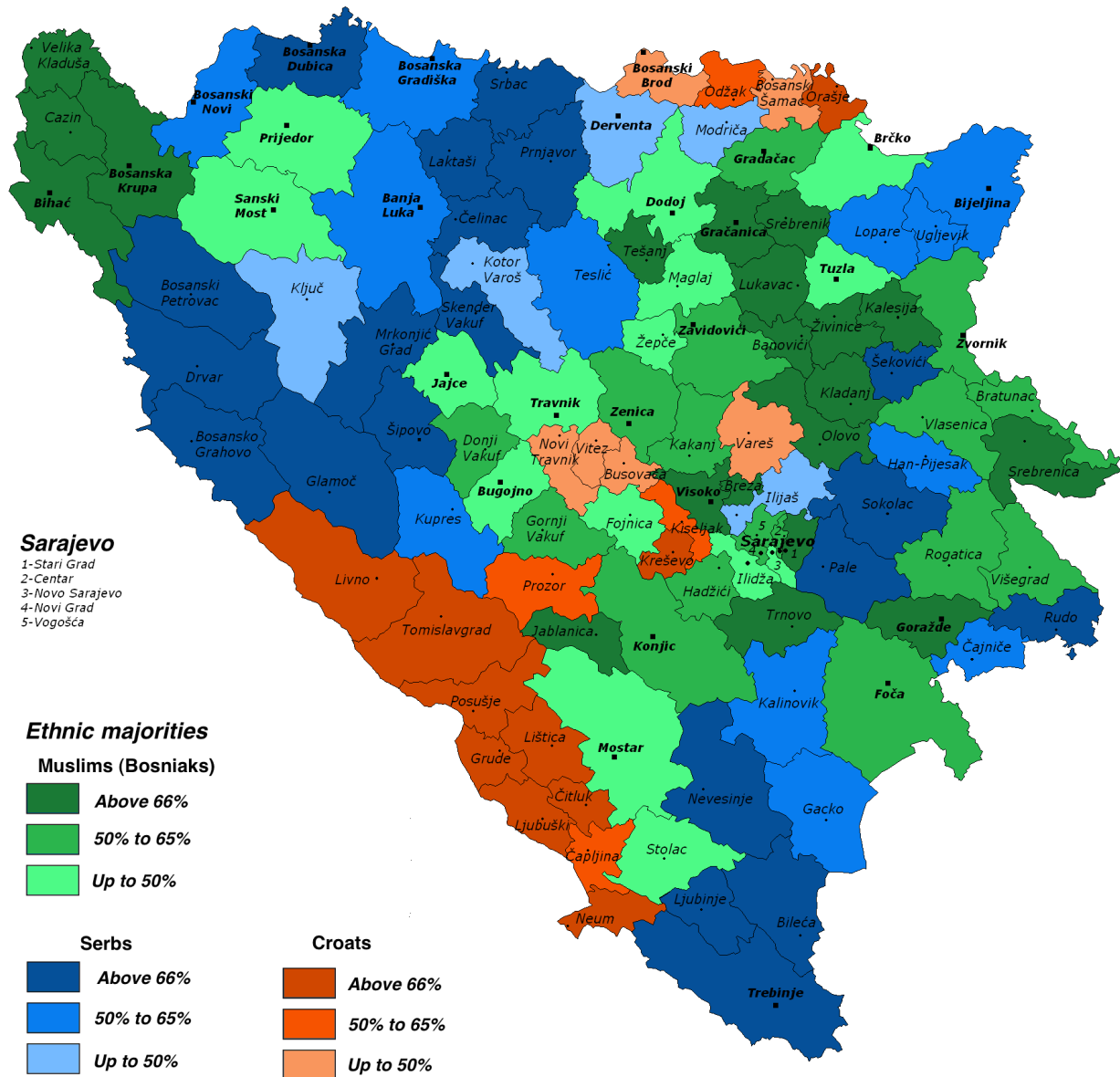
	held various positions in Herceg Bosna institutions; elected president of the HDZ BiH in July 1994; sentenced to 25 years imprisonment in 2001 for involvement in war crimes; released in 2014.
Momčilo Krajišnik	Born in Zabrđe, Novi Grad Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1945; studied economics and worked at state companies <i>Energobanka</i> and <i>Energoinvest</i> before the war; became member of SDS Main board in September 1990; elected to Bosnian House of Citizens Assembly in November 1990; elected assembly chair in December 1990; appointed president of Bosnian Serb assembly in October 1991; confirmed as ex-officio member of RS presidency in June 1992; appointed member of supreme command as of November 1992; elected first Serb member of post-war Bosnian presidency in September 1996; sentenced to 27 years imprisonment for war crimes in September 2006; granted early release in September 2013.
Radislav Krstić	Born in Neđaljišta, Vlasenica municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1948; worked as officer in JNA before the war and transferred to Bosnia from Kosovo in 1992 and joined the VRS; became chief of staff of the VRS Drina Corps in October 1994; promoted to commander of Drina Corps in July 1995; convicted of genocide in 2001 for role in 1995 Srebrenica genocide and sentenced to 46 years in prison; sentence reduced to 35 years on appeal.
Zoran Lilić	Born in Brza Palanka, Kladovo municipality, Serbia, in 1953; worked as director of rubber factory before joining Milošević's Socialist Party and winning election to the National Assembly of Serbia; appointed president of the SRJ in June 1993; served as president of the Supreme Defence Council from June 1993 until July 1997.
Josip Manolić	Born in Kalinovac, Croatia, in 1920; fought with the partisans in the Second World War and worked as a high-ranking communist functionary in 1950s and 1960s, but expelled from the League of Communists following his involvement in the 1971 'Croatian Spring;' one of founding members of the HDZ in 1989; served as Croatian prime minister 1990-91; first head of Croatian intelligence service from 1991-93; split with HDZ in 1994 and founded the Croatian Independent Democrats with Stipe Mesić.
Slobodan Milošević	Born in Požarevac, Serbia, in 1941; completed law school and worked as a banker and director at a major gas company until 1978; became president of <i>Beobanka</i> in 1983; became chairman of Belgrade City Committee League of Communists in 1984; became chairman of the presidium of the central committee of the League of Communists of Serbia in 1986; appointed president of the presidency of the Republic of Serbia in May 1989; became president of the Socialist Party of Serbia in 1990; elected president of the Republic of Serbia in December 1990 and held the post until 1997 when he became the president of the SRJ; member of the Supreme Defence Council 1992-2000; toppled from power in October 2000 and arrested in April 2001; tried for war crimes committed in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo began in February 2002; died

	of a heart attack during his trial in March 2006.
Ratko Mladić	Born in Kalinovik, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in March 1942; worked as officer in JNA before the war; promoted to Commander of JNA 9 th Corps and fought against Croat forces in Knin in 1991; named Commander of the Main Staff of the VRS in May 1992; currently on trial for war crimes, including genocide.
Milan Panić	Born in Belgrade, Serbia, in 1929; raised in the United States and became a multimillionaire after founding the ICN Pharmaceutical firm; served as prime minister of the SRJ from July 1992 until January 1993.
Života Panić	Born in Gornja Crnišava, Trstenik municipality, Serbia, in 1933; served as career officer in the JNA; assistant commander and chief of staff of the JNA 1 st District in 1990; promoted to deputy commander of the JNA Main Staff in July 1991; promoted to chief of General Staff of the JNA-VJ in May 1992 and held post until August 1993.
Ivić Pašalić	Born in Tomislavgrad/Duvno, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1960; studied medicine and worked as a doctor and hospital administrator before the war; elected as HDZ delegate to Croatian assembly in 1990; served as presidential advisor from 1993 and sat on various state councils.
Momčilo Perišić	Born in Koštunići, Gornji Milanovac municipality, Serbia, in 1944; worked as JNA officer before the war; became commander of JNA artillery school in Zadar in 1991 and commanded bombardment of the town; chief of staff of JNA Bileća Corps in 1991-92 and involved with offensives in Southern Dalmatia, eastern Herzegovina, and Mostar; helped established VRS Herzegovina Corps after JNA withdrawal; allegedly refused to become VRS commander in chief at Karadžić's request; became commander of JNA 3 rd Military District in Niš; appointed VJ Chief of General Staff in August 1993 and held post until October 1998; convicted of aiding and abetting war crimes in Bosnia and Croatia during wars and sentenced to 27 years imprisonment in September 2011; acquitted and released on appeal in February 2013.
Milivoj Petković	Born in Šibenik, Croatia, in 1949; served as a high ranking officer in the JNA before joining the Croatian army in 1991; became chief of staff of the HVO upon its formation in 1992 and served until replaced by Slobodan Praljak in July 1993; returned to the HV and commanded the Osijek Military District.
Biljana Plavšić	Born in Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1930; worked as professor of biology and dean of the Natural Sciences and Mathematics faculty at the University of Sarajevo; elected to one of two Serb seats on Bosnian presidency in November 1990; elected as acting president of the RS in February 1992; elected member of RS presidency in May 1992; appointed vice president of the RS in December 1992; elected president of the RS in first post-war elections in 1996; served eleven years in prison after reaching plea bargain.
Slobodan Praljak	Born in Čapljina, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1945; childhood friend of Gojko Šušak; studied film direction, sociology, and psychology in Zagreb and directed films and theatrical productions before the war;

