

# The principles and determinants of Dr. Franjo Tuđman's national strategy

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**Abstract:** *The author gives an overview of the Croatian national strategy (1990.-1999.) as defined by president Dr. Franjo Tuđman, a strategy leading to the international recognition of the Republic of Croatia, liberation of the occupied territories and the establishment of peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. President Tuđman based his strategy on the philosophy of history of the contemporary Europe and on the right of peoples to self-determination. For Dr. Franjo Tuđman the historian: „The more the world integrates in a civilizational sense, the more it becomes individualized in the national and political sense”. As a statesman Tuđman based his political strategy on the following principles: 1. The rule of continuous interactions and open communication. (This means advocating one's own point of view; harmonizing policy with international standards; continuous interaction is a prerequisite for finding partners, and open communication for maintaining partnerships with those who have the same or similar interests). 2. Strategic problem solving: identification and prioritization. (The sequence of political, diplomatic or military moves at the national and international level is crucial to the national strategy's success). 3. The rule of neutralizing the enemy with isolation. (Although one third of the Croatian territory was occupied by the same forces that held control of 2/3 of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, president Tuđman's strategy was not to physically defeat the enemies. The aim was to isolate the enemy by condemning its efforts at the political, military, and/or international level. An enemy who is isolated in its desires is neutralized. Its political, diplomatic, and military maneuvering space is narrow, reduced to its own strength, and therefore predictable. Since the Greater Serbia politics never consented to any of the peace plans and political solutions, it lead Yugoslavia/Serbia to*

isolation and enabled Croatia to accomplish its legitimate goals by military means.)

**Tuđman's archive** serves as a starting point for the analysis of the principles and goals of Croatia's national strategy, i.e. the use of political, diplomatic, and military strategies to actualize an independent and integral Croatian state. The six books of **Tuđman's Archive** contain the correspondence of the first Croatian president with foreign statesmen, the Holy See, heads and representatives of international organizations, heads of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the former Yugoslav republics (this material comprises 1,397 documents) from 1990 to 1999..

**KEY WORDS:** National strategy, Principles, Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, Tuđman's archive

**Sažetak:** Autor daje prikaz hrvatske nacionalne strategije (1990.-1999.) koju je definirao predsjednik dr. Franjo Tuđman, strategije koja je imala za cilj međunarodno priznanje Hrvatske, oslobađanje okupiranih područja te uspostavu mira u Bosni i Hercegovini. Predsjednik Tuđman svoju je strategiju temeljio na filozofiji povijesti suvremene Europe i pravu naroda na samoodređenje. Povjesničar Tuđman je vjerovao: „Što se svijet civilizacijski više integrira, to se nacionalno-politički sve više individualizira“. Državnik Tuđman svoju je političku strategiju provodio držeći se sljedećih načela: 1. Pravila kontinuirane interakcije i komunikacijske otvorenosti (što znači dosljedno zagovarati vlastita stajališta; vlastitu politiku uskladiti sa pravilima međunarodnog poretka; stalno biti u interakciji i održavati partnerske odnose s onima koji imaju iste interese). 2. Pravilo prepoznavanja i određivanja prioriteta (redosljed poteza na nacionalnoj i međunarodnoj sceni od presudnog je značenja za uspjeh nacionalne strategije). 3. Pravilo neutraliziranje neprijatelja izolacijom (iako je jedna trećina hrvatskoga teritorija bila okupirana, a iste su snage držale i 2/3 teritorija BiH pod kontrolom, strategija predsjednika Tuđmana nije bila fizički uništiti neprijatelja. Cilj je izolirati protivnika osudom njegovih nastojanja na političkom, vojnim i/ili međunarodnom planu. Njegov politički, diplomatski i vojni manevar je skučen, reduciran u vlastitu snagu i zato predvidiv. Neprijatelj koji je izoliran u svojim nastojanjima je neutraliziran. Kako velikosrpska politika nije pristala ni na jedan mirovni plan i političko

rješenje, to je Jugoslaviju/Srbiju dovelo u izolaciju, a Hrvatskoj otvorilo put da može vojno ostvariti svoje legitimne ciljeve.)

*Tuđmanov arhiv* bio je polazište za analizi načela i ciljeva hrvatske nacionalne strategije, tj. uporabu političke, diplomatske i vojne strategije u stvaranju nezavisne i cjelovite hrvatske države. Šest svezaka **Tuđmanova arhiva** sadrži korespondenciju Prvoga hrvatskoga predsjednika sa stranim državicima, Svetom Stolicom, čelnicima i predstavnicima međunarodnih organizacija, čelnicima Socijalističke Federativne Republike Jugoslavije (SFRJ) i bivših jugoslavenskih republika (građa obuhvaća 1.397 dokumenata) od 1990. do 1999. godine.

**KLJUČNE RIJEČI: nacionalna strategija, načela, Hrvatska, Franjo Tuđman, Tuđmanov arhiv**

*“This is the age in which the question of the national sovereignty of all European peoples and their union into a federation of European nations can no longer be ignored, as it has become the historical task of the entire world, and especially of Old Europe. In its despair, it must bring forth a new spirit of wisdom and prudence ... to thus provide a sound basis for a lasting European order and new incentives for the global community of nations.”*

*Dr. Franjo Tuđman*

*Nationalism in Contemporary Europe, 1981.<sup>1</sup>*

## **Prologue: Respecting the right to self-determination is a crucial determinant of future history and global integration**

“Superficial historiography” considers the creation of national states in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century a retrograde, 19<sup>th</sup> century idea that manage to survive the French Revolution and the end of the revivalist movements of European nations. Moreover, leftist-liberal Marxist historical and theoretical thought considers the nation a product of

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<sup>1</sup> Dr. Franjo Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe*, published in English (New York, 1981), and then in Croatian *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi* (Munich-Barcelona, 1981) and German (Lidingo, Sweden, 1982). Quote taken from the fifth Croatian edition, Zagreb, Nakladni zavod MH, 1996, p. 269.

capitalism, a historical category doomed to wither away and disappear from the historical scene as historical trends in the world become subject to that scientific and technological development and global integration<sup>2</sup> to which the nation presents an obstacle. It also considers nationalism a pathological incidence in global integration processes.

Unlike contemporary “superficial historiography”, which considers nations and national movements retrograde phenomena, historian Dr. Franjo Tuđman spent decades researching this national issue, not only in Yugoslavia, but in Europe and in the world at large, proving thereby that the process of self-determination of small nations and their right to a nation-state is a prerequisite to global integration.

His historical and political works are based on the belief that the freedom of men and nations is the underlying prerequisite to all other values. Dr. Franjo Tuđman did not consider freedom an abstract category, a theoretical universality, but rather believed that, “in practical realization, it has at least three levels that mutually influence, permeate, and unify each other: freedom of state, freedom of society (and this means above all freedom of the nation), and freedom of man. These three levels form a whole, but such that one cannot occur without the other. There is no free state without free nations, and there are no free nations without free men. Nor, conversely, are there free men in an unfree society, nor free nations in an unfree state”.<sup>3</sup>

For Tuđman the historian, the issue of national sovereignty in multi-national states was “the fundamental issue regarding any form of freedom and democracy ... an essential prerequisite for the economic and overall free development of all nations, and therefore of Europe and the world”.<sup>4</sup> In the late 1960's, he claimed that the national idea in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was “experiencing greater affirmation than any other, and more than ever in history”.<sup>5</sup>

The historian's aforementioned view is confirmed by the growing number of countries in Europe and the world. “Towards the end of the last century (1871) in Europe, for example, there were only 14 independent states; shortly before the First World War (1914) there were many more - 20; and after the war (in 1924) there were 26. After the Second World War,

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<sup>2</sup> See: Dr. Franjo Tuđman, *Povijesne pretpostavke samoodređenja naroda i integracije svijeta*. Toronto, 1987

<sup>3</sup> Dubravko Jelčić. *Filozofska i politička podloga Tuđmanove ideje o pomirbi* / in *Dr. Franjo Tuđman – vizije i postignuća* (ed. Ivan Bekavac), // Zagreb : UHIP, 2002, second edition, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 215

<sup>5</sup> F. Tuđman. *Usudbene povijesnice*, p. 188

this number had climbed to 33 independent states in Europe".<sup>6</sup> At the end of the 1970's, he wrote: "In the summer of 1945, when the United Nations began to function, it had only 51 members. In 1960, 82 states were members of this international organization, and by 1978, the number of independent UN member states had risen to 138, and it is predicted that by the end of this century there will be more than 200".<sup>7</sup>

Analyzing these historical processes, Dr. Tuđman comes to the conclusion that "the right of all nations to self-determination and freedom...is confirmed as an irrepressible supreme principle of modern thought and historical-social development throughout the world",<sup>8</sup> and that this results in "the necessity to recognize the national sovereignty of all dependent, and therefore dissatisfied, peoples, as a prerequisite for the harmonious social development of every nation and their voluntary integration in accordance with the needs of modern Europe and the global community".<sup>9</sup>

His conclusions regarding "the need to recognize national sovereignty of all dependent, and therefore dissatisfied, peoples" and that "meeting the national aspirations of all European peoples is an essential prerequisite for the stability of the new international order in a united Europe"<sup>10</sup> are outside the range of "superficial historiography", which protects itself from the interpolation of its knowledge into current political events. In contrast to this view — which requires a set "historical distance" mostly due to political security and the opportunism of the author rather than objective historical knowledge — Tuđman the historian believes that "there are no coincidences in history", and that man reflects on his history not as the reality of the past, but rather as the past in the present, and "does so because of his future in the present, and the present in future history".<sup>11</sup>

In other words, the present is unknowable without a historical judgment of the past, and present judgments determine future history. Historical events have deeper causes — present ones in the past and future ones in the present. Thus, a historian is obliged to be truthful about past

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<sup>6</sup> F. Tuđman. *Povijesne pretpostavke samoodređenja naroda i integracije svijeta*, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 217

<sup>8</sup> Further: "It is logical and inevitable that it also finds its realization in other national issues in Europe", F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 266

<sup>9</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 267

<sup>10</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 228

<sup>11</sup> F. Tuđman. *Bespuća povijesne zbiljnosti*. Zagreb : Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 1994. (fifth edition), p. 9.

events in order to understand present ones and predict future ones. This conception of the social task of history and advocacy for historical truth upon which it is possible to build the future formed Dr. Franjo Tuđman's political convictions in the early 1970's, and resulted in his being isolated for nearly two decades.

His political destiny as a dissident could not have been otherwise in the non-democratic Yugoslav community, which was burdened with national contradictions and crises. The communist system in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) could not accept "the indisputable fact that multinational state communities ... are not a prerequisite, but rather a constraint for general social and national development, and are thus a source of inter-ethnic and international conflicts. The right of nations to self-determination can be realized only through the formation of their own unit in the international order, in the European and global community".<sup>12</sup> Accepting this kind of historical analysis would have meant that communist Yugoslavia would either pursue a coherent confederate constitutional arrangement, or even allow the exercise of the constitutionally-recognized right to self-determination by those republics which desired independence and sovereignty.<sup>13</sup>

However, his views were also unacceptable to the reigning world historical paradigm, since they predicted deep and lasting changes in the international order.

Dr. Tuđman summed up his philosophy of history with the phrase: "The more the world integrates in a civilizational sense, the more it becomes individualized in the national and political sense".<sup>14</sup> He considered the processes of national self-determination and international integration not contradictory, but complementary. The right to self-determination and right to state for each nation "is one of the basic and most significant issues for world peace and the stability of the international order",<sup>15</sup> because "only free and equal nations can join or unite into a greater whole".<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 268

<sup>13</sup> The political convictions and prison sentences of Dr. Franjo Tuđman (1972 and 1982) because of his views as a historian directly confirm his theory that the breakup of multinational states in Europe in the early 1990's would also be confirmed at the international level.

<sup>14</sup> Dr. Franjo Tuđman modifies his theory in various places in his works. This quote is extracted from a lecture entitled *The Historical Assumptions of the Self-Determination of the Nation and Global Integration*, 1987.

<sup>15</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 222

<sup>16</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 11

Free and equal nations do not fight against one other. Wars are led by empires and imperial policies on behalf of various supranational ideas and ideologies. Therefore “the historical necessity of self-determination... contributes to the rapid unification of European countries into a united states of Europe”.<sup>17</sup>

However, it should be emphasized that Tuđman the historian was aware of the fact that (small) nations can attain their states only if international conditions are met. Moreover, he considered these international conditions, i.e. changes in the international order, crucial for achieving the objectives of small nations.

That is why, in 1968, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Soviet Union, he wrote of the need for a united Europe – at a time when many considered this notion impossible:

*“ .. shaping European policies in order to revive Europe and remove it from the gap between two superpowers as an independent factor on the international stage– has become a historical necessity. The current situation is unsustainable...”<sup>18</sup>*

*“The European Community, which would, in the form of a union of European states, use the combined forces of European countries to prevent the further deterioration of the position of individual European nations could be the most suitable framework for actualizing the idea of co-existence in today's world”<sup>19</sup>.*

In 1968, Tuđman the historian wrote that the program of European integration into a “union of European states” (in today's terminology, the EU) was impossible to achieve or even imagine without Germany, more precisely a reunified Germany. Thus, he predicted that a reunified Germany was not only necessary, but vital. In other words, there could be no European integration without a reunified Germany, just as

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<sup>17</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 228

<sup>18</sup> F. Tuđman. *Evropa u procjepu između Istoka i Zapada: Ideja o europskoj zajednici nasuprot razudbe europskih naroda između dviju svjetskih velesila*. // *Forum*, 10-11 (1968), pp. 623-648. Further: “Europe ... as a factor for peace and understanding, global balance, and safety in Europe, the coexistence of states regardless of differences in their political ideologies and the obstacles in their social systems, the cooperation factor of small and large nations, and the unity of plurality based upon respect for the principles of the identity, equality, and sovereignty of each nation in the life of the European community, which would undoubtedly be a significant contribution to the victory of these principles in the world at large”, pp. 629-630.

<sup>19</sup> F. Tuđman, 1968, p. 644

there could be no reunified Germany without a European integration strategy:

*"Understandably, such a community is inconceivable without Germany. Therefore, Europe does not need a disunited and dissatisfied Germany, but rather a nationally united Germany...."*

*... Germany also needs Europe, and to a much greater extent. As things stand now, without the perspective of a united Europe and an alliance of European nations, it is difficult to envisage any real prospects for a reunified Germany"<sup>20</sup>.*

Ten years after these assessments, as well as ten years before the independence of Croatia, F. Tuđman the historian concluded:

*"The gradual organization and increasing advancement in creating a European community is a historical phenomenon of crucial significance for the future of European nations and the prospect of international order in Europe, and is of global significance considering the role of Europe in global relations."<sup>21</sup>*

However, despite the existing strategic efforts of the European Economic Community towards comprehensive integration, these integration processes were of limited range due to a lack of understanding of the importance of the national issue in European integration, both by politicians and by the historical sciences:

*"And in today's Europe, the national issue still remains a stumbling block, particularly for all those who do not know the origin of its causes, yet they easily overlook its historical essence and latent meaning in modern international circumstances."<sup>22</sup>*

Ten years before the emergence of fifteen new countries on European soil in the 1990's, historian Dr. Franjo Tuđman warned that integration processes in Europe were doomed to failure if the international community decided to prevent the right of (small) nations to self-determination and their own states:

*"Integration processes, aimed at the unification of Europe, would be doomed to failure, or would, at the very*

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<sup>20</sup> F. Tuđman, 1968, pp. 628-629

<sup>21</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 208

<sup>22</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 71



*least, set off on the wrong historical track if they were aimed at preventing the general tendency of the development of mankind, which is reflected in the unstoppable realization of nations' rights to self-determination and the appearance of a growing number of independent countries on the global political scene".<sup>23</sup>*

Global and European leaders implemented the détente policy in the 1970's and 1980's, a policy that ultimately resulted in the division of the world into blocs. However, they neither desired nor planned for – and so were not prepared for – the disintegration of multi-national states and the creation of new countries on the old continent. From today's perspective, it cannot be denied that Dr. Franjo Tuđman, long before the radical changes and dramatic events of the 1990's in Europe, warned not only of the historical processes that were taking place and that would take place in the near future due to the sequence of historical logic, but also warned of the steps that needed to be taken in order for the independence process of "stateless European nations" to occur peacefully through democratic processes:

*"Thus, the European Community lacks a program to resolve the issue of unfree and stateless European nations, and the fact that this is a question of the future of Europe is something about which there can be no doubt".<sup>24</sup>*

Unfortunately, global and European strategists observed the issues of "stateless European nations" and a reunified Germany through the prism of their particular national interests, and met the disintegration of multi-national states in the 1990's unprepared. The reunified Germany and some 15 new states in Europe changed the international order, allowing for the transformation of the European (Economic) Community into the European Union. Thus, the future of the European Union in the 1990's did not unfold as an (expected and desired) consequence of the strategic plans and objectives of international policies, but rather as an unexpected historical consequence of the dissolution of multi-national states (the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia) under the communist system and the Warsaw Pact, and that of socialist, Communist Party-controlled Yugoslavia in the buffer zone between the two conflicting blocs: NATO and the Warsaw Pact.

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<sup>23</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 217

<sup>24</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 222

## 1. National movements – the prime mover of changes in the international order

*The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their proper name.*

*Confucius*

Dr. Franjo Tuđman is the only Croatian historian who, through an analysis of the national issue in Modern Europe decades before the collapse of communism and the disintegration of multinational states, anticipated the trends and processes that culminated in a very brief period in the early 1990's. Only a comparative study of contemporary European history can determine whether he was the only one, or one of a few intellectuals, whose systematic and historical analysis of the necessity of national individualization to (European) integration was fully confirmed by history.

There is no doubt that a number of scientific studies and strategic assessments of the democratic world also contain arguments on the unsustainability of the nondemocratic communist regimes in Eastern Europe.<sup>25</sup> However, none of these analyses resulted in a synthesis of the historical causes and an assessment of the foreseeable political consequences of resolving the national issue in the modern world, as concluded by Tuđman the historian. For example, some assessments from the 1970's implied the possible disintegration of Yugoslavia, but they were unable to assess it because it involved "too many variables".<sup>26</sup>

Even individual geostrategists within the international order, such as Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to US "President Jimmy Carter, were aware of the crucial influence of national "variables", i.e. "That history clearly shows how the idea of nationalism is stronger than

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<sup>25</sup> The intellectual elite in socialist states prohibited the communist stance, but the current regime took all necessary measures to physically or politically eliminate and/or isolate their opponents.

<sup>26</sup> CIA. Yugoslavia. An Intelligence Appraisal, 27 July 1971: „There is, however, a great array of variables which will bear on the course of Yugoslav national development, some international, others domestic. It is thus possible to construct a variety of futures for Yugoslavia, in addition to the one perceived above as the most likely. The country could begin to disintegrate and be saved only by a military coup; or it could fall apart and descend into civil war; or it could split into two or more parts, each seeking support, including military support, from abroad.”

the idea of communism".<sup>27</sup> Although aware of the fact that "the idea of nationalism is stronger than the idea of communism", international figures only used these findings to draw pragmatic conclusions on how to preserve Yugoslavia without communists and communism,<sup>28</sup> and did not recognize the driving force of all national liberation movements.

The reason for this lies in the fact that the social sciences, both in democratic and communist countries, had an *a priori* negative attitude towards the nation and nationalism.

