

FROM OTTAWA TO SARAJEVO

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CANADIAN PEACEKEEPERS IN THE BALKANS

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Dedication

To my parents,

Msgt (ret) Norman E. Hewitt and Mrs Ruth Kane Hewitt

*The way of arms and arts as the way of the warrior
is a constant precept that needs no detailing.
Keep arts at your left side, arms by your right,
the two must complement each other,
without one the other can not be.*

Hojo Code

The Martello Papers

This is the eighteenth in a series of security studies published over the past several years by the Queen's University Centre for International Relations (QCIR), under the general title of the *Martello Papers*. "From Ottawa to Sarajevo" is a detailed, empirical examination of Canadian participation in UN peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1995, written by a US Air Force officer, Major Dawn Hewitt, who served as Visiting Defence Fellow at the Centre during the 1996-97 academic year.

Peacekeeping, by all accounts, has become increasingly complex since the ending of the Cold War, and as Major Hewitt's monograph reveals, nowhere have those complexities and frustrations been more apparent than in the former Yugoslavia. From the outset, Canada played a central role in UN attempts to impose some semblance of order in that war-torn land, whether by providing interposition forces in Croatia, humanitarian-relief expeditions in Bosnia, or even (as in the case of Macedonia) expert reconnaissance teams assisting the initial stages of deployment.

Major Hewitt's detailed account is enriched by numerous interviews with Canadian personnel who took part in Yugoslavian operations. At a time when, in the aftermath of the Somalia affair, Canadians might be tempted to dwell only upon the negative aspects of peacekeeping, Major Hewitt reminds her readers that the country's involvement in Yugoslavia did demonstrate how a professional military operating under nearly impossible circumstances could, nevertheless, have had a positive impact on the lives of countless innocents trapped among warring factions; in so doing the Canadian Forces left in their wake a legacy of considerable honour. Indeed, one gets the impression from reading this work that if UN peacekeeping had been run from Ottawa not New York and according to Canadian principles, norms, and operational procedures, the UNPROFOR experience would have turned out dramatically for the better.

We at the Centre are appreciative of the US Air Force for having enabled Major Hewitt to spend her research year with us, and we are especially grateful to the Security and Defence Forum of the Canadian Department of National Defence, whose generosity allows us to carry on, year in and year out, our scholarly work on issues of immediate relevance to national and international security.

David G. Haglund
Director
QCIR

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The views expressed in this monograph are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of National Defence, the Government of Canada, the US Department of Defense, or the US Government.

Dawn M. Hewitt
1998

Glossary

ABiH	Bosnian Government Army
APC	Armoured Personnel Carrier
ARGBAT	Argentine Battalion
BSA	Bosnian Serb Army
CANBAT	Canadian Battalion
CAS	Close Air Support
ECMM	European Community Monitor Mission
FREBAT	French Battalion
FRY	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)
HDZ	Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica/Croatian Democratic Party
HV	Croatian Army
HVO	Croatian Defence Council (Bosnia)
ICFY	International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JNA	Yugoslav National Army
JORBAT	Jordanian Battalion
NEPBAT	Nepalese Battalion
OP	Observation Post
PPCLI	Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry
RCR	Royal Canadian Regiment
R22eR	Royal 22nd Regiment (the Van Doos)
RSK	Krajina Serb Army

SDA	Party of Democratic Action (Muslim-based party)
SDS	Serbian Democratic Party
SPS	Socialist Party of Serbia
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
TO	Territorial Defence Force
TOW	Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided missile
UNCIVPOL	UN Civilian Police
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNMO	United Nations Military Observers (unarmed)
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
ZNG	Croat National Guard

Introduction

In May 1993, a year into the Bosnian war, the United Nations (UN) approved a project to reinforce the road between the Bosnian Muslim village of Tarcin and the Bosnian Croat village of Kresevo. The road had been used to transport supplies that winter and the UN had found it wanting. A Bosnian Serb civil engineer, who had graduated from the University of Sarajevo, was appointed overseer for the operation. He was given a group of Bosnian Muslim workers to perform the road work. A company of Canadians from CANBAT 2 stationed at Kiseljak were tasked to perform escort duty for the six weeks it would take to upgrade the road.

Early in the morning the Canadian peacekeepers would send out three armoured personnel carriers (APCs) and a jeep before the workers arrived. One APC was stationed at the Bosnian Croat Army (HVO) checkpoint on top of a mountain at one end of the road. The second APC would be at the road with the workers. The third APC was stationed near the Muslim confrontation line before Tarcin. An officer in the jeep would drive between the APCs and locations, monitoring the situation.

One morning in late June as the road neared completion, the Canadians arrived but the workers did not. Suddenly a company of the Bosnian government army (ABiH) charged down the newly built road toward Kresevo. The Canadians quickly went to an all-round defence in their APCs and watched as the ABiH swept past their positions. The ABiH ignored the Canadians, but they killed everyone at the HVO checkpoint and proceeded to raze the village of Kresevo.

Platoon commander Captain Yvan Pichette arrived after the battle to secure his men. Pichette found the ABiH commander surveying the destruction, resting his tennis shoe upon the body of one of the HVO soldiers. Pichette calmly informed the commander, "I'm here to collect my troops." The ABiH commander nodded and allowed them to depart.¹

The world tends to see the UN missions in the former Yugoslavia as either a great humanitarian salvation (as evidenced by the Sarajevo Airbridge Operation



*Danyluk, R22eR and an HVO soldier on the Tarcin-Kresovo road.
Photo by Capt Peter Danyluk*

which delivered food aid to beleaguered Bosnians) or military incompetence (as witnessed by the chaining of UN Military Observers [UNMOs] to fences and bridges). As real life is not black and white there is truth in both statements.

When war broke out in Croatia, the world turned to the European Community (EC) and then the UN to stop the slaughter. The problem was that classic peacekeeping requires both belligerents to agree to end the war. While the UN was preparing for deployment to Croatia, 15 ceasefires were signed and broken. After UN forces were on the ground, sporadic fighting continued and there were three sizable Croatian Army (HV) campaigns against the Krajina Serbs (RSK) in January 1993, and May and August 1995.

The problems were compounded in Bosnia. The UN chose to establish its military headquarters for Croatia in Sarajevo as Bosnia collapsed into civil war. Without any mandate to operate, UN peacekeepers found themselves brokering ceasefires and handling humanitarian relief. What is more, the war made it difficult fully to oversee operations in Croatia, for which the UN Headquarters had been formed. Eventually the UN decided to send peacekeepers into Bosnia while all sides remained determined to prosecute the war.

The United Nations Charter has two chapters dealing with peace operations. Chapter VI typically requires the consent of both parties and includes preventive deployments and classic peacekeeping operations in which the UN interposes troops between two forces who have agreed to cease hostile operations. Chapter VII has been used to restore or maintain peace and security and allows the use of coercive force.² The operations in Croatia, Bosnia, and Macedonia were all authorized under Chapter VI. Yet there was no peace agreed to in Bosnia, and there were three major violations of the UN agreement in Croatia (which the UN was unable to prevent) that led to the dissolution of the Krajina Serb entity.³

The UN must have felt the situations there were not exactly Chapter VI as they refused to issue clear guidelines to the peacekeepers on rules of engagement (ROE). While Canada and other NATO countries issued their own ROEs, the UN preferred to remain vague. Indeed, officers assigned directly to multinational UN headquarters reported they were never told what the rules of engagement were.⁴ As the war progressed, the UN sometimes veered toward Chapter VII guidelines. In 1993, regarding the safe areas, the Security Council stated:

[UNPROFOR is authorized] in carrying out the mandate defined in paragraph 5 above, acting in self-defence, to take the necessary measures, including the use of force, in reply to bombardments against the safe areas by any of the parties or to armed incursion into them or in the event of any deliberate obstruction in or around those areas to the freedom of movement of UNPROFOR or of protected humanitarian convoys.⁵

Yet the UN refused to embrace Chapter VII. It was only the pressure of NATO in 1995 that finally ratcheted up the UN's response to the warring factions through such actions as NATO airstrikes and heavy artillery action by the Rapid Reaction Force deployed to Sarajevo by the British, French, and Dutch.

There were three choices facing the UN upon the collapse of the Yugoslav state. They could have sealed the borders and prevented the conflict from spreading to the other Balkan nations. They could have intervened with significant military force, in effect becoming an army of occupation, and forced a solution. Or they could have maintained just enough involvement to avert the worst effects of war on the civilian population.

The first choice was nearly impossible because of the international outcry over ethnic cleansing and war crimes that had not been witnessed by Western Europe since World War II. The international community demanded action. The second choice, massive military involvement, was shied away from by the West, in large measure because of the cost involved. Estimates suggested anywhere from 100,000 to 500,000 troops would need to deploy.⁶ Numerous commentators raised the spectre of World War II. It was pointed out the Wehrmacht had been tied down by a ghastly guerilla war for five years.⁷ For its part, the US did not want another Vietnam. The UN therefore chose the third alternative, deciding to allow the war to continue while dampening its worst effects.

There is no doubt the UN relieved the worst of the suffering of the civilian population. In 1992 Bosnia suffered 130,000 war dead, mostly civilians. In 1993 there were 30,000 war dead. In 1994 there were 13,000 dead, most of those soldiers.⁸ At the same time, and it is a brutal thought, the UN made the war bearable, and probably helped to prolong the conflict. Considering the UN's choice for involvement, could its deployment have been better handled?

Many commanders argued that the UN could not use military force as it would compromise the troops' neutrality and set them up as targets. Neither should the UN act as an army of occupation. By that choice, UN peacekeepers were subject to hostage-taking, sniper fire, and artillery barrages. General Sir Michael Rose stated that this is part of peacekeeping. If so, it seems to be a *new* aspect of peacekeeping considering the scale on which it happened. And the conflict in Bosnia, in which there was no peace treaty to enforce, is more indicative of peacemaking. The evidence suggests the peacekeepers who took a strong military stance avoided many of those problems. The initial UN stance did not bring Bosnia closer to peace. In the end NATO became involved and exerted decisive military force. Indeed the impending airstrikes of August 1995 did mean the UN lost some of its neutrality because by that point the UN was only deployed on federation territory. No peacekeeper remained on ground held by the Bosnian Serbs. But the UN had never been fully neutral in the conflict anyway. It frequently refused to punish the Bosnian Muslims for violations it would not tolerate from the Bosnian Serbs. This was understandable. If you are involved in a war, you cannot afford to have all sides against you, unless you have the overwhelming military advantage. The UN did not.

The Canadians deployed a battalion to Croatia and another to Bosnia. They provided the UN with engineering and logistic support and a number of Canadians served at the multinational UN headquarters in Zagreb and Sarajevo. Of the

38 nations deployed, the Canadians were arguably the most experienced at peace-keeping. As they did not sport the heavy firepower or variety of high-tech equipment of the British or French, their tours were more indicative of the broader UN contingent experience. And their frustrations, whether aimed at the UN bureaucracy for a failure to deliver supplies or a warring faction for using a road constructed to deliver humanitarian supplies to wage war, constitute a perfect case study of UN operations. The Canadian experience can illuminate the successes and failures of the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) as a whole in the former Yugoslavia.

Notes

1. Military interview.
2. Walter Gary Sharp, Sr., *UN Peace Operations* (New York: American Heritage Custom Publishing Group, 1995), pp. 1-2.
3. It was President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia who had agreed for the Krajina Serbs to the UN deployment. The Krajina Serb leader Milan Babic opposed the UN deployment in January 1992 but caved in after pressure from Belgrade.
4. Military interview.
5. Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime* (London: Penguin, 1996), p. 114.
6. Gwynne Dyer, "Intervene in Bosnia before price goes higher," *Toronto Star*, 12 August 1992, p. A17; Major General Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 508.
7. Military historian Gwynne Dyer refers to this as the Yugoslav myth. He points out that the Germans only took over from the Italians in Serbia in 1943, and they never lost control of the cities or roads in Yugoslavia. The 12 divisions in Yugoslavia were among the poorest quality of the 300 divisions deployed by the Germans. The guerrilla war did not evict the Germans, the Soviet Army did. Gwynne Dyer, "Another Vietnam?" *Gazette* (Montreal), 14 August 1992, p. B3.
8. Speech by General Sir Michael Rose, British Commander, UNPROFOR Bosnia-Herzegovina, at the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ottawa, 21 October 1996; Honig and Both, *Srebrenica*, p. 119. Rose claims 1994 casualties were 3,000, while Honig and Both place them at 13,000.