	joined HV in summer 1991; became Croatian assistant minister of defence in March 1992; commanded HV forces in Bosnia in April 1992; appointed by Tudman to Council of National Defence of the Republic of Croatia; commanded HVO in Prozor in October 1992; resigned Croatian Ministry of Defence position and appointed Commander in Chief of HVO in July 1993; removed from HVO leadership in November 1993 and replaced by Ante Roso; became Tudman's advisor for Herceg Bosna and served as Director of the Cultural Information Bureau for the remainder of war; sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for war crimes.
Jadranko Prlić	Born in Đakovo, Croatia, in June 1959; grew up in Mostar where he completed a doctorate in economics and worked as a journalist before the war; became deputy prime minister in last communist Bosnian government; headed Herceg Bosna finance department in 1992; became prime minister of HR Herceg Bosna on 20 November 1993; elected to HR Herceg Bosna presidential council in February 1994; served in Herceg Bosna and Bosnian government, including as foreign minister, after the war; sentenced to 25 years imprisonment in May 2013.
Božo Rajić	Born in Kupres, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1943; appointed HVO Assistant Minister of Defence for Morale in September 1992; became member of HDZ Central Committee in November 1992; made Minister of Defence of BiH on December 1992; held various positions Bosnian Croat institutions during the war, including HVO vice president; became president of the HDZ BiH after the war.
Ante Roso	Born in Tomislavgrad/Duvno, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1951; served in French Foreign Legion 1970-89; joined HV in 1991 and transferred to HVO in 1992 and at rank of general; re-joined HV in August 1992; served as commander of HVO from November 1993 to August 1994; appointed to HR Herceg Bosna presidential council in December 1993.
Miće Stanišić	Born in Ponor, Pale municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1954; active in Bosnian internal security apparatus before the war; appointed as minister without portfolio in Bosnian Serb assembly in December 1991; named RS Minister of Internal Affairs in March 1992; sentenced to 22 years imprisonment for war crimes in March 2013.
Bruno Stojić	Born in Hamzići, Čitluk municipality, in 1955; became Assistant Minister of Internal Affairs for Bosnian government after 1990 election; held various positions in the HDZ BiH during the war; appointed Chief of HVO Department of Defence in July 1992; sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for war crimes in May 2013.
Gojko Šušak	Born in Široki Brijeg, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1945; immigrated to Canada in 1969 and became active in the Croat diaspora community; returned to Yugoslavia in 1989 and helped establish the HDZ; became Minister for Diaspora following 1990 election; became Croatian Minister of Defence in September 1991; died of cancer in May 1998; named as part of 'Joint Criminal Enterprise' in May 2013 Prlić et al. guilty verdict.
Momir Talić	Born in Piskavica, Gračanica municipality, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in 1942; JNA officer before the war; promoted to chief of staff of the JNA

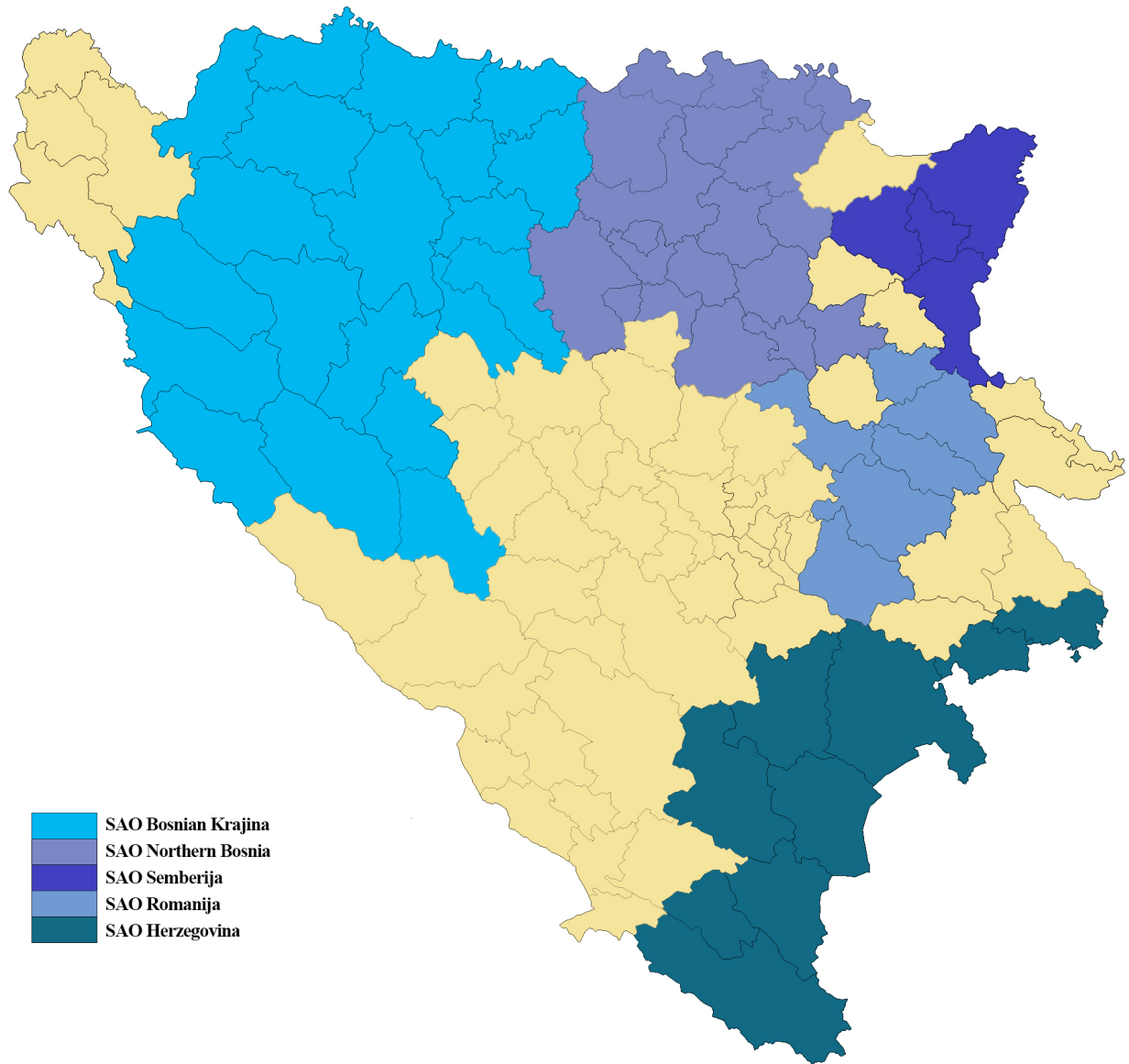
	5 th Corps in July 1991; became commander of the VRS 1 st Krajina Corps in March 1992; died in May 2003 while on provisional release during his trial for war crimes, including genocide.
Franjo Tuđman	Born in Veliko Trgovišće, Croatia, in 1922; served with Tito's partisans during the Second World War; became JNA's youngest general at 38 in 1953; served as president of the Yugoslav Sports Society of Partizan Belgrade; left the army in 1961 and completed his doctorate in history in 1965; sentenced to two years in prison for his involvement in the 'Croatian Spring;' founded the HDZ in June 1989; elected president in May 1990; re-elected president in 1992 and 1997; served as Commander in Chief of the HV and effective Commander in Chief of the HVO during the war in Bosnia; died December 1999; named as part of 'Joint Criminal Enterprise' in May 2013 Prlić et al. guilty verdict.
Krešimir Zubak	Born in Doboј in 1947; worked as a higher court judge in Doboј and as an assistant to the minister of justice; wounded fighting for the HVO; appointed HVO vice president in October 1992; appointed president of Herceg Bosna organisation for displaced persons and refugees in June 1993; appointed minister of justice for HR Herceg Bosna in November 1993; appointed to presidential council of HR Herceg Bosna in December 1993 and president of the council in February 1994; member of Croat delegation at Dayton and refused to sign the agreement because it granted much of his native Posavina region to Republika Srpska.

Appendix C – 1991 Census



Map adapted from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:DemoBIH1991.png>. Created by Vladimir Varjačić. Licensed through the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Serbia license.