*"US scientists in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities are generally skeptical, and even hostile, towards such references to nationality (nationhood). It is considered old-fashioned, limited, naïve, backwards, and even dangerous. For many scientists in the social sciences and the humanities, the nation is a questionable category".<sup>29</sup> Most authors in the social sciences associate nationalism with intolerance, xenophobia, militarism, excessive national pride, and aggressive foreign policy. Nationalism is dangerous because it is "closely connected with some of the greatest evils of our time,*

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<sup>27</sup> The quote is taken from the transcript Zbigniew Brzezinsky, The Situation in Yugoslavia, presentation for the American participants at the 9th Congress of Sociologists which was held in Uppsala from August 13 – 19, 1978.

<sup>28</sup> Z. Brzezinsky in Uppsala in 1978 divided the opposition groups in Yugoslavia into "Yugoslav dissidents" who were not necessarily anti-Yugoslav or anti-Communist (like the members of Praxis and those similar to them). However, it was "in the interest of the US that to assist... centralist forces" in order to realize its first strategic objective of preserving Yugoslavia. However, Brzezinsky adds, "At the same time, it is also equally important to help all separatist-nationalist forces because they are the 'natural enemies' of communism as an ideology", in order to achieve the second strategic objective of US policy - "removing communist rule in any form". Presentation for the American participants at the 9th Congress of Sociologists, held in Uppsala from August 13 – 19, 1978.

<sup>29</sup> Rogers Brubaker: *In the Name of the Nation: Reflections on Nationalism and Patriotism*. Citizenship Studies, Vol. 8, No. 2, June 2004, 115–127. As he warns J. Zupanov (2002, p. 266), Brubaker's fundamental categories are nationhood and nationness. These terms are untranslatable i.e. they do not have an adequate equivalent in Croatian. For Brubaker, "nationhood" i.e. "nationality" is the desire to institutionalize a nation in society; Brubaker uses the term "nationalism" as a term which denotes a particular political ideology. "Nationness" is completely untranslatable – because it assumes the "nationalization" of public discourse which may or may not occur, and thus "nationness" is a term of extreme nationalism. J. Zupanov suggests the use of the term "events of a nation" instead of "nationness".

*with the sense that nationalism is... the greatest political disgrace of the twentieth century”.*<sup>30</sup>

In short, Western scientists believe that the “nation is a fundamental, anachronistic category and reference to nationality (nationhood), and even when it is not dangerous, it is not in accordance with the fundamental principles upon which modern social life is based”.<sup>31</sup>

The works of Dr. Franjo Tuđman do not follow this ubiquitous dogmatic conception of nationalism, but rather assess it as a historical force that determines national movements for the freedom and sovereignty of stateless nations. For him, “there can be no doubt that the national issue is a primary issue in European history, and that nationalism has shown greater integrational power than any other idea or ideology”.<sup>32</sup>

Dr. Tuđman opposes *the boogeyman of nationalism*, which was imposed on the world and on communism in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For Tuđman:

*“Nationalism plays – in either an exposed or more or less hidden form – a historically irreplaceable and intricately conflicted role.*

*A positive one – when it is an expression of maturity and self-determination, the aspiration of a nation to be recognized as a national entity and a state in the international community.*

*A negative one – when seen as a negation of other nations, i.e. as expansionism, chauvinism, and imperialism at the expense and danger of other nations.*

*In both of the aforementioned forms, nationalism is considered one of the key determinants of historical trends”.*<sup>33</sup>

The essential feature of Dr. Franjo Tuđman’s historical considerations and insights was the fact that he had the courage and strength to distinguish between positive nationalism as a determinant of national movements for freedom and independence and negative nationalism as a

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<sup>30</sup> R. Brubaker, *ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> R. Brubaker, *ibid.* After such an introduction, R. Brubaker – one of the leading sociologists in the US today – assesses the nation and nationalism. For him, “Nationality (nationhood) remains a universal formula for legitimate statehood”.

<sup>32</sup> F. Tuđman. *Nacionalno pitanje u suvremenoj Europi*, p. 194

<sup>33</sup> F. Tuđman. *Povijesne pretpostavke samoodređenja naroda i integracije svijeta*, 1987, p. 6.

historical force in the service of expansionist policies. It was on this basis that he sought answers to why atrocities and the worst disfigurements of every kind occur in history on behalf of nationalism. He did not approach historical events and phenomena with predefined criteria and moral categories. Instead, he sought deeper historical logic and causality. Thus, he concludes the following regarding nationalism:

*“Nationalism emerges as a lawful, inevitable incidence of historical, social, and international development as a whole. Its positive aspect has borne the noblest acts in the history of mankind, whereas its degeneration has resulted in the most shameful atrocities”<sup>34</sup>.*

Nationalism cannot be condemned *a priori* if it is the prime mover of national and liberation movements aimed at freedom and sovereignty, as the fundamental value and origin of all the other values of the modern world. However, the moment nationalism becomes the driving force of imperial and expansionist policies at the expense of other states and national communities – or when the nationalism of large nations hides behind supranational ideas aimed at subjugating and subduing nations and communities against their will and national interests – then nationalism is an unacceptable idea because it opposes freedom and human rights.

The upheavals in Eastern European countries during 1989 and 1990 occurred as pan-national movements in terms of (conventional or coerced) national reconciliation, with a twofold objective: a) the implementation of free democratic elections in the national states of the Warsaw Pact and opposition to communist regimes and the lustration of communist elites and Marxist ideology; b) republics in multinational countries under communist rule sought international recognition and the acknowledgment of their full sovereignty.

All of these upheavals in Europe were driven by the idea of democracy and social justice, the need to protect human dignity, and the demand for independence and sovereignty as a guarantee of freedom from the hegemony of multinational states or from Soviet supremacy. Moreover, all of these emerging states aspired towards Euro-Atlantic integration.

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<sup>34</sup> F. Tuđman. *Povijesne pretpostavke samoodređenja naroda i integracije svijeta*, 1987, p. 6.

Nevertheless, all of these national movements, as well as the bearers of these movements – from media and international figures to scientists – were most often proclaimed nationalist and right-wing.<sup>35</sup> The narrow-mindedness of such assessments, as a rule made by left-wing dogmatic political and scientific thought, resulted in the inability to acknowledge that it was the right-wing political option, and not the left-wing one, that was the bearer of the national movements for freedom and social justice in the European upheavals of the 1990's.

15 new countries emerged in the early 1990's: Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Macedonia, Yugoslavia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Moldova.<sup>36</sup> Soviet state politicians adopted changes and restructured the Soviet Union into the Commonwealth of Independent States, acknowledging the sovereignty and independence of all states. The Baltic states were on the path to complete independence. The dissolution of Czechoslovakia passed peacefully and harmoniously. Only socialist Yugoslavia broke up in war.

This entire sequence of events that marked the end of the Cold War and communism in Europe is yet another confirmation that “the idea of nationalism is stronger than the idea of communism”, and serves as the empirical confirmation of the fundamental postulates of Dr. Franjo Tuđman's philosophy of history - “the world is constantly integrating, while becoming nationally discrete”.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> The Yugoslav and Greater Serbian agenda (and their followers in Croatia) called Croatia's movement for independence fascist or fascistoid.

<sup>36</sup> The international recognition of Montenegro (2006) and Kosovo (2009) were a continuation of the same process.

<sup>37</sup> This assumption is constant in the works of F. Tuđman from the late 1960's until 1999: “The world is constantly integrating, while becoming nationally discrete”; Presentation at a session of the Main Board and all bodies of CDU, June 26, 1999; Glasnik HDZ, Zagreb, April 2000, XI, no. 227, 6.

## 2. The fundamental determinants of Dr. Franjo Tuđman's national strategy

*He thinks too much – such men are dangerous.*

*William Shakespeare*<sup>38</sup>

For Dr. Franjo Tuđman the historian, freedom was at the top of the hierarchy of values. He believed that man could not be free without a free nation, and that a nation could not be free if it was not sovereign and did not have its own state. Moreover, states could not be free and independent in the modern world if they were isolated in the international order. Likewise, a stable international order must respect the principle of the freedom and equality of nations and states.

His historical works explored the historical opportunities and circumstances on the basis of which unfree nations could attain their own state. The historical theorem is that – especially in the modern globalized world – small nations cannot attain independence and sovereignty if they do not create the necessary international circumstances, or if they do not seize the right moment in changed international circumstances and obtain consent from international institutions for their recognition. Small nations in the modern world, generally, lack the military and economic power by which to autonomously establish their independence. Thus, they must rely on the declared values of the international order and commit themselves to obeying international rules and standards, based on which they may obtain support from key factors in international relations. Based on historical experience, Dr. F. Tuđman often repeated that only 50% of the fate of small nations depended on their will, and that everything else depended on international circumstances and the interests of the international community.

Tuđman the historian's vision of Croatia as a free and independent state that can and must take its place as a Central European and Mediterranean country in the international order was reformulated in the political program of the Croatian Democratic Union (CDU) in 1989, which received support from the majority of the Croatian nation at the first free elections in 1990, and unanimous support at the independence referendum in May 1991.

The fundamental objective of its political program, into which Tuđman the historian had incorporated his knowledge

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<sup>38</sup> William Shakespeare: "He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous", Julius Caesar Act 1, Scene 2.

of Croatian national history, became the mission of Dr. Franjo Tuđman the statesman — to create an independent and internationally recognized Croatia.

President Tuđman was a key figure in defining and implementing national strategy. On May 30<sup>th</sup>, 1990, the first day the democratic multi-party Parliament was constituted, he openly and accurately explained the starting point for creating an independent and whole Croatia:

*"Based on overall historical experience, we believe that Croatia's state sovereignty – in a community with the other nations of today's SFRY – can be ensured on federal foundations as a contractual alliance of sovereign states."<sup>39</sup>*

In order to achieve the political objective of a sovereign Croatia, President Tuđman defined ten national strategy tasks or priorities to ensure its future.<sup>40</sup>

The national strategy is the highest form of state art, and a number of other strategies are derived from it to achieve the fundamental objectives of state policy.<sup>41</sup> **Tuđman's archive** serves as a starting point for an analysis of the principles and goals of Croatia's national strategy, i.e. the use of political, diplomatic, and military strategies to actualize an independent and integral Croatian state. Our aim is not to show political, diplomatic, or military history, but rather to show the conditionality of each political decision, historical event, and military operation through political, diplomatic, and military relations. In other words, we aim to

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<sup>39</sup> F. Tuđman. *ZNA SE. HDZ u borbi za samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb : Izvršni odbor HDZ-a, 1992, p. 29.

<sup>40</sup> 1. A new Constitution of the Republic of Croatia; on the determinants of democratic freedom of citizens and the state sovereignty of Croatia,  
 2. The creation of Croatia's new constitutional position in Yugoslavia on a non-federal basis, and a peaceful dissolution,  
 3. Inclusion into Europe and the Europeanization of Croatia,  
 4. Establishment of the state law order and modernization of state administration,  
 5. Spiritual renewal... In democratic Croatia, the division of people into first and second class citizens, winners and losers, suitable and unsuitable, friends and enemies, must finally come to an end,  
 6. Radical changes in ownership relations and the economy,  
 7. Demographic revival,  
 8. The return and inclusion of emigrants,  
 9. The necessity for changes in civil services,  
 10. Moral revival and work ethic.

Quoted according to F. Tuđman. *ZNA SE. HDZ u borbi za samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb : Izvršni odbor HDZ-a, 1992, p. 29.

<sup>41</sup> There is no consensus regarding the use of the term national strategy. National strategy is a term which is used in the US, general strategy is used in Great Britain, and total strategy in France.



understand the political and strategic art that led to Croatia's independence and integrity through harmonized political, diplomatic, and military action.

## *2.1 The principles of implementing a political strategy*

The national strategy for Croatia's sovereignty and independence was based on the historical knowledge and works of Dr. Franjo Tuđman; it was adopted by Croatian Parliament in 1990, and unanimously confirmed by Croatia's citizens at a referendum in 1991. The scenario through which this national strategy was realized is not available in writing.<sup>42</sup> However, based on the political philosophy from which this national strategy sprung, and on the basis of the documents available to us, we can conclude which three fundamental platforms were crucial for bringing the national strategy to fruition.

The strategic game with the goal of creating a sovereign and independent Republic of Croatia was based on the philosophy: "the world is constantly integrating, while becoming nationally discrete". Consistent with this philosophy, Croatia constantly adapted its strategy to the interaction of two processes in the international order: global integration and national individualization.

The political theorem of success (or failure) had already been made clear by national history: insisting (or counting) on success through support for and activities related to only one of these processes makes it impossible to harmonize them; in other words, there is no way out of a latent crisis or permanent conflict if the interests of the (new) nation-states are not harmonized with those of the international order.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> There are probably more reasons for this. First, during the time of the breakup of Yugoslavia, it was not customary in the world to write scenarios for the realization of national strategies; second, political changes at the internal and international level were so rapid and dynamic that each inflexible realization of national strategies was doomed to failure.

<sup>43</sup> Croatia made several attempts throughout its history to create an independent state, but all of these attempts ended unsuccessfully or tragically, since they did not – or they could not – harmonize their national interests with the interests of international factors. In addition, the international order determines the fate and future of nations regardless of their will; there are sufficient examples of nations after World War One whose fates were determined at the Versailles Peace Conference or by the agreement at Yalta, which determined the fate of many nations and states after World War Two.

Croatian politicians were quite successful in realizing their national strategy, and their efficiency is clearly seen in the following facts: in mid-1991, relevant members of the international community opposed the breakup of Yugoslavia and the recognition of Croatian independence (and that of the other republics). Nevertheless, in January of 1992, all countries of the European Community recognized Croatia as a new independent state, and it became a new member of the United Nations in May of 1992 –less than a year from its declaration of independence on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1991.

This success was due not only to international circumstances, but also to the principles by which Croatian leadership had implemented its national strategy. The three principles that ensure success in international strategic games of global integration and national individualization were affirmed by the implementation of Croatia's national strategy, but they are also universally applicable and can be placed within game theory:

1. The rule of ***continuous interactions and open communication***. The aspiration towards international recognition and integration into the international order requires constant interaction and communication with all key factors in the international environment. Being active in continuous international communication means a) advocating one's own point of view – explaining the reasons for national individualization and the goals of integration; b) harmonizing policy with international standards and modifying it for international integration; c) continuous interaction is a prerequisite for finding partners, and open communication is a prerequisite for maintaining partnerships with those who have the same or similar interests. An interruption in (international) relations and communication brings with it the loss of both strategic initiative and the ability to integrate into the international order. Ultimately, a strategy without diplomatic negotiations and open communication constitutes a path to self-isolation (or imposed isolation).
2. Strategic problem solving: ***identification and prioritization***. The national strategy defines the objectives that need to be achieved. Objectives are achieved through a series of political moves, diplomatic agreements, or the implementation of military solutions which ultimately lead to the desired objective. The sequence of these moves at the national and international level is crucial to the national strategy's success. Different priorities, no matter how logical they seem from the perspective of the local military or political

situation, do not necessarily lead to ultimate success at the national level. The proper selection of national priorities can lead to smaller losses and a more efficient realization of the objective in the end; thus, "ignoring local priorities" in crisis and war situations results (or may result) in having to cope with losses and defeats that cannot be avoided.

- 3. Neutralizing the enemy with isolation.** Just as the final objective of war is not to physically destroy one's enemy but rather to subjugate him to one's will, the objective of new states that want to rid themselves of a hegemonic and/or centralist multinational state regime is not to physically defeat the enemies of their freedom and independence. The aim is to isolate the enemy by condemning its efforts at the political, military, and/or international level. An enemy who is isolated in its desires is neutralized. Its political, diplomatic, and military maneuvering space is narrow, reduced to its own strength, and therefore predictable. Ultimately, an isolated enemy is doomed to defeat: without will, strength, and courage in having to face their isolation in the domestic and international environment. A physically defeated or destroyed enemy can be dangerous in the future if, as a neighbor, they rise as a victim of international injustice, a victim left without living space. However, an isolated enemy may eventually accept the standards of the international order and the new situation, once again becoming a (potential) partner.

These principles were affirmed in the efficiency of Croatian policy and strategy, which succeeded in creating an independent and undivided Croatia. The principles that Croatian leadership held to were never recognized by those who did not want an independent Croatia, nor were they recognized by those who did not wish for the breakup of Yugoslavia and a change in the international order in Southeast Europe. A distorted media depiction especially contributed to this. Therefore, it is necessary to illustrate the scenarios through which Croatian national strategy was implemented with a few examples.

## 2.2. *The rule of continuous interactions and open communication*

Diplomacy accurately distinguishes official meetings from state meetings, formal from informal meetings, meetings with representatives of state institutions from meetings with

the opposition, etc. In official and inter-state relations, the official view of the state and of official institutions is more significant than the intellectual foundation of the message or the views of the opposition. Thus, in diplomatic, international relations, the speaker is more important than the message being conveyed. The state apparatus and the power of its institutions stand behind official messages and have the power to implement their policies.

The political system in Croatia was democratized after the first free elections, but the center of political, diplomatic, military, and economic power still remained in the federal institutions in Belgrade. President Tuđman used all methods possible to connect Croatia to the international political, public, cultural, and scientific world, in order to have as many open channels through which he could promote official Croatian policy.

For these reasons, and not only for the sake of the policy of unity between Croatians at home and abroad, dozens of appointed officials and ministers had dual citizenship. Even Prime Minister Hrvoje Šarinić<sup>44</sup> had both Croatian and French citizenship. President Tuđman offered Rudolph George Perpich, the Governor of Minnesota, the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, at a time when official US policy supported the survival of Yugoslavia.<sup>45</sup> President Tuđman wanted Nobel Prize winner Vladimir Prelog to accept the position of president or honorary president of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, stating "Your contribution would greatly help us, especially in the affirmation of our homeland in the world of thought and knowledge".<sup>46</sup>

Every week during 1991 and 1992, President Tuđman received a number of ambassadors from Belgrade and consuls accredited in Zagreb. There were also many foreign journalists and media agencies to whom he frequently gave interviews and through whom he explained Croatian politics

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<sup>44</sup> Hrvoje Šarinić, President of the fourth Croatian Government, August 1992 – April 1993.

<sup>45</sup> Rudolph George „Rudy“ Perpich was the longest-running governor of Minnesota (1976-1979, 1983-1991). He was born in the US, but has Croatian roots, and was the only Catholic governor in the US. The US citizen and multimillionaire Milan Panić received US approval to become Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992-1993): "While Mr. Panić was present in Belgrade, and appointed as Prime Minister, I asked governor Perpich to come to Croatia. And he came to Croatia, but he did not receive approval to become the a minister in the Croatian Government" (Minutes from the second session of the Presidential Council of the Republic of Croatia, held at the Presidential Palace on May 25, 1996.)

<sup>46</sup> Professor Vladimir Prelog dismissed this proposal due to his age (85 years) and health, which "does not allow me to accept your flattering invitation" (Letter of Vladimir Prelog, Zurich, April 23, 1991).

to the global public. All the while, he also attended meetings of the expanded SFRY Presidency, the highest political body and supreme commander of the Yugoslav National Army (YNA). The presidents (and presidencies) of the republics of the SFRY Presidency were only invited members without voting rights.

