



BAR

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THE YUGOSLAV WARS



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The Yugoslav Wars

Welcome to this British Army Review (BAR) Special Report: The Balkan Wars. As with most of our Special Reports the material within this report is from the BAR archives and concentrates on specific conflicts such as the Bosnian War, The Croatian War of Independence, the Kosovo War and the Ten Day War.

The conflicts involving the former Yugoslavia are complex and difficult to understand because there were so many different factions vying against each other. This report tries to disseminate the complexity of the conflicts into a more straightforward understanding of the Balkan wars. Below is a brief background to help the reader get started on his/her journey of understanding.

The Balkans conflict can be generally referred to as the Yugoslav Wars which was a series of related ethnic conflicts, insurgencies and wars of independence fought within the former state of Yugoslavia from 1991 to 2001. These wars led to the breakup of the Yugoslavia Federated nation as each of the constituent states declared independence. However, declaring independence did not ease unresolved tensions and hatreds inside the new republics. In fact, it was these tensions that fuelled the wars.

The wars were primarily ended through international peace accords that saw full international recognition of the new states such as the Republics of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo and Serbia-Montenegro.

Prior to the outbreak of war and the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Yugoslavia People's Army (JNA) was the main catalyst in trying to preserve the unity of Yugoslavia. This was done by crushing those governments trying to declare independence from the Yugoslavia Federation.¹ Serbia increasingly took control over the JNA as President Slobodan Milosevic, head of the Serbian government, used the unity of Yugoslavia and nationalist rhetoric aimed at creating a Greater Serbia from parts of Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina, to stir up old hatreds and ignite Serbian dominance. As a result of this, the JNA lost most of its ethnic personnel effectively turning it into a Serb army.

The collapse of Yugoslavia also saw other countries such as Albania try to create a Greater Albania from parts of Kosovo, although this was abandoned following international diplomacy.² There was also an attempt by Croatia to form a Greater Croatia which would have taken areas of Herzegovina but this was stopped

1 See the Yugoslav Wars, Introductory Section, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_Wars

2 Yugoslav Wars, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_Wars

with the Washington Agreement in 1994.³

These wars were particularly brutal with many war crimes and atrocities carried out by all the warring parties. These crimes included rape, genocide and crimes against humanity. Bosnia suffered some of the worst acts of genocide not seen in Europe since the Second World War and was the first since that time to be judged as genocidal. Many of the key players on all sides who committed or were responsible for the atrocities and acts of genocide have been charged with war crimes. To prosecute these crimes the UN set up the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

The actual number of deaths resulting from the Yugoslav Wars is difficult to verify but the International Center for Transitional Justice states that 140,000 people died in the wars, while the Humanitarian Law Center estimates the number as at least 130,000.⁴

The story of ethnic conflict in this region came to prominence in the 20th Century starting in the early 1920s with tensions around the constitution of what was, at the time, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes that erupted into violence after the assassination of Stjepan Radic, a Croatian politician in the late 1920s. Violence and atrocities continued during the Second World War with the Croatian Ustase, an ultranationalist, terrorist, fascist organisation 'responsible for the murders of hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews and Roma,'⁵ as well as political dissidents. On the Serb side were the Chetniks, a detachment of the Yugoslav Army that carried out partisan and terrorist acts against Croats in areas where there was ethnic mixing between the two peoples as well as against the Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶ In Serb dominated territories violent attacks between nationalists and non-nationalists occurred and those who criticised the Serbian government or the growing nationalist movement were either harassed or killed.

Yugoslavia came into existence after the First World War, and while it was primarily made up of South Slavic Christians it had a large Muslim population. During the Second World War Yugoslavia was invaded by the Axis powers, specifically Germany and Italy, ending that version of the country. The invasion provided fertile ground for the Ustase to mount its campaigns of genocide against the Serbs, Jews and Roma while also giving the Chetniks the foundation to conduct their campaigns of atrocities against ethnic Croats and Bosniaks, carrying out ethnic cleansing wherever they could.

3 *Ibid*

4 *Ibid*

5 For details on the Ustashe see Wikipedia, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ustashe>

6 For more detail on the Chetniks see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chetniks> at Wikipedia

When the Second World War came to an end in 1945, a new state of Yugoslavia was set up under Josip Broz Tito as the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The SFRY was a federation of six socialist republics made up of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia governed by the League of Communists of Yugoslavia⁷ of which Tito was the leader. He held a tight grip on the six republics stamping out any form of nationalism up until his death in 1980. From that point the SFRY began to collapse as each of the six republics sought greater autonomy within the federation starting with Slovenia and Croatia. Serbia, on the other hand, wanted to strengthen the federation and build greater control of the federal authority through a Greater Serbia.

Throughout the 1980s tensions continued to rise as it became more and more obvious that there was no real solution that all parties could agree to. As a result, both Croatia and Slovenia moved towards independence from the federation. By the early 90s Yugoslavia faced an economic crisis as nationalist desires amongst its various ethnic groups grew. There was, at this time, no really effective federal authority. Representatives of the six republics, two provinces and Yugoslav People's Army made up the Federal Presidency while the ruling communist leadership was split along nationalist lines.⁸

As the Federal Presidency began to break down the Serbs, under Slobodan Milosevic, increased their federal influence. Representatives on the Federal Presidency from Kosovo, Montenegro and Vojvodina were replaced by people loyal to Milosevic who secured four out of the eight presidency votes, giving Serbia the majority of votes. All the other republics had just one presidency vote. Thus Serbia now had majority control at the federal level. Croatia and Slovenia demanded a multi-party system, Serbia, led by Milosevic, wanted a centralised Serbian federation. In January of 1990 the Serb-dominated assembly of the 14th Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia agreed to abolish the single party system.

However, Milosevic, head of the Serbian Party branch of the League of Communists in Serbia, influenced the assembly to block and vote down any other proposals from any of the other republics, specifically from the Croatian and Slovene party delegates. As a result, both delegations promptly left the assembly marking the breakup of the party that ultimately led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. In 1991 Croatia and Slovenia both declared independence from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav People's Army was used to forcibly stop the breakup of the country

⁷ For further details see *Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* at Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socialist_Federal_Republic_of_Yugoslavia

⁸ See the *Yugoslav Wars*, Introductory Section, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yugoslav_Wars

and the Serb-controlled federal government condemned the independence claims of Croatia and Slovenia. The use of the JNA to try to secure the internal integrity of Yugoslavia ultimately led to the Yugoslav Wars.

The Yugoslav Wars consisted of:

- *The Ten Day War: (26 June 1991 - 07 July 1991)*
- *The Croatian War of Independence: (1991-1995)*
- *Bosnian War (1992–1995)*
- *Kosovo War (1998–1999)*
- *Insurgency in the Preševo Valley (1999–2001)*
- *Insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia (2001)*

The result of the wars saw Croatia become a republic in its own right. Bosnia-Herzegovina became two entities after the Bosnian War. One was the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the other was the Republika Srpska with Banja Luka being its administrative centre and largest city.⁹ The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) was renamed Serbia and Montenegro in 2003. In a referendum in 2006 55% of the people of Montenegro voted to end their country's union with Serbia.¹⁰

Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008 and at that time 112 UN countries recognised its new status. Serbia did not and at the time of writing still has not done so. While Kosovo is a member of international institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund it is not a member of the United Nations.

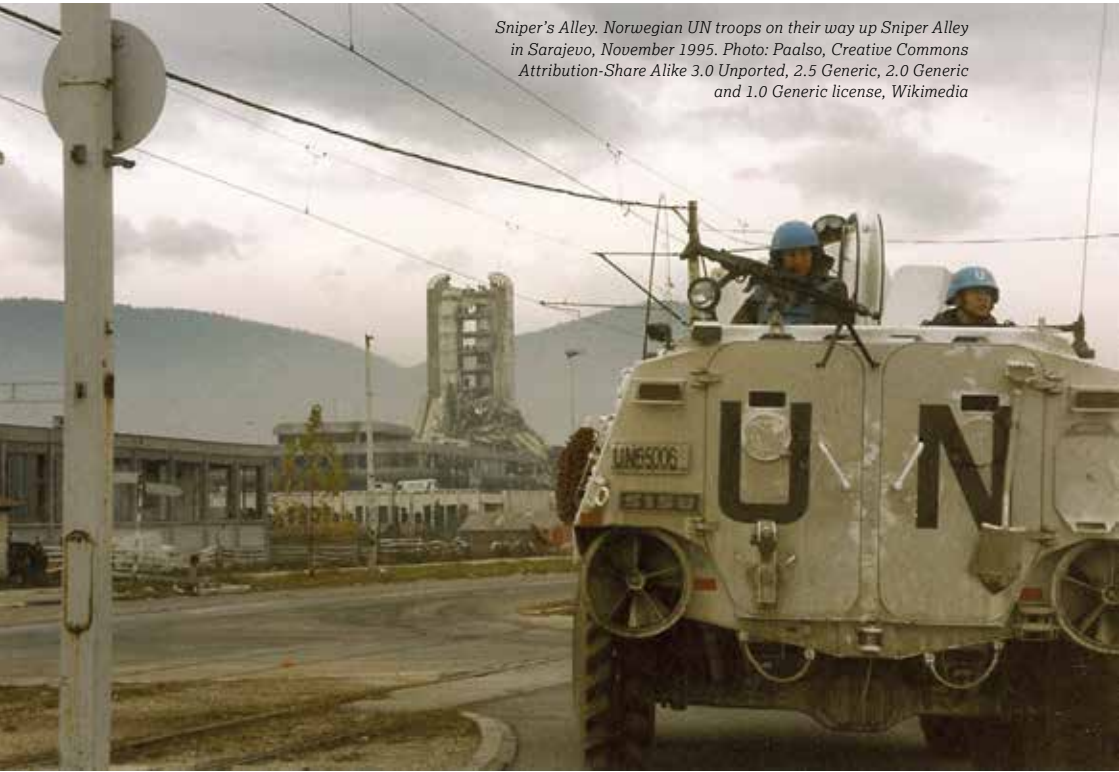
While this report does not go into detail on all the Yugoslav wars it does provide some detail, and hopefully some clarification, on some of the wars listed above, but not all. By studying this BAR Special Report we hope that the complex nature of the Balkan wars is now a little clearer and easier for readers to understand.

The Editor

⁹ For more detail see the Wikipedia entry on the Republika Srpska: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republika_Srpska#Impact_of_war

¹⁰ For more detail on Yugoslavia see the Wikipedia report here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serbia#Breakup_of_Yugoslavia,_political_transition_and_contemporary_history

Sniper's Alley. Norwegian UN troops on their way up Sniper Alley in Sarajevo, November 1995. Photo: Paalso, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported, 2.5 Generic, 2.0 Generic and 1.0 Generic license, Wikimedia



Serbian Responses to Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina

This article by historian Charles Dick considers Serbian¹ reactions to various forms of foreign intervention mooted on behalf of the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H). This article was originally published in BAR 102, December, 1992.

¹ For the purposes of this paper, Montenegrins and Serbs are lumped together as Serbs.

The South Slavs And Their History²

Any analysis of events in former-Yugoslavia and predictions about its future must be based on an understanding of the history, and consequently, the character and attitudes of the South Slavs. The Slavic nationalities of former-Yugoslavia are tribal societies, governed more by their emotions than by their intellects. Moreover, these emotions are primitive, atavistic, and not those shaped by late twentieth century liberal values: concepts such as death before dishonour and the sacred duty to wreak personal revenge on those who have wronged oneself, one's family or one's country are still powerful motivators. Grudges and hatreds from the distant past are nursed constantly to keep them warm.



Map 1: Croatia Locator Map, ESRI, UNCS. Image: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia.

² The Slovenes will be excluded from the following, brief survey, as Slovenia's independence is generally accepted. So too, will Montenegro, as this tiny backward republic is so closely associated with Serbia.

From Byzantine times until the early twentieth century, most of the ex-Yugoslav people were subjects of foreign empires and many of their lands were scenes of constant warfare.

The Catholic Croats had the misfortune to spend almost two centuries under the despotic and barbaric rule of the Ottoman Turks. Then, from 1699 until 1918, Croatia was part of the Austrian Empire. It formed part of the military frontier, and the Croats were amongst the best, and fiercest of the emperors' troops. For much of the period, the region enjoyed a degree of autonomy, though this was constantly being eroded by Budapest, especially after 1867 (Croatia being in the Hungarian part of the empire).

The various tribes of Orthodox Serbs were loosely united by the end of the thirteenth century, forming an empire which was, however, beset by endemic dynastic conflict and territorial disruption as the fortunes of war ebbed and flowed. The Battle of Kosovo in 1389 snuffed out Serbian independence. For the next four centuries, the Serbs endured brutalising Turkish rule. The threat of starvation and the savage suppression of the frequent insurrections forced considerable emigration into neighbouring Croatia and Hungarian Vojvodina, with the remaining population living as much through brigandage as agriculture. By 1830, Serbia had wrested autonomy from the Turks, and by 1878, independence. A series of wars, mostly successful, had, by 1914, enlarged the country to include Kosovo, the country's spiritual home, its Jerusalem, and much of Macedonia. Austria-Hungary, however, prevented the acquisition of partly Serbian-inhabited Bosnia, the Sanjak of Novi Bazar and Albania. In the First World War, the Serbs achieved initial defensive victories, but the country was overrun by the Central Powers in 1915. Despite eventual defeat by overwhelming forces, the Serbs felt justifiably proud of the military prowess they had demonstrated over the preceding century. They also demonstrated an impressive capacity to endure. Serbia's military casualties were proportionately the highest of all the combatants, with 57 dead per thousand of the population and 371 per thousand mobilised (compared to Britain's 16 and 125 respectively).

Bosnia-Herzegovina (B-H) was divided as early as the tenth century by the Catholic West and the Orthodox East. Most of the area was part of the unstable Serbian empire until it too was occupied by the Turks in the wake of the Battle of Kosovo. Turkish occupation further complicated the religious map of B-H through the conversion to Islam of the hitherto persecuted Bogomil heretics. Ottoman oppression continued until 1878, when the province, along with the Sanjak was given to Austria-Hungary, thus robbing Serbia of part of what the Serbs regard as their homeland. Thus, the peoples of B-H never enjoyed even an autonomous existence. Neither did they build up a proud military tradition like the Croats or



Nikola Šubić Zrinski's Charge from the Fortress of Szigetvár, oil on canvas, depicting the sortie of Count Nikola Šubić Zrinski, Ban (Viceroy) of Croatia, and his men, the heroic defenders of the castle of Szigetvár, against the besieging Turks in 1566, in which Zrinski lost his life. The painting, by Johann Peter Krafft (1780-1856) had been commissioned by the Vienna court, and currently held at the Hungarian National Gallery in Budapest.

Photo: Web Gallery of Art, Public Domain

the Serbs (though banditry and murderous feuding were as prevalent as elsewhere in the region).

Settled by Slavic tribes since the seventh century, Macedonia became part of the Bulgarian empire in the early thirteenth then part of the Serbian towards the end of that century. The area was seized by the Turks even before Kosovo, and misruled by them for five and one third centuries. Russia awarded Macedonia to Bulgaria in 1878, on strong ethnic grounds, but the other powers forced its return to Turkey. The Balkan Wars of 1912-13 led to its own liberation, but also to partition between Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria. The latter seized most of what it regarded as *terra irridenta* during the First World War. Macedonia, then, was another region without its own history and traditions, or even identity.

In 1918, a voluntary union, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was created. This comprised restored Montenegro and pre-war Serbia, enlarged by the acquisition of Vojvodina from Hungary and some bits of Macedonia from Bulgaria (which also lost its Aegean coastline to Greece) and, from the ruin of the Austro Hungarian Empire, Slovenia, Croatia, B-H and the Sanjak. After immense sacrifices, the Serbs had emerged from the war on the winning side: they were the most numerous ethnic group, they had their own king and a history and tradition

of which they were proud, and they believed that they should therefore dominate the new kingdom. There was no pandering to the sensibilities of the disparate, and often in the past, mutually hostile religious and ethnic groups in this rigidly centralised state. There was predictable political chaos which was hardly reduced by the imposition of royal dictatorship in 1929. In that year, King Alexander changed the name of his country to Yugoslavia and tried, without success, to foster a Yugoslav national identity and spirit, but deep divisions remained.

In 1941, a German blitzkrieg overran the country, and Yugoslavia was partitioned. Germany and Italy annexed or occupied and administered large areas: Vojvodina reverted to Hungary, most of Macedonia was awarded to Bulgaria, and the large puppet state of Croatia was created. There then followed a war against the German, Italian and Bulgarian occupiers combined with the civil war between the Croat Ustashe and Moslem supporters of the Axis on one side, Tito's communist-dominated partisans on another, and Serbian monarchist nationalists (the Cetniks) in the middle. This was a struggle (centred in B-H) of a viciousness hardly paralleled, even in the USSR, in which about 1.8 million Yugoslavs died (10.9% of the population); over half of those deaths, including the 400,000 Serbs massacred during ethnic cleansing in Croatia, were the result of the civil war.

Aided by the collapse of German power elsewhere, the partisans emerged victorious over the Axis, the Ustashe regime and the monarchists. Tito then set about creating a Yugoslavia in which bourgeois nationalism would be eliminated in favour of socialist unity of the Yugoslav peoples, all of whom would be treated as equals. The country was divided into six federal republics; Serbia (including the provinces of Vojvodina and Kosovo), Croatia, Slovenia, B-H, Montenegro and Macedonia (see map 1). These were purely administrative divisions and did not, indeed could never, reflect the boundaries of Yugoslavia's heterogeneous ethnic groups (see map 2). As table 1 shows, each republic contained substantial minorities.

Tito hoped that the creation of somewhat arbitrary republican boundaries and the re-imposition of a rigid centralism would be acceptable because the new Yugoslavia was to be based on an universal ideology, and not on the dominance of one nation. (Indeed, he offended Serb sensibilities by recognising both Montenegro and, even more, and for the first time ever, Macedonia, as separate republics). The watchword of the regime was 'Brotherhood and Unity', and one of the most powerful secret police forces in all Eastern Europe prevented any re-opening of the national issue. This was, however, a mere papering over the cracks: the fissures remained. Croats and Slovenes resented their economic exploitation in favour of the more backward regions, and in the mid '60s struggled

	Serb	Slovene	Croat	Moslem	Macedonian	Albanian	Hungarian	Others
Serbia, less —	66.7							33.3 (a)
Vojvodina	55.0						20.0	25.0
Kosovo	12.5					75.0 (b)		12.5
B-H	31.7		19.5	39.0 (c)				9.6
Croatia	10.9		76.1					13.0
Macedonia					65.0	20.0		14.5 (d)
Slovenia		89.5						10.5
Montenegro	66.7			19.5		9.4		4.4

Notes: (a) Mostly Croats, and Moslems in the Sanjak.
(b) Albanian population rising rapidly, and Serbian falling; by 1991, 90% were Albanian
(c) Moslem population rising rapidly; in 1991, it was 44% (compared with 33% Serbs and 18% Croats)
(d) Includes 4.5% Turks.

Table 1. Ethnic Dsitribution in Republics in 1981 (Percentages)³

successfully within the ruling party for greater republican economic autonomy. Vojvodina and Kosovo, too, were elevated to the status of autonomous provinces within Serbia. In 1974, a new constitution, designed to preserve the country's unity after Tito's death, in effect converted Yugoslavia into a confederal state with a system of rotating leadership for both state and the party. Tito died in1980, leaving an economic legacy as rotten as any East of the Iron Curtain. Escalating unemployment and inflation and a fall in production combined with political paralysis to remove any lingering arguments for preserving unity. Nationalism waxed once again, all the more virulently for having been so long repressed in the name of a failed experiment: all nationalities believed that they were receiving a raw deal, and not least the Serbs who, in 1987, elected as their president the rabidly nationalist Milosevic. This proved to be the last straw for Yugoslavia. Milosevic represented the outdated and discredited communist ideology and, at the same time, a return to Serbian domination of a restored centralist state. Slovenia seceded in 1991, to be followed by Croatia and then B-H and Macedonia, and dissatisfaction with Serbian rule grew amongst the Hungarians of Vojvodina, the Moslems of the Sanjak and, most of all, the Albanians of Kosovo.

Assumptions About The Intervention

It is assumed that foreign intervention in B-H may take four forms, or be (or become) a combination of them.

- *Purely humanitarian aid to the population of Sarajevo, delivered solely by air.*
- *Purely humanitarian aid delivered to Sarajevo, and perhaps other towns such as Gorazde or Bihac, by road and air.*

3 *Statistics from Stateman's yearbook 1988-89, based on 1981 census and rounded off.*

Yugoslavia, 1945-91



Ethnic composition of Yugoslavia



Reproduced by kind permission of the International Institute for Strategic Studies

Map 2: Showing Yugoslavia from 1945-91 and the ethnic composition.

- *Suppression of artillery and aerial bombardment of Sarajevo and perhaps other towns, creating 'safe havens.'*
- *Restoration of the pre-civil war boundaries of B-H (implying a major military effort by the interventionists).*

For the purposes of this section it is assumed that the Serbs were determined to disrupt or prevent the achievement of any of the above aims. It is worth noting that even humanitarian aid may well be considered intervention if it is directed towards a 'Serbian' area due for ethnic cleansing, as foreign troops will be bringing sustenance to the enemy and thus encouraging continued resistance. This may be accomplished by:

- *Yugoslavia⁴ as a matter of state policy, and using the Yugoslav Army (YA) as well as the Partisan forces (recruited from Bosnian Serbs and 'volunteers' from other Serb areas).*
- *Partisan forces alone, with or without aid and encouragement (overt or, more likely, covert) from Yugoslavia.*

It is more than likely that any significant employment of force against the Serbs will encourage some other nationalities to take anti-Serbian action, thus enlarging the scope and intensity of the conflict:

- *The Croats could attempt to recover the approximately one third of Croatia conquered in 1991-92.*
- *The Albanians in Kosovo could attempt to secede from Serbia. This could, in turn, result in an Albanian rising in Macedonia, and possibly Albanian intervention or even a full scale Balkan war.*
- *The Moslems in the Sanjak could try to unite them with their Bosnian brethren (a move which would, if successful, physically sunder Serbia from Montenegro).*
- *Vojvodina could seek restoration of its previous autonomy, or the Hungarian element could seek unification with Hungary (possibly involving that country).*

Yugoslav Military Strategy

Belgrade is unlikely to commit the YA to combat interventionist forces for four reasons.

⁴ Hereafter, Yugoslavia refers to the rump state comprising Serbia and Montenegro.



*Bodies of people killed in April 1993 around Vitez, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
Photo: Photograph provided courtesy of the ICTY, Wikipedia.*

- *The army is in poor shape after its reverses in 1991-92 and needs restructuring. Moreover, many influential military figures are inclined to make the preservation of rump Yugoslavia the priority over securing 'Serbian' Bosnia.*
- *The possibility of any or all of the developments outlined previously militate in favour of preserving what is left of the Army intact to deal with further fissiparous tendencies in the country.*
- *Yugoslavia is well aware of the damage western airpower and deep strike systems could inflict on the YA and on the defence industries and the country's infrastructure.*
- *Belgrade will probably wish to maintain the fiction that the civil war in B-H is a purely internal affair from which Yugoslavia is distancing itself. For these reasons, partisan warfare is likely to be the preferred method of pursuing war aims. Drawing on a long historical tradition and considerable successful experience in World War II, the Serbs have a well-developed doctrine for the prosecution of such a war. Yugoslavia is likely to aid the partisans with arms, logistic support, training and*

'volunteers' (especially technical specialists). The use of partisan warfare is also likely to be supplemented, in the event of Western intervention, by the use of terrorism against interventionist states, exploiting the Yugoslavs resident therein.

- *War aims are likely to be confined to the creation of Greater Serbia, probably with an intermediate state where so-called independent states are set up in 'Serbian' Bosnia and possibly Krajina. Once these 'Serbian' areas are seized and ethnically cleansed, Belgrade will expect the West to accept the fait accompli, however reluctantly especially as the Croats are unlikely willingly to relinquish Herce-Bosnia, their share of the de facto partition of B-H. In any case, the Serbs will be prepared to defend their gains, seen by them as their rightful homeland, through partisan warfare of indefinite duration. They will not be prepared to accept subordinate status in a country in which they believe the Moslem majority wishes to establish a fundamentalist Moslem state.*

The will of Yugoslavia, and of the ethnic Serbs outside its borders, should not be underestimated. As has been shown, the Serbs are a warlike, intensely nationalistic people easily mobilised and persuaded to endure great hardships and casualties to resist what they see as unjustified aggression against their homelands. The pain threshold of the Serbs is very high, and even the sort of destruction visited on Iraq is unlikely to do anything other than unite the people and stiffen resolve. Western notions of rational behaviour are foreign to them, and it would be very dangerous to count on their influencing Serbian reactions. Traditionally, the Serbs have cared little about the wishes and opinions of the rest of the world, as they demonstrated in 1913, 1914, 1941-45 and under Tito.

In prosecuting a prolonged struggle for the creation of a Greater Serbia, Belgrade will be well aware of advantages that it possesses and which were denied to Tito. These will make Yugoslavia less easily pressurised into an unwelcome peace agreement.

- *The interventionists will be perceived to lack Hitler's determination to see through any intervention regardless of the cost in lives, money or time. Nor are they likely to pursue their aims with the ruthlessness shown by the Third Reich. Internal divisions, the lack of international consensus, other world problems, and fear of the conflict spreading to become a Balkan war will all be expected to combine to ensure that western involvement will be half-hearted and of limited duration.*

- *Yugoslavia shares a land border with friendly Romania, and sees Greece, Ukraine and Russia as being well-disposed. This will facilitate the evasion of economic sanctions and the acquisition of modern arms and equipment appropriate to the needs of both the YA and the partisans. This will become especially important if interventionist air and missile power is brought to bear against Yugoslavia's subsequent armaments industry.*
- *By contrast with the situation in 1941-43, the partisans have started the war well-armed with appropriate equipment and can be sure of regular and substantial resupply.*
- *As the interventionists are unlikely to invade Serbia or Montenegro, the partisans will have stable and secure bases for training, the resting and refitting of units, and for the mounting of operations.*



Four M46 130mm Guns belonging to the VRS mixed Artillery Regiment in Bijelina Barracks (CQ 600578) are parked on the grass. The Task Force Eagle Division Artillery Verification Inspection Team and soldiers from the Russian Brigade were on the site to conduct a weapons inspection in accordance with D+120 GFAP requirements during Operation Joint Endeavor. Photo: Specialist Emmanuel Samed, US Department of Defence, Released, Wikimedia.

Partisan Operational Art And Tactics

If intervention is limited to the delivery of humanitarian aid, the Serbs will see little reason to modify their current methods of seizing and cleansing the areas they claim. As they appear close to achieving most, if not all of their objectives, and as western reluctance to act decisively is manifest, they will consider time to be on their side. They will probably let convoys through and flights land, contenting themselves with making sure that the operation does not run smoothly. They will:

- *Inflict delays through negotiation and then renegotiation at various levels.*
- *Employ mining, sniping, harassing artillery and mortar fire and ambushes wherever it cannot be proved unequivocally that they are responsible, or, failing that, when they can plausibly argue that such actions are not policy but junior-level, local initiatives. Indeed, with 17 different, imperfectly controlled factions involved in the fighting in B-H, such unauthorised actions are inevitable anyway. If the interventionists set up safe havens in areas not destined to be part of Greater Serbia, this will simply accelerate the process of ethnic cleansing in those that are. If, however, they try to create them in 'Serbian' lands, a major, and if necessary prolonged, campaign will be mounted to prove that the operation is pointless, ineffective and unsustainable at acceptable cost. The same reaction would follow from any attempt to recover land lost by B-H in the civil war, though the scope and scale of the operations on both sides would, of course, be greater. Efforts to wear down the will of the interventionists and Moslems alike are likely to take two forms.*

- Politically, negotiations will be pursued in bad faith, with constant tactical twists and turns and with retreats being accompanied by opening or reopening other issues.

- Militarily, the people in the havens or retaken territory will be harassed so that they realise that they are not, in fact, safe, and so will the interventionists until they tire of such a futile operation. This can be done using the methods mentioned above, but on a much larger scale and accompanied by raids, often mounted on a large scale.

The partisans will employ the organisation and methods perceived to have been so successful against the Germans and which were adopted by Tito's Yugoslavia in the event that the country be overrun by foreign invasion.

- *Organisationally, the partisans will be organised into two types of unit. Local detachments with strong ties to specific areas will operate in classic guerrilla fashion in their own localities: i.e., they will be civilians who are part-time intelligence gatherers, saboteurs and fighters. Large mobile units, organised into brigades and larger formations, will consist of full-time soldiers. These will manoeuvre to execute offensive operations of varying scale, using the local knowledge of and intelligence gained by local detachments, and incorporating the latter temporarily into their combat formation.*
- *Attempts will be made to deliver powerful, surprise blows, and fear of combat casualties and reprisals will not deter action: indeed, the latter will be almost welcome, being productive of new hatreds and thus acting as an effective recruiting officer.*
- *Battle will not be accepted under unfavourable circumstances, and no attempt will be made to hold territory against superior forces or to defend long, continuous fronts.*
- *The emphasis will always be an offensive action, and the loss of ground will be answered by the seizure of another, bigger area elsewhere.*
- *Flexibility is the partisan's watchword. Stereotype will be avoided, and continual changes in tactics, in the area of operations, and in the means and methods of warfare can be expected.*

The mountainous terrain of B-H is even more advantageous to partisan operations than that of Afghanistan, given the abundance of forest cover. It will inevitably force the interventionists to expend large forces in the defence of Sarajevo and its airfield, ground supply routes and safe havens or reconquered areas. It also provides ample cover for offensive manoeuvre by lightly equipped partisan forces, and for dispersal and concealment following attacks. Through ubiquitous harassing actions, the partisans will seek to tie down most of the enemy forces in more or less static defence of key points, routes and areas. This will create conditions conducive to the conduct of tactical and later operational manoeuvre so that superior, surprise concentrations can be achieved against objects of increasing size and importance.

At least in its early days, intervention appears likely to be limited to the delivery of humanitarian aid and perhaps the suppression of Serbian artillery or air attacks on population centres. For this reason, it is worth examining possible Serbian ambush, artillery and air defence tactics in more detail.

In places, convoys will be vulnerable to long range fire from manpacked ATGM and light, mobile, direct fire artillery. The main threat, however, is likely to be the ambush. Proving routes, even by ground reconnaissance, is likely to be

of limited value, given the use of remotely controlled mines and demolitions and perhaps mines remotely delivered by multiple rocket launchers, and given the ample concealment offered to the partisans by steep, heavily wooded slopes. With careful preparation, it will always be possible to spring a surprise ambush. The traditional answer of picketing the heights will not serve, given the forest nature of the terrain, and terrain considerations also severely limit the value of an air or artillery response. Convoys will have to rely, by and large, on their own resources for protection and immediate counter-attack. However, large numbers of partisan hand-held and manpackable anti-tank weapons and automatic small arms can do considerable damage in a short range ambush. Suppressive fire and infantry counter-attack by the escort and supporting helicopters are likely to be countered by the use of prepositioned smoke pots and a number of deterrent anti-personnel mines to enable the ambushers to slip away.



A Serbian self-propelled ZSU-52-2, 57mm Anti-Aircraft gun at a Serbian cantonment area in Zvornik, 28th February 1996 during Operation Joint Endeavor. Photo: US Department of Defence, Wikimedia, Released

Suppression of artillery which is being used to harass population centres and airfields will be a formidable task, and certainly one beyond the capability of airpower alone. Faced with an air and counter bombardment threat, the Serbs will seek to protect their artillery by exploiting the high mobility which characterises much of it (especially the mortars) and the concealment offered by the terrain. Weapons can be deployed individually, rather than in batteries, and re-deploy from one camouflaged position to another after firing a few rounds. Heavier less mobile weapons can be sited in populated areas (preferably near schools, hospitals or other emotive targets) to complicate the delivery of counter-fire through fear of inflicting civilian casualties. The fact that the resulting bombardment will be intermittent and inaccurate will not trouble the partisans, given that their interest is to indiscriminate harassment of large, area targets. To deal with such an artillery threat, the interventionists would be forced to deploy, not only sound-ranging and artillery-locating radars and howitzers, but also large numbers of artillery OP parties and FACs.

These, in turn, will require considerable numbers of infantry to protect them. The forces required to achieve and maintain suppression of Serbian artillery to a distance of 20kms of their target areas will be very substantial, imposing a logistic burden which would threaten to swallow the resources needed for humanitarian aid. Thus, partisan actions would be furthered one way or another.

For the most part, the partisans will have to rely on passive measures to protect themselves from air attack, i.e., on the abundant concealment offered by the terrain, improved by camouflage, by darkness and by bad weather (an increasing problem with the coming of autumn). They do, however, have (or have access to) large numbers of handheld SAMs and light AAA. As the war in Afghanistan showed, clever use of such assets in mountainous terrain can be very effective against a modern airforce. The favoured type of air defence action is likely to be the ambush. AAA and/or SAMs are deployed on the likely approach run or ground-attack aircraft to artillery, ground ambushes or, better still, dummy targets for a surprise engagement at a vulnerable stage in the aircraft's attack profile. Given the dispersed nature of targets and the fact that most will be in partisan-controlled areas, the loss rate of aircraft is likely to prove unacceptably high for the poor returns they are likely to produce as was the case in the Falklands. The likely result, perfectly acceptable to the partisans, is a serious circumscription of rotary and low level fixed wing operations: these, of course, are the very types of sorties which, through the delivery of intimate close air support, are of most use to the troops on the ground. Patrols with hand held SAMs are also likely to try and infiltrate close enough to operational airfields to engage aircraft on landing or take-off. The partisans would be well pleased with a defensive

reaction which committed large numbers of men to forming an impenetrable cordon round the airfields.

Conclusions

It would be wrong to expect the delivery of humanitarian aid to take place peacefully merely because limited interventionist forces were escorting it, with the threat of air power to back them up, and perhaps the threat of committal of more troops if that is not enough.

- *Even if official Serbian policy is to let convoys pass peacefully, the odds are that some local commander will disobey orders. Even if that does not happen, the Moslems, desperate to involve others in fighting the Serbs, will almost certainly fire on convoys and pin the blame on their enemies.*
- *The Serbs will discount the influence of airpower employed in the protection of convoys, and will probably have a low opinion of its ability to influence the course of operations in B-H as a whole.*
- *The Serbs may well discount the threat of the deployment of further ground forces by the interventionists. They are likely to proceed from the assumption that their foreign foes will be too disunited and too fearful of the costs of escalation to commit enough forces to make a serious impact on their operations. If they calculate that the interventionists are bluffing. If they are right, they win. If they are wrong, the interventionists still lose, in the sense that they are then saddled with a bigger commitment than they had intended: a commitment which will have no foreseeable end, given that the Moslems, and perhaps other ex-Yugoslav nationalities, will be emboldened by the anti-Serbian involvement of even a few thousand foreign troops to intensify and perhaps expand the scope of the war.*

A larger scale intervention to create safe havens in Serbian-claimed areas, in addition to ensuring the delivery of aid, will not be accepted with resignation by the Bosnian Serbs, and probably not by Belgrade. It would therefore be pointless to go in with a small force, hoping that a show of resolve will cow the opposition. The only hope of success would lie in a massive military effort, sustainable over a long period. This would almost certainly lead to an intensification and expansion of the conflict as Croats, Albanians and possibly the Sanjak Moslems seek to realise their aims against an embattled Serbia. It follows that an attempt to restore B-H's borders would inevitably be even more fiercely resisted, and would certainly lead to a widening of the war, possibly even sparking off a general Balkan war and a spate of terrorist attacks on the interventionists' homelands. It must also

be borne in mind that such an attempt could also result in interventionist forces fighting on two fronts, against Croats in Herce-Bosnia as well as Serbs.

It is hard to see any positive results stemming from even a successful safe havens policy or restoration of B-H. The hatreds already extant in the region would be intensified, and some parties would inevitably refuse to accept the verdict of a trial of strength as permanent. Once the interventionist forces left B-H, revisionist states or ethnic groups would seek to build up their strength in order to renew the war. Of course, this is as true of Croatia, which has lost Krajina and may lose Herce-Bosnia, or even the Sanjak or the Hungarian part of Vojvodina break away. Moreover, if the West were to become bogged down in a prolonged and expensive conflict in B-H, there would be repercussions as far away as Moscow and Baghdad.

If, despite its manifest unattractiveness, a large scale intervention is decided on, it is essential that appropriate troops be sent. These must be trained in and equipped for mountain warfare and be able to endure the rigours of a Yugoslav winter without loss of effectiveness. They must be prepared, not for a 'normal' internal security campaign, but for major combat with a highly aggressive enemy operating often in large unit or formation strength. If they are not, they may well suffer initial reverses which will have important psychological repercussions on both themselves and the enemy (not to mention third parties). Unfortunately, Italian, German and Turkish mountain troops are precluded from deployment in B-H for obvious historical reasons.

Thus far, the brief has concentrated on the possibility of Western intervention in B-H. Various Moslem countries have also been expressing a desire to help their co-religionists, however. If such countries send troops to B-H, the result could well be disastrous. Serbian resolve would certainly stiffen, and the struggle would degenerate to new depths of barbarism. It would also be all but inevitable that the war would spread to the Sanjak, to Kosovo and to Macedonia. The end result would likely be a Balkan war. It would therefore be highly desirable for the West to persuade Turkey to act as a restraining voice in international Moslem councils. Turkey may well react positively. It has its own problems with the Kurds, is anxious to spread its influence into the Turkic part of former-Soviet Central Asia and has to face the possibility of involvement in the Armenian-Azerbaijan conflict: it could do without being drawn into a war on its other flank, a war which could lead to a flood of Moslem refugees heading for Turkey. Furthermore, Turkey is anxious to join the EC, and the opportunity to gain favour may well have its appeal, especially when Greece is increasingly out of favour because of its attitude to both Macedonia and Serbia.



A Serbian T-34/85 is drawn away from the frontline near Doboj in the spring of 1996. Photo: Paalso, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported licence, Wikimedia

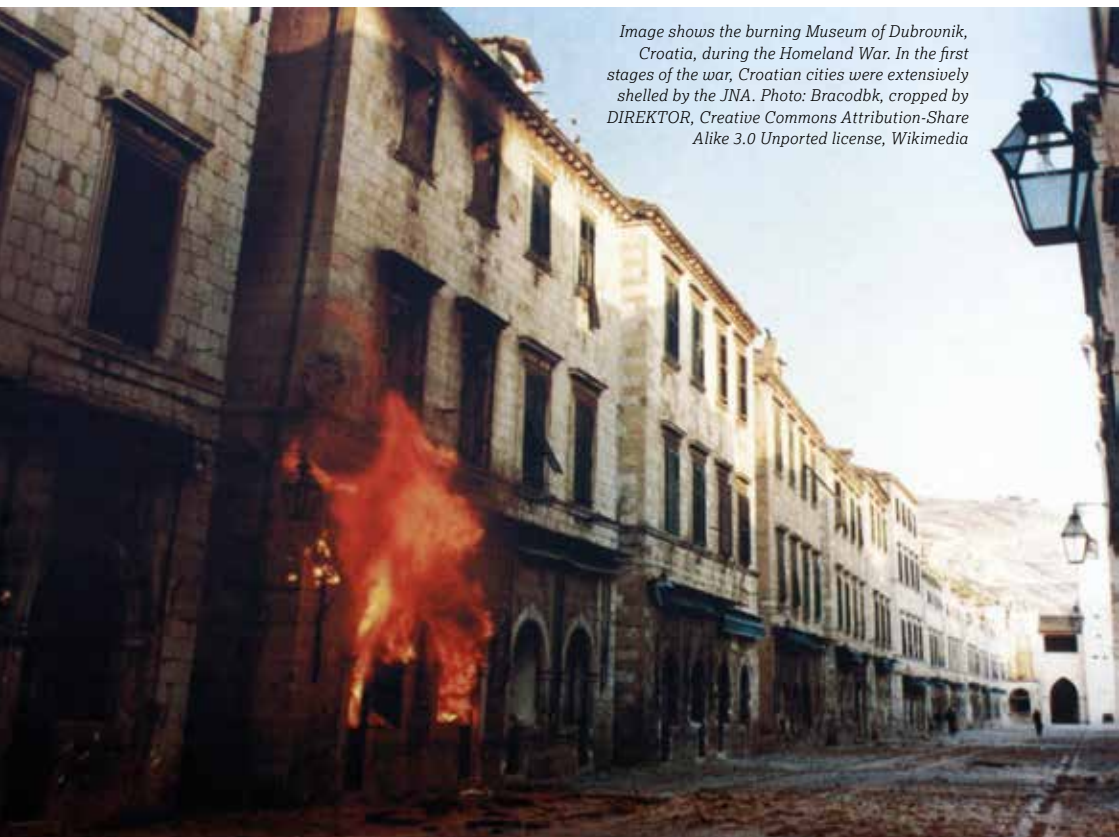
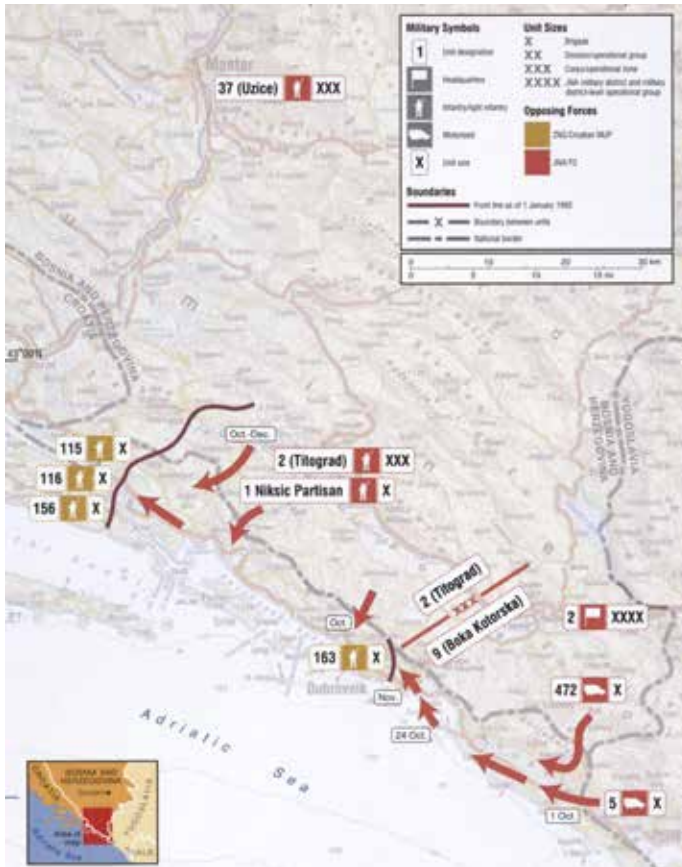


Image shows the burning Museum of Dubrovnik, Croatia, during the Homeland War. In the first stages of the war, Croatian cities were extensively shelled by the JNA. Photo: Bracodbk, cropped by DIREKTOR, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia

Disengagement during Peace Support Operations

This article by Lieutenant Colonel J.P. Riley, RWF, was originally published in BAR 106, April 1994 and it looks at supervising the disengagement of forces during peace operations in the former Yugoslavia



Map 1: Yugoslav People's Army offensive around Dubrovnik, Croatia, October 1991-April 1992.
Source: *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995*, Diane Publishing Company, 2003, Central Intelligence Agency, Released

The subject of Peace Support Operations is a wide one and is currently attracting much attention. What is already clear is that in situations of conflict but short of war - where conflict may be intrastate but war is always inter-state¹ - there exists a growing variety of operations which require the deployment of military forces, probably multinational and in support of UN Resolutions. These operations will be covered by both Chapter VI and Chapter VII of the UN Charter and thus will embrace both the violent and non-violent use of military forces.

1 Draft Field Manual Operations, June 1993, pp 1-3 to 1-7; Quadripartite Study, Peace Support Operations in Situations of Chaos, Staff College Camberley, June 1993 pp 12 to 15.

This short article, which was originally delivered to the Strategic and Combat Studies Institute and the Centre for Defence Studies at King's College London in June 1993, describes a specific example of one such military operation, supervising the disengagement of rival combatant forces. The example chosen is the withdrawal of the Yugoslav Army (YA) from the Dubrovnik area of Croatia in October 1992, a situation in which the consent of both parties had been obtained.

Background

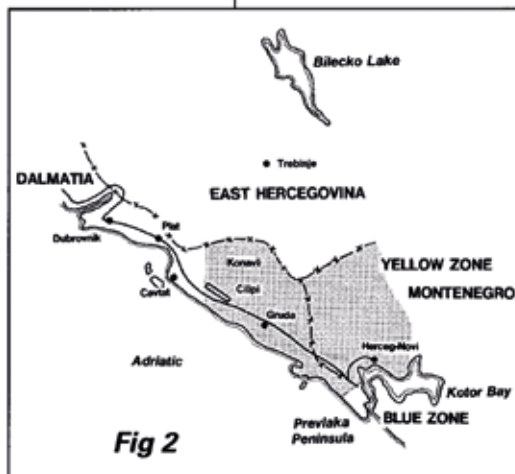
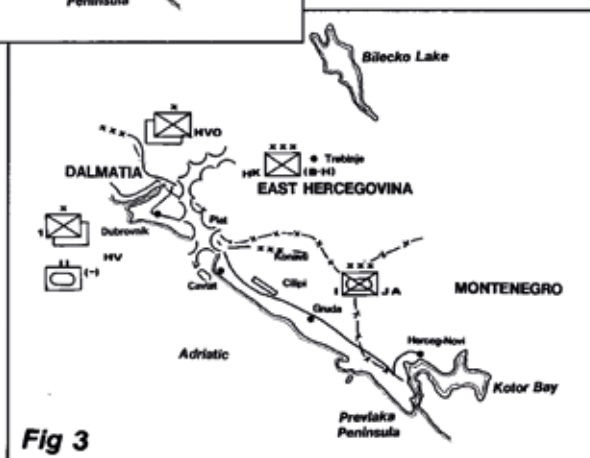
By the end of 1991, the City of Dubrovnik had been besieged and bombarded for months from the surrounding area which was firmly under the control of the Podgorica Corps of the YA. Some respite was gained when the Ceasefire of January 2nd 1992 came into force between Serbs and Croats, and this was later supplemented by local agreements. However, when, under the terms of this ceasefire, the YA withdrew its forces from Croatia in May 1992, it remained in possession of the area of Konavli, south west of Dubrovnik. It did so because of two separate but related factors: the Prevlaka Peninsula and the situation in East Herzegovina.

