

# The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina Or the Unacceptable Lightness of "Historicism"

Davor Marijan  
War Museum, Zagreb,  
Republic of Croatia

## Abstract

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The author in this study does not intend to provide a comprehensive account of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in part because the current level of research does not enable this. The only way to understand this conflict is through facts, not prejudices. However, such prejudices are particularly acute amongst Muslim-Bosniac authors. They base their claims on the notion that Serbs and Croats are the destroyers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that both are equally culpable in its destruction. Relying on mainly unpublished and uncited documents from the three constitutive nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the author factually challenges basic and generally accepted claims. The author offers alternative responses to certain claims and draws attention to the complexity of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which has been mainly viewed in terms of black or white. The author does, however, suggest that in considering the character of the war it is necessary to examine first the war in Croatia and the inter-relationship between the two. The main focus is on 1992 and the Muslim and Croat differences that developed into open conflict at the beginning of 1993. The role of the international community in the war and the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina are also discussed.

At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe and the eclipse of Communism from the world political scene, it is not easy to trace the indelible marks left behind after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the wars that ensued. Within fifty years Yugoslavia ceased to exist for a second time, this time it appears to be permanent or at least for an indefinite period. The first of these wars, the war in Slovenia, in contrast to the war in Croatia, and even more so the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was a serious maneuver and not

a conflict between nations and ideologies. The intensity and brutality of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina caught the world's attention, a war taking place in civilized Europe.

During the course of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina there were attempts to interpret its nature, which vulgarized the conflict in terms of black and white, good and evil akin to bad literature or B-grade films. For example, Mustafa Imamović, professor at the Faculty of Law in Sarajevo, stated: "The aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina was organized and planned in detail and implemented in the spring of 1992 by Serbia and Montenegro (so-called Yugoslavia), with the active support of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Chetniks. At the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, as an aggressor Croatia joined in, with the support of the Ustashi elements within the Croatian Defense Council (HVO)."<sup>1</sup> Imamović's statement captures the key element in Muslim-Bosniac publications on the subject of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995. This key element is in many ways questionable. The significance of this interpretation, especially in its most "sensitive" aspects, of the Muslim-Croat conflict is the claim that the entire war is understood from the perspective of the second half of 1993.

The war from 1991/92 to 1995 in many ways appeared to be the continuation of nothing more than the darkness of World War II, its conclusion determining the history of the socialist (republic) of Bosnia and Herzegovina. During the Second World War each constitutive nation found itself divided along two opposing sides, while the Bosniac-Muslims found themselves divided into three, or four sides as it has recently been asserted. The similarities to the Second World War are visible also in the way in which the conflict has been interpreted. In much the same way as 1941 was viewed as the "defining" year in which everything began and nothing good was occurred before it, except for the "painful" experiences of the victor. Now 1991 and 1992 are taken as starting points. The period before 1991 was "difficult and unjust" for all three constitutive nations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Clearly this interpretation is unfounded.

During World War II the Serbs were separated into the Chetniks and the Partizans. Their participation grew constantly in the Partizans as the war closed, and in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Partizan contingent they constituted a majority. The Muslims spent the war mainly in the formations of the home-guard/*domobrani* and the Ustashi forces of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH). They also participated in the local police forces under the auspices of the military formations of the NDH, although today there is an attempt to give them an "independent" character.<sup>2</sup> The participation of the Muslims in the Partizans of Josip Broz Tito was slightly lower, but it began to grow by the end

of 1942. However, there were only a few units with Muslim majority participation, to that we can accept the Partizan terminology to describe them as equivalent "divisions" or infantry brigades, so that for the sake of precision we can use the language of the regular army.<sup>3</sup> A small number of Muslims found themselves in the ranks of Serbian nationalist Chetniks, which is a paradox because they mostly victimized Muslims during the war.

The Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina as the least numerous nation during the entire war remained loyal to radical Croatianhood, while their participation in the Partizans was only symbolic, even when the latter mobilized on a large scale near the end of the war.<sup>4</sup> During the war Bosnian Croats only constituted a majority within a single "brigade," that is an infantry unit. Akin to the Muslim unit, this unit also carried a national name, which was not the case for the partizan forces in which Bosnian Serbs were a majority.

After the Second World War, Serbs and Muslims who distinguished themselves in the war were given the responsibility for maintaining brotherhood and unity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this context, their role and orientation during the war between 1941-1945 was gradually "forgotten." In contrast, the Croats were subjected to systematic repressive measures after the war because of the side they took.<sup>5</sup> The war between Croats and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 1993 demonstrated the full extent of this forgetfulness. In light of the fact that the history of socialistic Yugoslavia is only becoming a problem for historiography, an analysis of inter-national relations and the degree of "equality" of the constitutive nations can be seen in the population census. The census reveals that the percentage of Croats after the Second World War constantly decreased, falling from 25 percent to 17.5 percent. This fact speaks volumes about the incongruity between the stated and reality.<sup>6</sup> This analysis also includes the cultural position, economic representation amongst other factors of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is all necessary background to understand the drama of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, this should be the subject of other historical studies.

The recent decades of socialism in Bosnia and Herzegovina are significant because of the articulation of a national "sentiment" of Muslims, which unfortunately has often been given vulgar interpretations in the social sciences. However, the advocates of this notion are a small "elite" segment of the population holding out to be intellectuals. It seems that the foundation stone of this process can be found in the *Encyclopedia Yugoslavia* in the following formulation: "It seems that the powerful tribe Bosna settled in central Bosnia after the migrations, then a part of Roman province Dalmatia."<sup>7</sup> Although this passage provoked a small

scandal within academic circles when it appeared, it remained a part of the encyclopedia and is today considered the basis of the pre-history of the Muslims. This was one of the most foresighted moves in this region. We now can read in *The History of Bosniacs* that “in the literature there are views that the Slavs that settled in the area of central or original Bosnia brought that name with them, like other ancient Slavic tribes, namely the Croats and Serbs. Therefore, from the Slavic pre-homeland, somewhere from Karpata, the Bosna tribe lived or a tribe older bearing the name Bosna.”<sup>8</sup> Even though such assertions are amusing to experts in the field of medieval Bosnian history, they are published in large numbers in popular books which have acquired the status of “capital intellectual works,”<sup>9</sup> comparable to the reputation of Vjekoslav Klaić’s *The History of Croats* shared by Croats.

Translated into the idiom of this issue, to justify the assertion that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a country exclusively for Muslims-Bosniacs it was necessary to find their “presence” in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the early Middle Ages. On this basis, a chronological projection was formulated for Bosnia (early Middle Ages)—the Bogomils (Middle Ages)—Muslims (Ottoman epoch)—Bosniacs (from Austria-Hungry until today). The chronology served to grapple with historical sources already demonstrating them as Croats or Serbs, as the only South Slavic tribes that arrived in this area with a degree of proto-state organization and awareness of themselves that differentiated them from others.<sup>10</sup> This is how medieval Bosnia became an important foundation stone in the hastened creation of a Muslim-Bosniac historical mosaic. The time period relating to this problem in the last fifteen years speaks clearly about the nature of the motives involved.<sup>11</sup> Until recently, this issue was in principle of no concern for Bosniac-Muslims, whose scientific interest in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina was limited to the 15th century, when the Ottomans arrived in this area and the end of medieval Bosnia. Indeed, during socialistic Yugoslavia, this period of history was mainly of interest to Serbian historians on both sides of the Drina river. Their work was the extended hand of state interests in order to demonstrate the similarities between Serbia and Bosnia.<sup>12</sup> Croatian studies of the medieval period after 1945 were directed towards religious and cultural issues, which reflected political changes after the Second World War in which it was undesirable to focus on the political issue of mediaeval Bosnia. The rare study of this issue, whether within a branch of historiography or not, was exclusively along the lines of AVNOJ Yugoslavia, that is, clearly along the borders of the republics.<sup>13</sup>

## The Eclipse of the "Idols"

The victory of nationalist parties in the first multiparty elections clearly demonstrates that the Communist, internationalist Yugoslavism was a surrogate that failed to permanently blunt nationalism, or more precisely chauvinism, which remained dormant until its first opportunity to resurface. The Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA) brought together a majority of the largest section of the population on the basis of preserving 'Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate political community, irrespective of whether it would or in which manner be incorporated in some broader state-legal framework' and the widest possible Islamization of 'all aspects of life, aimed at creating a completely Islamic society.'<sup>14</sup> The Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), the party of Bosnian Serbs that bore the same name and initials as the party of Croatian Serbs in Croatia, harbored more ambitious desires ideologically and numerically in relation to the other two nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Both Serb parties were part of a broader Serbian movement whose center was in Belgrade. Its objective can be described by the famous expression 'all Serbs in one state,' which demonstrates the dismissal of existing republican borders and the establishment of ethnic borders. The party of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) carried the same name as its counterpart party in Croatia. It was expected to be a response to the *idea of unified Serbdom*. In contrast to the largest segment of the party leadership in the first phase of its organization, prewar phase of its existence its supporters clearly looked towards Zagreb and the Croatian President Dr. Franjo Tuđman. The HDZ advocated a decentralized form of power in Yugoslavia through the transformation of the country into a confederation, the continuation of internal republican borders, and in the event that the confederation failed, the only option was the withdrawal out of Yugoslavia, as well as the equality of the three constitutive nations.<sup>15</sup> The parties individually sought to organize power upon the model of trilateral separation, which analysis at the time pointed out that such a model was unnatural and incompatible with democratic standards, and therefore, dysfunctional.<sup>16</sup> As a result, it was clear that the nationalist parties after they appeared on the historical scene demonstrated that their perspectives on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina were incompatible. This should have been of no surprise because this has been the problem in past and remains the problem today.