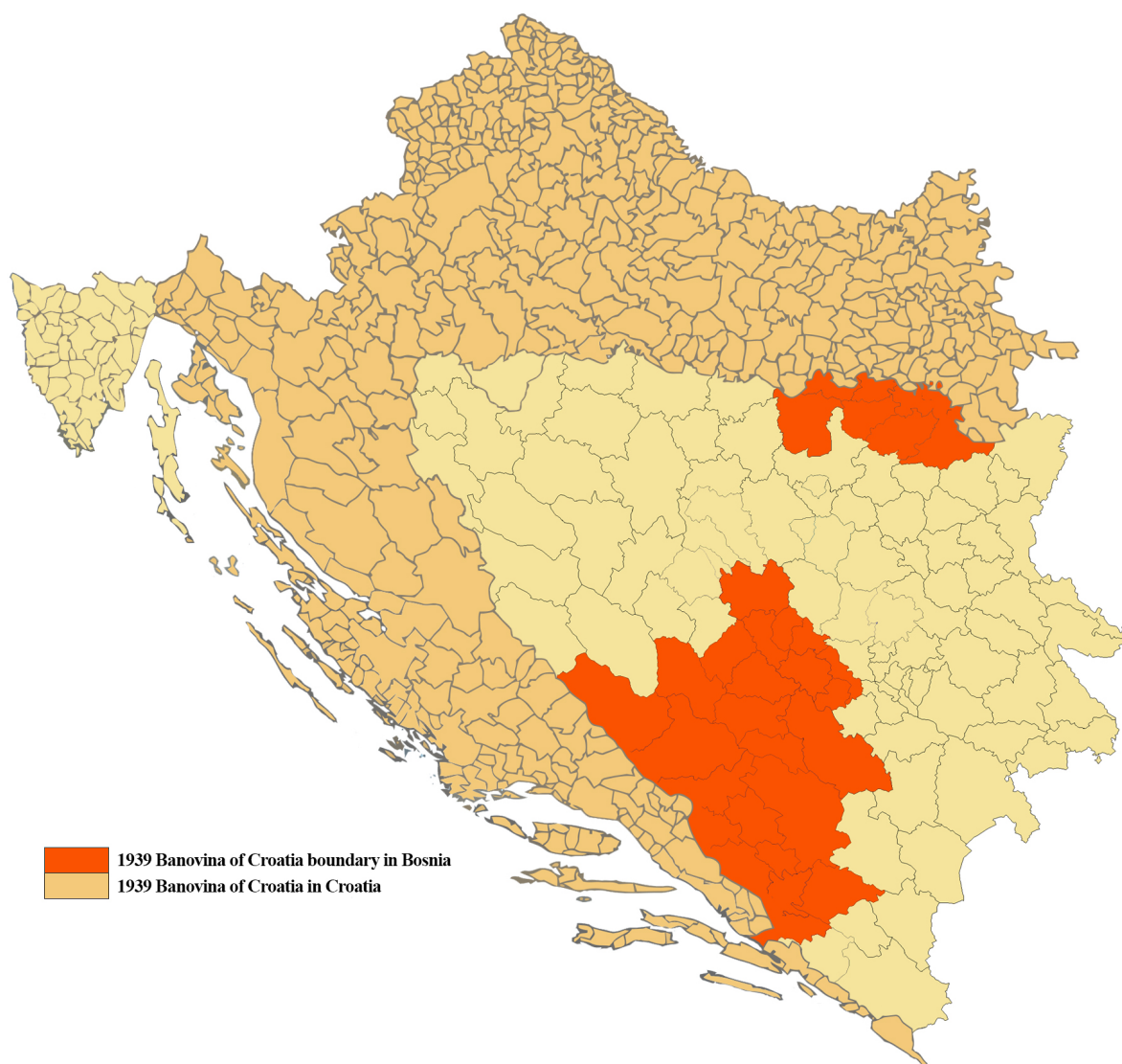
Appendix D – 1991 Serb Autonomous Regions (*Oblasti*)



Map adapted from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Srpske_autonomne_oblasti_u_Bosni_i_Hercegovini_u_studenome_1991.png. Created by Ali Pasha and Vladimir Varjačić. Licensed through the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license; and M. Klemenčić, 'Territorial Proposals for the Settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina,' in M. Pratt and C. Schofield (eds.), *Boundary and Territory Briefing* 1/3 (1994).

Appendix E – 1939 Banovina and Socialist Municipalities

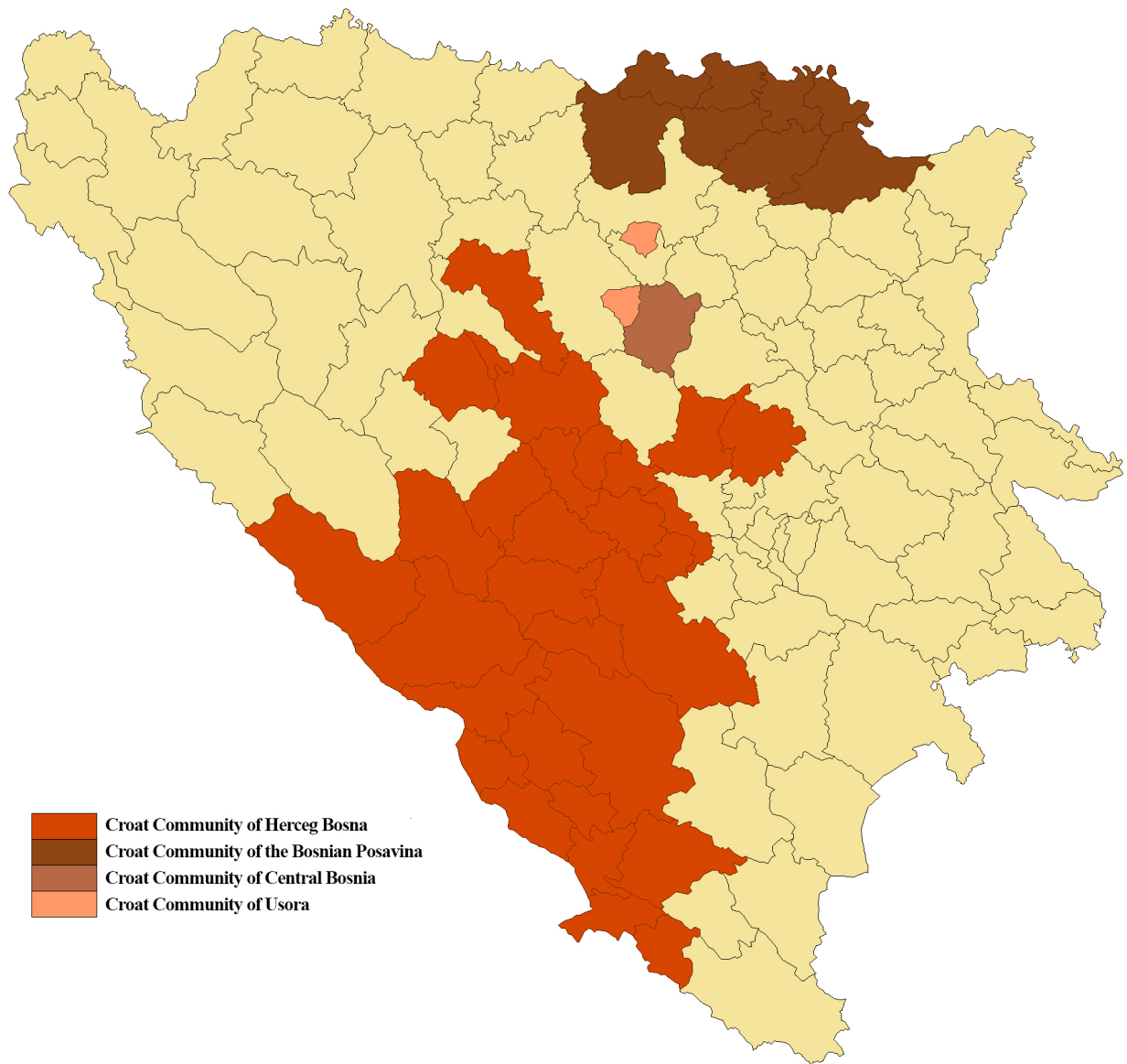


Map adapted from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zajednice_op%C4%87ina_od_1987-01-01_do_1990-07-25.png. Created by Rainman. Licensed through the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license;