In the 1990's, President Tuđman often used to say that he would "even negotiate with the devil himself if it would save lives and bring peace". Immediately after the outbreak of the "Log Revolution" on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 1990, he requested a conversation with Slobodan Milošević in order find a political solution. At the suggestion of Borisav Jović (August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1990), Milošević denied President Tuđman's request.<sup>47</sup> Jović wrote that President Tuđman sought a conversation regarding the issue of Croatian-Serbian relations at the highest level again in October of 1990.<sup>48</sup> President Tuđman proposed a third conversation with Serbian leaders during the dramatic hours in which the High Command of YNA made its final decision regarding the implementation of a military coup on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1991:

*Mesić came with a message from Tuđman. Tuđman proposed a secret conversation between Jović, Milošević, Mesić, and Tuđman. They would discuss a method by which to solve the Yugoslav crisis in light of Serbian-Croatian relations. He asked that Milošević be informed about this and be told that it had nothing to do with the outcome of tomorrow's Croatian-Serbian discussion, which he will head. I agreed and told him that, at the meeting, Serbia would give Croatians consent to leave Yugoslavia provided that they give consent that the Serbians in Krajina remain in Yugoslavia. Under this condition, everything can be solved, but otherwise there*

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<sup>47</sup> "I suggested to Slobodan to not accept the meeting with Tuđman for several reasons... Discussions should be done only within federation meetings. The same applies for Slovenia. They should all be forced into collective meetings. Slobodan agrees." B. Jović, 1996, pp. 182-183.

<sup>48</sup> *October 4th 1990, Franjo Tuđman wishes to converse with me after the session of the Presidency. He thinks that what 'Milošević and I are doing' (regarding the rebel Serbs in Krajina) is leading to a civil war and the breakup of the state, and that we will have to deal with historical responsibility in Serbia. (Insolence. He wants to pass his responsibility onto us!) He wants us to meet and have a discussion. He asks me to pass this message onto Slobodan Milošević, because the fate of Yugoslavia relies on us.*

*...With regard to Milošević, I told him that the three of us do not have the right to solve the fate of Yugoslavia. We need to have a collective discussion with all the republics, but I will pass on his wish to Milošević.*

*October 5th 1990, I am informing Milošević on Tuđman's message. He says that Tuđman should come. I advise him. Slobodan withdraws. (B. Jović, 1996, p. 202)*

*will be no deal. Let him mentally prepare himself... (B. Jović, Diary – January 24, 1991)*

Since President Tuđman's proposed meetings did not take place in January and February, he wrote a letter addressed directly to Milošević:

*In the conclusion of discussions between the heads of the Republic of Serbia and the Republic of Croatia – which took place on January 25<sup>th</sup> in Belgrade – we agreed that it is in our common interest to continue these discussions in order to find a democratic solution to this current state-political crisis.*

*With regards to this agreement, I propose that we hold a meeting as soon as possible in Zagreb in order to discuss the need for the assistance of experts on certain issues.<sup>49</sup>*

Five months after the first attempt at discussing the Serbian rebellion in Croatia at the highest national level, a bilateral meeting was held in Karađorđevo on March 25<sup>th</sup>, 1991. On March 15<sup>th</sup>, 1991, Jović resigned as President of the Presidency of SFRY, and thus was not present.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, there was no reason for Mesić to attend the bilateral meeting as the Croatian member of the Presidency.<sup>51</sup>

The dramatic circumstances that followed on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, 1991 – when YNA leadership was looking for any excuse to execute a military coup, when the Presidency of the SFRY was in disarray due to the resignations of B. Jović, B. Kostić, and N. Bućin, when Milošević stated “Yugoslavia is finished... Yugoslavia has entered its final throes. The Republic of Serbia will not recognize any decision of the Presidency” – were taken advantage of by Presidents Dr. Franjo Tuđman and Milan Kučan on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1991 to make an appeal all the presidents of the republics:

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<sup>49</sup> Letter from Dr. Franjo Tuđman, President of the Republic of Croatia, to Slobodan Milošević, President of the Republic of Serbia, March 8, 1991.

<sup>50</sup> B. Jović resigned because the Presidency of SFRY, even after the third session, had not accepted the “Decision to declare a state of emergency”. B. Jović resigned in agreement with S. Milošević and Veljko Kadijević so that the High Command of YNA would have a reason to declare a state of emergency in the state without the decision of the Presidency of SFRY (B. Jović, 1996, p. 296 /March 13, 1991/ The Presidency stopped functioning after the resignations of Borisav Jović, March 15, 1991, and of Kostić and Bućin on March 16 (representatives of Vojvodina and Montenegro in the Presidency).

<sup>51</sup> From the chronology of agreements made at the meeting in Karađorđevo, it can be concluded that the claims of the media and of Mesić regarding the division of Bosnia were groundless.

*Due to the situation which arose from Mr. Jović's resignation, and the statement of Mr. Milošević, the President of the Republic of Serbia, we believe it is necessary to hold a meeting of the highest government representatives of the sovereign republics in order to find a democratic way out of this political and state crisis.*

*To this end, we propose a meeting of the presidents of the republics, specifically the presidents of the Presidencies of all of the republics, where we might discuss the current situation and the proposals for a democratic way out of this crisis.<sup>52</sup>*

The initiative for joint meetings of the presidents of the republics was made by Presidents Tuđman and Kučan, and the decision to do so was made by the SFRY Presidency, which, after the withdrawal of resignations (B. Jović, B. Kostić, N. Bućin) at a session in Belgrade on March 21<sup>st</sup>, 1991, proposed meetings "of all federal units in order to find solutions". Based on the Croatian-Slovenian initiative and consent from the SFRY Presidency, a cycle of six political meetings of the presidents of the republics was held.<sup>53</sup>

At these meetings, the presidents of the republics failed to agree on a way out of the Yugoslav constitutional crisis, and differences in national interests were irreconcilable from beginning to end. Croatia and Slovenia advocated the structure of Yugoslavia as *an alliance of sovereign states*, while Serbia and Montenegro were of the opinion that Yugoslavia is and must remain a *federal state*. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia sought to reconcile the irreconcilable. The fact was obvious that Yugoslavia was unsustainable. There was no consent over who was sovereign and who had the right to self-determination: nations or republics. Serbia was of the opinion that nations have the right to self-determination, but not republics, since the borders as they stood (created after World War II by a special council of the Anti-Fascist Council for the National

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<sup>52</sup> Letter from President Franjo Tuđman to Milan Kučan, President of the Presidency of Slovenia, June 18, 1991.

<sup>53</sup> At the suggestion of President Tuđman, the first meeting of the presidents of the republics was held in Split on March 3, 1991; the second meeting was held in Belgrade on April 4, 1991; the third meeting was held in Brdo near Kranj on April 11, 1991; the fourth meeting was held in Ohrid on April 18, 1991; the fifth meeting in Cetinje on April 29, 1991; and the sixth meeting in Sarajevo on June 6, 1991. The transcripts from all the meetings (except the one in Belgrade on April 4, 1991) are available to researchers in order for it to be known what was discussed at these meetings and who represented which view.

Liberation of Yugoslavia) were administrative, and therefore an open issue and subject to change.

This cycle of meetings did not result in an agreement, nor did they result in political programs and arguments yet unknown to the public. However, the mere fact that these meetings even took place changed the political scene and political relations in Yugoslavia. For some, according to Dr. Smilja Avramov, it was "... a step towards the extra-constitutional regulation of relations"<sup>54</sup>.

The cycle of political negotiations did not result in an agreement, but it did pave the way for Croatian independence and sovereignty. Continuous activity and insistence on democratic forms of communication resulted in the following: a) federal institutions lost their status as the centers of political power, b) the center of political power was irrevocably transferred to the republics, c) an agreement was not reached on the content of the referendum questions, but there was no dispute since the referendum was no longer the only necessary path towards independence, and d) through intensive and open communication, the rearrangement of temporary and permanent partnerships between the republics began – at least concerning the resolution to the Yugoslav constitutional crisis.

### 2.3 Strategic problem solving: identification and prioritization.

Dr. Zdravko Tomac accurately described the views of the public, the opposition, and even some of the members of CDU concerning Dr. Franjo Tuđman's readiness to negotiate and sign various agreements:

*In the Croatian public, even among a part of the CDU, in the National Unity Government, and in Croatian Parliament, especially among the opposition, Dr. Franjo Tuđman was often widely criticized and sometimes marked as a national traitor for his strategy of **buying time**, for his negotiations with Slobodan Milošević, forgiving in to Martić and Babić in Croatia, for his attempt to sign a Serbian-Croatian agreement on the demarcation of Croatian and Serbian territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for accepting numerous ultimatums from the international community at the expense of*

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<sup>54</sup> S. Avramov. *Postherojski rat Zapada protiv Jugoslavije*. Veternik: LDI, 1997, p. 140.



*Croatian interests, both in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.*<sup>55</sup>

It is obvious that the public, and even some political actors, understood neither Tuđman's political negotiation strategy nor the fact that he was often alone in these negotiations, opposed by both friends and enemies.<sup>56</sup> President Tuđman received recognition for his negotiation, persuasion, communication policies, and tactics at a later stage: "... there is no doubt that Franjo Tuđman's strategy was correct, because he managed to free the occupied part of Croatia, overthrow the quasi-Serbian state in Croatia through Operations *Flash and Storm* and, finally, peacefully integrate Baranja and Eastern Slavonia".<sup>57</sup>

There is no doubt that the success of President Tuđman's strategy was due to his knowledge of how to recognize and define priorities: the sequence of decisions, procedures, and operations is critical to the success of a strategy. One who is able to predict his opponents' actions is also able to anticipate events and is prepared to respond to them promptly.

President Tuđman had an advantage over his rivals, opponents, and enemies because he had "privileged" information — his knowledge of history allowed him to anticipate events. This provided him with a strategic advantage, as he possessed *advance information*: information about events before they even occurred.

*Let us examine a very similar situation, regarding our multi-national relations and republics in the Soviet Union. There they proceeded from a Stalinist regime to regulating mutual relations between republics and nations, both in relation to the reality of those six republics that chose independence and in relation to those nine who wanted to maintain the federation. And based on this, new contracts and agreements were signed. And we insist on returning to a centralist federation, and that the federation should determine everything, even procedural issues regarding referendums in certain republics. And we are more a part of Europe than they are, and we are increasingly*

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<sup>55</sup> Z. Tomac. *Pledoaje za istinu o dr. Franji Tuđmanu*. **Kolo** 3, 2010.

<sup>56</sup> Z. Tomac himself admits: "I often personally ... criticized Dr. Tuđman and his policies, and several times I even commented ironically how he should be prohibited from owning a pen when attending negotiations because he has the irresistible need to immediately sign every agreement and ultimatum that is presented to him" (Z. Tomac, **Kolo** 3, 2010)

<sup>57</sup> Z. Tomac, *ibid.*

*subject to the democratic changes taking place, as well as to international factors.*<sup>58</sup>

In April 1991, President Tuđman reviewed the processes that were taking place in the USSR and their effects on the international order and, indirectly, on the fate of Croatia and Yugoslavia. He relied on *advance information* based on an assessment of political processes (not on past events) in the Soviet Union, since the Baltic republics only declared their independence in August of 1991, and the USSR transformed itself into the Commonwealth of Independent States in December of 1991.

Advance information is the most valuable to strategic planning, because it provides an advantage over timely information reported immediately after an event has occurred, and provides the recipient sufficient time to make decisions. Timely information leaves enough time to make decisions, but less than advance information. Advance information enabled Croatian politics the initiative to make a number of **advance** moves to prepare and ensure the implementation of its political objectives and the realization of its national strategy.

The sequence and dynamics of the political moves were crucial. Six months after the first democratic elections, Croatia adopted the Christmas Constitution, which defined it as a sovereign republic.<sup>59</sup>

*"The Republic of Croatia remains a part of Yugoslavia until a new agreement is made between the Yugoslav republics, or until Croatian Parliament decides otherwise."*<sup>60</sup>

Parallel with the preparation of the Croatian Constitution, Tuđman (together with Slovenia) proposed to the Presidency of SFRY and the Yugoslav public non-federal structure for Yugoslavia as an alliance of sovereign states with the right to a peaceful breakup.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1990 in Belgrade, after the collapse of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, YNA generals founded the League of Communists Yugoslavia

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<sup>58</sup> F. Tuđman, unauthorized minutes from the fifth meeting of the presidents of the Presidency and the presidents of the republics, Cetinje 29. 4. 1991.

<sup>59</sup> The 1990 Christmas Constitution underwent several amendments, however it did not need to be significantly altered despite all the changes that had taken place: from the breakup of Yugoslavia to Croatia's entrance into NATO and the EC.

<sup>60</sup> Article 140 of the 1990 Constitution.

Movement.<sup>61</sup> The Presidency of the Republic of Croatia immediately requested the depoliticization of the YNA as a condition for the democratization of the entire society:<sup>62</sup>

*The Presidency of the Republic of Croatia proposes that the Presidency of the SFRY prohibits army structures from engaging in political agitation through political parties as well as banning political party membership to active YNA officers. The Presidency of the Republic of Croatia also proposes that the Presidency of SFRY take a position regarding the statements of retired YNA generals and officers who have made public statements in the name of YNA, threatening the use of force in order to preserve the existing federal socialist system of Yugoslavia.*

However, the army held fast to its beliefs and the constitutional provisions of the communist regime. After the schism at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party, Kadijević announced: "Defending the Party means defending the country", and in line with this, he planned military coups and the overthrowing of the legal authorities in Croatia and Slovenia. Kadijević made his thoughts on the depoliticization of the YNA indirectly known on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1990 on Belgrade TV, when he attacked President Tuđman and Croatian leadership for the "renewal of fascism and genocide against Serbs".<sup>63</sup>

Croatian leadership attempted to neutralize these threats, as well as the arming of rebel Serbs by YNA and the preparation of military coups and armed conflict by requesting that the Yugoslav crisis be internationalized. YNA prepared another military coup to overthrow the Croatian authorities on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1991, however this did not occur thanks to the Croatian strategy of "deterrence", negotiating, and proving to the world who the aggressor was, along with concessions to demobilize the reserve police force. Thus, it

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<sup>61</sup> This group had a small number of members outside of YNA. Around 75,000 registered members were officers, as well as citizens working for YNA. During the time of the first multinational elections in Serbia on January 9, 1990, the generals supported Milošević's Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS).

<sup>62</sup> "In accordance with the earlier agreement of the Presidency of SFRY with the leadership of the republics, the common leadership stance of Croatia and Slovenia, and the request of the local and global democratic public for the depoliticization of the Army and a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav crisis. The Presidency of the Republic of Croatia considers that the renewal of SKJ-POJ is in contrast to the agreed policy". Letter from President F. Tuđman to the President of SFRY, November 26, 1990.

<sup>63</sup> Laura Silber and Allan Little, 1996.

is no coincidence that President Tuđman sent a letter to United States President Bush on the very same day in order for "the world to recognize who the aggressor is" against Croatia and its democratic government. At the same time, he sent Mesić with a message to the President of the Presidency of SFRY and to the President of Serbia regarding the necessity for discussions in order to avoid war. The letter to Bush and the message to Jović and Milošević were part of the same negotiation strategy, which was aimed at ensuring Croatia's future.

In the letter, the President of the Republic of Croatia informs US President George Bush that the threat of a YNA military coup in the Republic of Croatia is very real, and seeks the support of the United States. Among other things, the letter states:

*Disaster in Yugoslavia can be prevented with an explicit message from the United States, stating that it supports the majority in the newly established democratic republics, calling for a peaceful solution to ensure future stability and the respect of internal borders and cooperation among the mentioned national states.*

*Yugoslavia is not the Soviet Union, Serbia is not Russia, and the Yugoslav Army is not the Soviet Army.*

*It would be an unforgivable mistake if communist terror was re-imposed over the majority in Yugoslavia, which established its democratic government at free elections. This would be in the interests of neither the Yugoslav nations nor the United States. This can be avoided if the United States takes a decisive stance.*

*If the aforementioned terror does not stop immediately, it will have long-lasting and devastating effects. Therefore, we expect the support of the United States.<sup>64</sup>*

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1991, YNA raised its combat readiness to the highest level. It issued a warrant for the arrest of the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Croatia, General Martin Špegelj, and sought approval from the Presidency of SFRY for the forceful disarmament of "paramilitary units" in Croatia. YNA's proposal was not approved by the majority of the Presidency's members.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Letter from President Franjo Tuđman to US President George Bush, January 24, 1991.

<sup>65</sup> Late in the evening of January 25, 1991, at a session of the extended Presidency (representing the Republic of Croatia: President Franjo Tuđman, President of Parliament Žarko Domljan, and Head of Government Josip Manolić), an agreement was made to break up the

However, the Presidency of SFRY asked the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office to initiate proceedings for the arrest of President Tuđman for high treason for sending President Bush a request for the intervention of the United States. The Federal Public Prosecutor concluded that Dr. Franjo Tuđman committed the offense of high treason because he "... tried to induce the United States to take measures which would damage the sovereignty of SFRY within the area of its security... In the criminal overview of such an attempt, Dr. Franjo Tuđman's overall activity is of high significance both in other relevant contacts with the United States ... and other countries".<sup>66</sup>

The Presidency of SFRY, the YNA, and the Greater Serbian agenda were opposed to the internationalization of the Yugoslav crisis. Their main objective was to reorganize Yugoslavia on a new basis: change the republics' borders in order to "unify all Serbian lands" so that most or all Serbs lived in the "remainder" of Yugoslavia. The international community could not agree on how to redraw the republics' borders, not only for reasons of international law, but also out of fear of a potential domino effect that might cause border changes in Europe itself.

Croatia's attempt to internationalize the Yugoslav crisis in early 1991 failed because United States leadership wanted to preserve Yugoslavia.<sup>67</sup> However, this could not stop the leadership of Slovenia and Croatia from continuing to make decisions that led to their independence.<sup>68</sup> After the

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reserve system of Croatia's Ministry of Internal Affairs and at the same time abolish YNA's combat readiness.

<sup>66</sup> The letter from the Federal State Prosecutor Ljubomir Prljeta to the Presidency of SFRY, February 13, 1991. B. Jović tried to incorporate the view of the Federal State Prosecutor regarding the high treason of the President of the Republic of Croatia as an item on the daily agenda of the Presidency, based on which he received a response from President Tuđman on March 1, 1991.

<sup>67</sup> US President George Bush, in a letter dated March 28-29, 1991, writes to President Marković: "...It should be clear that the US does not and will not give priority to any national or ethnic group in Yugoslavia. At the same time, we wish that the differences between nations be solved within the framework of a united, democratic Yugoslavia, and we will not encourage or award those who wish to breakup this state" (Politika, March 29, 1991).

<sup>68</sup> On February 20, 1991, the Assembly of Slovenia accepted the amendments to the Constitution, which defined Slovenia as an independent state which will determine its relations with other states of SFRY based on international law.

On February 21, 1991, Croatia began the dissolution process: Parliament passed a decision to abolish all federal laws that were

referendum, Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence on June 25<sup>th</sup> 1991. The international community could not deny the right of Croatia and Slovenia to independence and sovereignty, but sought a moratorium on this decision so that the European Community might offer “principles for the resolution of the Yugoslav crisis”.

At a peace Conference in The Hague on October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1991, the European Community offered a document entitled “Arrangements for the general settlement of the Yugoslav crisis”, which proposed “a free community of independent Yugoslav republics”. The first sentence of the “Arrangement” foresees “sovereign and independent republics with international recognition for those who desire it”.<sup>69</sup> The fact is that the EC essentially accepted the political concept proposed by Croatia and Slovenia a year earlier to the Presidency of the SFRY in October of 1990 — the same proposal that was discussed but not accepted at any of the six meetings of the Presidencies of the republics.<sup>70</sup>

In international relations, a year is a very short period of time. One year in times of war and crisis claimed thousands of lives in Croatia. This is how long it took for the international community to accept not only the views, but the decisions of Croatia (and Slovenia and the other republics that wanted independence). If we evaluate the success of Croatia's strategy, then we can conclude that Croatian leadership remained proactive, and that it did not make the wrong decisions.

Croatia's strategy was successful even in relation to the EC's policy. Croatia made its assessments and decisions, as previously noted, on the basis of advance information. International factors made their decisions based on timely information. They could obtain the information first-hand –

opposed to republican laws, and it was announced that the Republic of Croatia will leave SFRY on June 30, 1991.