1. The Origins of the Conflict

“It’s ethnic warfare. You can’t stop it.” “They’ve been killing each other for thousands and thousands of years and will continue to kill each other for the next one thousand.” “These people hate each other on a level that’s almost genetic.”¹ Many in North America perceive the conflict in Bosnia as one caused by ancient ethnic hatreds. As such, the conflict of the 1990s is simply a continuation of a war that has been ongoing for the past thousand years.

The Yugoslav civil war was neither inevitable nor a continuation of a previous conflict. Obviously, war has occurred in the former Yugoslavia during the past millenium, as it has in France, Germany, or the Netherlands. The component parts of Yugoslavia have also known long periods of peace, even productivity. Many members of the warring ethnic groups only claimed their “ethnicity” (nationality is a better term and the one used by Yugoslavia) in the nineteenth or even the twentieth century. The truth is, the former Yugoslavia has hosted such a variety of ethnic groups and nations that individuals of the state would have an impossible time determining what percentage of their genetic make-up belonged to the Illyrians, Romans, Vlachs, Slovenes, Italians, Magyars, Albanians, Germans, Turks, Bulgars, Macedonians, Croats, or Serbs. In a land where one has been free to select ethnicity based on a choice of religion, Yugoslav has been as valid an ethnic group as Croat, Serb, or Muslim.

Nor should it be forgotten that the Yugoslavs chose to join together, as indeed unlike the rest of Eastern Europe, they chose a communist state. It was Yugoslavia’s misfortune that their communism began to collapse long before the wall came down in Berlin and there was widespread international recognition that the Marxist-Leninist system was doomed to failure. The inability to adapt to the collapse of Yugoslav communism and move toward a democratic state was a major reason for the conflict,

as was the effort of ruthless *apparatchiks* to maintain power through the use of nationalism when it was apparent the communist system was in collapse. Such men as Franjo Tudjman and Slobodan Milosevic irresponsibly disregarded the consequences of rampant nationalism. None of this means history is irrelevant to understanding the Yugoslav conflict. It was the participants' abilities to draw upon and corrupt history that led to the numerous atrocities that plagued the conflict and drew some 38 nations into the maelstrom.

If Marshal Josip Broz Tito, the founder of communist Yugoslavia, had lived until 1989, it is possible that Yugoslavia would have made the peaceful transition through democratic reform to a free-market economy as the states of Eastern Europe have done in the past several years. Instead, Yugoslavs were offered the opportunity for change in 1980 before the fall of the Berlin Wall. Rather than making a colossal leap to a new ideology, Yugoslavia's leaders chose to turn to nationalism to maintain their power in a state on the verge of economic collapse.

The refusal to spurn communism was in part due to history. Neither the Ottoman Empire nor the Austro-Hungarian Empire, much less communist Yugoslavia, had left a flexible, pluralistic political system the Yugoslavs could build upon.² More importantly, communism had been created within Yugoslavia, not imposed from the outside. "The Titoist brand of socialism, especially after the split with the Soviet Union, was not felt to be alien but rather an authentic, distinguishing feature of Yugoslav society."³

Attempts at internal economic reform from 1983-86 ended in failure. As the situation worsened, the bureaucrats ignored all the careful checks and balances Tito had established and pushed Yugoslavia toward disintegration. Titoist Yugoslavia consisted of six strong autonomous republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia). Serbia was kept relatively weak vis-à-vis the federation (with two autonomous provinces within its borders, Vojvodina and Kosovo). However, although Serbia was weak, there was strong Serb participation inside the republics in respect of political leadership and the military.⁴ In post-Titoist Yugoslavia, the Serbians (backed by Montenegro) pushed for a further centralized Yugoslavia (in which they would have greater control), the Slovenes wanted to increase individual autonomy, and the Croats kept silent — but this backed the Slovenes, as they refused to weigh in with the Serbs; meanwhile, Bosnia and Macedonia tried to maintain the status quo.⁵

The *intelligentsia* were now allowed to print and promote nationalist ideologies. They were greatly responsible in the 1980s and particularly the early 1990s for promoting an "us versus them" attitude, increasing the hate level in the populace. Religious institutions such as the Serbian Orthodox church embraced nationalism. The media, too, were more than happy to serve as the organs of the nationalists.⁶ The media were increasingly strident in the early 1990s, escalating tensions by reporting every nationalist/ethnic incident and encouraging a violent response. A reporter from *Vreme* told US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren

Zimmermann, “You Americans would become nationalists and racists too if your media were totally in the hands of the Ku Klux Klan.”⁷

Elections and Growing Nationalism

Although most of the Yugoslav republics had large minorities, only Serbia had two autonomous provinces representing them (Vojvodina was largely Yugoslav Hungarian, Kosovo was mostly Yugoslav Albanian). Autonomous provinces were given equal representation in federal political structures.⁸ Serbia felt it was unfairly penalized. For example, the Krajina Serbs of Croatia did not possess an autonomous province. No one wished to remember the two autonomous provinces had been part of Tito’s delicate balance in Yugoslavia. In July 1988 there were labour demonstrations in Belgrade against the government’s austerity measures. This was followed by mass demonstrations in Vojvodina and Montenegro which caused the resignation of the politburos in each region (October 1988 for Vojvodina, January 1989 in Montenegro). Communist Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic replaced the members of the politburos with his own supporters. In March 1989, Milosevic passed a constitutional amendment abolishing Kosovo and Vojvodina as autonomous entities. The demonstrations that followed in Kosovo were crushed by the police.⁹

The strengthening of Serbia within the federation was a boon to Milosevic’s popularity. Milosevic wished to capitalize and build upon this, using nationalism as the glue that bound Serbians to him. On 28 June 1989 he organized a 600th anniversary rally at Gazimestan, the site of the Battle of Kosovo. The Battle of Kosovo marked the end of the medieval Serbian state and its incorporation into the Ottoman Empire. Even though the Serbs lost the 1389 battle, it has deep spiritual and symbolic significance. Milosevic had no qualms about tapping into that emotion. Before the rally, the bones of Prince Lazar (leader of the medieval Serbian forces) were taken around the country. At the rally, there were stalls that sold icons showing Jesus Christ, Prince Lazar, and Slobodan Milosevic arm in arm. In a bit of foreshadowing, Milosevic proclaimed to the crowd, “after six centuries we are again engaged in battles and quarrels. They are not armed battles, but this cannot be excluded yet.”¹⁰

Slobodan Milosevic went ahead and held a presidential election in Serbia in December 1989. There were no opposition parties, so Milosevic selected four of his friends as the opposition candidates. He won with a firm majority, although the Yugoslav Albanians in Kosovo boycotted the election (to protest the end of their autonomous province). During 1990 Milosevic continued to encourage nationalist actions. He ordered the replacement of all Latin script signs in Belgrade with Cyrillic signs, a further overt indication that Serbian culture was undeniably dominant.

Ante Markovic became the federal prime minister of Yugoslavia in March 1989. Although things were far gone, Markovic believed significant economic reform could stop the slide toward dissolution. He removed controls on the hard currency savings of the populace. In December 1989 he implemented an economic reform package: pegging the dinar to the deutsche Mark, controlling government expenditure, and capping wage increases. Over the next six months, Markovic brought inflation from 60 percent to almost zero. The prime minister received verbal support from the West for his reforms (particularly from the Western ambassadors), but little concrete support.¹¹

Markovic wanted to form a federalist state. His program included economic (privatization) and democratic (pluralistic) reform. The Slovenes and Croats opposed Markovic because they felt he was a centrist. The Serbs felt he was rushing economic reforms which hit them hardest, and they opposed many of his democratic ideas. After Markovic's anti-inflationary reforms proved successful, he formed the Reform party. However, his inability to bridge the Serb-Croat-Slovene gap left his party (and Markovic's position) that much the weaker. The two states that favoured a federalist structure (because anything else was sure to lead to civil war on their territory) supported Markovic. The Reform party did very well in Macedonia's elections (where it elected the president of the parliament) and had moderate success in Bosnia.

The elections of 1990 set the republics firmly on the road to dissolution. Slovenia led the pack, heedless of the effect its desire for independence would have on its fellow republics. Slovenia had multiparty elections in April 1990. Milan Kucan became president although the opposition DEMOS party held the majority in Parliament. Both agreed on a push toward Slovene independence with a possible confederal arrangement with Yugoslavia. After the election the Yugoslav national army (JNA) attempted to seize the arms of the Slovene territorial defence (TO) units and place them under federal control. The Slovenes hid a large portion of their armaments and by summer had a secret plan to form a Slovene army. The hidden armaments were subsequently used to arm the force. By December 1990 Slovenia had a plebiscite on the future of the republic. Parliament voted to declare independence in six months if federal Yugoslavia had not found a solution to the current problems. Despite its timetable, six weeks later, Slovenia suspended all federal laws on its territory. The next day Croatia followed suit.

Croatia held multiparty elections in May 1990. The right-wing nationalist Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica (HDZ) won and Franjo Tudjman became president. The HDZ provoked the 600,000 Croatian Serbs by constitutionally defining Croatia as a nation of Croats. The Croatian Serbs walked out of the *Sabor* (parliament). President Tudjman began to promote Croatian nationalism and openly advocated anti-Serbianism by attacking communist Serbian behaviour. Tudjman's failure to understand the Croatian Serbs' fears and to disassociate his government from the World War II fascist Croat Ustasha state led directly to bloodshed on Croatian soil.

Tudjman judged all Croatian Serbs by the urban Croatian Serbs he knew in Zagreb. He failed to understand rural Krajina Serb society. The Krajina is a mountainous belt that runs along the western and northwestern border of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Ottomans encouraged the nomadic, martial Vlachs (who were Eastern Orthodox in faith) to move to the Ottoman-Habsburg frontier. They were given financial incentives such as a lowering of the tax on sheep, and the leaders were granted military holdings (*timars*). Since they were not granted a military salary, the Vlachs were allowed to take their plunder for reimbursement. These groups evolved into the Bosnian Serb groups in northern Bosnia.

Other Vlachs and Serbs who fled north from the Ottomans in the fifteenth century were organized by the Habsburgs for military defence against the Ottomans. Ferdinand I of Austria established a formal military system for the Vlachs and Serbs in 1527. This included formal land holdings with military duties, and the right to practice Orthodox Christianity. There was a settlement by other ethnic groups in the zone, including Serb merchants. The merging of the population, along with the adoption of Serbo-Croatian and the concept of nationalism in the nineteenth century caused those in the Krajina eventually to declare themselves Serbs.¹² Krajina Serb society continued its martial traditions into the twentieth century. Krajina culture attached a great importance to weapons. School children were taught to use shotguns and handguns. A person's standing in the community could be enhanced by an ability to wield a weapon.¹³

Upon the election of the HDZ and Franjo Tudjman, Krajina Serbs feared the reestablishment of the Ustasha state. They associated Croatian nationalism with fascism. Nor did Tudjman do anything to allay their fears. Red-chequered flags flew everywhere after the election. Although to the Croats the red-chequered flag is a symbol of the medieval Croatian state, to the rest of Yugoslavia it is associated with the fascist state of World War II. Tudjman made it clear that the Yugoslav majority Serbs were now minority Serbs in a Croatian state. It was mandated that literary Croatian be used in all Croatian administration and the Cyrillic script¹⁴ was banned. Although less than 5 percent of Croatian Serbs could use Cyrillic, the act of banning the script promoted Serb fears and encouraged Serbian nationalism. Later, Tudjman would continue the trend, replacing bi-script road signs with Latin-script-only signs.