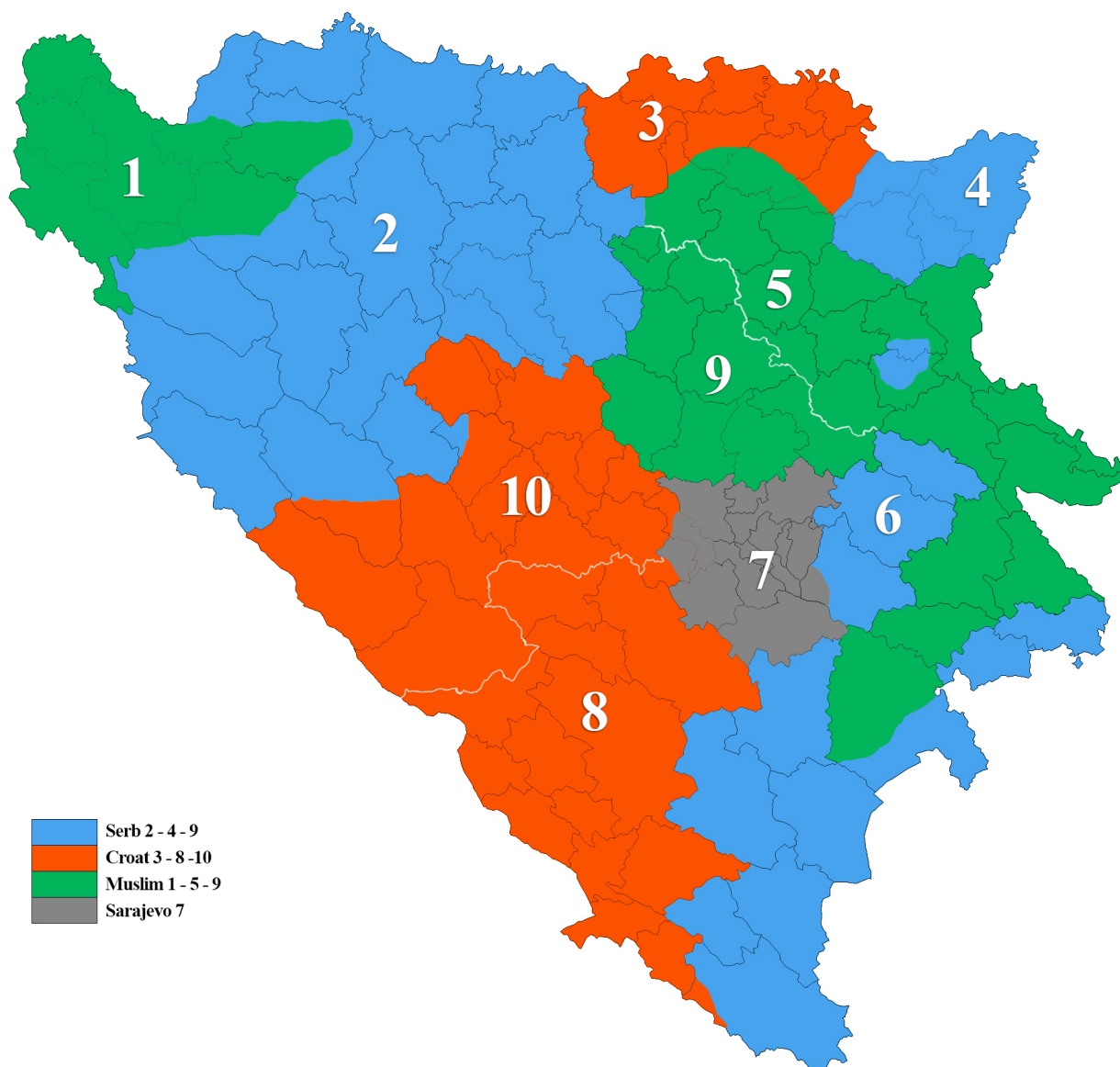
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Locator_map_Croatia_Banovina_in_Yugoslavia_1939-1941.svg. Created by NordNordWest. Licensed through the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license; and M. Klemenčić, 'Territorial Proposals for the Settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.'

Appendix F – 1991 Croat Communities



Map adapted from:
https://hr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datoteka:Hrvatske_zajednice.PNG. Created by Mostarac.
Licensed through the GNU Freed Documentation license; and M. Klemenčić, 'Territorial
Proposals for the Settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.'

Appendix G – Proposed Vance Owen Division, January 1993



Map adapted from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vance-owen_plan.png. Created by Peccafly. Licensed through the Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication; and M. Klemenčić, 'Territorial Proposals for the Settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.'

Appendix H – Notable VJ Personnel in the VRS

Name ¹	Position	Area of Operations	Comments
Ljubiša Beara	Chief of Security of the VRS Main Staff	Srebrenica	Guilty of genocide, extermination, murder and persecution; life imprisonment. ²
Vidoje Blagojević	Commander of the VRS Bratunac Brigade	Srebrenica	Guilty of aiding and abetting murder, persecutions, and inhumane acts; 15 years imprisonment. ³
Stanislav Galić	Commander of the VRS Sarajevo Romanija Corps, 1992-94	Sarajevo	Guilty of violations of the laws or customs of war, and murder and inhumane acts as crimes against humanity; life imprisonment. ⁴
Milan Gvero	Assistant Commander for Morale, Legal, and Religious Affairs of VRS Main Staff	Srebrenica	Guilty of persecution and inhumane acts; five years imprisonment. ⁵
Dragan Jokić	Chief of Engineering of the VRS Zvornik Brigade	Srebrenica	Guilty of extermination, and aiding and abetting murder and persecution; nine years imprisonment. ⁶
Radislav Krstić	Chief of Staff of the VRS Drina Corps	Srebrenica	Guilty of aiding and abetting genocide, extermination,

¹ List of VJ personnel identified in Prosecutor v. Perišić (Judgement), pp. 242-243.

² Prosecutor v. Vujadin Popović *et al.* Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-05-88-T, 10 June 2010. Last accessed 5 August 2015 at:

<<http://icty.org/x/cases/popovic/tjug/en/100610judgement.pdf>>, pp. 786-787 and 833.

³ Prosecutor v. Vidoje Blagojević and Dragan Jokić Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-02-60-T, 17 January 2005. Last accessed on 5 August 2015 at:

<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/blagojevic_jokic/tjug/en/bla-050117e.pdf>, pp. 285-286; Prosecutor v. Vidoje Blagojević and Dragan Jokić Judgement (Appeals Chamber), IT-02-60-A, 9 May 2007. Last accessed on 5 August 2015 at:

<http://icty.org/x/cases/blagojevic_jokic/acjug/en/blajok-jud070509.pdf>, p. 137.

⁴ Prosecutor v. Stanislav Galić Judgement (Trial Chamber), IT-98-29-T, 5 December 2003. Last accessed 5 August 2015 at: <<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/galic/tjug/en/gal-tj031205e.pdf>>, p. 310; Prosecutor v. Stanislav Galić Judgement (Appeals Chamber), Case No IT-98-29-A, ICTY, 30 November 2006. Last accessed 5 August 2015 at: <<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/galic/acjug/en/gal-acjud061130.pdf>>, p. 185.

⁵ Prosecutor v. Popović *et al.*, pp. 791-792 and 837.

⁶ Prosecutor v. Blagojević *et al.*, pp. 286-287 and 304.

			persecution, and murder; 35 years imprisonment. ⁷
Radivoje Miletić	Chief of Operations and Training of the VRS Main Staff	Srebrenica	Convicted of murder, persecution, and inhumane acts; 19 years imprisonment. ⁸
Dragomir Milošević	Commander of the VRS Sarajevo Corps, 1994-95	Sarajevo	Guilty of terror, murder and inhumane acts; 29 years imprisonment. ⁹
Ratko Mladić	Commander of the VRS General Staff	All RS territory, including Srebrenica and Sarajevo	Indicted for genocide, persecution, extermination, murder, deportation, inhumane acts, terror and taking hostages. ¹⁰
Drago Nikolić	Chief of Security of the VRS Zvornik Brigade	Srebrenica	Guilty of aiding and abetting genocide, extermination, murder, and persecution; 35 years imprisonment. ¹¹
Dragan Obrenović	Chief of Staff of the VRS Zvornik Brigade	Srebrenica	Pled guilty to persecution; sentenced to 17 years imprisonment in 2003; released in 2012. ¹²
Vujadin Popović	Chief of Security of the VRS Drina Corps	Srebrenica	Guilty of genocide, extermination, murder and persecution; life imprisonment. ¹³
Zdravko Tolimir	Assistant VRS Commander of Intelligence and Security	Srebrenica	Indicted for genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, extermination, murder, persecution, forcible transfer, and deportation. ¹⁴

⁷ Prosecutor v. Krstić, p. 87.

⁸ Prosecutor v. Popović *et al*, pp. 790-791 and 836.

⁹ Prosecutor v. D. Milošević, p. 326; Prosecutor v. Dragomir Milošević Judgement (Appeals Chamber), IT-98-29/1-A, 12 November 2009. Last accessed on 5 August 2015 at: <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/dragomir_milosevic/acjug/en/091112.pdf>, p. 144.

¹⁰ Prosecutor v. Mladić, pp. 16-38.

¹¹ Prosecutor v. Popović *et al*, pp. 787-788 and 834.

¹² Prosecutor v. Dragan Obrenović Sentencing Judgement, IT-02-60/2-S, 10 December 2003. Last accessed 5 August 2015 at:

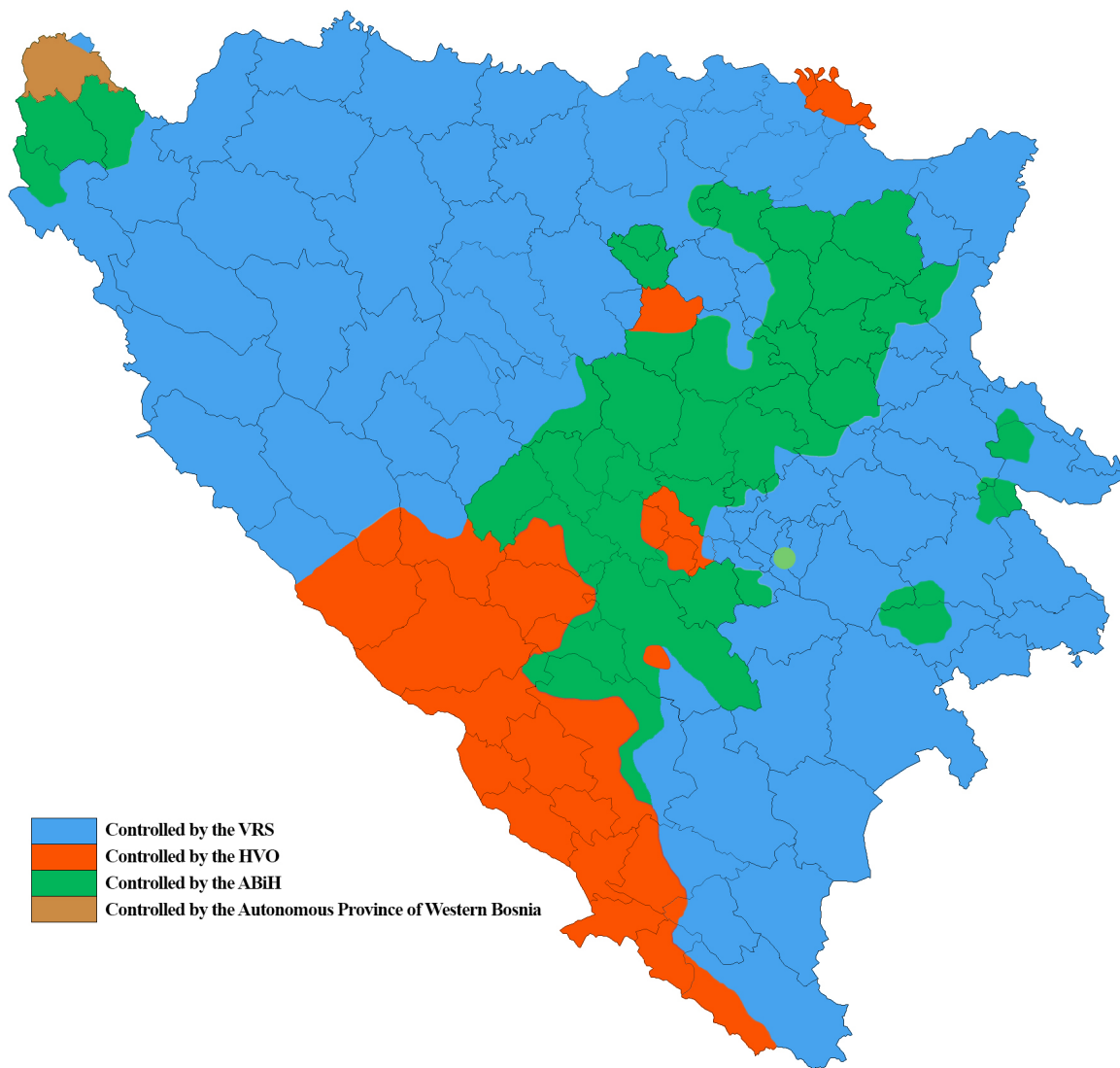
<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/obrenovic/tjug/en/031210_Obrenovi_summary_en.pdf>, pp. 45-47.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 785-786 and 832.

¹⁴ Prosecutor v. Zdravko Tolimir Third Amended Indictment, IT-05-88/2-PT, 4 November 2009. Last accessed 5 August 2015 at:

<<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/tolimir/ind/en/091104.pdf>>, pp. 4-30.

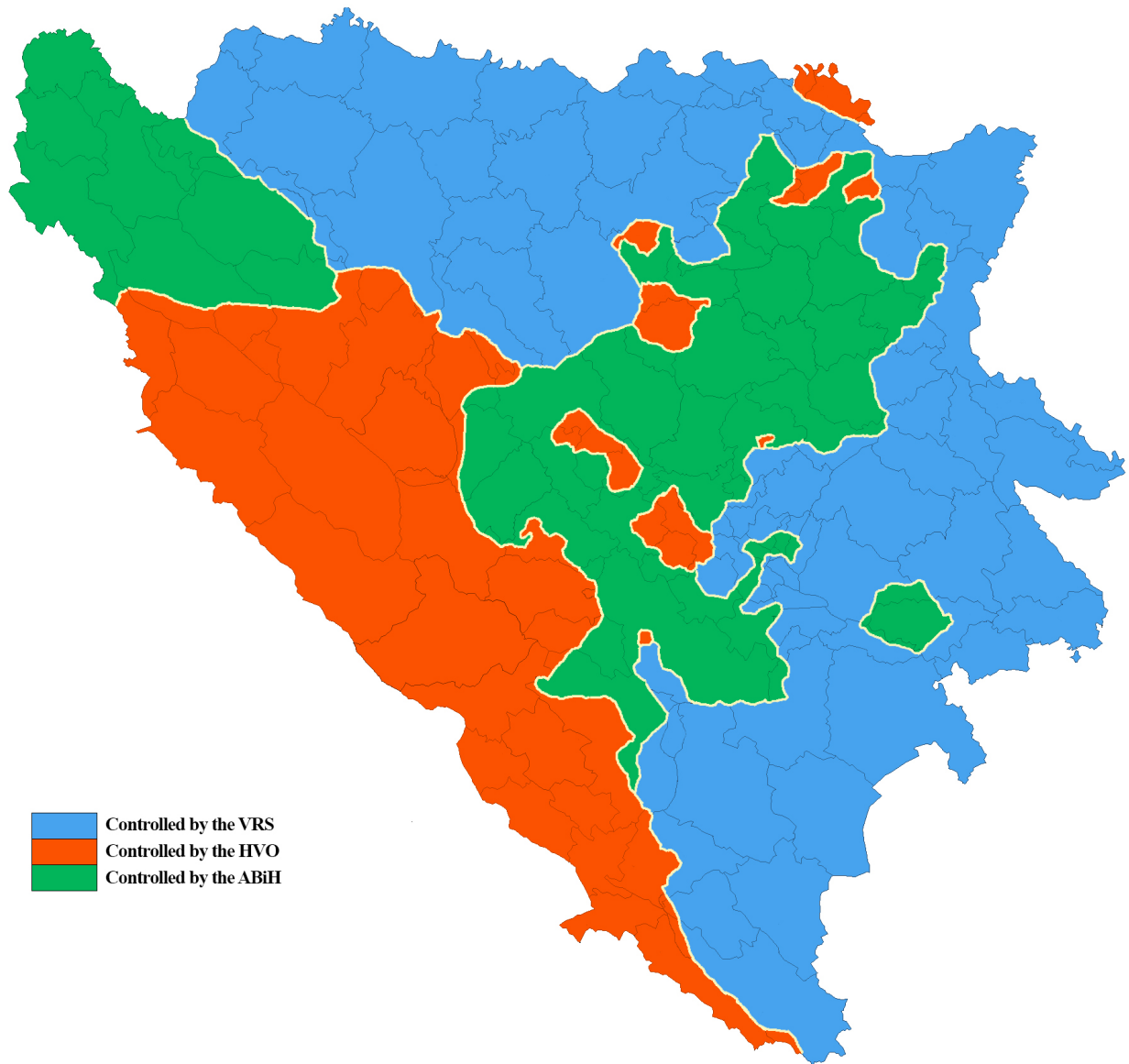
Appendix I – Battle Lines, September 1994



Map adapted from:

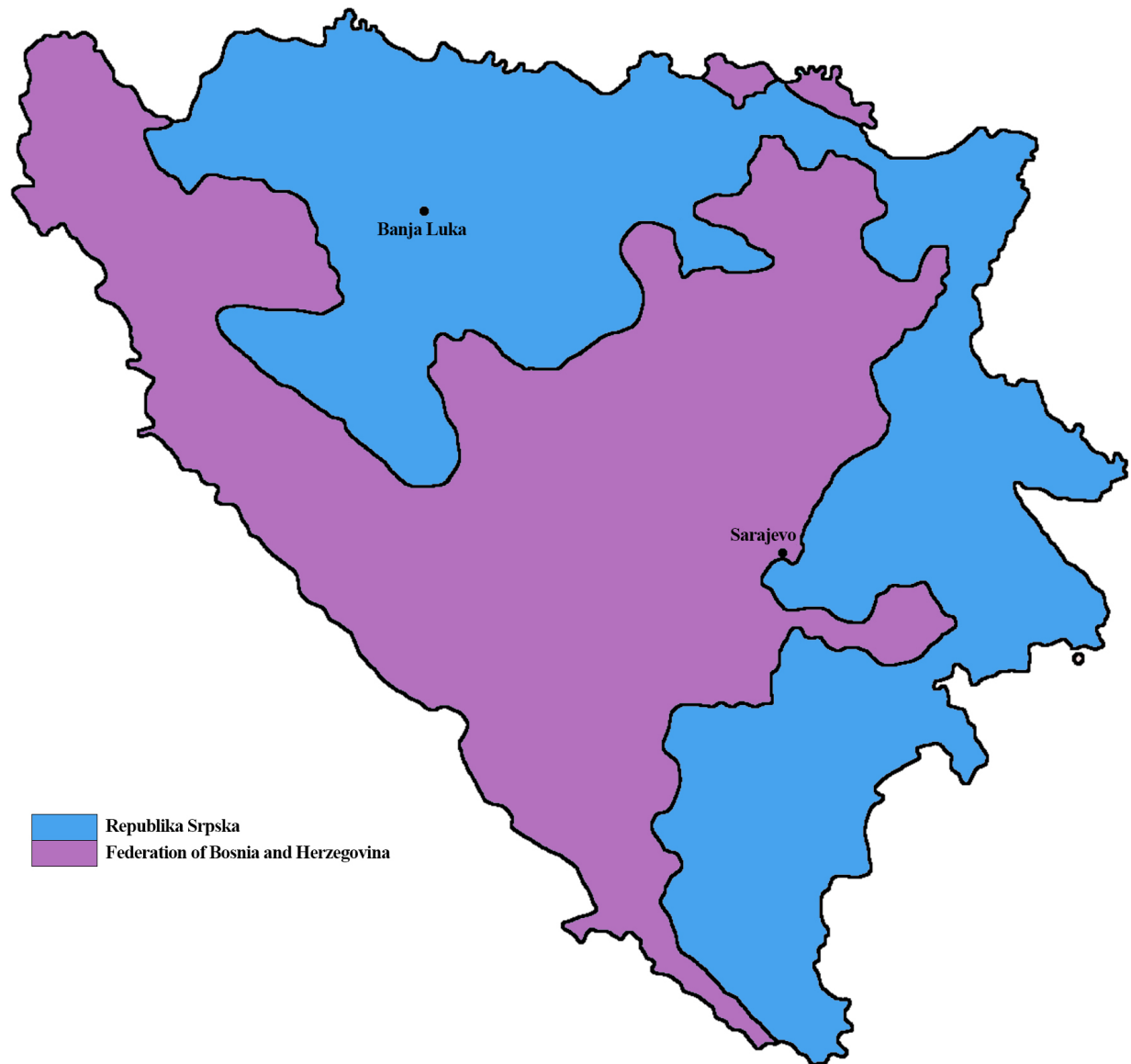
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Bosnia_areas_of_control_Sep_94.jpg. Unauthored document created by employee of US government. In public domain under Title 17, Chapter 1, Section 105 of the US Code, and *Balkan Battlegrounds*.