<sup>69</sup> See: “Peace Conference on Yugoslavia: The EC proposes ‘A free community of independent Yugoslav republics’” (The Hague, October 18, 1991), in: M. Tuđman. *Istina o Bosni i Hercegovini. Dokumenti 1991-1995*. Zagreb : Slovo M, 2005, p. 75-82.

<sup>70</sup> At the meetings of the presidencies of the republics of Slovenia and Croatia, they were accused of breaking up Yugoslavia. When the EC declared the same notion (with support from the US and the Soviet Union), the Presidency of SFRY also accused the international community of breaking up Yugoslavia (refer to the letter which President Tuđman sent on October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1991 to the presidents and ministers of foreign affairs of the EC Member States, to the US, Russia, the Pope, and co-presidents of the Conference on Yugoslavia).

and on the basis of regular contacts with Croatian officials – immediately after the events occurred.

YNA and the Greater Serbian agenda considered a unitary Yugoslavia acceptable if all Serbs would remain in one country, a country which they did not intend to leave as they had ensured their hegemony in it through ideology and majoritarianism. They therefore used all means possible to oppose the proposed constitutional changes – both the proposal for a confederation and for a new alliance of sovereign states.

It is obvious that the policy of YNA and Slobodan Milošević were led on the basis of delayed information and assessments which did not take changes in the international order into account. They counted on lasting support from international factors (ranging from the United States and EC Member States to Russia) who firmly advocated the survival of Yugoslavia, factors that did not support the “secessionist” republics. These factors supported the survival of Yugoslavia in 1991, due to current fears that (after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact) “civil war” in Yugoslavia would become a framework for the possible violent collapse of the USSR in a conflict of much larger scale. Thus, the international community was not prepared to support any political option not in favor of Yugoslavia.

Belgrade did not anticipate the events and democratic processes in Europe. Instead, it built its strategy as the guardian of Yugoslavia by relying on the expectations of the international community to preserve Yugoslavia, even in a “diminished” structure, but such that Serbs were not separated from Yugoslavia, and that the nations wishing to remain could do so.

However, the policy of the forced integration of all Serbs into a third Yugoslavia was contrary to the democratic changes in Europe. The brutal use of military force by YNA and Chetnik paramilitary units, resulting in tremendous destruction and immense casualties in Croatia in 1991, inevitably led Serbia and Montenegro (Yugoslavia) into international isolation. Nevertheless, this was a price Belgrade was willing to pay in order to “unite all Serbian lands” and ensure the same hegemony over the third Yugoslavia which the Serbs had enjoyed in both the first and second Yugoslavia.

The starting point of the Croatian national strategy was that history should be changed, aware that all events have deeper causes – present ones in the past and future ones in the present. This is why there is no sharp distinction between politics and history. Because of the very fact that

Croatian society relied on its political leadership and its historical judgments, accepting the anticipation of political and social changes in Europe, Croatia did not lead itself into a situation in which its politics was led by fools or its modern history was written by cowards.

## 2.4 *The rule: neutralizing the enemy with isolation*

YNA was considered one of the strongest military forces in Europe. The fact that it was also a “seventh republic”, i.e. an independent political factor, resulted in YNA preventing the breakup of socialist Yugoslavia in 1990 by means of the threat of force. After Croatia and Slovenia’s declaration of independence, it used war as a means to impose new borders for Yugoslavia – so that all Serbs would continue living in one country.

Had it not been for YNA’s direct political and military participation in the processes leading to the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990’s, the fate of Yugoslavia would not have been resolved by the war in Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, but rather by political means; in any case, with less casualties and destruction. Unfortunately, this did not occur, and given the political and military doctrine of leadership of YNA, it could not even have taken place, because the High Command of YNA was opposed to democratic changes to the Yugoslav political system in the 1960’s, as well as those affecting Europe in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s.

The viewpoint of YNA is accurately and truthfully described by Army General Veljko Kadrijević<sup>71</sup> in his book *My View on the Collapse*.<sup>72</sup> He claims that “the federal structure of the Yugoslav state was the best and only possible option”. However, his positive assessment applies only to the period immediately after 1945, when Yugoslavia was fraught with revolutionary terror based upon the Soviet model, with mass expropriation of property and the persecution and liquidation of all political opponents and “domestic traitors”:

*“All solutions up until the 1960’s were characterized by their simplicity and intelligibility to everyone... Yugoslav politics was founded on these bases, and as such,*

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<sup>71</sup> Army General Veljko Kadrijević was the Federal Secretary for National Defense from May 15, 1988 until January 8, 1992.

<sup>72</sup> Veljko Kadrijević. *My View on the Collapse*. Beograd: Politika, 1993.



*experienced unprecedented prosperity and, correspondingly, immense international recognition*".<sup>73</sup>

According to Kadijević, the breakup of Yugoslavia began with the reforms of the 1960's when self-management was accepted, and "in place of a realistic relationship towards the state and its functions... a thesis on the death of the state was developed". The consequence of these reforms: "The Yugoslav idea was rejected, proclaimed a unitaristic conspiracy... This first and main mistake signed the second Yugoslavia's death sentence. Everything else flowed negatively from this first historical failure, sped up as if on a conveyor belt"(highlighted in italics in the original).<sup>74</sup>

Kadijević considered Tito responsible for the 1962 victory of "Kardelj's concept of Yugoslavia ... or, as depicted later, the concept of the breakup of Yugoslavia". Kadijević: "*This decision was made by Tito*. It is certainly the worst and most disastrous of all decisions made during the time of the second Yugoslavia" (highlighted in italics in the original).<sup>75</sup> The process of the breakup of Yugoslavia, what Kadijević called *the negative turning point*, began in 1962, and the "Constitution of 1974 represented the constitutional and legal basis whose consistent application inevitably and lawfully led the state to its breakup".

Clearly, the assessments of YNA High Command regarding the 1962 constitutional reforms of socialist Yugoslavia were negative, but they did not dare to openly oppose Tito during his lifetime. However, in the late 1980's, High Command refused to accept the consequences of the collapse of the communist regime and the Warsaw Pact, and it planned to oppose the results of free elections and democratic changes. Even after Tito's death in 1980, the dissolution of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in January of 1990, and the fact that the army remained the only "constitutional guard" and the last of three integrating factors of the Yugoslav state, High Command was ready, despite all political and historical changes, to forcibly retain the constitutional position and role within the state which it had lost:

The further the degradation process of the federal state went, and in the last few years it went very quickly, the more YNA was practically **becoming an army without a state, and as such, unique in the world**. YNA was caught between a disappearing and completely paralyzed federal

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<sup>73</sup> Veljko Kadijević, pp. 60, 61.

<sup>74</sup> Veljko Kadijević, p. 62.

<sup>75</sup> Veljko Kadijević, p. 64.

state and emerging republics, states with different interests and completely opposing concepts regarding the possibility of a joint Yugoslav state, and joint armies within it... The condition into which YNA was brought, that of an army without a state, best finalized the concept of the breakup of the unified armed forces of Yugoslavia in order to enable the breakup of the Yugoslav state, which had been written into the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution (highlighted in the source).<sup>76</sup>

Even before free elections in 1990, High Command opposed the idea of destroying “the concept of armed forces contained in the Constitution”, by “maximally disabling solutions” not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, and through the fact that “YNA maximally nurtures and develops the Yugoslav idea”. The strategic and operational reorganization of the YNA in 1985 was important to these plans: “... instead of six territorial forces, three military regions were formed whose territorial division *completely ignored the administrative borders of the republics and provinces*” (highlighted in italics in the source).<sup>77</sup> The strategic and operational reorganization into three military regions *completely ignored the administrative borders of the republics*, yet it *fit* completely with the borders for the planned division of Croatian territory for the purpose of *uniting all Serbian lands*.

In 1990, YNA military leadership was aware that “internal and international circumstances had completely excluded any type of classical military coup”, and had they immediately launched an attack on Slovenia and Croatia, “YNA and Serbia would suffer immense consequences as the aggressor”.<sup>78</sup> With this view, Kadijević overestimates international circumstances while underestimating internal ones. Kadijević was convinced that they would, at the international level, “walk into a trap” because they would be subjected to sanctions and “rigorous military intervention” with attacks on “vital facilities in Serbia and the most important YNA infrastructure”.<sup>79</sup>

The military intervention of international forces in 1990 and 1991 was not likely for several reasons. First, Yugoslavia lost its geostrategic importance through the disappearance of the bipolar division of the world – which was a direct consequence of the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of communism in Europe. Second, the United States was so preoccupied with the war in Iraq that it

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<sup>76</sup> Veljko Kadijević, pp. 76-77.

<sup>77</sup> Veljko Kadijević, pp. 76-77.

<sup>78</sup> Veljko Kadijević, p. 115.

<sup>79</sup> Veljko Kadijević, *ibid*, p. 115.

had no interest in the Yugoslav crisis, so little in fact that none of their representatives attended the Conference on Yugoslavia in the Hague in 1991, nor did they send American troops to UNPROFOR in 1992. Third, the European Community was not capable of an independent military intervention of such proportions at the time, and are likely still not today. Fourth, Russia was burdened with its own internal problems, and did not support military coups, even in secret consultations.<sup>80</sup>

“*Internal circumstances*” were evidently the key reason why the army did not receive political support, neither for a military coup nor for intervention. There are several reasons for this. From 1990 until late 1991, Croatian and Slovenian leadership did not have the international support to declare independence, and the international community was in favor of preserving the unified Yugoslavia. However, through constitutional changes and legal provisions, Slovenia and Croatia were preparing to declare their independence, as well as offering a non-federal structure of Yugoslavia as an alliance of sovereign states. The longer the Yugoslav constitutional crisis lasted, the weaker the federal institutions became, and political power was transferred to the republics. The plebiscite declaration of independence was the final message that “YNA had been left without a state”, not because of the will or policies of international factors, but rather because of the Croatian and Slovenian nations and the strategies that led them to this objective.

Croatia was in a much more difficult situation than Slovenia, because for almost a year leading up to its declaration of independence, it underwent a crawling territorial occupation. YNA had gained control of Croatian territory and placed itself in buffer zones in accordance with a decision made by YNA military leadership, “relying on political strength ... and those nations who want to live in Yugoslavia”, to ensure “the protection and defense of the Serbian nation outside of Serbia by assembling YNA forces within the future borders of Yugoslavia”.<sup>81</sup>

When Croatia and Slovenia declared independence on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1991, the political process of establishing independent states was completed. However, an attempt was made to prevent both their declaration and international recognition. High Command asked the Presidency of SFRY

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<sup>80</sup> V. Kadijević, during a critical session of the extended Presidency of SFRY (March 12-15, 1991) with approval from B. Jović, flew to Moscow in search of support from D. Jazov for a military coup, but did not receive it.

<sup>81</sup> V. Kadijević, p. 114.

to declare “a state of war and general mobilization”.<sup>82</sup> The Presidency was divided and the army did not obtain approval. Kadijević threatened a military solution and Milošević announced it.

*Kadijević: “The army will consider the measures to be taken after the Presidency opposed army recommendations aimed at preventing inter-ethnic armed conflict and civil war”. On March 16<sup>th</sup>, 1991, Slobodan Milošević finally spoke out, stating that “Yugoslavia is finished”. “I have ordered the mobilization of reserve special police and the urgent organization of additional Serbian military units. Yugoslavia has entered its final throes. The Republic of Serbia will no longer accept any decisions made and adopted by the Presidency in the current circumstances because they will be illegal”, said Milošević.*

*Source: <http://www.posavski-vremeplov.com/suznadolina/raspad/> (accessed August 30, 2014)*

After a fake war in Slovenia, the plan of the Supreme Command was 'to dislocate the entire YNA structure from Slovenia'. “The general political objective is to create a new Yugoslavia of those nations who want it”, and YNA aimed to achieve this by “freeing each Serbian region of any presence of the Croatian Army and Croatian authorities... The plans developed for the use of YNA throughout Yugoslav territory were: to completely defeat the Croatian army if conditions permitted...; to achieve full cooperation with Serbian rebels in Serbian Krajina ...; to pay special attention to the role of the Serbian nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, because it is crucial for the future of the Serbian nation as a whole...”<sup>83</sup>

Kadijević became aware that he had lost when Croatia did not 'start a war against YNA', but avoided a direct conflict. Croatia did not seek a solution at the military level—its strategic priority was political and international recognition. Without declaring independence and receiving international recognition, Croatia's military conflict with one of the strongest armies in Europe would have been doomed to failure. Croatia's opportunity to attain its own state would have gone to waste, because at the time, international factors also opposed breakup of Yugoslavia.

The army “without a state” was doomed to failure. It lost the war at the political and international level, not at the military level. Even when Kadijević announced his view on

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<sup>82</sup> V. Kadijević, p. 133.

<sup>83</sup> V. Kadijević, p. 134.

the breakup of Yugoslavia (1993), he was convinced that YNA had achieved its objectives: it had defeated the Croatian army and all the Serbian regions in Croatia were freed; "If Croatia had not lost the war, it never would have accepted the Vance plan, according to which one third of the territory which it considers to be its own was placed under the protection of the United Nations with Serbian full ownership of that territory.... which enabled it to achieve political objectives in a peaceful manner, but over a longer time period".<sup>84</sup>

In 1993, Kadijević expressed his surprising historical and political blindness in his statement that he believed it to be possible, or that it would become possible, to change borders through military force. However, the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia (also known as the Badinter Commission), less than ten days after signing the Vance plan, decided that the republics' borders were international and that they could not be changed by force. As a result, the entire project regarding the violent redrawing of borders, the "unification of all Serbian lands", was strategically defeated at the political and international level. The military and political bearers of this program were sinking deeper into isolation. The space in which they survived was within the boundaries of the battlefield which divided them from the free world, and these war-drawn borders could not become the internationally recognized borders of a state.

YNA was neutralized by isolation in the moment when the "army was left without a state", and when the military option had lost all meaning. This is also indicated by the personal fate of Army General Veljko Kadijević. While he was serving as Federal Secretary for the National Defense of Yugoslavia (i.e. Minister of Defense), he also complained that "any contact with prominent figures in the US administration had been made impossible", that scheduled meetings with the Italian Minister of Defense were canceled three times at the last minute, that he was not even received by President Gorbachev during his visit to Moscow, and that he did not wish to talk to Hans Dietrich Genscher personally because Germany had played "a leading role in breaking up Yugoslavia". After his resignation as Minister of Defense, doctors suggested he have a medical examination at *Walter Reed* Military Hospital in Washington. He was notified by the US Government that his request was rejected and that he

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<sup>84</sup> V. Kadijević, p. 142, 143. Further: "In addition, Serbian Krajina is within the framework of the Vance plan, and is secured with a strong and well-armed army, with strong and agile YNA units..."

could not receive a medical examination at any military hospital in the territory of the United States.<sup>85</sup>

### 3. Negotiations – the strategic scope of the European diplomatic paradigm

“In friendship and hostility, one should place both trust and hatred within certain borders: so that your trust might not become dangerous, and so that your hatred might not preclude any possibility of reconciliation.”

Philip Stanhope Chesterfield

On the basis of his historical works, Dr. Franjo Tuđman knew well that small nations cannot use force to ensure their freedom, territorial integrity, and a place at the international table. Small nations, as a rule, do not have the military power, oil, or crucial geostrategic location with which to extort or purchase their international position. Aside from this, every state organization that is forced upon a people through repression, just like every border between states created by force, is a short-term proviso in today's world of global economic and technological integration.

This is why Croatia could reach its goals of territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic integration first and foremost through political means. Croatia resorted to military operations only after the aggressor (rebel Serbs, Serbia and Montenegro) failed to meet the obligations of signed peace agreements and failed to respect UN Security Council decisions — in other words, after the steps taken by the international community had proven entirely ineffectual.

The strategic goals of Croatian politics after international recognition were very clear: territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic integration. Croatia wanted to ensure its place in Europe once again as a central European and Mediterranean country through all political and economic means possible, and to remove itself of Yugo-Balkan associations and communist heritage. Croatia could have realized these goals firstly through political means – through negotiations involving a number of states and the acceptance of political agreements varying in scope – and only then through military operations freeing occupied territory. This is why Croatian politicians constantly opposed

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<sup>85</sup> V. Kadrijević, p. 20, 21.

the conflicting interests of the aggressor and strategized with the requests of international representatives.

The political strategy for Croatia's international recognition, the liberation of occupied Croatian territory, and the attainment of territorial integrity was handled like a chess game being played simultaneously on three boards.

There were three differing dimensions of strategic play involving a large number of players, but in which each move in each dimension changed military borders and the political and international position of the players.

On the first board, the rules of international order and the accepted obligations of signed agreements applied, as did the diplomatic laws of coercion. The main players were international organizations (UN, UNSC, EC/EU), the interested permanent members of the UN Security Council (USA, Great Britain, France, Russia), the Conference on Peace in Yugoslavia 1991-1992, and after 1992, the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (member states and the co-presidents of the conference, UNPROFOR commanders, etc.

On the second board, a classic game was being played by the rules of hard power and military force. There were multiple conflicted parties on this board as well: YNA, the Army of Republika Srpska, the Serbian Army of Krajina, Serbian paramilitary formations, the Croatian Army, the Croatian Defense Council, and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The third board was dictated by the flexible rules of soft power: the war was fought in the domain of information. The information war was fought for the support of the domestic and foreign community, with direct and indirect effects on political negotiations and the status on the battlefield. In this domain, the rules of the physical world did not apply, but rather that of "virtual" reality: demonizing and demoralizing the enemy, and homogenizing one's own strength to win over foreign partners and the support of the foreign public.

Since Croatia wanted to realize both goals – territorial integrity and Euro-Atlantic integration – it had to play the game on all three boards at the same time. To focus on only one of those two goals would have led to defeat. Orienting itself only towards the military liberation of 30% of Croatian territory (had Croatia even had this ability from the first moment of its independence) would have resulted in condemnation from the international community and, finally,

isolation or the indefinite delay of Euro-Atlantic integration.<sup>86</sup> Accepting only the second option – the Euro-Atlantic future of Croatia – would have prolonged the status of occupied territory indefinitely, and finally resulted in the quick attainment of accession to the EU and NATO, but with the real chance of losing occupied territory forever.

Croatia thus pursued a policy of not endangering either of these two strategic goals. Official policy always gave preference to the political solution, and resorted to military operations only when it had become obvious that the other side was not willing to fulfill the tenets of signed agreements. Military operations remained a legitimate option when political negotiations and international agreements proved ineffective.

### 3.1 Vance's plan for Croatia

Making simultaneous moves in all three dimensions of a game of strategy while ensuring one's advantage and final victory demands exceptional diplomatic and negotiating skill. From the very outset of conflicts, Croatia sought a political solution in the internationalization of the Yugoslav crisis.<sup>87</sup> Borisav Jović, member of the Presidency, precisely described Croatia's position: "Their only hope is to internationalize the problem and bring in foreign troops... The Croats [are] in a great bind, and before a dilemma: escalating the war means their military defeat, and accepting peace brings them defeat on the internal political field."<sup>88</sup>

The internationalization of the Yugoslav crisis was contrary to the goals of Belgrade, which was unwilling to accept international intervention until YNA reported to Milošević that "all Serbian regions in Croatia have been liberated". Despite this, the internationalization of the Yugoslav crisis was an inevitable consequence of a series of Croatian and European diplomatic steps. In June of 1991, the EC placed pressure for a moratorium on the independence of Croatia and Slovenia; in July, the *European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM)* was founded to report on whether not the agreement was being kept; in

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<sup>86</sup> Slobodan Milošević did not want to give up on the military realization of his strategic goal of "unifying all Serbian lands". The consequence of this policy is that, even 25 years after the collapse of Yugoslavia, Serbia is not involved in Euro-Atlantic integration.