A glance at the map (Fig 1) shows that the Prevlaka Peninsula dominates the entrance to Kotor Bay in Montenegro, the main - indeed only - base of the Yugoslav Navy. The peninsula was disputed territory which was not going to be released by the JA without at least a political directive from Belgrade and the guaranteed demilitarisation of the area. An attempt was made to break the deadlock on *HMS Avenger* in July 1992, when an eight-day withdrawal programme was brokered by the ED Monitor Mission (ECMM), a regional organisation operating under the authority of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter², and the UN. However, no start date was agreed. As summer turned to autumn, Croatia began to show increasing frustration but there was still further political activity needed.

This issue was clouded by fighting north of Dubrovnik in Hercegovina where Bosnian Croats of the HVO were battling with the Bosnian Serb Hercegovina Corps (HK). A YA withdrawal from Konavli would, reasoned the Serbs, open up the southern flank of the HK to a Croatian attack towards the town of Trebinje. Disputes over prisoners further clouded the issue.

Matters almost came to a head on 23 September 1992 when the Croatian Commander, the veteran General Janko Bobetko, threatened to attack the Serbs - a move which would have brought disaster to the region. Major General David Cranston, commander of the British contingent to the ECMM, or Operation OXLIP, made several visits to the area to mediate with both Bobetko and the YA local commander, General Demjanovic. At a higher level, the problem was referred to the

2 *Charter of the United Nations 26 June 1945, Chapter VIII pp 28-30*

Fig 1**Fig 2****Fig 3**

standing Peace Conference in Geneva. Here, in October, a deal was brokered shortly before the expulsion of Yugoslavia from the UN. All YA forces would withdraw from Konavli by 20 October 1992; Prevlaka would be demilitarised and monitored by UN Military Observers (UNMOs) in what was known as the Blue Zone; and a five-kilometre strip of territory either side of the international border, known as the Yellow Zone, would also be demilitarised and monitored by EC Observers (Fig 2) .

Planning and Executing the Operation

The disengagement monitoring operation was planned as a joint ECMM/UNMO operation from the start, sharing equipment, manpower and knowledge, and operating under a unified command and control system. The planning sequence followed the well-worn path of mission analysis and estimate, leading to a plan. This was largely based on an assessment of the contending parties, whose outline strengths and dispositions are shown in Fig 3.

The mission given to his observers by General Cranston was 'To monitor the withdrawal of both YA and Croatian Army (CA) forces from the Dubrovnik municipality in order to verify the demilitarisation of the area'. The operation was planned in three quite distinct phases, each phase a necessary precursor to the next. These were:

- *Phase 1: Pre-withdrawal actions and preparations.*
- *Phase 2: Monitoring the withdrawal.*
- *Phase 3: Subsequent Activities including continued observation of the demilitarised areas.*

Twelve Observer teams were tasked, each team comprising two or three observers, a driver and an interpreter. The teams were deployed as follows:

- *1 to Cilipi airport*
- *2 to CA brigades.*
- *1 to the CA tank battalion*
- *4 to YA formations*
- *2 mobile on the YA side*

Each team was equipped with an FFR Landrover or equivalent, with communications which included VHF and telephone for local and cross-front line communications between teams; and HF and satellite for longer range communications. The operation was controlled on the ground from a checkpoint in Dubrovnik.

In Phase I, the estimate identified the following tasks:

- *Assembly or redeployment of teams, vehicles and equipment.*
- *Drawing up a census of CA and YA units and equipment from lists provided by the parties and checked by the Observers, in order to verify withdrawals on the ground.*
- *Liaison with local commanders and the establishment of security and safety measures for Observers.*
- *Establishing contact with the HVO and HK in order to negotiate a ceasefire. This important, implied, task emerged as vital in order to prevent these forces interfering with the withdrawal.*
- *Establishing Command and Control arrangements.*
- *Estimating the condition of Cilipi airport.*

In Phase 2, the following tasks were identified:

- *Monitoring and reporting the withdrawal and recording collateral damage.*
- *Obtaining YA minefield maps and passing these to the CA for subsequent clearance action.*
- *Monitoring any ceasefire agreed between the HVO and the HK, reporting and protesting any violations.*
- *Confirming and reporting on the completion of the withdrawal.*

In Phase 3, tasks were:

- *Assisting in the controlled re-entry of refugees and displaced persons. This eventually included acting as the local mayor, council and police until the Croatian authorities resumed control.*
- *Monitoring and reporting the continuation of the demilitarisation agreements and protesting violations.*

The operation was successfully carried out and all went well until the day after the completion of the withdrawal, when CA units of the 1st Brigade moved in to the Cavtat area in strength and launched an immediate attack northwards onto the HK in an attempt to push the HK back from the high ground overlooking the Dalmatian coast. The only result of this act of aggression was to impede the possibility of future cease-fires, and bring Bosnian Serb artillery fire onto the coastal towns and villages of Dalmatia.



*A destroyed T34/85 Tank of Yugoslav Army, by Croatian troops sits near the cease-fire line in Croatia.
Photo: Ken Mayer, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license, Wikimedia.*

Problems and Solutions

What then were the main problems encountered in this operation, and how were they solved? This will be examined at the strategic, operational and tactical levels.

At the strategic level, the problems were in defining the desired end state; framing a suitable mandate for the monitoring force; and obtaining the consent of the Parties in the conflict. These problems had to be resolved at the correct level, which they were, in Geneva. The inducements offered to the Yugoslavs to withdraw are not public knowledge, but clearly must have recognised their concerns over access to Kotor along with the need to put in place adequate arrangements to ensure its demilitarisation. It is possible that some side deal was struck between Croatia and Yugoslavia involving the Croatian withdrawal from Bosanska Posavina, which took place at this time, but this is speculation. Thus the Mandate given to the Observers was one of observing and reporting on an agreement being implemented by the two Parties. No enforcement was possible or necessary.

At the operational level, a number of concerns had to be addressed. There was clearly a need for unified command and control, and this was addressed. Also mentioned earlier was the need for reliable theatre-wide communications, which was solved by the purchase of commercial equipment, supplemented by some military radios. The consent of the Parties had been obtained at the strategic level, but this still had to be negotiated at the Operational level. Information was always a difficulty and was never solved. Information could only be obtained through direct observation on the ground since there was no access available to national

intelligence gathering assets. This may not always be so in similar circumstances - indeed it should not be so. Public Relations and Public Information was similarly a problem, since there was always a danger that the disengagement would be portrayed in the Media as a Croat victory, thus endangering the neutral status of the Observers. This problem was never satisfactorily solved, but clearly a PR/Plinfo Staff is required in these circumstances to support the Operational Commander. Finally, the identification of tactical tasks and the sequencing of the operation were solved by the application of the standard techniques of mission analysis and the estimate process by the Commander and his G2/G3 Staff.



Destroyed Serbian house in Sunja, Croatia. From 1991-1995 Sunja was part of Republic of Serbian Krajina, a relic of the war 1991-1995 in Yugoslavia. Photo Petar Milošević Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia

At the tactical level, the need for unified command and control has been stressed, as has the provision of reliable cross-front line communications. The deficiencies in information and PR/PInfo also apply here. Lastly, at the tactical level, it was a feature of the Mandate that the Observers had no 'teeth' -they could do nothing to enforce the agreement, merely observe and report. This was determined at the Strategic level where the needs of each individual case of this kind must be determined.

Conclusions

This disengagement monitoring operation was a success. No tactical doctrine and little experience existed to help in framing the plan, which was therefore done from first principles using the tools of mission command. It did, however, obey - and validate - the principles identified from previous peacekeeping missions: consent, noninterference, impartiality, non-use of force except in self-defence, support of the Security Council, and delegation of responsibility for the operation to the correct level of command.^{3 4}

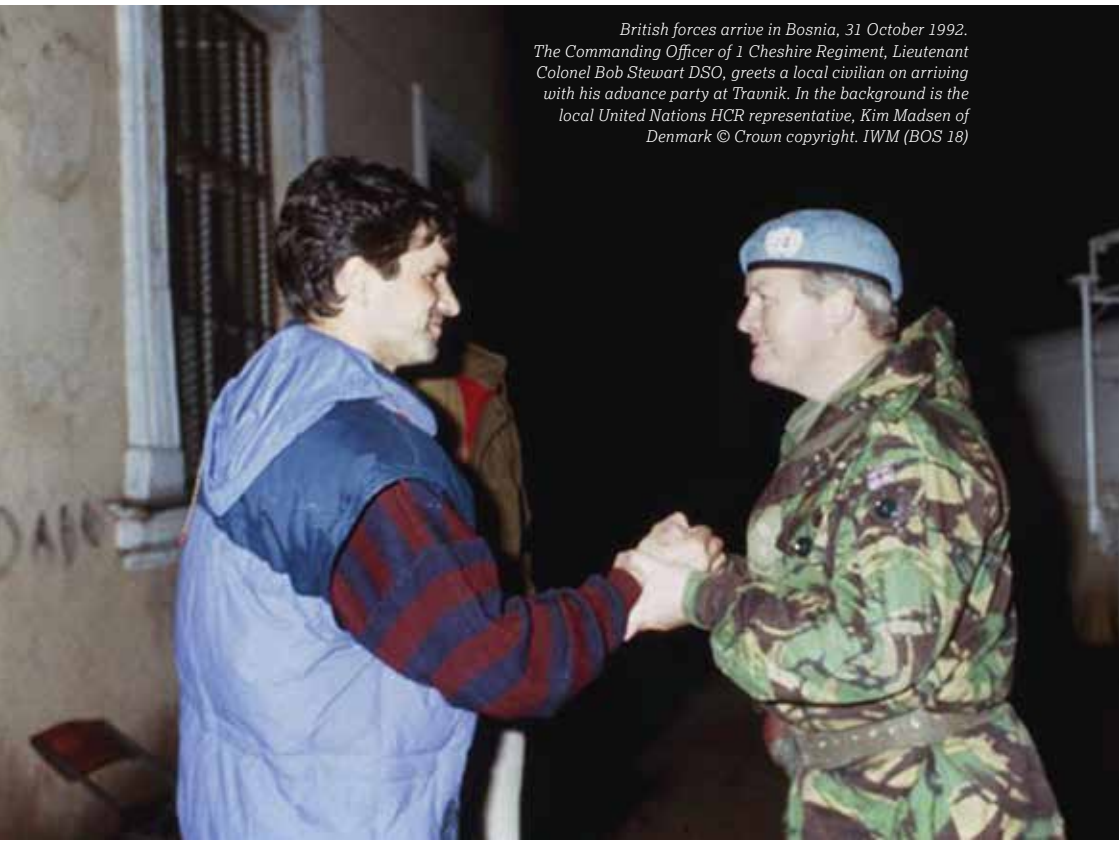
3 *Draft AFM Operations, pp 7-4 to 7-5.*

4 *For a full survey of the events in Dubrovnik see: Glenny, Misha, The Fall of Yugoslavia; Riley, J.P., The Monitor Mission in the Balkans.*



The image shows a Mine Marking sign in Croatia. Photo: Modzzak, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.

*British forces arrive in Bosnia, 31 October 1992.
The Commanding Officer of 1 Cheshire Regiment, Lieutenant
Colonel Bob Stewart DSO, greets a local civilian on arriving
with his advance party at Travnik. In the background is the
local United Nations HCR representative, Kim Madsen of
Denmark © Crown copyright. IWM (BOS 18)*



Civil Information in Peacekeeping: Lessons from Bosnia 1992-94

*This article by Major R M Lyman AGC (ETS) was originally published in BAR 110,
August 1995.*

The more than two years of Op GRAPPLE to date have exposed a significant deficiency in the British Army's attitude to, and provision for, Civil Information (CI). CI is about providing factually and timely information to the civil population amongst whom a peacekeeping force operates. In Bosnia-Herzegovina it is an essential part of peacekeeping in general and the campaign plan in particular. Without it the bulk of the population would remain ignorant of our intentions and unaware of the wider benefits of our deployment. As such it is an aspect of Public Information but aims to meet the needs of a different audience to that traditionally targeted by military Public Relations.

The British Experience in Bosnia

The importance of CI is only gradually being learned by the United Nations and relearned by the British Army in Bosnia. For the first year or more of the Op GRAPPLE deployment to the Former Republic of Yugoslavia the provision of material for the international and national (ie UK) audiences was extremely comprehensive and effective. But the needs of the local population were largely ignored, perhaps because of the difficulties in getting the UN message across to all protagonists involved in a vicious civil war. This was despite the Joint Commander's directive to:

Ensure that all factions within the former Yugoslavia are aware of the UN roles and the British forces place within them.

Yet the same message being transmitted to the UK about the role and achievements of UNPROFOR was precisely the message which needed to be put across to the local population. In fact, the need to advertise our success to the local population was far more important than telling the people of the troop-contributing nations. This deficiency was recognised by the Spokesman for the Secretary General, who reported in June 1994 on the

Limited and ... ineffective effort being made to prepare and distribute printed and audio-visual materials in local languages which would tell people what UNPROFOR is and describe its goals.

Peacekeepers Cannot Operate In Isolation

CI is important for three principal reasons. The first is because peacekeepers cannot operate in isolation from the population. They deploy into a society fragmented by war, operate within that society and cannot exist aloof from it. They have to retain the support of the local population in order to ensure that their

peacekeeping objectives are met. CI is based on the twin premise that not only does it make sound military sense for the peacekeeper to publicise his activities, but that common courtesy dictates that the host country has a right to know what the guests are up to.

It follows that as peacekeeping forces deploy and exist only by the consent of the various parties, it is essential that this consent be nurtured. This is best achieved by persuading people that peacekeepers have been deployed for the good of all communities: the preaching of this message lies at the root of CI.

It remains axiomatic, however, that there needs to be 'good news' to advertise in the first place. This was certainly available in Bosnia throughout the time frame of Britain's deployment of troops to Op GRAPPLE. Cease fire brokering, substantial civil affairs aid, repairs to the civic infrastructure, the development of the Croat Muslim Federation following the 23 February 1994 Washington Agreement and the active promotion of the 31 December 1994 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) stand out as landmarks in this regard. Many of these were staggering achievements carried out with the understatement typical of the British Army. Yet this understatement had an undesired effect when it came to transmitting the magnitude of these achievements to the local population: for much of Op GRAPPLE we didn't even bother. Therein lay our failure.



A soldier from 'B' Company, 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment (Rangers) talks to a local Moslem woman in Gornji Vakuf with the assistance of an interpreter © Crown copyright IWM (UKLF-1993-015-49-33)

Information, Persuasion and Peacekeeping

The second reason is that information and communication are important elements of persuasion, and persuasion lies at the heart of peacekeeping. Little or nothing in peacekeeping will ever be achieved by units which, when deployed, sit on the sidelines and fail to engage in the sort of referee diplomacy that can lead to the dis-engagement of the warring factions. Peacekeepers are diplomats who, through friendly, though persistent, pressure attempt to persuade warring parties of the fruitlessness of continuing to employ force to achieve their ends. Peacekeepers attempt to deter through argument and not, as is often urged, by the threat of military retaliation! Nothing is more illogical than the cry of some to take up arms to enforce demands for peace. Persuasion can only be achieved by talking, often by lots of it, and by providing avenues of communication to enable dialogue to continue.

CI Is Positive Publicity

Third, without information the benefits brought by the peacekeeper may be lost on the population. To be effective CI must publicise who the peacekeepers are, where they come from and why they are there. It must also publicise what the peacekeepers are doing on a daily basis to meet the terms of the mission and the practical benefits the deployment is accomplishing. Without this type of message the advances made in restoring a measure of peace and stability would otherwise not be transmitted to those who most need to hear it. Why would the bulk of the population support the deployment if they could see or hear no reason for its continuance? Losing the support of the population is devastating to a UN mission as Somalia so clearly showed. There is an extremely fine line between passively supporting a peacekeeping operation and actively opposing it.

Problems of Disseminating Information

In Bosnia-Herzegovina getting this message to the local people poses significant challenges. Nowhere is the dictum that 'Information is Power' more evident than the warring parties' control of information in Bosnia. This is in part a result of forty years of Titoism which limited the inquisitiveness of press and public alike. When the communist state collapsed in anarchy in 1991, so too did its civil communication and information network. A vacuum appeared, eagerly exploited by local militia and sectarian leaders. Information quickly became a tool of propaganda. The extent to which the war became one of information and disinformation played expertly for the cameras by all factions was, and still is, extraordinary to observe. The peacekeepers are often embarrassingly inexperienced in their use of information by comparison especially when they have virtually exclusive access to it.



Members of the 1st battalion Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment distributing aid in the village of Glavice, South East of Bugojno © Crown copyright IWM (UKLF-1994-004-91-22)

Command and Control

For it to be effective the CI strategy should be planned at the highest level and integrated into the Commander's campaign plans at Sector level and below. Through it the Commander can publicise his operation: without it he remains alienated from the local community and ignorant of its reaction to the peacekeeping effort as a whole. At unit level CI is an important part of each battalion's link with the community with whom unit and sub-unit commanders should be encouraged to develop constructive relations.

It should be stressed that CI is not solely a Public Information task: in many respects the traditional Public Information organisation has proved itself incapable of dealing with the needs of CI in Bosnia. One of BRITFOR's failures was not to set aside dedicated resources at an early stage to meet this need. CI only gained direction and support when it became a recognised part of the Sector Commander's plan, reporting directly to him through the G3 chain of command, in late 1994. As CI plays an essential part in the local outreach of all units it should be directed by Commanders, G3 elements of headquarters staffs and uniformed officers appointed by them for this task. The use of civilian staff in this role is wholly inappropriate. The appointment of an S03 G3(CI) in each major unit, for example, should be filled by a high grade officer commensurate with the value placed on the role of CI in the over all campaign plan.

What CI Is Not

CI, used openly and honestly, is an extremely powerful tool for the peacekeeper. But it is worth emphasising what is not. It is not disinformation, the manipulation of information, the distortion of information or any form of falsehood in any guise. The strength of CI must lie in its factual nature, thus representing the fairness and impartiality of the provider. In Bosnia, the impartial provision of information by British peacekeepers in particular acted to cement UNPROFOR's image as impartial and unbiased in the minds of the bulk of the population. Too often, CI on Op GRAPPLE was written off as propaganda, psychological warfare or worse. Such attitudes must change if future peacekeeping is to be effective.



Troops of the 1st battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers in Jelajah, North of Maglaj, Central Bosnia. Infront of the camp area is a FV107 Scimitar and a FV510 warrior in the mud © Crown copyright. IWM (UKLF-1994-004-72-16)

The Vehicles Of CI

The vehicles for providing CI are numerous and include radio, newspapers, television and leaflets.

Radio: Local radio stations are ideal vehicles for CI but the possibility of setting-up one's own radio station should not be neglected. The underlying theme should remain the efforts being made on the people's behalf by the peacekeepers to restore the country to a semblance of normality. In the BRITFOR AOR at present (early 1995) we continue to broadcast news and current affairs, not just on the current situation Bosnia-wide but also about topical local issues, on a variety of

local radio stations every week. Liaison with these radio stations began in an *ad hoc* manner by the Public Information team in Vitez following the Washington Agreement of 23 February 1994. Nevertheless it soon gained a momentum of its own and within four months a captain was exclusively involved in broadcasting transcripts on stations from Gornji Vakuf to Maglaj. Almost without direction and planning it became established as a crucial part of BRITFOR and Sector South West's¹ attempts to carry the UN message to the disparate populations of central Bosnia. The growing radio effort saw the birth of an embryonic CI campaign throughout the Sector. In time, Serb-controlled radio in Ilijas began to receive broadcasts as did a stridently Croat station in the town of Prozor.

In the absence of any information infrastructure in the rubble of central Bosnia, these stations proved themselves to be the most effective and timely method of communicating with the local populations in the AOR. Without newspapers communities tended to receive all their news from the radio and have remained extremely loyal to their 'own' station. Despite the fact that most of these remain partisan, the BRITFOR broadcast established itself as an impartial purveyor of news and information acceptable to even the most biased station. By the end of the year, 15 radio stations were receiving broadcasts and transcripts were faxed to all other national contingents (Malaysians, Canadians, Spaniards and Turks) in the Sector where contingent Public Information officers adapted them to suit local needs.

The programme material for the radio transcripts continues to be based on the news from the previous week and is sourced entirely from authorised or previously published UN material. Each broadcast includes news from around Bosnia, news specific to each area, G5 and Civil Affairs updates and a look forward to the following week.

Television: The second vehicle available to us is television. In the latter half of 1994 considerable progress was made in the audio-visual field with UNPROFOR TV providing timely and relevant local broadcasts, of which 80% are screened uncensored by the five local TV stations in central Bosnia. TV teams from Zagreb travelled to central Bosnia to cover stories identified by units as timely and relevant, such as mine clearance operations and the developing peace in specific areas.

Newspapers: For the first two years of Op GRAPPLE no facility existed for transmitting information in print to the local communities of central Bosnia. A small number of externally funded news magazines began to emerge as a result of a growing normalization of affairs throughout the region during 1994 but these

¹ *Sector South West includes all BRITFOR troops in Bosnia with the exception of three companies of BRITBA T 2 in Gorazde.*

remained either embryonic or hostile to UNPROFOR. In addition, the one UN publication which did exist failed to address the local issues which most concerned units on the ground and the communities with which they had to deal on a daily basis.

A British initiative was therefore begun in late 1994 to prepare a monthly news sheet in a number of different versions designed principally to impress upon local communities the efforts being made on their behalf by units in their area. It was to concentrate on the progress being made towards peace, local advances, agreements and G5 initiatives. Before long, however, the project was extended to cover all the force contingents in the Sector and received funding by HQ UNPROFOR to the tune of US\$2,000 per month.

The first edition of NADA (Hope) was produced in eight different versions, some written in Bosniac and some in Croat, in late January 1995. Four of these versions covered the BRITFOR AOR. 2,000 copies of each version (ie a total of 16,000) are now produced every month. The editions are as follows:

- **Maglaj:** *Zepce, Tesanj, Maglaj and Zavidovici - BRITCAVBAT*
- **Lasva:** *Travnik, Vitez and Busovaca - BRITBAT1*
- **Vrbas:** *Bugojno, Gornji Vakuf, Prozor - BRITBAT1*
- **Rama:** *Livno, Tomislavgrad, Kupres - BRITBAT1*
- **Zenica:** *Zenica and Kakanj - TURKBAT*
- **Visoko:** *Visoko, Kiseljak, Ilijas - CANBAT2*
- **Konjic:** *Konjic and Jablanica - MALBAT*
- **Mostar:** *Mostar and List - SPABAT*

The newspaper was deliberately made as locally-orientated as possible. The large size of the Sector made it difficult for the achievements of UNPROFOR and all the humanitarian agencies involved to achieve publicity at the lowest level and in every area. In addition to meeting this need for local information each edition was to contain:

- *General news items from across Bosnia Herzegovina.*
- *The developments of the Joint Commission Policy Committee QCPC), the body established to effect the implementation of the Washington Agreement at Sector level. This dealt with such things as the return of displaced persons (DPs) to their homes, joint mine clearance operations, check point opening hours and the rights of freedom of movement on public roads.*
- *Notes from the Sector Commander.*
- *Economic and infrastructural developments and G5 tasks sponsored by UNPROFOR or international agencies.*

- *Developments at the Joint Commission Sub Committee level on the progress of the Federation.*
- *Interviews with local personalities such as municipal leaders.*
- *GS developments in the local area.*

Leaflets: Another vehicle for the dissemination of information is leaflets, one such which was issued following the COHA² of 31 December 1994. To be successful leaflets must remain absolutely unbiased and report only the absolute facts of the message which needs to be transmitted. 40,000 copies of the leaflet were distributed throughout the Sector and touched a raw nerve on behalf of the warring parties who saw their own tight grip on the dissemination of information being compromised. Wisely used leaflets are an ideal way of pulling the rug from under the feet of the local war lords who have much to gain by keeping information from the people. Although the COHA leaflets caused considerable consternation among the warring parties it was notable how receptive school children in some areas were to them.

Press Bulletins: Tremendous success was also encountered in publishing press releases and information bulletins, by HQ Sector South West, following the regular JCPC and Regional Joint Committee (RJC) meetings to the local and Croatian press. On a number of occasions Croatian newspapers which were originally hostile to UNPROFOR published press releases in full and official information releases in this manner gained access to channels of information not previously open to UNPROFOR.



*Members of the Household Cavalry Regiment handing out books to the children of a school in Lug, near Prozor
© Crown copyright. IWM
(UKLF-1994-004-53-2)*

² COHA is the Principles for Freedom of Movement agreement or Cessation of Hostilities Agreement

Posters, Literature And Badges: A final but not insignificant aspect of the CI campaign in Bosnia is the provision of media materials carrying the UN message, such as posters, information booklets, pamphlets and badges to schools and kindergartens.

Conclusion

CI acts to reinforce the success of the mission so that the indigenous population remain supportive of the peacekeeping forces. It is an extremely important aspect of the hearts and minds campaign, which has been waged to great effect in all British 'small wars' since Malaya. Yet, as an Army today we have, at worst ignored it, and, at best, paid lip-service to it. Without it, however, we deprive ourselves of an extremely potent weapon which can be wielded to tremendous effect in cementing the peacekeeping mission we have been given.

Perhaps a small measure of our success in this field in the last year, however, is the fact that the names of 'Captain Ted' (Shields), 'Captain Jerry (McDermott)' and 'Captain Sam' (Orwin) are as indelibly imprinted on the minds of the many hundreds and perhaps thousands of people who listened to the weekly BRITFOR radio broadcasts throughout Central Bosnia.



Soldiers from 'B' Company of the 2nd Battalion, Royal Irish Regiment (Rangers) with a Warrior FV510 in the town of Gornji Vakuf. © Crown copyright. IWM (UKLF-1993-015-49-22)



Engineers from 20 Field Squadron, 36 Regiment Royal Engineers complete the jacking of the Durrant bridge over the Vrvas river near Jajce, Bosnia. The bridge, was required since a section of road bridge was blown during a previous Serb offensive. The bridge is called Durrant bridge by the engineers, after a Second World War Victoria Cross awarded to a sapper in the regiment. Photo: Captain Harvey, Crown Copyright

Working with UNHCR in the Former Yugoslavia

This article by Major M D Smith REME, a former UNHCR Military Liaison Officer to HQ UN Peace Forces in the former Yugoslavia, was originally published in BAR 112, April 1996.

In the coming year many British service personnel will be contributing to the peace settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina as members of IFOR. Their primary tasks are likely to include:

- *To ensure the continued compliance of the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement.*
- *To ensure the withdrawal of forces from the Agreed Cease-fire Zone of Separation*
- *To ensure the separation of forces from the InterEntity Boundary Line*

In addition to these key responsibilities, IFOR might be asked to undertake supporting tasks within the limit of its capabilities such as to help create secure conditions for the conduct of other tasks associated with the Peace Agreement; to assist in the observation and prevention of interference with the freedom of movement of civilian populations, refugees and displaced persons; to assist in the monitoring of the clearance of minefields and obstacles; and to provide assistance to UNHCR and other international organisations in their humanitarian missions.

So who is UNHCR and what does it do? I thought it might be beneficial to provide an insight into the workings and responsibilities of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the lead humanitarian agency in the former Yugoslavia. An understanding of its mission could be useful to IFOR personnel who could find themselves working closely with humanitarian aid agencies. It was written shortly after completing a seven month tour seconded to UNHCR as their Military Liaison Officer to HQ UN Peace Forces. The post will eventually evolve into UNHCR's Military Liaison Officer to IFOR.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by the United Nations General Assembly on 1 January 1951. The High Commissioner is elected by the UN General Assembly. UNHCR's two main functions are international protection of refugees and seeking durable solutions to their problems.

UNHCR's Statute defines refugees as

those who have fled their countries as a result of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular group and cannot return or do not wish to return.

Since its establishment, UNHCR has helped more than 30 million refugees and earned two Nobel Peace prizes. Today, when wars, persecution and intolerance continue to compound the refugee problem, the role of UNHCR



*Bosnian Muslim women and children refugees, possibly from Srebrenitza, arrive in Tuzla, March 1993
© Crown copyright. IWM (BOS 80)*

remains more critical than ever before. There are currently an estimated 23 million refugees around the world. Over the years UNHCR has also been asked by the United Nations Secretary General to assist the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs.) These are people who have been forced to flee their homes but remain within their country. They have very much the same needs as refugees - food, shelter and protection - and have often fled for the same reasons.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every person has the right to seek and enjoy asylum from persecution. In fulfilling its protection role, UNHCR strives to ensure that asylum-seekers are able to exercise that right and that they are not forced to return to countries where they would be in danger. In support of the host government, UNHCR coordinates emergency relief to refugees in their countries of asylum. Except in special circumstances, this assistance is provided through the national or local authorities concerned, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOS) or technical agencies.

When conditions in their homeland have changed and are conducive for return UNHCR promotes the voluntary repatriation of refugees. For those who opt to stay in their country of asylum, UNHCR provides support for their local integration. When necessary, UNHCR assists refugees to resettle in third countries.

UNHCR's work world-wide is carried out by 4,800 staff members of which 940 are at Headquarters in Geneva, with the remainder located in over 200 offices in 116 countries. UNHCR's budget is funded almost entirely from voluntary

contributions from governments. In 1994, mainly due to the crisis in Rwanda and the on-going war in former Yugoslavia, UNHCR 's global budget reached its highest total ever at US \$1.32 billion.

UNHCR's relief effort in the former Yugoslavia began in October 1991 when the High Commissioner's first Special Envoy arrived with a staff of one. At that time UNHCR maintained only an office in Belgrade, but offices were soon opened in Sarajevo, where the Special Envoy was initially based, as well as Zagreb. There are currently some 790 staff in 27 UNHCR offices throughout the former Yugoslavia, the vast majority working in Bosnia and Herzegovina in support of the operation there. (See the map on the following page) As a small confidence-building measure UNHCR has recently opened two new field offices in the Serb-held suburbs of Sarajevo, which are to revert to the Federation.

In recognition of UNHCR's existing relief operation following the wars in Slovenia and Croatia and its expertise in dealing with refugee crises, the UN Secretary General in late 1991 named UNHCR the lead agency for UN humanitarian relief operations in the former Yugoslavia. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) also have programmes. The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) has also recently established a presence in the region. Other organisations like the European



British forces carry out their first humanitarian relief mission on the evening of their arrival in Bosnia, 31 October 1992. The Commanding Officer of 1 Cheshire Regiment, Colonel Bob Stewart DSO, distributes food supplied by the United Nations to Muslim refugee civilians in Travnik. The refugees had been expelled from Jajce by Serb forces a few days earlier. Knowing that UNHCR supplies in Travnik had been exhausted by the influx of refugees, the British advance party had loaded their vehicles with supplies in Split. Their first task on arrival was to distribute the supplies. © Crown copyright IWM (BOS 19)

Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), through the European Community Task Force (ECTF) maintain large relief programmes in the former Yugoslavia, and more than 220 NGOs are at work. A short summary of the responsibilities of the main humanitarian and reconstruction organisations active in the former Yugoslavia is shown below:



UNHCR Offices in the Former Yugoslavia

1. **UNHCR:** UN lead agency for humanitarian assistance in the republics of the former Yugoslavia, with prime responsibility for protection, legal assistance, logistics, transport, food monitoring, domestic needs, shelter, community service, health, emergency transition activities in agriculture and income-generation and assistance to other agencies in sectors under their responsibility.
2. **WFP:** Mobilisation and delivery of basic food and provision of supplementary food. It keeps donors and implementing partners fully informed on all aspects of the food aid process, including assessment of needs, status of food aid pledges, delivery and distribution.

3. **WHO:** Primary agency for health sector, including health monitoring, nutrition evaluation, public health intervention, support to war victims, rehabilitation of health services and provision of medical equipment and supplies.
4. **UNICEF:** Seeks to meet the survival needs of children and women in primary health care, immunisation, nutrition, water and hygiene, pre-primary and primary education in all countries of the former Yugoslavia, except Slovenia.
5. **ECTF/ECHO:** The European Community Task Force (ECTF), funded by the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), carries out important activities in Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina including logistics, food aid, medical, psycho-social, hygienic and engineering support.
6. **ICRC:** The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) carries out protection activities related to detainees and missing persons and provides relief assistance.
7. **IOM:** In addition to a medical evacuation programme operated jointly with UNHCR, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) operates a family reunification programme and organises international transport for displaced persons, refugees and other vulnerable groups to countries ready to receive them on a temporary or permanent basis.
8. **NGOs:** More than 220 Non-Governmental Organizations are active in the region, making a major contribution to the humanitarian assistance programme.



Bosnian Croat refugees having been expelled from their homes in Banja Luka cross the Sava River into Croatia at Davor. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

9. **IMG:** *The International Management Group - Infrastructure for Bosnia-Herzegovina was established in July 1993 and operated initially under the umbrella of UNHCR in October 1993, but its activity became significant only after March 1994, when regional offices in Sarajevo, Tuzla and Medjugorje were established and the Cessation of Hostilities Agreement (COHA) between the HVO and BiH improved the possibility to travel and work in the field. IMG is composed mainly of technical experts. The IMG engineers in Sarajevo are integrated into the Office of UN Special Coordinator for Sarajevo. The main functions of IMG are needs assessments and the identification and promotion of projects in the field of shelter, infrastructure and energy which are to be supported by the international community.*

It is common knowledge that there is a refugee problem in the former Yugoslavia but few realise the sheer scale of the crisis. The numbers alone are daunting with over 3.5 million refugees or displaced people involved. Taking in to consideration recent movements, the table on the next page reflects the planning beneficiary figures for the period 1 September 1995 to 31 December 1995. Special mention should be made of the figure for Bosnia and Herzegovnia. The figure 2,700,000 given in the table represents the population in Bosnia and Herzegovnia who receive some form of UN assistance. The food deficit met by the WFP is 23,000 metric tonnes per month, which is equal to 1.4 million full food rations. This ration is targeted to a higher number of beneficiaries who receive full or partial rations according to assessed needs.

The Peace Implementation Conference held in London 14th December 1995 reviewed and agreed upon the implementation of the civilian tasks provided for in the Dayton Agreement. The Conference approved the designation of Mr Carl Bildt as the High Representative to coordinate these tasks. He will have his headquarters in Sarajevo. All present at the conference emphasised the need for very close cooperation between IFOR and the civilian agencies in order to ensure the success of the implementation period.

On the humanitarian front, the UN Secretary General addressed the conference and outlined the main tasks as being to continue to provide food, shelter and other basic relief items for the dependent population for some time to come as well as to plan and work out a repatriation operation in cooperation with the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and asylum countries.

Towards the end of 1995 UNHCR began planning for the tasks entrusted to it at the Dayton Peace Agreement. The High Commissioner visited Sarajevo, Zagreb and Belgrade to seek views of the authorities on planning for repatriation and solutions for refugees and displaced persons. First and foremost she emphasised

Republic	Refugees	Displaced Persons	Refugees, IDPS War Affected	TOTAL
Bosnia and Herzegovina			2,700,000	2,700,000
Croatia	228,000	197,000		425,000
Sector East		38,000		38,000
(Sub Total, Croatia)				(463,000)
FYROM	6,500			6,500
Slovenia	24,000			24,000
Federal Republic of Yugoslavia	330,000			330,000
GRAND TOTAL	588,500	235,000	2,700,000	3,523,500

that the delivery of humanitarian assistance by UNHCR, the UN agencies, ICRC, and the NGOs would remain crucial in the winter period but that the aim would be to reduce the scale of this assistance as soon as possible, and re-direct these efforts towards returnees.

The issue of returnees is tragically complex. In many cases returnees' homes are destroyed or occupied by soldiers or refugees from the other side who will not give them up, having nowhere to go after losing their own homes. It could involve up to 2.1 million people, of whom 1.2 million were displaced within Bosnia and Herzegovina. Accurate planning at this stage was difficult because factors such as the wishes of the refugees and displaced persons, the evolution of the security situation following the deployment of IFOR and the availability of adequate shelter remain uncertain.



Members of the 1st battalion Royal Highland Fusiliers on patrol in Ahnici near Vitez. Behind the FV432 APC are the remains of the shattered tower of the mosque © Crown copyright. IWM (UKLF-1994-004-70-15)

Croatian Air Force Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21bisD at 20th anniversary. Photo: Goran Novacic, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported License, Wikipedia



Operation Storm

This article by Captain R C Dangerfield, RDG, is a Personal Account of Events Prior to, during, and after the Croatian assault on the Serb Krajina, 4-5 August 1995. It was originally published in BAR 113, August 1996.

As I sit here writing about the dramatic events that happened 10 days ago I know for many people the 4th and 5th of August 1995 will have passed by unnoticed. For myself and my driver, Marine Andy Green, it was an experience that we will never forget. It was the culmination of weeks, possibly months of negotiations by the Croats led by Franjo Tudjman and the Krajina Serbs led by Milan Martić.

Since May our job had been to monitor the build-up of Croatian forces to the west, south and south east of the United Nations Sector South. We had



Map 1: Operation Storm Map showing the positions of the warring factions from 03 to 04 August 1995 in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina prior to Operation Storm: Croatian Army (HV); Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia; Serbian Republic of Krajina Army (ARSK), Army of the Republika Srpska (VRS/ASRK); Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH/HVO) and Croatian Defence Council (HVVHVO). Image: Tomobe03, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia.

also been monitoring the response to this by the Army of the Republic of Serb Krajina. I remember going on leave on 4 July and reading in the papers that the Krajina was the next flashpoint in Europe's backyard war. The speculation was when would the Croatian offensive come? If the build-up of these troops was a bluff, it was a very expensive one.

During the second week of July the Bosnian Serb Army had captured the UN-declared Safe Area of Srebrenica. The media was full of reports of atrocities - according to them it was the most dramatic event of the war to date. The self-declared Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, and his army commander General Ratko Mladic vowed to take all safe areas and, as the UN stood by helplessly, Zepa fell. Only the safe areas of Tuzla, Sarajevo, Gorazde and Bihac remained. Gorazde was thought to be the next on the Bosnian Serb list but as the UN and NATO had meetings about meetings, rebel Muslim forces loyal to Fikret Abdic attacked Bihac from the north, Bosnian Serbs from the east and south east and the Krajina Serbs from the west and south west.

21st July

The Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman and the Bosnian Government President, Alija Izetbegovic got together. The result of the meeting was that the Croats agreed to help Bosnian Government forces lift the siege of Bihac. Since May, Croat forces had been moving up the Livanjsko Polje valley to the east of the strategically important Dinara mountains situated about 15km to the southeast of the self-styled Krajina Serb capital of Knin. They had taken ground slowly but surely and were continuing to pour troops in to the area. From the beginning of June the Croats had been in a position to shell Knin and Bosanska Grahovo - a town of vital importance to the Krajina Serbs - it was on their main supply route from the Bosnian Serb stronghold of Banja Luka. Bosanska Grahovo was swiftly and decisively taken at the end of July - a major blow to the Krajina Serbs.

While Serb refugees fled northwards to the town of Titov Drvar, CNN displayed pictures of the victorious Croats riding on their outdated tanks surrounded by the remains of a town flattened by artillery and tanks. The Croats knew they were now in the driving seat and could force the Krajina Serbs to the negotiating table. They would be able to talk about the peaceful reintegration of the Krajina into Croatia that had been taken by the Krajina Serbs.



The town of Knin with the Dinara Mountains in the background. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

The UN Secretary General's Special Envoy, Yasushi Akashi, flew into Knin to discuss the situation with the Krajina Serb leader, Milan Martić. The talks went on for about four hours in which time the Krajina Serbs agreed to go to Geneva for talks. The outcome seemed, at the time, less than hopeful. Serb helicopters flew continuously to and from Knin and the sound of endless shelling in the Dinara Mountains was louder than any cry for peace.

Against this backdrop my feelings were that I would like to be in a war. My six and a half years training would be put to the test and although I would not participate in the fighting, I would, at least witness it. It could be the highlight of my career.

As part of my job as Sector Liaison Officer I had to visit many border crossings. On this occasion I called into the Kenyan UN troops at Strmica, a small village 10 km north east of Knin. The soldiers had little or no protection from the shells, fired by Croats from the Dinara Mountains. The men wearing the blue berets were dishevelled, scared and seemed incapable of doing their job.

The sitreps they were sending back to the Sector Headquarters were almost non-existent. I was ordered to rectify the situation. I saw to it that a new bunker was built and I started sending much needed information to my HQ on Serb and Croat movements. The Kenyan platoon commander seemed nervous about my work. He explained to me that I had been issued with a warning. The Serb local commander had said to him 'either the British Officer stops spying on us, or we shoot him'.

3rd August

Thorvald Stoltenberg, the European mediator, chaired talks in Geneva between Croat and Krajina Serb delegations. Decidedly low key, it seemed that both sides had sent uninfluential people along. Stoltenberg, along with the rest of the world, had hoped to lay foundations for future peaceful negotiations. I had, what must seem, an odd reaction to the talks. I listened to and watched every news bulletin, almost wishing that the talks would fail. I would then get the war that I wanted. The talks finished late in the day. Thorvald Stoltenberg said that he had never seen the Krajina Serbs so conciliatory. They had agreed to everything the Croats wanted. The Croats, though, announced that the Krajina Serbs had given in to not one of their demands. A stay of execution had to be found for the Krajina. The politicians were determined to find some solution to this increasingly serious situation. They didn't stand a chance.

4th August

At twenty past four on Friday morning there was a knock at my door. Al Balfour, a Major in the Canadian Army, announced, without emotion, that the Croats had warned the UN that they were to attack Knin and the Krajina at 0500. We were to



An M18 Hellcat Gun Motor Carriage at the Museum of the Croatian Independence War as part of an exhibit of weapons on the front line. 1991-1995 marks the fighting in the Karlovac district of Turanj. The collection is set up on a battlefield of the worst fights of the Croatia army, which defended Karlovac. Photo: Dennis Jarvis, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license, Wikimedia

go to the bunker immediately. I had heard it all before and did not get overly excited at the news - but the siren went off and Andy, my Royal Marine driver, and I got dressed and joined the others seeking protection. The panic was tangible. Many nationalities, usually only their blue berets in common, seemed to share something else - fear. At that point and for reasons I will never be able to explain, I decided to take a shower.

When it came it was a terrifying shock. I will never forget the noise as the first wave of rockets seemed to be destined for us. It was 0500 exactly. For once the Croats were on time. Within seconds I was in a state of panic. Andy and I were bumping into each other, grabbing clothes, flak jackets, helmets and weapons. He kept saying 'remember the second wave': How could I forget? We fled down the corridor out of the headquarters towards the bunker. All I was wearing was a towel, shoes, and a flak jacket. Andy had somehow got dressed. As we entered the relative safety of the bunker I shot a look back at Knin. The early morning light made the smoke pouring out of it look eerie. Artillery was exploding everywhere.

As we reached our room in the bunker the electricity went off. People continued to arrive from all over camp while I got dressed, still in a state of utter confusion. Andy and I checked that we were both OK and then with hands shaking uncontrollably, I lit up probably the best cigarette of my life. Andy, virtually a non-smoker, took one as well, a sign that the last ten minutes had affected him too. We

spent about an hour and a half listening to the constant barrage of artillery. From where we were the shells seemed to be right on top of us, later we discovered they had landed about 200 metres away. In the first 30 minutes more than 300 rounds had landed. This information came via HQ Chief of Staff, Colonel Andy Leslie, from the Royal Canadian Artillery. I remember saying 'I take back everything I have ever said about the Gunners'. His reply was 'it's too late'.

Once things quietened down we ventured to the door watching and listening to shells whistling into Knin. The Sector Commander, Brigadier General Alain Forand asked me if we had any communications with anyone outside Knin. He told me that his phone lines were down and he was unable to communicate with anyone. We set up our INMARSAT to help but failed to get good enough reception. At 0715 electricity and phone lines were working again and we had work to do. The APCs left camp to collect the civilian employees living in Knin. With shells still screaming in I thought 'rather you than me'. Half an hour later we got the INMARSAT working. I managed to get through to HQ Sector South West in Gornji Vakuf to be told that my reports were going to be crucial as I was the only British Sector Liaison Officer 'on the ground'.

Confusion created by the fog of war meant that all information at that time was sketchy. I sent off a brief outline by fax and then went for breakfast with Andy. The day passed very quickly as I sent out report after report telling my HQ where the attacks were taking place. They were particularly interested in tank and infantry movements. By 0900 we established that the Croats were fighting on five fronts with continuous shelling elsewhere.

On the balcony we listened to the guns in the distance and watched the shells finding their resting place in an eruption of dust and smoke which marked the destruction of another block of flats or a house; counting the human cost was impossible. The APC crews kept arriving with the UN civilians who reported seeing bodies lining the streets. Throughout the day these bodies were collected and taken to the mortuary in Knin. This had to be done quickly as disease spreads quickly into vital water supplies. Medical supplies were taken to the local hospital to help with the injured. My memories of that day are of the young female Serb interpreters, in floods of tears, the local Serbs, seeking refuge in our camp and turning away Serb soldiers from the gate.

By the evening things had calmed down. We were able to assess the situation and send out consolidated sitreps. These included events of the day passing and our predictions for the next. A similar heavy attack was a definite probability. Sleeping in the bunker was an option I chose not to take. Artillery was coming in but I felt safe enough. As I climbed in to bed, exhausted from report writing, another ferocious wave of shells came in. We decided to take the bunker option!

5th August

The shelling of Knin began at 0520. Those extra 20 minutes could have been either for psychological reasons or because the Croats had got out of bed later, a reason we will never know. I did not get much sleep that night because every little bang sounded for an instant like another shell. I was jolted awake when the first volley of artillery screamed in. It was very intense for about 15 minutes and then calmed down.