A greater percentage of Serbs worked in the government than would be warranted by their percentage in the population. This was partly due to more Serbs being members of the communist party. Tudjman made nationality a criterion for government service. Large numbers of Croatian Serbs were laid off from the state administration and the police force. This surge in Serb unemployment provided ammunition to the Serbian nationalists.

Dr Jovan Raskovic, a psychiatrist at Sibenik's hospital and leader of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) met with President Tudjman in May (before the Croatian constitution was drafted) to discuss Croatian Serb autonomy. Raskovic was vague about autonomy and did not see it as having a specific territorial dimension but rather a guarantee of certain rights to the Serbs and their recognition

as part of Croatia. The two failed to reach an agreement and Tudjman went ahead and approved a constitution defining Croatia as a nation of Croats. This opened the way for more radical control of the SDS by Milan Babic, a Knin dentist and former member of the Stalinist, Croatian communist party. That summer, Babic met with Belgrade officials and undoubtedly received Milosevic's backing to establish an autonomous state. Babic proceeded to build a well-armed militia supplied by the JNA and members of the Yugoslav interior ministry. The SDS organized a Krajina Serb referendum in August and September 1990 calling for political autonomy for the Krajina. The Croatian government declared the referendum illegal and attempted to use the police to stop it.¹⁵ The action failed utterly against the heavily armed Krajina Serbs who under Babic's urging ended up barricading the Krajina. Unlike Raskovic, the wily Babic had clear borders in mind and introduced the idea of the Krajina seceding from Croatia.¹⁶

Macedonia held elections in the fall of 1990. A moderate government ensued, which supported Prime Minister Ante Markovic's efforts to form a federalist state. Macedonia tried in vain to wield a moderating influence on the rest of Yugoslavia.¹⁷

Bosnia held its elections in December 1990. Unfortunately for Bosnia's future, the parties broke out along nationalist rather than ideological lines. The Muslim intellectual Alija Izetbegovic, a long-time activist against the Tito communist government and only released from his second jail sentence in 1988, formed the Party of Democratic Action in May 1990. The party's program was supposedly pluralist, but the symbols, including green banners and crescents, suggested that it represented Bosnian Muslims (although the party was a far cry from being an Islamist party) and it would occasionally veer in the next few years in the same nationalist direction as the Croatian or Serbian parties. Izetbegovic tried to justify the Muslim character of his party, saying Bosnia was not yet ready for pluralism. Yet, only democratic pluralism would have saved Bosnia from disintegration. The Party of Democratic Action gained 86 seats in parliament.

The Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) formed in July 1990, and named after the Krajina Serb party, was led by Radovan Karadzic, a psychiatrist and poet who had never been accepted as a member of Sarajevo's urban elite. It took 72 seats. The SDS' primary support came from the rural Bosnian Serbs. The urban Bosnian Serbs of Sarajevo and Tuzla perceived the SDS as buffoons.

The Bosnian Croat HDZ was formed in early 1990 as an offshoot of the Croatian HDZ. Its official platform declared the borders of Bosnia inviolate. The Bosnian Croats of Sarajevo and the northwestern Bosnian Croats were content to be part of Bosnia. The Croats of western Herzegovina were more radical and would agitate for union with Croatia when civil war erupted in Bosnia. The Croatian HDZ were elected in 44 seats.

The remaining 38 seats were distributed among other ethnic parties and some nonsectarian parties such as the Yugoslav parties. The breakout from the election (41 percent Muslim, 35 percent Serb, 20 percent Croat) roughly matched the population (44 percent, 31 percent, 17 percent). Izetbegovic created a coalition with

the three major parties and formed a government of national unity.¹⁸ The government surprisingly held on until fall 1991, but certain elements were already working to undermine it. Radovan Karadzic was receiving arms shipments from Serbia through 1990. President Slobodan Milosevic knew of and supported these deliveries. Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) mp Mihalj Kertes in Belgrade organized arms deliveries to Bosanska Krajina (northwest), eastern Herzegovina (southwest), and Romanija (the mountainous area east of Sarajevo).

By autumn 1990, the republics had derailed Markovic's reforms. The privatization program was halted. Government expenditures rose as did inflation. Come January, Slovenia and Croatia had suspended all federal laws and were pushing full-force toward independence — at the most, willing to maintain a loose confederal arrangement with Yugoslavia. Slovenia seemed unconcerned that it was the only state with a somewhat homogenous population; the other states were sure to face violent civil conflict if they tried to leave the union. Croatia blithely ignored its large Serb population's demands or concerns. And Bosnia and Macedonia desperately pleaded for reconciliation.

The unrestrained nationalist agitation finally led to violence in March 1991. While the Krajina Serbs had barricaded themselves against Croatian authority, the Serb populations in western and eastern Slavonia remained nominally under Croatian control. Milan Babic and his military advisor Milan Martic (a former Knin police inspector) wished to bring the other Serb areas under the authority of the "Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina." In February, Serbs loyal to Babic and Martic seized control of the police station and municipality building in Pakrac, western Slavonia. On 2 March, the Croatian ministry of the interior sent a team in, to regain control of a now damaged Pakrac. It arrested 180 Serbs, while others fled to the nearby hills. The Croat interior police secured Pakrac by that afternoon. Later that evening the JNA intervened and separated the forces. Pakrac was returned to Croatian control.

Each one of these sorts of incidents was seized upon by the nationalist media and blown into a full conflagration. In Belgrade reports circulated that 20,000 Croatian Serb refugees were pouring into Serbia. The front page of the mass-circulation *Vecernje Novosti* cried that an orthodox priest and 11 others had been killed, yet on page two it said the priest was wounded, and on page three the same priest gave a statement of the events. Jovan Raskovic denounced Croatia before a Krajina Serb rally, proclaiming it had "declared war on the Serb nation."¹⁹

Babic and Martic would make another try on 30 March, when they tried to seize control of Plitvice National Park, a famous tourist mecca.²⁰ The JNA again stepped in to restore order, but this time two people died and another 20 were injured.

Nor was Belgrade immune from disturbance. Opposition forces held a demonstration demanding greater media access. President Bora Jovic of the federation ordered in the JNA tanks. One of the Serbian opposition leaders in parliament was arrested and two died in the confrontation. This in effect marked the point

where the JNA deserted Prime Minister Ante Markovic and his federalism and joined their fate to that of Slobodan Milosevic and Greater Serbia. The JNA generals had maintained a close relationship with Markovic who paid their wages. Now they reached a tentative accommodation with Milosevic. And Milosevic did indeed seem to be working toward a Greater Serbia as early as March 1991. Both Tudjman and Milosevic had made the American ambassador aware of their desire to incorporate large chunks of Bosnia into their respective republics. In March the two met secretly in Karadordevo, Vojvodina, and agreed to a division of Bosnia should the republics become independent. Not long after, Milosevic publicly stated individual nationalities could leave Yugoslavia, but they could not drag unwilling Serbs with them. Serbia would fight to preserve their rights.²¹

By May 1991 the rhetoric on all sides had increased. Slovenia had stopped sending recruits to the JNA and had formed its own army as had Croatia. The JNA had raised its readiness level and declared it would use live ammunition to defend itself. The Krajina Serbs were busy arming people in western Slavonia and the HDZ was raising tensions there by distributing weapons and bombing Croatian Serb shops and restaurants. The HDZ continued sacking Serbs from the police and government and then moved on to ousting Croatian Serbs from tourism, education, health services, and even restaurants and private companies.

The Croatian Serbs of Borovo Selo, a town three miles north of Vukovar in eastern Slavonia, had struck a deal with the HDZ government that no Croat police would enter Borovo Selo without approval of the Croatian Serb representatives of the area. On 1 May, two Croat policemen (apparently after ripping down the Yugoslav flag) were fired upon by Serbs in Borovo Selo and arrested. Twenty Croat police from Vinkovici were sent to investigate and were subsequently fired on by Serb paramilitary. One hundred and fifty police from Osijek were sent as reinforcements. The ensuing fight had to be stopped by the JNA. Twelve Croat police and three Croatian Serb civilians died. The media again entered the picture. Three of the Croat bodies had been mutilated. Photos of the bodies were given to the press, further inflaming passions.

Croatia teemed with armed people in June. Croat soldiers manned highway roadblocks, while Croatian Serb militias organized their own posts near majority Serb villages. Shootings, beatings, and kidnappings had become regular occurrences. Serbian families in Zagreb were finding "Chetnik" written on their doors. And standing above this increasing chaos, President Tudjman was moving toward a declaration of independence, still unsure if the JNA would intervene.

Slovenia proclaimed it would declare independence on 26 June. Croatia was going to follow, feeling that two states' actions would have more weight with the international community. Markovic went to Zagreb on the 24th to make a last-minute appeal to Slovenia and Croatia not to leave the union. He warned, "the federal government will counter unilateral secession with all available means."²² The MPs in the *Sabor* shouted down Markovic, and as a further slap in the face,

preempted Slovenia's declaration of independence, by voting in favour in the late afternoon 25 June 1991. The Slovenes followed suit later that evening.

The Ten-Day War

Slovenia moved to take control of all border posts on 26 June 1991. It replaced the "Welcome to Yugoslavia" signs with "Welcome to Slovenia." By seizing the posts on the Italian and Austrian borders, the Slovenes were in effect blocking the free transport of goods from Yugoslavia to the West. Some 75 percent of the Yugoslav budget was derived from customs revenues. The Slovenes obviously had things planned out and moved quickly. The federal Yugoslav government passed a resolution declaring Croatia's and Slovenia's acts illegal and ordered the JNA to be deployed. Two thousand troops were to escort 400 policemen and 270 customs officials to the border crossings. The JNA proceeded to underestimate seriously the capabilities and determination of the Slovene territorial defence. The JNA had 20,000 troops on Slovene territory but only deployed 2,000. And most of those 2,000 actually deployed from Croatian soil (Varazdin, Zagreb, Karlovac). The JNA thought their mere presence would cause the Slovenes to recant. This miscalculation cost them. While the TO resisted the JNA, Slovenia withdrew its representatives from the presidency and executive council of Yugoslavia.

After a JNA helicopter was shot down, the Yugoslav air force was deployed to knock out radio and TV transmitters. The TO seized keys and passports from foreign truck drivers. They then used the trucks as barricades on the roads against the JNA. The air force strafed the trucks and several of the foreign drivers died. Yet, it was the Slovenes who made the most use of the media. They provided film footage showing JNA tanks shredding makeshift barriers. No one remarked on the TO-seized foreign vehicles.²³

Within ten days it was over. The European Community negotiated a ceasefire, the Brioni agreement. All JNA would return to barracks. Croatia and Slovenia were to suspend their declarations of independence. Monitors from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would see to the disengagement of JNA and TO forces and oversee the Brioni agreement. The Slovenes did little to comply with the agreement and three months later were acting as an independent nation. Milosevic was prepared to allow Slovenia to depart the federation; it was Croatia he insisted stay (or at least the Serb-dominated portions). This was a critical mistake, as Admiral Branko Mamula pointed out: allowing Slovenia to go, while continuing the fight in Croatia, deprived the conflict of its Yugoslav character. Without Slovenia, the JNA officers felt they were fighting for a Greater Serbia. This would obviously bother the non-Serb JNA officers, who indeed would depart the ranks rapidly over the course of the summer.

The Croatian government had not tried to seize the border crossings although the *Sabor* started nonstop work creating a new Croatian government and legal structure.²⁴ Nonetheless, there was a surge in the fighting in three areas of Croatia during the Ten-Day War: Gospic, Banija (an area south of Zagreb which includes Sisak and Glina), and eastern Slavonia. The Marticevci²⁵ increased their area of control during July, for example, bringing in the Croatian Serbs of Glina who had remained loyal to the Croatian government until the declaration of independence.