<sup>87</sup> Letter from President Franjo Tuđman to US President George Bush on January 24, 1991, to which the federal public prosecutor reacted with the preparation of a charge of high treason on February 13, 1991.

<sup>88</sup> B. Jović, 1996, p. 370.



August, the EC announced a special peace conference that would bring together representatives of all conflicted parties in the Hague in September of 1991. The *Peace Conference on Yugoslavia* was thus an institutionalization of the international crisis in Yugoslavia.

The fact remains that Croatia first sought to internationalize the Yugoslav crisis in early 1991, and that it consistently promoted a peaceful solution and the solution to conflicts through arbitration at the Peace Conference in The Hague:

*Despite its determination to defend itself, Croatia is prepared to seek a peaceful solution, to internationalize the crisis and to seek international arbitration. We have advocated this not only because of the obvious military and technological superiority of our opponent, but because of our honest belief that a permanent and just solution to the Yugoslav crisis can only be reached through political and democratic means.<sup>89</sup>*

Croatia did not only accept the “three principles of the European Community on: the unacceptability of unilateral border changes through force; the protection of the rights of all in Yugoslavia; and the full consideration of all desires and legitimate aspirations”,<sup>90</sup> but also consistently held to these principles during all negotiations in the following years — not because the EC had forced them upon it, but because those principles were a part of the philosophy of history and international relations of Tuđman the historian: the world is constantly integrating, while becoming nationally discrete.

The plan for the UN peace operation in Yugoslavia was adopted in Security Council Resolution 724 on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1991. UNPROFOR (*United Nations Protection Forces*) were supposed to create the necessary conditions for peace and for negotiations on an overarching solution to the Yugoslav crisis. The plan defined the conditions of the arrival of peacekeeping forces in Croatia, while not deciding on a political solution for the occupied territories. According to the Plan, UN forces and international observers were to be distributed into “United Nations Protected Areas” (UNPAs). These areas were supposed to be demilitarized, and all armed forces within them were supposed to be either withdrawn or disbanded. Three UNPAs were initially foreseen: Eastern Slavonia, Western Slavonia, and Krajina.

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<sup>89</sup> Speech by President Franjo Tuđman at the Peace Conference in the Hague, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1991, p. 1.

<sup>90</sup> Speech by President Franjo Tuđman at the Peace Conference in the Hague, September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1991, p. 2.

The plan also foresaw the withdrawal of all YNA and Croatian Army units from the UNPAs, and the disbanding of all paramilitary formations.

Negotiations on the agreement for the arrival of peacekeeping forces and their tasks were very difficult. Serbia and YNA attempted to legalize conquered territory in Croatia through military operations and *fait accompli*.<sup>91</sup> President Tuđman also warned of this in a letter to Cyrus Vance, special emissary of the UN Secretary General.<sup>92</sup>

According to Borisav Jović's testimony, the last day of 1991 "passed turbulently". The truncated presidency of SFRY adopted the Peace Plan for Yugoslavia, although a UN decision had excluded it from the negotiations.

The Serbian elite hailed the arrival of UN peace forces, convinced that the role of UNPROFOR was "exclusively... to stop armed conflict and establish peace, and not to become involved in the organization of political structures... Power essentially remains in the hands of the Serbian people until a final political solution (and surely afterwards)."<sup>93</sup>

Milošević accepted the Peace Plan on Yugoslavia and the arrival of UNPROFOR much before the rebel Serbs in Knin. He did so thanks to the fact that YNA had occupied 30% of Croatia's territory, and because he had received a guarantee that the arrival of UNPROFOR would not presuppose a final political solution. This meant that UNPROFOR would not change the *status quo* of local rebel Serb authority, and that the UNPAs would not be under Croatian jurisdiction.<sup>94</sup>

The requests of the Croatian side for the "United Nations to send peacekeeping forces, but exclusively to the border" was not accepted.<sup>95</sup> Peacekeeping forces were placed along the "ethnic border". Because of the principle of "not

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<sup>91</sup> YNA began a general attack on Croatia on October 1<sup>st</sup>, 1991 with the goal of conquering Dubrovnik and the Dubrovnik coastal region, and final operations for the capture of Vukovar. For more on YNA's military and strategic goals, see: V. Kadijević, pp. 134-144.

<sup>92</sup> A letter from President F. Tuđman to Cyrus Vance, special emissary of the UN Secretary General, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1991. In this same letter, President Tuđman appeals for the formation of an International War Crimes Tribunal: "I also appeal to you to support the initiative to form an International Tribunal for War Crimes against the Croatian people and other non-Serbian peoples, as well as against loyal Serbs, to which the conscience of the international community should not close its eyes."

<sup>93</sup> B. Jović, 31 Dec 1991, p. 421.

<sup>94</sup> For details on the flow of negotiations and the preparation of the UN peacekeeping mission, see: I. Miškulin "Republika Hrvatska i mirovna operacija Ujedinjenih Naroda: kada, kako i zašto je došlo do njezine realizacije?"

<sup>95</sup> F. Gregurić. *Vlada*, Notes from 9 November 1991, p. 252; quoted according to I. Miškulin, p. 142.

presupposing a final solution”, the request for the UNPA zones to fall under the jurisdiction of Croatian law was also rejected, as was the suggestion that local police forces in the UNPAs be organized based upon their pre-war ethnic structure. Rebel Serbs thus received a guarantee that they would remain in power over regions they controlled, and so they also accepted the implementation of the Vance plan. However, rebel Serbs did not receive the recognition of SAO Krajina’s international subjectivity – and thus did not have the right to decide on the arrival and distribution of peacekeeping forces.

Croatia had to face the fact that “power essentially remained in the hands of the Serbian people” in the occupied territories, that UNPROFOR would not stop at the borders of the republic — i.e. Croatia’s state borders — and that the efficiency of international forces in returning state territory to Croatia’s constitutional-legal order was an illusion.

After Croatia’s international recognition on January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1992, President Tuđman insisted that Croatian legislation also be applicable in occupied territory. However, he was forced to withdraw and confirm in writing that “*Croatia still accepts the concept of the UN peace operations in Yugoslavia*” and “the conditions for the arrival of peacekeeping forces”.<sup>96</sup>

There were many versions of this strategic game of wits. Refusing the Vance plan, especially after Croatia had internationalized the Yugoslav crisis and sought peacekeeping forces in order to put a stop to the general aggression that raged in the last quarter of 1991, would have made Croatia an untrustworthy interlocutor and partner. Rejecting an agreement that had already been signed would have also jeopardized its international recognition.

Croatia got less than it expected from the Vance plan. UNPROFOR ensured the *status quo* to rebel Serbs in occupied territory, under the condition that they demilitarize, that displaced people be returned, and that they gradually peacefully reintegrate. These conditions were a futile hope for the Croats, as the goal of rebel Serbs was to amputate Croatian territory. The Vance Plan did however set the international political framework, which required the cooperation of Croatia, rebel Serbs, and UNPROFOR. This framework allowed Croatia the initiative in all future

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<sup>96</sup> A letter from President Tuđman, dated February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1992, to Cyrus Vance, special emissary of the UN Secretary General, and Joao De Deus Pinheiro, presiding over the European Community Council of Ministers.

negotiations with international figures on the future of occupied state territory, as well as on the role of international forces in ensuring demilitarization and the return of refugees.

UNPROFOR did not stop at state borders, but YNA had to leave occupied territory. This did not abolish the war zone, but the military potential of rebel Serbs began to wane: YNA could no longer legally or openly cooperate in military operations and provide supplies to Serb paramilitary formations.

The Vance Plan stopped YNA aggression in Croatia, but it did not promise a quick solution to the issue of occupied territory. By accepting the Vance Plan, Croatia was faced with the risk of UNPROFOR's long-term presence on the dividing line meaning the Cypriotization of Croatia and the *de facto* permanent division and loss of its state territory.

Still, the opinion of the Arbitration Commission (commonly known as the Badinter Arbitration Commission) that the borders of the republics were the borders of the states<sup>97</sup> and the principle "*on the unacceptability of unilateral border changes through force*" adopted by the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia (i.e. EC as well as UN SC) ensured Croatia a strategic position allowing it to solve the issue of occupied territory as an internal issue, and not an international conflict.

However, despite the occupation of nearly a third of its territory, Croatia's decisive strategic advantage was realized in diplomacy by insisting that the Yugoslav crisis be internationalized and by accepting the unfavorable Vance plan – it had won international recognition, and it was accepted into the circle of European nations as the victim of aggression and as a desirable partner. On the other hand, aggression against Croatia led Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) into a lengthy period of isolation and left it without the support of even those states that had been against the collapse of Yugoslavia.

### *3.2 President Tuđman's peace initiative for a political solution to the Yugoslav crisis and the issue of occupied Croatian territory*

President Tuđman's peace initiatives are poorly-known to the public, and have been insufficiently examined in

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<sup>97</sup> Opinion no. 2, Arbitration Commission, Paris, 11 Jan 1992. Published in: M. Tuđman. *Istina o Bosni i Hercegovini*. Zagreb : Slovo M, 2005, pp. 122-123.

scientific literature. President Tuđman himself claimed that “Many... still have not realized” that all of these initiatives, suggestions, and offers were based on his historical “prediction that the latent Yugoslav crisis can and must be solved exclusively through ‘Scandinavization’, that is to say, through the mutual recognition of the nations who make up this state community”.<sup>98</sup> In keeping with this belief, Croatia and Slovenia suggested the “Scandinavization” of Yugoslavia at the very outset of the Yugoslav constitutional crisis (1990 – 1991) – a confederate model based upon peaceful separation into a “federation of sovereign states”. Historical and political science has not drawn conclusions on the possible positive scope of these initiatives and of the Croatian-Slovenian strategy for solving the unsolvable national oppositions in Yugoslavia. Had Serbia and Montenegro agreed to the formation of a “federation of sovereign states” through “Scandinavization” modeled after the European Community, the war and all of its devastating consequences would have been avoided.

However, “Scandinavization” – the mutual recognition of the Yugoslav republics and the pacifying of conflicts – was the strategic goal of Croatian policy in the following years. The public knows little of President Tuđman’s peace initiatives in the period from 1992 to 1993, and so the picture of Croatia’s peace suggestions and efforts remains incomplete. Only through an assessment of the intent, goals, and scope of these initiatives in international relations — especially in the context of the destruction and casualties caused by the war — can we view and assess Croatia’s official policy in the 1990’s in its entirety.

### 3.2.1 *President Franjo Tuđman’s Adriatic-Danube Basin Initiative, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1992*

The international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina in April of 1992 did not bring peace, as neither the Serbs nor the Muslims wished to implement Cutleir’s plan for the constitutional organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the absence of the readiness of Serbs and Muslims to found the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina on a federal basis, the military option was opened, and the focus of the war shifted to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serbs staunchly realized their national interests through military force and ethnic cleansing. The presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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<sup>98</sup> Dr. Franjo Tuđman. *Journal entries*, 23 August 1996, unpublished.

declared a state of war on June 20<sup>th</sup>, 1992 and named its enemy. Meanwhile, Izetbegović signed a friendship agreement in Zagreb on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1992, however he refused to sign a military agreement with Croatia to unite against their common aggressor in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia.

The Serbs speedily took control of 70% of Bosnian territory. Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina were satisfied with the signed agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional organization (the so-called Cutileir Plan), but lacked military support and were expelled from areas where they were not a majority. The consequences of Serbian ethnic cleansing were enormous in proportion. During 1992, Croatia accepted 700,000 refugees and displaced persons.

The European Council condemned Serbia and the Yugoslav Army for the conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina in Lisbon on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 1992. However, a contradictory message was sent by French President Francois Mitterand, who landed the very same day at the occupied Sarajevo Airport and symbolically "opened the airport" for humanitarian flights from Sarajevo. The true intent of this visit was to prevent the bombing of Serbian positions around Sarajevo, and to send a message to EU countries that France had no intent of implementing signed agreements on Bosnia and Herzegovina militarily.

The UN Security Council passed a series of resolutions on Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992 harshly condemning war crimes, however they lacked a precise identification of the aggressor. Since the international community was disunited, the doctrine of "shared blame" was applied – a compromise solution by which everyone involved was guilty – because key members of the Security Council could not harmonize their opinions and interests in and surrounding Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite this, Serbia and Montenegro gradually became the accused, and fell deeper and deeper into international isolation.<sup>99</sup> The UN Security Council's **Resolution 781**, passed on October 9<sup>th</sup>, banned air traffic over Bosnia and Herzegovina. The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia began its work in late August of 1992. By the end of October, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, co-presidents of

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<sup>99</sup> UN SC passed *Resolution 777* on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1992, which disallowed SRY (Serbia and Montenegro) from automatically continuing the membership of SFRY in the UN, requiring them to apply for acceptance. This is why Yugoslavia could no longer take part in the work of the UN's General Assembly.

the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, had presented their draft of a new peace treaty for Bosnia and Herzegovina, which the Serbs immediately rejected, seeking the strictly ethnic division of the Republic. Four days later, on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1992 in Prijedor, representatives of rebel Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaimed their unification.

It was under such circumstances that President Tuđman began his initiative for the **Adriatic-Danube Basin Summit** (ADBS), inviting the presidents of Hungary, Austria, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the president of Bavaria to a meeting on the Brijuni Islands in mid-December 1992.

The initiative for ADBS was not to block the formation of the Central European Initiative (CEI), but to invite individual states from within and without CEI who were connected by similar geographical and economic interests along the corridor between the Adriatic Sea and the Danube.

*I also believe that the current state of integrational trends in Europe and the general development of international relations is pointing us towards the creation of more closely-tied transitional forms, strengthened by cooperation within central Europe. This manner of cooperation would be, in my opinion, equally useful to the economies of our countries, and would contribute to our mutual efforts to strengthen regional stability on the basis of our commitment to peace and security on the path to a future integrated Europe.<sup>100</sup>*

The final goal of this initiative was to reach a multi-state agreement to found a consortium for the construction of roads, low-lying rail lines, and gas lines, along with the existing oil lines, from the northern Adriatic (Rijeka) to central Europe (Budapest, Bratislava, Prague...), with the opening of duty free zones for state partners in Rijeka and Kvarner. The ADBS initiative was complementary to the basic goals of CEI, and the solidification of the suggested program would have been of manifold economic and political significance.

The political argumentation used for ADBS began from the need for lasting forms of economic cooperation between the invited states within the new European order, considering: a) their similarity in economic interests, current needs and experiences, and long-term development plans,

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<sup>100</sup> A letter from President Franjo Tuđman to the presidents of states and governments for ADBS, November 6<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

b) the especially new geopolitical and economic value of the Adriatic-Danube Basin corridor after the reduced importance of the East-West transversal.

Strategic interests were accentuated in the argumentation used in the diplomatic preparation of ADBS.

- Long-term interest arises from Croatia's historical familiarity with this central European political and economic circle of countries.
- Direct interest arises from the need to find a worthy, timely answer to the proffered model of the "Balkan Economic Community" in still undefined circumstances of the search for optimal forms of future sub-regional associations in the post-Yugoslav period. Such a model might still appear an attractive replacement for the former SFRY to some in the west, a model that would once again, via facti, prevent new entities from the former Yugoslavia, especially Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, from developing and strengthening connections and cooperation with other states exclusively outside of the geopolitical space of their former shared state.
- The inevitable future stabilization of circumstances across the entire Adriatic coast of Croatia alongside the stabilization of circumstances in the interior –as well as in the gravitational BH hinterland, based upon the creation of regional communities naturally focused on regional connectedness with the Croatian coast, and alongside the assurance of the flow of this route towards the interior of the Pannonian and central European transport and geopolitical space – radically revalues the total potential of the Adriatic-Danube Basin transversal
- Adriatic-Danube Basin connectedness, aside from the indirect economic benefits and relief of pressure on the EC, also significantly increases the geostrategic value of the central part of Europe, which is of particular significance in terms of US and EC attempts to prepare new modalities of security on the territory of the former USSR and SFRY as a kind of subregional branch of the NATO pact.<sup>101</sup>

As concerns an estimation of the strategy that shaped official Croatian policy, this initiative also served the function of pacifying conflicts between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina through economic integration. The obvious

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<sup>101</sup> Quoted from: REMINDER for political and diplomatic action in preparation for a summit of Adriatic-Danube Basin states, Brijuni, January 1992. Edited by: Hido Bišćević, Ana Marija Bešker. Croatian State Archives.



intent of President Tuđman was to use economic interests and the connection of the Adriatic and Danube Basin states to discredit and neutralize the military solution of political conflicts, both in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

During the preparations for ADBS, President Tuđman also wrote to the heads of state of Organization of Islamic Cooperation states emphasizing the need for a political solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as emphasizing that he considered cooperation and economic connection with countries in the Arab and Muslim world “*an extremely important component of [Croatia’s] foreign policy strategy*”:

*The Republic of Croatia considers enhancing cooperation with countries in the Arab and Muslim world an extremely important part of its foreign policy strategy within the framework of a new evaluation of the exceptional potential for political and economic connection in the region from central Europe and the eastern Mediterranean to the Middle East and the Gulf.*<sup>102</sup>

His invitations to ADBS meant that Croatia had taken the initiative in advocating a political solution to conflict, but also that it was sending long-term messages. Firstly, that it sees itself in the post-war period as a part of central European and Mediterranean integration, and not as part of some future “Balkan economic community”. Second, that it has its own vision for long-term political solutions, and that it will not be a mere guest at the international table, but an active partner in realizing its goals.

The Summit at Brijuni in mid-December of 1992 was never held. Correspondence following the invitations to ADBS show the positive opinion of all invited state presidents and prime ministers. President Izetbegović immediately replied that he would attend (November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1992), Slovenian President Kučan, Hungarian President Antall, and Bavarian President Streibl agreed with the initiative but suggested that the meeting be prepared beforehand by expert teams. Austrian President T. Klestil noted “the exceptional importance of regional cooperation”, which should be organized beforehand by “work groups” in coordination with the Central European Initiative. Vaclav Klaus, president of the Federal Republic of Czechoslovakia, together with his prime minister, hailed the initiative but answered that they could not attend due to obligations

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<sup>102</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to HM Amir Sheik Kalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Qatar, November 25, 1992.

concerning “the division of Czechoslovakia into two independent states”, as Czechoslovakia was to cease to exist on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1992.

President Tuđman’s initiative on economic cooperation between central European and Danube states during the war apparently did not enjoy sufficient critical strength or regional boldness, as the initiative came from Zagreb without the direct support of key international factors. For this reason, the initiative failed at the level of a meeting of experts.

Even regional initiatives and sub-regional cooperation require the approval of international institutions and organizations (from political ones to financial ones) in order to be efficient. Five years after the ADBS initiative, with the encouragement of the United States, the *Southeast European Cooperative Initiative* (SECI) was actualized, headquartered in Vienna (1997). Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Slovenia, SR Yugoslavia, and Turkey all became members of SECI, and its official state supporters were the United States, Italy, Austria, Switzerland, and the Russian Federation.

The goal of SECI regional cooperation was defined in 1997 in the same way as President Tuđman’s initiative: pacify the region, and induce economic cooperation between SECI states with the help of foreign capital.