## War before "war"

The war in Croatia between 1991 and 1992 affected Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the same way that it affects

Croatians. The attack on Croatia was understood as an attack on Croats as a whole, and the Serbs as the attackers were identified without distinction throughout Yugoslavia. Many Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina volunteered to fight in the war. This was also the case with Bosnian Serbs, but in much larger numbers. They saw themselves as the rest of the Serbs did, as the defenders of Yugoslavia. The role of Muslims from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the war on the Serbian side was mainly in the form of the officer corps of the Yugoslav Army, new recruits beginning their military service in the army and reservists mobilized by the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA). On the Croatian side, there were volunteers in the Croatian National Guard of the Republic of Croatia (ZNG RH). However, it seems that in both cases they did not constitute a significant percentage,<sup>17</sup> particularly compared to the role of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a staging ground for the JNA's attack on Croatia. The Bosnian Krajina and eastern Herzegovina were the bases for attacks on western Slavonia and southern Croatia from the Neretva river to Prevlaka. The Commander of the Territorial Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina (TO BH) even gave soldiers from Bosnia and Herzegovina a supplement to their wages without the knowledge or approval of the Presidency of the SRBH ... from the budget of the Republican Headquarters of the Territorial Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>18</sup> At this point, the republican sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina was such that it raises the legitimate question whether in fact it existed at all.

As stated previously, Bosnia and Herzegovina was not in a position to protect its local population, and to large extent became the staging area for attacks against the Republic of Croatia. In addition to using the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the JNA also attacked Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as witnessed by the destruction of Croatian settlements in eastern Herzegovina. The destruction of the village of Ravno became the symbol of suffering of these settlements.<sup>19</sup> Here we have the primary problem or issue, the issue for Croatia whether Bosnia and Herzegovina was the aggressor? Bosnia and Herzegovina became the operational area for JNA attacks against Croatia, which was made up of members from the local population that blindly accepted Belgrade as the unquestionable political center. Apart from the bordering areas inhabited by Croats (Posavina and western Herzegovina with Livno and Tomislavgrad), the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina's border and deep hinterland became a war zone with at least two operational directions. The territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina played an unfavorable role for Croatia in extraordinary operational basis that the JNA failed to exploit for their own strategic objectives. This fact is very often not taken into account. The three constitutive nations in Bosnia

and Herzegovina held different positions regarding the war in Croatia. Croats and Serbs participated, while the Muslims tried to remain on the side lines in accordance with Alija Izetbegović's famous statement that 'this is not our war.'<sup>20</sup>

If we understand Bosnia and Herzegovina as a territory that functioned in accordance with its current territory since the period between 1878 and 1918, and from 1945 to 1991, then we can conclude that Bosnia and Herzegovina survived on the basis of its special status. It is significant that this status, which was the guarantee of its survival (indivisibility), came from outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, Bosnia and Herzegovina fell within the authority of a joint ministry. In socialistic Yugoslavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina was placed between Croatian and Serbian national questions, which led to the emergence of the Muslim question near the end of Yugoslavia's existence.<sup>21</sup> At the end of the 80s the guaranteed "equality" that held Bosnia and Herzegovina at bay began to wade, ceasing to exist by late autumn 1991.

## Precursors of Dissolution

The war in 1992 had its political roots in the second half of 1991. In political terms, the Bosnian Serbs on October 24, 1991 founded the Serbian People's Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>22</sup> On the basis of the plebiscite of a Serb nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina held on October 9-10, 1991, the Serbian Autonomous Region in Bosnia and Herzegovina was proclaimed on October 21, 1991.<sup>23</sup> The next step was to pass the Decision on efforts towards the establishment of the Srpska Republika of Bosnia and Herzegovina on December 21, 1991, which was in fact founded on January 9, 1992.<sup>24</sup> This initiated the process of reorganizing and destroying the central authority of republican institutions in one section of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In addition to the Bosnian Serbs, Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina also saw the need for the reorganization within the republic, which was being reduced on a daily basis. Meeting in Grude on November 12, 1991, the presidents of the crisis headquarters of the Herzegovinian and Travnik regional communities concluded that that the Croatian nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina must finally pass a decisive, active policy on realizing the centuries dream of a joint Croatian state. While this conclusion demonstrates the strategy adopted by Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina towards the establishment of a sovereign Croatia in her ethnic and historical (currently possible) borders,<sup>25</sup> six days later they rejected the decisions with the Decision on the establishment of the Croatian Community Herceg-Bosna. This resolution specified that the Community ... will respect the democratically elected government of the

Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as long as the state independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina exists in relation to former Yugoslavia or any other Yugoslavia.<sup>26</sup>

The Decision on the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina passed by the republican assembly on October 15, 1991 stipulates, inter alia, that Bosnia and Herzegovina ... will develop as a civic republic, sovereign and indivisible state. In the conflict between Serbia and Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina will remain neutral, but it can only remain within a Yugoslav community if Serbia and Croatia also remain.<sup>27</sup> This resolution reflects the position of the Bosnian Muslims. For the other two nations, this position was an anachronism. Yugoslavia was in the process of dissolution, and Bosnia and Herzegovina was Yugoslavia in small. The Bosnian Muslims were neither enemies nor allies of the Croats or Serbs. This relationship continued until April 1992 with the turning of a new page in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## On the Threshold of War

The period immediately before the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was characterized by preparations by the parties for war. The intensity of these preparations was not the same for all the parties because their respective points of departures were different. The dominant SDS as the Serbian party received its weapons from the Serbianized JNA. The Croats through the HDZ also received weapons, but in significantly lower quantities than the Serbs. However, the Croats received enough to completely erase any sense of inferiority after the JNA disarmed the Republican Territorial Defense forces. The Muslims were in a much more unfavorable position, in part because they found themselves stuck between political leaders and nations, even though they made plans for this very early on. The Muslim Patriotic League was created on May 2, 1991, which could then only be treated as a party based paramilitary group. On June 10, 1991 in the Sarajevo Police Offices (Dom) at a meeting of the leading Bosnian officials from Yugoslavia, under the auspices of the SDA, the Council for National Defense of the Muslim Nation was established and the Patriotic League remained its military component.<sup>28</sup> The political scene in Bosnia and Herzegovina resembled the political situation in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from the era of Dragiša Cvetković and Vladko Maček, when the political representatives<sup>29</sup> of the Serbs and Croats sought to resolve their most important problems while the Muslims were placed to 'one side'.

The shared element in the 'race towards arms' was its ethnic principle. Each party armed themselves individually. During a military council of the Muslim Patriotic League in the village of



Mehurić near Travnik held on February 7/8, 1992, it was decided that the League had at its disposal between 60 and 70 thousand armed members. By the end of February, the Directive on the defense of the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina was adopted. The directive specified that the Patriotic League consider that the SDS along with the Yugoslav army and the extremist wing of the HDZ are the destructive factors in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The directive charged the Patriotic League with the responsibility to protect the Muslim nation, preserve the integrity and wholeness of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to secure the further common life of all the nations and nationalities on the state territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Article 3 of the directive called upon the people of Sandzak, Kosovo and Macedonia to join our just struggle and immediately begin the struggle to undermine the power of the enemy and weaken their offensive capacity on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, it is necessary to establish contacts, cooperation and coordination in joint platform with the Croatian nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the common enemy.<sup>30</sup> Compared to the beginning of the month when the decision referred to the "extremist wing of the HDZ," this was large step forward.

## **The War**

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After the relaxation of military activity in Croatia at the beginning of 1992, it was feasible to consider that the conditions for separating the front lines could be separated along republican, that is state borders. However, this was not possible primarily because the war in Croatia had not ended, but only a cease-fire was in place. The secession of parts of Croatia inhabited by Serbs were not incorporated into the legal system of the Republic of Croatia. As a result, the state borders in parts of Lika, Banovine and Kordun could not become state borders.

The withdrawal of the JNA to Bosnia and Herzegovina began in the summer of 1991, and the withdrawal of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Corps from Slovenia and the 10<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Corps from Croatia officially should have continued. Two groups can be identified in the withdrawal of the JNA. While one group withdrew from areas in which it had no physical contact (14<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> Corps), a part went over the border into Bosnia and Herzegovina and continued with its military activities against Croatia.