Pictured is a destroyed house near the village of Živaja, Sisak-Moslavina county, Croatia. The village was part of the Republic of Serbian Krajina (with a Serbian majority) until most of the Serbs were expelled in 1995's operation Oluja and Bljesak. This house along with many other Serbian houses in the village was destroyed during the fighting of 1991-1995. Photo: Petar Milošević, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia

I learned from various sources that to the south Croat forces advancing from Sinj had gained considerably more ground than we first suspected. Intelligence revealed that they had actually advanced a full 10 km. We learned later that the Croats had been counter-attacked and driven back by the Serbs twice. In the rest of the sector the Croats had had less success and appeared to face much stiffer opposition.

During the shelling we were receiving refugees the whole time. It was a pitiful sight as they arrived with their worldly possessions in not much more than carrier bags. One thing I have learnt in my time here is that while the aid agencies are capable of doing their day-to-day jobs, the way I saw it was that when the crunch came they were unable to cope.

During the morning of Saturday 04 August I went onto the balcony to watch the shelling continue. Some shells landed in the mud, failing to explode while others found their targets. One of these landed very close to us, in fact it landed at the end of the camp. We all laughed nervously at this and went inside due to its close proximity. I later learnt that it had killed seven people, Serb soldiers and civilians alike. The soldiers had been trying to seek refuge but had been turned away. All the time people were taking any form of transport whether it was horse and cart, tractor and trailer or car and heading out of Knin.

I continued to send my reports to HQ Sector South West, doing my best to try and build a picture of what was going on. At 1000 the shelling stepped up a gear with a vengeance but at 1045 it stopped abruptly. Some tank fire and small arms could be heard which could only mean one thing - the Croats were about 5km away from the capital of the Serb Krajina. At 1200 there was a sudden scurry of activity in the headquarters with the Canadians rushing out to the front gate. Andy and I followed only to discover that there were Croatian soldiers with three tanks there. The Slovak and Jordanian soldiers had allegedly abandoned their posts and at first it looked as though we were going to have to defend the camp from the Croats on our own.

Colonel Leslie, in the face of stiff opposition from the Croats, negotiated a settlement. The Croats agreed not to enter the camp and the UN agreed not to leave it. We had to be witnesses to one officer being ordered to defend the camp. His excuse was that he would only defend it if everyone else did. It is at times like this that you learn the true meaning of discipline. Some conscript armies may get paid a lot of money to be with the UN but when the time comes to do their job they are ill-disciplined and seemed untrustworthy.

A Croatian flag of monstrous proportions was hoisted above the citadel in Knin. The capital had fallen. It had been a lightning assault, and there was little or no resistance from the Serbs. Franjo Tudjman had achieved his goal.



T-55 tanks go firm after the assault on Knin. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright.

The story continues of the shell that killed seven people. We learnt to our horror that after the Canadians had bagged the bodies and placed them on the side of the road, the Croats had taken them out of the bags and then emptied their Kalashnikov rifles into the bodies. As if this were not enough they then ran over them in their T-55 tanks. During the next few days water and electricity were intermittent in the camp, and the food was appalling. Although we were offered two meals a day, I was only having one. Breakfast was not an option as I find it impossible to get out of bed in the morning! The chefs were relentless in their pursuit of feeding 1200 people, many more than they were used to due to the refugees. For five days, because of the Croatian offensive, we were not able to leave the camp. We learnt that these manoeuvres were, in reality, ethnic cleansing. When we did get out what we saw was horrific.

One of our patrols followed the withdrawal of the Serb army and refugees. The roads were strewn with abandoned military and civilian equipment and transport. Some of the vehicles, which were no more than garden tractors, could not have gone 6km let alone the 60 required to take them into Serb-held parts of Bosnia. The Croats had shot horses, cattle, pigs, sheep and dogs. Some were still lying in the middle of the road. The stench was horrendous. Villages had been burnt and destroyed, all in the name of peaceful reintegration. We went to the Border Crossing Point at Boricevac. This was the only place that refugees could cross in relative safety. The Jordanians here had counted 72000 people and 7500 vehicles of all descriptions; for 36 hours it must have been the busiest international crossing in the world.

During that week we patrolled various different areas seeing sobering sights. Our work was to try and push the restrictions on freedom of movement and monitor Human Rights abuses. These patrols were carried out with the

Canadians. Amongst others there were Captains Jeff Hill and Phil Berikoff, WO1 Laurier Thibault, and Corporals Dan Hache, Steve Ferrari and Steve Ellis. They were all outstandingly generous to me and Andy. Without their humour our attachment would have been tedious to say the least. On one occasion Jeff Hill was carrying a Serb AK-47 Kalashnikov rifle. As we got to the checkpoint a member of the Croatia military police approached the car. He then spotted the rifle and to say he was upset is an understatement. He started shouting and very quickly the atmosphere became tense as a crowd of Croatian soldiers surrounded the car. We were all ordered to get out at gunpoint and they demanded to check all our kit and weapons. It looked as though things were rapidly getting out of hand, but at this point a Croatian Liaison Officer from Zadar turned up and calmed the situation down due to his ability to speak faultless English.

In other patrols at that time we were arrested and escorted out of the sector for seeing things we weren't supposed to. Rumour had it that atrocities were taking place. In the village of Cetina we were told that people had been led into a house and then the building razed to the ground. All this time there was an underlying threat to our safety, drunken Croat soldiers shooting at anything or anyone that moved. Being around them was just bad timing I'm sure, but you couldn't help feeling targeted nonetheless. Whether Croat or Serb the sense of imminent death swept over us whenever we passed a crowd of unruly looking soldiers. I made a promise at this point, I would never feel unlucky again if I finished this tour in one piece.



*Pictured is a Krajina Serb APC, mounting recoilless rifles, abandoned on the withdrawal route.
Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright*



Pictured is an old woman in a tractor trailer, fleeing from Operation Storm in Croatia. The photo was taken at border crossing of FR Yugoslavia, in August 1995. Photo: Matija, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia.

26th August

Andy and I escorted Richard Bramford of UN TV into the village of Grubori in the Plavno valley north east of Knin. It was quite a surprise to meet him out here. I knew him from our Troop Leader's course, which we completed together after leaving the RMA. As we entered the village you could smell the acrid fumes of houses burnt down less than twelve hours earlier, but that wasn't the worst. What distressed me the most about that day was the sight of old women sobbing. They were with three old men who told us that the Croats had come, burnt the village and slaughtered the other men and their livestock.

We walked up a narrow alley way into a house with a rickety old staircase. The woman who owned the house was wailing. In her bedroom face down in his own blood lay her husband. Beside him were two 7.62mm cartridges. His body was still warm and the dark red pool beneath him seeped slowly across the floor. We went to another house; this one had been torched. Two women went in ahead of us and started screaming and then howling in some sort of religious 'ceremony'. In front of us was yet another dead man; his throat had been slashed numerous times. In the garden lay a puppy shot to death - pigs had been killed in the yard and sheep burnt alive in the barn. It was hard to know what to think. In fact I couldn't think. I couldn't help either. As we were leaving, one of the women passed me a drink of rakia, the potent local brand of alcohol. As it hit my stomach it brought tears to my eyes. At least I think it was the rakia.

My closing thought on this situation has to be with the Serb civilians who worked alongside me in the camp and who are no longer here. There was one woman, Milica, who used to clean my room. She spoke very little English but we always managed to laugh together - especially when she asked if the young Captain 'would like clean shits on his bed'. I don't know where she is now, and can only guess that she is just another statistic in this tragic and confusing war. A century and a half ago Lord Clarendon wrote: 'we are willing to do anything for the maintenance of peace except committing ourselves to a policy of action'. How history repeats itself. The biggest single problem the UN has in this war is that no one is brave enough to realise that there is little anyone can do to stem the bloodshed of revenge. The passion and hatred that runs through the veins of these people, on all sides, almost prohibits any political solution and, unlike the paper tiger that the UN has become, when the warring factions say they'll do something, they'll do it.

In essence the war in the Balkans is unstoppable. There have been too many chiefs, too much disjointedness; and too many factions in the UN chain.



A shelled building filled with bullet holes, destroyed during the Croatian Independence War. It now sits as part of the Croatian Independence War museum at Turanj. The museum is on the battlefield of some of the worst fighting experienced by the Croatian Army. There is also a memorial here for 239 soldiers who died defending the Turanj bridge. Photo: Dennis Jarvis, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license, Wikimedia



The arrival of British forces in Bosnia at the start of Operation GRAPPLE. A column of Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicles belonging to A Company, 1 Cheshire Regiment, moves up from Split through winter landscape to the operating base at Vitez. The Warriors are painted in the high visibility white colour scheme identifying UNPROFOR vehicles. The proximity of Serbian forces rendered the main route to Vitez unsafe and the first priority for British troops on deployment was to identify alternative routes through the difficult terrain. The additional armour which had been developed following the destruction of British Warriors by American 'Friendly Fire' during the Gulf War is clearly visible on the sides of the vehicles © Crown copyright IWM (BOS 21)

Peacekeeping with the UN - Some thoughts Post-UNPROFOR

This article by Brigadier A.G. Denaro OBE, was originally published in BAR 113, August 1996.

I watched with pride and a degree of envy the Challenger tanks of the Queen's Royal Hussars trundle off the ro-ros in Split; it was astonishing to imagine that my Regiment was going back into operations, major operations, for the second time within five years. After all, up to 1990, armoured regiments had seen almost 40 years of peace on the north German plain. Five years ago in the Gulf, they predicted a desperate conventional war; today the Regiment faces all the unpredictabilities of a unique peace enforcement operation. It is this spectrum of operations which requires our service personnel to be more professional, flexible, and better prepared for all eventualities than ever before.

In March 1991, as the Irish Hussars returned from the Gulf War, I remember saying: 'no one could ever, would ever start a war in Europe if they had seen what modern weaponry' had done in an empty desert'. How quickly was I proved wrong; for within months the former Yugoslavia fell apart, with all the horror, and unbelievable human behaviour that we have seen since.

A year ago, as COS HQ UNPROFOR, I visited the northern Krajina and simply could not believe the total destruction, the wanton demolition of homes, lives, generations of families that has happened in that wretched country. It was somehow made the more devastating and sad, because of the beauty of the country itself. Enough of this dismal stuff; what is most important is that the UN was there; late and wholly disorganised, but none the less determined, the International Community was there to witness the events and to take account of them, and to do what it could to resolve the awfulness. The fact that the UN almost totally failed in this latter objective, is the subject of this short article.

Let me start on the essential fact that the UN was there. So many arguments have prevailed both before the decision to deploy British troops in support of the UN, and on almost every occasion since, as to whether it was right or not. I too prevaricated at times, but I was absolutely certain, in the first instance, that we had to be there. This was not just to follow that old adage that 'good soldiers must march towards the sound of the guns', (but that is not a bad line to take for young, professional, men and women at arms). It was more because of all the other compelling reasons so often cited, that we the British, having as we do the most professional, well-trained, and widely experienced Army in the Western world should play a large part in, if not assume the leadership in a war on our very doorsteps; (there is no question that if we had not deployed in the early days, few other European forces would have done so;) if we had not deployed we would not have had the right to provide commanders and senior staff officers in various key appointments; we would have sat by and watched as a critical era of military experience, and one that we will have to concentrate on largely in the years to come, was taken up by others. So as a British officer I am certain that

we, as a nation, were right to be involved, and professionally as a soldier I am glad to have been there in one guise or another.

What then are the important issues for a country, an army, a regiment or an individual as they take part in UN operations?

Firstly there is the Task. How easy it is to write it down; how difficult it has been to define this through the last three and half years in the former Yugoslavia. How obvious to say that before our troops deploy, a clear estimate has to be carried out refining the aim, looking at all the factors, applying troops to the task and then planning how it should evolve. But it was this very evolution that threw all the best intentions and well laid plans into disarray. In short, the tasking changed, constantly, and ultimately relied on the initiative, innovation, and determination of the soldiers on the ground to succeed ... or not.



A British Army Challenger 1 Main Battle Tank (MBT), the command tank of the 1st Queen's Dragoon Guards (The Welsh Cavalry), with IFOR markings drives forward on the loading ramp of the VLADIMIR VASLYAEV, a Russian Commercial RO-RO Container (Gearless) ship, onto the dock at the harbor in Split, Croatia, during Operation Joint Endeavor. Operation Joint Endeavor is a peacekeeping effort by a multinational Implementation Force (IFOR), comprised of NATO and non-NATO military forces, deployed to Bosnia in support of the Dayton Peace Accords. Photo: Sergeant Brian Gavin, US Army, Wikimedia, Released

It was not war fighting and that was clear from the start, but exactly what it was and therefore how we should be structured as a force, how we should be equipped, trained, deployed, and what exactly were our rules of engagement, were all very unclear. Add to this confusion on tasking, a very laborious chain of command that was constantly being short-circuited by national interference, and one ended up with a force so easily split, surrounded, and isolated both in commitment and on the ground, that the warring factions were able to run circles around us from the start.

Thus clear direction which has the political support of every nation involved, a taut and well-respected chain of command, and equally importantly, the clear orchestration of this determination and cohesion to all parties, are essential. (Certainly IFOR seem to have got that right).

Then there is the Preparation: from, on the one hand, a clear understanding of how the UN is constituted and what is involved in operating under its mantle, right the way through our normal preparation procedures, to the detailed study of the culture of the country in which we are about to operate.

This preparation is not something that can be done in a month or two prior to deployment, and thus there should be a theme with in our military careers that sweeps in the study of the types of organisations within which we may operate in the future, the languages that are most likely to be needed, the cultural and philosophical problems of the world in which we might fight. Preparation at the highest level means a determination to alter the military organisation within the United Nations, which as currently constituted, is unquestionably incapable of coordinating effectively, operations such as the scale of the one in the former Yugoslavia.

In the meantime it is essential that officers of quality and credibility are seconded to these operations; for it is they who will have to design an organisation and structure, and devise a philosophy and direction as the operations develop. Despite our wide experience in 'operations other than war', it is important that a doctrine continues to be developed, the subject continues to be studied, and the lessons learnt are applied if we are to continue to send our soldiers as best prepared as possible, into conflict. Individually there must be a determination and commitment to be where the action is, not just to contribute, but to learn and re-teach.

Mixing well is so important as we join a new multi-national coalition force: and this is one of the most difficult aspects. Without it we become isolated, or worse, open to accusations of arrogance, (this is absolutely what we must never be). Undoubtedly there is a great temptation at times to pull together the best, and concentrate on them for the effective work; not only would this overwork the willing horses, but it is also an insult to the competence of others and results in

the downward spiral of cohesion, broad support for the cause and overall morale. In short, we must work together in these UN operations, and this demands prior liaison, discussion, joint studies, training and understanding, patience and above all goodwill. This cannot be achieved in a month or two.

On Public Information; it was extraordinary that in spite of all the modern methods of spreading the word internationally, nationally, and within the UN, they were rarely used to good effect. The media has become such an important factor in the military arena that its handling can often mean the success or failure of a mission; certainly the failure to grasp this fact by the UN, both in New York and in the Former Yugoslavia, was a major contributory factor to the low standing of UNPROFOR in the eyes of the world. There are two key aspects to this information business; public information, explains the aims to the international world through all media forms; and community information which is how the strategy and tactics are explained to those who are going to be most affected, (the warring factions, the local people, their leaders, the Force itself). If these two aspects are not carefully coordinated, and if they do not follow a clear overall strategy which is linked to, and dependant on, the overall operational strategy, then the force has no hope of gaining the essential support of the various communities.

Just a final word on Casualties: Inevitably casualties are an aspect of operations that the media latch on to quickest. (As a result of the Gulf War, the western world



*A British FV432 and a Land Rover both equipped for medical duties with UNPROFOR in the Vitez area of Bosnia.
© Crown copyright IWM (BOS 30)*



*A Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle of B Company, 1 Cheshire Regiment heads for its operating base at Vitez.
© Crown copyright IWM (BOS 20)*

now thinks that we can take part in operations without them!). What seems not well understood nowadays is that war or 'operations other than war' are a risky business, and taking part implies accepting the possibility of casualties. Now, most soldiers very quickly become aware of this fact, but not so the general public, and in particular the families of these soldiers, and it is to their fears that the media so frequently panders. I do not need to stress that unnecessary casualties must never be taken, but what does need to be stated clearly is that achieving the aim is often more important than taking unavoidable casualties.

In summary, we:

- *Were right to be there; always were; and now we are an essential part of IFOR.*
- *Must give and receive Clear Direction - Politically and internationally supported objectives, strength and unity of purpose will prevent indecision, division, and the risk of being 'surrounded' by the enemy.*
- *Must be Well Prepared:*
 - *at the highest level, to continue to work towards the reorganisation of the UN's command and control structure.*
 - *corporately, to continue to study the culture and the doctrine. (Should there be a multinational Staff College for peace support?).*
 - *individually, to learn languages and to be professionally ready to go at the shortest of notice.*
- *Must Mix Well - understand the capabilities of others (and our own!) and use them to best effect within a cohesive team.*
- *Must have an Information Strategy - Clear orchestration of our aims at public information and community information level.*
- *Must accept the Risk Business - a clear understanding of the cost of being there.*



Destroyed buildings in Grbavica, a neighbourhood of Sarajevo, approximately 4 months after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord that officially ended the war in Bosnia. This particular scene shows the part of the neighbourhood located by the left bank of Miljacka river near Vrbanja bridge at the point where Zagrebačka Street and Beogradska Street (later renamed Emerika Bluma Street) meet. Photo: Lieutenant Stacey Wyzkowski, US Department of Defense, Wikimedia, Released.

An Exercise in Force Protection

This article by Major J.W. Ogden, LD, originally published in December 1996, is an in-depth analysis of Bosnian Federation Offensive Operations from October 1994 to October 1995.

Genesis

C Squadron, The Light Dragoons, deployed to Bosnia on Operation RESOLUTE in early January 1996 as part of the IFOR surge to implement the Dayton Agreement, which had been signed on 14 December 1995. The warring factions had only ceased fighting barely a month previous to the signing of this agreement and their forces were still dug in facing each other across the Agreed Ceasefire Line (ACFL). IFOR's focus at the time of our deployment was on their separation by way of a Zone of Separation (ZOS) stretching 2 kilometres either side of the ACFL. This was to be achieved by the first major Dayton timeline of D+30 (19 January); a date by which the factions were also expected to declare all their minefield records. As a result of this ongoing operation, C Squadron were assigned to what was described as, and certainly appeared in terms of the events of the moment, a 'sleepy backwater' in Western Bosnia.

The Area of Responsibility (AOR) we took over extended from the town of Limó in the south to Drvar in the north, and from the international border with Croatia in the west to the future Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), which delineated the bottom end of Area of Transfer (AOT) ANVIL, in the east; an area of some 2000 square kilometres. On getting out onto the ground, it rapidly became clear to us that however sleepy this area appeared now, it had certainly not always been so; evidence of heavy fighting and the detritus of war littered the area.

Of particular concern to us were the number of mines that could clearly be seen beside many of the routes and the fact that, due to the D+30 timeline, no minefield traces of the area were yet available. Patrolling off tarmac roads, even on the numerous hard core Main Supply Routes (MSRs) in our area, was therefore fraught with potential danger and required a careful assessment of risk at all times; none more so than when we were tasked to mark the future IEBL, and its associated ZOS, on our eastern boundary. This required extensive movement off MSRs and it was during this particular operation, despite considerable circumspection by our patrol commanders that we suffered our catastrophic and well-documented minestrike on 28 January.

Although by now minefield traces were starting to trickle in, there was still very little to go on. Worse still, there was nothing indicating mines anywhere near our minestrike, nor indeed a number of locations where we had seen mines. Clearly a more proactive approach was required and we decided, particularly in light of the paucity of minefield records submitted by the factions, that the only way forward was to embark on a study of the fighting that had led to the mines going into the ground in the first place. With such facts as we hoped to glean, we could, at the very least, identify the likely mined areas; better still perhaps we could identify the faction forces responsible for laying them with a view to approaching them for further records.



Aftermath of a Mine Strike on the 28th January 1996. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

Development

What followed was an intensive period of straight detective work, 'bread and butter stuff for reconnaissance troops, where we attempted to map old front lines based on what could be seen from the ground and from the air, and on whatever we could glean from local faction forces, police and civilians. The latter, the majority of whom were displaced Croats from Northern and Central Bosnia, could provide little information other than what they had seen and found since their arrival in the area, but the police, many of them demobilised soldiers, and some of the local HVO (Bosnian Croat Army) were more forthcoming. A particularly valuable find was a local HVO scout, now employed by IFOR, whose knowledge of the ground and fighting that had taken place in our area was extensive. His, and other accounts, were systematically recorded and, over a number of weeks, the pattern of HVO, and indeed HV (Army of Croatia), offensive operations that had recently taken place in the area began to emerge. Armed with this expanding bank of knowledge, our attached RE recce sergeants and the BGEOO (Battle Group Explosive Ordnance Officer), all from 32 Engineer Regiment, set about approaching the relevant faction engineers for further minefield records. These approaches took them far and wide, not only within Bosnia but also into Croatia, where they visited HV engineers in Split, Knin and even as far afield as Varazdin, some 50 kilometres north of Zagreb.

Despite some predictable reserve in some quarters, their 'take' steadily improved, to the point where the factions, after their initial suspicion and reticence, were almost vying to appear more cooperative than each other. In addition, a snowball effect developed where such approaches provided yet further information on the fighting itself, with the result that our knowledge of the HV/HVO, and to a lesser extent the BSA (Bosnian Serb Army), version of events became ever more accurate. Whilst not directly relevant to our own AOR, the missing link, namely the part played by the ARBiH (Army of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina), was provided by a 4 (UK) Armoured Brigade study of the overall campaign initiated, by fortuitous coincidence, at about the same time that our own study got underway. The comparison of perspectives offered by the two supposed partners in the Federation was as interesting for its contradictions as for its similarities, but both studies were usefully complementary and information was pooled to our mutual benefit.

Perspective

In stark contrast to the 4(UK) Armoured Brigade study, our own focused primarily on finding mines and therefore intentionally avoided any attempt to analyse the fighting in terms of tactics, the operational art, strategy, or indeed the peculiar politics of the Balkans. Inevitably, however, complete detachment from such considerations is impossible in a study of this kind and the simple campaign narrative that follows contains some limited deductions and conclusions in this vein.



*The greatest cause for concern - assorted anti-tank mines close to a Main Supply Route.
Photo: Original image, Crown Copyright*

The most striking of these, concern the degree of Federation cooperation and the supposed growing sophistication of their handling of all-arms battle. Much has been made of these factors in attempting to explain how a previously so successful and better equipped army, namely the BSA, could have suffered such rapid and well-nigh catastrophic reverses. There is considerable evidence to suggest, however, that intra-Federation cooperation was not always what it seemed and many of the battles fought, particularly early on in the campaign and certainly at the tactical level, were essentially attritional in nature, and lacking in any real tempo or sophistication. With the exception of heavier artillery support and some limited use of armour this was more of a Falklands-style campaign where the dismounted light infantryman, often marching long distances and fighting in mountainous terrain, held the key.

Whilst the Federation forces undoubtedly fought well, there are numerous other factors which must also be taken into considerations when considering their success and BSA failure. Firstly, the part played by Croatia and the HV in the campaign was evidently critical. Rested, reorganised, re-equipped and well-trained following the calamitous events of 1991, the HV was, by 1994, a force to be reckoned with. President Tudjman 's international credibility and prestige were also riding high, not least, one suspects, because Croatia was seen as the only regional power capable of taking on the Serbs and he was accordingly provided with international support, most noticeably by the United States and Germany.

The Bosnian Moslems, too, received much publicised support, but on a considerably smaller scale. By stark contrast the Serbs, and the Bosnian Serbs



Fig 1: Confrontation Lines as at October 1994

in particular, were really starting to suffer, not only at the hands of UN sanctions and international revulsion, but also by 1995 from NATO airstrikes. Critical shortages of fuel, dislocated command and control structures and plummeting morale all conspired to thwart their ability to resist a determined Croatian and Federation offensive.

Opening Moves

Three operations, one mounted by 5 Corps ARBiH alone and two mounted by the HVO/HV between October 1994 and January 1995, acted as a precursor for the more sophisticated combined Federation operations that were to follow in the second half of 1995 and marked the first real advances by either faction beyond the 1992-94 confrontation lines (See Fig 1).

On 24 October and under the name of Op GRMEC 94, 5 Corps ARBiH broke out of the Bihac pocket and made rapid and impressive gains, capturing the Grabez plateau and Ripac within two days. Equally quickly, however, they overextended themselves and were systematically beaten back to the very outskirts of Bihac town by 28 October. Whether by accident or design, but close on the heel of these events, 1 and 3 Guards Brigades HVO mounted, on 1 November, a long-awaited operation, codenamed CINCAR (after the prominent mountain overlooking Livno), to take the Kupres plain from the well-equipped 7 Mechanised Brigade BSA. Advancing primarily from the south east, but with a supporting attack in the area of the Suica Pass, they succeeded, by 10 November, in retaking Kupres itself and closing up to the Demirovac feature which dominated the important Kupres Tunnel link to Central Bosnia.



An abandoned T-55A Main Battle Tank in Livno Valley, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Photo: Tknob, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license, Wikimedia

Then, on 30 November, the HVO combined with the HV to mount Op SIMA (Winter) (See Figure 2), a concentrated and largely attritional push north in the Livno Fields. With the HVO, primarily 3 Guards Brigade HVO supported by 7 Guards Brigade HV, tucked in under the Golija feature on the right and the HV, many of them operating high up in the Dinara feature and including 4 Guards Brigade, 126 DP, 140 DP and Special Police on the left, this attack proved a slow and costly slog, with advances generally limited to only 4-500 metres a day and battalions being rotated through on an almost daily basis. By 20 December they had advanced some 12-15 kilometres and, after a short pause over Christmas and the New Year, a final push between 4 and 6 January brought them to the top of the Fields and the base of the pass to Bosansko Grahovo. They also succeeded in capturing 9 Brigade BSA's minefield records at Crni Lug and advancing deep into the vital Sartor feature to the north east.

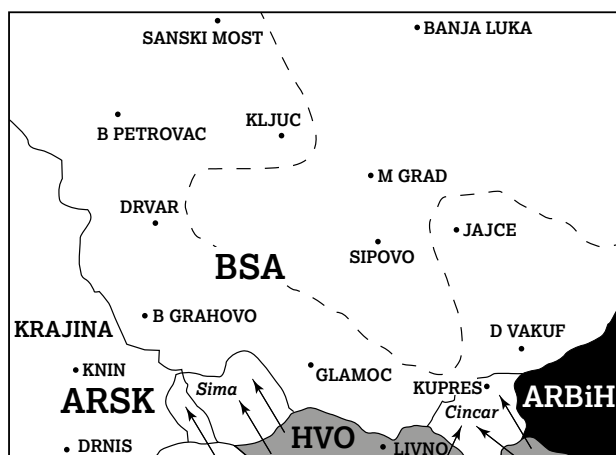


Fig 2: Preliminary Operations November 1994-January 1995 - Op SIMA

All three attacks appear almost inconsequential in isolation, but they set a precedent and provided vital experience of offensive operations, not to mention some useful early attrition of the BSA. Whilst it escaped most observers' notice, the latter two also provided an important stepping stone for, as well as a vital clue to, the direction and main effort of the offensive that eventually resumed well into the New Year.

Interlude

With the onset of winter and, as so often before, the concurrent signing of a UN-

brokered cease fire, no meaningful offensive actions by the Federation took place until the ceasefire was broken by the ARBiH attack on the Vlasica feature in Central Bosnia in April 1995 and the HV seizure of Western Slavonia from the ARSK (Army of the Republic of Serb Krajina) in Op FLASH in May 1995. Whilst both operations were mounted in areas geographically remote from those of late 1994, this may have been no accident and the latter operation in particular was a clear signal of Croatia's aspiration to 'liberate' the whole of the Krajina. It is important also to note at this juncture that an interesting agreement had been reached in July 1995 with the signing by Presidents Tudjman and Izetbegovic of the Split Declaration. This agreement, which included a clause respecting each partner's 'sovereignty' over land they captured, essentially formalised their intention to combine offensive operations and set the seal on the greater Federation cooperation witnessed during the Western Bosnia offensives in the latter half of 1995. The clause on land capture was particularly interesting in terms of its likely effect on the shape and direction of future operations, not to mention the extent of land bargaining that has continued in the wake of Dayton.



President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, President Alija Izetbegovic of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and President Franjo Tudjman of the Republic of Croatia initial the Dayton Peace Accords. The Balkan Proximity Peace Talks were conducted at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Nov. 1-21, 1995. The talks ended the conflict arising from the breakup of the Republic of Yugoslavia. The Dayton Accords paved the way for the signing of the final "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina" on Dec. 14 at the Elysee Palace in Paris. Photo: Staff Sergeant Brian Schlumbohm, US Air Force, Wikimedia, Released.

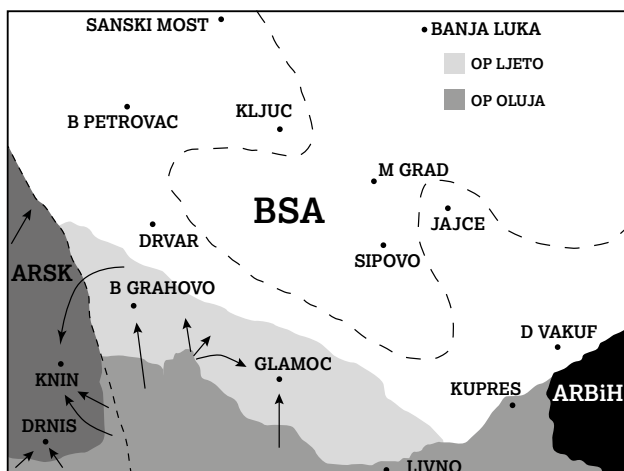


Fig 3: Summer Offensives July - August 1995

Summer Storm

Offensive operations were resumed in Western Bosnia in July 1995, when the HY/HYO mounted Op LJETO (Summer) (See Fig 3), again attacking north out of the foothold gained at the top of the Livno Fields earlier in the year. Their primary objective was almost certainly the Sartor feature, whose defences had been initially breached in January and which dominated both the Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoc valleys. Under the subsidiary codename Op SKOK (Jump), 3 Guards Bde HYO, supported by amongst others the seasoned mountain fighters of 126 DP HY from Sinj, eventually drove 1 Serpska Volunteer Bde off the heights so initiating a significant BSA withdrawal back towards the Vitorog feature, running the eastern length of the Glamoc valley and now part of the IEBL. Of greater significance, however, was the fact that the way in to the Glamoc valley and, more importantly still for the HV, the Bosansko Grahovo valley, was now substantially open. The town of Bosansko Grahovo, now a burnt out ruin, sits on the vital junction linking this part of Western Bosnia with the adjacent Krajina and the important town of Knin, and there can be little doubt that Croatia saw its capture not only as a way of isolating the ARSK from the BSA but also as a stepping stone towards the capture of the Krajina that was to follow. Whilst the town was finally taken by 2 Bn of 4 Guards Brigade (BDE) HY on 28 July, by which time the defending 9 Bde BSA had been reduced from about 1500 men to some 100 necessitating reinforcement by 11 Bde from 2 Krajina Corps, the HVO were streaming into the Glamoc valley to the east. Having turned the Serb line, causing 1, 3, 5 and 7 Bdes to start withdrawing to the Vitorog feature, 3 Guards Bde HYO pushed east from Sartor, HY Special Forces and HYO Special Police advanced on Glamoc from the north west and 2 Guards Bde HVO pushed north out of the

Livno-Glamoc Pass area. On entering Glamoc late on 29 July, however, they found the town largely empty and by 4 or 5 August had closed up on the previously well-prepared BSA defensive positions on the Vitorog. Meanwhile, the HV consolidated their position around Bosansko Grahovo and had closed up to the pass south west of Drvar by about the same time.

The HV's eye, however, was now firmly fixed, at the temporary expense of further operations in Western Bosnia, on the Krajina and they duly launched Op OLUJA (Storm) (See Fig 3) on 4 August. In a massive operation, involving some 50,000 troops on numerous axes from Drnis in the south to the area north of the Bihac pocket in the north, the HV succeeded in defeating the ARSK in less than 5 days. 4 and 7 Guards Bdes, as well as 126 DP, attacked west out of the Bosansko Grahovo area in support of ZP Split's advance on Knin, whilst further north limited operations in the Bihac pocket by 5 Corps ARBiH took the pressure off ZP Gopscic and other HV formations advancing east and south.

Wind of Change

A month-long lull now occurred, which in operational terms allowed the HV to consolidate their gains in the Krajina, but equally importantly enabled all the Federation partners to reconstitute their forces for the next and decisive phase of operations in Western Bosnia. Op MAESTRAL 2 (named after the wind and a previous but unenacted plan of the same name) (See Fig 4) was perhaps the first and last truly combined operation, with the HV, HVO and ARBiH attacking virtually simultaneously on all fronts. Whilst 5 Corps ARBiH from the Bihac pocket and 7 Corps ARBiH from the Bugojno area probably launched their attacks slightly later, HY/HYO forces, now divided into Ops Group East and Ops Group West, launched their main assault out of the Glamoc valley and onto the Vitorog feature at 0300hrs on 8 September 1995. Under an extensive MBRL and artillery barrage, and supported by a limited heliborne descent operation by HY SF, 4 Guards Bde HY and 3 Guards Bde HYO attacked at Mliniste (now known to IFOR as COLD HUSSAR) whilst 7 Guards Bde HY attacked just to the south at Pribelja. 9 Posavina Bde BSA, who had only just completed a relief in place that night, were caught completely by surprise and broke quickly enabling the Vitorog itself to fall by 1800hrs on 9 September and a significant bridgehead to form for the next phase of the operation. In this, 1 and 2 Guards Bdes HVO were launched from the bridgehead in a south easterly direction towards Novi Selo in an attempt to out flank 7 Mech Bde BSA, who at this time were also being engaged by many of the HYO DPs attacking out of the Kupres area. It also had the advantage of relieving some pressure on 7 Corps ARBiH, who at this time were making rather heavy weather of their attack on 19 Bde BSA in Donji Yakuf.

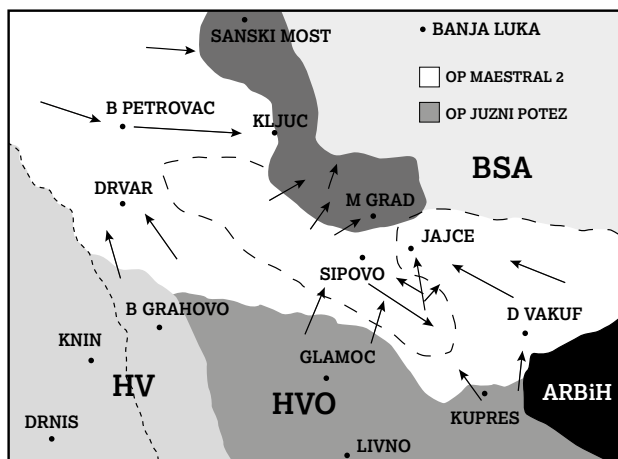


Fig 4: Summer Offensives September - October 1995

By 11 September, Novi Selo had been taken and 2 Guards Bde HVO, supported by HV SF and Special Police, wheeled north to advance on Jajce, almost cutting off 19 Bde BSA's withdrawal route from Donji Vakuf at Babin Potok, whilst 1 Guards Bde HVO advanced north west towards Sipovo and 3 Guards Bde HVO expanded the original bridgehead towards Baraci. By 13 September, when the BSA withdrew to the rough line of Kljuc-Mrkonjic Grad-Jajce, the HV in Ops Group West had encircled Drvar and exploited east as far as Gornj Ribnik, 4 Guards Bde HV and 1 Guards Bde HVO had taken Sipovo on 12 September, 2 Guards Bde HVO had taken Jajce, and 7 Corps ARBiH had finally taken Donji Vakuf. Abortive HVO attacks appear to have been made on Skender Vakuf and Mrkonjic Grad at about this time and Drvar was eventually taken by night attack on 14 September, but by 15 September the HV/HVO, as well as 7 Corps ARBiH appear to have paused. Not so 5 Corps ARBiH who, almost certainly heavily reinforced by 1 and 2 Guards Bdes HV, continued to press south and east from Bihac, taking Bosanski Petrovac on 15 September and Kljuc on 16 or 18 September. Controversy, however, surrounds their failed attempt to reach Kulen Vakuf before the HV; a blue on blue with the HV at Ostrelj north of Drvar in the early hours of 15 September; whether or not they took Sanski Most on 17 September only to lose it and retake it again later; and more bizarrely still, 501 Bde's push east from Kljuc to within 6 kilometres of Mrkonjic Grad at Podbrdo. Like Corps 7 ARBiH's claims about who had or had not been instrumental in taking the Demirovac feature north of Kupres, such actions did little to endear the Moslems to their Croat partners and were a clear indication of the fragility not only of the combined plan but of the Federation itself. Suffice it to say perhaps, that with no explanation for their actions forthcoming from the Moslems and for whatever other possible reasons, 501 Bde were beaten back to the very outskirts of Kljuc by a BSA counter-attack.



A German Army Armored Mineclearing Vehicle, attached to the Joint German-French Engineering Brigade, is used to clear a field of possible mines in Butmire, Bosnia-Herzegovina, which will later be used to house NATO troops. Photo: Charles L Withrow, US Department of Defence, Wikimedia, Released

Prelude to Peace

Having at last stemmed the tide of HV/HVO and ARBiH advances and recovered some of their previous composure, the BSA now mounted further counter attacks, most notably against 5 Corps ARBiH in the north. In contrast to previous *ad hoc* and patently inadequate reinforcing, they brought fresh and formed units down from the Posavina area, most notably 43 Mech Bde, who launched a significant counter attack west from the area of Prijedor on 23 September retaking much ground lost during Op Maestral, including possibly Sanski Most and certainly the area north east of Bosanski Krupa, until eventually halted by heavy HV artillery support.

This respite and limited reversal of fortune for the BSA remained, however, short-lived for the HV/HVO and ARBiH launched their final attack of the war, Op JUZNI POTEZ (Southern Move) (See Fig 4) , on or about 8 October 1995. Whilst the HV/ HVO advanced north of the Manjaca feature, taking Mrknjic Grad with hardly a shot being fired on 9 October and the Bocac Dam with rather heavier fighting by 15 October, 5 Corps ARBiH resumed their attack eastwards taking, or retaking, Sanski Most on 12 October. With stragglers and deserters being dragged in from all quarters, the BSA' s plight was by now desperate and it seemed only a matter of time before the Federation's declared objectives of Prijedor and Banja Luka were taken. For whatever political reasons, no doubt

with heavy international pressure, however, a ceasefire was ordered late on 10 October and had largely been respected by 15 October. There followed an uneasy two months in which the opposing sides dug in and awaited the results of the political negotiations that eventually resulted in Dayton. Whether due to military exhaustion or, more likely, to the redistribution of land brought about by the campaign, a strong negotiating position had emerged for all sides, not least the Serbs, which marked the end of the most successful offensive of the entire Bosnian War, and hopefully also of the war itself.

Conclusion

Whilst unquestionably of interest merely as record of what had so recently occurred in MND(SW)'s AOR, not to mention an insight into how the warring factions behaved and performed, the real test of this study lay in achieving what it set out to do: namely to find mines. There are hundreds of thousands of mines still buried in Bosnia and to have hoped to unearth records of all of them would have been quite unrealistic. Despite the fact that, in those areas where confrontation lines were static for protracted periods, the Royal Engineers working on our behalf came across numerous cases where re-mining had occurred, such lines were relatively easy to plot and the minefield records pertaining to them had mostly survived and were generally accurate. Equally, the identity of those formations engaged in the operations and where they paused could be recorded with sufficient accuracy to, at the very least, alert us to the danger and, at best, produce further records. Inevitably, however, the more fast-moving, not to mention confused and attritional, engagements provided the greatest degree of uncertainty, and therefore risk. Mines would have been random- and even panic-laid, records would have been lost or never made, and those doing the laying could have been killed or become untraceable. An extensive mine threat will remain in Bosnia for many years to come, and whilst such a study can reduce the risk to those on the ground, it will never dispel it completely. Nevertheless a concentrated RE estimate adjudged our efforts to have increased the knowledge of minefields in our AOR from 30% to something closer to 70% and, if nothing else, it did much to settle our nerves after the tragedy of 28 January. Having said all that, this article was written with both aims in mind and, whilst it in no way claims to be an authoritative version of the campaign it seeks to describe, my hope is that it may be of more than passing interest to anyone who has had, or indeed still has, anything to do with Bosnia.

(The author is to be congratulated on this succinct but informative account of the 1994-95 fighting between the Federation forces and the Bosnian Serb Army, and we would highlight it as a source for further studies of this interesting example of high-intensity but local warfare. We would also point out its emphasis, so tragically proved, of the effect of quite simple anti-tank mines on freedom of movement and manoeuvre. Ed)



A Challenger of the Queens Royal Hussars stops to observe the area during the first patrol by this British main battle tank in Bosnia. Crown Copyright

For the first time in operational theatre, six of Britain's AS90, 155mm self-propelled guns fired live artillery on an especially established training range near the Bosnian Croat town of Glamoc. As part of IFOR's Multi-National Division South West, the guns from 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery, have deployed on both sides of the inter-entity boundary line, ready to react to calls for military action under the General Framework for Peace.

Photo: Mark Owens, Crown Copyright



Bosnia Herzegovina and the Struggle for an Imperfect Peace

This article by Lieutenant Colonel S.J. M. Marriner was originally published in BAR 113, December 1996. Lieutenant Colonel Marriner deployed on Op JOINT ENDEAVOUR as Chief of Media operations and Commander ARRC's spokesman from March to September 1996. He was responsible to Lieutenant General Sir Michael Walker for all contact with the indigenous and international news, radio and TV networks and helped formulate the ARRC Information Campaign. This article represents a distillation of his own thoughts and opinions.

The fall of Yugoslavia, in common with so many of the last decade's conflicts, was found in the emergence of ethnic polarisation and intolerance. Ethnic genocide is wholly incomprehensible to those of us living in the comfort of civilised UK. However, as this decade has ably demonstrated, tolerance is in very short supply and usually the first casualty of conflict. Against this background the international community decided to impose its will on the Yugoslav warring factions in the shape of the Dayton Peace Accord (DPA) late in 1995. This short article will look at the successes of the current international mission as it hands over to LANDCENT and the follow-on force, and identify some of the potential threats to future peace in the country. The background to the collapse of communist Yugoslavia is well catalogued in contemporary history and current media reports - I do not intend to review that in this short article, nor is it my intention to focus on the ARRC on operations.

International resolve to make the DPA work was manifested by the deployment of the HQ Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) on 20th December 1995. The Corps was deployed with three multinational divisions and Corps troops from 35 nations, and structured to ensure that the military aspects of the DPA



Pictured are weapons confiscated by 3 Regiment Royal Military Police in Banja Luka. They are (l-r front), M53/39 Self-Propelled Anti-Aircraft System, a TAM wheeled vehicle containing a twin-barrelled rocket launcher, (l-r back) M80 BVP Armoured Personnel Carrier and BOV-M Armoured Personnel Carrier. Photo: Captain Kevin Harvey, Crown Copyright

were complied with. The rebuilding of the country and establishment of public services and administration was vested in the Office of the High Representative, Mr Carl Bildt. The key to understanding the role of the DPA is that the Parties, in signing the original document, agreed to comply fully with its requirements. It is true to say that they are all, broadly, in compliance with the Military Annex 1A. However, there are a number of well-publicised areas in which they are not; perhaps the most well-known of which are return of refugees to their pre 1991 homes and the arrest of indicted war criminals.

Has the International Community Been Successful?

The Military Mission

There is no doubt that the ARRC has achieved a great deal in the 12 months since deployment. The warring parties have been separated and there have been no violations of the cessation of hostilities since deployment, although it has on occasion been a close run thing. The armies have reduced their size, after putting their weapons and men into barracks. Throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) there is a degree of freedom of movement not seen since 1991. Other achievements include the reopening of some 65 bridges, over 1700Km of roads maintained by Corps engineers, with railways following suit. The Civil-Military Co-operation organisation has identified in excess of 300 projects spread throughout the Corps Area of Operations, and they worked closely with all the civil agencies in the transition from initially a purely military mission to a civil primacy operation.

On the other hand ARRC has been repeatedly criticised for failure to act in a wider policing role, such as organised refugee returns and crowd control issues. Such criticism is unfounded when judged against the Corps mandate. The ARRC is in BH to ensure the provisions of Military Annex 1A to the DPA are complied with. It is not a replacement police force, provider of public works services or catch-all for issues dodged by the Parties. There are many in BH and outside the country who believe that the ARRC is the solution to all problems, but that it has too rigid an interpretation of the requirements laid on it. A classic case in point is the vexed question of pursuit of indicted war criminals. The Parties (Serbs, Moslems and Croats) have been very slow in producing those people of this category - but the weight of international condemnation has been directed at the Serb failure to deliver Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic.

Throughout the Spring and Summer of 1996 the politicians, international media and the International War Crimes Tribunal have demanded that IFOR be ordered to hunt these men down. The responsibility for this task rests not with IFOR but with the Parties who signed the DPA, a fact conveniently overlooked by the international media and, more worryingly, by some senior European politicians.



A Saxon armoured personal carrier from the 1st Battalion The Queen's Lancashire Regiment on patrol around the streets of Gornji Vakuf in Bosnia. Photo: Captain Kevin Harvey, Crown Copyright.

It would be naive to assume that all the contributing nations to Op JOINT ENDEAVOUR are there for the same reasons. The US agenda is different to the UK, as is the French to the German. This is the nature of multinational operations-and will, probably, ever be thus. What is very clear though is that, despite differences in equipment, training standards, operational procedures and even desired end states, the ARRC has been a resounding success. When it was being formed in the early 1990's the pundits were predicting incompatibility and lack of cohesion as reasons why the Corps would never make it into operations. Op JOINT ENDEAVOUR has removed many of the perceived problems and replaced them with a proven track record based on operational experience.