### 3.2.2 *President Franjo Tuđman’s peace initiative, November 1993.*

It was obvious that the international community was unsuccessfully handling the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. The Lisbon Agreement on the constitutional organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the Cutileir Plan) was a prerequisite for Bosnia and Herzegovina’s international recognition, however the Muslims accepted it for tactical reasons but rejected it out of strategic reasons.<sup>103</sup> Despite this, the international community did nothing in 1992 to force the Muslims to keep

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<sup>103</sup> A. Izetbegović: “... The document also contained some positive things. It guaranteed the integrity of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian state within its existing, internationally recognized borders, and national independence. However, it had one negative thing, and that was that it assumed an ethnic regionalization that was unacceptable to us.” A. Izetbegović in an interview on Radio Free Europe, 13. Jun 2000, see “**Bosna i Hercegovina. 1990. – 2025**”, ed. M. Tuđman, UHIP, Zagreb, 2005, p. 55.

to the Lisbon Agreement, nor did it take effective measures to stop Serbian aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Vance-Owen Plan also ended in failure. "Milošević had accepted the plan in April of 1993. The Bosniaks, Croatian President Franjo Tuđman and Croatian representatives had also accepted it. But, when the Bosnian Serbs did not accept it and when no one else could exert influence over them, the plan was dead."<sup>104</sup>

Lord Owen lists a number of realities that went against his peace plan: "America did not include itself constructively. The UN, as always, was disunited in its policies and complete chaos ruled, and finally the entire plan was also buried by the Clinton administration."<sup>105</sup> It is apparent that the "disunity" of the international community was one of the causes of "complete chaos". However, this was also in great part due to the policies of Great Britain, which had blocked every serious international attempt at intervention since the outset of the conflict under the pretense of not becoming involved in a "civil war", not only in 1993 but also in 1994.

Great Britain advocated the limited involvement of the international community, which implied the delivery of humanitarian aid but the use of military force only concerning the "protected zones" and only to protect UN units.<sup>106</sup> The British opinion was that "military intervention from outside will not bring the conflict to an end". This is why Owen and Hurd publicly emphasized the vital importance of Milošević in peace negotiations: "I believe that Milošević is the most important figure in the entire region... The fate of the Balkans depends on his decision".<sup>107</sup>

British politics did not only rehabilitate Milošević – Lord Owen played a key role in bringing the "multi-national" collective presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina back to life.<sup>108</sup> By awarding legitimacy to Izetbegović at the head of

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<sup>104</sup> Lord David Owen, "BiH je trebalo podijeliti na tri dijela", *Globus*, April 11, 2014. The plan foresaw the decentralization of BH, divided into ten regions, which would have had jurisdiction over internal affairs and education. The regions would have been formed based upon ethnic principles, while the capital city of Sarajevo would have been a demilitarized district and the seat of the central government.

<sup>105</sup> Lord David Owen, "BiH je trebalo podijeliti na tri dijela", *Globus*, April 11, 2014.

<sup>106</sup> "Great Britain played a key role in the Security Council concerning the shaping of the Communal Action Programme by supporting the policy of 'protected zones' and limiting the use of air strikes only to the protection of UN units." Carole Hodge, 2007, p. 155.

<sup>107</sup> Lord David Owen, quoted by Carole Hodge, 2007, p. 121.

<sup>108</sup> Alija Izetbegović's mandate as the president of the Presidency ran out on December 20, 1992. However, he remained the president of the Presidency the entire time, which was not foreseen by the BH

the BH Presidency, Izetbegović's public status was twofold: he was the representative of Muslims/Bosniaks as well as the official representative of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. For this reason, he was able to support the theory on the "civil Bosnia and Herzegovina" and that the "ethnic division of Bosnia" would never be accepted. What is more, supporting the "civil Bosnia and Herzegovina" theory allowed Izetbegović the maneuvering space to proclaim every constitutional reconstruction of Bosnia and Herzegovina a division of the state.<sup>109</sup>

David Owen resigned as co-president of the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, because "From the moment the Vance-Owen Plan failed, it was no longer possible to keep the country together. This possibility had passed."<sup>110</sup> He was convinced that the Vance-Owen Plan was the final chance for a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that after the failure of the plan, that "some kind of division" would occur. However, twenty years later, David Owen believes that the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina would have been the best solution:

*...things must change now, and we will have to come to accept that Bosnia and Herzegovina must undergo a division... into three parts. That was the best solution then, and I still believe today that this is the best solution.*<sup>111</sup>

Izetbegović and Bosniak politicians believed the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan<sup>112</sup> for a union of three republics to be an

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Constitution. Since the international community had accepted him as the legal representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Izetbegović "changed" the members of the Presidency based on "nationality" after this a number of times. The presidency *de facto* represented exclusively Bosniak interests, although it was formally the highest representative body of all three nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>109</sup> Alija Izetbegović considered that the only democratic option was a so-called "unitary" BH in which "the bearer of sovereignty is only the nation", because "the nation is sovereign, but not the nation in the ethnic sense, but in the European sense, the nation as the citizens of one state". Izetbegović, A. 2001. *Sjećanja*. p. 109.

<sup>110</sup> Lord David Owen, "BiH je trebalo podijeliti na tri dijela", *Globus*, April 11, 2014.

<sup>111</sup> Lord David Owen, "BiH je trebalo podijeliti na tri dijela", *Globus*, April 11, 2014. Owen believes that the Croats should share this belief: "Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina likely think this as well, feeling cheated by the Dayton division."

<sup>112</sup> Owen and Stoltenberg, the co-presidents of the Peace Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, announced their suggestion for a map of BH as

even worse solution than the Vance-Owen Plan. Izetbegović considered the new plan the final proof that the “unitary Bosnia” was finished, and that a Muslim state should be created.

*“It [Bosnia and Herzegovina] can no longer be this way. It can be, but it cannot be the way it truly is... a Serbian-Croatian-Muslim Bosnia as some form of communal state, with a communal government, a communal presidency to which one group would delegate Četniks while others would delegate Ustašas, within this government we tried to maintain for the sake of some sort of legality, is not possible. I beg you, this is my belief after all of the troubles we have lived through with them... because what does a Muslim-Serbian-Croatian Bosnia and Herzegovina mean, or a Bosnia with three constitutive nations, then of course we are not the ones who will determine which Serbs will be a part of it — they are the ones who will determine it. And they will choose Chetniks. The others will choose Ustašas. And how can you have a democratic government with Ustašas and Četniks who will then work directly to destroy the state, or obstruct it at every step...*

*... Therefore, not to create a pure, Muslim state here. We should not do that, although that is what it will be, via facti as they say, it can be no other way. It will be a state in which there will be 80% Muslims and it will be equally as Muslim or Bosniak, however you like, how French is France despite there being 3 million Arabs there?<sup>113</sup>*

The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina believed even less in the efficiency of the international community and the signing of international agreements than Bosniak politicians. They planned and waged war operations in order to ensure as much territory as possible for the Bosniaks:

*“The task is to fight for the survival of the state and the Bosniak-Muslim nation in this area. These are our strategic goals... Let them go to Geneva, let them talk, let them negotiate. One day they will come again and say:*

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a confederate union of three national states on August 20, 1993. The Muslims rejected this suggestion.

<sup>113</sup> Izetbegović, Alija. 14.11.1993. *Speech of the president of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina* (phonogram). TV BiH – TV Okruza Zenica.

*by God, nothing will come of this. We must wage war and that is that.*"<sup>114</sup>

For Izetbegović and Bosniak politicians, the three-way talks between Izetbegović, Milošević, and Tuđman organized by international negotiators on the British aircraft carrier *Invincible* on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1993 was a stronger argument for the war option than for the acceptance of an agreement to end the war.

*According to the plan from the Invincible, 49% of Bosnia will go to the Serbs, 33% to the Muslims, and 17.5% to the Croats, with the central state as a figurehead.*<sup>115</sup>

In the diplomatic field in 1993, "total chaos reigned" which culminated in the last quarter of 1993. All of the peace plans suggested by the co-presidents of the Peace Conference on the Former Yugoslavia were dead. Without clear political goals, UNPROFOR peace forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina were paralyzed, and their roles were reduced to the protection of humanitarian corridors and their own safety. Nothing prevented Serbs and Bosniaks from focusing on their territorial intentions and ensuring them through war. Even David Owen privately suggested to the Muslims that their territorial pretensions should be "settled on the account of the Croats".<sup>116</sup>

When diplomacy collapsed, the chaos that ensued left war as the only efficient option. Bosniaks waged war for their minimum of 33% of territory, and the Serbs fought not to lose much of the 70% they already controlled. Croats in central Bosnia were in a double clinch – between the BH

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<sup>114</sup> Commander of BH Army High Command Sefer Halilović, transcript of a consultation with the BH Army High Command in Zenica, August 21 and 22, 1993.

<sup>115</sup> *Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency*. Little Rock, Arkansas : William J. Clinton Presidency Library, October 1, 2013, p. 28. The Presidency of BH took the firm position that they needed to negotiate 33.3% of the territory of Bosnia for the Bosniak entity, but they were aware that they would have to wage war for this territory because the Serbs were not willing to give up the 70% of the territory they controlled willfully. Alija Izetbegović: "We seek at least 33.3% for the Republic, access to the sea, sovereign access to the sea, access to the Sava, Brčko harbor, and we will tell our negotiators to fight for the best possible combination of territory amounting to 33.3%." *Session of the Presidency of BH*, Dec 15, 1993 (Tape recording). Sarajevo. See: *National Security and the Future*. 2006, 1-2 (7), p. 100.

<sup>116</sup> According to testimony by Muhamed Filipović, Lord Owen suggested to Bosniak leaders during a private dinner in Geneva on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1993 to accept the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan on the union of three republics, so that they might realize their territorial pretensions "on the account of the Croats". Filipović, Muhamed. *Bio sam Alijin diplomata*. Bihać : Delta 2000, p. 301.

Army and the Army of Republika Srpska – and exposed to ruthless ethnic cleansing. It was under such circumstances that President Tuđman sought a political solution for Croats in an accord with the Bosniaks, both to stop the ethnic cleansing of Croats in central Bosnia as well as to protect Croatian interests within the framework of the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan for a union of three republics.

Presidents Tuđman and Izetbegović signed a secret agreement on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1993 “that relations between the Bosnian-Muslim republic and the Croatian republic within the framework of the Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina develop on all fronts with the goal of creating a shared state that will simultaneously enter into a confederal relationship with the Republic of Croatia”. Izetbegović maneuvered around this agreement within two days – by September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1993, he had signed an agreement with Momčilo Krajišnik giving approval to the Serbian republic to secede from the union of three republics under the condition “that all rights of the Union of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including membership in the United Nations, will be automatically transferred to the republic with a majority of Muslim residents”.<sup>117</sup>

Izetbegović could sign these agreements lightly, and ignore them even more so, because President Clinton had promised to send NATO forces to ensure the realization of the peace plan – a plan that would be “respectable” to the Bosniaks – a few days earlier in the White House.<sup>118</sup> None of the plans advocated by negotiators in the name of the European Community could have been “respectable” to the Bosniaks. Izetbegović knew this, because America had opposed these plans from the outset.<sup>119</sup> Without American support and without the military support that the UN SC was unprepared to give to implement the peace plans under the auspices of the EC, these plans were doomed to failure. The failure of these plans was also the failure of European diplomacy.

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<sup>117</sup> See: M. Tuđman, 2005, pp. 439, 441.

<sup>118</sup> On September 8, President Izetbegovic of Bosnia came to the White House. ... Izetbegovic assured me that he was committed to a peaceful settlement as long as it was fair to the Bosnian Muslims. If one was reached, he wanted my commitment to send NATO forces, including U.S. troops, to Bosnia to enforce it. I reaffirmed by intention to do so.” President Bill Clinton. *Ending the Bosnian War: The personal Story of the President of the United States*, p. 6.

<sup>119</sup> In early February, I decided not to endorse the Vance-Owen plan. On the fifth, I met with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada and was pleased to hear him say he didn't like it either. "President Bill Clinton. *Ending the Bosnian War: The personal Story of the President of the United States*, p. 4.

By the end of 1993, it was apparent that the Geneva negotiations had ended in failure. Europe was powerless to ensure the implementation of any agreement, because there was neither a shared opinion on its interests nor the bravery to use military force against the aggressor. Under such circumstances, Serbia and Montenegro's aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia continued, and battles in Bosnia not only continued, but intensified.

European diplomacy no longer knew where to go, and the Americans had not yet taken the initiative. A way out was sought in vague promises "of a new international conference, of a 'global solution', and of other more or less undefined suggestions that not only put off a solution, but spoke of the calling of a new conference in six months or even at the end of next year".<sup>120</sup>

The key question was then "what will happen in the meantime" to prevent "a catastrophe with immense consequences"?

President Tuđman sent a peace initiative to all relevant members of the international community suggesting that decisive measures be taken in a very short term in order to stop the war, establish peace, and enable the solution of political and economic problems in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>121</sup>

The peace initiative contained suggestions for the pacification of all three focal points of the conflict: 1. *Suggestion to implement a peace plan in the UNPAs in Croatia*; 2. *Suggestion to end the war and establish peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*; 3. *Suggestion of measure for the long-term solidification of peace*.<sup>122</sup>

For the occupied territories in Croatia, the president suggested an agreement on the implementation of all of the UN resolutions, with a guarantee to Serbs of local and cultural autonomy within the framework of the Constitutional Law on the districts of Knin and Glina, and suggested that "the normalization of social and economic life in the UNPAs overall be immediately addressed". Croatia was even

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<sup>120</sup> Reasons for the suggested peace initiative of President Franjo Tuđman, November 1, 1993.

<sup>121</sup> President Franjo Tuđman sent this peace initiative to David Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, co-presidents of the Peace Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, as well as to Austrian President Thomas Klestil, Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel, French President Francois Mitterand, Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Hungarian President Arpad Göncz, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Russian Federation President Boris Yeltsin, US President Bill Clinton, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, and British Prime Minister John Major.

<sup>122</sup> Peace Initiative of Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, Zagreb, November 1, 1993.



prepared to accept the immediate foundation of a special international body to monitor the civil rights of Serbs.

To end the war and establish peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the peace initiative contained the suggestion of avoiding new long-term negotiations, and instead to implement the signed Geneva agreements: on the unconditional end to hostilities and all military operations without delay, and the signing of a declaration accepting the Constitutional Agreement on the Union of the Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>123</sup> under the patronage of countries who could influence on an effective solution to the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina: France, Germany, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Turkey, and Great Britain. These states can ensure an effective solution "through the use of NATO forces (in the role that UNPROFOR has had until now), with the authorization to use force, including air strikes, against anyone who violates the cease-fire."<sup>124</sup>

Long-term peace and stability can be ensured through the signing of a solemn declaration under the patronage of the Secretary General of the UN and the UN Security Council on the international recognition of the independence and sovereignty of all of the newly-created states on the territory of the former Yugoslavia within their internationally recognized borders. The rights and obligations of all state successors to the former Yugoslavia should be arranged in a succession agreement, disagreements over which should be resolved in arbitration.

President Tuđman's peace initiative illustrates all of the strategic determinants of Croatian policy. First, readiness to accept international agreements, as well as pressure on the international community to effectively act to implement agreements even through the threat of the use of military force. Second, determine the order of priorities in the interests of Croatia, as well as in the interest of establishing peace and stability across southeastern Europe. Third, the suggestion attempts not to isolate any party with a vested interest in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Border disputes between the republics of the Union of BH were to be solved through bilateral negotiations, and if no decision was reached, the decision was to be deferred to international arbitration.

<sup>124</sup> *President Franjo Tuđman's Peace Initiative*, Zagreb, November 1, 1993, Part II, Point 4.

<sup>125</sup> The peace initiative did not suggest the EC should lose priority, but it advocated the inclusion of the US, the Russian Federation, and Turkey; it did not advocate the departure of UNPROFOR, but it recommended the decisive action of NATO; it sought a condemnation of the aggression

President Tuđman's peace initiative drew a map on how to strategically resolve the conflicts and wars in the former Yugoslavia. Croatian interests surely served as its starting point, but it simultaneously advocated negotiations and agreements, putting political solutions before military ones. The "historical determinism" on the necessity of global and regional integration and the national individualization on which President Tuđman built his suggestions for the peaceful solution to the conflicts were confirmed by the times that were to follow.

#### 4. The fragmenting of the great battlefield

The territory of the former Yugoslavia was host to conflicts of various national interests, both those of the nations involved and those of international factors and the international community. Differing strategies were constantly present, the aim of which was to realize differing political goals. These irreconcilable strategies resorted to military options in order to ensure their goals. Croatian political goals began from the premise that the removal of the cause of national conflicts was the prerequisite to any permanent solution, and thus advocated and accepted agreements that postulated a peaceful solution to the problem.

However, various paths led to a peaceful solution. Croatia was prepared to cooperate with the international community, it agree with the implementation of all peace plans signed by it, but differed from international representatives in that it could not wait for the implementation of these agreements to be prolonged indefinitely. Constantly putting pressure on the international community for an efficient resolution to the problem of occupied Croatian territory, Croatia occasionally irritated international factors with its requests for signed agreements to be implemented effectively. In the end, Croatian demands proved efficient and enforceable.

##### 4.1 The redefinition of the task of UNPROFOR in Croatia

The military and police operation *Storm* was the final operation which liberated 10,400 square kilometers of

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of Serbia and Montenegro, but advocated an agreement on mutual recognition and a succession agreement.

Croatia (18.4% of the total area of occupied Croatian territory), representing the end of both the Serb rebellion and the war. The strategic and diplomatic preparations for operation *Storm* – which was carried out in only a few days – had begun a few years earlier as a backup option in the case of the failure of diplomatic and political solutions to the occupation. The primary goal of Croatia's political and diplomatic strategy was never the military solution to the occupation of Croatian territory. The primary goal was to realize its territorial integrity through political and diplomatic means. Only in the case of political and diplomatic failure would it use military force.

Vance's plan foresaw demilitarization and the return of displaced persons, which were in opposition to the political goals of the rebel Serbs. As UNPROFOR did not stop on Croatia's state border but on the borders of occupied territories, this allowed rebel Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue their policy seeking "that RSK unite with other Serbian countries, firstly with Republika Srpska". Due to these political goals, and in order to "actually" realize the "final political solution" of uniting Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the "Protocol on Cooperation between the Governments of Republika Srpska and the Republic of Serbian Krajina" was signed on September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1992 in Banja Luka. Thus began the process of negotiation and unification of occupied "Serbian" regions in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The next step in the realization of this goal was the signing of the "Declaration on the Unification of the Republic of Serbian Krajina and Republika Srpska" on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 1992 in Prijedor.<sup>126</sup>

In operation ***Maslenica***, which began on January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1993, Croatian military and police units liberated 92 square kilometers of Croatian territory in 72 hours. The significance of operation ***Maslenica*** is most often cited due to its liberation of the Zadar hinterland and solving the problem of Croatia's transport and economic isolation.<sup>127</sup> However, two

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<sup>126</sup> Ante Nazor: "Zašto se **OLUJA** nije mogla izbjeći, niti se smjela odgoditi", **Hrvatski vojnik**, double issue 303/304, July 2010, (<http://www.hrvatski-vojn timer.hr/hrvatski-vojn timer/3033042010/oluja.asp> - accessed 5 Oct 2014). The unification process also continued in 1993: "On the basis of the mentioned "Declaration", a decision was made on 24 April 1993 to constitute a joint 'National Assembly of the Republic of Serbian Krajina and Republika Srpska, as a communal organ of the Republic of Serbian Krajina and Republika Srpska', headquartered in Banja Luka" (*ibid*).

<sup>127</sup> After successfully completing operation ***Maslenica***, the construction of a pontoon bridge in place of the destroyed "Maslenica bridge" enabled the flow of road traffic between the north and south of Croatia. After the

other vital strategic dimensions to this operation must not be missed.