The process of opening the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina began after the relaxation of the conflict in Croatia. Even at this point the strategy of the Serbian JNA was clear that it wanted to solve the two problems separately and to avoid two fronts along separate lines. They examined their experiences in Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia in time, and considered that a difficult

situation is forthcoming for members of the army and that they have to begin with an evacuation on more secure grounds.<sup>31</sup>

The early phase of the war is illustrated by the assessment of the Command of 2nd VO, which states that: *After the recognition of the sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Community, the United States and other states, this republic was exposed to war with unforeseen tragic consequences. The escalation of the international armed conflict on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina resulted in general mayhem, chaos, fear and panic by people in various towns and villages. The situation is totally unclear, conflictual and in the final analysis completely unpredictable. Various armed groups and armed civilians control certain counties, cities and settlements. Murders and mass killings are becoming frequent occurrences, extensive destruction, imprisonment and maltreatment, suffering and theft and crimes of all sorts are occurring. On the entire area not a single political-state institution is functioning, apart from the JNA. Life is totally paralyzed. Hunger, social deprivation and all the other scourges of war are apparent.*<sup>32</sup> Nothing could be added to this assessment except that the cause of this human drama was the Serbianized JNA.

As expected, parts of the JNA in Bosnia and Herzegovina became the armed forces of the Bosnian Serbs, which gave them an incomparable advantage in the war.<sup>33</sup> At the end of May, existing forces and materiel and technical resources of the JNA were transformed into the Army of the Srpska Republika of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They retained similar operational structures in the previous zones of responsibility and their names were changed during the month of May and the beginning of June in accordance with their new terminology.<sup>34</sup> Although they had overwhelming superiority in MTSes (materiel and technical resources, MTS), the Bosnian Serbs encountered problems in human resources and with parts of its officer corps. They especially encountered problems with the latter when General Ratko Mladić in September 1992 complained that from 4206 soldiers from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the Army of the Srpska Republika, only 900 joined, which was half the required soldiers for the needs of the Bosnian Serb army.<sup>35</sup>

## **Between Objectives and Success**

From Serbian ethnic areas in which the MTS and the JNA withdrew to from Slovenia and Croatia between 1991 and 1992, the war for mapping out Serbian ethnic space began. The quickest successes were made in eastern Bosnia in areas with Muslim majorities. In southwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina, apart from

the successes in Kupres, the JNA suffered a double failure in Croatian areas around Livno. Suffering these losses, the JNA tried to take Sarajevo and the Neretva basin. At the end of March, difficult and long battles for the Bosnian Posavina began. In the area of the Bosanska krajina where there was no military resistance, the practice of ethnic cleansing and the establishment of concentration camps began, which spread to other parts of the Srpska Republika of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It seems that in the first phase of the war the JNA, or rather from May 21, 1992 the Army of the Srpska Republika of Bosnia and Herzegovina, attempted to quickly take as much territory as possible by mobile infantry without utilizing lines accessible by tank. On areas that the land-mechanized infantry were unable to dominate, whether because of the terrain or organized resistance, their success was greatly reduced. After this, it required a great deal of effort and manpower and MTSes to be successful, as demonstrated in Bosanska Posavina and Jajce.

In an address on the results and the status of the armed forces, the Main Headquarters of the Army of the Srpska Republika estimated that they had achieved ... significant results which could be described as follows:

1. The Army of the Srpska Republika successfully took control of the front held by the JNA in former Bosnia and Herzegovina and defended the Serbian nation.
2. Responded to efforts by destructive forces of Yugoslavia to destroy and eliminate the Serbian nation in the former Bosnia and Herzegovina or to reduce them to second-class citizens.
3. Prevented the occupation of territory belonging to the Srpska Republika, and stopped Ustashe units advancing along the wide front on the River Drina.
4. Repelled many offensive efforts by the Croatian-Muslim coalition, assisted by the regular forces of Croatia and other Western European and Islamic countries in an attempt to deblockade Sarajevo through Herzegovina and to cut off the corridor.
5. Operation Corridor destroyed Ustashi units in Posavina and Sanberia and the operation opened a territorial link with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the rest of the Srpska Republika ....
6. Due to the heroic resistance and high level of consciousness of the Serbian nation, as well as the determination of the political and military leadership of the Srpska Republika to continue the struggle to defend Serbianhood and the creation of our state on the land of our forefathers, we have achieved a situation in which for the first time since the arrival of our forefathers in these areas we have

realize our goals to remain on our own and create a democratic community in which all the standards of civilization and the rights of individuals and citizens are respected.<sup>36</sup>

In response to the Serbs, in the first phase of the war the Croats and Muslims sought to consolidate their defense positions. In this context, the significance of Croatian successes has greater strategic relevance than those of the JNA for the following basic reasons.<sup>37</sup> The Croat successes were important for both threatened nations because they connected them to Croatia as logistics and support base. The military activities of the Croatian army, or more accurately the Croatian National Guard (ZNG), along the northern and southern borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in cooperation with the HVO, directly benefited the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the hinterland. It assisted the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina because the military activities disrupted lines held by the Bosnian Serb army and they enabled logistics and humanitarian supplies to get through. In this respect, this important aspect seems to be forgotten not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also in Croatia.

The fall of Bosanska Posavina carries the "pall" of a political agreement since the autumn of 1992, a betrayal which is based on the claim that despite a propitious position, Franjo Tudjman through parallel command channels, ignoring the General Headquarters of the Croatian Army, ordered the withdrawal of the Croatian Army and the HVO from parts of Bosanska Posavina. This enabled Serbian forces from the direction of Banja Luka and Bijeljina to merge and establish a corridor as the vital communication link between Serbia and parts of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina under Serbian para-authority.<sup>38</sup> However, without a detailed analysis it is undesirable to draw any far-reaching conclusions. We are of the opinion that Posavina was too demanding for the Croatian Army and HVO. The command structure was a questionable element, as was the tactic of deploying a large number of armed troops that had difficulty in reaching a level of unity in the spiritual sense. Within the HVO, which at the time resembled more a police force, there were significant problems of disinterest amongst soldiers in acting outside their own areas, especially after they were lost in battle. The Army of the Srpska Republika mainly used armored and mechanized troops inherited from the former JNA, whose value was in heavy firepower and good maneuverability. These troops were not identified in time by Croatian army intelligence, which was a significant mistake because they included 16 mtbr. and 1 okbr which were of the highest quality troops of the 1<sup>st</sup> Krajiški Corps.<sup>39</sup> This was particularly important for the armored brigades because of areas assessable by tank, but it seems that the overwhelming success of the Army of the Srpska Republika was achieved by

armored and artillery, so that the opponent could not strike back.<sup>40</sup> In the discussions of the battle for Posavina there are only partial analyses that elide over the fact that battles along the southern front were also taking place and that parts of the operative armed forces were dispersed along the areas under the control of rebel Croatian Serbs. In addition, the Croatian Army underwent great changes with the reduction of ten infantry brigades.<sup>41</sup>

Operation Vrbas 92, which involved a strengthened 30<sup>th</sup> Krajiški division of the Army of the Srpska Republika,<sup>42</sup> after months of battle, took Jajce, developed in part parallel with the battle for Posavina. The operation demonstrated unambiguously the extent to which the Bosnian Serbs were dependent on armory and tanks and that it was limited in its successes when it relied on infantry troops. Naturally, the conflict between the HVO and the Muslims also affected the battle. However, the suggestion that a joint Croatian-Bosniac defense coalition collapsed in large part because of political intrigues within the HDZ of Bosnia and Herzegovina, reflects more the position(s) of the author(s) than a true analysis of the facts.<sup>43</sup>

With the fall of Jajce and Bosanska Posavina, HVO's war with the Army of the Srpska Republika literally came to a close. The defense of Livno, parts of the Vrbas valley and parts of Central Bosnia, especially the successes in the Neretva valley, crowned by operation Dawn of June,<sup>44</sup> meant that the HVO came to a stalemate with the Serbs. After this there were only battles for positioning, erupting occasionally around Usora and parts of the Posavina battle-lines. Several meetings between the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs and Croats outside of Bosnia and Herzegovina did not lead to any concrete steps forward.<sup>45</sup> To summarize events in 1991 on the side of the Croats, the Head of the Main Headquarters of HVO concluded that the forces of HVO, in addition to the problems and difficulties under its control, successfully held 70 percent of the free territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the creation of its armed forces on the area of the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna, the Croatian nation defended ... itself and the largest part of the Muslims.<sup>46</sup>

The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina had the least reason to be satisfied. At the end of 1992 it had the worst relationship between their size and the territory under its control.<sup>47</sup>

Efforts by representatives of the international community to end the war resulted in the well known Vance-Owen plan at the beginning of 1993. This plan transformed Bosnia and Herzegovina into ten provinces. The basis of the plan was the situation on the ground. It seems that the Croats and Serbs were satisfied with the territory under their control. Areas in Central Bosnia that was under the control of mixed units Operative Zone

HVO Central Bosnia and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the delimitation into provinces, this problem was to be resolved. The HVO in the early days of January 1993, believing that the war was over, undertook measures to fulfill its obligations arising from the Geneva Conference. The HVO also requested plans of minefields and assessments of necessary manpower to control the *extant front-lines*.<sup>48</sup> The National Assembly of the Srpska Republika passed on December 17, 1992 a Declaration on the end of the war that, inter alia, concluded that the ethnic-religious war in former Bosnia and Herzegovina has ended and that the Serbian nation has defended its independence and sovereign state the Srpska Republika.<sup>49</sup>