The Civil Mission and Political Forum

Despite some successes the civil agencies have fared less well. This can be attributed to a number of causes, not the least of which are the difficulties, mistrust and prejudices that have built up over 3 years of conflict. It would also be true to say that a great deal of progress has been slowed down, if not actually stopped, by the various national agendas that accompany some of the initiatives in BH. There is another key consideration that must be brought into focus here. The projects which confront those tasked with rebuilding the country must

be seen as five, ten- and fifteen-year programmes, not activities which will be achieved in the duration of the one-year military mission. As a consequence, comparative progress may be seen, at least superficially, as slow.

The other area of concern rests with the Office of the High Representative. There has been a perception that, throughout a summer of hard negotiations, Mr Bildt has been seen repeatedly to come off second best in negotiations with the ex-Bosnian Serb leader Dr Radovan Karadzic. During prolonged efforts by the international community to rid the Bosnian political landscape of this man, Bildt has been the victim of a careful and well-structured Serb/ Balkan political chess game. But, as we approach the end of the year Dr Karadzic and General Mladic are both marginalized from the political forum; although it would be naive to assume that their influence is gone - it has not.



Local population view the construction of a Bailey bridge at Fajtoy, near Sanski Most, which when finished will allow buses to travel through to their village. The bridge was constructed by 3 Armoured Squadron, 22 Regiment Royal Engineers. Photo: Captain Kevin Harvey, Crown Copyright

What Bildt has also had to contend with is steering a line that meets all the sensitivities and agendas of nations over whom he has little or no influence. This appointment has been made all the more difficult for the lack of resources and authority - both of which he requested at Dayton but was refused. His efforts have often been diluted, and on one occasion hijacked, by external pressures from these quarters.

There are also anomalies in BH created by the international community, perhaps the most celebrated of which is the US 'Train and Equip' programme. In a \$300M programme the US Government will provide, through a civilian contractor called MPRI, last generation US military hardware and training to the Federation Army. The programme is seen as an incentive for the Moslems and Croats to maintain their union through joint defence, but with the spinoff that minimises any vestige of influence that Iran may have with the Moslems.

Why it is so incongruous is that BH is not short of military hardware. The ARRC has spent 12 months cantoning this equipment and manpower, and reducing tension between the factions. Now the US is rearming two of the former warring factions, and the Serbs are looking increasingly worried, as they see a stable state of capability being quickly eroded by one of the principal architects of the DPA.

Success to Build on in BH?

So what events and activities can be seen as successes in the last 12 months?

- *The military mission has been a great success and, with the transition to a civilian-led operation in June, much good continues on this front. The military capability of the three Parties remains broadly comparable, but this will change with the completion of the American Train and Equip programme for the Federation (Moslem and Croat) Army.*
- *The key to transition from war to peace, and the success of the international mission in BH as a whole, was perceived to be the successful elections in September. There was never any question, in some international politicians' minds at any rate, that these would happen. The situation in BH was less clear with completion of the elections. In the end it was down to HQ IFOR staff and the weight of the US State Department to get the job done. But done it was. The elections were far from perfect and do not constitute a role model of how these events might be run. But, they were conducted against considerable odds, across 3 polarised ethnic groups and divided communities. They lay the ground work for the next election in two years' time and those four years after that, indeed, they may be seen as an investment in the country's future.*

- *Springing from the political initiatives is the coalition of Moslems and Croats - The Federation. The development of this power base is fundamental to the future of the country, and peace of the region. The fact that it exists at all is great credit to the mission, but it is also a large part of the corner stone of continued peace.*
- *There is a considerable amount of international money pledged to help rebuild BH - although much of the \$8Bn found at the Donors Conference in Brussels this March has yet to appear in country. Be assured though, without international money and support over the next five years, BH has little hope of being anything other than a beggar on the European stage.*

Where Do the Threats to Continued Peace Lie?

Peace, even an imperfect one, is still fragile in BH. Threats to its continuation rest largely within the country, and in most cases with a few men. Some of the main issues are:

- *The Serbs and Moslems are currently locked in negotiation over ownership of the NE town of Brcko. The city and its access to the Danube waterway infrastructure is key ground to the Bosnian Serbs. Regrettably the Moslems view it with the same degree of importance. The city is already the scene of much ethnic violence and mistrust and is seen by many as the most likely genesis for the next Balkan war. If the Serbs do not retain the city they have said they will return to war. The Moslems have expressed similarly hard-line views.*
- *The Federation must not be allowed to collapse. If it does the very basis for much of the peace is swept away. The Federation needs external support too much at the moment to jeopardise the union. But, treaties and contracts are vulnerable to change in the mid-term and key issues and priorities change over time. It is, however, a far from amicable coalition and in places is stretched so thin as to be transparent.*
- *The current ethnic division must not be allowed to polarise any further. The Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) separating the Federation and Republika Srpska must not be allowed to become a border (a de facto status that it currently enjoys in some minds.) There is much evidence to suggest that the Moslems will try to stop this happening by carrying out politically motivated and organised mass crossings over the IEBL. This would almost certainly be taken by the Serbs as a form of invasion and they would respond accordingly. The resultant act of non-compliance would cause a major breach in the current positions of the Parties and could lead to resumption of hostilities. It would*

almost certainly result in the Serbs pulling out of crucial negotiations like the Brcko issue.

- *Finally, while the echoes of the recent September elections recede into the distance, the implementation of the public offices and officials they created is far from over. Should one or more Parties decide to pull out of the newly elected Presidency or House of the People the effect would be to invalidate large parts of the legislature. The knock-on effect would be to create a disenfranchised element within the country.*



Warriors from 'C' Company 1st Battalion The Green Howards on patrol round the Donji Vakuf region, Bosnia, 1996. Photo: Captain Kevin Harvey, Crown Copyright

Final Thoughts

The international community can, in the round, feel that it has made a significant and positive contribution to the rehabilitation of BH. A word of caution though. The work of bringing BH from war to peace and on to national reconciliation will take tens of years and require massive undertakings from the world community. There will be a continued need for the military and civil aid organisations to monitor the country in the coming years. The UNHCR and Red Cross will certainly be required until the end of this decade.

The need for a follow-on force to replace IFOR is well recognised - but who will undertake to provide the troops? There is no doubt that the lack of a return to conflict in the early days was due to a capable and credible force that would punish any breach of Annex 1A of the DPA. What must be learnt from this lesson is that whatever follows, the ARRC must have the characteristics of capability, flexibility, manoeuvre and firepower (notably on call airpower) to deter opportunist actions. As this article goes to press the structure of a follow-on force is being decided by NATO ministers, barely 1.5 months before it is due to deploy. It is, perhaps, an unfortunate quirk of fate that the end of the IFOR mission should coincide with a US Presidential election.

International interest is fickle by nature and must not be allowed to waver. It was due in large part to the international media that the UN started its mission in BH in 1992, culminating in the current NATO operation in December 1995. If the achievements of the last year are not to be wasted international resolve must remain fixed on the people of BH and their future.

Easy to say - but so easy to forget.





A British Army Corporal manoeuvres the jib of the Recovery Vehicle as one of his team prepares to hook on a water tank. The tank will improve conditions for the signalers manning a rebroadcast site on Trebevic Mountain overlooking Sarajevo. Photo: Sergeant Dave Whitley, Crown Copyright



Children from Hasan Kikic School, Sanski Most, wave excitedly from behind their new school windows replaced by the Overseas Development Association (ODA) under a project undertaken by gunners of 17/159 Battery, 26 Regiment Royal Artillery. Photo: Captain Kevin Harvey, Crown Copyright

The Use of Psychological Operations (Psy Ops), and their Role in the Return to Normality in Bosnia-Herzegovina

This article by Major R. R. Smith, LI, was originally published in BAR 114, December 1996 and provides a company commander's perspective during May 1996 on the use of Psy Ops on operations.

The British seem to persist in thinking of Psychological operations as being something from the realms of Science Fiction.¹

The concept of Psychological Operations (PsyOps) or the deliberate attempt to influence the attitudes and behaviour of a specific target audience to one's own advantage is neither new nor is it a black art. Indeed learning from its earlier experiences in Vietnam the American Army has now developed the use of psyops as an integral and highly effective part of its military capability. While the British Army has had the opportunity to develop a similar capability, particularly by drawing upon some of its experiences from the counter-insurgency campaigns in which it has been engaged since the Second World War, it appears that the concept of Psy Ops is not something which rests easily with the British military mind. There is an element of truth in General Sir Frank Kitson's observation, shown above, even today. Hence as a company commander in the 2LI Battle Group, operating as part of NATO's IFOR, the requirement to implement a formal Psy Ops plan in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BH) was both something of a revelation and an education. Initially I viewed the plan with a degree of traditional British scepticism but was soon won over by the real contribution it made towards reinforcing the return to normality in that troubled country. Although there were particular circumstances in BH which had a bearing on the Psy Ops plan we developed, nevertheless the experiences of IFOR served both to reinforce some of the conclusions of former campaigns as well as to highlight some of the new lessons emerging in the post-Cold War era. The true benefit of a proactive Psy Ops programme was demonstrated. It perhaps added weight to the argument that the whole subject should receive greater consideration in the next edition of the *Army Field Manual Wider Peacekeeping*.²

Concept of Psy Ops

Psy ops are defined in *ADP operations* as:

Planned activities carried out in both peace and conflict (including war) and can be directed at friendly, enemy and neutral audiences. Their purpose is to influence attitudes and behaviour thereby enhancing the achievement of one's own political

¹ Kitson F, *Low Intensity Operations*, Faber and Faber London, 1971, p 189.

² *Wider Peacekeeping*, HMSO 1994

*and military objectives. Specifically PSY OPS seek to undermine an enemy's will to fight, strengthen the support of the loyal and gain the support of the uncommitted.*³

At the core of any psy ops plan is the attempt to penetrate and then influence a man's mind, character and thought process. There is a need therefore to try and enter the psyche of a target audience, and this entails a certain approach which needs to be developed. The natural response to view this process as something sinister or taboo should be avoided, particularly if psy ops have the potential to save the loss of lives in subsequent operations.

Historical Use of Psy Ops

The use of psy ops is neither new nor is it a black art. Indeed the American Army places considerable emphasis on their employment. Learning from its experiences in the Vietnam War where, amongst other techniques, the US Army deployed C-47 'Gooney Birds' with loudspeakers to drop leaflets and urge the Viet Cong to surrender,⁴ it refined its methods to great effect during Operation DESERT STORM.

Psy ops focused on destroying Iraqi morale and encouraging mass surrender and desertion. After the cease-fire an Iraqi division commander stated that next to the coalition bombing operations, psy ops was the greatest threat to his troops' morale. Psy ops leaflets and radio broadcasts undermined unit morale, provided instructions on how to surrender, instilled confidence that prisoners would be treated humanely, and provided advanced warning of impending air attacks, thus successfully encouraging desertion.⁵

The British Army has been involved in a number of counter-insurgency campaigns since the Second World War, and, as General Sir Frank Kitson observed, at the heart of any such campaign is the 'struggle for men's minds'.⁶ Drawing upon his experiences in Kenya, Malaya, Muscat, the Oman and Cyprus he developed a framework for operations which depended, in part, on both creating the correct atmosphere and having the appropriate machinery available in order to influence people's attitudes and opinions.⁷ He foresaw that the military had a critical role in having a well-developed Psy Ops capability in place, which could be employed as one of the preliminary measures in counter-insurgency campaigns.⁸

3 *Army Doctrine Publications, Operations, June 1994, pp 4-25. This page includes a full description of the concept of Psy Ops*

4 *Atkinson, R., The Long Gray Line, Collins 1990, pp 217 and 241*

5 *United State Secretary of Defence, Conduct of the Persian Gulf War Final Report to Congress, US DOD, April 1992, p .J-20.*

6 *Kitson R, Bunch of Five, Faber and Faber London, 1977, p 282.*

7 *Ibid, pp 284-6*

8 *Kitson, Low Intensity Operations, pp 187-9*



Figure 1

In his 1971 book, *Low Intensity Operations*, Kitson also lamented that the British Army continued to be slow in embracing the full potential of Psy Ops and ensuring that its infrastructure was properly established.⁹ To a certain extent there remains an element of truth in this message even today. At present, the British Army only maintains a very limited Psy Ops capability. Much of its experience is cadreised during times of peace, and would rely on activating a significant number of shadow-posted regulars and reservists during times of conflict to reinforce specific headquarters as necessary. It is also a question of education, for Psy Ops does not yet enjoy comprehensive coverage in some of the Army's principal academic instructions. There appears to be a degree of traditional British caution to the use of Psy ops. This caution is not dissimilar to the time it took the British Army to properly adopt the concept of 'deception' in its doctrine, and hence learn some of the lessons from, amongst others, the well-practised Russian art of 'maskirovka'.¹⁰

The Role of Psy Ops in Bosnia Herzegovina Operational Environment

I was fortunate enough to take over A Company 2 LI in February 1996 as the Battlegroup entered a more settled phase, after a period of considerable movement

⁹ *Ibid*, p 189.

¹⁰ For full discussion of the meaning of *Maskirovka*, see Duffy C, *Red Storm on the Reich*, Atheneum 1991, page 324-6

immediately following D-Day on the Dayton timetable. The Battlegroup became based in the heart of Serb territory and was to remain in its Area of Responsibility, as shown at Figure 1, until the end of its tour in early May. Within A Company's area the towns of Celinac and Kotor Varos were to be key targets in the future Psy Ops plan. Kotor Varos was the slightly bigger town with an approximate population of 10,000 people, but both acted as feeder towns to Banja Luka. Although neither of their infrastructures had been badly damaged by the civil war, both of them had suffered significant casualties and fatalities in their populations as a result of the males having gone away to fight.

Thus, initially, they were suspicious about the durability of the peace and needed convincing that the whole process would not degenerate into a state of violence again, especially when IFOR had left.

That said, on a wider picture and as Spring approached, the level of compliance amongst the Former Warring Factions (FWF) with the Dayton Agreement, as represented at Figure 2, was generally high. They were prepared to co-operate with IFOR under the security of its umbrella. The balance of operations was beginning to move away from the purely military measures executed by IFOR, which had been predominant in the aftermath of D-Day. The emphasis was switching towards the promotion of civil, social and economic measures with the intention of initiating a return to normality. Increasingly key civilian agencies such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe were to take the lead with the military activity supporting them, while maintaining an overall readiness to react should the situation deteriorate.



Figure 2

The Resulting Psy Ops Plan

Against this background, the military focus began to switch towards the development of deep operations, which sought to shape the operational environment so that we could act in the most favourable conditions. By and large this meant encouraging, educating, coaxing and if necessary directing the FWF and the civilian population towards continued compliance with the Dayton Agreement. The intention was that the presentation of peace leading to a return to normality should be seen as the norm, rather than a return to violence.

At this point the Psy Ops campaign gained a real momentum, in a way which had not been possible under the United Nations (UN) where the priority had lain in activities designed more at maintaining cordial relations with the FWF on an even-handed-basis rather than trying to influence them. Equally military operations under the UN had been hamstrung by the incomplete product provided by military information (mil info), rather than true intelligence, which was beginning to be developed under IFOR.

A comprehensive Psy Ops plan was formulated under the co-ordination of HQ 4 (UK) Armoured Brigade and then further refined at battle group level. The overriding purpose was to complement the thrust of the Brigade's deep operations and hence contribute to the return to normality process. It rested on the following objectives which were both defensive and offensive in nature.¹¹



Return to Normality - Refugees on their way home. Photo: Original Image, Crown copyright

¹¹ *Kitson in Bunch of Five between pp 293-6 describes defensive operations as measures to prevent the disruption of one's own programme, while offensive operations focus on the neutralisation of the potentially damaging opinions and behaviour of selected target audiences.*

- *First of all to gain demographic information from all sources down to patrols on the ground, as to the activities of both the FWF and the local population, the general level of compliance and signs of the return to normality so that the resources could be targeted correctly.*
- *To quell rumours and fill information gaps, including the activities of the other FWF on the other side of the Inter Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) and misconceptions over IFOR's role.*
- *To portray IFOR in a positive light. This objective required emphasis to be placed on the positive aspects of IFOR's activities in a selective manner, although it was critical never to tell a lie. The aim was to concentrate on what we wanted to say, rather than relaying a series of untruths.*
- *To employ Psy Ops resources to support specific operations as necessary. In this area we had to call upon the Brigade Psychological Support Element (BPSE) which was based with HQ 4 (UK) Armoured Brigade and comprised 15 American troops and five Hummvee vehicles. Each Hummvee was equipped with both a mounted and a manportable loudspeaker system.*

Means of Dissemination

As a company commander I have to admit, initially to scepticism when we were first briefed on the Psy Ops plan and I wondered if it would have any tangible effect on the ground. I was soon, however, to be convinced both of its positive results and also of the need for an early consideration of Psy Ops in the planning process.



Learning about Loudspeaker Equipment – with the BPSE. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

In essence, our plan revolved around the dissemination of the information we wished to project. At its foundation was the patrols we conducted into the towns such as Celinac and Kotor Varos in my Company's, area, and the surrounding countryside. Not only did they establish the vital link with the local community, but they also provided the medium through which, firstly, to collate the raw data for passage up the chain of command and then to implement the subsequent plan on the ground. As the military timelines of the Dayton Agreement came and went, for the most part without incident, by April we made a conscious decision to reduce our patrols in the Warriors and instead switched our emphasis to foot patrols. This allowed us to meet the local people in face-to-face contact, and use some of the chat-up skills which the British Army has developed over the years in Northern Ireland. These patrols were also supplemented by the BPSE who, in liaison with the local IFOR commander on the ground, were able to gauge the continuing effect of the Psy Ops plan on the ground and then recommend the necessary adjustments to the Brigade plan. Finally, this whole process of communication was brought together by the process of liaison with the FWF and the civilian authorities. As IFOR troops, we very much used liaison to communicate understanding of what we were trying to achieve and intent as to what we expected them to do.

Having achieved this basic building block, the next area we focused on was our relations with the media. At the tactical levels these included both local and IFOR resources. It is worth noting, at this stage, an important distinction between Plnfo and Psy Ops policies.

Plnfo policy aims to gain public support and understanding for an operation. Both back in the UK and in the wider community. This is done by releasing information to the international media in a timely manner in order to keep people informed. Plnfo uses the international media to transmit its information, but has no control over the editorial process and thus the final message.

Psy Ops policy, on the other hand, seeks to project information within an area of operations in such a manner as both to guide and influence the opinions of specified target audiences to support the aims of the Commander (in this case continued compliance with the Dayton Agreement and a return to normality). Unlike Plnfo, Psy Ops employed dedicated media (print, radio, loudspeakers). Both Plnfo and Psy Ops use only true information, however, the target audiences that they aim to persuade and the media, by which they communicate, are often separate.

As a result the use of Psy Ops will frequently have to be on an opportunity basis and with the co-operation of the local media in theatre. A considerable effort was made to work with the local media in BH, and it formed an important part of our Psy Ops plan. Indeed, by the spring of 1996 IFOR had established a strong



Platoon base repaired and handed back to the community to resume duty as the school.

Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

link with the independent radio station in Banja Luka, 'Radio Big'. Personnel from IFOR ranging from the Divisional Commander through the Brigade Commander to members of the Battlegroup appeared on a weekly show. It combined music, conversation and questions which were phoned in from a live audience.

The purpose was on the one hand to quell any rumours and misconceptions, while on the other to foster a greater understanding of IFOR's role. It was noted that the open approach of British officers and our willingness to answer difficult questions was in stark contrast to the ex-communist attitude of most Serb officers. Moreover such was the success of this measure that the Commanding Officer of 2LI hosted his own music show every week.

Finally on the subject of the media, we also employed various items produced from IFOR resources. These included IFOR's own newspaper, *The Herald of Peace*, a list of the ten most popular questions with the appropriate answers and a colouring book for the children. We re-learned many old lessons in this area in that whatever you disseminate must be credible to the target audience. For example, the education authorities in Kotor Varos took exception to one of the pictures in the colouring book which to us looked like a Southern German Schloss, but to the Serbs the various towers of the castle took up the appearance of Muslim minarets.

As well as seeking to influence the opinions of the target audience, our Psy Ops plan also sought to generate an element of goodwill with the local community. Through this it was hoped to promote confidence in IFOR and hence render the local population more receptive to the message we were trying to portray. In this area our efforts concentrated on the co-ordinated arrangement of sporting fixtures

such as football and support for community projects designed to contribute towards improving the local quality of life. An example of this at a very low level, was the repair work a platoon from A Company carried out on one of its bases before handing it back to the village, so that it could resume its former role as a school. At a higher level, the visit of the Light Division Band and its varied itinerary, which ranged from *ad-hoc* recitals at a village school near Celinac to a Sounding Retreat in the centre of Banja Luka, served to cement together many of our activities in assisting the return to normality.

Lessons

Tactical Level

Although the operational environment of BH and the mandate to implement the Dayton Agreement, in largely favourable conditions, had a bearing on the particular Psy Ops plan we were able to develop, nevertheless our experiences as a company served to highlight some key lessons.

There were certain similarities between our Psy Ops plan and some of the hearts and minds programmes which the British Army had conducted in former counter-insurgency campaigns. Yet at the same time many of the techniques we developed were more overt and direct in their nature.

The use of Psy Ops, as a deep operation, was a useful way to understand that by influencing the opinions and attitudes of a target audience, they could help to shape the operational environment to one's own advantage. Even as far down as company level, this called for an early consideration in the planning process of the employment of Psy Ops. This point is further reinforced by the time it took for the desired message, from even simple measures such as patrolling and low-level liaison, first to reach and then be accepted by their target audience.

Careful thought should be given both to the selection of the target audience and also the Psy Ops measures to be disseminated. In particular the target audience must potentially be receptive to the message, and that message must be credible. There is considerable scope to alienate a target audience by ill-conceived measures. Around Banja Luka there was the risk that our Psy Ops plan, if it was seen to be too blatant, would be rejected as the propaganda of an army of occupation by an ex-communist society. There was always the requirement for an element of the traditional British tact and subtlety. While, ideally, any planning team would include a loyal member of the native population in the formulation of a Psy Ops programme, at company level we used our interpreter to do a final check and ensure that our proposed measures were not going to cause offence.

Finally at company level, the degree of success of our Psy Ops plan very much depended upon the ability of the soldiers first to disseminate it to the local



A British Brigadier talks to the media with the help of a local interpreter in Bosnia. Photo: Crown Copyright

population, and then provide feedback up the chain of command in the form of weekly reports from the platoons. Again this meant that our plan had to comprise simple and effective measures, which were also credible to the soldiers who were going to have to implement them on the ground.

Doctrine

In the post-Cold War era where the British Army is likely to become increasingly involved in future peace support operations, two doctrinal lessons seem to emerge. Firstly, as Dr John Mackinlay has commented, in such operations where civil violence compounded by massive humanitarian upheaval will be common characteristics, there will be a large and disparate group of both UN agencies and Non-government Organisations (NGOs) also present in theatre. The division of responsibility between them will not always be clear.¹² As a result the formulation of any Psy Ops plan by the military will have to take account of these changed circumstances. The plan will have to follow a line which is compatible with the work of these agencies, and may well have to be co-ordinated in liaison with them. Finally, the fact that many of them are likely to have arrived in Theatre before any military deployment is confirmed at the political level, reinforces the requirement for a robust Psy Ops infrastructure to be in place during times of peace, and capable of rapid deployment at the threat of conflict.

¹² Mackinlay J, 'Peace Support Operations Doctrine, British Army Review Number 113, August 1996, pp 6 and 7

Secondly, *AFM Wider Peacekeeping* which was produced in 1994, is an excellent first iteration of doctrine in this important new area of operations after the end of the Cold War. It was, however, conceived very much based upon the experiences of conducting peace support operations under the guidance of the UN. As a result a number of the military measures it describes are limited by some of the sensitivities of operating as part of a UN force. For example, there is a section on Community Information which indirectly refers to the whole subject of Psy Ops.¹³ It may be that as a result of IFOR's experiences in BH under a NATO mandate, the next edition of *Wider Peacekeeping* can reflect in a more proactive manner both the application and, ultimately, the benefits of Psy Ops.

Conclusion

As a company commander the requirement to implement a Psy Ops plan on the ground came as both a revelation and a real education to me. Having viewed the whole concept with a degree of caution initially, I was soon convinced by the tangible contribution it made towards encouraging a return to normality.

As something of a convert, I believe there are a number of lessons we can learn in the planning and practice of Psy Ops. Of interest, many of these lessons are not new. It is perhaps more of a question of an attitude of mind, as arguably the whole concept of Psy Ops is not something which rests easily with the British Military mind. Finally it may be that the term Psy Ops itself needs refining to reflect something which conjures up fewer sinister overtones, and as a result is more acceptable.



IFOR, Bosnia: Local children inspect an AS90 155mm self-propelled gun of the Royal Artillery.
Photo: British Army, Crown Copyright.

13 *Wider Peacekeeping*, pp 5-8 to 5-10



A LEOPARD 1A5 Main Battle Tank Dozer, with IFOR markings, destroys a Serbian 23mm M55 A4 B1 Anti-aircraft Gun carriage by driving over it at Danver Camp (DANBAT) in Doboj, Bosnia-Herzegovina, during Operation Joint Endeavour, a peacekeeping effort by IFOR in support of the Dayton Peace Accords. Photo: Specialist David Morgan, US Department of Defence, Released

The Role of UNMOs in a Peace Support Operation

This article by Lieutenant Colonel J.D. Deverell, R IRISH, was originally published in BAR 115, April 1997.

Many UN missions include UN Military Observers (UNMOs). Our Army does not widely understand the UNMO role because relatively few British Officers have completed tours as UNMOs. Having spent the final six months of the UN mandate in the former Yugoslavia as Chief Operations Officer of the UNMOs, I believe an article on the subject could be useful.

My aim is to explain the UNMO role in a Peace Support Operation. I use the former Yugoslavia as my model but the principles are applicable elsewhere in the world, both inside and outside a UN context. I will cover the subject under the following headings:

- *The UNMO Concept*
- *Principles*
- *Roles and Tasks*
- *Method of Operating*
- *Structure, Command and Control and relationships with other elements of a force package.*

The UNMO Concept

In essence, the UNMO concept is to liaise with the warring factions, to monitor compliance with agreements and to report accordingly, up the UN chain of command.

In the former Yugoslavia, the practical basis for this was as follows: UNMOs operated in small teams, usually 4 to 8 strong, living in rented houses in the community and patrolling in their areas of responsibility in cars and on foot. These teams were grouped under UNMO Senior Military Observers (SMOs). The areas of responsibility of these SMOs conformed to UN Sectors, where these existed. The SMOs were co-located with Sector HQs. (See Figure 1)

UNMOs reported through their own chain of command directly from Sector level to HQUNMO in Zagreb, with the intermediate Mission headquarters as information addressees. Reports were incorporated into UN theatre reports by Headquarters UN Peace Forces (UNPF), the theatre HQ in Zagreb, and sent daily to New York.

Some 650 UNMOs from 30 different countries made up the teams and the UNMO HQs. Teams were spread right across the former Yugoslavia, covering all its former countries less Slovenia; that is to say, we had teams in Croatia, Bosnia, Montenegro, Serbia and Macedonia. No other uniformed UN element had this geographical spread of responsibility. (See Figure 2)

My job was to make all this work operationally, over the last 6 months of 1995. No one said it was going to be easy!

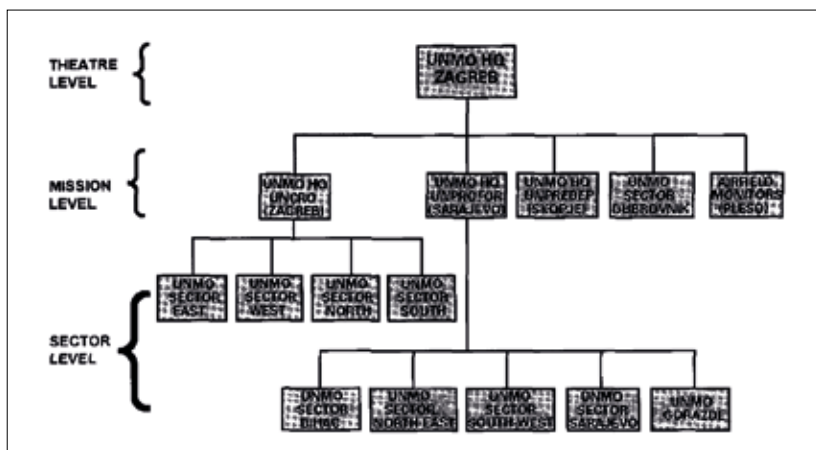


Figure 1: UNMO Organization



Figure 2: UNMO Locations as at 30 Nov 1995



A UNMO team member stands at the remains of UNMO house attacked by IED at Hrasnica, outside Sarajevo. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright.

UNMO Principles

Consent of the warring factions: This is a critical principle which inevitably influenced the way we did business. The need for consent was driven by practicalities as well as by principle; we were hugely outnumbered and we could be made *persona non grata* effectively and quickly. On occasion, UNMO teams were forced out by being directly targeted, a clear indication that consent had lapsed.

Always unarmed: This principle was an important psychological ingredient in getting the warring factions to accept our presence. It showed that the UNMOs were not part of the enforcement package, that they were more in the nature of 'Diplomats in Uniform'.

International and multicultural team mix: This principle reinforced the perception in the minds of the warring factions that we were neutral and that the international community was committed to a solution. Linguistically the unifying link was English. The ability to speak it well was a prerequisite for being an UNMO.

Officers only: All UNMOs were commissioned officers (Captains and above). They had to understand the cultures amongst which they were living, and had to be able to comprehend the subtleties of what they were seeing and what was being said - not easy.



Dutch UN Transportbatallion crossing a Pontoon bridge over the river Neretva from the M17 towards the west with, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Photo: Cor Veringmeier, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license, Wikipedia

Self sufficiency: Once deployed, UNMOs had to be self-sufficient in accommodation, food and equipment. Support from HQ UNPF in Zagreb supplied our vehicles and communications. Interpreters were provided to each team on a contract basis. The fact that the teams lived amongst the communities over which the warring factions were fighting helped us to be accepted by those communities.

Flexible, responsive and reliable: The combination of a local, mobile all - officer force with direct communications, good liaison potential and integral interpreters gave a powerful capability. Furthermore, because UNMOs were given, without condition , to UN New York by the countries who supplied them, the way in which the UNMOs operated, or where they were deployed, was not subject to concerns in their home countries for their safety. If any one country got the jitters about where UNMOs were operating, they could not influence their deployment directly; they could only take their UNMOs away (as Malaysia did, the only case I know of). All this meant that the UNMOs could - and can - react rapidly to changing events, without having to concern themselves with pressure from the contributing nations.

Economy of effort: Owing to their small numbers and very light equipment, UNMOs are an inexpensive force for UN New York. Therefore when UN military strength is neutered by realities on the ground or in New York or at home (as was often the case in the former Yugoslavia), UNMOs can do as much as heavy metal at a fraction of the price.

Operate on both sides of confrontation lines:

Verification of ceasefires and other agreements cannot be done effectively from one side only of a confrontation line. To illustrate this: a large number of UN personnel, including UNMOs, were taken hostage by Bosnian Serb forces after the NATO airstrikes of May 1995. Thereafter, Commander UNPROFOR was not keen to put the UNMOs back on the Bosnian Serb side because of the constraints that another bout of hostage-taking would impose on his military operations. As a result, the Russians were the only nation to have any uniformed UN personnel on the Bosnian Serb side of the confrontation line, for some four months. Accordingly liaison with the Bosnian Serbs and monitoring of their activities was made much more difficult. We therefore knew that, sooner or later, despite the risks, it was important to reintroduce UNMOs onto Bosnian Serb territory, in order to regain the trust of both sides and to report accurately on warring faction action and reaction, rather than give a one-sided picture. UNMO teams that were eventually reintroduced were able to prove that bombardment of Bosnian forces back onto the Serb side in autumn 1995. As a result there was an increase in Serb confidence in the UN; as the Bosnian Serbs saw it, the UN had demonstrated trust in them and had shown an interest in ensuring that the Bosnian-Croat and Muslim Federation was respecting the ceasefire - thereby indicating even-handedness. Regrettably, one-sided pictures were what many troop contributing nations wanted to promote. UNMO reports, if from both sides, could help to redress this. As an example, by being deployed in the Prijedor area of Serbian Bosnia, we were able to prove that bombardment of Bosnian forces was actually part of a two-way exchange of fire.



Interpreters were provided to each team on a contract basis. The photograph also includes two Dubliners, one in the British Army and one from the Army of the Republic of Ireland! Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

DATE	UNSCR	SUBJECT	AUTHORIZED STRENGTH
21 FEB 92	743	VANCE PLAN, UN PROTECTED AREAS	100
29 JUN 92	758	SARAJEVO AIRPORT, DELIVERING HUMANITARIAN ASST	60
29 JUN 92	762	'PINK ZONES'	60
14 SEP 92	776	B-H/HUMANITARIAN PROTECTION	80
9 OCT 92	779	PREVLAKA PENINSULA	14
19 OCT 92	786	AIRFIELDS MONITORING/NO FLY ZONE	79
11 DEC 92	795	FYROM (MACEDONIA)	35
6 MAY 93	824	UN SAFE AREAS	50
30 JUN 93	847	EXTENSION OF MANDATE	100
31 MAR 94	908	EXTENSION OF MANDATE AND OPENING TUZLA AIRPORT	20
27 APR 94	914	B-H AND CROATIA INCREASE	150
ESTABLISHED FOR			748

Figure 3: UNMOs Enabled by the following United Nations Security Council Resolutions

UNMO Roles

In the former Yugoslavia, the UNMOs were established at an early stage of the conflict. Their roles, the areas in which they were to work and their strength were decreed by successive UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR). (See Figure 3) Nations were invited by the UN to contribute UNMOs accordingly. Detailed UNMO tasks depended on the situation in each of their areas of responsibility and on the mandate derived from each UN Security Council resolution or other agreement. They could be broken into the following categories:

- *Observing and reporting*
- *Liaison with local commanders and civil authorities*
- *Liaison between warring factions.*
- *Monitoring compliance with ceasefires and other agreements*
- *Investigation and verification of ceasefire violations and incidents, including crater analysis*
- *Facilitating joint commissions*
- *Assistance with the conduct of humanitarian activity*
- *UN representation.*



The Russians were the only nation to have any uniformed personnel on the Bosnian Serb side. This image shows the author with members of the Russian battalion on the Serb side of the confrontation line above Sarajevo. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

We monitored the following major events over the last 6 months of 1995:

- *Croatian military movement into and out of Bosnia. This military movement was in direct contravention of UNSCR 752 which demanded that all forms of interference from outside Bosnia-Herzegovina cease. The troop moves which we were monitoring had the following purposes:*
 - *To support the Bosnian Croatian forces (the HVO)*
 - *To sever lines of communication from the Bosnian Serbs to the Krajina Serbs, and*
 - *To attack the Krajina Serbs from the rear.*
 - *(There was a Western reluctance to acknowledge the facts until the Croatian invasion of the Krajina was imminent. UNMOs monitored the build up from June to August 1995 and reported it on a daily basis, though the UN did not give our reports any prominence.)*
- *The military build-up within Croatia, in preparation for the Croatian attack on the Krajina Serbs in August 1995. Also, in the aftermath of the attack, reporting abuses of human rights of the residual Serb population. There had been tacit international support for Croatian ejection of the historic Krajina Serb population, despite the fact that this population was located in two UN Protected Areas (Sectors North and South). Many Westerners of influence were reluctant to accept that the Croats had abused human rights. UNMO reporting could not on its own head off the attack itself, but it did eventually help persuade the West what really happened afterwards. As a direct result,*

in May 1996, Croatian membership of the Council of Europe was vetoed - albeit only for six months.

- The Croatian military threat to the Krajina Serbs in Eastern Slavonia (Sector East) and corresponding Krajina Serb and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia military deployments. Following the Croatian operation in Sectors North and South mentioned above, Sector East was the last of the four UN Protected Areas in Croatia. UN deployment in this part of Croatia continues today under the mission acronym of UNTAES.*
- Krajina Serb deployment in Bosnia in support of the Moslem warlord Abdic in the Bihac pocket who was fighting against the Bosnian 5th Corps. This is not an easy campaign to understand and I will not dwell on it.*
- Bosnian Serb threats to the UN Safe Areas in Bosnia. There were six of these Safe Areas until the Serbs expelled Bosnians from Zepa and Srebrenica; the remaining four Safe Areas were Bihac, Sarajevo, Tuzla and Gorazde. Despite the strong UN words of commitment to Gorazde during the London declaration following the fall of Srebrenica, the UNMOs were the only UN forces left in Gorazde by the Autumn*
- The Croatian and Montenegrin military presence in the DMZ either side of the border and in the adjoining Prevlaka peninsula area, a potential flashpoint.*
- Potentially destabilising influences in the border areas of the former Yugoslavia Republic of Macedonia.*
- Violations of the no fly zone over Bosnia. To do this, we monitored key airfields and radars in Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro.*

In some of the instances covered above, UNMOs were the only agencies reporting on the situation, and in others, they were playing an important complementary role. The examples I have given should make it clear that UNMO reports are only effective if acted upon.

Method of Operating

Establishing the UNMO team: An agreement or UN Security Council resolution would be passed and HQ UNPF in Zagreb and HQ UN New York would authorise the establishment of appropriately located teams. We would then staff the establishment of those teams within HQ UNPF to acquire the necessary vehicles, communications and contracts for hiring interpreters, accommodation and buying fuel. Concurrently, agreements would be made to secure support from local authorities and warring factions. This would enable the new teams to live, and operate, in the relevant area. We would deploy individual UNMOs to make up the new team or teams.

Building confidence: This enabled us both to do our job and directly to help peace. Our multi-nationality, our small numbers, our lack of arms, our all-officer status and our dependence on the local community for safety were all important tools in gaining confidence. There were many indications that the presence of the UNMOs was accepted by warring factions where they would not otherwise readily accept others, whether UN forces in general or UN representation from certain nations in particular. Our presence on both sides of the confrontation line also built confidence. 'Where we did not have such a presence, we sought to establish it.

Liaising: I regard liaison as an absolutely critical ingredient of peace support operations. It is not yet part of our doctrine in any detail, but it should be. Liaison enabled the warring factions to understand (or at least prevented them from having the excuse of not understanding) what the UN was there to do and under what authority. It therefore made their acceptance of the UN, and of our job, easier. In the same way, liaison was critical in order to make one warring faction understand where and why it had transgressed. How could we, or the UN in general, communicate our intentions and our protests to the warring factions without liaison? How could the warring factions communicate their views and concerns to the UN, without liaison? But there must be a liaison strategy: who to liaise, who to liaise with and at what level, where to be best located to liaise: basic, but, as they say, *not a lot of people know that*: I would submit that emphasis on liaison should be one of the big differences between View 1 and View 2 operations, to use terminology from British Army 2000.

Protesting: Formal protests about warring faction activities, whether these activities were directed against other warring factions, against civilians or against ourselves, were an important part of our armoury. If raised to a high enough level these formal protests often had an effect, though this effect might not be lasting. Protests often had to be reiterated. A properly thought-out liaison machinery had to be in place, in order to direct the protests to where they would have effect.

Monitoring and reporting: We were there to help underwrite agreements made and we had an important task in checking compliance with those agreements. Our bosses in New York and in theatre had to be notified of warring faction activities in contravention of agreements. Whether or not the UN bosses acted on the information was another matter. Sometimes what we had to say was unpalatable to the UN. On at least two occasions I had specific knowledge of Bosnian forces bombarding their own side apparently in order to promote international support as a result of what they claimed to be Bosnian Serb attacks, but this information

never reached senior UN officers. However frustrating it might be when our reports were stifled, it was important to keep reporting. The only exceptions we made were where monitoring was clearly outside our mandate - an example of this would have been reporting on Yugoslav naval activities in Kotor Bay, which we were seeing daily - or when warring faction awareness of our monitoring activities would undermine something more important. For example, I told the Senior Military Observer in Banja Luka (a Kiwi lieutenant colonel) not to report on Bosnian Serb troop movement unless that movement was liable to threaten the ceasefire which had by then been secured. We did not want UNMOs to be ejected for temporary and insignificant gain.

I would like at this stage to make a relevant comment about operational security. Monitoring and reporting were always fraught with problems because the warring factions were well aware of what we were doing. They had inherited the Eastern bloc security mentality and electronic warfare equipment to go with it. Many UNMOs, by comparison, had no idea about OPSEC and I became aware that I was fighting a losing battle in trying to improve our own OPSEC though I could not afford to give up. Matters would have been infinitely easier if we had secure radios but many people in the UN disagreed on principle with such equipment; for them, 'transparency' of UN operations was a relevant and inflexible principle. The paradox was that the warring factions themselves would have preferred us to have had secure radio sets; they would then have been confident that what ever we were reporting about them would not be 'overheard' and taken advantage of by their opponents.

Facilitating joint commissions: After a ceasefire, the next step was for the UN to start up meetings on the confrontation line under the auspices of the regional Joint commissions. The UNMOs were the only agency able to facilitate these meetings with any ease because they were trusted by, and based on, both sides.

Disestablishing ourselves: In our view there were formidable reasons for UN New York maintaining an UNMO presence in Bosnia after the departure of other blue berets and the arrival of IFOR. This presence, we believed, would have benefited both IFOR and UN New York. (See Figures 4 and 5). But it was not to be, and so the last part of our method of operating was to draw down and send home: all was over, bar the report-writing - or at least in Bosnia.

Structure and Command and Control: We have on occasions been referred to as 'diplomats in uniform' and in theory the Chief Military Observer, my boss, answered directly to the UN Secretary General in New York. However, in practice,

- MISSION-WIDE, COHERENT LIAISON AND MONITORING MACHINERY
- PARALLEL, NON-NATO REPORTING CHAIN: A 'SECOND OPINION'
- EXPERT ANALYSIS OF CEASEFIRE VIOLATIONS
- AIRFIELD MONITORING UNDER NO-FLY ZONE GROUND BASED MANDATE
- MONITOR CROATIAN ARMY INTERFERENCE (UNSCR 752)
- LIAISON WITH FLANKS OUTSIDE BOSNIA (PREVLAKA, KRAJINA, EAST)
- COLLECTIVE STORE OF HUMAN EXPERIENCE THEATRE-WIDE
- TANGIBLE LINK WITH PREVIOUS UNPF MIL STRUCTURE
- SYMBOL OF UN-SANCTIONED LEGITIMACY OF IFOR

Figure 4: What can UNMOs do for an implementation force?

- PROVIDE 'BLUE BERET' PRESENCE IN ALL FORMER UNPROFOR AOR
- RESPOND TO INFO REQUESTS FROM UNNY AND UN IN AREA
- PROVIDE UNMO ADVICE TO UN AND OTHER AGENCIES IN AREA
- NUCLEUS OF POST-IFOR UN DEPLOYMENT IF REQUIRED
- PROVIDE 'SECOND OPINION' TO UNNY: 'KEEPING THE FAITH'

Figure 5: What can UNMOs do for Unny?

control was exercised by the Special Representative to the Secretary General in theatre (Akashi, then Annan). For day-to-day purposes this control was further delegated to the UNPF Force Commander in Zagreb, General Janvier. The Chief Military Observer had his own Headquarters. HQ UNMO was separate but close to HQ UNPF, the force HQ. However, the two HQs were in constant and necessary liaison with each other; we provided HQ UNPF with about 60- 70% of the information they received from all sources, on the activities of the warring factions. (See Figure 6). At the lower level UNMOs were the only uniformed UN presence in some of the areas where we worked. In all other areas, operational control was delegated to the UN Mission commanders. At that time in Bosnia, this meant Lieutenant General Smith, Commander UNPROFOR. The UN Mission Commander further delegated operational control of the UNMOs to the UN Sector commanders below him. Thus the British Brigadier based at Gomji Vakuf and commanding Sector South West had OPCON of UNMOs working in his area.

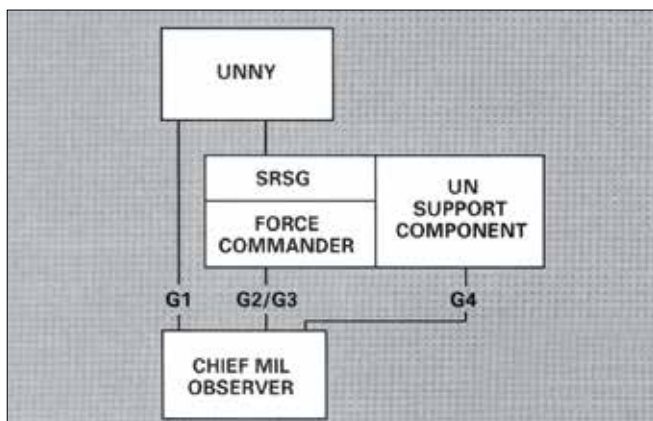


Figure 6: What can UNMOs do for an implementation force?

At the lowest level there was a need to coordinate operations between teams and Battalions who were often working in each other's areas. The activities of each were complementary: the UNMO teams were orientated to liaison and monitoring and had no part in enforcement, which was the preserve of the UN battalions. Conversely, the battalions had to be able to liaise with the warring factions in their areas, but that was not their primary reason for being there. (See Figure 7)



There was a need to coordinate operations between teams and battalions. This image shows UNMOs working with the French battalion at the Jewish cemetery in Sarajevo.