Firstly, operation **Maslenica** was a message to rebel Serbs – and the international community – that Croatia would not sit idly by and accept the “unification of the Republic of Serbian Krajina and Republika Srpska” in order to win a “lasting political solution”.

Secondly, operation **Maslenica** was a message to the international community on the ineffectiveness of UNPROFOR. Specifically, international forces were supposed to expediently solve the problem of occupied “pink zones”, which were outside of the borders of the UNPAs, and according to Security Council Resolution 726, were Croatian territory that rebel Serbs were supposed to immediately turn over to Croatian police and authorities for supervision.<sup>128</sup>

Croatia, in executing operation **Maslenica**, was not in breach of its responsibilities according to the Vance Plan, because the goal of the operation was to liberate the “pink zones”, occupied territory “outside of the agreed-upon borders of the UNPAs”. Despite this, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 802 on January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993, in which it “demands the immediate cessation of hostile acts” by Croatian forces, and “strongly condemns attacks [by Croatian forces] against UNPROFOR” (!!).

Operation **Maslenica** represented the realization of Croatia’s strategic goals: it ensured that Croatia was connected in terms of roads, railways, and its economy; it clearly showed the international community and rebel Serbs that it would respect international agreements, but that it would not be tricked by backdoor games at integrating “Serbian territory” or the Cypriotization of Croatia. The fact that rebel Serbs reacted to operation Maslenica with an armed retaliation including actions against “the largest Croatian cities”<sup>129</sup> did not change the Croatian standpoint.

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destruction of the “Maslenica bridge” in 1991, the connection between southern and northern Croatia, as well as supply to the southern theater, depended on the weather and the capacity of ferry lines via the island of Pag.

<sup>128</sup> UN Secretary General’s report S/23844 dated April 24, 1992 defines “pink zones” as “a defined area in Croatia currently controlled by YNA but outside of the arranged borders of the UNPAs.”

<sup>129</sup> See: *Dokumenti institucija pobunjenih Srba u Republici Hrvatskoj (siječanj-lipanj 1993.)*. / ed. Mate Rupičić, Janja Sekula // Zagreb – Slavonski Brod : Hrvatski memorijalno-dokumentacijski centar Domovinskog rata, 2010.

A letter from the President of Croatia to the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali dated March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1993 shows both the strategic goals and the moves Croatia would take leading up to the end of the war and peaceful reintegration of occupied territory. Croatia warned that prolonging UNPROFOR's mandate for the territory of the former Yugoslavia was unsustainable, and that a new mandate needed to be agreed upon with each of the newly created and internationally recognized states:

*At this moment the UNPROFOR operation is taking place on the territory of two sovereign UN member states - Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina - and on the territory of the Republic of Macedonia. Therefore, "Yugoslavia" has no competence either in a legal or a political sense for the ongoing UNPROFOR action. This is not a civil war but an international armed conflict caused by Serbian aggression against Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. This is the essence of the crisis. Therefore the definition of the character of the peace mandate and the formal agreement on the status of United Nations forces must be reached among the respective Governments and the United Nations. Consequently the agreement on the future mandate and status of UNPROFOR in Croatia must be concluded between the United Nations and the Government of the Republic of Croatia.*

In this letter, the President of Croatia announces that Croatia will accept an extension of the UNPROFOR mandate for the following six months, but that it wishes to see the Vance Plan implemented and Croatia's territorial sovereignty respected. Croatia confirms its decisiveness that the mandate of UNPROFOR needs to be extended based upon principles that have already been confirmed. However, Croatia considers the opening of roads, rail lines, and communication channels the top priority of UNPROFOR, with the goal of peacefully reintegrating occupied territory, building trust, reducing tensions, and avoiding conflict in order to normalize living conditions throughout Croatia.<sup>130</sup>

Security Council Resolution 815 (March 30<sup>th</sup>, 1993) extended UNPROFOR's mandate until the end of June of 1993. Not all Croatian requests were respected, but the Resolution clearly stated and confirmed that the "UNPA zones are a component part of the territory of the Republic

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<sup>130</sup> A letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, March 19, 1993, just before a UN Security Council session to discuss an extension of UNPROFOR's mandate.

of Croatia". Before the UN SC decision to extend the mandate of UNPROFOR, President Tuđman reexplained Croatia's requests and sought the demilitarization of UNPA regions, the return of displaced persons, and sought that "Croatia should be able to immediately establish its state power across the entire territory of the so-called 'pink zones'". In addition to this, Croatia repeated its requests for the opening of roads and control of state borders.<sup>131</sup>

The reply of rebel Serbs to Resolution 815, which left no doubt that the UNPA zones were a component part of Croatia's territory, and to Croatian peace initiatives and the steps that UNPROFOR was supposed to take to peacefully reintegrate the UNPAs was twofold. Rebel Serbs increased their attacks on Croatian cities and inflicted terror on local Croatian and non-Serb residents in occupied territories.<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, the rebel Serbs rejected negotiations and political agreements with Zagreb, and continued with their policy of integrating "Serbian lands":

*Local Serbs simply broke off negotiations with representatives of the Croatian government. The president of the self-appointed Assembly of the so-called Republic of Serbian Krajina, Mile Paspalj, called a session of the "Parliament of Krajina" on Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1993 in Petrinja to discuss the issuing of a referendum on the "unification of the Republic of Serbian Krajina and Republika Srpska and other Serbian lands". This meant a call to unite with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, that is to say with Serbia and Montenegro, to create a "Greater Serbia".<sup>133</sup>*

Again, Croatia did not answer these provocations and the actions of rebel Serbs militarily, but sought a solution through diplomacy and with the cooperation of the international community. Croatia sought of the UN Secretary General and of UNPROFOR to "immediately check and

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<sup>131</sup> A letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, May 12, 1993.

<sup>132</sup> "Serbian aggression towards the Republic of Croatia – a member of the UN – continues in the UNPAs. Armed provocations and attacks on Croatian cities (Zadar, Biograd, Šibenik, Gospić) have increased in recent days, civilian targets have been destroyed and lives have been lost. Citizens in UNPAs are also being terrorized, Croats and other non-Serbs are being jailed and abused, most actively by volunteers from Serbia, of whom there are thousands in each sector." Letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1993.

<sup>133</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1993.

ensure the international borders of the Republic of Croatia with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) that are in contact with UNPA zones". Additionally, with increased accusations that Croatia was involved in internal conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, President Tuđman suggested "that UNPROFOR make an effective security check of all of the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, meaning that we accept that, as a part of the checking of all borders of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the entire border between the Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina be checked as well, not only those relating to the UNPA zones."<sup>134</sup>

Shortly before the new Security Council decision, in an attempt to force a political and diplomatic solution for the occupied regions and to end the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, President Tuđman extended the mandate of UNPROFOR, stating that Croatia was prepared to accept a one-month extension of their mandate.<sup>135</sup> If rebel Serb leaders did not agree to cooperate within this month, Croatia was not willing to further extend the mandate of UNPROFOR.<sup>136</sup>

In this letter, President Tuđman warned: „However, we emphasize once more that any agreement on the new mandate could be concluded only between the Republic of Croatia and the United Nations, and be separated from the UNPROFOR mandates in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia“. The importance of this message in mid-1993 had been stated as an announcement, and in the end of 1994 it was a firm decision of strategic importance and vital to fragmenting the “great battlefield” and attaining both military victories and concluding peace agreements.

President Tuđman's letter and the efforts of Croatian diplomats apparently were apparently resounding. UN SC Resolution 847, passed on June 30th, 1993, directly cites this letter, expanding the task of UNPROFOR to the opening of transport infrastructure.<sup>137</sup> In conclusion, the UN Secretary

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<sup>134</sup> “I am convinced that a border check is a necessary and key step towards ending aggression and war and the attainment of a peaceful solution following the Security Council Resolution”. Letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1993.

<sup>135</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

<sup>136</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993.

<sup>137</sup> *Calling on the parties and others concerned to reach an agreement on confidence-building measures in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, including the opening of the railroad between Zagreb and Split, the*

General committed to reporting on the progress of peace efforts within a month, and “taking into account the opinions of the Croatian government”, to consider a future “UNPROFOR mandate in the territory of the Republic of Croatia”.

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1991, the UN Security Council passed the **Vance Plan**, which defined the tasks of UNPROFOR, peacekeeping forces on the territory of the (former) Yugoslavia. In early 1992, Yugoslavia formally disappeared with the international recognition of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia – the presence of UNPROFOR on the “territory of the former Yugoslavia” only homogenized the crisis and wars while prolonging the *status quo*. The paradox of this kind of international effort is that the very presence of UNPROFOR implicitly fed Serbian imperial ambitions and pretensions. This was another one of the reasons why Croatia sought the division of UNPROFOR’s mandate into three separate operations – in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia.

From a strategic and political viewpoint, the consequences of the existence of three UN operations in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia instead of UNPROFOR on the “territory of the former Yugoslavia” were more than obvious. Each of the three operations had the task of standing at the borders of sovereign states and bringing order: disarming irregular units and enabling peaceful reintegration – the return of displaced persons and the establishment of legitimate government. The political and military goals of uniting “all Serbian lands”, a program orchestrated by Belgrade under the hypothesis that only nations have the right to “self-determination and secession”, could not be transferred from one state to another — which also meant that they could not have international support either, and would be politically, militarily, and economically destined to fail in a much shorter time.

In a letter to the Secretary General of the UN (July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1993), President Tuđman warned of this very fact: “*This division will, if it is carried out, provide positive results, mainly because the organization of the work of UNPROFOR*

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*highway between Zagreb and Županja, and the Adriatic oil pipeline, securing the uninterrupted traffic across the Maslenica straits, and restoring the supply of electricity and water to all regions of the Republic of Croatia, including the United Nations Protected Areas (UN SC Resolution 847).*



*will not cause the crises in these countries to act on each other."*

However, Greater Serbian politics was also aware that the separation of UN peacekeeping forces into three separate operations led to the end and failure of their imperial ambitions. It was for this reason that the existing mandate of UNPROFOR suited the Greater Serbian agenda, because of two key weaknesses: first, the existing mandate "of freezing conflicts, guarding cease-fires, does not lead to a solution to the conflict, but instead to further complications"; second, "some countries that have activated their forces to implement the multilateral peace mandate are attempting to pursue the national policies of their state, and not that of the Security Council, through their members in the peacekeeping units and mediators in negotiations."<sup>138</sup>

UNPROFOR's mandate, which "did not lead to a solution to the conflict", enabled the Greater Serbian agenda to react to each and every military, political, or diplomatic action simultaneously at any point on the "great battlefield". The Greater Serbian agenda considered state borders fictive, and so the territory from Belgrade to Banja Luka to Knin functioned like connected containers. This situation suited the Greater Serbian agenda, and it was difficult for analysts and participants at the time (and still is for some today) who were not familiar with the situation, and thus did not have information on what was happening either at the international table or in other parts of the "great battlefield", to understand then the true reasons and causes of certain statements, imputations, and accusations.

In a time when Croatia was more and more aggressively posing the question of dividing the UNPROFOR mandate into three operations and seeking that UNPROFOR control Croatia's state borders with Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia (Montenegro), accusations arose that the Croatian Army was involved in conflicts in central Bosnia. If this had been true, then Zagreb's suggestion on UNPROFOR's control of the state borders would have been the international community's most effective measure for insight into the action of the Croatian military outside Croatia's borders.

These unfounded accusations were an additional reason why Croatia insisted on a change in the mandate of UNPROFOR:

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138 Speech by President Franjo Tuđman at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the UN, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1993 (Dr. Franjo Tuđman. *ZNA SE. HDZ u borbi za samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb : Izvršni odbor Središnjice HDZ-a, 1993, p. 227.)

*If the mandate of UNPROFOR does not change within the next 48 hours with the goal of implementing resolutions and other documents of the Security Council, the Republic of Croatia will have no choice but to thank the United Nations for the peacekeeping operation it led on Croatian soil and ask that UNPROFOR units leave Croatia by November 30<sup>th</sup> of this year at the latest.*<sup>139</sup>

Croatia did not announce the cancelling of UNPROFOR's mandate because it opposed the engagement of international forces, but rather because it was against the inefficiency of existing peacekeeping forces. In a speech at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the UN on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1993, President Tuđman simultaneously advocated the engagement of NATO forces in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina at a time when NATO was not prepared for this.

*Croatia hails the readiness of NATO to take over the role of central guarantor of peace and stability in this part of Europe, whose units will actively support the implementation of the peace plan. We would also like to see NATO in a supporting role for the implementation of the Vance Plan.*<sup>140</sup>

Croatia's decisive opinion that it would not accept an extension of the UNPROFOR mandate had to be respected by the UN Security Council. Without the consent of the Croatian government, UNPROFOR was not allowed to stay in Croatia. On October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1993, the Security Council passed Resolution 871, which satisfied all of Croatia's political requests: a condemnation of military attacks against Croatia, a confirmation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Croatia, the importance of reestablishing Croatian control in the pink zones, the necessity of reopening transport infrastructure (highways, rail lines, and other paths), oil lines, electrical and water supply networks, etc. The Croatian request to separate UNPROFOR's mandate into three separate operations was only partially satisfied by

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<sup>139</sup> Speech by President Franjo Tuđman at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the UN, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1993 (Dr. Franjo Tuđman. *ZNA SE. HDZ u borbi za samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb : Izvršni odbor Središnjice HDZ-a, 1993, p. 227.)

<sup>140</sup> Speech by President Franjo Tuđman at the 48<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the UN, September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1993 (Dr. Franjo Tuđman. *ZNA SE. HDZ u borbi za samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb : Izvršni odbor Središnjice HDZ-a, 1993, p. 232.) Further: "We believe that it would be purposeful for NATO to be the main and decisive bearer of the peace plan for Bosnia and Herzegovina..." (p. 233.)

the Security Council. Resolution 871 accepted the "Takes note of the intention of the Secretary-General to establish ... three subordinate commands within UNPROFOR - UNPROFOR (Croatia), UNPROFOR (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and UNPROFOR (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)..."<sup>141</sup>

Croatia's political requests had been satisfied completely, but the request to reorganized UNPROFOR had been satisfied only halfway. However, the very fact that the UN SC confirmed Croatia's political requests solidified Croatia's position, not only within the international community, but internally. The confirmation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Croatia was an admission by the international community that the problem of occupied territory was a Croatian problem that Croatia needed to solve – by international standards.

UN SC Resolution 871 changed Croatia's strategic position, as it no longer had to prove its right to its territorial integrity. However, it still did not intend to liberate occupied territories by force. President Tuđman again released a complete *Peace Initiative* in an attempt to stop the war in the former Yugoslavia, which also recommended the implementation of a number of measures in occupied territory (UNPA zones) in Croatia:

*In order to implement UN Security Council Resolution 871 as quickly as possible (as well as the remaining Resolutions that this Resolution calls upon), the Republic of Croatia suggests the following:*

*The Croatian government is willing to, within a period of 15 days, conclude an agreement on the cessation of all hostilities with representatives of local Serbs, giving them a guarantee for local and cultural autonomy.*

- 1. To this end, we suggest that the work of the joint commission be renewed in order to solve all issues mentioned by the Vance Plan, and to implement the tenets of Security Council Resolution 871, with the cooperation of UNPROFOR representatives and the European Community.*
- 2. We suggest that the issue of normalizing social and economic life overall be immediately approached...*<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> UN SC Resolution 871, October 4, 1993.

<sup>142</sup> Peace Initiative of Dr. Franjo Tuđman, President of the Republic of Croatia, November 1, 1993.

The content of President Tuđman's *Peace Initiative* offers rebel Serbs what had been promised to them both in 1990 and 1991, and even this was more than they were to get after *Storm*. From the strategic standpoint, every new step Croatia took in diplomatic and international relations stemmed from the previous one. This is also clearly shown by the *Peace Initiative* of November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1993, which openly called on Resolution 871, which preceded the initiative as a realistic foundation for its actualization. Tuđman, as a historian, saw the logic of historical processes and peaceful solutions to international conflicts in Scandinavization – which he had defined as a historical problem and concept as early as 1981 in his book *The National Issue in Modern Europe*. Tuđman, as a statesman, saw the solution to the Yugoslav crisis in 1990 in the federal reorganization of Yugoslavia as an alliance of sovereign states with the right to peaceful secession. President Tuđman's overall political strategy operated within the bounds of these defined historical insights.

Advocates of the Greater Serbian agenda, however, believed that they could and had to realize their goals through war, and that the international community would accept the solutions forced through war on occupied and conquered territories sooner or later. In the end, they lost on two fronts. First, they were defeated internationally, as the international community did not accept the logic and behavior of violence, and subjected them to sanctions and excluded them from international organizations. Second, they were defeated militarily, as their goals were no longer legitimate, and thus they had neither political support from the international community nor moral support from their own supporters internally.

#### 4.2 Defining UNCRO's mandate for Croatia

From today's perspective, it is not difficult to conclude why Croatia so firmly advocated the redefinition of UNPROFOR's mandate, state border control for Croatia, Bosnia, and Yugoslavia (Serbia & Montenegro). The fragmenting of the great battlefield was a prerequisite to the efficient implementation of peace plans both in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia could not use military force stop the ethnic cleansing of Croats in central Bosnia being carried out at the time by the BH Army. This would have meant entering a war to stop Bosniak territorial pretensions, which were the consequence of dissatisfaction with the Vance-

Owen Plan, as well as of Bosniak advocates of the unitary organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to whom Bosnia and Herzegovina should belong to its “founding nation”.

*In recent days, I have been receiving alarming notices from representatives of the Croatian people and local authorities, secular and church institutions from central Bosnia asking that Croatia do all that is possible to stop the tragedy befalling the Croatian people in Zenica, Kakanj, Vitez, Busovača, Kiseljak, Kreševo, Travnik, Konjic, and in the regions surrounding Žepče and Usor, where complete ethnic cleansing is being carried out along with the destruction of settlements and the massacre of civilians. Over a hundred thousand Croats are now either refugees or are in mortal danger.*<sup>143</sup>

Izetbegović decided to “settle” his territorial issues on the account of Croats in central Bosnia, and in doing so, it was natural that the “authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina hold session in Zagreb, representatives of these authorities move freely across the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia without respect to basic international rules on announcing and seeking authority for actions on the territory of another sovereign state, while a number of various offices and logistic centers of political organizations which are committing crimes and aggression against the Croatian people are operating in many Croatian cities”.<sup>144</sup>

In summer and fall of 1993, the fate of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina was truly uncertain, as peace plans had failed one after another due to being rejected by either the Serbs or Bosniaks. Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, who were the only ones to accept all offered peace plans, fought simultaneously on two separate battlefields with horrific losses. They were first victim to ethnic cleansing by the Serbs in Bosnian Posavina, and then by the Bosniaks in central Bosnia. At the same time, no progress was made in Croatia on the actualization of the Vance Plan. Rebel Serbs continued to reject the political solutions foreseen by the peace plan, and relied on their military superiority<sup>145</sup> which

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<sup>143</sup> Letter from President Franjo Tuđman to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (June 25, 1993.)

<sup>144</sup> Letter from President Franjo Tuđman to the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1993)

<sup>145</sup> “The numerical strength of the Serbian Army of Krajina as of February 13<sup>th</sup> [1993] amounts to 71,409 people, that being 3,291 officers, 3,424 non-commissioned officers, 60,496 conscripts, and 4,198 volunteers.

they ensured through cooperation with Republika Srpska and support from Belgrade. Rebel Serbs even invested in efforts to cement the *status quo* and turn it into a permanent solution through integration with other “Serbian lands”.