Franjo Tudjman paid an informal visit to Bonn on 18 July where he met with Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher.²⁶ Germany and Austria wholeheartedly supported Slovene and Croatian independence even while Britain and the United States opposed Germany's efforts to grant recognition. Germany's support seemingly confirmed the Croatian Serbs' worst fears, Tudjman had reestablished the Ustasha government of World War II. Tudjman and fascism were inextricably intertwined in their minds. Germany itself was widely referred to as "the Fourth Reich,"²⁷ and German citizens were reviled. As usual, Tudjman did not allay Croatian Serb fears. In fact, he apparently came away encouraged from his visit (one of several).

Five days after Tudjman's return, the federal representatives met in Ohrid, Macedonia, to work out a solution and avoid an escalation of violence in Croatia. Tudjman departed the meeting abruptly, ending the last chance for an internal solution. Three days later there was a violent confrontation between the Croat National Guard (ZNG) and the JNA near Vukovar, eastern Slavonia. Vukovar was Croat, but the Vukovar *opstina*²⁸ had a slight Serb majority. Zagreb had dissolved the local council and appointed a governor. The Croatian Serbs rejected this arrangement. The ZNG decided to enforce the directive, and for the first time, the JNA clearly sided with the Croatian Serbs. Tudjman demanded the JNA return to barracks. In early August he announced a general mobilization and three weeks later (27 August) it was carried out. Coincident with this, the JNA Banja Luka Corps launched an attack from Bosnia against Croatian Posavina. Two days later the JNA laid siege to Vukovar. The war in Croatia ignited. And the world was introduced to a new term, "ethnic cleansing."

The first village subjected to ethnic cleansing was in the Krajina. The village of Kijevo was a Croat village surrounded by Serb territory. The citizens had barricaded themselves in since 1 March. Milan Martić issued a warning that they should evacuate or face the consequences. The tactic Martić followed was used by the paramilitaries in the months to come. On 26 August, the JNA pounded Kijevo for 12 hours with artillery. The next day, the Marticevci entered the village and burned the homes while the Croatians fled.²⁹ An artillery bombardment followed by infantry entering the village was subsequently refined with the killing and mutilation of key citizens by the paramilitary and gang rape of selected women. The purpose was to cause the citizens to flee, removing a potentially hostile population.

While both the Krajina and western Slavonia suffered fighting, by far the worst actions occurred in eastern Slavonia. Serb and Croat paramilitaries operated freely in the more ethnically mixed eastern Slavonia and they bear the responsibility for the most gruesome atrocities. These paramilitaries were ultranationalist and many were led by international criminals. Two examples are Zeljko Raznjatovic and Branimir Glavis. Raznjatovic was known as Arkan and led the Tigers in slaughtering Croats in eastern Slavonia (and later Bosnian Muslims in northeast Bosnia). Arkan was wanted by Interpol for running guns. After his heyday in the paramilitary, he sat in the Serbian parliament. Branimir Glavis led the Croat Glavas unit. He conducted ethnic cleansing in the vicinity of Osijek and even killed Croat police he felt were too friendly with the Serbs. He later became the mayor of Osijek.

The cities of Vukovar and Osijek suffered greatly due to their ethnic mix. As mentioned earlier, Borovo Selo, three miles north of Vukovar, had erupted in violence in May. The cities of Osijek and Vukovar had Croat majorities, while of the seven villages between, six had Serb majorities and one (Celje) had a Croat majority. The villages gradually barricaded themselves, encouraging the minority group to emigrate while discouraging the appearance of outsiders. There were occasionally outbreaks of violence through the summer and by August, Vukovar had shrunk from a population of 50,000 to 15,000.³⁰

On 14 September the JNA and Serb paramilitaries launched a ferocious attack on Vukovar. The assault included mortar, artillery, and airstrikes. Yet the siege dragged on into October, turning the town to rubble. The JNA performed surprisingly poorly. The Serbian defence minister had to send the commander of the First Army District to reorganize the forces and press home the siege. Despite General Panic's efforts, Vukovar did not fall until 18 November. By then, the town was an eerie copy of 1943 Stalingrad. The Croats of eastern Slavonia accused the Croatian government of abandoning them. The truth was, as bad as the JNA performed, Tudjman had even less to work with.

While Croatia took its turn as a battleground, the European Community tried to negotiate a settlement. In August 1991, the EC declared that any changes of internal or international borders by violence would not be accepted. Also, minority rights must be guaranteed.

The EC's Conference on Yugoslavia (ICY, to become ICFY — International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia) convened 7 September 1991 and was chaired by Britain's Lord Carrington. It got off to a bad start as both Tudjman and Milosevic took the opportunity to savage each other verbally in their speeches to the conference. Despite the poor start, the conference contended that Yugoslavia had to be dealt with as a whole. It offered international recognition to those republics that wished it, within a general overall settlement. The fly in the ointment was Germany, which pushed for recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. Once the conference granted recognition to the two Balkan republics, it would lose its power to compel

a solution. But with Germany pushing, the EC invited all the republics to apply for recognition subject to conditions laid out by Brussels.

Although there had been talk of deploying the Western European Union (WEU), the only forces the EC deployed to Croatia were the 150 (increased to 225 in September) diplomats and soldiers of the European Community Monitor Mission. Originally deployed to oversee the implementation of the Brioni agreement, they were continued in Croatia during the various autumn ceasefires to observe the withdrawal of the JNA. As the JNA showed little inclination to withdraw at that time, the ECMM mostly observed token withdrawals and reported violations of the ceasefires.³¹

While the UN did not want to interfere or undercut the EC's diplomatic efforts, the events of Vukovar were propelling it to action. In September President Stipe Mesic of the Yugoslav federal presidency sent a letter to the UN requesting peace-keeping forces. Other members of the presidency were not aware of the letter and disapproved when they found out. UN Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said the problem was Yugoslavia's internal affair. Regardless, the UN Security Council (UNSC) passed Resolution 713 on 25 September. An arms embargo was placed on the whole of Yugoslavia. The UN followed up by appointing former US diplomat Cyrus Vance as special envoy to Yugoslavia.³²

As the conflict continued into November, the UN moved to take the lead from the EC in mediating an end to the dispute. Cyrus Vance persuaded Milosevic, Tudjman, and the defence minister, General Veljko Kadijevic, to sign what became known as the Vance plan in Geneva, 23 November 1991. The agreement called for a general ceasefire and the suspension of all federal and republican laws in the disputed territories in favour of local self-rule until a solution could be found. The significant point was the disposition of 10,400 UN soldiers and 2,740 support personnel in three UN Protected Areas (UNPAs) in Croatia (the Krajina, western Slavonia, eastern Slavonia). The UN would be responsible for protecting civilians in the UNPAs. The JNA would withdraw to Serbia, although if individual JNA soldiers wished to remain, they could do so as unarmed civilians. The UN would disarm the militias in the UNPAs. Police forces in the sectors would return to their original ethnic composition.³³

Unfortunately, the plan left much unsaid. In order to get the agreement signed, many issues were put off to be solved by the future UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) commander. Even more disturbing, the ceasefire was again ignored. Durbrovnik, the jewel of the Mediterranean, suffered a ten-hour bombardment on 6 December.

Dubrovnik, which did not have a sizable Serb population to protect (but the Serbs there remained integrated and worked toward the city's defence), or a JNA barracks to defend, had come under siege 1 October. The JNA could have captured the city, but it did not want the inhabitants. It therefore aimed to drive the population from Dubrovnik. Internationally, the JNA was lambasted for the destruction of a World Heritage Site, but the HV bears some responsibility, too. The

HV encouraged the destruction of the historic city by setting up small artillery positions on the walls of the old town which fired at the JNA. Croatia did its best to exploit international opinion and it had an effect. Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), General John Galvin, prepared contingency plans to use NATO military force to stop the bombardment. Western leaders in the end declined to involve NATO, a move Ambassador Zimmermann had approved but later regretted. He now feels a strong stand at that time by NATO could have prevented later bloodshed in Bosnia.³⁴

The residents of Dubrovnik refused to surrender and by November the battle lines had become somewhat static with low-level activity. Thus the artillery bombardment in December embarrassed General Kadijevic who had just signed the Vance plan — which had included a ceasefire. Kadijevic called for an investigation as to who had authorized the attack on Dubrovnik.

In mid-December 1991, Germany announced it would unconditionally recognize Slovenia and Croatia on 15 January 1992. President Alija Izetbegovic panicked. His republic was the most ethnically mixed. If Croatia was internationally recognized before a peaceful solution was found to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, there would be civil war in Bosnia. At the time President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia, fearing that the same conflict would touch his ethnically mixed republic,³⁵ also opposed recognition. Izetbegovic travelled to Bonn to try to talk Kohl and Genscher out of recognizing Croatia and Slovenia. He warned Kohl that international recognition would strip Bosnia of the constitutional protection it still enjoyed from the territorial claims of Croatia and Serbia. Izetbegovic failed in his mission as did Perez de Cuellar who wrote Genscher warning that if Bonn recognized Croatia, war would break out in Bosnia.

War in Bosnia

From the beginning, the events in Croatia had an impact on Izetbegovic's unity government. The Bosnian SDS demanded autonomy for large areas in the north and west of Bosnia in May 1991, declaring that they would join those regions to the Krajina to form a new state. Three areas in this region were declared Serb autonomous areas. They claimed that Bosnian law and government did not apply to them. As was mentioned earlier, Radovan Karadzic collaborated with the Serbian minister of the interior, Mihalj Kertes, to deliver arms to the Bosnian Serb territorial defence units.³⁶

The JNA deployed into Bosnia from Serbia and Croatia. By autumn, it had occupied all the major communications centres in Bosnia. The JNA constructed heavy artillery positions around the major towns, including Sarajevo. When the fighting died down in Croatia in January and February, the JNA withdrew much of its heavy equipment into Bosnia with the UN's permission. Izetbegovic even allowed the JNA to seize military supplies from the Bosnian militias (what would become the ABiH) in an effort to keep the peace.³⁷

However, when the Bosnian parliament decided to vote on Bosnian sovereignty within the Yugoslav state in October, Karadzic marched his deputies out of the chamber. They relocated to Banja Luka and Karadzic formed a Bosnian Serb parliament with all the trappings of an independent state. President Izetbegovic wrote a letter to the UN requesting that it send peacekeepers and observers. This request puzzled the UN, which could see no conflict, turned down. The new Bosnian Serb parliament held a referendum asking the Bosnian Serbs if they wanted to remain in Yugoslavia. The majority did. In December the self-proclaimed parliament announced that the same day Bosnia was recognized as a sovereign state they would declare their own state.³⁸

Bosnia's constitution stated that all matters dealing with strategic issues, state sovereignty, or interethnic relations required a consensus among the three constituent nations of Bosnia. So by Bosnian law, with its historic precedents, a Bosnian vote on sovereignty would require in effect three votes of agreement, one from the Bosnian Muslims, one from the Bosnian Croats, and one from the Bosnian Serbs. A simple popular majority could not make a legal declaration, if one of the nations dissented.³⁹

The JNA started a military consolidation in Bosnia in early 1992. The town of Bosanski Brod lay in the Posavina Corridor, a northern territorial link between the Bosnian Serbs of the north and the east. Although the territory around Bosanski Brod was Bosnian Serb, the town itself was 50 percent Bosnian Croat. The Croats within the town received support from Croatia across the Sava river.

The real spur to war however was the 1 March referendum on independence. After recognizing Slovenia and Croatia, the EC invited Bosnia and Macedonia to apply for recognition. Bosnia had a referendum 29 February-1 March which was boycotted by a majority of Bosnian Serbs who were prepared for civil war. Sixty-four percent of the population voted in favour of sovereignty. The next day, the Bosnian Serbs set up roadblocks and sniper positions near the parliament in Sarajevo. Their *putsch* was aborted when thousands of demonstrators poured into the streets of Sarajevo.