Appendix J – Battle Lines, October 1995



Map adapted from:
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:BeforeDayton.png>. Created by Ceha. Copyright holder releases work to public domain; and *Balkan Battlegrounds*.

Appendix K – Dayton Peace Agreement, December 1995



Map adapted from:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bih_dayton_en.png. Created by Panonian.
Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication; and *Balkan Battlegrounds*.

Bibliography

Primary sources are organised in chronological order. All ICTY archival items are accessible at <http://icr.icty.org/> upon free registration. Document titles are listed as they appear on the tribunal database.

Archival Sources Accessible Online

Date	Case	Exhibit Number	Title	Collection
08-Jun-91	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P1	7 th Session of the Supreme State Council of the Republic of Croatia	Croatian Presidency
18-Nov-91	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00080	39 th Session of the Supreme State Council of the Republic of Croatia	Croatian Presidency
10-Dec-91	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1576	Directive on the Use of the Armed Forces	
11-Dec-91	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	D00084	Shorthand Record of the 3 rd Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
19-Dec-91	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P97A	Instructions for the Organisation and Activity of Organs of the Serb People in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Extraordinary Circumstances	
21-Dec-91	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	D00086	Shorthand Record of the 4 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
27-Dec-91	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P2	Meeting between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tuđman, and a delegation of the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian Presidency
01-Jan-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P01186	‘Constitution of the SRJ’, Official Gazette of the SRJ, 1/1 (1992)	

08-Jan-92	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P3	Meeting between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, and his associates with members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Professor Nikola Koljević and Mr. Franjo Boras	Croatian Presidency
09-Jan-92	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01347	Shorthand Record of the 5 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
26-Jan-92	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01349	Transcript of the 6 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
7&8 Feb-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	D29.1	Tasks of the Main Staff	
25&27-Feb-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	D120.1	Directive for the Defence of Sovereignty	
02-Mar-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P596.7	Minutes of the Expanded Session of the SFRJ Presidency	
02-Mar-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P596.7	Expanded Session of the SFRJ Presidency	
10-Mar-92	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P4	Record of the Croatian Democratic Union /HDZ/ Presidency session held at the <i>Zagorje</i> villa	Croatian Presidency
20-Mar-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00185	Letter to JNA General Staff Forwarding Report	
20-Mar-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00185	Letter to JNA General Staff	
24-Mar-92	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01354	Stenographic Record of the 13 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
27-Mar-92	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	D00304	Transcript of the 14 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
28-Mar-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P606	5 th Corps Command Regular Combat Report no. 44-1/87	

08-Apr-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2554	Combat and Operational Report of 2 nd Military District HQ, No 10/36-2082
08-Apr-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00152	Decision on the Creation of the Croat Defence Council
10-Apr-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00154	Herceg Bosna Main Headquarters Order 2-01-11
10-Apr-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	5D04271	HVO Main Headquarters Order 1-92/02
10-Apr-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00156	Order Appointing Janko Bobetko as Commander of Croatian Army on Southern Front
15-Apr-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P153	Decision of the Serb Republic of BiH on the Establishment of the Army
16-Apr-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00162	Southern Front Command Order
27-Apr-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1470	JNA 5 th Corps Regular Combat Report
02-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P629	JNA 5 th Corps Regular Combat Report
02-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P629	5 th Corps Command daily combat report No. 44-1/126 to 2 nd Military District Command
04-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1533/S138b	Autonomous Region of Bosanska Krajina Republic Secretariat for National Defence Decision on Mobilisation
05-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P900	5 th Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/128 to the 2 nd Military District Command
07-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	DB266b	JNA 5 th Corps Command Operational Report

07-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	DB273	5 th Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/130 to the 2 nd Military District Command	
08-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	DB47	Conclusions of the War Staff of the Autonomous Region of Krajina meeting	
11-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1655	JNA 5 th Corps Regular Combat Report	
11-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1406	Dispatch no. 11-1/01-0D- 236/92 on Weapons Surrender	
12-May-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00188	Transcript of the 16 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
14-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1787b	Order by Military Post 4022	
14-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P51	Command of the 1 st Partizan Brigade Meeting with the Presidents of the Municipalities	
14-May-92	Galić (IT-98-29)	P3683	Minutes of meeting with presidents of municipalities in the zone of responsibility of the 1 st Partizan Brigade	
15-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2393	Plan for Seizure of Illegal Weapons, RS Ministry of Interior Security Services Centre	
15-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P637	Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serb Municipality of Bosanska Krupa, War Presidency Decision No.130/92, Evacuate remaining Muslim Population	
15-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1190	Minutes of the 2 nd Session of the National Defence Council of the Municipal Assembly of Prijedor	

15-May-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00206	Statutory Decision on the Provisional Establishment of Authority on Territory of HZ Herceg Bosna
15-May-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P201	UNSC Resolution 752
16-May-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00211	Report to HVO Municipal Commands on Fuel Supply
21-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1597	Order from 1 st Krajina Corps Command
21-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P204	General Mobilisation Order Sent to Crisis Staffs No. 03- 36/92
21-May-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	D49	1 st Krajina Corps report No. 459-2
21-May-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.58.1	Report by 1 st Krajina Corps Command to All Units
21-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1597	1 st Krajina Corps report No. 459-2
22-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P523	1 st Krajina Corps Command 463-2
22-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2098	Decisions of the Serb Municipality of Sanski Most Crisis Staff
24-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1414	Report to the Main Staff
26-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2152	1 st Krajina Corps Command report on the political and security situation No. 459-3
27-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1587	1 st Krajina Corps Command Report no. 44-1/150-1
27-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1587	1 st Krajina Corps Command Report
28-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P924	1 st Infantry Brigade Command Combat Report No. I-121/92
28-May-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P759.C	Ključ Crisis Staff Order

30-May-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P202	UNSC Resolution 757
31-May-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2422	1 st Krajina Corps Command regular combat report No. 44-1/155
01-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P380	1 st Krajina Corps Command report No. 482-1 on the Current Political and Security Situation
01-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P380	1 st Krajina Corps Command report No. 482-1
01-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P892.38.1	1 st Krajina Corps Command Report
01-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1588	1 st Krajina Corps report on the current political and security situation
01-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P380	1 st Krajina Corps Command Report No. 482-1
02-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P657	1 st Krajina Corps Regular Combat Report no. 44-1/158
03-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P950	1 st Krajina Corps Command daily combat report No. 44- 1/159
08-Jun-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00241	Order to Transfer Members of the Croatian Army to the Southern Front
09-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1583	VRS Main Staff Instruction No. 28/4-143
09-Jun-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.13.1	1 st Krajina Corps order for defence, security of the territory and offensive operations
13-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P383	1 st Krajina Corps regular combat report no. 44-1/177

14-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P385	1 st Krajina Corps Command state of Combat Morale Report No. 505-2 to the VRS Main Staff
14-Jun-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.90.1.	1 st Krajina Corps to VRS Main Staff Concerning State of Morale for May 1992
17-Jun-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P194.1	1 st Krajina Corps regular combat report
18-Jun-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P2434	UNSC Resolution 760
20-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	DB196	1 st Krajina Corps Command 520-3
23-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	DT10	1 st Krajina Corps Command Order Preventing Desecration of Religious Buildings
24-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2172	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/197
25-Jun-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1265	Prijedor Crisis Staff Decision
26-Jun-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00279	Preliminary Report by Milivoj Petković
26-Jun-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00279	HVO Southern Front Command Preliminary Report
29-Jun-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.91.1	Minutes of the 47 th Session of the Kotor Varoš Crisis Staff
02-Jul-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.62A.1	1 st KK letter forwarded from Main staff of the SR BH Army to all Commands congratulating the members of 1 st KK
03-Jul-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00302	Decision on Establishing the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna

06-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1431	1 st Krajina Corps Command daily combat report No. 44/1-220	
06-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1432	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/219	
08-Jul-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P529.298.1	2 nd Session of the Kotor Varoš War Presidency	
10-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1469	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report, No.44-1/227	
14-Jul-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00332	Appointment of Ante Jelavić	
15-Jul-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P1033	1 st Krajina Corps report on the political and security situation	
16-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	DB271	VRS Main Staff order No 28/4-260	
16-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2207	1 st Krajina Corps Command Order	
20-Jul-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00335	HVO Military Police Report 01-119/92	
23-Jul-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P667.3.1	Stenographic Transcript of the 3 rd Session of the Supreme Defence Council	Supreme Defence Council
24-Jul-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00345	HVO Military Police Administration Report to 145 th Brigade Command in Zagreb	
26-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P397	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/259	
24&26-Jul-92	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	D00092	Transcript of the 17 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
29-Jul-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	529.354.1	Minutes of the 43 rd Session of the Kotor Varoš War Presidency	

30-Jul-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2228	1 st Krajina Corps Command Combat Report No. 44-1/266	
02-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1448	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/272	
03-Aug-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.73	VRS Main Staff logistic support directive for Operational Directive No. 3	
06-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P892.41.1	1 st Krajina Corps Report on the Selection of War Prisoners in Manjača Camp	
07-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1535	1 st Krajina Corps Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/283	
11-Aug-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.41	Stenographic notes from the 1 st Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council
13-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2427	1 st Krajina Corps Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/296	
15-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2423	Bosanski Novi Public Security Station	
15-Aug-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P96.1	Bosanski Novi Public Security Station Report	
16-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2000	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/303	
17-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2239	1 st Krajina Corps Command Regular Combat Report No. 44-1/305	
18-Aug-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.42	Stenographic notes from the 2 nd Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council

10&18-Aug-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P667.2	Stenographic Transcript of the 2 nd Session of the Supreme Defence Council	Supreme Defence Council
20-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2420	1st Krajina Corps report No. 583-18	
22-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P719	Minutes of the 12 th Session of the Executive Committee of Sanski Most Assembly	
22-Aug-92	Krajišnik (IT-00-39)	P892.85.1	1 st Krajina Corps report	
31-Aug-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P1572	1 st Krajina Corps report No. 18-168/1	
31-Aug-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00098	Request by Mate Boban to Privredna Banka to Open an Account	
Sep-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00078	Narodni List Official Gazette, Croat Community of Herceg Bosna, Official Gazette, No. 1	
03-Sep-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.43	Stenographic notes from the 3 rd Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council
03-Sep-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2425	1 st Krajina Corps report about the State of Combat Moral No. 631	
06-Sep-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P421	1 st Krajina Corps Command daily combat report No. 44- 1/344	
08-Sep-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P319	Serb Republic Ministry of the Interior, Security Services Centre, Department for the Tasks and Duties of the Police, Banja Luka, No. 11-1/01	

17-Sep-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.44	Stenographic notes from the 4 th Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council
17-Sep-92	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P5	Minutes of the meeting of the state and political leadership of Croatia with the representatives of the Croat Democratic Union and Croat representatives from Bosnia and Herzegovina	Croatian Presidency
18-Sep-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00505	Decision Published in the Official Gazette of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 18 September 1992	
26-Sep-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00524	Second Session of National Defence Council	
Oct-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00553	Official Gazette of the HZ of Herceg Bosna N. 5	
05-Oct-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P11376	Mladić Notebook Entry	
18-Oct-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10291	List of Salaries of HVO Officers and Soldiers for December 1992	
26-Oct-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00653	HVO Military Intelligence Report No. 89/92 on Situation in Prozor	
31-Oct-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00679	Order from HVO Main Staff 31-10-1/92	
Nov-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00772	Official Gazette of the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna N. 7	
Nov-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00714	Official Gazette of the Croat Community of Herceg Bosna N. 6	
02-Nov-92	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.45	Minutes from the 5 th Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council

04-Nov-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2301	1 st Krajina Corps Regular Combat Report no. 44-1/458	Supreme Defence Council
04-Nov-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2302	1 st Krajina Corps Regular Combat Report no. 44-1/459	
05-Nov-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2303	1st Krajina Corps Command combat report No. 44-1/460	
17-Nov-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10290	List of Salaries of Soldiers and Officers in the HVO	
19-Nov-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2552	VRS Main Staff Directive For Further Operations Number 4	
20-Nov-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00785	UNMO Report on Presence of the Croatian Army in Herzegovina	
28-Nov-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10674	Financial documentation from the Republic of Croatia Related to Cash flow between the Ministry of Defence, the Croatian Army, and Herceg Bosna	
06-Dec-92	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2429	1 st Krajina Corps regular combat report	
09-Dec-92	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00788	Stenographic Transcript of the 6 th Session of the Supreme Defence Council	
10-Dec-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00891	Request by Slobodan Praljak for Southern Front	
15-Dec-92	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00910	Order by Gojko Šušak for a loan from the Republic of Croatia to the HVO	
06-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01067	HVO Presidency Appointments to the Main Staff	

09-Jan-93	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.40	Stenographic notes from the 6 th Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council
15-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01146	HVO Main Staff Decision 01-I-32/93	
15-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01135	HVO Main Staff Full Combat Readiness Order	
16-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01163	Cheshire Milinfo Report No. 77	
17-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01174	ABiH 3 rd Corps Command Report 02/32-109	
18-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01197	Minutes from the Extraordinary Session of the HVO HZ Herceg Bosna	
18-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01184	Letter from Jadranko Prlić to HVO in Gornji Vakuf	
19-Jan-93	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	D00115	Transcript of the 25 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
20-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01241	Request for Cash Withdrawal by HVO	
20-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01243	Privredna Banka Receipt for Cash Withdrawal	
20-Jan-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P6	Meeting of Supreme State Council of the Republic of Croatia	Croatian Presidency
21-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01245	Privredna Banka Receipt for Cash Withdrawal	
21-Jan-93	Milošević (IT-02-54)	P469.39	Stenographic notes from the 7 th Session of the Council for the Coordination of Positions of State Policy	Coordination Council
23-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01277	Daily Report for Operation Zone Northwest	
24-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01277	Daily Report for Operation Zone Northwest	

25-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01305	Letter to the Government of the Government of Croatia from Jadranko Prlić	
27-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01327	HVO Rama Brigade Order 01-22 3-13/93	
27-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01350	Minutes of a Meeting of the HVO Ljubuški Military Police	
30-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01357	Daily Report for Operation Zone Northwest	
30-Jan-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01357	Report on Situation in Gornji Vakuf	
04-Feb-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01418	HVO Main Staff Report 02- 229/93	
08-Feb-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01439	Minutes from the 24 th Session of the HVO of HZ Herceg Bosna	
10-Feb-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00771	Stenographic Transcript of the 7 th Session of the SRJ Supreme Defence Council	Supreme Defence Council
08-Mar-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P7	Minutes of the meeting of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, with representatives of Central Bosnia municipalities and of the HVO of Herceg Bosna with their associates	Croatian Presidency
09-Mar-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	5D005381	Record of Coordination Meeting with Commanders	
12-Mar-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P02692	Stenographic Transcript of the 8 th Session of the SRJ Supreme Defence Council	SDC
24-Mar-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P08112	HVO Main Staff Request of Croatian Ministry of Defence	

27-Mar-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P8	Record of a meeting of President of the Republic of Croatia Franjo Tuđman and his associates with Alija Izetbegović, President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and his associates	Croatian Presidency
31-Mar-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P1529	Ratko Mladić Letter to the Chief of the VJ General Staff	
Apr-93	Brđanin (IT-99-36)	P2419	Analysis of the Combat Readiness of the Army of the Republika Srpska in 1992	
02-Apr-93	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01367	Stenographic Transcript of the 26 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
02-Apr-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01788	Minutes from Meeting of HVO Commanders and of Brigades and Special Purpose Units	
02-Apr-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01788	Minutes from the Meeting of the Commanders of the Operative Zone Northwest	
02-Apr-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P01788	Minutes of a Meeting of the HVO Commanders in the Central Bosnia Operating Zone	
23-Apr-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P09790	Jablanica HVO Report No. 193	
23-Apr-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	4D01078	Letter from Milivoj Petković to Mate Boban	
03-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02176	HVO Main Staff Report on Members of the Croatian Army 101 st Brigade on the Southern Front	
04-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02187	Meeting Among HVO, ABiH and SPABAT [Video Transcript]	

04-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02182	Order from Milivoj Petković to Herceg Stjepan Brigade	
06-May-93	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01370	Stenographic Transcript of the 30th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
10-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02258	List of People Detained in the Heliodrom	
10-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02264	Letter from Bishop Ratko Perić to Milivoj Petković	
13-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02315	List Mostar HVO Regional Field Hospital and Family Members Removed from Flats	
13-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02372	Jablanica HVO Decision	
13-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02358	'Croats Detain TV Crew Filming Blown-Up Mosque' <i>Reuters</i>	
16-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02412	HVO Military Police 3 rd Battalion 3 rd Company Report	
31-May-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02575	Minutes of Joint Meeting Between HVO of HZ Herceg Bosna and HVO of Mostar Municipality	
02-Jun-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00789	Stenographic Transcript of the 9 th Session of the Supreme Defence Council	Supreme Defence Council
02-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02961	HVO Southeast Herzegovina Operational Zone Crime Prevention Department Official Note	
10-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02707	Official Gazette of the HZ of Herceg Bosna N. 11	
10-Jun-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P2473	UNSC Resolution 838	
15-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	1D01668	Minutes of the 42 nd Session of the HVO of the HZ Herceg Bosna	
22-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02266	List of Persons Arrested on 10 May 1993	