Under these circumstances it can be asserted without reservation that the Croats were satisfied with their situation in the spring (more accurately the winter, author's note) of 1993 and the Croats had no reason to open a conflict with the Bosniacs.<sup>50</sup> The conflict that erupted in mid-January 1993 is rarely a good basis to hide the true causes of the conflict, two irreconcilable political concepts about the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## War within "War"

The Muslim-Croat conflict that continued throughout 1993 had its causes in the early days of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SJB (Office for Public Security) in Bugojno delivered ammunition only to Muslim members of the special police forces, along with instructions that they hide their stash from Croatian members of the force. In Gornji Vakuf relations between Croats and Muslims were tense. Although these two sentences may be apt descriptions of the situation by the end of 1992 and the beginning of 1993, they were written on April 1, 1992 in the regular daily report by the "impartial" Command of the 30<sup>th</sup> Partizan Division of the JNA, which immediately before the conflict erupted had the Kupres plateau zone of responsibility, the river Vrbas to the broader area of Janja.<sup>51</sup>

The suspicious relations noted by the military intelligence of the 30<sup>th</sup> Partizan Division was a regular pattern in the areas in which there was a rough balance between two or more nations, that is in areas where the size of one nation was not large enough to dominate over another. In such areas one nation was not able to dominate convincingly on another. In this sense, we can assert that in principle two types of national composition existed in principle in Bosnia and Herzegovina, areas with a balance and areas that were ethnically clear in which one "constitutive" nation had an obvious majority. The conflicts that erupted in 1992 turned into open war in such areas, more specifically Central Bosnia.<sup>52</sup>

The only exception to this "principle" was the conflict in Sarajevo in the settlement of Stup, where the small Croatian oasis in an area populated mainly by Muslims.

It seems that in the Uskoplje area, around Gornji Vakuf, the first incidents between the HVO and the Territorial Defense occurred at the end of April. They reoccurred on June 20 and 21, 1992.<sup>53</sup> At the beginning of May, a conflict erupted in Busovača,<sup>54</sup> which reoccurred the following month.<sup>55</sup> In Novi Travnik on the afternoon of June 19, 1992 a conflict between units of the Headquarters of the Territorial Defense and units from the HVO and the Croatian Armed Forces (HOS).<sup>56</sup> Inter-ethnic tensions increased also in Konjic,<sup>57</sup> which led to conflicts by the end of August in Kiseljak. However, in the first phase of the Muslim-Croat tensions August 17, 1992 has a special significance. On this day, units of the Territorial Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina attacked the Croatian village of Stup in Sarajevo. This incident differed from previous incidents on a local level because of its impact on Croats in Sarajevo and raises the important question about the origin of such an action.<sup>58</sup>

The chronology of the conflict between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina that is known widely in the public begins with events in Prozor. It was preceded by tensions that lasted throughout October between the HVO and the Territorial Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Central Bosnia, but primarily in Travnik. Tensions were lifted by Sarajevo Television after it broadcast a special "Documentary" on alleged massacres of Territorial Defense soldiers in the village of Lješće, while in fact the pictures were actually of members of the HVO from Travnik. The massacre occurred on May 15, 1992 in Vlašić, committed against HVO members by Chetnik forces. Following this there was gunfire and armed attacks against members of HVO officer corps from Central Bosnia and their colleagues in the village of Rastovci, in the county of Novi Travnik. In the village of Karaula members of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina fired at the car of the HVO Commander of Jajce.<sup>59</sup> A conflict of words between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina over a petrol pump in Novi Travnik leads to the murder of the Commander of the Travnik Brigade along the Travnik-Vitez route. The local commander of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina had declared that it was 'either the Petrol station or war.'<sup>60</sup> The HVO accused members of the 7<sup>th</sup> Muslim Brigade for the murder.<sup>61</sup>

The deterioration of security in the Central Bosnia Operative Zone frequently spread from Gornji Vakuf to the edges of areas along the Operative Zone North-western Herzegovina.<sup>62</sup> The HVO General Headquarters on October 21, 1992 reported that in Gornji Vakuf and Prozor the situation is tense and that at any moment a conflict could break out ... in relation to the new

situation in parts of the operative zone all measures will be undertaken to preserve security to prevent any conflict between HVO and OS of Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in Gornji Vakuf and Prozor.<sup>63</sup>

The conflict occurred in fact on October 23, 1992 and ended with the total defeat of the local forces of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The claim that HVO prepared a surprise attack against the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Prozor is very courageous, and it is based purely on prejudice.<sup>64</sup> At a meeting between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina held on November 6, 1992 in Jablanica, representatives of the latter accepted the HVO request to replace its commander of the County Defense Headquarters in Prozor.<sup>65</sup> This is a fact that is not insignificant in analyzing the conflict.<sup>66</sup>

The other main problem in relations between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the existence of two parallel political and military structures in the central areas of Bosnia and north-western Herzegovina. They are a reflection of deeply held distrust and divergent perspectives on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The relevant issue for historians is to answer the question of what were the efforts of SDA and HDZ to resolve this problem?

This problem is well illustrated in statement by a member of the war presidency of the County Assembly (SO) of Novi Travnik: The fundamental problem in Novi Travnik is the existence of two authorities, the HVO and ours, as well as the regular one. This has led to collisions and conflict. And they will recur in the future. They do not allow the President of the Government to enter the County without his identification being controlled. It is better to separate. We will fight again. There were various proposals that the Muslims and Croats form their own governments. We have tried to give each nation an equal number of members in the government.<sup>67</sup>

The issue of parallel authorities was a crucial problem for Croatian-Muslim relations in Central Bosnia, an area where the conflict escalated. Examining the causes of the conflict in Prozor, the Commander of the Operative Zone North-western Herzegovina correctly concluded that the only preventive measure to avoid such conflicts was to end the existence of two command structures, two armies, and two logistics, etc.<sup>68</sup> A similar view was expressed by the Commander of the 17<sup>th</sup> Krajiška Brigade of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, assessing that one of the problems in the failure to defend Jajce was the problem that a single town was defended by two command structures.<sup>69</sup> However, the most widely known attempt to resolve the problem of parallel authority was the order by the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on January 15, 1993.



This order was interpreted in a recent book about this issue in following terms: "The Minister of Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina Boško Rajić (HDZ) ordered that in the operative zone in areas covered by provinces 3, 8 and 10 (Posavina, Herzegovina with Livno-Duvno areas, parts of central Bosnia with Travnik and Lašva) units of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina submit to the Main Headquarters, which was rejected by the former."<sup>70</sup> A similar interpretation can be found in the *Hrvatski leksikon*.<sup>71</sup> For the sake of historical truth, we have to state that such an interpretation cannot be supported. The order under examination consists of 9 points, but only point 2 is discussed. In point 1, the order stipulates that "all units of the Croatian Defense Council (HVO), which find themselves in the areas under provinces 1, 5 and 9, which are defined as Muslim provinces under the Geneva agreement fall under the command of the Main Headquarters of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina."<sup>72</sup> While the editors of the *Hrvatski leksikon* could be excused because of superficial and lack of understanding of the problem, this could not be said of the compiler of the chronology for the collection of essay *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991–1995* because in one of the essays there is, although rare, an accurate interpretation of the order.<sup>73</sup>

From the military perspective the order was uncontroversial. It was an unsuccessful attempt to define the zone of responsibility and authority after both sides had a clearer picture of its position in time, space and most importantly, objectives. However, it seems that this is precisely the reason that it was rejected by one side and why the politicians responded as they did with a focus on the military component.

The third major issue in Muslim-Croat relations was provoked by the third party, the Serbs with their occupation efforts and practice of ethnic cleansing. The sheer mass of refugees and displaced persons from areas under the control of the Army of the Srpska Republika into Muslim-Croat areas. A part went to Croatia and further abroad, while males competent for military service remained. In this way, the ethnic structure was changed, especially in the mixed areas in Central Bosnia that lead to a new balance of power between Croats and Muslims. A majority of refugees came from rural areas into urban settings, bringing with them a different approach and way of life. Cities in ethnically mixed areas had an experience with multi-ethnicity, which was not in principle the case in the villages.<sup>74</sup> The changes to the ethnic structure strengthened the position of the Muslims. The HVO was aware of this, and the HVO in Gornji Vakuf adopted a characteristically undefined political position about the future, stated in one of its reports from mid-June 1992 that after a second conflict with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina within two months, that it

our area there are approximately 12,000 refugees from D. Vakuf (all of Muslim nationality) with a large number in military service, so that the further that they arm themselves, they represent a danger to our county and the neighboring counties (Bugojno, Novi Travnik, Travnik). We conclude that we their primary enemies, and only then the Chetniks.<sup>75</sup> After local Muslim-Croat conflicts, one of the first Croatian demands was for the withdrawal of foreigners from county areas.<sup>76</sup>

## A Lack of Tact

One of the most interesting issues of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the problem of cooperation between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the struggle against the JNA, or rather, the Army of the Srpska Republika. In the main part, the greatest degree of cooperation began after the Washington Agreements of March 18, 1994.