The European Community, under the auspices of the International Conference on Yugoslavia, was making a last-ditch effort to avoid war. In late February the Bosnian Serbs complained that the EC's referendum would force them to leave Yugoslavia by the combined votes of the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims. There were a series of meetings in Brussels and Lisbon with the leaders of all three factions.⁴⁰ It was announced on 18 March that all sides had initialled a plan for the cantonization of Bosnia.⁴¹ Under pressure from hardliners in his government and probably feeling he would have international support, Izetbegovic rejected the agreement on 25 March, one day after a rejection of the plan by the Croatian Defence Council (HVO). (Ironically, the Vance-Own plan, signed by the Bosnian government exactly one year later, was quite similar.) The ICY meetings continued through April, but the three leaders reached no further agreement, doubtless in part because the EC had recognized Bosnia.⁴² The civil war had begun;

the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats consolidated territory, while the Bosnian government turned to the world press to secure international military intervention for their cause.

The Bosnian Serbs opened their military campaign on 27 March 1992. Their offensive was based on securing the strategic road network.⁴³ The Bosnian Serbs took cities along routes from Serbia to Bosnia and from Croatia to Bosnia. They immediately captured Foca, Cajnice, Visegrad, Zvornik, Bijeljina, Bosanski Brod, Derventa, and Kupres. After six weeks, the Bosnian Serbs controlled 60 percent of the country (they formed 31 percent of the population).⁴⁴

The Bosnian Serbs already controlled the countryside in these areas, but several cities along their routes contained significant numbers of Bosnian Muslims (or in the case of Bosanski Brod, Bosnian Croats) who supported the Bosnian government. The JNA would set up roadblocks and bombard the towns. Then, as in Croatia, the paramilitaries would be sent to mop up. The objective of the paramilitaries was to scare the Bosnian Muslims and Croats into fleeing. They engaged in selective killing to inspire fear and flight. They would go after the community's elite and those men of military age. Zvornik (which was hit in the initial campaign) and Bratunac (which endured Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Muslim sweeps) suffered some of the worst excesses of the war.⁴⁵

While many believed the paramilitaries were rogue elements, evidence indicates that some Serbs were closely connected to the JNA. The leaders of the paramilitaries such as Vojislav Seselj, Jovic, and Arkan were linked to Serbian nationalist political parties and the Serbian Orthodox church. The Serbian government had passed laws in 1991 giving the paramilitaries status in the JNA with related benefits. As seen earlier, the Croat paramilitaries enjoyed similar links. How then to explain the appalling atrocities that occurred in Croatia and Bosnia? There are three strands that increased the brutality of this war: the events of World War II, the media, and communist Yugoslav army doctrine.

The Yugoslavs not only dealt with a German occupation during World War II, but they had two civil wars on their territory, one that pitted Croat extremists against Croatian Serbs and Bosnian Serbs; and a second between the Chetniks (royalists led by Draza Mihailovic)⁴⁶ and the communist Partisans (led by Tito). Probably one million died in Yugoslavia during the war — most killed by fellow Yugoslavs, not Germans. The first conflict was roughly an ethnic one, the second was ideological and involved all the ethnic groups on both sides. But 50 years later, with strong nationalism, people could come up with specific examples of atrocities by the opposing factions. As an example of the integration of the sides, only in late 1941 did Bosnian Muslims join Tito in great numbers (before that they tended to favour the Ustasha government). By joining the Partisans, they endured terrible massacres from the Chetniks in the Foca-Cajnice region. At least 2,000 Bosnian Muslims were killed in August 1942, and another 9,000 in February 1943. Yet the Muslims of Zenica were part of the local Chetnik resistance, and by 1943, 8 percent of Mihailovic's soldiers were Muslim.

The town of Glina, where fighting had broken out the day after Croatia declared independence, was a Partisan stronghold in World War II. In 1941, 80 Serbs were massacred in Glina's Orthodox church. Later, 1,000 more were killed on the outskirts of the town.⁴⁷ Eastern Slavonia, which was the region that exhibited widescale atrocities first in 1991, had actually featured good relations between the Croats and Serbs during World War II. However, after Tito took power, he transplanted settlers from western Herzegovina (which had suffered horrific massacres) and Serbs from Knin (who had been persecuted by the Ustasha government). The initial violence that flared in eastern Slavonia in 1991 took place in the towns where the post-World War II immigrants had settled. Mostar, whose fighting would be internationally decried in 1993, had seen hundreds of Serbs shot and thrown into the Neretva river by the Ustasha.⁴⁸

In 1942, 60,000 Partisans were trapped on Kozara mountain in the Bosanska Krajina by Ustasha and German forces. The Germans launched a three-pronged offensive from Prijedor, Banja Luka, and Bosanska Gradiska. Thousands of Partisans were killed. The rest were shipped to the Jasenovac concentration camp in Croatia. The Muslim village of Kozarac is 15 miles from Kozara. During World War II its inhabitants were Ustasha supporters, at one point murdering some 500 Bosnian Serbs in the village in a day. When the BSA launched their six-week campaign in 1992, they surrounded Kozara which surrendered without a struggle. A massacre of hundreds of civilians ensued, and the village was levelled. The Muslims who escaped the massacre were forced to sign over their property and were shipped off to the Omarska and Manjaca concentration camps.⁴⁹

The media played its part in reigniting memories. Tito had tried to discourage a rekindling of the memories of World War II. After his death, communist leaders allowed the publication of uncritical works about the wartime resistance groups. Slobodan Milosevic himself in the late 1980s suggested a link between the Ustasha state and present Croat leaders.⁵⁰ Grandparents brought out their memories of the 1940s and daily reviled the other ethnic groups who had caused their suffering, thereby poisoning the younger generation. One Croatian confided to a Canadian officer that if Tito had lived another ten years, the World War II generation would have been dead, and the war impossible.⁵¹ As mentioned earlier, when there were outbreaks of fighting the media readily published the most gruesome pictures on their front pages and told outrageous stories, inflaming emotions. The following is a report from a British journalist:

'Do you see that field?' asks a Serbian woman, pointing to a sloping meadow by the Drina river. 'The jihad (Muslim Holy War) was supposed to begin there. Foca was going to be the new Mecca. There were lists of Serbs who were marked for death,' the woman says, repeating a belief held by townspeople and gunmen. 'My two sons were down on the list to be slaughtered like pigs. I was listed under rape.' None of them have seen the lists but this does not prevent anyone from believing in them unquestioningly.... Milorad Todovic, a bearded office worker from Belgrade ... a native of Foca, said he returned when he heard stories about the lists and says soon

Europe will have to join Serbia in the battle against Islam. 'Imagine, there were infants on that list.'⁵²

The people of Bosnia had seen film footage and heard of the atrocities in Croatia. They were prepared to believe the worst.

Finally, the doctrines inherent in the communist Yugoslav army should not be underestimated. Tito had brutally sovietized the areas he liberated in World War II, executing the bourgeoisie. He had engaged in actions that caused the death of civilians without remorse. It was justified by his goal of a communist Yugoslavia. There is ample evidence that those trained in communist warfare did not mind executing millions should it be necessary to reach their higher goal: witness Stalin's purge of the Kulaks in the Ukraine, or the Khmer Rouge who had started out with the plan to eliminate the opposition that snowballed into the destruction of one-third of Cambodia's population. Obviously, the warring factions in Yugoslavia were not engaged in class warfare, but the military had spent their careers imbibing communist military doctrine. It was not difficult to apply this to nationalist ends. The military's purpose was not ethnic warfare per se, but to eliminate a potentially hostile population from their new state.

The three factors combined produced ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, and mass graves.

Notes

1. Quotes by Canadian and American military personnel.
2. Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama*, 2d ed. (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p. 63.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
4. Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, rev. ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 32.
5. Crnobrnja, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 115.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 116, 118-20; Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 206.
7. Warren Zimmermann, "The Last Ambassador," in *Agenda 1996: Critical Issues in Foreign Policy* (New York: Foreign Affairs, 1996), p. 123.
8. Crnobrnja, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 95.
9. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 211-12.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 213. Crnobrnja, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 31.
11. Crnobrnja, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 89, 143, 148-50; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 43, 88-89.
12. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 72-73, 80-81.
13. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 6.

14. Croats, Bosnians, and Serbs all speak Serbo-Croatian. Serbo-Croatian can be written in either the Latin script (as was the tendency in western Yugoslavia) or the Cyrillic script (the tendency in eastern Yugoslavia).
15. The JNA had seized the Croat territorial defence unit's weapons after the election. Tudjman worked to build a paramilitary in the summer of 1990 but the Croats had to arm themselves from scratch. Expatriates from the US, Canada, Austria, and Germany provided money to Croatia to smuggle arms across the border of Austria and Hungary. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 152.
16. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 16-19; Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin, 1995), pp. 103, 107, 110.
17. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 145-46.
18. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 222-23.
19. Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 105, 146-47.
20. Two hundred Italian tourists got caught in the clash between the Croatian and Krajina Serb forces; *ibid.*, p. 148.
21. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 149; Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 156; Zimmermann, "Last Ambassador," pp. 126-27.
22. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 89.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 96; Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 161-62; Zimmermann, "Last Ambassador," p. 123; James Gow, "One Year of War in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report 2* (4 June 1993): 4.
24. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 165.
25. The territorial defence force of the Krajina.
26. Hans-Dietrich Genscher, *Erinnerungen* (Berlin: Wolf-Jobst-Siedler Verlag, 1995), p. 932. Translation provided by Reinhard Golks.
27. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 112.
28. An *opstina* is similar to a county.
29. Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 188-90.
30. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 106, 116; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, p. 194.
31. Sean M. Maloney, "Operation BOLSTER: Canada and the European Community Monitor Mission in the Balkans 1991-1994" (unpublished), pp. 4-7.
32. Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London. Background Brief, *The Former Yugoslavia: Chronology January 1990 - 31 October 1996*, November 1996, p. 1; Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, pp. 205-6.
33. Crnobrajna, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 208; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 135; Major General Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), pp. 151, 174; Headquarters United Nations Peace Forces, *Force Commander's End of Mission Report*, former Yugoslavia, January 1996, p. 1.
34. Zimmermann, "Last Ambassador," p. 126; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 136; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, pp. 201-04; Gow, "One Year in Bosnia," p. 7.

35. According to the 1994 census, Macedonia is 66.5 percent ethnic Macedonian, 22.9 percent ethnic Albanian, 4 percent Turkic, 2.3 percent Roma (Gypsies), and 2 percent Serb (the census also recorded Bosniacs, Bulgarians, Montenegrins, and Croats). Macedonian Census Report issued by Macedonian Statistical Office 28 December 1994.
36. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 224-25.
37. Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime* (London: Penguin, 1996), pp. 71-72; Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 224-25. The Bosnian Croats refused to cooperate and remained armed. Gow, "One Year in Bosnia," p. 8.
38. The EC had voted on 16 December to recognize those republics that met certain conditions on 15 January. This could have spurred the Bosnian Serb declaration.
39. Crnobrnja, *Yugoslav Drama*, p. 174; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 141.
40. Radovan Karadzic, Mate Boban, and Alija Izetbegovic represented the three factions. Robert J. Donia and John V.A. Fine, Jr., *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (London: Hurst and Co., 1994), p. 234.
41. According to *Vijesnik*, 52 districts would be Muslim dominated, 37 districts Serb dominated and 20 Croat. There would be a two-chamber parliament in which each ethnic group would have equal representatives. The central government would run finance and defence. The cantons would have considerable power to run education, police, and social security. "Bosnian Leaders Reach Agreement," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Daily Report* (hereafter RFE/RL), 19 March 1992, p. 6; "Update on the Yugoslav Area," *RFE/RL*, 20 March 1992, p. 6.
42. The EC voted on 6 April to recognize Bosnia the next day. The United States followed suit. Fighting proceeded to intensify. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, p. 233; "EC Mediated Bosnia Talks Continue," *RFE/RL*, 28 April 1992, p. 6; "Bosnia Update," *RFE/RL*, 29 April 1992, p. 5; Robert M. Hayden, "The Partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1990-1993," *RFE/RL Research Report 2* (28 May 1993): 7.
43. And indeed to understand the fighting in Bosnia for the next three years, look at the roads.
44. Honig and Both, *Srebrenica*, pp. 73, 77.
45. *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 75-76; Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 168, 185, 204.
46. It needs to be noted that there were other Chetnik groups that were not connected to Draza Mihailovic. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, pp. 176-77.
47. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 89-90, 92.
48. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, p. 176.
49. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 206-7.
50. Malcolm, *Bosnia*, p. 206, 214.
51. Military interviews.
52. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, p. 170.