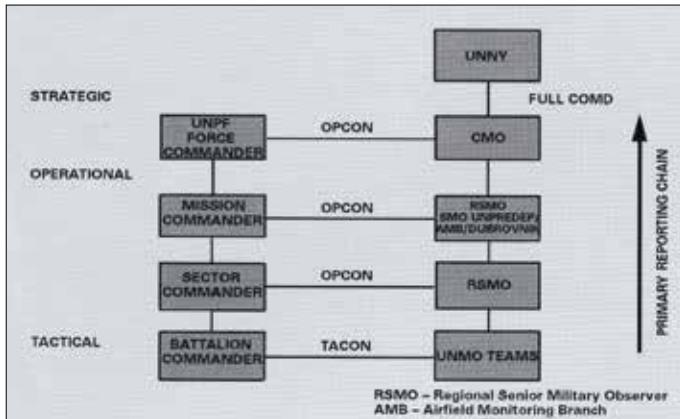


Figure 7: UNMO reporting Chain and Chain of Command

In the hands of competent and enlightened officers on both sides, such a system was very effective. The UNMOs were there to be tasked by the Sector commanders within the framework of the enabling mandates set by Security Council resolutions and they were excellent tools for monitoring and liaising with warring factions. In practice, most of the time, all worked well and the UNMOs' achievements were appreciated. However, in the worst cases some of the Sector commanders were supported poorly by their Senior Military Observers or by the teams themselves. As a result, these Sector commanders did not understand UNMO capabilities and limitations, were resigned to UNMO incompetence, frustrated by not being able to wield a higher state of command over them and resentful of UNMO separateness and extra living allowances. Such commanders were liable to try to create their own monitoring and liaison force in microcosm, as the British did with their Sector Liaison Officers and the so-called Joint Commission Observers, though these had an enforcement role as well and were seen as such. I would like at this stage to say that British UNMOs (of whom there were 19 from all three Services), and other like-minded officers with similar outlook and training, worked wonders with their teams and were a powerful force for success.

Conclusions

- *We came to be strong believers in the UNMO concept. The liaising and monitoring function is critical to the success of any peace support operation. I include IFOR. It is best carried out by an organisation whose members are*

deployed throughout the theatre. As a result, the liaison policy can then be coherent throughout all the local missions; the same organisation will have links to representatives of all warring factions at all important levels; and, reporting will be rapid and balanced.

- *The sooner we have a coherent doctrine for liaison, the better.*
- *Coordination with other UN agencies working in the same geographical areas as the UNMOs is crucial and must be ensured. I include human rights monitors and UNHCR as well as UN battalions.*
- *UN commanders down to Sector level must understand what UNMOs can do for them and should be encouraged to use them.*
- *Confidence building and impartiality are of paramount importance in peace support operations. These must be promoted by ensuring that observers are deployed to both sides of any confrontation line. If this is not possible, which I accept may sometimes be the case, it will be to the detriment of impartiality. Due weight given to UNMO reports of each warring faction's deceptions and violations can help the UN to be seen as even-handed. Armed thus with correct information, the SRSG and UN New York will be in a position to avoid the tendency to 'situate the appreciation', censuring one warring faction only, in accordance with the majority international view.*
- *While the UNMO concept and principles are sound, the organisation is flawed because of too many bad officers within it. It would be possible to weed out bad officers during training and orientation on arrival, or if they fail to measure up later. This already happens to a minor extent: HQ UNMO regularly sent home UNMOs who were found to lack the necessary driving or English-speaking skills. The multinational makeup of UNMOs within the teams must be maintained but the selection of UNMOs for key positions within the organisation should be based on merit and not solely on the aspiration to maintain national balance between teams and sectors and within UNMO HQ.*

Only in this way will the organisation live up to its full potential.



Pictured is the destroyed Media Centre of Sarajevo. Photo: Hedwig Klawuttke, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikipedia



Pictured is a shelled house in Vukovar, Slovenia, after the occupation by the Yugoslav Army (JNA). Photo: Seiya 123, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia

A Visit to Eastern Slavonia

This article by Anthony Wood was originally published in BAR 115, April 1997.

The roads from Pecs, pronounced 'PAGE', to our destination were surprisingly good; after the Hungarian Croat frontier we sped down the Osijek bypass in the dark passing reassuringly normal road signs to Vukovar until a point at which the road went straight on but we made a rapid left.

'Why are we going this way?' I asked the enigmatic Finn in whose car I was a passenger.

'Well, the road ahead is mined and the bridge blown up.'

'So why isn't there a No Entry sign?'

'Oh, I guess the driver would find out anyway.'

We had started our journey at the IFOR logistics base in Pecs where an extremely polite Swedish soldier had handed over a minibus which had last seen service in Cambodia. In this we now rattled towards the Russian-controlled crossing point into Eastern Slavonia; there was no official presence on the Croatian side except a police car at a road junction; then a bright light from above, a young soldier standing by the anti-tank obstructions on the road and we were through.

'The country on both sides of this road is heavily mined', said my guide.

'Even the verges?' I asked.

'Yes.'

It gave new meaning to DO NOT WALK ON THE GRASS.



Mine Warning Sign. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

'A couple of Russians lost control of their car near here in July went over the ditch, turned over in a field and blew up on an anti-tank mine; one dead, one badly injured, we had to get them out.'

It was therefore something of a relief to arrive at Vorovo on the outskirts of Vukovar, whose ruined state was only dimly perceptible in the light of a half moon.

At first it is very difficult to understand the way of life of this once beautiful stretch of land on the western banks of the Danube. It has no government, no law, no courts, great areas of the country are mined which must make agriculture difficult, there is almost no industry though surprisingly a blanket factory continues to operate in Vukovar and there is a brick factory in Dalj, so how can there be any commerce? Perhaps my Serb host Boris can provide the answer.

He has let his house to a member of the UN administration; he keeps half a dozen pigs and several chickens; he has apparently a share in some woodland to the north, which is not mined; he fishes in the Danube with the nets which are hung in the yard and disentangled after each operation. There is a stall which sells fish just down the road. His yard also has a tall wood and stone grain store at present full of maize and hanging baskets of walnuts.

We were treated next day to a better view of the countryside by a Major in the Russian battalion of the UN troops in the region and my first impression proved



Boris's yard at Dalj. Note the domestic essentials - part of Boris's still, visible at left of the picture. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

false; there are in fact wide strips of cultivated land, even large fields producing sugar beet, cabbages, maize etc but the places to avoid are areas that looks like they've been set-aside, and of course all abandoned buildings, which appear to be the majority, scrub and wood land; but in the zone of separation nowhere is safe except the road. It was to this eerie and abandoned area that he drove us in the afternoon to visit two checkpoints of his unit like the one we had driven through the previous night except that these were places from which the road did not continue. Here an armoured personnel carrier or two sat surrounded by sandbags next to the practical UN solution to accommodation: a row of white painted containers. In the desolate mid foreground stood a row of pylons draped in broken cables.

The Russians were cheerful and friendly and had previously invited us for a ride in a BTR-80 at their base; this eight-wheeled amphibious vehicle can carry ten men and travel at 110 KPH, this version had, I think, a 30mm cannon and a machine gun; there is an air drop model which our guide claimed could be dropped complete with driver! I would not have volunteered for this but we squashed into the normal version and drove round the base with the Major sitting on top shouting instructions through the hatch, an anxious sergeant sitting beside the driver doubtless with his hand on the brake. The gearbox was difficult to master. The Major had been in Afghanistan in such an APC when a wheel had been blown off by a mine; it had successfully withdrawn from the field. Incidentally, he said that if friendly Afghan forces ever tried to stop Russians on the road the latter would shout "**** off". This password had remained the same for three years.

That same evening we stopped for a drink in a partly inhabited village on the edge of no man's land, the zone of separation. A couple of grumpy girls served us beer and coffee in a dark room with a dance floor and strobe lights. One of our small party sought the loo and when she returned said *'Today I have for the first time in my life driven an APC, and visited a brothel'*.

We wondered where the customers came from and did not ask our Russian friend.

Our next foray, with another enterprising Scandinavian, was to the south via Vinkovci; the roads in Croatia were good again but on re-entering Eastern Slavonia we again saw roofless and abandoned houses with weed-choked gardens but occasionally some signs of occupation, then a roadblock manned by Americans of IFOR, which is not under UN command, who politely told us that we could not use their bridge across the Sava south of Zupanja; the original having a large gap in the middle. We therefore took the improvised ferry and found ourselves in another country - Bosnia. Here, after the long traffic jam for the ferry, stood numbers of people beside the muddy road holding up cartons of cigarettes and other oddments for sale. These poor people were Croats; leaving them we went back over the river.



Pictured is the Main Street of Vukovar with damaged and war-scarred buildings. Photo: Modzzak, Wikimedia, Released.

A few miles north of the town of Bosnaci we turned west along a newly reopened part of the Zagreb to Belgrade highway through thick woods before turning north again towards Orolic. We were now in an area almost totally abandoned by the original Croat population, one village had only one inhabited house, guarded by the Jordanian battalion of UNTAES, the soldiers sitting atop their APCs cradling their weapons beside their temporary quarters all decorated with a photo of a smiling King Hussain. They greeted us warmly and it would have been nice to stop for tea but we had no time.

The next feature was an oilfield, now out of production but about to be revived, and the double tracks of a main line railway on which you might have to wait a long time for a train. Finally we drove out again into no man's land past the last Jordanian post, into Vinkovci and back to Vukovar past a Russian checkpoint.

That night in a cafe in Dalj, an undamaged village north of Vukovar, we talked about the improving level of security with some UN observers and a Slovak engineer. About six months ago the hijacking of UN vehicles was not uncommon, now it was rare but if you had to drive at night you should drive fast and down the

middle of the road.

‘Who are these hijackers?’

Answer, ‘They are sitting all around us.’

The cafe was indeed full of leather-jacketed young men but another UN temporary inhabitant of the village protested that any trouble makers came from outside and only on weekends. In fact shots had been fired in another cafe that Friday night but into the ceiling.

Appropriately enough, the stated UN brief begins:

‘To bring the Region (Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium) demilitarised and secure, under the sovereign control of the Government of Croatia.’

Well, how is this going?

One of the observers replies;

‘There is a Kalashnikov in every house.’

And I know that my host has one, besides a few grenades and a pistol. However, the UN has a programme of buying in arms and destroying them and we only missed the weekly Slovak equivalent of Guy Fawkes afternoon because of bad weather.

The TV pictures of Vukovar did not lie. Approaching from the north we pass the street lamp where it all began when a number of Croat police were shot down attempting to remove a Serb flag, then we see cliff-like ruined apartment blocks -with the occasional stretch of washing on a balcony where some family holds out high in the air as if in a gull's nest, then the old centre of the town where if you were an architectural historian you would be interested to see fine 17th and 18th century buildings in section - blown in half, even a church tower with bells



*Pictured is a destroyed house at the railway crossing in the Djevtolivici oilfield area.
Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright*

precariouly hanging exposed to view. There is, they say, only 10% of this place left standing. Further on we find a cafe with a stupendous view up and down the wide empty brown Danube, not a vessel in sight and across to the dense autumn-tinted woods on the Serb side. This establishment is approached by a road marked by the tail fin of some unexploded projectile round which we drive cautiously.

Our last afternoon is spent fishing with the landlord; he takes his nets, outboard and pistol in his Lada down a track through woodland to another empty stretch of water where we set the nets from his punt on flimsy stakes, paddling about on the weed-ridden slow stream in the rain, collecting about four kilos of fish from yesterday's nets. He confidently predicts that tomorrow's catch will be much bigger.

The considerable UN presence in Eastern Slavonia, its second most expensive operation after Angola, is designed to assure Boris that it is safe for him to go on living in the village in which he was born, to cut wood to fish, to kill the fattest pig on his saint's day, to share his own slivovitz with his friends under the rule of people he does not trust. This is not surprising; when his telephone was reconnected to Croatia he began receiving death threats and a list was published alleging him to be a war criminal; he can point to the living people they claim he shot but says he will leave anyway. The UN's mission is therefore a daunting one but there is no alternative.

In a gesture of hope, a new onion-shaped spire was hoisted back above one of Vukovar's churches during our visit.



Pictured are the ruins of Castle Elitz Vukovar destroyed by Serbian attacks. Photo: Modzzak, Wikimedia, Released



Pictured is the monument to the Battle of Vukovar in Trpinja Street (known as the tank graveyard). Photo: Perun, Wikipedia, Released

Eastern Slavonia: A Balkan Success Story for the UN

This article by Tim Ripley, a research associate at Lancaster University's Centre for Defence and International Security Studies (CDISS) and a Territorial officer in the 4th Battalion, the King's Own Royal Border Regiment at the time of writing was originally published in BAR 117, December 1997. In the spring of that year, he was a civilian public affairs consultant to the United Nations Transitional Administrator Jacques Paul Klein in Eastern Slavonia.

In the tangled web of international efforts to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia the United Nations mission in Eastern Slavonia has a very low public profile. 'B (for Bosnia) comes before C (for Croatia)' is the comment of UN personnel in the region.

In the geopolitical jigsaw of the Balkans, Eastern Slavonia plays a vital role and the success of the mission there has had great impact on higher profile events in Bosnia. This article takes up from Anthony Wood's piece in April 1997 BAR describing the background to the mission and its progress to date. It will provide an interesting insight to British observers more used to Bosnia and perhaps identify some lessons for the future of international efforts in that wartorn country.

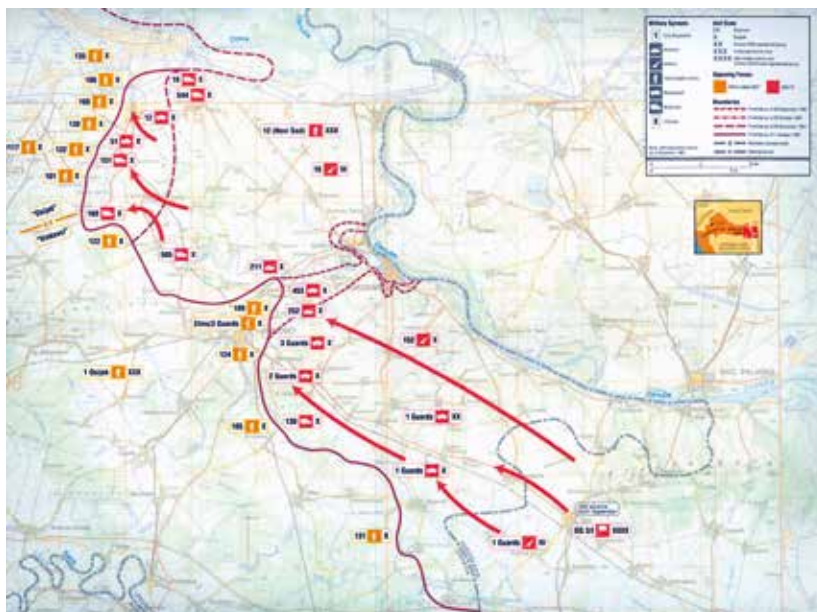
The most telling lesson has to be the pivotal role of Belgrade and Zagreb in ensuring peace in Eastern Slavonia. The Croat-Serb conflict was the cause of the wars of Yugoslav successions. The two major Balkan powers must be engaged if Bosnia's peace is to be lasting.

Key to Peace in the Balkans?

Situated astride the border of Croatia and Serbia, the Eastern Slavonia region is the key to a stable peace between the two largest and most powerful former Yugoslav republics. If their common border is not stable then peace will not take hold elsewhere in the wartorn former Yugoslavia. The successful demilitarisation of Eastern Slavonia also provides a bridge between Belgrade and Zagreb. In the autumn of 1996 this process bore fruit when Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) and Croatia established diplomatic ties and mutually recognised each other as fully sovereign and independent states.

Eastern Slavonia in 1991

Six years ago the situation was very different. In the spring of 1991 Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium had a population of some 190,000 people drawn from a variety of ethnic backgrounds - 45% Croats, 23% Serbs, and the remainder Yugoslavs, Hungarians, Czechs, Gypsies, Italians, Muslims, Ruthenians, Slovaks and Ukrainians. The Croat declaration of independence from the then Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the subsequent armed response by ethnic Serbs, turned the region into a bloody battlefield. Local Serb forces backed by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) seized control of the region. Croat forces held out in Vukovar for over 100 days before surrendering in November 1991 but the city was devastated in the battle. Few buildings were untouched by some of the worst fighting in Europe since World War Two. Neighbours fought neighbours in brutal ethnic warfare. An estimated 80,000 refugees fled into Croatia. Several thousand more ended up in Yugoslavia and Hungary. A tense military standoff then continued until 1995, with forces of



Map 1: Military operations in Eastern Slavonia, Croatia, September 1991 – January 1992. Image: CIA Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Backgrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* Volume 1, Wikipedia, Released

the locally recruited Serb forces, the so-called Army of Republic Serb Krajina (ARSK), occupying Eastern Slavonia and large Croatian forces massed across the frontline. Skirmishes and incidents between the two forces were a regular occurrence, in spite of the presence of some 1,600 United Nations peacekeeping troops in the region. From January 1992 the UN was limited to trying to find a diplomatic solution, while at the same time monitoring a ceasefire along the front line, or zone of separation, that neither side really wanted to keep.

1995 - The Defeat of the Krajina Serbs

In the spring of 1995 the previously static frontlines elsewhere in Croatia began to move. But this time the movement was not in favour of the nationalist Serbs, or Krajina Serbs as they were known, who occupied some 30 per cent of the land mass of the Republic of Croatia. The first area to fall to the reinvigorated Croatian military was Western Slavonia, termed by the UN as Sector West, after a three day offensive in May. Three months later they launched Operation STORM which comprehensively defeated the Krajina Serb forces in the UN Sector South and North. More than a hundred thousand Serbs fled into Bosnia and then into Yugoslavia. Eastern Slavonia looked like the next objective of the triumphant Croatian army.



This image shows damage to the Castle Eltz at Vukovar from the fighting. Photo: Modzzak, Wikipedia, Released

To head off an all-out Croatian offensive that might have sparked intervention by Federal Yugoslav military forces in neighbouring Serbia, the International Contact Group (France, Germany, Russia, United Kingdom and the United States) sponsored talks between the Croatian Government and the local Serb leadership in Eastern Slavonia. These came to fruition in November 1995 with the signing of the Basic Agreement in Erdut. This called for the UN to administer Eastern Slavonia while it was peacefully transferred to Croatian control over a period of up to two years. In the wake of the 21st November 1995 Dayton accords, which brought peace to neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1037 to formally establish the UN Transition Authority in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES) to implement the Basic Agreement.

When the new UN mission moved into the region it found a devastated landscape, populated by an estimated 150,000 people - 85 % Serbs, 8% Croats and including 60,000 Serb refugees from other parts of the former Yugoslavia - who somehow managed to eke out a life among the ruins of the Region's towns and villages. Beyond basic agriculture and exploiting the local oil fields there was little economic activity. Every able-bodied male over 18 years was serving in the ARKS forces. The Krajina Serb government was in a state of collapse after their flight from Knin the previous August. Years of bitter ethnic war had generated great hatred between Serbs and Croats.

Demilitarization

In January 1996 Eastern Slavonia was the base for between 8,000 and 12,000 armed Serb soldiers of the Army of the Republic Serb Krajina (ARSK), 11 Slavonia Baranja Coprs and a number of small nationalist Serb paramilitary militias. These included the notorious warlord Arkan and his Tiger militia, as well as two other groups called the Scorpions and the Jumping Snakes. Almost every able-bodied adult male was serving in some form of military or paramilitary group. Ill-discipline and drunkenness were rife. Civilians and UN personnel were often attacked and robbed as they went about their daily business.

One of UNTAES' first missions was to negotiate and then implement the demilitarization of Eastern Slavonia to restore respect for the UN and provide a secure environment for the return of normality and peace. Between January and May 1996 UNTAES, under then Force Commander Major General Jozef Schoups, of Belgium, began to build up its military forces from 1,600 lightly armed peacekeepers to 5,000 peace enforcers, backed by some 50 tanks, 204 armoured vehicles, 21 mortars, 12 artillery pieces, six assault and six transport helicopters and NATO air power.

Close links were established with NATO's Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Contingency plans were prepared for IFOR to come to the assistance of UNTAES in emergencies and these links were retained when IFOR handed over to its successor, the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) in December 1996. Liaison and communications links were opened with NATO's 5th Allied Tactical Air Force (5 ATAF) in Italy to ensure the quick provision of close air support for UNTAES in a crisis. UNTAES tactical air control parties conducted weekly training with NATO aircraft operating over Eastern Slavonia. In May the demilitarization process formally began with the majority of the ARSK's 120 tanks, 120 artillery pieces, 140 mortars and other heavy weapons being taken out of the region to Yugoslavia. The ARSK then disbanded itself and its former soldiers became civilians en masse.



*Jordanian M60 tanks spearheaded the operation to seize the Djeletovic oil fields from Serb paramilitaries.
Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright*

Demilitarization Completed

To the south of Vukvar Serb paramilitaries from the Scorpions were not as co-operative as the mainstream ARSK units and refused to participate in the demilitarisation process. On 14th May UNTAES troops, tanks and artillery from its Jordanian battalion backed by Ukrainian Mi-24 assault helicopters were deployed as a show of strength to force the Scorpions to leave their base at the Djeletovic oil fields.

UNTAES chief of staff Belgian Colonel Jean-Marie Jockin gave them an ultimatum. 'We would like to do this peacefully. It's up to you.' Within a short time the Scorpions were heading for the Yugoslav border in a fleet of 150 cars. Others fled into the countryside on foot. A month later Arkan's Tigers also vacated their base in Erdut for Yugoslavia.

By 21st June the process of demilitarization was formally declared over and UNTAES was the sole military force in the region. It was mandated to preserve the demilitarized status of the region and has acted to do this on a number of occasions, against both Serb and Croat infringements. Between 19th and 26th July 1996 a strong group of Croatian Special Policemen entered the demilitarized zone, which defines the area between Croatian government control and the area administered by UNTAES. Four of the policemen were detained and disarmed by Belgian Para-commandos. They were then returned to Croatian controlled territory.



*This image shows just some of the thousands of weapons handed in under the weapons buy-back programme.
Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright*

Weapon Buy-Back Programme

Although the demilitarization removed all the heavy weapons from the Region it did not deal with the large number of small arms held by almost every adult. To try to take as many arms out of circulation as possible, UNTAES began a weapons buy-back programme on 2nd October 1996. In return for cash payments funded by the Croatian government some 4,690 rifles, 4,620 disposable and 590 reusable rocket launchers, 11,760 grenades and 971,000 rounds of ammunition were handed into UNTAES collection points by 30th April 1997. UNTAES soldiers are authorised to disarm anyone openly carrying small arms and weapons, which have not been registered as hunting rifles with the local authorities.

Since May 1996 Eastern Slavonia has been transformed from an armed camp, organised for war, into a largely peaceful region. On 3rd December 1996, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman made his first visit to Vukovar since the country's independence in 1991. In the wake of the successful demilitarisation campaign UNTAES put increasing emphasis on its efforts to move along the political process to re-integrate Eastern Slavonia into the Republic of Croatia, this in the face of political and rhetorical opposition from nationalist groups on both sides of the old frontline.

New Politics of Eastern Slavonia

'Bringing People Together'

UNTAES had the unprecedented mission of peacefully bringing together a number of very distinct ethnic groups into a single democratic society. This was a far from easy task. Many local people had little understanding of democratic processes or the rule of law.

Others were unaware of Croatian legal and constitutional procedures. Others had swallowed years of war propaganda and could not bring themselves to have any contact whatsoever with what they saw as the 'enemy' state. This has seen UNTAES political, civil and public affairs components, alongside UNTAES military personnel and civilian police, guiding, assisting and educating Eastern Slavonia's population towards the goal of re-integration into the Republic of Croatia.

UNTAES efforts were aimed at enabling the local Serbs to take full advantage of the legal rights they would gain as Croatian citizens to enable them and their political leaders to play a full part in the country's political, administrative and social institutions. At every opportunity UNTAES stressed that only by early political and social engagement with Croatia would the people of Eastern Slavonia be able to preserve their distinct cultural and political identity. Participation in the political system would allow the local Serbs to retain control or influence in vital local and regional government bodies.

A major UNTAES initiative was the establishment of the Transitional Police Force (TPF), made up, at first, of some 1,200 Serb, 100 Croat and other ethnic groups, to police the region in an even-handed manner. The TPF operates under the oversight of the UNTAES Civilian Police component, who provide training and advice. They are helped by US-funded training programmes, allowing them to operate to international standards. Other UNTAES Civilian Police helped families trace missing relatives from the war and assist the Hague International War Crimes Tribunal investigate alleged war crimes, such as the Ovcar massacre. Along Eastern Slavonia's international borders, UNTAES border monitors helped the TPF and Transitional Border Control Force to operate customs and immigration procedures to recognised standards. Croatian local government officials were brought into Eastern Slavonia by UNTAES to help prepare for the smooth transition of town and county administration into the country's system of government.

School curricula and qualifications have been harmonised and multi-lingual certificates issued. The pension systems for old people and war widows has also been brought into line with those of Croatia, in a way that ensured the needy

continued to receive support. Postal, telecommunications, public utilities and banking regulations have also been prepared for re-integration.

Civil Affairs Focus

The recasting of Eastern Slavonia's local government and administration has had to go hand-in-hand with practical moves to remove the psychological barriers between people who had recently been waging ethnic warfare against each other. UNTAES has established an active public affairs component to get this message out to people who have previously been fed a daily diet of ethnic hatred and propaganda in most local newspapers, television and radio reports. UNTAES *Bulletin* is published bi-weekly, and the mission produces daily television and radio programmes for broadcast on its own transmitters.

From the start of the mission UNTAES has sought to break down the old frontlines to allow the people free movement. A weekly market was started in August 1996 on a road in the zone of separation near Osijek, where some 140,000 people from all over the former Yugoslavia have gathered to buy and sell goods or meet friends and relatives. When the telephone links to Croatia were switched back on, 20,000 people made calls in the first 48 hours. In the UNTAES sponsorship programme, more than 30,000 people have been able to make visits across the old frontline. A temporary postal system was set up so people could mail items to and from Eastern Slavonia. UNTAES has a programme of opening roads and bus routes for civilian traffic, including the main highway between Belgrade and Zagreb.



*Image shows Pakistani troops delivering humanitarian aid during a UNTAES 'social patrol'.
Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright*



Pictured is the Vukovar Water Tower destroyed during the conflict in Eastern Slavonia now part of Croatia. Photo: Pudelek, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license, Wikimedia

All these activities are closely controlled and monitored by UNTAES to ensure security.

Rebuilding Vukovar

Over four years of war have left terrible scars on the landscape of Eastern Slavonia. The city of Vukovar needs almost total rebuilding. Few dwellings or industrial premises in the city were untouched in the 1991 battle. Numerous villages in the surrounding countryside were also devastated in fighting or ethnic cleansing. UNTAES is heading efforts to physically reconstruct the Region and its economy. The two areas are closely linked, with economic activity still at low levels and something like 65% of the adult male population unemployed. Agriculture is the only industry that is operating at anything like pre-war levels.

Transitional Administrator Klein has co-sponsored two international donors conferences that have raised some \$70 million towards reconstruction of Eastern Slavonia's water supplies, telephone systems, electric power grid, agriculture, oil industry, residential accommodation, police stations, roads, sewage, ports and schools. Donors to date include the European Union and a number of nations including Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, United Kingdom and the United States. This work continues with conservative estimates suggesting some \$1 billion is needed for reconstruction and economic development.

De-mining

During the war some 800,000 mines were laid on the battlefields of Eastern Slavonia and up to 100,000 unexploded munitions litter its buildings, streets and fields. These pose a grave danger to the area's inhabitants, seriously inhibiting its economic regeneration and the safe return of displaced persons to their former homes in frontline areas. Civilians and livestock are constantly being injured by the residue of war. UNTAES has begun to co-ordinate a programme of de-mining in Eastern Slavonia, with its engineering experts helping to identify both side's minefields from old records, where they still exist. Local and Croatian mine clearing companies, often made up of former military engineers, have been contracted by international agencies and the Croatian Government to begin de-mining operations in a number of areas. This is highly labour intensive, time consuming and expensive work. It takes one de-miner a whole day to clear 30 square metres. To date around 400 to 600 de-mining personnel are working at any one time in Eastern Slavonia, clearing several thousand mines but conservative estimates expect the work to take up to ten years to complete. It could cost a great amount to fund this work fully, so UNTAES has worked hard to promote international support for de-mining and attracted funding for this vital work from the UNHCR and European Union.

Election Success

The spring of 1997 saw the culmination of the UNTAES civil affairs effort with the peaceful participation of Eastern Slavonia in Croatian local and parliamentary elections. In the run up to the elections UNTAES ran a major campaign to issue Croatian identity documents and register voters.

By the eve of the 13/14th May elections some 102,000 of Eastern Slavonia's 150,000 local Serb population had applied for and received their new identity papers. More than 80 percent of them then voted in the elections.

This opened the way for the gradual re-integration of Eastern Slavonia into Croatia. The newly elected local administration have taken up their posts and during the second half of 1997, UNTAES plans to gradually hand over its authority to the Croatian government ready for the full handover in January 1998. Perhaps of greater significance was the fact that the Serb population has so far stayed put and not fled across the Danube in to Serbia. This is attributed to a mixture of factors. UNTAES civil affairs and diplomatic efforts played a major part but the local Serb population had gradually come to realise that it had few options. Escape to Serbia offered little apart from sharing the destitution of other Serb refugees from the Krajina in squalid camps around Belgrade.



UNTAES Transitional Administrator Jacques Paul Klein successfully led the mission from January 1996. Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic looks down from the wall. Photo: Original Image, Crown Copyright

Why Successful?

Given the lamentable record of previous UN missions in the former Yugoslavia the progress achieved in Eastern Slavonia has been something of a surprise. The following factors have been at play.

- *Support of Belgrade and Zagreb: The close involvement of Croatia's President Franjo Tudjman and Serbia's President Milosevic in the UNTAES process has been fundamental to its success. Whenever hardliners from both Croat and Serb sides, have threatened to derail the re-integration process the two Balkan strongmen have intervened to get things back on track. Prior to the April 1997 elections, Milosevic for example called all the local Serb leaders to a meeting on the Yugoslav side of the Danube to order them to participate in the Croat political system. In the first months of the mission he was instrumental in ordering Yugoslav Army officers serving in the ARSK to return home, effectively abandoning the locally recruited Serb soldiers without leadership, heavy weapons, air defence or logistic support. The ARSK ceased to exist without support from across the Danube. The Serb para-militaries left soon afterwards.*
- *US Diplomatic Support: The Clinton administration took a close interest in the fate of the region and at key moments used its leverage with the Croatian Government to ensure they stick to their side of the Basic Agreement and the UNTAES mandate. The US Ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, was instrumental in preventing the Croats from invading the Region in late 1995.*

The UNTAES mission has also not been dogged by the political divisions that have plagued the international community's efforts in Bosnia.

- *Leadership: UNTAES has had perhaps the strongest leadership team of any of the UN missions in the former Yugoslavia. It is headed by Ambassador Jacques Paul Klein, a CS career diplomat and USAF Reserve Major General. The military contingent has been led by two experienced and tough Belgian generals, Jozef Schoups and Willy Hanset. Schoups is tipped to be commander of the Euro Corps if it deploys to Bosnia in 1998 to take over from NATO's Stabilisation Force. A number of UN diplomats and political officers with years of experience working in the former Yugoslavia, such as Ambassador Klein's deputy Derek Boothby, have provided the UNTAES leadership with a 'real depth of experience'.*
- *Robust Mandate: The UNTAES mandate has been robust from the outset, including some provision for Chapter VII or peace enforcing activities. It also arrived in-theatre equipped with main battle tanks, self-propelled artillery and helicopter gunships. NATO close air support has also been available. The high profile presence of so much military hardware has proved very intimidating and ensured that UN personnel are not subject to low-level harassment, hijackings or kidnappings.*



A group of high school students visits the Vukovar war memorial dedicated to the patients in Vukovar hospital which were evacuated by the JNA army, brought to and executed in Ovčara on 20 November 1991. It's interesting to point out that the memorial is located in the actual hospital where the incident occurred. The hospital is still working today and secured that location exclusively for the memorial, including puppets which represent patients in 1991. The crater on the ceiling, where a JNA shell fell but miraculously did not explode, was left unrepaired to show what damage was done. Photo: Seiya 123, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license, Wikipedia

- *Civil Affairs/Public Affairs Expertise: Fundamental to the success of the UNTAES has been its strong emphasis on civil affairs activities to ensure the local population knew about the aims and objectives of the mission. Civil affairs and public affairs teams were posted throughout the mission area to explain to the population the legal and technical requirements for applying for Croatian citizenship, identity documents and voter registration. UNTAES set up document centres in every town and village, where Croatian government officials processed applications and issued papers. Civil affairs staff were on hand throughout this process to ensure it was carried out fairly and to answer questions of a population that had little knowledge or experience of the democratic process.*

Future Challenges

Much has been achieved in Eastern Slavonia over the past 18 months but the re-integration process is far from complete. There are some areas of concern which could endanger the progress, after the re-establishment of Croatian administration in July.

- **Refugee Return:** *This is potentially the most destabilising issue facing Eastern Slavonia. Many of the 80,000 Croats who were 'ethnically cleansed' in 1991/92 were very keen to return to the region and re-claim their old property. However many of the old Croat houses and flats that were not destroyed in the war have been occupied by Serb refugees, who have nowhere else to go but displaced persons camps in Yugoslavia. The brutal way the Croats were expelled from their homes by the Serbs also means there may be some settling of old scores. Most Croat and Serb civilians have access to small arms and automatic weapons, so there is the potential for violent confrontations that may escalate. UNTAES and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is currently working out a programme with the Croat Government to ensure refugee return is conducted in an orderly and planned manner.*
- **Human Rights Abuse:** *The Croatian armed forces and police were judged by many international organisations, including the UN and a number of human rights groups to have committed widespread abuse of human rights in their occupation of the Krajina in 1995. Serb civilians were assaulted, property destroyed and many deaths occurred far from the frontlines. Croat hardline nationalists have made public statements calling for 'ethnic purity'. This has led to concern for the behaviour of Croatian security forces in the aftermath of their assuming control of Eastern Slavonia. To reassure the Serbs, some UNTAES troops remained until January 1998 and then an Organisation*

for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) monitoring mission was established. UNTAES is also looking to secure agreement to maintain Eastern Slavonia's demilitarized status.

The Future

In the coming months the future of Eastern Slavonia will be largely determined by the success or failure of the refugee return programme. If UNTAES, the UNHCR and the Croat Government can get a refugee return programme up and running that peacefully brings the former residents of Eastern Slavonia back to their old homes, then the peace will be secure. A breakdown of the refugee return process could lead to violence and a huge exodus of Serbs into Yugoslavia. It would also mean there was no hope for the breaking down of the old frontlines and ethnic state structure in Bosnia.

The future of the former Yugoslavia depends on how returning Croat families react to meeting their old neighbours in the ruins of Vukovar.

THE UNTAES MANDATE

The mission of UNTAES is the peaceful reintegration of the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium into the Republic of Croatia.

Its objectives are:

- *To Bring the Region, demilitarised and secure under the sovereign control of the Government of Croatia.*
- *To retain the multi-ethnic character of the Region.*
- *To promote an atmosphere of confidence among all local residents irrespective of their ethnic origin.*
- *To enable all refugees and displaced persons to enjoy the right of return freely to their homes and to live there in conditions of security.*
- *To promote respect for the highest standards of human rights and fundamental freedoms.*
- *To promote redevelopment and reconstruction of the Region in harmony with the overall plans of the Republic of Croatia.*
- *To organise free and fair local elections not later than 30 days before the end of the transitional period.*

The UNTAES Military Component March 1997

- *Force Headquarters: Belgian HQ Company and Defence Platoon (Para-commandos)*
- *Belgian Battalion (Belbat) - 44 M113/AIFV armoured personnel carriers, 21 Scimitar recce tanks*



Slovenian forces hit tank near international border crossing Rožna Dolina. Photo: Peter Božič, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported license, Wikipedia.

- *Argentine Reconnaissance Company* - 6 M113 armoured personnel carriers, 6 SK105 light tanks
- *Pakistani Battalion (Pakbat)* - 14 T95 tanks, 34 M113 armoured personnel carriers, 6 130mm howitzers
- *Russian Battalion (Russbat)* - 63 BTR-80 armoured personnel carriers
- *Jordanian Battalion (Jorbat)* - 14 M60A3 tanks, 39 M113 armoured personnel carriers, 6 M109 155mm self propelled howitzers
- *Polish Special Police Group*
- *Indonesian Medical Company*
- *Ukrainian Light Infantry Company*
- *Czech Field Surgical Team*
- *Slovakian Engineer Battalion (Slovengbat)*
- *Ukrainian Helicopter Squadron (UkrHeliSqn)* - 6 MilMi-24 assault helicopter, 6 Mil Mi-8 transport helicopter
- *UN Military Observers (UNMOs)*
- *Nationalities* - Argentina, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Czech Republic, Egypt, Finland, Ghana, Indonesia, Ireland, Jordan, Kenya, Nepal, New Zealand, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine.
- *Total Military personnel: 4880 (including 100 UNMO)*
- *UN Civil Police: 402*
- *UN Civilians: 455*
- *Local Employees: 715*

Note: A handful of British officers have served in UNTAES as UNMOs and air liaison officers.



Warrior FV510 dug in along the Bosnia Herzegovina/Bosnian Serb Army frontline, North East of Visoko. Dug in by Private McNeal and Robert Buckman from 'C' (Northamptonshire) company, 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment © Crown copyright. IWM (UKLF-1994-004-2-14)

Implications for Just War Theory of the International Intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina

This article by Reverend Roy A Hemmings CF, was originally published in BAR 119, August 1998.

Just war theory is often questioned, and occasionally amended. The two world wars of this century had their influence upon it, and for many people the development of the atomic and hydrogen bombs seemed to have rendered it almost irrelevant. The end of the Cold War has eased tensions. Simultaneously a number of local ethnic wars have drawn the international community into direct intervention.

By examining the history of the Bosnian Conflict, the various aspects of just war theory, the attitudes and behaviour of the warring factions, and the international community's attitude to such conflicts and criticisms of it, I hope to assess the current standing of 'just war' and its relevance for the future.

Mention the Balkans to almost anyone you meet and the chances are they will recall that in June 1914 Archduke Francis Ferdinand, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated in Sarajevo by a Serb nationalist, an act that precipitated World War I. This snippet of common knowledge reveals three important points about the peninsula: its history has been plagued by foreign imperial involvement, nationalist feelings have nevertheless always run high, and resort to violence has never been far beneath the surface. Add to this the disintegration of Russia's Central European Empire in 1990, the death of Tito in 1980, and UN/NATO peacekeeping / enforcement operations in Bosnia Herzegovina since February 1992, and we have a cocktail of complex history, violence and international mediation in which we can usefully examine just war theory today. First an examination of the history of the Balkan Conflict is essential, not because history justifies war, but it is in history that lessons are learned upon which our moral reflection stimulates the creation of laws of warfare, and specifically the attitudes of the warring factions in Bosnia have been shaped by their historical perspectives.

History

When the Romans occupied Bosnia-Herzegovina in the first century BC they named the province Illiricum (after Illyria its ancient name). Diocletian, whose palace in Split is now by an ironic twist of history the cathedral of St Dujice, had separated the empire into four kingdoms, an arrangement not favoured by Constantine. Born in Nis in Illyria, Constantine moved his capital from Rome to Byzantium, a well-defended city on the Bosphorus in 330AD. Although Constantine by defeating Maxentius at Milvian Bridge took Rome, unified the Empire and ended persecution of Christians by converting, he nevertheless set the precedent of an empire divided between east and west. Byzantium (Constantinople) was to be a bastion against the Arabic/Islamic world for 1,000

years, long after the Western Roman Empire had crumbled. Looking eastwards it was to adopt Greek, the Cyrillic alphabet, and become a centre for Eastern Orthodoxy after the east/west split of 1054. Today this legacy still exists as the great ethnic divide between the Eastern Orthodox, Cyrillic script-using Serbs and the Roman Catholic, Latin script-using Croats.¹

The situation is further complicated by the existence of a third ethnic group: the Muslims. Not given ethnic status under former Yugoslavia until 1963, they have a history dating from the mid-fifteenth century. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, Goths and Slavs invaded until in the twelfth century Bosnia became a banal of Hungary. Briefly in the late fourteenth century Stephen Tvtko proclaimed an independent kingdom of 'Serbia and Bosnia'. By 1463 the Turks had conquered Bosnia, and Herzegovina fell in 1483.² Despite nineteenth century uprisings Bosnia/Herzegovina remained part of the Turkish Ottoman Empire for the next 400 years, and today's Muslims are descendants of converts to Islam during that time. The decline of the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century created unrest amongst the ethnic groups and the general disorder which led to the growing 'Eastern Question' in European politics.

Following the Serb/Russian victory over the Turks in the Balkans, the Congress of Berlin in 1878 gave the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and despite recognising Serbian independence it in effect gave the Austro Hungarian Empire control. When Austria annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908 Serb nationalism was affronted, and Serb influence increased in the Balkans after the 1912-13 wars. The scene was set for Gavrilo Princip, a Bosnian Serb, to fire his fateful shot, and send Europe into total war. During the war Serbs, Croats and Muslims co-operated in the hope of independence, and on 1 December 1918, with the overthrow of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, Bosnia-Herzegovina became part of the independent Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, under the Serbian monarchy of King Alexander (1921-34). When Croat-Serb tensions ran high in 1929 he increased his hold upon it and renamed it Yugoslavia (land of the South Slavs).³

During World War II Italy formed a pro-fascist puppet state encompassing much of Croatia and Bosnia, controlled by the Ustasa. Partisans, under Josip Broz Tito, a Croatian Communist, and General Draza Mihajlovic the Serbian Royalist leader of the Chetniks, resisted the Fascists. In 1944 Tito's Council for National Liberation merged with the Royal Yugoslav Government. After the war Tito took control, the monarchy was abolished, King Peter remained in exile, and the moderate political parties boycotted the November 1945 elections, from which their candidates had

1 Chadwick, *The Early Church*

2 Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*

3 *History of the Balkans, Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia*



Members of B Squadron The Light Dragoons line the road to Krupa in Bosnian Serb territory south of Banja Luka in their Scimitar Recce vehicles prior to moving into the town. Photo: Corporal Darren Cooper, Crown Copyright

been prohibited. From 1945 to his death in 1980 Tito ran a communist state which nevertheless had strong economic ties with the west, and retained a militarily non-aligned position. Bosnia became one of the six constituent republics, despite Serb insistence that it should be only a province like Vojvodina and Kosovo.⁴ To succeed him, Tito set up a collective presidency of seven. After his death ethnic tensions rose, and when in 1990 the Communist party relinquished power it was replaced by a panoply of factional parties. Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence in June 1991. The Serbs declared themselves loyal to a unified Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, and established Serbian Autonomous Regions (SARs) throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bosnian Serbs held a referendum and voted to remain in Yugoslavia, and in March 1992 a referendum of all inhabitants (boycotted by Bosnian Serbs) voted to secede. Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence, recognised in April by the US and in May by the UN. By then Serb and Montenegrin forces calling themselves the FRY had taken more than two-thirds of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and by July Croats had formed a Union of Herzeg-Bosnia in the south thereby destroying the Croat/Muslim alliance (reinstated in 1994 as a Federation). EC and UN mediators were convinced that their March 1992 proposal of three autonomous units could alone resolve the situation, a proposal rejected by

4 *Ibid*

all the factions.⁵ The stage was set for the conflict and ethnic cleansing, images of which (shelled villages, refugee columns, accusations of mass murder) so close to home shocked the West into action. It is time to consider the conflict in terms of just war from two perspectives: the warring factions, and the international parties to intervention. First, a brief reminder of the 'just war' theory itself.

The Just War Tradition

The difficult decision for the Christian concerning war is not at issue in this analysis. Many would take a strong pacifist line, but the large majority would take the post-Constantine view that in a less than perfect world, whilst peace is the ultimate goal, wars do happen and therefore the Christian has to examine conflict and the waging of war in relation to Christian moral thinking for the sake of all those embroiled in it. From Augustine in the fourth century to Aquinas in the thirteenth and beyond to the present, Christian moral thinkers have taken part in the development of just war theory, which is more an evolving tradition than a set of definitive principles. Its secular development is reflected in international law, and it informs public debates about the rights and wrongs of war. It is used to legitimise the use of force (e.g. the obtaining of UN Security Council agreement) and to criticise it, but it should not be a mere consequentialist look at conflict with justification of action as its goal: a criticism levelled at it by both pacifist and jihad (holy war) traditions.

The just war tradition looks at two fundamental questions: when is it right to go to war? (*jus ad bellum*), and once at war how is it to be fought? (*jus in bello*). *Jus ad bellum* lays down seven conditions which must be satisfied if a decision to go to war is to be considered 'just':

1. *The war must have a 'just cause', which raises the question: if a cause is just is war not only permissible but obligatory.*
2. *There must also be 'right intention' no hiding ulterior motives behind a just cause.*
3. *The decision to go to war must be made by a 'legitimate authority' representing the community. Since the development of nation states this authority has been taken to mean 'the state'. Modern wars of liberation however are beginning to test this assumption, especially where the rights of ethnic minorities are gaining international support. Furthermore the developed*

5 Glenn, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*. Misha Glenn undoubtedly felt great sympathy for the Muslims whom he felt were the chief victims of the conflict which filled our TV screens and media in general from 1992 to 1994. I am not convinced by the Croat/Muslim Federation re-established in 1994 by the Dayton Accord, but nor am I convinced that a Muslim State in the midst of Bosnia could remain independent or peaceful.

nations are beginning to make more collective decisions on the basis of UN Security Council resolutions on the protection of minorities and the desire for peaceful settlements of disputes.

4. *There must be a 'formal declaration of war'. Again the changing nature of conflict is making this less likely.⁶*
5. *There must be a 'reasonable hope of success', without which the evils that war will inevitably involve cannot be unleashed.*
6. *War must be a 'last resort' following all possible efforts to achieve the desired aim peacefully.*
7. *The decision to go to war must satisfy the requirements of 'proportionality' the good being achieved outweighing the harm produced.⁷*

Despite satisfying the conditions of *jus ad bellum* a party might wage war unjustly, the doctrine of *jus in bello* governs the just conduct of war, two traditional conditions of which are:

1. *Non-combatant immunity: it is no surprise that in the twentieth century this has proved the most difficult condition to obey.⁸*
2. *The requirement of proportionality, applied this time to means rather than to ends. The means of war must not cause so much harm and destruction that it outweighs the good to be achieved.*

Certain conditions have been emphasised in recent history: just cause in *jus ad bellum*, and non-combatant immunity in *jus in bello*. Furthermore the desire for peace has led to a focusing on 'defence against aggression' as the only justification for war.⁹

These points will now be considered in relation to the Bosnian Conflict warring factions.