The most interesting and intriguing period before that was 1992. In the first months of the war both sides were concerned with establishing their armed forces. Croatia literally tried to create something out of nothing by relying minimally on the former republican structure of territorial defense, while the Muslim-Bosniac inherited elements of the Territorial Defense with a strengthening of the officer corps with those that left the JNA. The main problem in relations between HVO and the Territorial Defense, or rather the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, was exactly the officer corps, which included elements who had fought in the war in Croatia against the Croatian nation.<sup>77</sup> Within HVO, part of the officer corps also had experience in the war in Croatia, naturally on the other side. Both sides, unsurprisingly, were suspicious towards each other.

After the signing of the Agreement on Friendship and Cooperation between the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia in Zagreb on July 21, 1992, conditions for cooperation between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina were created.<sup>78</sup> It was not until autumn of 1992 that an effort towards cooperation was made. The factor that stood in the way was differing views on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. A demonstrative example is the unsuccessful meeting between civil and military representatives of Gornji-Vrbaš and Lašva region held on August 15, 1992 in Travnik. An agreement wasn't reached because of mutual Croat-Muslim recrimination about Muslim unitarism and the role of Croatian responsibility for the situation in the region. In his conclusion in a report of the meeting, the representative of the County Headquarters of HVO Gornji Vakuf stipulated that the President of the Assembly of the Travnik County stated that where Serbs and Muslims lived, Muslims suffered, where Croats and Serbs lived, Croats suf-

ferred, and where Croats and Muslims live, both are alive and well, but without an agreement.<sup>79</sup>

The nature of this cooperation seems to be described aptly in a report of the Operative Zone of Central Bosnia about impressions from the first meetings between the highest official representatives of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and HVO in Sarajevo. The head of the Main Headquarters of HVO complained that the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina had not contacted as yet the Main Headquarters of the HVO. Petkovic brings forth the fact that the Main Headquarters was not contacted by telephone, or that any thing else was done. On the other side, the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina and organs of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina contacted the Croatian Armed Forces (HOS) from Ljubuski, which has 180 soldiers, which is the equivalent of a company. As he stated, you are sending your people to Ljubuski to contact Blaz Kraljevic without my knowledge and in my zone of responsibility. In the future we will arrest anyone entering our zone of responsibility without my knowledge. You have invited Kraljevic and Primorac, and they have attended meetings in Sarajevo, but you didn't invite anyone from HVO. If you want to continue working on a joint defense you have to respect our results and us. When and how the politicians agree to a joint command, the HVO will respect that.<sup>80</sup> The Presidents of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina met on November 1, 1992 in Zagreb to discuss cooperation. The meeting resulted in a joint command, headed by Colonel Jaganjac and General Praljak. Time demonstrated that this was not acceptable, mainly within the ranks of the Bosniac-Muslim side.<sup>81</sup>

In discussing efforts to promote Croat-Muslim cooperation, there seems to be the false and baseless impression that only the HOS stood for cooperation as a mixed armed group made up of Croats and Muslims. In this respect, it viewed that the murder of the Commander of HOS Blaž Kraljević on August 2, 1992 was the advocate of a Croat-Bosniac alliance.<sup>82</sup> This view "converts" the media's problematical HOS from the war in Croatia as a group into a group whose dissolution is greatly regretted. The Serbian perspective on this problem is illustrated well by the assessment of the command of the 30<sup>th</sup> Partizan Division at the beginning of 1992, in which he concludes that the HOS ... is considered as the most extremists part of the Croatian forces, even Tuđman has distanced himself from them, but they are still sent to the front lines.<sup>83</sup> However, the HOS did not act as a united formation on the entire territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Section of the State Security Service in Zenica at the end of June 1992 estimated that HOS is the extended hand of HVO in the

area of Novi Travnik. In the June 19 conflict, HOS took part on the side of HVO.<sup>84</sup>

## The Guilty and Prejudices

In analyzing the contemporary historical process is an extremely difficult task. If that process, such as the "story of Bosnia and Herzegovina" is not complete, then it is even more difficult. Contemporary historiography in many respects is specialized in relation to the study of earlier periods. Due to technological advances, generally high levels of literacy and the emergence of new media, the contemporary period there are ample documents with an abundance of facts and information. On the one hand, this enables unprecedented access to local and apparently less important historical levels. On the other hand, the sheer number of facts carries with it the constant danger of selective analysis, focusing on only the minimum number of selected arguments to "firmly" prove a desired image. So there is a legitimate question whether it is at desirable to wait for "historical distance" of 30 to 50 years after which the archives are opened, and when the "story" from the perspective of the participants, journalists and publicists refined prejudices are mercilessly unwrapped and turned into a "witch hunt."

All that is necessary is to look at Croatian or Muslim-Bosniac press to see what the problem is. In mid-March of 2000, we find in the widely circulated *Globus* weekly an article about the formation and the command structure of HVO and read, inter alia, that Mate Boban's decision on establishing the Croatian Arms in Bosnia and Herzegovina was made ... as early as 1991, and that in June 1991 an improvised Main Headquarters was established. The journalist erred for one year that the General Headquarters of HVO General M. Petković under international pressure was replaced in the second half of 1993 by General Slobodan Praljak. In fact, General Praljak was named the commander of HVO, while General Petković further remained the Head of the Main Headquarters. That General Praljak after the destruction of the Old Bridge in Mostar did not initiate an investigation, which is inaccurate because he could no longer initiate such an investigation because he was no longer the Commander of HVO. That General Praljak as the Commander of HVO was replaced by General Stanko Matić, which is not accurate because that former General Major of the JNA was the assistant head of the Main Headquarters of HVO at the time that General Praljak departed. That the command "confusion" within HVO mistook Janko Bobetko, Four Star General of the Croatian Army as the Commander of the Southern Command. It is sufficient to look at ALL MY BATTLES that General Bobetko at the end of 1993, the rel-

event time under discussion, was the head of the Main Headquarters of the Croatian Army for almost a year.<sup>85</sup>

This example is mentioned because it relates to the most transparent element of a military organization. Moreover, the organization can be reconstructed on the basis of civilian and military newspapers, which are available to the widest possible audience in institutions such as the National University Library in Zagreb.

The majority of publications referred to in this analysis fall within the category of cultivated Muslim-Bosniac publicity that does not reflect the formal qualifications of the author. So, in the case of Brigadier General Hasan Efendić, former JNA officer and the first Commander of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, his book *Who Defended Bosnia?* is far more authoritative than that of the professional historian Dr. Smail Čekić's *Aggression against Bosnia and the Genocide against Bosniacs 1991–1993*.<sup>86</sup>

The publication *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991–1995* is the last to appear on the topic of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Apart from the authoritative article by the historian M. A. Hoare, attention should be given to the chronology of the war. Although we have mentioned some of the questionable aspects of this chronology, it is worthwhile to examine another flaw.

We can read that on December 18, 1992 the HVO assumed authority on all the areas under its control: it dissolved the lawful county assembly, replaced the mayors and members of the local administration who were against confrontation with the Bosniacs, disarmed the remaining Bosniac soldiers (except in Posavina). The HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina are largely homogenized and powerful political opponents.<sup>87</sup> Although we were unable to verify the first claim,<sup>88</sup> the second one is a total fabrication. Multiethnic forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina really only existed in the HVO, primarily because in the operative zones of South-eastern Herzegovina and Bosanska Posavina.<sup>89</sup> To the ultimatum of the 1st Brigade of HVO, the Command of the 42nd Mountain Brigade of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina responded in mid-April 1993, inter alia, with the following words: We remind you that you are well aware that a large number of soldiers from the Muslim ranks are within your armed forces, and they are Muslims and belong to this nation, so it would be undesirable to damage the existing organization and formation of your units.<sup>90</sup> After June 30, 1993 betrayal of a group of Muslims soldiers in HVO, the Northern camp military base collapsed and the 2nd Brigade of HVO was dissolved. This incident accelerated the process of

disarmament of distrusted soldiers,<sup>91</sup> which was completed only by the end of 1993, except for the area of Orašje.

It seems that the intention of the compiler of the chronology was to show that a confrontation between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina was unavoidable from the beginning of 1993. The period between April 1992 and January 1993 was the relevant period to study the political and military tensions between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or more accurately, HDZ and SDA. During this period the Republic of Croatia made repeated, but unsuccessful efforts to move these relations from a dead letter.<sup>92</sup>

At the end we should focus on some aspects of the war for the period between January 1993 and the end of 1995. Some of the issues that need to be addressed before a "serious" assessment can be made are, *inter alia*, the following:

There are three constitutive nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The question is how to confront the fact that one of the nations from the very beginning of the war had an undisclosed intention to destroy the state? The next question relates to the fact that this was also sought by two of three nations, and not necessarily always the same two.<sup>93</sup>

If three constitutive nations are at war with each other, does this mean that it is appropriate to describe the conflict as a civil war? The next difficulty is to describe the involvement of neighboring countries. The Republic of Croatia has been described as an aggressor because it assisted HVO with logistics and manpower. At certain points of the war, Croatia assisted logistically the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and permitted the organization of its army on Croatian territory.<sup>94</sup> The 1<sup>st</sup> Volunteers Regiment "King Tomislav" actually became formally part of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, that is, the Territorial Defense.<sup>95</sup> From the perspective of the Bosnian Serbs, this was an act of aggression. From the perspective of HVO, Croatia could be criticized. Croatia could also be criticized because the largest number of "holy warriors" in Bosnia and Herzegovina arrived through Croatia. With a good dose of irony about the question of Croatia's aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina, it could be suggested that Croatia was the aggressor because rebel Croatian Serbs from the Republic of Serbian Krajina assisted the Bosnian Serbs in the summer of 1992 in battles for the Bosanska Posavina. The HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina have the same attitude toward the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ).