2. *Send in the Blue Helmets*

UN envoy Cyrus Vance witnessed the signing of a fifteenth ceasefire between military representatives from Croatia and the Yugoslav army (JNA). The 3 January 1992 ceasefire was not a total success. Firing incidents continued and on 7 January the Yugoslav air force shot down a clearly marked European Community Monitor Mission (ECCM) helicopter killing the five monitors on board. Belgrade immediately suspended the air force commander, General Zvonko Jurjevic (as it happens a Croat). The EC talked of suspending its monitoring mission until the safety of its personnel was assured,¹ but the undeterred UN readied a 50-person advance team to be sent to Zagreb and Belgrade in preparation for the deployment of 13,140 UN peacekeepers.

The 50 unarmed observers of the United Nations Military Officers Yugoslavia (UNMLOY) arrived in mid-January. Australian Colonel John Wilson commanded a team that included three Canadians pulled from observation duty with UNTSO headquartered in Jerusalem. The observers were told to mediate between the warring factions if there were any flare-ups of violence and to provide communications support between the military headquarters of the JNA in Belgrade and the nascent Croatian army (HV) in Zagreb.² But the next problem to crop up was political.

Both President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Krajina Serb leader Milan Babic balked at the UN deployment. Tudjman demanded it be spelled out that he had constitutional authority over the sectors. The Vance plan stated that federal and republican laws were to be suspended in favour of self-rule until a political solution was found. It also stated that the police forces in the UN protected areas (UNPAs) would return to their original ethnic composition. Tudjman now wanted policing of the sectors under his sole authority. Neither of these points would have been agreed to by the Krajina Serbs or Belgrade. German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, stepped to the fore. He pressured Tudjman to back down on his demands.³ A sullen Tudjman faxed one line to Cyrus Vance, accepting unconditionally the Vance plan and the deployment of UN forces.⁴

Milan Babic sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali warning that UN troops could become casualties if they tried to deploy. Babic was initially backed by the JNA commander in the Krajina, General Ratko Mladic. President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia acted to re-exert control over his former minion by applying pressure to the Krajina Serb elect. He publicly denounced the former Knin dentist. This was followed by a meeting of moderate Krajina Serb representatives in Glina in mid-February who voted to remove Babic. Babic denounced the vote from Knin. Four days later, the minister of the interior, Milan Martic, ordered Krajina Serb militia units to subordinate themselves to the JNA. When the forces failed to respond, Martic was removed by Babic who had now lined up his support. Slavko Ozegovic became the new minister of the interior and a parliamentary vote confirmed Babic as president.⁵ But Milosevic's pressure did the trick: on 22 February (one day after the UN Security Council voted to send 13,140 troops to Croatia) Babic announced he would accept UN forces in the Krajina.⁶

The UN selected Indian Lieutenant-General Satish Nambiar as force commander for the UNPROFOR operation. The deputy commander would be French Major-General Philippe Morillon and the chief of operations Canadian Brigadier-General Lewis MacKenzie. The three met in New York in March, where they were told their headquarters would be located in Sarajevo and the UN logistics base would be in Banja Luka. The generals immediately objected to the locations. It was obvious the direction Bosnia was heading, which meant their headquarters and logistics base would be sitting in a war zone. As the UN was futilely hoping their small presence would deter Bosnia from civil conflict, the three were told Sarajevo was non-negotiable, but they would allow some leeway for the logistics base.⁷

It was decided there would be four UN sectors: Sector South, Sector North (the Krajina would be divided into two sectors due to its size), Sector West (carved from part of western Slavonia) and Sector East (eastern Slavonia). They would be overseen by 12 UN infantry battalions and two engineer regiments. Canada volunteered 1,200 soldiers, military observers, police, and personnel for the UN headquarters staff. The Canadian infantry battalion would come from Germany and be deployed to Sector West, under the overall command of Argentine Brigadier-General Carlos Maria Zabala. The Canadian Combat Engineer Regiment would support mine-clearing in all four sectors.⁸

The three generals arrived in Belgrade 8 March 1992. They visited officials in both Belgrade and Zagreb before arriving in Sarajevo on 13 March. Croatian officials blatantly admitted to MacKenzie that they would retake the UNPAs at the first opportunity regardless of the UN presence — not the most auspicious start. Logistical difficulties ensued as the commanders had to fly continually between the three capital cities as the forces arrived, a task that would become nearly impossible by April.⁹

Operation Harmony

A warning order for deployment was received at Canada's two bases in Germany (Lahr and Baden-Söllingen) in the early hours of 22 February. LCol Michel Jones initiated a contingency plan that had been drawn up in the weeks before. His approximately 850-strong battalion would be formed around the 1st Battalion, Royal 22nd Regiment (1R22eR — the Van Doos) but heavily supplemented from 3rd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (3RCR) and the 8th Canadian Hussars. Mike Gauthier would command the 4th Combat Engineer Regiment, approximately 250 strong.¹⁰ The short official notice meant frantic haste to train, perform medical checks, and prepare the vehicles for deployment.¹¹ Unlike later units, the first battalion to participate in what would be coded Operation Harmony had to paint their vehicles white, their helmets blue, and add UN insignia to various items.

An advance team was sent to Belgrade on 13 March to receive two days of briefings from Lieutenant-General Nambiar and other members of the headquarters staff. Aside from the Canadians, three countries would deploy to Sector West: Argentina (who would be north of the Canadians), Jordan, and Nepal (both located south of the Canadians). After two days in Belgrade, the advance party scouted Sector West where low-level fighting had continued since the ceasefire.¹² The advance party gave the Canadians a more definitive idea of what to bring. Whereas the UN had told each battalion to bring 15 armoured personnel carriers (APCs), the Canadians felt this grossly inadequate and decided to deploy 83. Aside from the APCs, LCol Jones wanted more vehicles, weapons, and ammunition. None of the UN estimates were felt adequate. The UN balked at the Canadians' request, basically because it did not want to pay for it. Ottawa agreed to absorb the cost and told the battalion to bring their additional equipment.¹³

The first of four contingents of combat engineers departed Lahr 24 March. Their train and the three that followed received special clearance to travel through Germany, Austria, and Slovenia, to Croatia. The engineers established their headquarters at Daruvar, an eerily quiet town that housed a JNA camp. Daruvar was north of the confrontation line between the Croats and Croatian Serbs. Artillery fire from the front line could be heard by the camp's residents. Many in the town were glad to see them, feeling that the Canadians' presence meant peace was at hand. One woman promised to bake pastries for the peacekeepers on a regular basis. Within a week the unit was established but had their hands full, first clearing the site that was strewn with waist-high garbage and had catfish swimming in the sinks (the HV's ad hoc fish farm) and then preparing buildings for 1R22eR headquarters.¹⁴

The engineers were at their UN-assigned duties in Sector East and Sector West by April, teaching the UN infantry units about mines, performing mine-clearing, removing rubble, and rebuilding roads and bridges. Gauthier planned that eventually each warring faction would clear their own minefields with UN assistance.¹⁵

Ninety engineers were sent to assist the Jordanians in establishing their camp. Ninety more were sent to Vukovar in Sector East patrolled by Belgian and Russian troops. The JNA were everywhere in Sector East and were hardly rushing to evacuate as agreed in the Vance plan, nor did they pass control of the sector to the UN. Aside from daily ceasefire violations, the city of Osijek (30 km northwest of Vukovar) was subject to sporadic shelling. Vukovar itself was rubble, only 30 percent of its original buildings remaining. Due to the fighting in Sarajevo, Vukovar lost its communications to UNPROFOR headquarters, although the Canadians did receive a supply convoy from Daruvar each week. Despite the tense situation, the engineers could not resist challenging the Russians to a game of field hockey. The Canadians trounced the Russians, raising their own morale, anyway.¹⁶

The infantry battalion to be named CANBAT 1 also travelled by train to Croatia. The first contingent arrived on 8 April and soldiers continued to arrive daily for the next two weeks. The danger of the situation became apparent the first day. A convoy driving to the camp unknowingly used an entrance that had not been checked by the combat engineers. The lead driver spotted something on the road, stopped and notified the commanding officer. It turned out to be three mines that would have caused considerable damage to the convoy.¹⁷ On 13 April the camp was shelled by heavy mortars and artillery. The companies scrambled for their APCs, but six soldiers were wounded slightly. The Canadians quickly decided to build bunkers. Each sector at this time was experiencing 100 to 200 ceasefire violations a day. It was not long after the peacekeepers arrived that both the HV and Krajina Serb forces (RSK) saw the advantage of digging in close to the UN camps for protection. This served to bring retaliatory fire on the UN battalions.¹⁸

In Sector West each side was solidifying its hold on territory. Opposing ethnic families were evicted and then their homes destroyed. If the families would not leave, they would be destroyed with their property. The carcasses of livestock littered the countryside. The Canadians needed to establish working relations with the warring factions, and start their duties. The UN had decided that rather than patrolling a ceasefire line (à la Cyprus) the peacekeepers would maintain 24-hour checkpoints and observation posts (OPs) scattered through the disputed area. They would operate patrols through the woods and hills of Sector West and seal the sector to weapons supplies. The police could carry sidearms. Everything else had to be taken out of the sector or placed in storage under UN supervision.¹⁹

CANBAT's first job was to perform reconnaissance missions in Sector West to establish where the ceasefire boundaries were as the line had moved since the Vance plan was signed. The areas where the most change occurred were known as "Pink Zones" and caused the biggest headaches for the UN. According to the Vance plan the sector boundaries were to be finalized by General Nambiar following consultation with both sides. The Croats were adamant there was to be no increase in territory for the Croatian Serbs from November, when the plan was signed. Belgrade was equally adamant that Croatian Serb territory would not be given over to Croatia. While the UN negotiated the issue, the ECMM sent teams

to the pink zones (the UN technically did not have a mandate to operate there) to ensure some protection for the population by holding soldiers in the area accountable and to tell the United Nations of specific problem areas so they could exert pressure. In Sector West, CANBAT located the current ceasefire boundaries, noted the location of equipment on both sides and reported any military activity to the UN Military Observers (UNMOs). The UNMOs would then deal with any violations.²⁰

When the Canadians began discussions with the Croats and Croatian Serbs they had first to listen to a history lesson that began with the Middle Ages and concluded with every wrong done to the speaker's family by the opposite faction in the past 50 years. It did not matter how many times a Canadian officer met with the same individual, the Serb or Croat wanted to repeat the history. And, of course, each negotiation session became yet another excuse to bring out the favoured Balkan alcoholic drink, *slivovitz*. One Canadian officer said he attended 25 negotiation meetings and alcohol was served at each one and frequently the negotiators were already "under the influence." A member from the Bosnian contingent (where the same problem was encountered) commented it was best to have the meetings early in the morning. Each officer had to consider whether he preferred to deal with a section commander who was drunk or one with a hangover.²¹

Drinking and firearms went together in Croatia. The Canadians frequently encountered drunken soldiers from both sides who would fire bursts into the air, or take aim at any passerby (particularly if they sported UN badges); one young drunk thought it amusing to threaten a couple of peacekeepers with grenades. Sergeant Sam Pengelly thought of the soldiers as "yahoos with a belly of beer — loose cannons in an already chaotic civil war."²²

Many found the convoluted wording of the UN rules of engagement confusing. Typically, the NATO countries would interpret each UN ruling and send out guidance to their soldiers. Starting in September 1992, each Canadian soldier was given a laminated card with the rules of engagement.²³

Canadians could fire their weapons:

1. To defend themselves, other UN personnel, or persons and areas under their protection against direct attack, acting under the order of the senior rank at the scene.
2. To resist attempts by force to prevent CCUNPROFOR from discharging their duties.
3. To resist deliberate military or paramilitary incursions into the UN protected areas or safe areas.