6 Holmes, *On War and Morality*, Holmes links declaration of war and legitimate authority (conditions 3 & 4). He quotes the U.S. National Conference of Catholic Bishops in adding their own seventh condition: 'Comparative Justice' recognising that some justice may exist on both sides, therefore every party to a conflict should acknowledge the limits to its own just cause, and consequently limit the means it uses to pursue its objective.

7 Norman, *Ethics, Killing and War*, and Lackey, *The Ethics of War and Peace*, both agree on the above seven conditions.

8 Lackey has pointed out that this implies combatant non-immunity, restricted by the Geneva Conventions on care of genuine prisoners of war and the wounded. Both he and Holmes refer to it by the commonly used term: 'discrimination'.

9 Johnson, *Can Modern War Be Just?*, and William V. O'Brien, *The Future of the Nuclear Debate*, argue the relevance of just war theory in limited nuclear war.



A Muslim civilian displays a sniper's rifle with home made silencer near Gornji Vakuf, Bosnia
 © Crown copyright. IWM (BOS 69)

The Claims of the Warring Factions

The problem with Walzer's 'resistance to aggression only' argument is that in conflicts such as Bosnia the beginnings are fragmentary and often localised acts of aggression by both sides (eg Vukovar and Knin where violence flared at vehicle control points run by Croat and Serb militia/ police respectively), rendering the apportionment of blame virtually impossible. Such a Solomon-like task I suspect will defeat historians. Instead of embarking upon it, I intend to relate various aspects of just war theory to the claims and conduct of those involved in the war.

When in June 1991 Slovenia became the first republic of the Yugoslav Federation to declare itself independent there followed a short war. This raised the question of sovereignty and of the right of a state to defend itself against an act of aggression. The UN Charter of 1945 sought to prohibit first use of force or the threat to do so 'against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state'.¹⁰ 'Nothing in the present Charter shall impair the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs against a member of the United Nations, until the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.'¹¹ The problem remained that rights of collective self-defence against aggression were afforded to nation states rather than to peoples. The General Assembly in December 1974 adopted a definition of the concept of aggression, in which it counted as aggression only military

¹⁰ *United Nations Charter, Article 2 (4), 1945*

¹¹ *United Nations Charter, Article 51, 1945*

acts that might substantially affect the physical security of the nation suffering aggression. Two clauses of the General Assembly definition are pertinent:

*No consideration of whatever nature, whether political or economic, military or otherwise may serve as a justification for aggression.*¹²

*Nothing in this definition ... could in anyway prejudice the right to self-determination, freedom and independence, as derived from the Charter, of peoples forcibly deprived of that right... particularly peoples under colonial or racist regimes or other forms of alien domination; nor the right of these peoples to struggle to that end to seek and receive support...*¹³



An AS90 of 1 RHQ moves to another firing position near Sanski Most, Bosnia. Photo: Captain Jim Gallagher, Crown Copyright

12 General Assembly Definition of Aggression, United Nations, Article 5, 1974

13 General Assembly Definition of Aggression, United Nations, Article 7, 1974

As Lackey pointed out, this modern trend has sought to limit just cause to primary wrongs: 'the only violation of rights that merits the unilateral use of force by nations is the physically threatening use of force by another state'.¹⁴

Yet most armed conflict today arises within states, not between them.

The Slovenian declaration of independence met with only little resistance from the old guard of the Yugoslav People's Army. Had they, as the lawful army of the Federal Government, the right to prevent Slovenia's secession by force? If they had done more to do so would Slovenia have had the right to defend its newly acquired sovereignty? Ironically in 1991 the US and Europe would have settled for the status quo, and if action had been taken early to maintain the federal state many lives might have been saved in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Armed intervention in Slovenia could have been seen as having just cause: a legitimate national government, with a reasonable hope of success, causing minimal harm to civilians, as a last resort using force to protect the state and establish a just peace as the nation is threatened from within.

Hindsight provides an impotent wisdom, but given later events in Bosnia-Herzegovina a short 'just war' at the beginning may have led to a just peace. In the post-Tito, post-Russian Empire Yugoslavia, the political will did not exist. As Misha Glenny has pointed out, the nationalist politicians (Franjo Tudjman in Croatia, Slobadan Milosevic in Serbia) had other objectives: the independence of Croatia, and the creation of Greater Serbia. Thus, Serb expansion into Croatian territory where Serbs were in the majority formed the springboard for the Serb-Croat war.¹⁵ Tudjman was not totally innocent in the prelude to war. He provoked Serbs living in Croatia by imposing Croat symbols, alphabet and government structures upon them, and by refusing to distance himself publicly from the Ustasha 'Independent State of Croatia' he was seen by Krajina Serbs as a fascist leader.¹⁶ The Serb-Croat war inevitably spilt into Bosnia Herzegovina especially where territory was in dispute. The conflict represents an attempt by Serbs and Croats to establish their own nation states on the grave of the old federal state, and to define their mutual

14 Lackey, *The Ethics of War and Peace*, p 35

15 *Historically the Krajina (border areas) had been inhabited by Serbs, though administered as the Croat part of the old Federal Republic. The two principal areas being NE Croatia known as Slavonia with its principal border town of Vukovar where some of the first murders of the conflict began between armed Croat and Serb Police/Militia, and SE Croatia (Dahnacia) where similar early violence erupted at Knin. Later violence in the Dalmatian Krajina was centred upon Bihac where the rebel Muslim leader Milan Babic aligned himself with the Serbs, see Glenny, op cit.*

16 *Serb memories of Croatian Fascist (ustasha) atrocities in the region during World War II have ensured that a deep aversion to the idea of Croat statehood has remained amongst the Serbs. Nationalism utilising strong religious feeling has played a sad part in the recent conflict.*

borders by force. Given the failure of the old Federal republic to maintain itself self-determination may have been considered a just cause. Three factors, however, unite to dispute such a simplistic, though with historical hindsight, effective view.

Bosnia-Herzegovina has a third 'nation' in its midst. The Moslems were granted ethnic status by Tito in 1963, but have never been regarded by their Croat or Serb neighbours as anything other than apostate Catholics or Orthodox Christians.¹⁷ There has, at times, been a partnership between Bosnian Croats and Moslems in the face of Serb hostilities, and since 1994 as part of the Bosnian Croat/Moslem Federation brokered by Cyrus Vance (US negotiator). This alliance is tenuous and historical sympathies between Serb and Croat to rid the area of the 'Turkish Problem' has a serious implied hidden agenda. The 1995 Dayton Accord recognises two entities in a united Bosnia: Republica Serbska and the Bosnian Herzegovinan Federation, separated by an inter-entity boundary. It has protected the Moslems by arming and training them, with a view to protecting their religious freedom without recourse to a Moslem minstate in Europe.

Furthermore the distribution of ethnic populations was extremely complex. The failure of the earlier Vance-Owen plan lay in the complicated patchwork map which left ethnic groups separated from their partners. At the height of the conflict in the early phase of Serb expansion there existed United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs) of Serbs in the Krajinas, Croats and Moslems in Sarajevo and Gorazde, and Moslems in Srebrenica and Zepa. The great embarrassment of the ethnic cleansing of Srebrenica by the Serbs, and the disappearance of 8000 Moslem men and boys down to the age of 12, along with the mortar attack on civilians in the Sarajevo market place so shamed the UN that the very nature of international intervention changed, a point to which I shall return. When the Croat/Moslem Federation counterattacked and swept the Serbs out of the Krajinas where they had lived for over 200 years ethnic-cleansing reached its logical conclusion as 200,000 Serb refugees fled to Serbia. The conflict has been marked by accusations of atrocities and war-crimes,¹⁸ and that ethnic cleansing both locally and en masse has taken place is indisputable; giving to Europe a phrase which has shamed its civilised self-image. In addition, the theft of civil property, the wanton destruction of towns including people's homes and the targeting of civilians including old men, women and children, have been witnessed by many

17 There is some historical validity in this view. The Ottoman Empire permitted freedom of religion but only on payment of a tax. As elsewhere when this taxation has been imposed the wealthy chose to pay, but the poor peasant farmers of the mountainous Bosnian hinterland 'converted' rather than pay. Their descendants form the present Moslem minority, who nevertheless feel that their religious faith is worth fighting for.

18 Such is the history of atrocities in this area that the truth is difficult to know, and word of mouth is not totally to be trusted.

and recorded on news cameramen's film. Any attempt to justify the conflict from the *jus ad bellum* stand point (the fixing of national boundaries¹⁹ based on the self-determination of freed peoples) is itself flawed by the possibility of peaceful co-existence within the old federation boundaries. The abuses of the *jus in bello* precepts render the conflict outside the bounds of just-war.

The Hopes and Criticism of the International Parties to Intervention

The swift recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by European powers led by German enthusiasm contributed to the break-up of the FRY. It also sealed the fate of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which only swift action from outside would have saved from war. Many observers are highly critical of the limitations and aims of the international community's policy of intervention. Bryant and Loza have led the criticism from a Bosnian government perspective. First there was a general



A Spartan Combat Vehicle Reconnaissance (Tracked) goes down the ramp of the first aircraft, a C-130 Hercules from the Royal Air Forces 47 Squadron based at Lynham, into the arms of the waiting press at Banja Luka, Bosnia. Photo Sergeant Dave Whitley, MPC/LAND, Crown Copyright

19 In his biography Lord Owen relates that early in the conflict when he and Cyrus Vance were seeking a peace formula, Franjo Tudjman swept a hand across Bosnia-Herzegovina and said that that would be the Croat/Serb boundary. Almost exactly the same line is today's IEB.

belief amongst the Bosnians that they had a moral case for independence and could maintain their multi-ethnicity, secondly, and naively, they believed that internationalisation of the crisis would deter Serb and Croat ambitions to carve up Bosnia Herzegovina.²⁰ The Bosnians were aware that they had always been a distinct and autonomous entity within a wider structure, never a fully independent state, and that they needed international support to give them guarantees of security. In August 1991 Ejup Ganic, a member of the Bosnian Presidency, met Herbert Okun, UN representative and Cyrus Vance's deputy, and requested 2,000 UN troops to be deployed in potential hot spots, and raised the same point again when the Bosnian leadership met Vance's team. The request was denied, yet Bosnian hopes were raised when, following the acceptance of the Vance plan for Croatia, UNPROFOR headquarters moved to Sarajevo.²¹ Yet the record of the UN protection force proved poor, and in the eyes of the Bosnians they offered 'neither protection nor force' and became a 'fourth warring faction'.

The initial response of the UN was to assist the provision of aid to civilians but it soon became drawn into the politics of the conflict. UN Under-Secretary Marrack Goulding and President Izetbegovic were very close to sniper fire on a visit to Sarajevo on 6 May 1992. UNPROFOR commander, Canadian Major-General Mackenzie, suggested that it was an orchestrated show for the media, intended to 'put the Serbs in a bad light'. The same interpretation was put upon the artillery shell which killed 20 Sarajevans on May 27th who were queuing for bread. The Bosnian government accused MacKenzie of feeding pro-Serb interpretations to the media. He pointed out that:

*'...Presidency claims that it was a Serb attack, Serbs claim it was a set-up using explosives. Our people tell us there were a number of things that didn't fit. The street had been blocked off just before the incident. Once the crowd was let in and had lined up, the media appeared but kept their distance. The attack took place and the media were immediately on the scene. The majority of people killed are alleged to be "tame Serbs". Who knows?...'*²²

20 Bryant and Loza, 'Expectations and Realities'

21 According to Ganic, one of Vance's colleagues explained why: there should first be a war, and then a cease-fire, and then peacekeepers might be deployed. Ambassador Okun, though, said that the main reason Ganic's request was denied was that the UN did not believe that 2000 peacekeepers could prevent a war. Bryant and Loza, *op cit*.

22 MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper, The Road to Sarajevo*. On 21 July 1992, General MacKenzie, when asked why it was impossible to arrange a cease-fire that would hold, replied: 'Because I can't keep the two sides from firing on their own positions for the benefit of CNN'. Within days he was recalled, however his remark shows a degree of exasperation rather than connivance with one side.



*A Royal Air Force Harrier GR7 takes off from Italian air base Gioia Del Colle to support SFOR.
Photo: Corporal John Cassidy, RAF PR, Crown Copyright*

The problem was that whilst the Bosnian government expected peace to be enforced, the UN mandate (Security Council Resolution 770) called only for the member states to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. When in September 1992 Resolution 776 permitted the use of force, the Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, limited it to 'traditional' peacekeeping rules of engagement, which meant in self-defence only. Bryant and Loza saw this as a means of preventing effective military action by member states whilst providing them with the opportunity to restrict their responsibility to the over-stretched and under-equipped peacekeepers. Ian Guest saw it as a reluctance on the part of the US to become involved in a 'European problem'.²³ I am inclined to the view that intervention was necessarily seen as the minimum required to protect civilians, provide aid and limit the number of refugees leaving for other European countries. The internal refugee problem became so acute in Srebrenica (60,000) that, following the visit of General Morillon, the Security Council Resolution 819 was adopted on 16 April 1993 making the town a 'safe area'. The subsequent addition of Zepa, Gorazde, Tuzla, Bihac and Sarajevo as 'safe areas' represented a significant increase in the UN mandate. Bryant and Loza place the blame for failure upon the military and UN General Secretary, claiming that General

²³ Guest, *On Trial: Peacekeeping and War Crimes*

Rose and Mr Akashi constantly sought short term, local concessions, from the Bosnians within the safe areas which deferred NATO air strikes, and enabled the Serbs to maintain their grip on the enclaves (except Bihac). In their defence they had been denied the resources to implement the safe area policy when of 34,000 peacekeeping troops requested by Secretary General Boutros-Ghali only 7,600 were provided.

The 'preventive protection' policy of the UNHCR was announced as early as 1992 by the UN's High Commissioner for Refugees, Sadaka Ogata, who defined it as 'activities to attenuate the causes of departure and to reduce or contain cross-border movements or internal displacements'. She emphasised that it was not intended as a substitute for asylum. UNHCR and ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) lacked the ability to prevent atrocities especially in the Serb-held areas where UNPROFOR could not operate and they alone bore the burden. Diane Paul has criticised the UNHCR for failing to evacuate the safe areas in time.²⁴ The atrocities of Srebrenica (and similar at Zepa on a smaller scale) finally shocked NATO and especially the US into action.²⁵ In a very balanced article Diane Paul also criticises Croat actions when recapturing Western Slavonia and the Krajina.²⁶

Of grave concern has been the war crimes element of the conflict. Roy Gutman has suggested that UN troops have to stand by and witness war crimes because of the impartial and non-combatant status of peacekeepers. With the increasing drift from peacekeeping to enforcement he argues that UN troops themselves should be bound by the Geneva Convention 1949. At present member states are so bound but their troops when operating for the UN are not; mandated only to protect aid workers and not local non-combatant victims.²⁷ Under criticism from the ICRC, the UN is drafting a new code of conduct for its peacekeepers, though some like Peter Kung, ICRC Chief Delegate to the UN, would like to see the UN ratifying the Conventions and having therefore the same duty to implement humanitarian law as other states. The first UN Rapporteur for Human Rights in former Yugoslavia,

24 'UNHCR and the ICRC had recognised as early as the summer of 1994 that mass evacuations might be necessary, but contingency plans were never developed for events such as the closing of escape routes or new roundups of minorities, even though they were predictable.' Paul, *The Price of Peace*.

25 Bert Kreemers, a spokesman for the Ministry of Defence in the Netherlands, later asserted that the Dutch troops were given orders not to prevent the Serb take-over of the city. On 11 July the Dutch UN Commander in Srebrenica, advised the 12,000 defenders of the city to withdraw from the surrounding area and evacuate the town ahead of the promised airstrikes, that never came.

26 According to a confidential report by the European Community Monitoring Mission, as well as other accounts by international NGOs and the media, Croatian army soldiers killed and harassed Serb civilians, looted properties and burned houses to the ground.

27 Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide*

Tadeusz Mazowiecki resigned in July 1995 after three years, in protest at the failure to protect the Safe areas'. He had praise for the professionalism of the War Crimes Tribunal staff, but his assessment of the UN involvement is critical:

'The UN is not adapted to recording and countering human rights violations. It needs restructuring. In the first place, the entire mandate needs to be reviewed. It is a sick mandate, a peacekeeping mandate where there is no peace to keep'.

The failure of the UN in Bosnia has led to much soul-searching. Criticism of the on-the-ground relationships of UN commanders with the Serbs, especially Mladic, has hurt both the UN and the UK. It has prompted Mark Almond to be especially critical of Britain's involvement as relying too much on its colonial past, and following a hidden agenda of Serb appeasement²⁸ (a view with which the Bosnian government, and Bryant and Loza, would concur). Michael Sheridan has alleged that Douglas Hurd, as Foreign Secretary in the Major government shared the Foreign Office belief that a stable Balkans requires a strong Serbia.

'In Foreign Office eyes, that remains as true today as in 1913 and 1939; unpopular, unpalatable, but undeniable.'²⁹ Other UN states have their hidden agendas too: Germany, apart from the embarrassing wartime connection, has had strong economic links with Croatia and Herzegovina through many thousands of foreign labourers. However since reunification she cannot cope with many refugees and requires the return of Bosnian Croats. Russia desires the continuation of friendly relations with Serbia. The US, reluctant at first to become involved, was concerned for the re-establishment of a multi-ethnic Bosnia-Herzegovina, and to be seen by the friendly Arab world as willing to treat the Bosnian Moslems fairly.

Changing Attitudes

With the failure of UN intervention to keep any peace, and the agreement in September 1995 at Dayton Ohio, NATO took over in the shape of IFOR (Implementation Force, after one year changed to Stabilisation Force - SFOR). The agreement was to foster and supervise a normalization of the Bosnia situation, including democratic elections and the return home of refugees. The main military change was that, not restricted by UN mandates, IFOR would enforce a peace by military means if necessary, backed up by a large increase in manpower and weaponry including for the first time US troops and the UK's AS 90 155mm guns. The changes raise fundamental questions of relevance to just war, to which we will return in my conclusion:

²⁸ Almond, *Europe's Backyard War – The War In the Balkans*

²⁹ Sheridan, Michael, *Comment page, The Independent*, 3 June 1995



Pictured is a Royal Engineer excavator helping to remove rubble from the mouth of the Cloutman Tunnel near Jajce, Bosnia. Photo: Mark Owens, Crown Copyright

- *Can the UN change its mandate to threaten and use force to enforce peace?*
- *If it does and becomes, therefore, another party to conflict should it not be treated as such and have to comply with international law especially regarding the Geneva Conventions?*
- *How even-handed can the international community be, given their individual agendas?*
- *Is US dominance an aid or as unwelcome a problem as were the old cold-war disagreements?*
- *Can the UN represent the global village and enforce a just peace?*

The international community has been truly shocked by the Bosnian conflict, shocked by ethnic cleansing, the response was the Dayton Accord enforced by NATO. If the plans to democratize Bosnia-Herzegovina, and re-settle refugees in a multi-ethnic state succeed it will have fulfilled the hopes of the Bosnian government when it first requested help. I have my doubts. Certainly there is peace now, rebuilding of homes is a sign of hope, free press and unrestricted travel is the norm. However, despite a pro-Dayton Serb party in Banja-Luka, support for the hard-liners still remains strong in Pale. I tend to the more pessimistic view that the new inter-entity boundary is where the Serbs and Croats wanted their boundary, and is in fact a traditional 'green line', which will require UN policing in the future. The Moslems remain an anachronism in the 'Federation', dominating certain municipalities some of which are growing more fundamentalist in their faith.

Future Implications for Intervention and Just War Theory

As we have seen, the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina was flawed in regard to *jus ad bellum* in as far as its chief cause was the expansionist ambitions of Serbia and Croatia. The ethnic cleansing and the criminal means of its achievement were well beyond the laws of armed conflict and disregarded any notion of *jus in bello*. I recognise that whilst it can be inaccurate and manipulated, the media coverage of conflict in the world of the global village raises public awareness of humanitarian need, which demands international action. What reciprocal implications are there for intervention and just war theory?

First there is a requirement for peace-enforcers to have the military strength and determination to use force. Operation DELIBERATE FORCE proved this in Bosnia-Herzegovina.³⁰ This raises the question of enforcement of the Geneva Conventions, which the ICRC would agree has been in the past the responsibility of individual states. When they are acting together in the name of the international community it would be far better if the body they represented was itself responsible. This is a view held by those who wish to see the UN Charter revised, notably Mazowiecki. It seems reasonable that any enforcing power should abide by, and compel the co-belligerents to abide by, the laws of war.

This raises the second point regarding the nature of support required by humanitarian aid. The notion of humanitarian intervention, necessarily lacking the consent required by traditional peacekeeping, links aid and use of force and raises the question: who applies it? I remain a UN supporter and have proudly worn the blue beret even when constraints have limited its success. Practically and financially the delegation of military protection to other forces by the UN may be an option. Hence, the idea that Asian nations 'police' Asia; African Africa, European Europe, and American the Americas has been suggested. Local forces, host countries, outside powers, regional organisations and alliances may have a role. I disagree with Roberts when he suggests that these may 'not necessarily be mandated by the Security Council or run under UN control'. The former is essential and the latter is preferable. Without them we run the risk of a form of neo-imperialism, especially threatening when one world power is in the ascendancy, be it the US or any other (even Old Testament examples Babylon, Persia, Egypt, spring to mind). Which argument brings us to the third point: the sublimation of national interest in the greater interest of world peace.

30 'To stop genocide, to prevent the slaughter of innocent civilians in a 'safe area', to ensure observance of rules about delivering aid, and to arrest those charged with war crimes may at times require a degree of coercive power and a willingness to get involved in the conflict.' Roberts, *Humanitarian Action in War*



SFOR, Bosnia: Early model Apache attack helicopter (without longbow mast-mounted fire control radar) flies over a Royal Artillery gunline of AS90 155mm self-propelled guns. Photo: Army Image, Crown Copyright

The just war has always required not only a just outcome and just means but also a legitimate authority: in the past a nation state. If other powers are to intervene on humanitarian grounds from whence comes their authority? If not the United Nations we have the problem of other agendas. Bosnia-Herzegovina has suffered as the result of her near neighbours' hidden agendas, and those of the aiding nations.³¹ The Bosnian conflict's history demonstrates how ancient religio-cultural differences can still erupt into 'neo-tribal' warfare where conflict

*31 Germany's rush to recognise Slovenia and Croatia can be seen as part of the cause of the old Federation's break-up. By many, especially in the Balkans, this was seen as a desire for renewed influence in the region. F.S. Larrabee, however, has attributed it more to Germany's attachment to self-determination after reunification. Larrabee, *Central and Eastern Europe - Yugoslavia**

resides within states not between them.³² In my view authority for intervention has to reside with the UN Security Council, supported by the approval of the General Assembly. This requires a sublimation of national interests which though a stumbling block will in the future be a necessary corollary to world peace.

Conclusion

Just war theory, in concentrating on the horrors of the atomic bomb and upon deterrence, began to be disregarded. Colleagues would say it was no longer relevant, an argument based on two suppositions: that weaponry was so horrific that no power would consider its use, and that the balance of power was an assurance of peace. Neither applies today. The Bosnian conflict, amongst others, has awoken the world to the insecurity of the post-Cold-War age, and to the shocking return of a past, thought to be long gone, Second World War mind-set. There is a great desire in the world today for greater co-operation (EU, Pacific Rim, and even Development Aid). Such power blocks bring together the desire of small nations to belong to the market, and the risk of inter-block competition. Parallel with this is the desire to respect the rights of small minorities (Bosnian Moslems, Kurds, Timorese). The balancing of these goals is the great security challenge of the next century. To do so and maintain peace is going to require international self-sacrifices, and a renewed respect for international law: a return to awareness of, and respect for, just war principles. Principles which will often say: 'no, not appropriate': Principles that require international support and enforcement: Principles that criticise both the weak and the powerful, and will need therefore a high degree of self-criticism from the powerful to avoid their domination. New world orders have been dangerous extremist abominations in the past, but perhaps the global village requires not a new pax Romana, nor a pax Americana, but just a pax - based on mutual need and respect.

Bosnia may have provided the shock that has awoken the world to the reality that peace cannot be treated with either a *laissez-faire* or an idealistic attitude. As I write, questions are being asked of the powerful nations by events in Israel/Palestine, Sierra Leone, the Indian sub-continent, Indonesia, and politicians speak of an 'ethical foreign policy'. Answers can only be sought, let alone found, if political and religio/moral leaders give due weight to the analytical and ethical guidelines provided by the just-war theory.

32 Many of our national boundaries are a result of old imperial dominations and post-colonial state-creation map-making. They did not always take into account tribal boundaries choosing geographical features and lines of latitude and longitude instead. Many of our present security problems have their root cause in this: parts of Africa, especially Rwanda, the Indian sub-continent, Indonesia, Arabia, even Northern Ireland. Where they did take tribal differences into account it was not always possible to locate boundaries to suit.

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An SFOR AS90 155mm self-propelled gun of the Royal Artillery deployed near Glamoc in Bosnia. Photo: Shaun C. Connors, Crown Copyright



The 'Deuce'. Recently procured for the British Army, this plant equipment is primarily used by Royal Engineers when large volumes of surface material need moving. The Deuce is particularly fast and efficient when used to create revetments for armoured vehicles when they need to be 'dug-in'. The vehicle has a top road speed of 30mph and is currently in operational use with SFOR in Bosnia. Photo: Corporal Mark Ballantyne, Crown Copyright

Reconstruction in Bosnia - Winning the Peace

This article by Colonel N A Sutherland OBE, who was the Chief Engineer Operations and Plans, HQ SFOR during July - December 1997 was originally published in BAR 120, December 1998.

NATO's sixteen nations, together with 23 Partnership for Peace (PfP) participants including Russia, enforced the Dayton Accord in Bosnia Herzegovina. The Accord provides the best hope for Bosnia to escape the treadmill of inter-ethnic violence and to shrug off the catastrophic effects of recent wars. NATO and its partners have been remarkably successful in separating the former warring factions, establishing peace and fostering a stable and peaceful environment for political elections and internal growth. Two forces have deployed, the Peace Implementation Force IFOR from December 1995 to December 1996, and Peace Stabilisation Force (SFOR) from December 1995.

The OP CONSTANT GUARD campaign plan calls for *unity of effort by military and civil organisations to promote peace and encourage stability*. At the Theatre level HQ SFOR coordinates the campaign with each of the three Multinational Divisions (MNDs), with the three Entity Army (EA) headquarters, with the High Representative and with a bewildering array of international agencies in addition to report to its military headquarters, SHAPE, and the NATO Committee. Through a range of mandated military activities to support the Bosnian civil authorities such as assistance with the transfer of power, supporting civil elections, helping to reform the security and police forces and developing and supporting civil infrastructure, NATO's mission today is far wider than that of war prevention. In fulfilling its leadership role, SFOR tries to remain focused on its military mission but because of the exceptionally difficult ethnic and institutional obstacles which can impede progress it often finds itself being required to oil the wheels as an honest broker, as a catalyst or by using its ability to compel attendance and initiate discussions. Success in these wider roles reflects the strength and clarity of the military provisions of Annex 1A of the Dayton Accord compared to the much less well-defined coordinating, nurturing and assisting role of the High Representative and external political organisations which lack the power of direct sanction or authority. Overall these extended roles for the military force are of key importance to the success of the Bosnia mission and regularly capitalise on the skills and equipment needed to win on the battlefield.

It would be impossible to do justice to every facet of SFOR's contribution to Bosnia's recovery in this article, so the focus will be on the pivotal role that military engineering plays in operations in Bosnia Herzegovina. Drawing on examples of the tasks at the strategic level the article seeks to examine NATO's contribution to establishing the environment, physical conditions and the programmes that will make a major difference to the long term future and recovery of the country.

Historical Setting

Generations of medieval wars, conquests and religious rivalries are the bedrock of Bosnia Herzegovina where past events and hostile attitudes are paraded with tribal vigour born of selective memories. Few would deny the country remains a crucible filled with potentially explosive ingredients. In 1990 Bosnia Herzegovina, as part of Yugoslavia, represented a moderately successful developing eastern or southern mid-European country. Just five years later the country was in ruins:

- *80% unemployment*
- *50% of all housed damaged or destroyed*
- *Infrastructure - water, gas, electricity, roads, rail, transport - largely non-operational with almost every major route blocked or blown up.*
- *Installations not destroyed in the fighting had been subjected to industrial scale plundering*
- *Estimates of up to 6 million mines in generally unrecorded locations*
- *About a third of the population displaced from their homes*
- *The hospitals on a wartime footing, the schools closed, the shops empty*

Demolition of rail and road bridges and thousands of minefields reflected the ebb and flow of the battle lines. Electricity pylons, hydro-electric plants and gas pipelines were severely damaged as utilities were used as weapons to lower civilian morale. Rail track was frequently stripped out to support overhead cover, road repairs were severely disrupted or halted altogether. Television and radio relay stations suffered considerable damage, only a few remained working. The scale of the reconstruction tasks was truly immense.

In the first year of the NATO-led operations significant improvement were seen in many of these areas. As peace was established through IFOR's military action, and the international agencies and national ministries were able to begin their rebuilding programmes. Operational freedom of movement was essential and the major main roads were opened by IFOR engineers. East-West rail lines were repaired to minimum requirements, electricity was restored to many areas but disputes over huge unpaid gas bills resulted in significant delays to supply reconnection. Many schools and shops reopened despite severe structural damage but industrial growth has been slow and barely profitable: black markets continue to thrive. Many families survive only on charity programmes and handouts from relatives abroad. Pollution from sewage, refuse and toxic wastes is everywhere in the air, the land and in the water. Most liquid waste is simply discharged into rivers or ponds. Solid, hazardous and even medical waste is generally dumped into landfills, which constantly emit toxic air pollution. All sewage from 420,000



View of Grbavica, a neighbourhood of Sarajevo, approximately 4 months after the signing of the Dayton Peace Accord that officially ended the war in Bosnia. This particular scene shows the part of the neighbourhood located by the left bank of Miljacka river near Vrbanja bridge. These ruins were among the last group to be turned over by the Bosnian Serbs to the Bosniaks (a.k.a. Bosnian Muslims) as required by the Dayton Peace Accord. Photo: Lieutenant Stacey Wyzkowski, US Department of Defense, Wikimedia, Released

people living in Sarajevo is discharged into local rivers. Further downstream the same rivers are used for sanitation, fishing and recreation.

After the encouraging start of 1996 reconstruction progress in 1997 and early 1998 has been variously stagnant, steady or spectacular. The efforts of the international community, the NGOs, SFOR and the country's internal ministries combine with equally varied success to assist this progress. Bosnia today is divided into two main administrative areas, the Federation consisting of an uneasy alliance between Bosnian Croats and Muslims in the South and West and Republic Srpska, in the North and East, run by Bosnian Serbs. Each of the three ethnic/religious groupings are known as entities and each has its own security and police forces.

PROJECT TITLE	TOTAL FUNDS EXPENDED US\$M
Bridges	6.7
Road Repair and Safety	22.9
Rail Repair and Signalling	4.9
Airstrip Repair/Maintenance	2.9
Ports Repair	0.6
Marshalling Areas	1.1
Logistic Base Moves	1.4

Table 1: Examples of NATO Infrastructure Funding for OP CONSTANT GUARD

SFOR'S Military Engineers

Military engineers support the campaign plan with battlefield support to framework military operations, monitoring Entity Army de-mining operations and working to improve civil infrastructure. At the divisional and brigade level military engineers provide intimate support through a wide range of mobility, protection and infrastructure tasks required by MND units and headquarters. In addition to providing Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) to support own forces, a major task for MND engineers, involving over 400 officers and soldiers on a daily basis, is the monitoring of Entity Army de-mining operations and furthering local initiatives to improve the effectiveness of this programme.

At theatre level the emphasis is on support to major road and rail reconstruction programmes in close co-operation with the civil authorities and international Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), assisting with the rebuilding of damaged bridges on major routes and border crossings, supporting air and sea ports, mounting an environmental clean-up campaign and an extensive variety of civil assistance measures. An illustration of the site of NATO infrastructure investment into this operation is given at Table 1. As with most headquarters detailed contingency planning is essential and considerable effort was put into planning for SFOR's withdrawal at end of mandate in June 1998. Now armed with a renewed mandate, SFOR engineers are planning the construction of a single HQ SFOR site in Sarajevo to replace the current five sites.

Many tasks and initiatives are actioned or coordinated with the MND operational and engineer staff. Embedded within the Bosnia-Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BH MAC), and its regional officers are serving military engineers who provide close liaison between the BH MAC, the HQ SFOR engineer mine staff, MND engineers and the Entity Army Chief Engineers.

Mine Clearance

Throughout the civil war anti-personnel mines and anti-tank mines were used to firm up confrontation lines and defended positions as well as to protect patrol bases. Civilian militias used mines to protect individual houses, villages and installations, such as pumping stations. Shifting fortunes meant mined areas were superimposed on top of each other as ground was won or lost. Some 19,000 minefield records account for about 350,000 mines but this leaves the whereabouts of an estimated 650,000 mines unknown.

It is a huge problem. There are 50 reported mine casualties per month, many of whom are young children. Locating, removing and destroying mines is absolutely critical to the progress of reconstruction work in Bosnia. Mines prevent industrial investment and inject serious and expensive delays into almost all building projects.



A French Army 17th Engineering Regiment Aardvark Joint Services Flail Unit (JSFU) is used to clear a possible mine field in Butmir, Bosnia-Herzegovina during Operation Joint Endeavor. Photo PHAN Charles L Withrow, US Department of Defence, Wikimedia, Released

The majority of minefield clearance and mine lifting in Bosnia is completed by commercial de-mining organisations and the military engineers of the three Entity Armies. The Entity Armies are obliged under the Dayton Agreement to conduct mine lifting operations which are monitored daily by SFOR military engineers who confirm 'effective effort' has gone into this dangerous task. Failure to perform satisfactorily results in training and movement bans which effectively ground the whole Army. It is a powerful stick to ensure compliance. With so much effort going into monitoring Entity de-mining operations, SFOR itself only conducts mine clearance and EOD to support its own operations. Until now the Entity Armies have lifted mines recorded using wartime minefield records, the same method as used to clear Europe of mines after the Second World War, and removed some 22,000 mines and devices in 1997 at a cost of six dead. The problem of discovering an overlapping minefield laid by opposing forces is ever present. However, entity military de-miners receive no or low pay which, when combined with a lack of insurance against injury or death, results in frequent human tragedy.

SFOR and the BH MAC run a joint mines data base in Sarajevo and have regional offices located close to MND HQs. The BH MAC tries with reasonable success to coordinate the commercial de-mining operations despite many organisations working to the agenda of their funding sponsor. Last year humanitarian organisations cleared over 6000 explosive devices. Certificates are awarded by the BH MAC for humanitarian standard work where each piece of the ground has been minutely examined. Until now Entity Army mine lifting has not been certified to the humanitarian levels but agreement has now been reached to ensure their operations are credited as meeting the humanitarian standard. HQ SFOR works close with NATO, international governments and agencies to find a source of funds to cover Entity de-miner insurance and pay and a programme to mechanise mine clearance through the use of converted T55 and T34 roller tanks. At current rates it will take some 35-45 years to clear the minefields assuming they can all be found. Of all the reconstruction programmes in Bosnia mine clearance can be considered to be the most vital and deserves the highest priority both within the civil and military communities.

Freedom of Movement and the Roads

One of the key missions of military engineers is to guarantee freedom of movement for operational units. This is usually accomplished by route opening detachments using military plant and battlefield bridges such as AVLB, AVRE or by constructing general support bridges such as the Medium Girder Bridge, Bailey or the new BR90 bridges. At the macro level opening routes and keeping them open is as vital to the civilian community as it is to the military. The progress achieved towards stability



Picture shows a Royal Engineer excavator helping to remove rubble from the mouth of the Cloutman Tunnel near Jajce, Bosnia. It took British Royal Engineers working in Bosnia just two days to clear the mouth of rubble and debris on a route which, when opened, will cut miles off vital journeys for local residents. Photo: Mark Owens, Crown Copyright

and commercial growth since 1995 is wholly founded on the roads being open for traffic. Most Bosnian roads were completely neglected during the conflicts of the early 90s, a situation compounded by limited road investment in the previous ten years as Yugoslavia's finances deteriorated. The roads were therefore in an appalling state by western standards, with pothole patching and repair being the normal method of maintenance. It can be considered as fire-fighting on a grand scale.

Of five thousand kilometres of major arterial roads in Bosnia SFOR Theatre engineers ensure freedom of movement over about half with MND engineers responsible for the balance.

Working in close co-operation with the civil road directorates, where this is possible, NATO has spent in excess of US \$18.9 million since December 1995 funding road improvements and repairs and over US \$4 million on road safety programmes, the whole programme controlled and supervised by HQ SFOR and its three Regional Engineer Offices. This investment represents over half of

all funds spend on roads and has resulted in very significant improvements to condition of the roads and greatly improved road safety equipment. However, the reason behind this large investment is not as a gesture of goodwill to the civil population, though the benefits are self-evident, but as a life-saving necessity. Since December 1995 79 soldiers have been killed serving in FRY and 478 injured (December 1997 figures). Setting aside helicopter crashes and mine accidents, the single largest cause of death and injury to soldiers involve traffic accidents.

In the mountainous central areas of Bosnia the road tunnels are still relatively intact despite concerted efforts to blow them up. All tunnel lights are broken but the rooves remain generally intact. Tunnel roof repair is very expensive and only in dire circumstances are repairs undertaken. Military engineers regularly inspect each major road tunnel for safety and monitor deterioration.

A by-product of the SFOR road programme assists the emerging democratic system by enforcing the use of commercial competitive tendering for most road repair contracts. The inflow of very significant amounts of hard currency on local economies also contributes to the wider aims of encouraging stability and growth. For the Regional Engineer Offices (REO)s, staffed by regimental officers seconded for a six month tour, the experience of hammering out a fair contract price and ensuring good construction standards are achieved provides unique challenges and a wide education. While many arrive with some knowledge of these subjects by the end of their tour all REO staff return home with an ability to support infrastructure projects, draw up and supervise compliance with technical specifications and have gained a knowledge of commercial contract practice. With freedom to use initiative to achieve success, the REO staffs have recently engaged in joint ventures with government road directorates to cut project costs in half through bill sharing. Recent joint ventures include a new approach road to Ploce Port, resurfacing 35 kilometres of road and repairing a major landslide. While it must be admitted that few joint programmes go exactly according to plan, most have succeeded after a fashion.

The most visible engineer work in Bosnia is the bridge mission. IFOR engineers build 62 temporary equipment bridges across the country in efforts to restore freedom of movement, and these bridges continue to have a vital military as well as civilian role. A measure of economic recovery is that civilian road traffic has increased by 300% in two years and is characterised by the large number of heavy, often overloaded commercial transports. A thriving black market in stolen cars also adds to the heavy congestion problems at single carriageway bridges. Constant repair and maintenance is needed to cope with the use and abuse the bridges suffer.

During the war about 150 bridges were completely or partially blown up using plastic explosive. Those bridges which survived have extensive cracking throughout the structure with frost damage adding to the fractures each winter. A major concern is the deteriorating condition of the damaged civilian bridges beneath the military equipment bridges, a problem compounded by heavy commercial trucks and poor maintenance. The repair of war damaged civilian bridges is called the Bridge Replacement Program and is controlled by the International Management Group (IMG) acting for international donors providing funds. SFOR provides significant help to coordinate this civilian programme but delays have been very disappointing. Construction started on only two of eight bridges scheduled for replacement in 1997, delays mainly due to an inability in the road directorates to seize the initiative or coordinate between departments together with a desire to refer every decision upwards for approval in accordance with good communist practice. Military engineers continue to construct bypasses to ensure military freedom of movement where necessary but Command SFOR retains the right to approve plans and can refuse to allow roads to be blocked for operational reasons.

The urgent need to establish freedom of movement on the roads did not allow IFOR to build its temporary equipment bridges away from the damaged civilian bridges, indeed in most cases the abutments or remaining safe spars were used as a basis for the crossing. As the Bridge Replacement Program gains momentum severe disruption of traffic will occur throughout Bosnia as some major routes are closed for up to a year to allow the original bridges to be repaired. Long bypassed will be constructed to take traffic but the use of poor quality, narrow secondary roads, often with steep grades, will add significantly to journey times and increase traffic accidents. Learning from the Bosnian example, the speed of repair of war damaged bridges needs to be a major focus of coordinated international effort with the aim to complete repairs before the traffic levels rise exponentially as industry prospers.

The ability of the UK's military bridges, and the many Mabey & Johnson bridges, to withstand repeated abuse and heavy overloading has been excellent. However, there are signs that nearly 50 normal (that is undamaged) civilian bridges on arterial routes are now beginning to fail under the increasing weight of commercial transports. Keeping the routes open for military and civilian traffic will continue to provide a complex challenge.

Rail Reconstruction

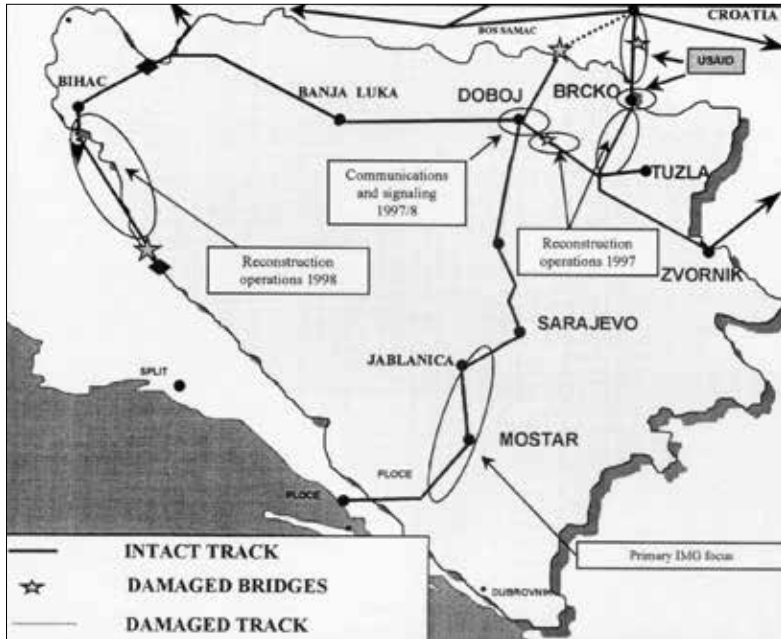
Freight moved by rail is 30 times cheaper than movement by road which provides a considerable incentive to move heavy military supplies and armoured equipment



Engineers from 20 Field Squadron, 36 Regiment Royal Engineers bridge the gap over the Vruas River near Jajce, Bosnia. The bridge was blown during a previous Serb offensive. The bridge was funded by the Overseas Development Association at a combined cost with Lendrum bridge of £403,000. The bridge is called Durrant Bridge by the engineers, after a Second World War Victoria Cross awarded to a sapper in the regiment. Photo: Captain Kevin Harvey, Crown Copyright.

by train. From their arrival in Bosnia NATO forces have invested heavily to repair and reconstruct the Bosnian rail network in conjunction with the civil authorities and external funding agencies, such as IMG. Bosnian railways appear on the map as a crucifix with a single major junction at the centre of Doboj (see Map 2).

In 1996 IFOR's military engineers and the IMG focused on repairing the East-West line to provide an entry-exit route for heavy tracked vehicles and other operational freight. Unique within NATO, the Italian Railway Engineer Regiment deployed from northern Italy using its special train which carries its own track repair equipment, offices, accommodation and feeding facilities. Highly capable, the Italian military engineers actually run a section of Italian civilian railways near Novara when not deployed on operations in support of NATO. On deployment to Bosnia the Regiment provided detailed technical supervision of the ambitious reconstruction project with regular design assistance from UK and Canadian specialist engineer staff. The statistics speak for themselves: 460km of track demined, repaired and proved and 17km of new track laid once minefields littering the route had been cleared by combat engineers. Signalling equipment sufficient to get trains running was installed along the route by contractors at a cost of US\$4million. Meanwhile the IMG, with donor money, focused its efforts on the North-South line with Hungarian engineers providing both bridging and mine clearance support.



Map 2:

In 1997 SFOR focussed on the need to upgrade Bosnia's main junction at Doboj with signalling and communication equipment and repair of the Tuzla to Hungary line. This line was not required to meet NATO requirements but the significant civilian benefits of connecting Sarajevo directly to the European rail network to the North could not be overlooked. It would also assist US logistics by providing a direct link from MND North to the US logistic base in Hungary. With this in mind much of the funding was American. Italian Military engineers repaired 22 damaged sections of track removing 13 mined defensive positions and 80 track breaks. Meanwhile, civilian contractors working directly for the US donor agency, USAID, had been rebuilding the major bridges over the wide Sava River at Brcko and the Bosut River in Croatia. The project was a highly successful joint venture with benefits to the civilian and military community; it is now possible to run rail traffic the length and breadth of Bosnia.

But perhaps one of the most significant achievements of 1997 had nothing to do with track repair at all. SFOR's success in brokering three bilateral rail operating agreements to run trains across international and internal inter-entity borders was a vital ground-breaking step towards establishing a working rail system.

The diplomatic skills of military engineers and the movement control staff proved up to the unusual task and drew praise from the Chairman of the Bosnian Rail Commission, international diplomat, Paul Monneray. For the press a symbolic 'First SFOR freight train' from Sarajevo left on its journey to Mannheim, Germany, on 11 December 1997 but was actually the 18th train to have made that journey! Repair operations in 1998 will focus in the Bihac area in northwest Bosnia with the aim to re-establish a rail link from Banja Luka to Split Port in Croatia. The challenge of repairing collapsed tunnels, filling landslides and replacing demolished bridges face the construction teams.