What is the role of the international community? What is the significance of the infamous UN Security Council Resolution 713 on the embargo on the supply of arms and military supplies to all the republics of the SFRY?<sup>96</sup> Does this resolution have any

moral responsibility and represent the direct assistance of the better armed side, the Army of the Srpska Republika? Does this mean that the world (the Great Powers) from the perspective of HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina took part in the war along side the Army of the Srpska Republika against the other two constitutive nations?<sup>97</sup> Did not the international community by accepting the reality, that is, the reality on the ground, place the foundation stone of partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina firmly in the ground?<sup>98</sup> Amongst these issues belong also the unanswered questions about the visit of the late President of the French Republic and the UN "safe havens."<sup>99</sup>

Was there a war **against** or **in** Bosnia and Herzegovina?<sup>100</sup> If we accept the proposition that the war was against Bosnia and Herzegovina, does this not mean that one nation is more "foundational" than the other two? Does this mean that the aggression was committed from outside the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina? This means that the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ) are treated equally responsible. Under this interpretation, it is forgotten that the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had a common war zone around Bihać, so that the position of Croatia is significantly different to that of the SRJ towards Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>101</sup> And where is the (dis)honorable role of the United Nations Security Council and the international community, whose shadow passed like a nightmare over the rubble of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia?

We are of the view that the war was both **against** and **in** Bosnia and Herzegovina that was sanctioned by the international community. The Army of the Srpska Republika in trying to occupy as much territory as possible committed ethnic cleansing and egregious crimes. The armed forces of the other two constitutive nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina committed noticeably less war crimes. However, it is demonstrative that HVO is treated on the same level as the Army of the Srpska Republika, while the role of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina is whitewashed. However, facts do not support this scenario. The HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina have shared elements: they both have a war against the other two constitutive nations; an attack on the territorial integrity of the state; assistance from abroad; ethnic cleansing; destruction of property of the enemy; concentration camps and war crimes. Is the "generally-accepted advantage" of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina over the HVO only in a name?

## NOTES

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1 Mustafa Imamović, "Aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and its Immediate Consequences," in *Aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina and the*

- Struggle for its Survival 1992-1995, (Sarajevo, 1997), p. 9.
- 2 A representative example is the recent critical article by Adnan Jahić, *Muslim formations in the Tuzla region during the Second World War*, Tuzla, 1995.
  - 3 In a speech delivered at the "Dom Ilijana" on December 9, 1993 before participants at a seminar organized by the Department for Morale of the Supreme Headquarters of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović drew parallels with the Second World War. He said, "we have on our scene Chetniks and Ustashi again, but in much worse degrees than before." He also said that a third army exists, "our national army," upon whom he called on to be "like the Partisans in the last war." See Alija Izetbegović, *Selected Speeches, Letters, Statements, Interviews*, Zagreb, 1995, p 14. Mile Stojić, alluding to a similar statement by Izetbegović at the beginning of February 2000, stated that Izetbegović "characterizes the enemy as either Chetnik or Ustashi, leading to the logical conclusion that "we" are in all this Comrade Tito. With a minor difference that Tito created a multinational army on the ashes of a collapsed state, while Izetbegović turned a multiethnic army of a country in short time into a national army. Therefore, to the extent that his opponents are the Chetniks and Ustashi, he is not a Partisan... SFOR forces are today the Partizans." See his article "Partizan," *Dani (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*, Sarajevo, February 11, 2000.
  - 4 A completely different predicament arose for Croats in the Republic of Croatia, who constituted a high percentage of the Partizan forces. Dalmatia was crucial in this regard because it was the strongest Partizan center in the whole of former Yugoslavia.
  - 5 After the fall of Aleksander Ranković, the well-known Bosnian and Herzegovinian Communist official Cvjetin Mijatović, by nationality a Serb, stated in Čitluk: "I am ashamed that I am a Serb when I see so much injustice inflicted in the Croat population here." Cited according to Bahrudin Bijedić, "My Cousin Džemal Bijedić," *Dani (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*, Sarajevo, March 15, 1999.
  - 6 Mladen Ančić, "The Historical Dimension of Croatianhood in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Herceg-Bosna or ..*, Mostar, 1996, p 32.
  - 7 "Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Encyclopedia Yugoslavia*, Zagreb, 1982, Volume 2, p 167.
  - 8 Mustafa Imamović, *The History of Bosniacs*, Sarajevo, 1997, p 24.
  - 9 "Personality of the Decade," *Dani (Bosnia and Herzegovina)*, Sarajevo, December 29, 1997.
  - 10 According to Darko Tanasković, 'Bosniac is a name referring to an ethno-political concept, which is essentially in the ancient history of Bosnia (and Herzegovina), older than Serbia and Croatia, as its autochthonous population with continuous ethnic, cultural, psychological, and even continuous statehood from the early middle ages to the present live Bosniacs, and that this is the only appropriate national name for the nation.' See Darko Tanasković, "Contradictory NeoBosniacism," collection of essays *Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Middle Ages to Recent Times*, Belgrade, 1995, p 47.
  - 11 The pioneer in this field is Dr. Enver Imamović.
  - 12 Mladen Ančić, *Putanja klatna. Austro-Hungarian Kingdom and Bosnia during the 14th Century*, Mostar, 1997, p 8.
  - 13 Miroslav Križić, *On Religion*, Sarajevo, 1982, pp 99-113. See also Nada Klaić,



- Medieval Bosnia, Zagreb, 1989. For more details, see M. Ančić, 1997, pp 26-32, *ibid.*, 1996, pp 11-12, 31-32.
- 14 Mladen Ančić, *Who erred in Bosnia?*, Osijek-Zagreb-Split, 1999, p 28.
- 15 *ibid.*, Ančić, pp 28-29.
- 16 Ivan Lovrenović, "The War: 1992-1995, and its Aftermath: Is there a future?," *Jukić* 26-26, Sarajevo, 1996/97, p 212.
- 17 Stanko Nišić, *The Serbian Strategy*, Belgrade, 1995, p 53.
- 18 Hasan Efendić, *Who defended Bosnia?*, Sarajevo, 1998, p 237.
- 19 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, Zagreb-Sarajevo, 1999, p 381. See also *op. cit.* H. Efendić, 1998, pp 238, 329-330.
- 20 *op. cit.*, H. Efendić, 1998, p 328.
- 21 Dušan Bilandžić suggested the following: "Towards the creation of an anti-hegemonic coalition, Tito forced the augmentation of the so-called Yugoslav peripheries—strengthening the sovereignty and autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro to establish a certain balance and symmetry between Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia. Tito sought to make Bosnia and Herzegovina as sovereign as it could be to work as a buffer republic between Serbia and Croatia, ... frequently visiting Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tito encouraged its leadership by telling them not to žgive in to either Belgrade or Zagreb.' From the mid-60s ... Bosnia and Herzegovina began to free itself from the federal administration in three important respects: the declaration of Muslims as a nation, reducing repressive measures against the Croats, and restricting Greater Serbian forces." See Dušan Bilandžić, *Modern Croatian History*, Zagreb, 1999, pp 577-578.
- 22 "Decision on the Founding of the Serbian People's Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina of October 24, 1991," Smail Čekić, *The Aggression against Bosnia and Genocide against the Bosniacs 1991-1993*, Sarajevo, 1994, appendix IV.
- 23 "Decision on the Verification of the Declaration of the Serbian Autonomous Oblast in Bosnia and Herzegovina of November 21, 1991," *ibid.*, appendix VI. On this day, the Serbian People's Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina recognized the Republic Srpska Krajina as a ~~federal~~ unit of Yugoslavia, *ibid.*, appendix VII.
- 24 *Ibid.*, appendix VIII., p 30.
- 25 "Conclusions from the Joint Meeting of Herzegovinian regional communities and the Travnik regional community of November 12, 1991, *ibid.*, appendix XVI. Čekić interprets the decision as the so-called Herzegovinian regional community and the so-called Travnik regional community on the establishment of the Croatian state.
- 26 "Decision on the establishment of the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna of November 18, 1991," *ibid.*, appendix XVII. As in the previous case, Čekić uncritically interprets this decision as the decision of the Croatian Democratic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the declaration of the Croatian state in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A reproduction of the Decision by Karlo Rotim is identical to Čekić's in the first six articles, while the remainders differ. Čekić does not include the concluding article. See Karlo Rotim, *The Defense of Herceg-Bosna*, Široki Brijeg, 1997, Vol. 1, pp 518-519.
- 27 *Op.cit.*, Lovrenović, 1996/97, p 217.
- 28 *Op.cit.*, *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, p 378.