Aggressiveness in interpreting those rules in the field environment varied. One Battle Group commander emphasized that an individual's decisions could not be regulated. A soldier has to be well-trained in what to do, and know he will be backed up by his superiors. This commander's policy was to return fire if fired upon. He informed his contingent neither to escalate nor to bluff. Another Battle Group commander pointed out that the UN allowed soldiers to fire to protect

property whereas Canadian law did not. Policy differed with each regiment. Many complained that the rules were too restrictive, especially when it came to responding to heavy weapons. When under mortar or artillery fire, the soldiers needed to respond quickly if they were to protect themselves, but there were often long delays as their requests went up the chain of command. Similar problems would occur in 1994-95 when units asked for NATO close air support (CAS).²⁴

The Opening of Sarajevo Airport

UNPROFOR headquarters was established at the PTT building on the main road on the west side of Sarajevo. It was a five-story building connected to a three-story building, with a basement with a bunker and an underground parking lot. Some 800 metres west of the PTT building was an unoccupied old folks home christened the Rainbow Hotel, which housed many of the UN's personnel.²⁵

Fighting broke out along the Neretva river in Herzegovina between Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats the week of 22 March (Bosnian Muslim paramilitaries were assisting the Croats). On 27 March the Bosnian Serbs launched their military campaign to secure the strategic road network. The EC was to recognize Bosnia on 7 April. Three days before, Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and JNA commander Colonel-General Kukanjac initiated fighting in Sarajevo.²⁶ Karadzic had apparently convinced the JNA commander to shell the city at night, feeling it would force President Alija Izetbegovic to capitulate. By 10 April the shelling began over the PTT building. Five days later the UN suffered its first hijacking.

The United Nations had absolutely no mandate to operate in Sarajevo. Yet the conflict caused all sides to ask for humanitarian assistance. When the UN provided that assistance, the opposing side would accuse it of collaboration. UN New York urged its commanders to encourage negotiation between the sides. Canadian Brigadier-General MacKenzie, after several efforts, became convinced that Izetbegovic had no desire to find accommodation. The president was counting on international military intervention in favour of the Bosnian government. Certainly his acceptance of the Lisbon agreement (the cantonization plan) on 18 March and then his rejection of it a week later did not bode well.

In April, Bosnia's interior ministry supposedly issued an official directive ordering the JNA out of Bosnia and demanding they leave their weapons and equipment behind. The Bosnian ministry later denied they had issued the order but federal defence minister, General Blagoje Adzic, wrote to Izetbegovic on 27 April informing him that the army had no intention of complying. He stated that the JNA's departure could escalate the violence.²⁷ But it quickly became apparent to the JNA that they did need to evacuate their vulnerable positions in Sarajevo and they turned to the UN for assistance.

Izetbegovic stepped off the plane from Lisbon on 3 May and walked into the arms of the JNA. The federal soldiers took him, his daughter Sabina Berberovic, and a bodyguard to Lukavica barracks, a JNA camp east of Sarajevo airport. Kukanjac's forces were under siege in eastern Sarajevo. The nascent Bosnian government army (ABiH) had attacked the JNA officers' club and killed three officers. The JNA responded by shelling the presidency and the mayor's office. This in turn caused the ABiH to lay siege to Kukanjac's headquarters.

Lord Carrington's personal envoy, Colm Doyle (Irish Army), and MacKenzie were asked to mediate. It was decided that Izetbegovic and company would be exchanged for Kukanjac and his 400 JNA. MacKenzie, using UN APCs, escorted Izetbegovic and his daughter to Kukanjac's headquarters. In the midst of this, Vice-President Ejup Ganic informed UNPROFOR headquarters that the deal was off. A confused MacKenzie double-checked with the ABiH commander laying the siege and with Izetbegovic. Both told him to go ahead with the exchange.

The JNA evacuated the barracks and loaded into 20 trucks. The convoy had covered about a kilometre when an ABiH unit appeared and opened fire on the convoy. MacKenzie jumped from his APC and ran back along the line. The ABiH soldiers were confiscating weapons. MacKenzie grabbed two ringleaders and brought them to Izetbegovic. While Izetbegovic was ordering the soldiers to leave the convoy alone, some 200 JNA soldiers were taken prisoner, and all the JNA weapons and equipment confiscated. Six or seven JNA officers were dead.

Izetbegovic was returned to the presidency and the remaining JNA soldiers were brought to Lukavica barracks. The UN soldiers had several dangerous delays as many of the Serbs blamed the ambush on them. The next day 180 JNA were exchanged for Izetbegovic's bodyguard (who narrowly escaped execution). Apparently 13 of the JNA prisoners wished to join the ABiH and remained with the government forces. This incident caused much of the Bosnian Serb ill will toward the UN. Both BBC World Service correspondent Misha Glenny and MacKenzie were sure it was Ganic who gave the order to attack the convoy, blatantly ignoring a UN-EC guaranteed truce and exchange.²⁸

Milosevic ordered the JNA out of Bosnia on 4 May. Natives could remain. The JNA proceeded to strip or destroy all defence infrastructure from non-Bosnian Serb areas. Of the JNA themselves, about 14,000 retreated to Serbia and Montenegro. The 75,000 who remained were reorganized as the Bosnian Serb army (BSA) complete with the JNA's heavy weapons. The moderate Kukanjac was sacked.²⁹ The BSA was to be commanded by General Ratko Mladic, former JNA commander in the Krajina. Milosevic would continue to support the Bosnian Serbs but had to be less visible as he came under international scrutiny. That meant reduced supplies and reinforcements to the BSA.³⁰

UNPROFOR planned to evacuate Sarajevo by early May. The peacekeepers were spending an inordinate amount of time in bomb shelters and communication with the deployed units in Croatia was increasingly difficult. LCol Michel Jones

sent trucks from Daruvar to remove the Canadian equipment from Sarajevo. Two hundred UN personnel left for Belgrade on 15 May. One hundred personnel commanded by Colonel John Wilson and Colonel Kerri Hogland remained to maintain the UN presence in Sarajevo.

Twelve days later the first of several infamous breadline/marketplace attacks occurred. Seventeen people were killed while they lined up for bread in Sarajevo. The Bosnian presidency claimed it was a Bosnian Serb army mortar attack. The BSA claimed the ABiH had initiated a setup with explosives. The UN investigators were puzzled by a couple of things. The street had been blocked off just before the incident. Then the people had been allowed to enter the square and the media appeared, but kept their distance. Of course after the attack occurred the media were “up-close and personal.” When the UN took measurements from the mortar impacts it led them to the confrontation line, so no definitive blame could be placed.

World opinion decried the carnage in Bosnia and demanded the guilty be punished. Serbia and Montenegro, seeing which way the wind was blowing vis à vis recognition, had approved a new constitution on 27 April proclaiming the sovereign state of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). However, due to the JNA’s support of the Bosnian Serbs the UN denounced the FRY as the aggressor nation in the Bosnian conflict. On 30 May UN Security Council Resolution 757 imposed a wide range of economic and political sanctions against the FRY.³¹

There were further calls for humanitarian aid to Bosnia, in particular Sarajevo. At first Boutros-Ghali proceeded cautiously. He warned against the UN committing peacekeeping forces to a security operation in Bosnia. He was worried about a personnel shortage and budget shortfall.³² There had already been some seven broken ceasefires in Sarajevo, which meant in effect the UN would be entering a war zone, not a classic peacekeeping situation. Nonetheless, the UN had the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs sign the Sarajevo airport agreement on 5 June.³³

The undersigned have agreed that:

- 1) The ceasefire declared for 1800 hours on 1 June 1992 in and around Sarajevo is reaffirmed. The ceasefire will be monitored by UNPROFOR, and the parties will provide liaison officers and escorts to assist in its verification.
- 2) To provide physical guarantees that fire will not be brought to bear against the airport, flying aircraft, or aircraft on the ground they agree that:
 - a) All anti-aircraft weapon systems will be withdrawn from positions from which they can engage the airport and its air approaches and be placed under UNPROFOR supervision.
 - b) All artillery, mortar, ground-to-ground missile systems, and tanks within range of the airport will be concentrated in areas agreed by UNPROFOR and subject to UNPROFOR observation at the firing line.

These measure will be established prior to the opening of the airport.

- 3) The parties undertake not to attempt to interfere in any way with the free movement of UNPROFOR-supervised air traffic into and out of Sarajevo Airport. such traffic will consist of:
 - a) Humanitarian and resupply missions.
 - b) UN and EC or related missions.
 - c) Official missions.
- 4) UNPROFOR will establish a special regime for the airport, and will supervise and control its implementation and functioning. This regime will be established at the earliest possible date after the approval of all concerned, with preparatory work beginning immediately after signature. All parties undertake to facilitate these processes, together with the handover of the airport to UNPROFOR.
- 5) Facilities, organization and security inside the airport, including perimeter security, will be supervised and controlled by UNPROFOR with its civil, military, and police personnel.
- 6) UNPROFOR will control all incoming personnel, aid, cargo, and other items to ensure that no warlike materials are imported, and that the airport's opening is not otherwise abused in any way. The parties' humanitarian organizations will each establish an office at the airport to facilitate UNPROFOR's related tasks.
- 7) All local civilian personnel required for the operation of the airport will be employed on a basis of non-discrimination, and will be supervised and controlled by UNPROFOR. To the extent possible, such personnel will comprise the current employees of the airport.
- 8) Humanitarian aid will be delivered to Sarajevo and beyond, under the supervision of the UN, in a non-discriminatory manner and on a sole basis of need. The parties undertake to facilitate such deliveries, to place no obstacle in their way, and to ensure the security of those engaged in this humanitarian work.
- 9) To ensure the safe movement of humanitarian aid and related personnel, security corridors between the airport and the city will be established and will function under the control of UNPROFOR.
- 10) This agreement shall be without prejudice to the settlement of constitutional questions now under negotiation; and to the safety and security of all inhabitants of Sarajevo and its surrounding area.

The UN had its first mandate to operate in Bosnia. It would secure the airport, a ten-kilometre safety zone around the airport, and a corridor into Sarajevo to transport food and supplies. UNPROFOR would control the airport and land corridors, UNHCR would see to the technical aspects of distributing aid. Now what was needed was a ceasefire to last long enough for the UN to open the airport. Shortly after the agreement was signed, fighting escalated around the airport as the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian government sought control before the UN arrived.

MacKenzie suggested the Canadians in Sector West be used for the airport operation until the UN could send the additional 1,000 peacekeepers needed by the agreement, with himself in command of the operation. This was approved by Nambiar and MacKenzie sent a warning order to LCol Michel Jones in Sector

West. Jones was to report to UNPROFOR headquarters in Belgrade with a reconnaissance team. MacKenzie sent a request to Canada for additional TOW missiles as he was worried about the number of tanks around the airport. The UN had told MacKenzie he could bring the vehicles but not the missiles. They also said he could bring mortars but only illuminating rounds, not high-explosive ammunition. Conveniently, Canada sent both missiles and explosive mortar rounds. Even so, in Ottawa cabinet worried about the lack of firepower. MacKenzie assured them this was enough. If he arrived with too much force, it could doom the mission.³⁴ Some complained in Ottawa that this was not traditional peacekeeping. The Canadians were entering a war zone where they were outmanned and outgunned. If the BSA turned against the UN, the Canadians would have no option but a humiliating surrender.³⁵ MacKenzie's view prevailed.