Croatia did not consider the military option its primary strategic goal. The strategic goal was always to ensure a political solution through diplomacy in accord with the international community. Only when rebel Serbs in Croatia (and parties in conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina) did not show readiness to realize peace plans that had been accepted by the international community, and when Croatia was certain that the international community would not be able to dispute the legitimate use of military force, did Croatia undertake military operations to successfully realize its goals.

Meanwhile, the fate of 250,000 displaced persons from occupied regions forced Croatia to make decisive and urgent moves. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, as a reaction to the ineffectiveness of UNPROFOR, displaced persons began a blockade of roads leading to multiple UNPROFOR checkpoints, blocking roads towards UNPA zones that were used exclusively by UNPROFOR members and humanitarian organizations. The UN Security Council’s presidential statement of August 11<sup>th</sup>, 1994 condemned the blockade of UNPROFOR’s approach points to the UNPA zones.<sup>146</sup>

Three years after they had occupied Croatian territory, the refusal of rebel Serbs to return displaced persons to their homes, their refusal to open transport infrastructure and normalize relations, and dissatisfaction with the efficiency of the “blue helmets were the reasons why Croatian Parliament unanimously adopted a resolution to cancel the mandate of UNPROFOR on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1994, which also accepted a technical mandate of 100 days. If UN soldiers in this time did not place themselves on the borders of Croatia, establish Croatian control in the pink zones, and enable the return of displaced persons, Croatia would seek a new UN SC resolution that would allow the actual implementation of the

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This kind of numerical strength will never be attained again in the Serbian Army of Krajina, especially not in the group of volunteers” (Milisav Sekulić. *Knin je pao u Beogradu*. Bad Vilbel : Nidda Verlag GmbH, 2000, p. 69.) General Milisav Sekulić was the commander of the operations and training department of the High Command of the Serbian Army of Krajina.

<sup>146</sup> Despite this, the blockade lasted until August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

mandate, and would not accept the extension of UNPROFOR's mandate in Croatia.

Croatia's president repeated the opinion of Croatian Parliament in a speech at the 49<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly of the UN on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1994.

*Croatia has shown great patience in its dialogue with rebel Serbs, but now, after a three-year occupation, it seeks that the international community redefine the mandate of UNPROFOR so as to ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions 769 and 871, and to force the Serbian side to gradually normalize and reintegrate on the basis of the accepted peace plan.*<sup>147</sup>

Croatia's dissatisfaction with UNPROFOR was emphasized by Croatian politicians nearly from the very outset. The international community, as well as the Security Council in its resolutions, constantly placed pressure on rebel Serbs to implement the Vance Plan. As there was no political will from their side for peaceful reintegration, and as they did everything they could not to reintegrate into Croatia and did everything in their power to integrate with Republika Srpska in a political and military sense,<sup>148</sup> Croatia decided to cancel the mandate of UNPROFOR.

Obviously, this move could have had far-reaching consequences for the peace process, not only in Croatia but in Bosnia and Herzegovina as well. Croatia and key international figures had opposing estimates of the possible flow of events. However, Croatia was the one to take decisive steps to end the crisis, while the crisis handlers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were behind on current events. Croatia's decision to cancel UNPROFOR's mandate was an extraordinarily delicate one for Croatia's fate itself. There was no doubt that the international community had accepted Croatia's right to reintegrate occupied territories, that it had condemned Serbian crimes and policies, and that the UN SC had obligated UNPROFOR to new tasks upon Croatia's demand in addition to those from the Vance Plan.

Croatia's decision could have changed the mood of key crisis handlers against itself. In order to familiarize world statesmen and NATO leaders on the reasons for the

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<sup>147</sup> Dr. Franjo Tuđman. *ZNA SE. HDZ u borbi za samostalnu Hrvatsku*. Zagreb : Izvršni odbor Središnjice HDZ-a, 1993, p. 191.

<sup>148</sup> In late 1994, the Serbian army of the so-called RSK, together with RS units, undertook a military operation to occupy the protected zone of Bihać, and thus radically changed their military and political position through the territorial connection of "Serbian lands".

cancelling of UNPROFOR's mandate from the Croatian standpoint, President Tuđman sent a number of envoys: he sent Foreign Minister Mate Granić to Paris and London, ambassador Miomir Žužul and Miroslav Tuđman to Washington, Deputy Foreign Minister Ivo Sanader to London and Rome, Assistant Foreign Minister Ivan Šimonović to Moscow, and Janko Vranyczany to Brussels, while Croatian Prime Minister Nikica Valentić represented the Croatian viewpoint in Peking, speaking on the same day with Chinese Parliamentary President Chiem.

United States President Bill Clinton wrote of "the pan-Balkan crisis"<sup>149</sup> and of UNPROFOR as the key instrument to a complete peaceful solution. This position implies the knowledge that the starting point of the "pan-Balkan crisis" was Belgrade and the agenda of uniting "all Serbian lands". This is why the crisis in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were connected through joint Greater Serbian political interests, and the entire region reacted militarily as one great battlefield. However, the Croatian and American view of the exit strategy from the "pan-Balkan crisis" differed greatly. It was in Croatian national interests to fragment the *great battlefield* into smaller wholes in order to reduce the size of the battlefield and force the Serbs to address their political requests to the states in which they lived, i.e. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia. Thus, President Tuđman answered President Clinton:

*The termination of the UNPROFOR mandate will not put an end to the negotiations with Serbs in Croatia. On the contrary, it should provide a new impetus for their more efficient outcome. It will convince the Serbs in Croatia, as well as the Belgrade authorities, to enter into serious negotiations.*<sup>150</sup>

The same day he answered President Clinton, President Tuđman also sent a letter to the UN Secretary General, in which Croatia refused to extend UNPROFOR's mandate:

*It is my honor as President of the Republic of Croatia to inform you that the mandate of UNPROFOR will end as of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1995, in accordance with Resolution 947 (1994)...*<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Letter from President William J. Clinton to President F. Tuđman, January 10, 1995.

<sup>150</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to President William J. Clinton, January 12, 1995.

<sup>151</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali, January 12, 1995.



Croatia focused on its demands, and in the end, got what it really wanted. On March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1995, Croatia accepted a new mandate of UN peacekeeping forces, under the condition that UNCRO take control of Croatia's borders with Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro, and oversee the peaceful reintegration of occupied territories. This same day, the UN Security Council passed **Resolution 981** establishing a new UN mandate in Croatia under the title of "United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia". The new mandate was to be established on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1995.

In this demanding diplomatic game, the final goal of Croatia was never to break off cooperation with the international community and UN forces. The true goal was to make the UN Security Council accept a mission for UN forces in Croatia alone, so that the problem of occupied territory in Croatia might be solved independently of the crisis in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## 5. The consistent implementation of a strategy of harmonized steps

*Storm* buried the myth of Serbian military superiority and invincibility. This Greater Serbian political myth had been fed and maintained by figures from Ilija Garašanin to Slobodan Milošević. It had a basis in reality during the collapse of Yugoslavia in the strength of the Yugoslav Army, which had occupied a third of Croatia and two thirds of Bosnia and Herzegovina in service of the agenda of "all Serbs in one state". This is why the majority of foreign analyses did not predict or believe that the strength of the Croatian Army could militarily liberate occupied territory.<sup>152</sup> Some international figures did not accept the military option for various, and often opposing reasons.

After *Storm*, the theory appeared in some media that the Americans had planned *Storm*, and that without their help Croatia would never have been able to successfully implement a military operation on that scale and in such a short period of time. The motives for such an interpretation are manifold. However, documents leave no doubt about the opinion of American politicians towards military operation *Storm*.

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<sup>152</sup> "The Croatian Army ... lacks the heavy weapons and skilled leadership to gain a decisive victory over Krajina Serb forces". *Special Intelligence Report*. DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force, November 17, 1994.

Croatian policy was consistent in its strategy of **realistically harmonized steps**,<sup>153</sup> and in early August it informed key members of the international community that it would undertake a military operation, as Serbian forces had again begun an attack on the protected zone of Bihać. An appeal was sent to Croatia from Bihać:

*The situation in the hospital is especially dire, where medicine and sanitary materials are lacking, and where patients are receiving only one meal per day due to a lack of food. The fate of around 180,000 residents of the Unsko-Sanski region is uncertain. We can only promise that we will fight regardless of the cost and regardless of the indecision of the international community. We can place our only hope in our brave soldiers and our allies, the Croatian people, since the fate our aggressor has intended for us is the same.*<sup>154</sup>

The unwillingness of rebel Serbs to negotiate, the humanitarian tragedy and exodus that would have resulted from the fall of Bihać, and the possible consequences of the fall of Bihać in terms of geostrategic changes were President Tuđman's reasons for informing Presidents Chirac and Clinton and Chancellor Kohl on the steps Croatia was intending to take:

*In terms of the current situation, I wish to emphasize that the Croatian Army has taken steps in neighboring Bosnia and Herzegovina at the request of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with the Split Declaration, in order to prevent the conquest of the Bihać UN "protected zone" by Croatian and Bosnian Serbs, which would have far-reaching consequences on the strategic, political, and humanitarian levels.*<sup>155</sup>

The reactions of President Chirac, Chancellor Kohl, and President Clinton to the fact that Croatia was prepared to undertake a military operation to liberate occupied territory and save the Bihać region were quite similar, and yet differed in tone:

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<sup>153</sup> In 1993, Davor Domazet Lošo advocated the term "realistically harmonized steps" to describe the Croatian military strategy as an answer to the Greater Serbian strategy of "realistic threats" (see: D. Domazet Lošo, 1993). The term **a strategy of realistically harmonized steps** is taken from D. Domazet, and we use it in its wider meaning for a description of not only military strategy, but the entirety of Croatian national strategy in the 1990's.

<sup>154</sup> Letter from Adnan Alagić, head of the Bihać municipality, July 26, 1995.

<sup>155</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to French President Jacques Chirac, August 1, 1995.

*However, let us not misunderstand each other: France believes that the Serbs must be stopped in order to stabilize the situation on the ground, however in no case will it be pulled into the dynamics of a military assurance of peace...*

*Today, at the edge of an abyss, France believes that such uncompromisingness can only lead to a new escalation.*<sup>156</sup>

Chancellor Kohl emphasizes friendship with Croatia, and warns that an escalation in military conflict could endanger Croatia's international position, and so recommends "the verification of the further intentions of Krajina Serbs" through negotiations:

*Thus I beg of you that, in making your decisions in coming days, that you do not lose sight of the possible consequences of military escalation, especially considering Croatia's international reputation, and thus the related willingness of the international community to support its aspirations. I have always supported these aspirations and I shall continue to do so.*

*It seems important to me to publicly verify the stated willingness of the Krajina Serbs to negotiate and open dialogue. The discussions set in Geneva in coming days between representatives of Croatia and those of the Krajina Serbs offer an opportunity you should take advantage of, considering the international support necessary, to verify the further intent of the Krajina Serbs and to potentially come to concrete and mutually useful agreements.*<sup>157</sup>

According to the available documentation, President Tuđman sent a letter with the same content to President Clinton and Chancellor Kohl, in which he reports on his decision and on the goals of the military operation:

*... Regardless of all the attempts of the international community and of messages sent from messages in London and from yesterday's NATO meeting, the Serbian offensive against Bihać has not ceased. Aware of the level of humanitarian catastrophe and long-term consequences to the resolution of the crisis in this region that would occur if the forces of Serb aggressors took*

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<sup>156</sup> Letter from French President Jacques Chirac to President Tuđman, August 2, 1995.

<sup>157</sup> Letter from German Chancellor Helmut Kohl to President Tuđman, August 2, 1995.

*control of Bihać, the Republic of Croatia has decided to offer military help to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have based our decision on the appeal of the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina and President Izetbegović...*

*... as the Croatian head of state, supported by a unanimous decision of the National Security Council, I have ordered a military operation, which will begin in the morning, to stop the occupation of occupied regions from which aggression is being inflicted on the protected zone of Bihać...*

*I assure you that our operation is in no way directed at the Serbian national community in the occupied territory. We will do everything in our power to prevent civilian casualties, and to enable normal life and development in a democratic Croatia.<sup>158</sup>*

On August 4<sup>th</sup>, 1995, military operation *Storm* began. It began with a message to Krajina Serbs from President Tuđman in the name of the democratic government of Croatia:

*...I call upon members of Serb paramilitary forces, who have willfully mobilized or been forced to do so, to surrender their weapons to Croatian authorities, with the guarantee that they will be granted amnesty according to valid Croatian laws...*

*I call upon Croatian citizens of Serbian nationality who have not actively been involved in the rebellion to remain in their homes, and without fear for their lives or their property, to await the arrival of Croatian authorities, with the guarantee that they will be allowed all civil rights, and allowed elections for local government according to the Croatian constitution and the Constitutional Law along with the presence of international observers.*

Operation *Storm* returned the entirety of occupied Croatian territory, with the exception of eastern Slavonia, to the control of the Croatian constitutional and legal system. From August 4<sup>th</sup> to August 7<sup>th</sup>, 10,400 square kilometers of Croatia was liberated (i.e. 18.4% of the surface area of all occupied Croatian territory). It represented the end of the rebel Serb army, the defeat of the Greater Serbian agenda, and the end of the war.

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<sup>158</sup> Letter from President Tuđman to President Clinton and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, August 3, 1995.

However, it was also the triumph of the Croatian national strategy and state policy which, since its arrival with the first democratic elections, offered an agreement on the reorganization of SFRY into a federation of sovereign states, and which recognized the national minority rights of rebel Serbs both in the 1990 Constitution, and again offered to guarantee and respect these rights according to the highest European standards in the referendum on independence in 1991. A state policy which attempted to peacefully reintegrate occupied territory through negotiations for four years. The policy of President Tuđman, which, even after military victory and all of the tragic consequences of the war, finally leading to the peaceful reintegration of Croatian Podunavlje, declared to both Croats and Serbs:

*“The victor who knows not how to forgive sows the seeds of new discord and future malice.”<sup>159</sup>*

## Epilogue

European diplomacy did not succeed in stopping the war in the former Yugoslavia. American diplomacy is credited with ending the war, and the Dayton Accords are the crown of its success. Consistent with their pragmatic philosophy, the Americans created the *Dayton History Project* in 1996, an analysis of diplomatic efforts on the basis of classified documents and interviews with American participants in the Dayton Accords. The intent of the resulting study, *The Road to Dayton. U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process*,<sup>160</sup> was to serve American diplomats and politicians as a problem-solving model, and upon its declassification, to serve as the “starting point for researchers” dealing in these problems.

The American concluding judgments on the negotiators in Dayton are significant: “The Bosnians were disorganized, Milošević dishonest, and Tuđman disinterested.”<sup>161</sup> Tuđman was disinterested as he received the most he could for Croatia from Dayton: a guarantee that Croatia would not

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<sup>159</sup> Dr. Franjo Tuđman, speech in Vukovar, June 8, 1997. F. Tuđman: ZNA SE, Zagreb, 1998, p. 292. 228

<sup>160</sup> *The Road to Dayton. U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995*. U. S. Department of State, Dayton History Project, May 1997. The document was declassified in 2005, and is available on the website of *The National Security Archive* ([www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB171/](http://www2.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB171/)).

<sup>161</sup> *The Road to Dayton. U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995*, p. 224.

lose Podunavlje and an agreement on the peaceful reintegration of eastern Slavonia. "Tuđman, who had already gotten his primary objective in Dayton – Eastern Slavonia – astutely played along, helping the Bosnians when it was in his interest but otherwise remaining aloof. His lack of interest in the details of other issues was evident in the amount of time he spent away from Dayton – ten of twenty-one days."<sup>162</sup> Despite President Tuđman's "lack of interest", main American negotiator Holbrooke called him "the King of Dayton", and analysts of the Dayton negotiations consider him "a master of the game".<sup>163</sup>

*Tuđman got what he wanted. Events would give him a key role in the peace process. Some critics had accused us of intentionally closing our eyes to the often brutal policies of Croatia towards Muslims and Serbs in exchange for Zagreb's support for the peace agreement in Bosnia. The truth is, in fact, different: we did not strengthen Tuđman, the situation did. Tuđman could have blocked an agreement on Bosnia until he got control of eastern Slavonia, the final piece of land controlled by Serbs in Croatia. Considering his earlier behavior, his threats that he would make war after Dayton if the territory was not peacefully returned had to be taken seriously. Tuđman's ability to prevent an agreement on Bosnia and threaten another war outweighed Milošević. His influence on Izetbegović was the result of his power to break the Croat-Muslim Federation, the continued existence of which was vital to the negotiations in Dayton. For years, Milošević had viewed Tuđman with contempt and Izetbegović hated him; now he held both of his opponents in his hand and knew exactly how to use them to his ends.*<sup>164</sup>

From the position of Croatian strategic interests, President Tuđman's behavior is understandable. At the end of 1995, the strategic goal was to reintegrate the remaining part of Croatian occupied territory, and if possible, to do so peacefully. President Tuđman received these guarantees at Dayton.<sup>165</sup> Croatian interests in Bosnia and Herzegovina and

<sup>162</sup> *The Road to Dayton. U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995*, p. 232. Presidents Milošević and Izetbegović were in Dayton the entire time.

<sup>163</sup> "Tuđman: Master of the Game" is also a chapter title in: *The Road to Dayton. U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process*, pp. 52-54.

<sup>164</sup> R. Holbrooke, 1998, p. 241.

<sup>165</sup> "The agreement on Eastern Slavonia was on the tenth day... and Tuđman left shortly after that". Dayton History Project. Interview Warren Christopher, U.S. Secretary of State, October 22, 1996, p. 27.

the interests of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina had been finalized in the Washington Agreement in March of 1994, and Dayton could not change this. The guarantee that the Dayton Accords recognized the Washington Agreements, the Federation of Croats and Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the confederation of the Federation with Croatia was also ensured by the Croatian side in early phases of negotiations.

Insensitive to the national issue, which was vital to an understanding of European history and the causes of the collapse of multi-national states, the Americans forced a pragmatic solution for Bosnia and Herzegovina with the ensured support of NATO with the sole goal of “ending the war”. The Washington and Dayton Accords ended the war, but it is questionable whether they provided lasting solutions. Pragmatic as they are, without understanding of the historical determinants and national components of Bosnian and Herzegovinian problems, the Americans believe that everything can be solved through the control of political structures and processes, especially concerning personnel changes. Robert Holbrooke in 1998 still believed that the disappearance of the leaders “who started the war in 1991-1992” was key to the success of the Dayton Accords, and that “more leaders like Dodik appear, and if they survive, then the initial Dayton plan will succeed”.<sup>166</sup> All of the leaders “who started the war” in 1991 and 1992 have disappeared and Dodik has survived, being the most consistent advocate of Dayton, but also of the independence of Republika Srpska, while Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state simply does not work.

The fact that a lasting solution to the non-functionality of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state should be sought first and foremost in removing the causes and reasons for national conflicts and friction (and not in personnel changes) is visible in the EU's most recent position. In March of 2014, European Parliament considered a resolution calling for the consistent federal organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is being destroyed by secessionist and unitarist forces and conceptions. After more than twenty years, the beginning and ending points are once again those same assumptions of “historical determinism” that President Tuđman advocated in his Peace Initiative:

*The problem of Bosnia and Herzegovina is a mirror of all of the problems that have appeared in the former Yugoslavia. The most urgent and briefest summary is as*

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<sup>166</sup> R. Holbrooke, 1998, pp. 364-365.

*follows: if the former Yugoslavia was unsustainable except as a federal organization of community of equal national states, then Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the existence of the same problems in a smaller space, can only survive in the form of a Union of Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina.*<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> The reasons for the suggested peace initiative of Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, November 1, 1993.



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