- R. Mahmutćehajić questions whether the Patriotic League was structured in such a way that it could be said that, well, before the war the Muslims created their own paramilitary organization. See R. Mahmutćehajić, interview in *Slobodna Bosna* (Sarajevo), March 9, 2000.
- 29 Sefer Halilović, *Cunning Strategy*, Sarajevo, 1997, p 120.
  - 30 *Ibid.*, pp 166-168.
  - 31 Information, Command of the 4<sup>th</sup> Corps, SP No. 75-1, May 7, 1992.
  - 32 Information on the situation of responsibility of the 2<sup>nd</sup> VO, Command 2, VO, Int. No. 25/142-777, April 18, 1992.
  - 33 For Serbian plans for creating military superiority at the beginning of the war, along with the complete ignorance of the basis of such superiority, material and technical resources that they inherited from the former JNA, see S. Nišić, 1995, pp 52-53.
  - 34 For example, the 5<sup>th</sup> Corps on May 21, was renamed the 1st Krajiški Corps, and contingents from the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Corps were transformed on June 2, 1992 into the 2<sup>nd</sup> Krajiški Corps, the 13<sup>th</sup> Corps on May 26, 1992 became the Hercegovački Corps.
  - 35 Expose on the results on the front, the status of the Army of the Srpska Republika, problems and tasks in the specified period, General Headquarters of the Army of the Srpska Republika, September 1992.
  - 36 *Ibid.*
  - 37 It is significant that military publications of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in writing about the first months of the war focus on the defense of Sarajevo, while less attention is given to other areas of confrontation. The reason for this may lie in the fact that the Bosniacs start from the view that in contrast to the other two "foundations," foundations based on the arms bearing the name Bosnia and Herzegovina, controls Sarajevo as the capital city. The successes of the HVO and the role of the Croatian Arms (HV) in the survival of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina is completely ignored. See H. Efendić, 1998; Jovan Divjak, "The first phase of the War 1992-1993: The Struggle for Survival and Continuation of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, pp 181-205.
  - 38 List in the chronology appended in *The War Against Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, p 389. See also *op. cit.*, I. Lovrenović, 1996/97, p 216.
  - 39 Both brigades were decorated with the Order of Nemanjić, the second highest decoration in the Srpska Republika, because of their successes in Posavina. "Recipients of the Order of Nemanjić," *Srpska vojska* (Sarajevo), July 15, 1993.
  - 40 The Croatian Army, HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina were unable to establish an armed brigade during the war. The 1<sup>st</sup> Krajiški Corps of the Army of the Srpska Republika.
  - 41 "The Homeland War," *The Croatian Lexicon* (Hrvatski leksikon), Zagreb, 1996, Vol. 1, pp 280-281.
  - 42 In operation *Vitaz* for the liberation of the city of Jajce within the formation of the 30<sup>th</sup> pd included the 1st mixed anti-armory artillery division, the 1<sup>st</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> light infantry brigade and the 1st battalion of the light infantry brigade. See the Report from the Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Krajiškog Corps, Top Secret, No. 174-643, October 26, 1992, General Headquarters of the Army of the Srpska Republika.

- 43 The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995, p. 392. The Commander of the Operative Zone of HVO North-eastern Herzegovina reported to HVO General Headquarters about the conflict in Prozor and its impact on Jajce. He stated that in the zone of responsibility of the Gornji Vakuf there was no escalation of conflict, however assistance for Jajce (ammunition and grenades) are located in Prozor because traffic towards Central Bosnia has been disrupted. The representatives of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina Territorial Defense have agreed that assistance be allowed through on the condition that along with this convoy four cistrene fuel trucks be allowed to pass for the OS of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Tesnju. This convoy was to travel along the Makljen-Gornji Vakuf-Bistrica rika-Sebesc-Prkosi-Fojnica and further to Jajce. Private Luka Sekerija believes that the convoy be allowed to pass because it would assist Jajce. We seek your instruction regarding this matter. Extraordinary Report of the OZ S-ZH, Top Secret, No. 50/92-1, October 24, 1992.
- 44 The compiler of the chronology of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995* claims that the operational focus on the eastern bank of the Neretva, known as the Dawn of June, was the counter-attack by Croatian and Bosniac forces in Mostar, a claim that is unfounded. The Lipanjske zore operation was conducted exclusively by the HVO. Bosniac forces in this alternative interpretation would have required a Mostar battalion, which existed as an integral component of the HVO, one of ten Mostar infantries. See *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, p 388. The principal Commander of the Bosniac-Muslim Territorial Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina also claims without foundation that the Mostar Battalion was not an integral part of the HVO. Furthermore, some military analysis's describe the conflict between the JNA and the Croatian Army and HVO in Herzegovina as an armed incident, a local disagreement and conflict which was not in accordance with relations between Tuđman and Milošević.
- 45 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, pp 385, 388.
- 46 Report of the Head Quarters of the HVO to the Government of the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna for the period from April 14, 1992 to December 31, 1992, No. 01-240, February, 4, 1993.
- 47 At the end of 1992 the HVO consisted of approximately 45,000 soldiers in four operative zones. The units of the Operative Zone Southeastern Herzegovina were completed up to 95 percent while the Operation Zone Posavina the least with approximately 45 percent. The other two operative zones in Central Bosnia and Northwestern Herzegovina had approximately 60 percent of soldiers that it required in terms of its organization. In the professional units of the HVO consisted of 855 members, including 85 officers, 91 non-commissioned officers and 670 soldiers. See Report of the Head Quarters of HVO to the Government of the Croatian Community Herceg-Bosna for the period between April 14, 1992 and December 31, 1992, No. 01-240. In comparison the 3rd Corps of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to information provided by its commander, at the end of November 1992 consisted of over 40,000 armed soldiers. See the Memorandum from the meeting between the Commander of the County stoz-er of Novi Travnik and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina of Novi Travnik,

- County Headquarter, Novi Travnik, No. 362/92, November 26, 1992.
- 48 Order of the Headquarters of HVO, No. 01-10/93, January 8, 1993. Request from the Headquarters of HVO, No. 01-57/93, January 13, 1993.
- 49 Information of the Headquarters of the Army of the Srpska Republika, Secret, No. 17/11-75, December 23, 1992. The Declaration on the end of the war did not mean that the war had ended, but an expression of the readiness of the Serbian nation, as stated in the Information. However, the conclusion to the war depended on the readiness of the Muslim-Croat coalition and the aggressor army of the state of Croatia to end the war.
- 50 Op.cit., M. Ančić, 1999, pp 36-37.
- 51 Regular Military Report, Command of the 30<sup>th</sup> partd. Top Secret, No. 174-66, April 2, 1992.
- 52 The Croats and Muslims were in some ways equally held hostage by Central Bosnia. Neither side was able to gain an absolute hold over compact territory, which lead from gradual intolerance to open war that occurred in other areas in at least two respects. On the one hand, there were areas from which the conflict expanded to other mixed areas, and on the other hand, the conflict brought into question accessibility of roads and traffic, including humanitarian and military. After the battles for these areas more ethnically clear enclaves were created, often more than less. In such cases, neither of the two sides benefited, but only the third party.
- 53 The responsible HVO units in Gornji Vakuf reported on April 26, 1992 that the situation in Gornji Vakuf was on the verge of conflict, and that units of the Territorial Defense were attempting to seize power in the city. The following day, armed incidents occurred between the HVO and the Territorial Defense. See Report by HVO Gornji Vakuf, April 17, 1992; Report by OS HVO Gornji Vakuf to the President of the Croatian Community Herceg-Bosna, Top Secret, No. 1-5/4-2/92, June 22, 1992.
- 54 The nature of this conflict can be understood from the Command of HVO Busovača, No. 62/92, May 10, 1992, published in H. Efendić, 1998, pp 196-198.
- 55 The conflict occurred on June 13, 1992 after the Territorial Defense incursions in the Serbian village of Katići and Predjele, whose Serb population expressed their allegiance to the HVO and handed over weapons that they had received from the JNA. HVO's attempt to protect those Serbs lead to a conflict that resulted in deaths and wounded on both sides. See *War Crimes by the Muslim Military forces against Croats from Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Sarajevo, 1997, p 20.
- 56 Report from the Center for Intelligence and Research in Novi Travnik, June 20, 1992. The underlying cause of the conflict was an attempt by HVO to control all institutions and important buildings in Novi Travnik with the aim of realizing the idea of Herceg-Bosna and this area (Zenica), as assessed by the Official Report of the Center for Security, Sector SDB, Zenica, June 27, 1992.
- 57 Request from the OŠ Konjic, No. 19-92, July 1, 1992.
- 58 The Defense Department HVO accused personally the head of the Headquarters of the OSRBH for the incident. See correspondence from the Defense Department, No. 03-34/92, September 3, 1992 to the Commander of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Protest from the Head of the Defense Department, No. 03-50/92, September 11, 1992 to the Headquarters of the OSBH.
- 59 Correspondence from the Command Headquarters OZ SB, October 15, 1992 to