The third and final link in strategic transport systems, NATO's focus at Bosnia's airports has been on maintaining the military flying requirements at Sarajevo, Mostar and Tuzla. Major runway improvements and long overdue maintenance to upgrade former Yugoslav fighter airfields has been completed by contractors working for REOs and for national contingents. These airports are now able to handle heavy air cargo and commercial traffic. Investment during the past two years has had a direct spin off as civilian air traffic continues to grow. Military snow clearance on runways ensures all-winter operation. Control towers and terminals, along with other airport facilities, are being upgraded using investment both from international donors and entity governments.

Civil Assistance

Some of the most obvious help provided directly to the civilian population is through civil assistance projects. Projects can range from the delivery of food and clothing and refurbishment of public facilities including schools through to major road construction operations. The majority of these tasks are carried out by MND engineers and MND units on a local basis. These projects make a major difference to the welfare of the local communities at modest cost but funding projects is too often a limiting factor. Charity donations channelled through international charity organisations still make a huge contribution to the welfare of the Bosnian people and reflect the outstanding generosity of many of the world's populations. Military units also provide local help but inevitably with such a speed of troop rotations, the inconsistency of delivery and approach can be bewildering for the local population.

The deployment of the US CIMIC Task Force (TF) in 1997 consisting of internationally accredited specialists from the US Army Reserve on an involuntary 12 month tour, provided first rank technical assistance and advice on a wide range of engineering, political and governmental subject areas to the civil authorities. Overall the CIMIC TF has been a success story in that it has enabled hard-pressed national and local authorities to receive up-to-the-minute



*Engineers helping to rebuild the Stari Bila School. Possibly 29 Field Squadron Royal Engineers at Vitez.
© Crown copyright. IWM (UKLF-1994-004-23-17)*

technical advice on a wide range of topics such as housing rehabilitation, civil aviation organisation and systems, public health infrastructure, water and waste treatment, the media and computer information expertise through to education and school reforms. The difficulty with such a powerful reconstruction tool is that the superb technical advice needs to be matched with funds to implement the recommendations. No formal link, programme or structure exists to match willing international donors to worthwhile reconstruction programmes with the result the net worth of the CIMIC TF work has been reduced considerably. This aspect deserves careful attention in any future deployment.

Environmental Programme

Military forces need to have an environmental policy decided at the start of deployment to control the pollution likely to be caused by their occupation. From common sense measures such as recording of the condition of sites prior to occupation through to the regime to be applied to POL points and oil disposal, the scope for expensive claims is legion. With 35,000 troops in hundreds of bases, SFOR has been engaged in determined attempts to start a programme of

environmental clean-up of its own sites, raise awareness within the MNDs and address some of the areas left behind or abandoned by UNPROFOR. Setting environmental targets for a 39-nation force scattered throughout very different terrain and with very different domestic environmental policies has been no mean achievement. Several national contingents saw no harm in washing down their armoured vehicles in the rivers. Problems with setting any standard were compounded by the awful state of some of the areas prior to occupation. Fortunately many temporary military camps seem to have been located in industrial complexes and therefore industrial levels of pollution are acceptable.



*The Stari Most bridge in Mostar being rebuilt in 2003 after being destroyed by the Bosnian Croats.
Photo: Donar Reiskoffer, Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported, 2.5, 2.0 and 1.0 Generic
licenses, Wikimedia*

Symbolic Gestures

Defence diplomacy can be advanced in different ways. The City of Mostar is divided into Bosnian Muslim and Bosnian Croat areas and many parts were very badly damaged during the war. The politics of Mostar are highly complex, there are some indications for example that Bosnian Muslims wish to make Mostar the capital of Moslem Bosnia so there is symbolic importance attached to reconstruction projects in the Mostar area. The old bridge or Stari Most which linked the two sides of the City was built in 1566 of local limestone and held together by a mixture of lead pins and a mortar of horse-hair and eggshells. The bridge survived for 426 years until a Bosnian Croat tank destroyed it with nine HE rounds in November 1993. Even Bosnian Croats tacitly accept this act was sheer vandalism and quietly supported the rebuilding of the Stari Most as a sign of progress.

The plan to rebuild the bridge was in two stages, the first stage to recover the stones and the second to rebuild the bridge using the rescued pieces combined with new stone quarried from the same source. Meetings were conducted in five languages to reflect the many interests in the project, many representatives were keen to be associated with the project but less willing to work for it. Despite, or perhaps because of, this progress was actually quite swift once the Hungarian engineers had been given charge of the project. To rescue the stones from under 10 metres of fast flowing water was a unique challenge. A purpose-built raft using PMP pontoons and a gantry crane was constructed to be capable of lifting 60-tonne stones and provide a stable platform for the divers. The raft moved the suspended stone to shore using four winches secured to the banks. A special elevated platform was constructed to allow the stones to remain above the water level to dry out. The symbolic first stone was lifted from the river bed at a ceremony attended by the Federation president, Izetbegovic, and the world's press.

In all 75% of the stones were recovered representing the majority of usable pieces. In the later stages of the recovery project the levels of water and near freezing waters of the Neretva river made the task exceptionally difficult for the divers. The completion of the first phase of this complex engineering task was acknowledged as directly contributing to defence diplomacy in the Mostar region.

Closing Thoughts

Bosnia provides an excellent case study for a military deployment to a second world country after a lengthy ethnic-driven civil war. The damage to roads, bridges and tunnels, the destruction of service installations and railways, the awful legacy of uncontrolled mine-laying and the effects of human pollution must be expected and plans made to address them. A much closer tie up between donor funds, international agencies, NGOs and military missions would see a

significant improvement to the rate of progress and prevent the high levels of staff and planning duplication. Efforts in appointing military liaison officers to such organisations, education programmes at national and NATO staff colleges covering the work of the agencies and short attachments between parties would make a significant difference to overall effectiveness. The military can seem naive in the difficult circumstances of reconstruction operations while, to the military officer, the civil authorities and NGOs can appear bureaucratic, parochial and painfully unfocused on practical problem solving.

It is as well to remember that framework military operations provide the conditions for reconstruction but, in themselves, do not provide reconstruction solutions. The key importance of broadening the military mission to include wider reconstruction and recovery tasks should not be viewed as mission creep; these roles are fundamental and integral elements of successful post war military operations. The only danger is that disengagement of the military force can be difficult if civil organisations become too dependent on military help and efforts to avoid this situation need to be carefully thought out.

Bosnia is regaining many traits of normality. International aid programmes are making significant strides in making life bearable for the average citizen, the rate of displaced persons returns testifies to an increasing confidence in the future. Free elections have been held in all areas and the results implemented. Donor funding and internal industrial development are firmly established in certain areas. Traffic levels continue to rise steeply and are placing a strain on poor roads and permanent and temporary bridges. Major roads will soon have to shut and long diversions established while damaged bridges are repaired. Railway traffic is now running and the rail programme has shown the benefits of establishing a close partnership between military and civilian engineers and the international donors. The slow progress on mine clearance remains a real concern and only recently has the importance of this area been fully supported; there is still a huge amount to do. Reforming an ex-communist state and rebuilding a war-ravaged nation takes time, money and patience. As joint leaders in an international partnership to achieve these aims, SFOR and its military engineers are in for a long but ultimately rewarding haul.



A remotely controlled Panther armored mine clearing vehicle leads a column of armored vehicles down a road near McGovern Base, in Bosnia and Herzegovina on May 16, 1996, during Operation Joint Endeavor. The Panther, based on a modified M-60 tank hull, uses metal rollers to set off contact or magnetic mines. The Panther is being operated by the 23rd Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division. DoD photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Long, U.S. Army, Released

One of a long line of U.S. Marine Assault Amphibious Vehicles from the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit comes ashore at Port Ploce, Croatia, on March 24, 1998. Assigned to the Strategic Reserve Force of the Stabilization Force, the Marines are taking part in Exercise Dynamic Response 98, a training exercise designed to familiarize the reserve forces with the territory and their operational capabilities within this region. DoD photo by Chief Petty Officer Steve Briggs, U.S. Navy, Released



From Coercion back to Consent - SFOR's Endgame

This article by Colonel P. G. Williams, OBE,¹ was originally published in BAR 122 September 1999 and provides a comment on the developments in Bosnia towards the end of the twentieth century.

1 The author was Chief Faction Liaison Officer in HQ SFOR in the period May-November 1998. He also served two tours with UNPROFOR and was responsible for the DIS Yugoslav Crisis Cell 1996-98

Our success is clear: an absence of war; and an environment within which peace has a chance. While we have established the conditions where peace can flourish, we cannot impose it. Peace must come from within.

Admiral Leighton Smith²

The Situation Since Dayton

No one lost the war in Bosnia. It is worth stressing this from the start. Even if it is true that none of the local parties won the armed conflict in their country in the early 1990s, it is equally true that none of them considers that they lost it either. Bosnia is thus unlike Germany or Japan at the end of 1945; it was not defeated and the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), subsequently retitled the Stabilisation Force (SFOR), was not introduced as part of an occupation regime. All the Bosnian factions emerged with their political and military structures battered, but intact, and protected by the relevant political agreements. The two key settlements were certainly imposed by heavyweight outside intervention, but from a legalistic perspective both were freely entered into by the indigenous parties: these were the March 1994 creation of the Croat Bosniac Federation and the December 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace (also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement or DPA).

In launching its major air and ground offensive against the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) in the summer of 1995, the NATO-UN coalition clearly crossed the so-called 'Mogadishu Line' from theatre-level impartiality to taking sides, but this intervention has been accepted in hindsight by the Serb military with remarkably little rancour. The reason for this apparently surprising reaction lies in large part in the perception by all the former warring factions that the war could not be brought to a fair conclusion until all parties had suffered significantly. The Muslim Bosniacs and the Croats had borne the brunt of the fighting, the casualties and the losses of territory in the first phase of the war. Now, the recapture of Western Slavonia and the Krajina in Croatia and the triumph of the Federation military in Western Bosnia, assisted by the Croatians, along with the NATO bombing campaign, had created a more even state of affairs and the opportunity for an end to the fighting in Bosnia and a return to the primacy of the political process.³

² Leighton Smith, Adam, *IFOR: Halfway through the Mandate*, edited excerpt from the *RUSI Journal*, August, 1996

³ Comments to the author by senior Bosnian military leaders in late 1998

Retaining the strategic initiative that it seized at the end of 1995, the International Community(IC) has been involved since then in a nation-building programme. The NATO Ministerial meeting at that time summed up the achievement and the challenge:

*Decisive action by the Alliance, in support of a determined diplomatic effort, helped create the conditions that have made peace possible. Our aim now is to contribute to a just and lasting peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina. All Parties to the DPA have accepted NATO's role. NATO will not be imposing a settlement, but will take the necessary action to ensure compliance.*⁴

This article examines the means by which the military aspect of the Bosnian peace implementation process can move on from being an externally imposed, essentially coercive operation to become the defence dimension of an internally managed, enduring and peaceful settlement, so allowing for the SFOR mission to be wound up.

Progress In Military Implementation

The DPA's Annex 1A gave IFOR, and now gives SFOR, great powers and provides guidance to the Commander (COMSFOR) on how to execute the military implementation of the Agreement. This authority is summed up as follows:

*The IFOR Commander is the final authority in theatre regarding the interpretation of the military aspects of the peace agreement.*⁵

Furthermore, while retaining the strategic initiative, the DPA explicitly moved the NATO-led coalition back across the 'Mogadishu line' to strict impartiality with regard to the Bosnian Federation (FBH) and the Republika Srpska (RS). It states: 'Both Entities shall be held equally responsible for compliance and both shall be equally subject to enforcement action by IFOR.'⁶

COMSFOR manages the impartial execution of military implementation at the operational level in theatre through the Joint Military Commission (JMC) process, in which he lays down the guidelines for the Entity Armed Forces' (EAF) compliance.⁷ The commanders of the ethnically-based EAFs (Bosniac, Croat and Serb) are obliged to be present. With compliance as its core business the JMC has not leant itself easily to dialogue and a free flow of ideas, although the post-meeting lunches

4 NATO ministerial communique of 5 December 1995

5 General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP), edited excerpt from Article XII, signed in Paris on 14 December 1995

6 GFAP Article 1, edited excerpt

7 GFAP Article VIII



Stabilization Force (SFOR) British Warrior armored fighting vehicles move into position during the joint, British and American forces, live fire exercise. Photo: SRA Blaze Lipowski, US Department of Defense, Wikimedia, Released

have allowed a rapport to be built and enhanced between the participants.

Observer status at JMC meetings is also enjoyed by the Military Adviser to the High Representative (MO/OHR), the senior military member of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) Regional Stabilisation staff and the Commissioner of the CN's International Police Task Force (IPTF). Under normal circumstances the SFOR-level JMC now meets quarterly under the chairmanship of the 3-star British Deputy Commander Operations (DCOMOPS), but COMSFOR participates in person in order to explain major policy initiatives.⁸

Compliance issues on which the JMC has concentrated in recent months have included weapon and ammunition storage regimes, military de-mining norms, common military vehicle registration plates and the system for the notification of EAF training and movement (T&M).⁹ All are closely regulated by COMSFOR's Instructions to the Parties (ITPs), whose Annexes lay down the chapter and verse of compliance.

The JMC process is also replicated at the tactical level, where each of the three SFOR Multinational Division (MND) commanders holds his own meetings,

⁸ For example, COMSFOR, General Montgomery Meigs attended the 4 December 1998 JMC to explain his Entity Armed Forces in a Democratic Society: Ethics and Professionalisation initiative

⁹ The Minutes of the 7 Dec 98 JMC reveal that the current compliance issues were the notification of recent ITP changes and updated on T&M, de-mining, the annual JMC calendar and the Weapon & Ammunition Storage Programme (WASP)

explaining to the local EAF corps commanders how COMSFOR's policies are to be implemented and listening to their feedback on how compliance requirements are received. Initiatives raised and tested at an individual MND level may later be adopted theatre-wide.¹⁰

Military Stabilisation

Annex 1B of the Agreement covers the issue of Regional Stabilisation and sets out mechanisms for:

*Devising new forms of cooperation in the field of security, aimed at building transparency and confidence and achieving balanced and stable defense force levels at the lowest numbers consistent with the Partie's respective security and the need to avoid an arms race in the region.*¹¹

The emphasis here is on cooperation and consensus, rather than on Annex 1A's strict compliance, and the DPA delegates the coordinating responsibility to the OSCE in line with the 1994 Vienna document on Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM). Guidelines and norms are prescribed, covering activities such as the import of arms, the exchange of military data and T&M notification. SFOR has amended its own compliance obligations for the EAFs, principally the ITP timelines for T&M approvals, in order to fit in with the OSCE's norms, but the Parties have a duty to inform both SFOR and the OSCE; they cannot get away with simply satisfying SFOR's compliance requirements.

Unfortunately, the assets available to OSCE's Regional Stabilisation branch in theatre and back in Vienna have proved to be insufficient to allow that organisation to seize control of the CSBM agenda with the same sort of vigour that SFOR has been able to apply to the Annex 1A compliance issues. To date OSCE has lacked the mandate, financial resources and the deployable manpower to enforce or even heavily to promote the provisions of Annex 1B, however laudable they may be.

Some forward movement in the areas of arms control and CSBMs has been made through the OSCE-led Bosnia-wide Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) and the Balkan-wide Sub-Regional Consultative Commission (SRCC). However, the need for consensus and for voluntary compliance by the Parties has ensured that progress beyond the initial Article II (CSBMs in Bosnia-Herzegovina)

¹⁰ For example, the Winter 1998-99 weapon amnesty programme was developed by the US-led MND(N)

¹¹ GFAP, edited excerpt from Annex 1-B, Article 1

requirements has so far been disappointing.¹²

It is also worth noting that whereas the DPA mandates COMSFOR to liaise closely with the High Representative,¹³ no such clear relationship is called for between SFOR and the OSCE. The result has been that any such IFOR-OSCE links have tended to be overly personality-dependent and that SFOR's representation at the JCC meetings in theatre, which is formally restricted to observer status, was only instituted in late 1998.

Despite the challenges of achieving coordination within the international military community, SFOR has itself played a leading role in the implementation of Annex 1B, as well as in driving through compliance with Annex 1A. COMSFORs have consistently rejected the notion that only the OSCE can organise or coordinate military stabilisation activities in the spirit of Annex 1B.

Working through the good offices of NATO's Bosnia Task Force, SFOR has sponsored courses for mixed groups of EAF officers at Oberammergau and early in 1999 laid on a visit for Entity military political leaders to SHAPE, NATO Headquarters and an Alliance capital, London. In many ways these initiatives are akin to those being implemented by NATO under the Partnership for Peace (PfP) programme and all the EAF commanders have expressed interest in being briefed on this Alliance initiative.¹⁴

Train & Equip

A further complication in the military implementation process has been the US State Department-led Military Stabilization Program (MSP), which was agreed upon at Dayton in November 1995, allegedly as the price of Bosnian President Izetbegovic's approval for the DPA. Several hundred million dollars-worth of military hardware¹⁵, and training support have consequently been poured into the effort, known colloquially as Train & Equip (T&E), to upgrade, professionalise and integrate the two ethnic components (Croat and Bosniac) within the

12 *It was only in the autumn of 1998 that the military liaison missions (MLMs) between the Commanders of the Federation Army (VF) and the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) were fully established and given clear missions by their sponsors; under Article II of Annex 1B they should have been operational by early 1996. OSCE has also sponsored visits by senior Bosnian MOD and military leaders to Western capitals and has co-sponsored seminars with the Entity authorities within Bosnia itself.*

13 *GFAP, Annex 1A, Article VIII. The MA/OHR conducts the day-to-day liaison with SFOR, while the High Representative and COMSFOR coordinate IC strategy and execution.*

14 *For example, the VRS General Staff asked SFOR for a briefing pack on PfP in late 1998*

15 *The equipment provided has included British-made 105mm Light Guns and ammunition, donated to the MSP by the United Arab Emirates and issued to the Zenica-based Bosniac 7th Knights Mechanised Brigade.*



A German Army H-53 Helicopter assigned to the Stabilization Force (SFOR) lands to extract a Reaction Force made up of Portuguese Army Soldiers dressed in personal protective armor, during a riot control exercise at Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), during Exercise JOINT RESOLVE 26. Photo: Staff Sergeant Maria J Lorente, USAF, Wikimedia, Released

Federation Army (VF). Indeed, the T&E programme of the US State Department Office of Military Stabilisation has four objectives:

1. *To give the Bosnian Federation (FBH) the means to deter aggression by the Bosnian Serbs and to defend its territory and population if aggression occurs;*
2. *To strengthen the FBH by establishing a single FBH Ministry of Defence and Joint Command orientated on a Western defence model;*
3. *To reduce destabilising foreign military and intelligence influences in the FBH, particularly from Iran and*
4. *Ensure that a secure environment exists upon the departure of NATO military forces.*¹⁶

Sadly, despite the best political intentions of the US and its predominantly Islamic T&E partners and the practical efforts of its American contractor in theatre, MPRI,¹⁷ the programme has delivered a great deal of capable equipment

¹⁶ *US State Department's Office of Military Stabilisation in the Balkans factsheet 004/97 of 12 November 1997*

¹⁷ *Military Professional Resources Inc., a contracted organisation of trainers exclusively US ex-military personnel*

and individual and collective training without managing to transform the mindsets of the two VF partners. It is also of note that there has been poor coordination of the MSP programme, with the US-led implementation of the military aspects of the DPA by SFOR.¹⁸

In reality, ethnic integration has gone no deeper than an acceptance of common VF insignia, badges of rank and flags. All units and the majority of formations remain ethnically based¹⁹ and the Croats remain adamant that VF integration will not be permitted to go further than the cosmetic appearance of unity that exists today. This has been achieved less by consensus between the VF partners than by the heavy-handed insistence of Ambassador Pardew, the MSP's diplomatic 'minder'.²⁰

Meanwhile, it is hardly surprising to find that the Bosnian Serbs have seen the T&E programme as tangible evidence of continuing US bias against the RS. The Serbs are quick to point out, for instance, that the Alliance has never bombed any party other than the Serbs and have no doubt that they and they alone would be the targets of any future strikes were the DPA-imposed absence of war in Bosnia to be shattered.²¹

The Serb General Staff has noted how the VF has been enhanced by the introduction of donated equipment, a NATO-compatible doctrine and training standards, while the VRS has been left to fend for itself, including paying its own costs for SFOR compliance measures. Without the cash or the inclination to remodel its forces, the Serb military leadership has concentrated on trying to make the best of a poor deal by relying on its Serbian and pre-war concepts and practices. Officer training at all levels has been maintained, largely thanks to close collaboration with the Yugoslav Army (JA) and conscription remains an accepted rite of passage for Serb youths. The result is that the VRS continues to be an effective and cohesive force and is still able to conduct relatively complex tactical demonstration exercises.²²

18 Up until late 1998, for US political reasons, US troops in theatre were not permitted to work alongside or cooperate with MPRI personnel, which lead to a lack of focus of US policy as seen by Bosnian and other SFOR bystanders.

19 For example, all four VF corps remain ethnically pure: the Bosniacs serve in the 1st, 2nd and 5th Corps, while the Croats man the 1st Guards Corps.

20 Views expressed repeatedly by senior Croat politicians and military officers to the author in late 1998

21 Views often expressed by senior VRS military leaders to the author in late 1998

22 Exercise SADEJSTVO-98, held on the Manjaca training area near Banja Luka, in late October 1998 confirmed the VRS' continuing ability to lay on an impressive Warsaw Pact-style demonstration of firepower and tactical movement: the VF attempted nothing as ambitious during its 1998 training season.



During exercise Joint Resolve 26, in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), soldiers from the German Battle Group's 2nd Reinforced Infantry Company, armed with Heckler and Koch automatic assault rifles, seek to capture French soldiers playing the role of paramilitary extremists, near a paramilitary training camp in the town of Pazaric. Photo: Staff Sergeant Maria J. Lorente, USAF, Wikimedia, Released

Other Complicating Factors

In summary, therefore, in the three years since Dayton, while the T&E programme has energetically sought to transform the VF into an integrated, NATO-compatible army, albeit with only limited success, the VRS has been left to mark time as an all-Serb, unreformed Titoist army and has been fiercely defensive of its freedom to do so.

Progress in implementing the DPA's military aspects has also been affected by a wide variety of non-military and even non-Bosnian issues. These include the pursuit of indicted war criminals, the return home of displaced persons and refugees (DPREs), the future of Brcko and developments elsewhere in the region, notably the crisis in Kosovo.²³

For instance, the requirements of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) may at times run counter to the pursuit of uninterrupted Annex 1A military implementation, but SFOR and the IC in general have been

23 The full effects of Bosnia of the NATO offensive against Serbia, Operation ALLIED FORCE, which began on 24 March 1999, will take some time to become clear, but are sure to be disruptive of the DPA implementation process.

and remain firmly committed to assisting the Hague-based tribunal. International political leaders have consistently supported the process, stressing that: 'there can be no lasting peace without justice'.²⁴ The case has recently been powerfully reiterated by the NATO Spokesman:

*It is very difficult for a major peacekeeping force, such as SFOR, to remain in Bosnia for years and not to arrest those who have committed the worst atrocities in Europe since the Second World War. Public support for SFOR has continued to rise following SFOR's actions against, so far, 14 indicted war criminals. To the extent that there is justice, there will be reconciliation; to the extent that there is reconciliation, there will be reconstruction; and therefore an end in sight to the peace support operation.*²⁵

The reality of the complex political situation in Bosnia, therefore, is that COMSFOR has been obliged to pay due attention to, and often to divert significant military assets to assist with, the IC's non-Annex 1A implementation programmes.

The Way Ahead - From Coercion to Consent

The situation described thus far can be declared as a qualified success from the perspective of SFOR: the absence of war in Bosnia gives every appearance of being solidly in place as a result of the DPA compliance mechanisms. A universally popular and well-established ceasefire is in place, the EAFs have undergone massive demobilisation and are under control within their cantonment sites and over 200,000 weapons have been destroyed.

Indeed, Bosnian political and military leaders have regularly described the status quo as a 'Protectorate'²⁶ and have stated that they consider it the best of the available options at this stage.²⁷ However, time marches on and NATO is well aware that unless forward momentum towards a self-sustaining peace can be maintained, there is a risk that this protectorate will become a long term status quo. Or, as the NATO Spokesman has all too realistically pointed out: 'it is difficult for the Alliance to escape its newfound role of protector of the Balkans'.²⁸

24 NATO Heads of State/Government communique of 8 July 1997

25 Shea, Dr Jamie, edited excerpt from RUSI Journal February 1999, p 12

26 President Izetbegovic called SFOR an 'occupation army' at a Tri-Presidency SCMM meeting in August 1998, but most EAF military leaders limit their descriptions to less emotive derivatives of 'protectorate.'

27 The three EAF commanders all took long periods of leave in August 1998, their first significant breaks in six years, justifiably confident that SFOR would maintain the peace in their absence

28 Shea, Dr Jamie, edited excerpt from RUSI Journal February 1999, p 12

Realising the perils of allowing the current situation to become the accepted and acceptable norm, considerable staff work was undertaken in the second half of 1998, both in theatre and wider afield. The aim was to assess how best to move the process of military normalisation forward, avoiding the institutionalisation of an EAF dependency culture, and so hand back ownership of the security agenda progressively to the Bosnians themselves. This in turn would allow for a measured SFOR disengagement from Bosnia to proceed.

The underlying foundation of this new approach was the realisation that the compliance aspects of military implementation had almost reached their conclusion and that the current interpretation of the DPA processes was unduly constraining the options for further progress.²⁹ It was therefore seen as time for coercive, externally imposed compliance to start to march hand-in-hand with, and finally to give way to, dialogue and consent; in effect gradually to empower the Bosnians themselves as the leading stakeholders in their own future security.

Analysis showed that some existing forums could be developed to encourage dialogue on wider security issues. At the operational level, COMSFOR's JMC meetings and other less formal gatherings³⁰ could, and indeed already did, provide opportunities for EAF commanders to meet. But the JMC format, based on Annex 1A compliance measures and on the presence of all three parties and outside observers, did not lend itself easily to debate or true dialogue. The same limitations applied to MND-level JMC meetings.

A decision was therefore taken, in consultation with the respective EAF leaders, to set up a series of bilateral staff meetings, outside and in addition to the SFOR-led compliance mechanisms, in order to encourage transparency and a free flow of ideas. The first two of these 'briefing days' were held in November 1998³¹ and each of the parties subsequently agreed to continue the initiative by holding such meetings with SFOR's senior staff officers twice a year. There is a further requirement for SFOR, acting in its capacity as a military-political level actor, to set up a series of similar meetings with the FBH and RS Ministries of Defence; the

29 One frustrated EAF commander frequently stated 'Dayton is not the Bible,' almost as though it were a mantra, in order to stress that further political change to the military settlement was needed

30 COMSFOR hosted working dinners for the EAF commanders on a quarterly basis in 1998

31 The HQ SFOR-VF Joint Command meeting was held on 18 November and the HQ SFOR-VRS General Staff briefing day followed up on 20 November. SFOR's Deputy Commander and DCOMOPS headed up by the HQ SFOR delegations. Both meetings were publicised by the EAF's as major steps forward.



A French Air Force Jaguar A/E Fighter-Bomber aircraft of Escadron de Chasse 1/7 Provence flies a refueling mission over the Adriatic Sea, in support of Operation JOINT FORGE. Photo: Sergeant Mike Buytas, USAF, Wikimedia, Released

need was identified, but no such forum was initiated in 1998.³²

At the highest political level, the Bosnian TriPresidency's Standing Committee on Military Matters (SCMM) has been identified by the IC as the principal security forum for a future, self-reliant Bosnia.³³ In order to assume a leading role it needs to enhance its institutional structures, building its currently under-resourced secretariat into a central focus for Bosnia-wide security issues. Given that this runs counter to the interests of the individual FBH and RS Ministries of Defence, external assistance and political pressure will be required to create a capable and

32 All too often SFOR found that the communications between the VF Joint Command and VRS General Staff and their respective MODs were poor or, for some areas, allegedly non-existent. Policy and personnel issues and resource allocation were jealously guarded by the MODS

33 Chaired by the Tri-Presidency members, the other SCMM members are the FBH (Bosniac and Croat) and RS Minister of Defence and Army commanders and the Bosnian Foreign Minister; High Representative, SFOR, OSCE and IPTF senior staffers attend as observers. SCMM cannot overrule COMSFAR where Annex 1A compliance issues are concerned.

self-sustaining SCMM Secretariat. The IC continues to encourage the rise of the SCMM, but because it does not own the forum and it is not an Annex 1A issue, it cannot impose the changes upon it, however frustrating that may be.

In parallel with enhancing the forums for intra-Bosnian dialogue, a requirement was identified to tighten up coordination and cooperation between the international military actors: SFOR, NATO, OSCE, MA/OHR and overseas donors. Each enjoys a high degree of autonomy and none has the right to coordinate the policies and activities of its fellows. The result has been that, when they are not remarking on the anomalies and curiosities of the status quo,³⁴ the EAFs have become masters in playing off these interested parties one against another. Mechanisms to improve coordination remain weak and personality-dependent, but at least the existence of the problem has been identified and so steps to remedy it can now be developed.

Meanwhile, at the operational and tactical level, SFOR is taking practical steps to pass the baton to the Bosnian military authorities. In particular, it is moving towards handing over responsibility to the EAFs for the detailed and asset-consuming processes involved in accounting for the equipment holdings in their cantonment sites and for their routine T&M activities. This is clearly an Annex 1A compliance issue, but, in line with the aim to make the Bosnian militaries stakeholders in their own security, COMSFOR has decreed that they are progressively to take charge of this process. SFOR and OSCE will then assume a spot-check-monitoring role.

In line with this policy SFOR's DARE computerised accounting system,³⁵ currently being introduced for the monitoring of weapon and ammunition storage sites, is scheduled to be provided to the EAFs by the end of 1999. In due course it is envisaged that as a transparency and confidence building measure all the EAFs, as well as SFOR, will have access to the entire inventory database. However, even if the EAFs are likely to be largely content to adopt transparency and CSBMs at the tactical and operational levels, making progress at the political level is sure to be more difficult. As Ambassador Pardew of the US State Department's MSP has long appreciated and struggled against, the EAFs and their political masters are certain to resist changes if they affect the perceived vital interests of their individual ethnic communities.

Attempts to induce the Federation partners to integrate the VF any further

34 For example, EAF leaders have complained to the author about the differences between the policies of COMSFOR and COMAIRSOUTH with regard to the confiscation of EAF equipment for T&M violations and about the differing visions of COMSFOR and Ambassador Pardew for the future of the VF

35 The Weapon & Ammunition Storage Programme (WASP) deals with the rationalisation of EAF cantonment sites and is being supported by the Data Access/Retrieval for the EAFs (DARE) IT system.

have pushed them to the limits of compliance, more often than not because the Croats see their limited autonomy under threat; they will not allow their wartime successes and subsequently agreed rights to be prised away from them in peacetime.³⁶ It is questionable whether the T&E programme any longer has the necessary incentives to offer; indeed, with or without them, VF integration seems to have reached the bounds of what is politically achievable. The leaders of all three ethnic militaries understand that further downsizing is vital, because the current manpower ceilings are economically unsustainable in the long term.³⁷ The IC has declared its determination to help the EAFs draw down to these lower levels over the next couple of years.

COMSFOR has also taken a new initiative under Annex 1A to force Western ethical standards onto the EAFs' general officer corps. The aim is to ensure that politically active and corrupt officers, as well as those whose wartime conduct may have included indictable offences of interest to ICTY, are not promoted to the highest echelons. Similarly, those who already hold senior positions must also affirm their support for the DPA process and each general officer must receive the written recommendation of his respective Minister of Defence, followed by COMSFOR's endorsement, before being confirmed in his appointment by the Tri-Presidency.³⁸

A Bosnia-wide Inspector General's office, staffed by senior officers from all three ethnic communities, has also been established under this same initiative to monitor and initiate inquiries and investigations into alleged misconduct by EAF general officers. As an explicitly declared compliance issue, which is clearly central to COMSFOR's strategy for the way ahead, the EAFs and their political masters will have no choice but to implement these professionalisation measures, even if many may find them a bitter pill to swallow. It is likely to be accepted by all the parties, however, if it is seen as being fairly implemented by SFOR.³⁹

36 *The principal documents are the 1994 FBH Agreement, the 1995 DPA, and the FBH Presidential Orders of 6 July 1996 (Dual Ethnic Chains of Command for a 3-year Transitional Period) and of 12 May 1997 (Composition and Locations of the VF)*

37 *Under the OSCE-sponsored Florence Agreement the manpower levels for the EAFS were set at 52,000 (23,000 Bosniacs, 10,000 Croats and 19,000 Serbs). Rough analysis by HQ SFOR in mid-1998 concluded that an overall EAF total of about 20,000 (0.5% of the population), divided up along the same ethnic ratios, would be what Bosnia could afford and sustain.*

38 *General Montgomery Meigs launched this initiative, through the medium of Chapter 14 of his ITPs, within six weeks of assuming command in Srajevo.*

39 *After its battering by NATO in 1995, the VRS is particularly sensitive to the issue of fair treatment for all EAFS, but invariably falls in line if a measure is seen as being equitably imposed.*



SFOR headquarters in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1997. Photo: Tomasino, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 license, Wikimedia.

Moving beyond the MSP programme will also present a challenge that must be met by the IC. The process has almost run its course, having issued virtually all the equipment donated by its US and other sponsors and having delivered an extensive array of collective and individual training to the Federation partners in Bosnia and overseas. Now, as described above, the T&E process is meeting increasing political and military resistance in the Federation to the concept of further VF integration and, over in the Republika Srpska, the VRS is finally starting to show an interest in PfP-style cooperation with SFOR and NATO.

To move the nation-building process forward the Alliance must seek to meet this EAF hunger for greater equality of treatment and for closer engagement with NATO by concentrating not on the internal issues of defence, but on the external aspects of Bosnian security.⁴⁰ While not easing up on the impartial compliance mechanisms or attacking the fundamental concerns of the three ethnic communities, SFOR, in coordination with the wider IC, will need to encourage still further the enhancing of the embryonic security structures of the Bosnian state.⁴¹

40 Rejection by the EAF high commands for further integration is unambiguous and mirrors the resistance of the political elites: as one very senior VRS general stated privately to the author, 'But, if we had one army, who would the enemy be!'

41 Opinions have differed within the IC on the correct description of the means to achieve this goal; 'common security policy' and 'a state dimension to defence' were expressions both in vogue in late 1998

As discussed above, at the highest level this process will seek to reinforce the authority and practical capabilities of the overarching SCMM. Its secretariat must be nurtured so that in due course it can assume the *de facto* role of Bosnia's state (rather than entity aligned) Ministry of Defence. The Alliance has a wealth of experience to offer and must continue to do so in a proactive manner, both politically and on a practical level.

Other Bosnia-wide common institutions, such as the Inspectorate General, will also need to be given firm support by SFOR and the IC in order to maintain the military and military-political momentum for 'professionalisation' and for standards of apolitical integrity. Symbols are also important in creating a sense of common security and statehood; one idea that has been floated is to form a Bosnian Presidency Guard, drawn from and reflecting all three ethnic constituent peoples, which could provide a focus both for state and for ethnic pride.

NATO and its member countries will also need to continue to apply their efforts to educating the next generation of Bosnian military and political leaders about how the military should contribute to the security of the state and of all its citizens. Much can be achieved by taking Bosnian servicemen abroad, individually and collectively, to undergo courses sponsored by the militaries of SFOR participant and other nations. There has also been a great deal of thought given to the concept of common training in theatre for young officers and NCOs and for staff officers.



U.S. Army 1st Armored Division M-1A1 Abrams main battle tanks convoy to the Glamoc Ranges in Bosnia and Herzegovina on March 26, 1998. The tankers are going to the ranges to zero in their M1 Abrams at a distance of 1520 meters and to practice platoon or volley fire. The tankers are deployed to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the Stabilization Force in Operation Joint Guard. Photo: Private First Class R. Alan Mitchell, US Army, Wikimedia, Released

In order to calm the deeply ingrained fears and prejudices held by members of all the ethnic communities, this process of professionalisation will have to be comprehensive and demonstrably impartial. Individuals will need to be subject to regular assessment, both in the form of self-criticism and by external review. Changing mindsets is a costly and long term project, but is critical to any enduring success that SFOR may achieve.

Concluding Remarks

The outbreak of war in Kosovo has taken the limelight away from the situation in Bosnia and has made the prospects for forward movement towards an SFOR endgame in Bosnia less predictable; a slowdown in the military implementation process may well prove to be an unavoidable consequence of the crisis in Serbia. It will not be easy to maintain a clear focus on developments in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Mostar, while grander events are unfolding across the border in Belgrade, Pristina and Podgorica. But it is essential that SFOR and the other IC agencies charged with implementing the DPA adhere to their military and civil objectives.

In many ways the final phase, the gradual shift from coercive compliance to mutual consent, is likely to be the hardest of all, requiring resolute maintenance of the aim, an overwhelming reliance on dialogue and impartiality, and keen attention to local sensitivities. Sticking to this goal will require remarkable patience, persistence and dedication on the part of COMSFOR and his IC principal partners.

Above all else, SFOR must set a course that the EAFs and their political masters are willing to follow. Finally, in seeking to move the process of DPA implementation from compliance to consent, we would do well to bear in mind Napoleon's advice:

*There are only two powers in the world: the sword and the spirit. In the long run, the sword is always defeated by the spirit.*⁴²

42 Bonaparte, Napoleon, quoted by Alistair Horne in *A Savage War of Peace*, p 398



SFOR, Bosnia, August 1998: A Warrior Infantry Fighting Vehicle of 2nd Battalion, Royal Green Jackets, stands watch over the headquarters of the SFOR detachment in Titov Drvar. Photo: Mike Weston, Crown Copyright



Soldiers from 26 Regiment Royal Artillery wait to board helicopters of 408 Squadron Royal Canadian Air Force during an operation to search for illegally held weapons in the hills north of Podujevo, Kosovo. Photo: Corporal Jon Molyneux, Crown Copyright

The Kosovo War

This article by the Lessons Learned Department, Land Warfare Centre, Warminster is an extract of a much larger document entitled Kosovo: Lessons From The Crisis.

In both Albanian and Serbian history, thinking and culture, Kosovo holds a special place, especially by the Serbs who see it as the cradle of their nation. When the Yugoslav Constitution was adopted by the Tito government in 1974 through to 1989, Kosovo enjoyed a high degree of autonomy within Serbia, part of Yugoslavia, including direct representation in institutions at the Yugoslav (federal) level. However, the Serbs were the minority population and felt increasingly vulnerable in a province where local government and services were dominated by the Kosovo Albanian majority. This frustration and fear was exploited by Slobodan Milosevic who became the Serbian president in 1989 on a nationalist agenda, which included re-asserting Serbian control of Kosovo.

From 1989 onwards, Milosevic imposed direct rule from Belgrade thereby removing Kosovo's autonomy. The Kosovo Provincial Assembly and Government were dissolved and Kosovo Albanians removed from important state posts, which included most key positions. Serbian security forces imposed a state of emergency and enforced a repressive direct rule, which included chronic underfunding of education and welfare provision for the ethnic Albanian population. In response, the Kosovo Albanians set up a shadow administration, and drew on funds from those Kosovo Albanians who lived outside the province to fund welfare and education programmes.

Throughout most of the 1990s, as the former Yugoslavia disintegrated, most of the international action was focussed on the ethnic cleansing and intense fighting in Croatia and Bosnia, rather than the increasing tensions in Kosovo. However, efforts were made by the international community to try to convince Milosevic of the need to engage in dialogue with the Kosovo Albanians. In addition, the international community also pressured the Kosovo Albanians to organise a delegation capable of negotiating an agreement with Belgrade.

However, Milosevic refused any dialogue with the Kosovo Albanians while also trying to reduce international involvement in Kosovo. For example, an extension of the mandate for the Kosovo monitoring mission, run by the Conferences on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)¹, was refused by Milosevic in 1993. But as the situation grew worse in Kosovo, the UN, NATO, the EU, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the Contact Group², began to regularly shift their focus to the province.

In December 1997, NATO Foreign Ministers confirmed that NATO's interest in Balkan stability extended beyond Bosnia to the surrounding region, and expressed concern at the escalating ethnic tensions in Kosovo.

1 *The CSCE, later became the OSCE - the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)*

2 *The Contact Group comprised France, Germany, Italy, Russia, the UK and the US*

Led by the moderate Ibrahim Rugova, who had been elected 'President of Kosovo' in unofficial elections in 1992, the Kosovo Albanians pursued a policy of pragmatic non-violent resistance in response to Belgrade's repression. But this made little progress, and the continued repression by Milosevic's regime led to the radicalisation of elements of the Kosovo Albanian population, and the emergence of a new organisation, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), which resorted to violent means to try to achieve its objectives.

The KLA's escalating attacks on the Yugoslav/Serbian security forces brought more heavy-handed responses from Belgrade that involved direct violence against civilians. Open conflict broke out in 1998 following Yugoslav/Serbian security force operations in the Drenica region in late February and early March which left 30 Kosovo Albanians dead. Following this incident, NATO's concerns were re-emphasised in a statement by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in March 1998.

All acts of violence by both sides were condemned by the international community and in March 1998 UN Security Council Resolution 1160 imposed an arms embargo that applied equally to the KLA and the Yugoslav/Serbian governments. Belgrade's right to respond to KLA acts of terrorism was accepted, but only if this involved appropriate and proportionate action. This did not include the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of tanks and heavy artillery which rapidly eroded sympathy amongst the international community for Yugoslav/Serbian anti-terrorist operations.

Following the collapse of the Albanian Government in March 1997, there was a large amount of weaponry newly available to the KLA. In addition there was widespread local sympathy for their aims in the mountainous border regions. Funding for the KLA came from Kosovo Albanians living abroad and also likely from criminal activities. The KLA was a disparate organisation with no real structure or hierarchy but this changed once the KLA's political leadership was established. Hashim Thaqi became the key KLA figure at the Rambouillet peace talks which enabled the international community to make its position known to the organisation.

Throughout 1998, diplomatic efforts to find a peaceful, negotiated solution were led by the Contact Group. Intensive shuttle diplomacy between the two sides was conducted by US Envoy Chris Hill. But these efforts were rebuffed by Milosevic.

Because of the potential looming humanitarian crisis and the continuing repression by Belgrade of the Kosovo Albanians in Kosovo, it became clear that military options should be considered by NATO as one part of the wider effort by the international community to find a solution. Therefore, in June 1998 NATO Defence Ministers tasked NATO military planners to produce a range of options, for

both ground and air military support to the diplomatic process, and by early August the results had been reviewed by the North Atlantic Council. The options considered included a phased air operation, a ground force to implement a ceasefire or peace agreement and - at the top end of the spectrum - a ground force which could enter Kosovo against opposition in order to impose a solution. During the summer, NATO forces conducted a series of air and ground exercises to demonstrate the Alliance's ability to project power rapidly into the region.

Yet, throughout 1998 the violence continued to escalate. Yugoslav/Serbian security forces conducted large-scale operations against the KLA, who had moved from hit and run attacks to the occupation of 'liberated' territory. Operations by Serbian security forces were heavy-handed as they preferred to fight from a distance, using heavy weapons, tanks and artillery against positions they believed were occupied by the KLA. As many of these were in Kosovo Albanian villages, it was the civilians who lived in them who suffered the most. Between 23 August and 5 September, Yugoslav/Serbian security forces launched major offensives in Suva Reka, Lipljan, Stimlje, Malisevo, Glogovac and Prizren resulting in Kosovo Albanian civilian casualties, and significant population displacement.



Gunners of 26 Regiment, Royal Artillery, unload humanitarian aid parcels from a Griffin helicopter of The Royal Canadian Air Force near Podujevo, Kosovo. Photo: Corporal Jon Molyneux, Crown Copyright

By mid-September 1998, an estimated 250,000 Kosovo Albanians had left their homes because of the tactics of the Yugoslav/Serbian security forces. Some 50,000 refugees were still in the open as winter approached and if the fighting continued many would die if they could not get to shelter. Widespread destruction of crops and property added to the concerns of the international community about the growing humanitarian crisis.

On 23 September, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1199, which noted the number of displaced persons without shelter and expressed alarm at the impending human catastrophe in Kosovo. It demanded a ceasefire, the withdrawal from Kosovo of the Yugoslav/Serbian forces involved in civilian repression and the start of real political dialogue. Meeting in Vilamoura in Portugal the following day, NATO Defence Ministers affirmed their resolve and determination to take action if required and to begin the formal build up and readying of forces to conduct air operations. On 8 October, a Contact Group meeting in London gave US Envoy, Richard Holbrooke, a mandate to secure agreement from Milosevic to the requirements of UNSCR 1199. On 13 October, NATO agreed that air strikes could begin by issuing Activation Orders (ACTORDs). On the same day, Holbrooke reported to NATO that Milosevic had agreed to the deployment of an unarmed OSCE verification mission to Kosovo and to the establishment of a NATO aerial verification mission, both aimed to verify his compliance with the requirements of UNSCR 1199.

Following negotiations with senior NATO military representatives, the Yugoslav/Serbian authorities agreed to reduce the numbers of security forces personnel in Kosovo to some 12,000 Yugoslav Army (VJ) and 10,000 Interior Ministry Police (MUP) personnel. Despite initial withdrawals, these reduced levels were never achieved, and forces gradually made their way back into Kosovo. On 27 October, NATO agreed to keep compliance of the agreements, which had by then been underpinned by UN Security Council Resolution 1203, under continuous review and to remain prepared to carry out air strikes should they be required, given the continuing threat of a humanitarian crisis.

There were some doubts as to whether the October Agreements would deliver a lasting settlement, but the international community recognised the vital breathing space they provided. Those who had been forced from their homes would be able to return under the terms of the Agreements, thus avoiding a humanitarian crisis for that winter.