22-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02900	Letter from Mate Boban to Philippe Morillon of UNPROFOR
27-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02977	HVO Security and Information Report
27-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P02975	Receipt for Croatian Army Equipment
30-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03038	Decision on Mobilisation on the territory of HZ Herceg Bosna
30-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03029	HVO Main Staff Report
30-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03019	HVO Main Staff Report
30-Jun-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03029	HVO Main Staff Report on the Muslim Armed Forces Attack North of Mostar
01-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03075	Daily Report by Čapljina HVO Military Police 3 rd Company of the 3 rd Battalion,' in 1 July 1993.
Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03089	Official Gazette of the HZ of Herceg Bosna N. 13
02-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03128	Instructions to HVO Operative Zone Southeast
02-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03121	Daily Report by Čapljina HVO Military Police 3 rd Company of the 3 rd Battalion
03-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03149	Order to Reorganise HVO Knez Domagoj Brigade
04-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03170	Daily Report by Čapljina HVO Military Police 3 rd Company of the 3 rd Battalion
05-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03190	Report on Prisoner Interviews from the Heliodrom
05-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	1D01669	Minutes of the 44 th Session of the HVO of HZ Herceg Bosna

07-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03258	Order to Fuel the HVO by the HV
08-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03308	Report by HVO 4 th Brigade Military Police
08-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03302	Report on the Work of the Žovnica Checkpoint
09-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03344	Report on Interrogations of Prisoners in Heliodrom
10-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03351	HVO Report on the Work of the Defence Department
10-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03347	HVO Čapljina Military Police Daily Report
10-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03351	Military Police Report on the work of the HVO Defence Department for January to June 1993
11-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03382	Request by HVO 2 nd Brigade 2 nd Battalion
12-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03394	Report on the Work of the HZ Herceg Bosna Office for Expelled Persons and Refugees
13-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03413	Report to the Presidency of the HZ Herceg Bosna
15-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03458	HVO Northwest Herzegovina Operational Zone
15-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03466	HVO Main Staff Analysis
15-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03466	Analysis of the Situation and Proposal for the Use of Units
17-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03516	Reply from Željko Šiljeg to Stanko Matić
18-Jul-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P2915	VRS Request to the VJ for the Provision of Ammunition
20-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03592	Order to Conduct Engineering Work
20-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03573	Minutes of the 47 th Session of the HVO of HZ Herceg Bosna

23-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03673	HR Herceg Bosna HVO Public Statement
23-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03667	Morale Report of the 5 th Guards Brigade
28-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10052	Letter from the Coordinating Committee of Expelled Persons from Mostar
30-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03818	Report about Arrival of HV Soldiers to the HVO
31-Jul-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03831	HVO Rama Brigade Security and Information Report
04-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03949	Order on Accommodation and Logistic Supply for the Croatian Army Volunteers
05-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P03979	HVO Main Staff Order
07-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04008	Minutes of the 49 th Session of the HVO of the HZ HB
08-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04039	Order 02-2/1-01-1748/93
09-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04058	HVO Military Police Crime Prevention Department Work Report
18-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04282	Letter to Vareš Municipality HVO President
18-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04274	Report HVO 4 th Brigade Military Police
19-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04297	Certificate for Release of Sulejman Hadžihajdić
19-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04295	Order to Send Volunteers to the Southern Front
21-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10187	HVO 4 th Brigade Military Police Record
21-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10187	Certificate to Release Two Prisoners with Letters of Guarantee from Dretelj Prison

21-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10188	Record from IV Brigade Military Police	
22-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10190	HVO 4 th Brigade Military Police Certificate	
22-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P10190	Certificate to Release all Prisoners in Gabela with Letters of Guarantee	
28-Aug-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04594	Report on Problems in the HVO's 3 rd Brigade	
Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04699	Report on the Activities of the HVO of HZ HB for Period January to June 1993	
06-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04822	Fourth Periodic Report on the Situation of Human Rights on the Territory of Former Yugoslavia	
08-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04877	HVO Order No. OI-34-39	
11-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00466	Republic of Croatia National Security Meeting	
12-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04979	Interim Report on Troop Rotation on the Southern Front	
15-Sep-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P9	Record of talks between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, and the President of the Republic of Herceg Bosna, Mate Boban, and officials	Croatian Presidency
21-Sep-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P10	Transcript of talks the president of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, had with a delegation from the HVO of Posavina, the municipalities of Ravno, Čapljina and Stolac	Croatian Presidency
23-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P05328	List of 36 Prisoners Brought to Heliodrom from Dubrane and Mostar	

26-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P04699	Report on Activities for the Period January to June 1993	
27-Sep-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P1626	Official Note from the Meeting of the VJ Supreme Command Staff,	
30-Sep-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P05518	HVO Security and Information Service Report	
27&29-Aug & 30-Sept-1993	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01379	Transcript of the 34 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
02-Oct-93	Karadžić (IT-95-5-R61)	P01381	Transcript of the 35 th Session of the RS Assembly	RS Assembly
11-Oct-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00709	Stenographic Transcript of the 14 th Session of the Supreme Defence Council	Supreme Defence Council
22-Oct-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P11	Transcript of a conversation between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tudman and the Minister of Defence	Croatian Presidency
26-Oct-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P878	Tasks set by Perišić at the Supreme Command Staff meeting of 27 September and 26 October 1993	
Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P1251	Report on VRS Financial Situation	
04-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06436	Central Military Prison List of Prisoners	
04-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06436	List of 100 Detainees with Letters of Guarantees for Third Countries	
05-Nov-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P12	Minutes of a meeting of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudman, with representatives from Herceg Bosna	Croatian Presidency

06-Nov-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P13	Transcript of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tuđman, with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia	Croatian Presidency
10-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00780	Stenographic Transcript of the 15 th Session of the Supreme Defence Council	Supreme Defence Council
10-Nov-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P14	Minutes of a conversation conducted by the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, with representatives from Herceg Bosna	Croatian Presidency
10-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P731	Presidential Order on the Formation of Special PCs	
10-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P731	Presidential Order on the Formation of Special PCs,	
18-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06729	Report on HVO Security, the Information Service, and the Military Police	
18-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06730	Report on HVO Security, the Information Service, and the Military Police	
18-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06722	HVO Military Police Bulletin No. 2	
19-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P1269	VJ Order Regarding Supply of Ammunition to VRS	
22-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P574	Matériel List	
22-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P581	Matériel List	
22-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06816	Central Military Prison List of Prisoners with Letters of Guarantee	
22-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06816	List of 51 Detainees with Letters of Guarantees for Third Countries	

22-Nov-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P06797	Republic of Croatia Ministry of Defence Order	
23-Nov-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P15	Transcript of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tuđman, with Minister of Defence Gojko Šušak and General Janko Bobetko	Croatian Presidency
23-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P571	Matériel List	
23-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P575	Matériel List	
23-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P577	Matériel List	
23-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P578	Matériel List	
23-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P576	Matériel List	
24-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P00215	The Directive for the Use of the Yugoslav Army, the Army of the RS, and the Serbian Army of Krajina	
24-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P582	Matériel List	
25-Nov-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P583	Matériel List	
28-Nov-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P16	Transcript of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Dr Frajno Tuđman with Mate Boban, President of the Croat Republic of Herceg Bosna	Croatian Presidency
01-Dec-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P744	Conclusions from the 15th Session of the SDC	
Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P00846	Official Gazette of the HZ of Herceg Bosna N. 8	
04-Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P07035	HR Herceg Bosna Report on Findings of Crimes	
10-Dec-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P1261	VJ Order Regarding Supply of Ammunition to VRS	

12-Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P07143	Minutes of a Meeting of a Working Group for Implementing the President's Order	
12-Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P07135	HVO Report on Logistics and Planning	
13-Dec-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P2933	Excerpt from Ratko Mladić's Notebook	
13-Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P07148	Minutes from Meeting on Disbanding Detention Centres in HR Herceg Bosna	
13-Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P07124	Minutes of a Working Meeting	
14-Dec-93	Prlić (IT-04-74)	P07173	Provision of funds for December 1993 and January 1994	
14-Dec-93	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P2934	Excerpt from Ratko Mladić's Notebook	
15-Dec-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P17	Minutes of talks between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tuđman, and the representatives of the Croat Coordination Committee of Herceg Bosna	Croatian Presidency
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18-Dec-93	Naletilić (IT-98-34)	PP892.P19	Transcript of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr Franjo Tuđman, with Hrvoje Šarinić and Mile Akmadžić	Croatian Presidency
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17-Feb-95	Perišić (IT-04-81)	P1214	Annual Financial Statement of the Plan of Tasks and Financing of the VRS for 1994	
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