- the Supreme Headquarters of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina—Zenica.
- 60 Report of Activities of the Commission monitoring the situation in the County of Novi Travnik, No. 1215/92, November 6, 1992.
- 61 *War Crimes by the Muslim Military forces against Croats from central areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Sarajevo, 1996, p 13; *Glasnik HVO*, No. 2, p 13.
- 62 In the military-territorial structure of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Gornji Vakuf and Bugojno, there were the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps, while these areas were within the composition of HVO there were OZ North-western Herzegovina. In the conflict the 3<sup>rd</sup> Corps had a significant advantage because the units of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovian Gornji Vakuf had ties with units of the army in Prozor and parts of the hinterland in Operative Zone in Central Bosnia, which blocked access for the Operative Zone North-western Herzegovina. This role of the units from Gornji Vakuf was not accidental because in comparison to the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Bugojno (which was cut between the forces of the Army of the Srpska Republika from Kupres and Donji Vakuf), had a better relationship with its rear and a tactically better placement. At the end of the year when the 305 Mountain Brigade was located on the Gornji Vakuf area, composed of Muslims from Jajce, tensions were further heightened, so that it is of no surprise that precisely in these areas the conflict between HVO and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina began in mid-January 1993.
- 63 Regular Report OZ S-ZH, Top Secret, No. 47/92, October 21, 1992.
- 64 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991–1995*, p 390. However, it should be acknowledged that this claim is significantly better than the assertion that the Republic of Croatia committed an act of aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the attacks in Prozor and Novi Travnik, and that in the assault on Prozor the 113<sup>th</sup> Split and a part of the 114<sup>th</sup> Šibenik Brigades of the Croatian Army were involved. In addition, in the assault on Novi Travnik, it is alleged that the other part of the 114<sup>th</sup> Šibenik Brigade and the 123<sup>rd</sup> Varoždinska Brigade of the Croatian Army participated also. See S. Čekić, 1994, p 226.
- 65 Before joining the Army of Bosnia and Herzeogvina he was the Head of the Anti-Aircraft Defense of HVO. See the Report by the Headquarters of the Operative Zone of the North-western Herzegovina, No. 135/92, November 10, 1992 to the Main Headquarters of HVO on the cases and basis of the conflict between HVO and the Territorial Defense.
- 66 Statement by Muharem Šabić of November 27, 1992, Supreme Commander of the OSRBH.
- 67 Report of the Commander of the County Headquarters in Novi Travnik from a meeting with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Novi Travnik, County Headquarters—Novi Travnik, No. 362/92, November 26, 1992.
- 68 Report of the Headquarters Operative Zone North-western Herzegovina, No. 135/92, November 10, 1992 to the General Headquarters of HVO.
- 69 “The People of the Krajina defend Jajce,” *Bosnjak / Bosniac*, April 4, 1995.
- 70 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991–1995*, p 391.
- 71 “The Homeland War,” *Hrvatski Leksikon / The Croatian Lexicon*, Zagreb, 1996, Vol. 1, p 281.
- 72 Order from the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, No. 01/93, January 16, 1993.

- 73 Marko Attila Hoare, "Civil-Military Relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995," in *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, p 218.
- 74 "The Destruction of Multiculturalism in the Cities," Interview with Dr. Hidajet Repov, Dani (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sarajevo, March 24, 2000.
- 75 Report of the OS HVO in Gornji Vakuf, Top Secret, No. 1-5/4-2/92, June 22, 1992 to the President of the Croatian Community Herceg-Bosna.
- 76 After the conflict in January 1993 in Gornji Vakuf, the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfilled the HVO request that the 305<sup>th</sup> Mountain Brigade composed of Muslim refugees from Jajce withdraw. In a brochure about the war history of this brigade it was asserted that the reason is treated as confirmation that the soldiers from Jajce are the true defenders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and not the factors that destroyed an ethnic balance. See *The War Path of the 205<sup>th</sup> Mountain Brigade*, Zenica, 1994, p 10.
- 77 An example of both pro-Croat and pro-Serb options are the two officers of the JNA from Varaždin, both having the rank of Generals in the Arms of Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of the war. Sead Delić in the defense of the military barracks on the side of the JNA was wounded. When he joined the Arms of Bosnia and Herzegovina he reached the rank of Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps. Fikret Ćuskić joined HVO where he was an officer in the 1<sup>st</sup> Mechanized Brigade. In the summer of 1992 he joined the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a commander for its elite forces, the 17<sup>th</sup> Krajiški Knights Brigade.
- 78 The text of the agreement was published in K. Rotim, 1997, pp 316-317.
- 79 A shorter account of the meeting in Travnik was held on August 15, 1992, County Headquarters of HVO Gornji Vakuf.
- 80 Report from the Headquarters of Central Bosnia, No. 01-555/93, October 7, 1992.
- 81 "Jaganjac and Praljak are in some joint command which should be located within the Supreme Command in Sarajevo. What else will this war bring? Who should we listen to?," as stated by officer of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina Mirsad Ćatić in his diary of November 13, 1992. "War Diary of the first Commander of TG Igman," Dani (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Sarajevo, April 7, 2000.
- 82 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, p 3989.
- 83 Order to implement the military activities of the commander of the 30<sup>th</sup> Partizan Division, March 4, 1992 to the Headquarters of the 1<sup>st</sup> Partizan Brigade.
- 84 Official note of the Center for State Security, Sector SDB, Zenica, June 27, 1992.
- 85 Gordan Malić, "Dossier HVO," Globus, Zagreb, March 17, 2000.
- 86 General Hasan Efendić's approach could be any different because of the influence of the former army that he served is affirmed in the case of another former JNA officer, General Slavko Lisica. They only differ in terms of the side on which they fought. In contrast, S. Čekić is a historian who followed the established path of political historians whose purpose was provide evidence to excuse prejudices. In the first part of his book devoted to the Bosnian Serbs, Čekić uses documents captured from the Command of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Military Region of the former JNA, which gives a persuasive account of the emergence of the Army of the Srpska Republika and the arming of the Serbian population. The second, smaller part of the pamphlet is devoted to the Croatian arms and the fascist elements in the HVO, which does not match the quality of the first section. This section is clearly based on /bad/ infor-

- mation gathered by the Military intelligence service of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, whose knowledge of the Croatian Army was low, so that the Croatian Army is listed as an “aggressor” and units which did not exist or were absolved after the transformation of the army in the autumn of 1992. See S. Čekić, 1994, pp 223-232.
- 87 The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995, p 391.
- 88 If there is any basis to this claim, then it is an isolated act because it was unnecessary for such measures to be taken in the circumstances as the Croat majority areas power was held by the HDZ and HVO.
- 89 Although Efendić is rarely reliable, in this example he was accurate, H. Efendić, 1998, p 240.
- 90 Correspondence from the 42<sup>nd</sup> bbr “Bregava,” No. 01-1024/93, April 13, 1993 to the 1st Brigade HVO R/ABH.
- 91 Report of the Main Headquarters of HVO, No. 02-2/1-01-1245/93, June 30, 1993 to the Defense Department.
- 92 K. Rotim, 1997, pp 314, 318, 319, 326.
- 93 Sefer Halilović, the head of the Headquarters of the Supreme Command of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, claims that the president of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Izetbegović from November 1992 considered the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina. See Halilović’s *The Cunning Strategy*, 1997, pp 18-20. According to Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, Izetbegović accepted the idea of partition of Bosnia in 1993. See his interview in *Slobodna Bosna*, Sarajevo, March 2, 2000.
- 94 The 1<sup>st</sup> Krajiški Battalion was organized at the Zagreb Fair grounds in the summer of 1992. This was one of the units which made up the 17<sup>th</sup> Krajiški “Knights” Brigade. See “The path from volunteer to hero,” *Bosnjak*, April 11, 1995.
- 95 When the Regiment entered the Territorial Defense of Bosnia and Herzegovina it was renamed to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Brigade “King Tomislav.” See the Decision of the Presidency of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina PR, No. 1170, May 27, 1992. This document is reproduced in H. Efendić, 1998, pp 138-140.
- 96 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, p 381.
- 97 The author uses the term “su-djelovao” in describing the role of the international community—translator’s note. I am using the Serbian term “sadejstvo,” which could be translated into Croatian as “suradnja” / cooperation. In English the term’s equivalent would be *coordination* or *cooperation*, and in German *Zusammenarbeit* or *Mitwirkung*.
- 98 In a report on the progress of the negotiations at the Geneva Peace Conference on the former Yugoslavia, the Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Krajiški Corps of the Army of the Srpska Republika informed its units that the conference in Geneva has brought more quality results than previous negotiations, and that the approach of the co-chairman of the conference on the former Yugoslavia Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance was objective and that they accept the existence of the Srpska Republika as a political reality. Our delegation in formal and informal contacts was treated as a state delegation. Report from the Command of the 1<sup>st</sup> Krajiški Corps, Secret, No. 711, October 1, 1992.
- 99 *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, pp 392-393.

100 According to Rusmir Mahmutćehajić, it was a war against Bosnia and Herzegovina. See Mahmutćehajić, "The Road to War," *The War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995*, pp 161-179.

101 On the position and meaning of Bihać, see interview with General Imra Agotić in *Slobodna Bosna*, March 16, 2000.