The UK played a leading role in both the OSCE and NATO missions, providing significant numbers of personnel for the OSCE mission. The UK also provided personnel for the Verification and Coordination Centre in Macedonia, which included a Brigadier as the head of the centre that facilitated liaison between the two operations. In December, NATO agreed to the deployment of a

force to Macedonia, designed to ensure the security of the OSCE verifiers, the first deployment of NATO ground forces to the Kosovo theatre of operations. Throughout this period, there was regular dialogue with Russia in the NATO/Russia Permanent Joint Council.

Despite a short stabilisation period the violence continued on both sides. The Kosovo Verification Mission played a useful role in giving the international community a direct monitoring presence in Kosovo. But it was unable, under the terms of its mandate, to prevent the escalation of the fighting. In late December 1998/early January 1999, Yugoslav/Serbian security forces operations began to intensify. At the same time, the KLA moved into territory vacated by Yugoslav/Serbian forces as part of their partial compliance with the October Agreements. Between 24 and 27 December, Yugoslav/Serbian security forces carried out a major operation in the Podujevo area, killing at least 9 Kosovo Albanians and forcing 5,500 to flee their homes. Heavy fighting followed shortly thereafter in the Decane area. A Serbian café in Pristina was attacked with a grenade on 6 January, and the KLA kidnapped a number of Yugoslav army personnel on 8 January (their release was subsequently negotiated by the Kosovo Verification Mission).

A particularly brutal example of Yugoslav/Serbian forces' disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force against the KLA was the massacre in the village of Racak on 15 January 1999, which left 45 Kosovo Albanians dead. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) described:

On or about 15 January 1999, in the early morning hours, the village of Racak was attacked by forces of the FRY [Yugoslavia] and Serbia. After shelling by VJ [Yugoslav Army] units, the Serbian police entered the village later in the morning and began conducting house-to-house searches. Villagers, who attempted to flee from the Serb police, were shot throughout the village. A group of approximately 25 men attempted to hide in a building, but were discovered by the Serb police. They were beaten and then were removed to a nearby hill, where the policemen shot and killed them. Altogether, the forces of the FRY [Yugoslavia] and Serbia killed approximately 45 Kosovo Albanians in and around Racak.

This single incident captured international media attention and also convinced the leaders of the international community that once again a humanitarian catastrophe loomed. Accelerated activity on both diplomatic and military fronts was now essential.

Despite a November 1998 Security Council resolution condemning Yugoslavia's non-compliance with the ICTY Yugoslavia refused to allow the Tribunal's chief prosecutor, Judge Louise Arbour, access to investigate Racak. Belgrade also



Pictured are two HUEY helicopters landing near an isolated outpost manned by soldiers of the Queen's Dragoon Guards Battle Group (QDG BG) on the road to 'Gate Two' on the northern border of Kosovo. The flight carried General Dr Klaus Reinhardt Commander of KFOR who was on a fact-finding mission. Photo: Sergeant Dave Miles, Crown Copyright

ordered Ambassador William Walker, the head of the OSCE verification mission, to leave the country when he condemned the killings, although this decision was subsequently suspended following intense international pressure.

On 28 January, NATO issued a 'solemn warning' to Milosevic and the Kosovo Albanian leadership. On 29 January, the Contact Group summoned the Yugoslav/Serbian and Kosovo Albanian leaderships to talks at Rambouillet in France. Greater emphasis was added to this summons the next day when NATO issued a statement reaffirming its demands, and delegating to the NATO Secretary General, Javier Solana, authority to commence air strikes against targets on Yugoslav territory, should such action be necessary.

The negotiations at Rambouillet in February 1999, co-chaired by the UK and France, presented the Yugoslav/Serbian governments and the Kosovo Albanian delegation with proposals for an equitable and balanced agreement on interim self-administration for Kosovo. The proposals reflected the results of previous rounds of consultations with the parties, US negotiator Chris Hill having spent several months engaged in shuttle diplomacy between Pristina and Belgrade, and would have protected the rights of all sides, including extensive provisions for minority rights. They recalled the international community's commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, provided for democratic self-

government in Kosovo and specified that amendments would require the consent of all parties. The proposals were put to the two sides by a team of negotiators consisting of Chris Hill of the US, Boris Mayorksy of Russia and Wolfgang Petritsch, who represented the EU.

The Rambouillet Accords were carefully framed so as not to prejudice the future status of the province. The agreement made provision for an international meeting to be held after three years to determine a mechanism for an enduring settlement for Kosovo. Independence was neither ruled in nor out. Both the Yugoslav/Serbian and Kosovo Albanian delegations were aware that Contact Group policy was opposed to Kosovo independence. Yugoslav/Serbian forces would have stayed in Kosovo under the terms of the proposed Rambouillet settlement to help give the Kosovo Serbian population greater confidence in the agreement. The first round of talks was suspended on 23 February, with both sides expressing broad agreement to the principle of substantial autonomy for Kosovo, and the Yugoslav/Serbian delegation expressing readiness to return to a second round of talks to discuss all aspects of implementation. In light of this progress, a second round of talks was convened in Paris on 15 March to discuss implementation of the agreement.

At the second round of talks, the Kosovo Albanians accepted the documents and signed the Rambouillet Accords on 18 March. It became clear, however, that the Yugoslav/Serbian delegation sought to re-open large parts of the political text to which they had previously agreed rather than sign the Accords. All members of the Contact Group, including Russia, refused to accept this backtracking. The texts included provision for a multinational military peace implementation force in Kosovo, similar to the highly successful force in Bosnia. This was essential, as the events of the preceding months had made clear that unarmed international verifiers would be unable to uphold any agreement. However, the Yugoslav/Serbian delegation claimed that the draft documents would have given the NATO force unprecedented powers of access in Yugoslavia, therefore they were right to reject the agreement. But this ignores several facts:

- *That the Yugoslav/Serbian team at the talks did not suggest that there was any problem with the document at the time;*
- *That the draft Status of Forces Agreement was similar to those already in force for SFOR in Bosnia, with Yugoslavia having agreed in that context to allow NATO forces to travel through Yugoslavia on the way to and from Bosnia;*
- *And finally, that the drafts were just that – working documents which were ready for discussion with the Yugoslav/Serbian side. But they refused even to discuss texts.*

On 19 March the talks were adjourned as a renewed Yugoslav/Serbian offensive got underway with reports of up to 250,000 internally displaced persons within the province. On the same day Norwegian Foreign Minister, Knut Vollebaek – the OSCE Chairman in Office - announced the immediate withdrawal of the OSCE verifiers due to the offensive which put OSCE personnel in direct danger. Their mission had not been the success that had been hoped for. The verifiers had put themselves in considerable danger as they carried out their duties, negotiated local ceasefires and the return of hostages. Their herculean efforts had prevented a humanitarian crisis during the winter of 1998/1999. The verifiers withdrew from Kosovo during the night of 19/20 March, without difficulty.

In a last-ditch attempt to persuade Milosevic to back down and prevent further bloodshed and military confrontation the Allies sent US Envoy Richard Holdbrooke to Belgrade on 22 March. But Milosevic remained intransigent. The nineteen NATO democracies had made every effort to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis, but NATO now had no choice but to act if a humanitarian catastrophe was to be prevented.



Members of the 2nd Royal Tank Regiment (2RTR) keep the peace by guarding the Serb Orthodox Church at Podujevo, near Pristina, in order to prevent the local ethnic population from destroying it. Photo Stuart Bingham, Crown Copyright.

On 23 March, the Prime Minister confirmed to the House of Commons that the UK stood ready with the rest of NATO to take military action. On the same day, following final consultations with Allies, Javier Solana directed NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Wesley Clark to initiate air operations in Yugoslavia. They began on 24 March 1999 at 1900 Greenwich Mean Time and continued until Milosevic agreed to NATO's demands, 78 days later.

It was known that a spring offensive against the KLA had been planned, and the likelihood of it being accompanied by civilian casualties, destruction and displacement was high. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that by 23 March 1999, assistance had been provided to 400,000 people displaced or otherwise affected by fighting within Kosovo, and to 90,000 refugees outside the province, altogether about a quarter of the total population of the province.

As the offensive intensified during the Paris talks it was clear that NATO had to act without delay. Despite the fact that the Serbian offensive was already underway well before the bombing campaign began, NATO was conscious that Milosevic might seize upon military action as an excuse to escalate further the tempo of his operations. But while it was anticipated that the offensive could involve large scale operations against the KLA the full horror and extent of the brutality came as a shock, as the Serbian forces set about the widespread ethnic cleansing of the Albanian population of Kosovo. On 9 April, the German Defence Minister, Rudolf Scharping revealed details of a Serbian plan, code-named Operation Horseshoe, the existence of which provided evidence that the expulsion of Kosovo Albanians from the province had been considered and planned in advance.

The Conflict Period

The UK was clear that military action was justified in international law as an exceptional measure and was the minimum necessary to prevent a humanitarian catastrophe. All NATO Allies agreed that there was a legal base for action.

NATO acted in support of the demands made repeatedly by the international community to Milosevic, the most important of which was the need to bring an end to the repression in Kosovo. As the situation in Kosovo rapidly deteriorated as Milosevic's forces wreaked havoc, these objectives evolved, including a requirement that the refugees ethnically cleansed from the province should have a right to return. But the essential goals of the Alliance's campaign did not change. NATO's action had limited military objectives: to disrupt the violent attacks of Milosevic's forces and to weaken their ability to continue these activities.

In late March, when Milosevic showed no sign of responding to NATO's air operations, the range of attacks was widened to cover carefully selected targets of high military value across Yugoslavia. It appeared that Milosevic had decided to

ride out the storm in the hope that the unity of the Alliance would crumble. This turned out to be a mistake on the part of the Belgrade regime. As the campaign continued, so Allied determination to succeed strengthened.

Attacks on mobile targets in Kosovo had always been part of the military planning, but as the horrific campaign of ethnic cleansing unfolded in Kosovo³ this aspect of the operation took on additional importance. Attacks against dispersed and concealed targets are always difficult, and so it proved in this operation.

There was widespread support throughout the international community for the action taken by NATO. A draft Security Council resolution condemning NATO's action and calling for it to be halted was defeated on 26 March.

The solidarity of the Alliance was reinforced when Alliance Foreign Ministers met in Brussels on 12 April. At this meeting, NATO's political objectives were confirmed and reiterated by Alliance leaders at the NATO Summit on 23/24 April in Washington. The breadth of the political and practical support from the countries of the region was seen at this Summit where there was wholehearted support from NATO's Partnership for Peace partners for NATO's actions (Russia and Belarus had stayed away). NATO came through the Summit strengthened and determined to continue the air campaign for as long as it took to achieve its objectives, illustrated by the agreement that the air campaign should be further intensified.

NATO's demands were also the basis for the principles later adopted by the Foreign Ministers of the Group of Eight (G8) countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the UK and the US) on 6 May 1999, which called for:

- *an immediate and verifiable end of violence and repression in Kosovo;*
- *withdrawal from Kosovo of military, police and paramilitary forces;*
- *deployment in Kosovo of effective international civil and security presences, endorsed and adopted by the United Nations, capable of guaranteeing the achievement of the common objectives;*
- *establishment of an interim administration for Kosovo to be decided by the Security Council of the United Nations to ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants in Kosovo;*
- *the safe and free return of all refugees and displaced persons and unimpeded access to Kosovo by humanitarian aid organisations;*
- *a political process towards the establishment of an interim political framework agreement providing for a substantial self-government for Kosovo, taking full account of the Rambouillet accords and the principles of*

3 By the end of the conflict, well over a million civilians had been forced out of Kosovo or were displaced within the province



A Challenger tank of the 1st The Queens' Dragoon Guards patrolling in Kosovo makes its way slowly through the streets of Podujevo. Photo: Corporal Jon Molyneux, Crown Copyright.

sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the other countries of the region, and the demilitarisation of the KLA;

- *a comprehensive approach to the economic development and stabilisation of the crisis region.*

The principles agreed by G8 Ministers set the framework for the proposals for an end to the conflict presented to Milosevic by the EU and Russian envoys, Finnish President Martti Ahtisaari and former Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, in early June.

In agreeing to the G8 principles, Milosevic accepted a settlement whose provisions were significantly more stringent than those which had been on offer at Rambouillet. Unlike the outcome provided for under the Rambouillet Accords, the Yugoslav and Serbian authorities no longer had any say in the running of the province. While the demilitarisation of the KLA was still a condition of the settlement, a full withdrawal of Yugoslav/Serbian forces from Kosovo was also required. Under the provisions of the Rambouillet texts, some of these forces could have remained.

Converting Milosevic's acceptance of the G8's demands into reality on the ground fell to Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson, the KFOR Commander. On 9 June, after four days of tough negotiations, he and representatives of the Yugoslav Army and the Serbian Interior Ministry Police signed a Military Technical Agreement. On 10 June, Yugoslav/Serbian forces began to withdraw from Kosovo. Their replacement by KFOR was carefully co-ordinated to avoid misunderstandings and the risk of clashes. As soon as Yugoslav/Serbian forces started to withdraw, the NATO Secretary General announced that NATO air strikes had been suspended. The UN Security Council then adopted Resolution 1244 which endorsed the agreements, provided a mandate for KFOR and established the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). NATO forces entered Kosovo on 12 June with no resistance from Yugoslav/Serbian forces. This well-organised and executed withdrawal strongly suggested the Yugoslav/Serbian troops were well-disciplined acting on orders from above, and that Milosevic could have halted the appalling violence at any time.

On 11 June, a number of Russian troops left their SFOR duties in Bosnia and drove through Serbia to Pristina airport. After consultation, the NATO commanders agreed that no action need be taken. While the Russians had acted without prior consultation with either NATO or KFOR, the deployment of this contingent did not create any practical impediment to KFOR's work. Effective working relations were quickly established with the Russian forces, which were integrated into KFOR a week later.

The air campaign was formally terminated by the NATO Secretary General on 20 June, following the completion, on time, of the Serb withdrawal from Kosovo. The following day, Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson accepted on behalf of NATO the undertaking by the KLA to demilitarise within 90 days, an undertaking met on 21 September.

The Humanitarian Crisis

The barbarity of the campaign of ethnic cleansing by Milosevic's forces hardened the determination of the international community to ensure he did not succeed in his aims of creating a 'Greater Serbia' in Kosovo.

In a huge international effort, the various aid agencies and humanitarian organisations in the region responded quickly to the massive flows of refugees. These refugees joined many others who had left in the months before the most recent intensification of Yugoslav/Serbian security force operations, and before the NATO air campaign began. NATO forces pre-positioned in the region in readiness for the planned peace implementation mission inside Kosovo helped the Macedonian authorities, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and others to cope with the crisis.

In close co-operation with the Department for International Development, UK military personnel erected 2,660 tents, distributed 129,000 meals, moved 120,000 pallets of aid, and provided medical treatment to 7,000 individuals. The situation was serious in Macedonia, where the majority of NATO forces were based, but even greater numbers of refugees were arriving in Albania. NATO responded by establishing a force in Albania (the Albania Force or AFOR), under the command of a British General, Lieutenant General John Reith, to help cope with the influx of refugees.



A Puma of The Helicopter Support Flight at a remote village delivers aid to it's inhabitants. Photo: Corporal Jon Molyneux, Crown Copyright.

Crimes Against Humanity

The UK, with NATO and the Contact Group, as well as in the UN Security Council, consistently condemned the callous and brutal actions of the Yugoslav/Serbian security forces in the period leading up to and including the crisis, which later became all-out ethnic cleansing. The UK Government condemned violence perpetrated by both sides (including the KLA). But the scale and scope of the actions by Yugoslav/Serbian security forces against Kosovo Albanian civilians during the conflict was in an entirely different league and included crimes such as:

- *Arbitrary killing of civilians was both a tactic in the campaign to expel Kosovo Albanians, and a tactic in itself.*
- *Albanian civilians experienced an onslaught over many days or weeks combining arbitrary violence and abuse with an overall approach that appeared highly organised and systematic. Everywhere, the attacks on communities appeared to have been dictated by strategy, not by breakdown in command and control.*
- *Rape and other forms of sexual violence were applied sometimes as a weapon of war*
- *There is chilling evidence of the murderous targeting of children with the aim of punishing adults and terrorising communities.*
- *The violence meted out to people, as recounted vividly, particularly in the statements of refugees, was extreme and appalling. The accounts of refugees also give compelling examples of the organised and systematic nature of what was being perpetrated by Yugoslav and Serbian forces, and their tolerance for, and collusion in, acts of extreme lawlessness by paramilitaries and armed civilians.⁴*
- *Another factor in assessing the higher level of civilian deaths in Kosovo is the possible Yugoslav use of civilians for 'human shields'. There is some evidence that Yugoslav forces used internally displaced civilians as human shields in the village of Korisa on May 13, and may thus share the blame for the eighty-seven deaths there.⁵*

The UK estimates that at least 10,000 Kosovo Albanian civilians were killed in Kosovo between June 1998 and June 1999. This figure is based on a variety of sources including debriefing of refugees, eye witness accounts, reports from Non-

⁴ All quotes above from *Kosovo/Kosova As Seen, As Told, Part I, Executive Summary*

⁵ *Human Rights Watch: Civilian Deaths in the NATO Air Campaign – Summary Section, Principal Findings, paragraph 7*

Governmental Organisations and media reporting. International Organisations such as the UN High Commission for Human Rights have used the same figure in their reports on the atrocities.

On 27 May 1999, ICTY announced the indictment of Milosevic and four other senior Yugoslav/Serbian figures (Milutinovic (President of Serbia), Sainovic (Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister), Ojdanic (Chief of the Yugoslav General Staff) and Stojiljkovic (Serbian Minister of Internal Affairs)) for crimes against humanity and violations of the laws and customs of war in Kosovo.



A Challenger 2 main battle tank leads Warrior Infantry Fighting vehicles over a bridge during Kosovo Battle Group manoeuvres in Kosovo. Photo: Petty Officer (PHOT) S.J. Lewis, Crown Copyright



An F-15C Eagle breaks away from a KC-135R Stratotanker after in-flight refueling during NATO Operation Allied Force on 04/04/1999, the air operation against targets in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Eagle is armed with AIM-7 Sparrow missiles on the fuselage, AIM-9 Sidewinder missiles on the inboard wing pylon and AIM-120 Advanced Medium Range Air-to-Air Missiles on the outboard wing pylon. F-15C Eagles fly Combat Air Patrol missions to maintain air superiority and protect aircraft in Allied Force. Photo: RAF, Crown Copyright

What caused Milosevic to Capitulate?

This article by Dr Anna Maria Brundenell, published in BAR 139 Spring 2006 looks at the role of air power in the defeat of Yugoslavia during Operation ALLIED FORCE.

Why was President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia suddenly and surprisingly prepared to agree to the West's terms in Operation ALLIED FORCE? Was it because of the supposed threat of a ground invasion, the air campaign, the withdrawal of possible Russia support, or other factors? Without the opportunity to interview Milosevic personally, it is unlikely that it will be possible to discover the precise cause; indeed, it is possible that even he might not know the full reason. Nevertheless, analysis of the evidence enables one to come to some broad conclusions.

Possible Russian Support

At the time of Milosevic's acquiescence, the Western media were writing that the withdrawal of Russian support and the threat of an imminent ground invasion were the decisive factors in bringing the conflict to an end.¹ How vital was Russian support to their pan-Slavonic brothers? What did that support consist of? Why did the Russians attempt to take control of Slatina airport at Pristina? Was it to boost Russian domestic prestige, to show Milosevic that Serbia's Allies were still supportive, or to force NATO to see Russia as a viable partner in the Balkans?

It has been considered that Milosevic conceded because he believed the Russians were going to invade Kosovo and take control of the northern half of Kosovo.² President Martti Ahtisaari of Finland believed that it was not so much the withdrawal of Russian support that was the decisive factor but rather that the Russians had their own agenda for the takeover of the northern half of Kosovo if Serbia were to lose control of the province.³ Ahtisaari was convinced that the Russians' six-hour march from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Slatina had been agreed between the Russian armed forces, Russian intelligence services and the Yugoslav leadership. This would enable Russia to take control of Pristina and the northern half of Kosovo and form its own sector there.⁴ Consequently, if two or three years later the Kosovar Albanians were to declare Kosovo's independence from Serbia, Russian troops would be in a position to enable Serbia to retain half of Kosovo. Indeed, President Ahtisaari admitted to me:

I think the [Serbian] military must have been aware that the Russian military was planning to bring troops from Bosnia to Kosovo because of what happened

1 Mokhiber, Jim, *Why did Milosevic give up?*, PBS Frontline, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/fighting/giveup.html>

2 *British Troops liberate Kosovo*, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 13th June 1999

3 Ahtisaari, President Martti, interviewed by the author on Monday 26th July, 2004; and also in President Ahtisaari, *Mission to Belgrade*, Helsinki, WSOY Press, 2000, English translation of his book, privately supplied, non-definitive translation.

4 Ahtisaari, interviewed by the author; and also in Ahtisaari, *Mission to Belgrade*, op. cit.

afterwards [and] in order for the planning to take place that must have been going for a long, long time.⁵

Both the former US National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, and the Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, also believed this to be the case. Brzezinski believed that Milosevic's 'sudden acquiescence was part of a desperate double-cross attempt, engineered jointly by Belgrade and Moscow'⁶ and that Serbia withdrew from Kosovo only after Russia had made a secret deal with Milosevic. Albright thought it:

Possible that Milosevic [had] cooked up a deal with the Russian military - perhaps through his brother, Yugoslavia's Ambassador to Moscow [Borislav Milosevic] - to achieve a virtual partition of Kosovo.⁷



Gunners of Sortie Troop, 22 Battery, 32 Regiment Royal Artillery, prepare a Pheonix remote controlled surveillance aircraft for another mission over Kosovo. This little aircraft proved its worth prior to the British advance into Kosovo, by transmitting real time video surveillance of the route North into Pristina. It is powered by a two-stroke petrol engine, has a ceiling of 9000 feet, and a flight endurance of approximately four hours.

⁵ Ahtisaari, interviewed by the author.

⁶ Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Lessons of Kosovo: Testimony of Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 6th October 1999*, p.2

⁷ Albright, Madeleine, *Madam Secretary, Macmillan, 2003*, p.423

Ahtisaari admitted that a plan of this nature would explain why Milosevic approved the peace offer that he and Chernomyrdin took to Belgrade:

Many are of the opinion that Yeltsin was included in this plan, or at least approved of it. Instead, the Foreign Ministry and the rest of the Russian Government, with the possible exception of the Defence Ministry and the Interior Ministry, were not aware of it. Neither was Chernomyrdin part of it. This kind of plan would explain why Milosevic and the Yugoslav leadership eventually approved the peace offer that I brought to Belgrade. It would also explain why Milosevic and his generals gave the Russians time by prolonging the preparations of the MTA, even though it would mean a prolongation of the bombings and was not in Yugoslav interests.⁸

Risks	Gains	Likelihood of Accepting Risk
High risk	High gain	Sometimes
Low risk	Low gain	Optional
Low risk	High gain	Yes
High risk	Low gain	No

Figure 1: Relationship between Risks and Gains

Ahtisaari believed that Milosevic was prepared to give up when he did for three crucial reasons. First, he realised NATO was determined to see the conflict through to the end. Secondly, the Serbian populace was becoming dissatisfied with the amount of damage to the civil infrastructure. Thirdly, even if Kosovo was to become a NATO protectorate for the present (and possibly gain its independence later), Serbia would still retain a sector in which Kosovar Serbs would be living and which would be ‘protected’ by the Russians.⁹

It has been stated that, under the terms of the supposed deal with Milosevic, Russia would receive a total of about \$8.7 million from the IMF and World Bank

... in stabilisation and development funds before the end of the year (and although half would remain in Washington to clear past IMF credits), the Zionist financiers and Moscow bureaucrats would be allowed to keep the other half.¹⁰

8 Ahtisaari, *Mission to Belgrade*, op. cit

9 Ibid

10 Hough, Warren, *Mysterious Financier brokered Kosovo Deal*, *The Spotlight*, 28th June 1999, <http://www.denverspiritualcommunity.org /SPOTLIGHT/SPOTLIGHTNewsJun99.htm#a nchor11857>

Milosevic would 'be able to go to Moscow if his position in Yugoslavia became untenable'¹¹ and would also be allowed 'to join the merger between Yukos and Sibneft, Russia's two leading oil companies, as an executive.'¹² In addition, neither Milosevic, 'nor the substantial funds that he had accumulated and stashed in Greece would be 'pursued or seized' by NATO.'¹³

According to other sources, Russia was paid circa US\$200 million by the IMF on condition that it supported the West's proposals for Kosovo.¹⁴ Furthermore,

*Moscow required additional IMF money to avoid default on its loans and wanted private Western lenders to reschedule some \$31 billion in bad debt.*¹⁵

Why did the Russians attempt to take control of Slatina? Let us presume, for the sake of argument, that the Russians invaded Slatina in order to establish its own protectorate within the former Yugoslavia. Had Russia attempted to reinforce its SFOR contingent in order to deploy part of that enhanced force to Kosovo, NATO and Bulgaria and Romania would have become deeply suspicious. Since Bulgaria and Romania wished to become full members of the Alliance, they would have been unlikely to assist their former communist ruler. What did Russia have to gain by its attempted coup compared to what it might lose? Figure 1 (on the previous page) shows the possible combinations of risk and gain.

From the Russians' point of view, it is probable that they believed their 'charge' to Pristina was a low risk with a high gain. They would have believed that the West would not want a major incident and would defuse any situation that arose. Consequently, what did Russia have to lose? Maybe a few men if shots were fired, maybe the situation would cause a minor incident, but it is debatable whether Russia would have been duly concerned. Yet, the gains would have been substantial. Not only would they have shown the West and their domestic audience that Russia remained a force to be reckoned with but they would also have retained their influence within the Balkans.

Russia was probably aware that NATO was determined to prevail, even at the cost of Allied casualties and/or unity. The Russians were probably also aware

¹¹ *Ibid*

¹² *Ibid*

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Ostojić, Zoran, former Serbian dissident and Director of Studio B (the anti-Milosevic TV station), interviewed by the author on Friday 17th October, 2003

¹⁵ Wines, Michael, *Russia and NATO, Split over Kosovo, Agree to Renew Relations*, New York Times, 17th February 2000, pA11, cited in Hosmer, Stephen T, *The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided To Settle When He Did*, MR:1351, RAND, Santa Monica, 2001, p44



Paratroopers of the 1st Battalion The Parachute Regiment take cover as they prepare to embark on the Puma Helicopters of 33 Squadron RAF. The lift was on the road to Pristina and was reminiscent of the film 'Apocalypse Now' as the noise, dust and swirling air brought a surreal quality to the occasion. Photo: Kevin Capon, Crown Copyright

that their future interests lay in supporting the West's demands rather than sustaining one of their former satellite states.¹⁶ Therefore, the disagreement over Kosovo was counterproductive to Moscow's diplomatic and economic interests, not least as Yeltsin wished to 'secure the money, technology, and expertise needed for rebuilding Russia.'¹⁷ Although it would have been useful to Milosevic if the Russians had supported him militarily, he knew that he was not popular with the Russian Government (due to his support for the losing side in the 1991 coup)¹⁸ and would therefore have believed that Russia would not sustain him. Furthermore, diplomatic support was essential to Milosevic; consequently, once he realised that

16 See also Dannreuther, Roland, *Escaping the Enlargement Trap in NATO-Russian Relations, Survival*, Winter 1999, p148, cited in Hosmer, *op. cit.*, p46.

17 See also Dannreuther, *op. cit.*, p148, cited in Hosmer, *op. cit.*, p44.

18 Ahtisaari, interviewed by the author



British Challenger main battle tank crews, of the Kings Royal Hussars, arrive in Krivolak military training area, in the Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, from Greece. These tank crews will carry out further training during the coming weeks whilst awaiting further orders. Their task was to monitor, verify and when necessary enforce compliance with the military aspects of the interim agreement in order to facilitate stability and peace within KOSOVO. Photo: Captain Jim Gallagher, Crown Copyright

Russia would not back him against NATO and had also withdrawn its support at the UN, he knew he could expect no assistance from that quarter.

If the rumoured terms of the deal are correct, Milosevic would have known that he had nothing to fear if Russia did not support him militarily. Not only would he find sanctuary in Russia but he would also retain his foreign financial assets; not least if, according to Ahtisaari, it was true that Russia was intending to take control of half of Kosovo. However, it is unlikely that Russia seriously intended to divide Kosovo, neither would they have been prepared to risk the wrath of the West by giving sanctuary to Milosevic.

Consequently, the withdrawal of the Russian support, although of importance to Milosevic, is unlikely to have been the primary factor behind his capitulation.

The Threat of a Ground Invasion

It has been suggested,¹⁹ particularly by members of various armies, that Milosevic's capitulation was primarily due to the threat of a ground invasion. However, this is unlikely. First, Milosevic and his inner circle would have realised that a ground

19 Naumann, General Klaus, evidence to the House of Commons, Defence Committee, 14th Report, Lessons of Kosovo, Volume I: Report and Proceedings of the Committee, p civ

invasion was not likely before the spring of 2000. Secondly, if the ARRC had entered Yugoslavia by force, there would have been heavy Allied casualties, which would have resulted in loss of support among the Western media and hence electorates. Thirdly, Milosevic probably believed that any consensus within the North Atlantic Council (NAC)²⁰ would not have held together.

If there was to be a NATO ground invasion, the decision to deploy would need to be taken no later than 15th June.²¹ The US believed that three months²² were necessary to prepare for a ground offensive; the British thought four months²³ were required. As permission was not granted until late May, ground troops would not have been in Serbia before October and would therefore not have had time to conclude the conflict before the onset of winter. Had NATO deployed ground troops in an offensive capacity, this would have resulted in considerable Allied casualties which NATO Nations' electorates might not have accepted. According to a well-placed source who had close dealings with Milosevic:

*[It would have been] enormously difficult and a politically and militarily dangerous venture [to deploy] a major ground force invasion and campaign. The Serbs knew they could use their experience in that terrain to make losses on the US and thought the US [was] smart enough to understand what they were thinking.*²⁴

Unlike the Alliance, with its requirement to limit casualties, the Serbs were 'prepared to die for Kosovo.'²⁵ Furthermore, Kosovo was ideal territory for guerrilla warfare and NATO ground troops would probably have fared badly against local forces. Colonel General Nebojsa Pavkovic²⁶ estimated that 300,000 NATO troops would be required, which was considerably larger than the 200,000 suggested by the UK MoD (Option B-)²⁷ and the US DoD.

Although the US had deployed Task Force HAWK to protect its Apache attack

20 NATO's policy-making group

21 Clark, General Wesley K, USA (Ret.), *Waging Modern War, PublicAffairs, New York, 2001*, p261.

22 *Reuters, 30th September 1999*, no. 1158, cited in Cordesman, Anthony H, *The Lessons and Non-Lessons of the Air and Missile Campaign in Kosovo*, Praeger, Westport, Connecticut, 2001, p244

23 *Reuters, op. cit.*, cited in Cordesman, *op. cit.*, p244.

24 A well-placed source who wishes to remain anonymous.

25 Pavkovic, General Nebojsa, *Frontline: War in Europe*, PBS, transcript, 2000, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/pavkovic.html>

26 Commander of the Yugoslav (3rd) Army.

27 US Official, interviewed on 24th September 1999 and NATO official, interviewed on 9th November 1999, cited in Daalder, Ivo H and Michael E O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., 2000, p34.

helicopters, it was not large enough for an offensive ground campaign.

The ARRC's KFOR in Macedonia was not much bigger and amounted to only 1/10 the size of Serb forces in Kosovo.²⁸ Even the ARRC's Commander, Lieutenant General Sir Mike Jackson, later admitted that 'that's no invasion force whatsoever,'²⁹ and that it 'was in no way a competent force to fight an opposed entry.'³⁰ Furthermore, the force that was sent into Macedonia was only 'deployed on the clear understanding that it would not be used.'³¹ Although it is not inconceivable that both Task Force HAWK and KFOR could have been expanded, it is unlikely that the NAC would have been prepared to deploy troops to KFOR in order to enter Kosovo by force.

There is little evidence from credible Serbian sources that the prospect of a NATO ground invasion was a significant factor in Milosevic's decision to concede. The Serbian Deputy Minister of Defence, Major General Dobrosav Radovanovic, admitted to me that:

*In a land combat they [the Yugoslav forces] would certainly be able to inflict casualties on NATO soldiers which would make the Western media and public opinion turn against NATO.*³²

Ahtisaari later acknowledged that he could 'not vouch that Milosevic gave in because of the threat of the ground troops operation'³³ and that it was 'never a serious threat ... If you [were to] put any percentage [on it], I wouldn't go very high on ground troops.'³⁴ Furthermore:

*It is quite incorrect to assume that the ground invasion was such a threat to the Serbian leadership that it was a cause for their capitulation. Quite to the contrary, the Serbs saw great political opportunity in all the difficulties they perceived the Americans to have when mobilising 400,000 troops and putting them into combat in a terrain [which was] familiar to the Serb defence forces.*³⁵

28 Lust, Larry J, *Kosovo Campaign Logistics: Task Force Hawk Overview*, ECJ4 Log Briefing, USEUCOM HQ, July 1999, cited in Hosmer, *op. cit.*, p111

29 Jackson, Lieutenant General Sir Mike, *War in Europe*, Channel 4, 2000.

30 Jackson, Lieutenant General Sir Mike, *KFOR: The Inside Story*, RUSI Journal, February 2000, p15.

31 A well-placed source who wishes to remain anonymous.

32 Radovanovic, Major General Dobrosav, *Serbian Deputy Minister of Defence*, interviewed by the author on Friday 17th October, 2003

33 Ahtisaari, interviewed by the author.

34 *Ibid*

35 A well-placed source who wishes to remain anonymous.

To summarise, any ground invasion by NATO would probably have suffered severe casualties, which would have led to a withdrawal of Western domestic support. It would also have been difficult to conclude the campaign and withdraw troops before winter. However, the continuing threat of a ground invasion no doubt made Milosevic 'wonder whether NATO was not up to something very real and serious in this field.'³⁶ In addition, had a ground invasion taken place, the Serbian electorate would have felt threatened (which, in turn, would raise doubts as to Milosevic's re-election). Consequently, it appears that the threat of ground attack was probably one of the reasons for Milosevic's capitulation.



*An RAF Harrier takes off from Gioia Del Colle air base in Italy for another sortie over Kosovo.
Photo: RAF, Crown Copyright*

The Air Campaign

To what extent was the air campaign responsible in bringing about Milosevic's capitulation? There were three aspects of the air campaign that were of crucial importance to Milosevic. The desertion of some of the Serbian military from their posts in southern Serbia, due to casualties brought about by the air campaign, meant that the Serbian Army was incapable of functioning effectively and hence unable to continue ethnic cleansing. In addition, the civilian demonstrations on 16th

³⁶ *Kaiser, Professor Karl, e-mail correspondence with the author, November 2004*

May at Krusevac, Cacak and Aleksandrovac showed the authorities that they were beginning to lose popular support for the war. With an army that was incapable of carrying out its mandate and with an army that was beginning to mutiny, it can be assumed that Milosevic realised that not only was he not winning the war but that there might come the day when the military would overthrow him. As the retention of the Presidency was Milosevic's key aim, it is reasonable to suppose that anything that jeopardised that would be of paramount concern.

Secondly, although the campaign was somewhat ineffective in Phases I (24th- 27th March) and II (27th-30th March), once it was escalated in Phase II+, particularly in mid-May, it destroyed much of Yugoslavia's civil and economic infrastructure. At first, Milosevic 'did not realise what the blackouts would cause in terms of the population's hatred of having no electricity [and hence] no TV, and therefore no media propaganda.'³⁷ After two months, the air campaign had deprived Belgrade and other major cities of much of their electricity and water. In order to affect Milosevic's control over his cronies, it was necessary to attack those cronies' assets; this was duly done, although not until somewhat late in the campaign. In addition, the US and EU put pressure on Serbia's neighbouring states 'to freeze bank accounts and deny transit to certain members of the Yugoslav elite.'³⁸ The names of Milosevic's cronies, as well as the bankers, police chiefs, party chiefs, and their wives, were put onto NATO's 'Black List' and they were not given visas. When the names of their wives were also added to the list, 'there was then big pressure imposed on Milosevic; at first, they were happy about this, if only to show Milosevic that they were faithful Party Communists.'³⁹ However, once the Yugoslav elite and Milosevic's cronies began to realise that they would not be allowed to travel, 'they then began to become seriously disgruntled.'⁴⁰ Due to the bombing of the cronies' assets, it is highly likely that they put significant pressure on Milosevic to concede.

Thirdly, since it was obvious that a ground invasion was not imminent, William Cohen, the US Secretary of Defense, 'argued for intensifying the air war and broadening and streamlining the target selection process.'⁴¹ This took place at the so-called 'secret' meeting at Schloss Petersberg on 27th May. However, it was not sufficiently secret to stop Russian intelligence, which was notoriously good at knowing what went on in the German system, learning the details and passing

37 Ostojic, *op. cit.*

38 Arkin, William and Windrem, Robert, *The Other Kosovo War*, MSNBC, 29th August 2001, <http://lists.virus.org/isn-0108/msg00191.html>

39 Ostojic, *op. cit.*

40 *Ibid*

41 *The Washington Post*, 19th September 1999, p. A-30, cited in Cordesman, *op. cit.*, p61

them on to their friends in Belgrade.⁴² Since NATO expected that its ground troops would suffer significant casualties if they had to fight their way into Yugoslavia, the Alliance probably wished to end the conflict as quickly as possible and ideally without the need to deploy ground troops. Consequently, towards the end of the campaign even the more hesitant members of the Alliance were prepared to escalate the bombing to whatever extent was necessary to bring about a conclusion.

By the middle of May, the air campaign was being enhanced and Serbia was coming under

*Insurmountable assault, which was causing increasing military and economic damage, undermining the morale of both the military and civilian population of Serbia and weakening Milosevic's political power base.*⁴³

Sir John Keegan later suggested that it was when the bombing increased that 'the Serb people would have started to make their discontent felt.'⁴⁴ Not only was there plenty of good bombing weather towards the end of May (and the likelihood that it would continue) but the numbers of NATO aircraft in theatre had greatly expanded and the Alliance was using bases in Hungary (Tiszla) and Turkey (Inçirlik), thereby making it possible to attack Serbia on a 24-hour basis. As a result, Milosevic would have realised that the bombing was going to be escalated, not least because air attacks had already been enhanced, and with it increased damage to infrastructure and his cronies' assets.

Would Milosevic have been prepared to jeopardise the support of the Serbian populace by refusing to surrender to NATO and hence bring about an increase in aerial attack? Even with the Serbians' love of martyrdom, particularly if it had been brought about by the world's most powerful military alliance, Milosevic must have known that there was only so much death and destruction his populace would accept. General Pavkovic later admitted that:

*If we did not accept this proposal, the threat/blackmail was that the destruction would continue in Kosovo, Serbia and the whole of Yugoslavia. The whole economic structure would be destroyed, the complete road network, the electricity grid, everything would be destroyed.*⁴⁵

42 Kaiser, *op. cit.*

43 Ritchie, Sebastian, *Britain and NATO Strategy during the Kosovo Conflict, Air Power History: Turning Points from Kitty Hawk to Kosovo*, edited by Sebastian Cox and Peter Gray, Frank Cass, London, 2002, p326 (his paper is unclassified but draws on classified sources)

44 Keegan, Sir John, personal communication, Monday 10th January 2005

45 Pavkovic, General Nebojsa, Channel 4, *War in Europe*, 2000



*An Irish Guards Scimitar, protects fleeing Serb refugees as they approach Pristina Kosovo, heading north.
Photo: HQ Land Command, Crown Copyright*

Even though NATO would probably never have carried out such devastation in Yugoslavia, it is possible that the Serb military, in order to have an excuse to the Serbian populace for surrendering, would have said that NATO would do so. In addition, the Belgrade news agency reported that

*Milosevic did not have much choice; he could have continued the war, which would result in the complete destruction of the country and enormous casualties as well as his probable overthrow at the end of the campaign. Instead, he decided to accept the peace plan.*⁴⁶

Although Keegan had famously stated on 4th June that 'air power had won the war alone,'⁴⁷ he subsequently admitted to me:

46 *VIP Daily News Report 1521, 4th June 1999, p5, cited in Hosmer, op. cit., p106*

47 *Keegan, Sir John, So the bomber got through after all, The Daily Telegraph, 4th June 1999*

I was perhaps being a bit expansive when I said that a war can be won by air power alone; wars are very rarely won by one factor alone ... but my feeling still is that it was the bombing which knocked the stuffing out of Milosevic and the Serbs.⁴⁸

In addition, President Ahtisaari suggested that the air campaign was ‘almost 100% [responsible] in bringing Milosevic to the negotiating table,’⁴⁹ not least as ‘it was the only game in town; now, let’s face it, there was no other pressure on him except his lousy economy.’⁵⁰ Having looked at the available evidence, it is reasonable to assume that the cumulative impact of the air campaign, not only against Serbian materiel but more particularly against the cronies’ assets, and the likelihood of its enhancement, were the main factors behind Milosevic’s decision to agree to the West’s terms.

Other Factors

It is probable that one will never know the precise reason why Milosevic surrendered when he did but, on analysis of the available evidence, it was probably the effect the air campaign was having on Yugoslavian infrastructure and, more importantly, on the interests and assets of Milosevic’s cronies. Nevertheless, the bombing was not the sole cause of Milosevic’s capitulation and the other major reasons have already been outlined. However, there are other factors of less importance and these are outlined below

Although it has never been established to what extent ‘NATO’s cooperation with the KLA produced any real operational value,’⁵¹ the KLA succeeded in forcing the VJ/MUP, during the battle of Mt. Pastrok, to concentrate enough tanks and artillery in order to defend themselves. By doing so, it forced the VJ/MUP into the open and thereby exposed them to NATO air attack.

Not only did Milosevic’s indictment for war crimes by ICTY⁵² add to the international pressure for him to capitulate but it also gave him an additional incentive to stop the bombing as he realised he could best postpone an appearance in The Hague if he were able to preserve a partially stable country.⁵³

Milosevic presumed that the unity of the Alliance would disintegrate and that ‘Greece and Italy would ‘fall by the wayside’ because they would not be able to

48 *Keegan, personal communication*

49 *Ahtisaari, interviewed by the author*

50 *Ibid*

51 *Lambeth, Benjamin S., NATO’s Air War for Kosovo, RAND, MR-1365, 2002, p56*

52 *The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, based in The Hague*

53 *Hosmer, op. cit., pp106-107.*

sustain their respective public opinions.⁵⁴ Furthermore, because Germany was prepared to deploy ground forces in a war-fighting capacity (which was highly irregular due to its policy of non-aggression)⁵⁵, Serbia realised that NATO was determined to use whatever was necessary to end the conflict. It had been agreed at the Washington Summit that it was imperative for the Alliance to win, and hence even major targeting errors failed to shake NATO solidarity: as a result, when NATO unity held firm Milosevic's 'belief that NATO wouldn't sustain its unity over a long period proved to be unfounded.'⁵⁶

The Importance of Air Power in Operation ALLIED FORCE

Although the air campaign had little effect during its early phases, when the members of the NAC increased the target sets to include major infrastructure targets in and around Belgrade, the campaign began to have substantial consequences. It is likely that Milosevic's cronies threatened to desert him once they realised their illegal networks and assets were being targeted. While the campaign was damaging only a small proportion of Serbian infrastructure, that would not be a problem; however, once their assets were regularly targeted and/or destroyed, that was a different matter. Lieutenant General Short, COMAIRSOUTH, later argued that 'destroying assets which had kept the Serbian leaders in power and in comfort was NATO's key to victory.'⁵⁷ Consequently, it can reasonably be assumed that Milosevic's cronies informed him that unless he was prepared to surrender to the G8's demands, they would not allow him to retain the Presidency. It is also probable that Milosevic was concerned that if he allowed the bombing to continue, and hence bring about the devastation of Yugoslavia, he might suffer the same fate as Nikolai Ceaucescu: assassination on behalf of the people.

After President Ahtisaari had warned Milosevic that bombers 'would step-up their destruction of Serbia's infrastructure, including the telephone system,'⁵⁸ Milosevic subsequently sought assurances from the Finnish President: 'is this what I have to do to get the bombing stopped?'⁵⁹ Milosevic later informed his politicians: 'We have no choice, to reject the document means the destruction of

54 *Ostojic, op. cit*

55 *Kaiser, op. cit.*

56 *Dick, Charles, Conflict Studies Research Centre, Sandhurst, personal communication, 13th January, 2003.*

57 *Short, General Michael C., Frontline: War in Europe, PBS, transcript, 2000, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/short.html>, p10*

58 *Judah, Tim, Kosovo: War and Revenge, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2000, p278.*

59 *Marshall, Tyler and Boudreaux, Richard, How an Uneasy Alliance Prevailed, Los Angeles Times, 6th June 1999, p. A1, cited in Hosmer, op. cit., pp92-93*

our state and nation.⁶⁰ Hence, it can be seen that the cumulative impact of NATO air power played a crucial role in influencing Milosevic's decision-making, first by creating a political climate conducive to concessions and secondly by making such a settlement imperative due to the threat of increased bombing. Although NATO air power did not succeed in stopping the ethnic cleansing, it obtained a cease-fire and negotiated settlement and hence the return of many refugees to Kosovo. In addition, 'the accumulated damage, [both to his] friends and to the population, threatened his position, as leader. Therefore, the air campaign is arguably the most important factor.'⁶¹

In my opinion, the air campaign contributed 75% towards achieving the operation's goals and Milosevic's eventual decision to negotiate. Other aspects, such as the possibility of a ground invasion, international diplomacy and Russian influence, were undoubtedly effective to some extent and probably constituted the other 25%.



A Puma of 33 Squadron prepares for a flight over Kosovo. Photo: Sergeant Jack Pritchard, RAF, Crown Copyright

60 Doder and Branson, cited in Hosmer, *op. cit.*, p93.

61 Vallance, Air Vice Marshal Andrew, interviewed by the author, SHAPE, Belgium, 27th January 2004.

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