The advance force arrived in Sarajevo on 10 June. A couple of days later they were joined by six French technicians and 30 French marine commandos. The team placed two liaison officers at Lukavica barracks with the BSA and two liaison officers were placed at the presidency to see that the ceasefire was enacted. The BSA and Bosnian government in turn sent liaison officers to the PTT building. Their work was cut out for them. Heavy fighting continued in the airport suburb of Dobrinja. And MacKenzie had another problem. The public was turning against the UN. Bosnian government supporters accused the UN of ferrying the BSA around for a price. But more problematically, UN personnel had reacted passively to warring faction attacks on their vehicles. In one case, UN peacekeepers had allowed themselves to be stripped of their weapons by the BSA. MacKenzie warned that any attack on a UN convoy would be answered in kind by the UN mandate that allowed peacekeepers to fire in self-defence.³⁶

Jones' reconnaissance team discovered that the airport runways and buildings were in good shape, although most of the equipment to service the aircraft had been damaged. The party tried to raise the UN flag at the airport on 20 June, but had to retreat from the heavy sniper fire. Three Canadians were wounded during the airport evacuation when mortar rounds landed near their jeep. Jones returned to Croatia to prepare his forces for the move to Sarajevo while MacKenzie searched for an ever elusive ceasefire.

The static situation was broken by President François Mitterrand of France who arrived in Sarajevo on the emotional date of 28 June, the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. Mitterrand walked through the streets of Sarajevo to let the residents know Europe had not forgotten them. He met with President Izetbegovic in the morning and with Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic at the airport before departing for Split. In a gesture intended to impress, Karadzic told Mitterrand they were about to hand the airport over to the UN. MacKenzie quickly took advantage of his opening. Thirty UN peacekeepers were sent to the airport that evening. At 1815 the next day, the last of the BSA departed the airport and Commandant Hauben ran up the UN flag an hour later. At 2000 the first aircraft landed. RCMP Michael O'Rielly and his team of civilian police would verify the deliveries

with representatives from the three factions. The French had reacted so quickly, the inspection team was not prepared. The aircraft was sealed until morning, then its six and half tonnes of supplies unloaded.³⁷ Four aircraft landed 30 June and unloaded. In the afternoon, four UN personnel were wounded by a sniper's bullet which entered a French APC where the bulletproof glass met the armour plating. Airport operations were suspended until the fighting ceased. The opening and closing of the airport based on the level of warring faction activity would be the norm for the Airbridge Operation for the next three years.

As the Canadian contingent prepared to leave Daruvar, the ABiH were taking the opportunity to reinforce Dobrinja. The BSA had only concentrated about 20 percent of their heavy weapons. At 0400 30 June 1992, 274 troops led by LCol Michel Jones left Daruvar in 100 vehicles. They travelled with APCs at the front and back of the convoy equipped with .50-calibre machine guns; in addition there were anti-sniper teams and TOW antitank missiles. BSA liaison officers travelled with the Canadians to smooth their way through the numerous checkpoints. The convoy was stopped by local fighting near Jajce, but the real problem was a BSA checkpoint some 120 kilometres northeast of Sarajevo.

At this Bosnian Serb roadblock, Jones encountered a drunken BSA commander who refused to allow the convoy through. The Canadians retreated 28 kilometres and awaited the second convoy that had left Daruvar the evening of 30 June. In the morning, with the convoys now joined, Jones led them back to the roadblock. The BSA commander was now sober, but still declined to allow them through despite the guarantees of free passage by the Bosnian Serb liaison officers. While Jones was negotiating their passage, snipers let off shots near the convoy. Jones immediately ordered the deployment of his anti-sniper teams and the armoured TOW vehicles. He informed the BSA officer he had 30 minutes to allow the Canadians through. When it appeared the commander was calling for reinforcements, Jones said he had five minutes to let them through. After the five minutes, he ordered the convoy forward and pushed through the roadblock.³⁸

As soon as the first convoy arrived at Sarajevo airport the peacekeepers stationed APCs around the airport perimeter with TOW and mortar support, began digging trenches, clearing mines, and building a bunker for ammunition. In the weeks that followed they would tape windows (to prevent them from shattering), sandbag positions, set up command posts, and establish radio communications. The Canadians were supposed to have been billeted at the Holiday Inn, but the hotel was making excellent money from journalists and wanted to charge the UN \$38 per night per soldier, contrary to the agreement made with the Bosnian government. Instead CANBAT was sent to an old JNA barracks one kilometre north of the PTT building they dubbed Beaver Camp.³⁹

Almost upon arrival, the Canadians were subjected to sniper fire. While having lunch with two friends, Captain Michael Rouleau of the Royal Canadian Horse Artillery heard a shot. He was hit in the face by a fragment from the ricocheting sniper's bullet. The medics were able to remove the fragment from under his

scalp and he shortly returned to duty. That same day, two other Canadians suffered minor wounds from snipers. A few days later Major Peter Devlin and seven soldiers escorted UN vehicles to Sarajevo airport in two heavy, dual-tracked vehicles. As the eight drove back to Beaver Camp, they came under fire from a couple of snipers. Two of Devlin's men located the snipers in a second-story window some 200 metres away and rapidly returned fire.⁴⁰

The Bosnian snipers would hide in abandoned buildings and grassy areas and take potshots at the UN peacekeepers and relief workers. Much of the sniping was an attempt at intimidation. The snipers on all sides were a far cry from trained professionals. They would move from window to window in the high-rise buildings, and were unaware of how to use shadows. Indicative of this amateur status, by far the best ABiH sniper was a Bosnian Serb woman who had been an Olympian athlete rather than a professional soldier. By 6 July the French and Canadians deployed anti-sniper teams. They first went after snipers in Dobrinja with good results. The Canadians would wait until the sniper sighted them, then wave to let the sniper know they were on to him. If the sniper proceeded to shoot at the UN, the anti-sniper would fire one well-aimed bullet that invariably found its mark.⁴¹

Snipers were not the only danger. Corporal Dennis Reid jumped on a landmine after attaching razor wire to a fence at Beaver Camp. The mine, about the size of a hockey puck, was hidden in the ground and had escaped detection in an earlier mine sweep. The explosion blew Reid into the air and he landed on his back. His right foot had to be amputated at a Sarajevo hospital. The RCR soldier was flown to the hospital in Lahr, Germany, on 11 July where his parents joined him.⁴²

Aside from airport security, the Canadians performed VIP escort and provided security for UNHCR convoys. LCol Michel Jones led a convoy to the Bosnian presidency on 11 July to negotiate a safe passage for a relief convoy to Dobrinja. Captain Guy Belisle was in the convoy when he spotted two wounded women about a kilometre from the presidency building. His APC was given permission to stay behind. Sergeant Mario Forest volunteered to get the women and asked Belisle to cover him. Outside the APC, Forest could see the wounded women were beside two dead men. There were three armed Bosnian government police nearby. Forest called to them to assist him to get the women to cover, but they refused. Forest crossed several metres of sniper-riddled roadway to reach the women but they did not want to move from the bodies, apparently fearing they would be shot on their run to the APC. After much cajoling, Forest convinced the first woman, wounded in the leg, to crawl to the APC, with him beside her. After she was safely inside the APC, Forest crossed back to the second woman and talked a lot and loudly. "But," said Forest, "she didn't want to move. She had been shot in the stomach. So I grabbed her by the hands and tried to put her inside the vehicle. At this point, the Bosnian *policia* helped me to put her inside the vehicle."

The Van Doos took the women to the hospital but she refused to enter that particular one, so they backtracked 200 metres to another hospital. Six days later Belisle and Forest visited the middle-aged woman at the hospital and learned she was Aida Kekic, a teacher. Kekic immediately recognized the soldiers and kissed

them. With tears she said, "If it wasn't for you, I'd be dead. You saved my life."⁴³ Belisle and Forest would later receive the Medal of Bravery for their actions, Canada's third highest citation.⁴⁴

While Belisle and his men were helping the Sarajevans, LCol Jones proceeded to the presidency where the UN reached an agreement for access with the warring factions. Dobrinja, a mostly Bosnian Muslim suburb of Sarajevo had been cut off from the capital since April by the BSA. The agreement guaranteed safe passage of relief convoys from the airport along a 6.5-kilometre route to Sarajevo's centre, and a six-hour truce on 12 July between the BSA and ABiH/HVO so food could be delivered to the 30,000 to 45,000 people trapped in Dobrinja.

The following day Major Peter Devlin led the convoy of 40 Canadians in their eight APCs guarding the relief trucks carrying powdered milk, canned beef, and other food. The trip to Dobrinja was tense as the warring factions had mobilized additional forces along the route, expecting the other side to try something. Devlin requested reserve UN forces from the airport be interspersed between the factions. After negotiations, the sides cooled down and allowed the convoy to proceed.

Devlin sent Captain Guy Belisle and Captain Chris Juneau into the wartorn streets of Dobrinja ahead of the convoy as liaison officers. They walked down the street unarmed, waving a United Nations flag. Belisle commented, "There was nobody around, it looked like the end of the world, everything was destroyed." The people slowly emerged from their homes. They were nervous but happy to receive the food. The children looked terrified, though. "They looked like they were starving." The convoy unloaded their supplies and returned to base at the airport.⁴⁵

Despite the humanitarian missions, the Canadians did not feel overly popular with the Sarajevo population. The local media, rather than praising Sergeant Forest's rescue, had condemned the UN for not retrieving other victims (they were dead, a fact not mentioned). A Canadian APC was fired at by an antitank grenade while driving down a Sarajevo street. The grenade bounced off the APC and exploded in the street, killing three bystanders. The attacks on the Canadians became more blatant; on 17 July the Van Doo operation centre came under fire from a heavy machine gun and more than 30 rounds penetrated the building. Two days later Beaver Camp came under mortar fire and a few buildings began to burn. The populace seemed to have high expectations of the UN. When the UN did not deliver, they were increasingly frustrated. MacKenzie has stated that he believes the Bosnian government failed to explain the UN's mandate. But in a situation where an active war was occurring, and the UN was trying to tread the middle ground, the peacekeepers were an easy and visible scapegoat for the population's woes.⁴⁶

Major John Collins of the 8th Canadian Hussars led 23 Canadians on a reconnaissance mission to deliver food aid to an area inhabited by Bosnian Serbs on 20 July. The UN had negotiated for a week to allow the convoy into the Bosnian Serb sector of Sarajevo. "But right at the eleventh hour the Bosnian side said they

weren't happy with the route and asked us to change it. At that time all our orders and plans had been put in place so we decided to try to go the initial route and liaise with the local commanders on the ground," said Collins. When they reached an ABiH checkpoint the officer in charge consulted with his superiors and told the Canadians they could not cross. The Canadians decided to withdraw and try another route. However, 100 to 200 ABiH troops refused to allow them to withdraw, aiming their rifles and even a rocket launcher at the UN convoy (which consisted of three APCs and four jeeps). The ABiH accused the Canadians of smuggling arms to the Bosnian Serbs.

In a building at the checkpoint Major Collins began negotiations with the officer in charge and then the next level commander arrived quite "hot under the collar. It took quite a bit of talk to try to calm him down." The Bosnians agreed the Canadians could leave if they allowed their vehicles to be inspected, a demand that contravened UNPROFOR's standard operating procedure (SOP). Nonetheless, the Canadians acquiesced. "We opened up every last vehicle, we let them look in every nook and cranny inside the vehicle to show that we were not in fact transporting anything that we don't normally transport." Collins continued, "that didn't satisfy them. They believed that whatever we had in the vehicles for self-defence we were going to give to the other side. And basically they were so nervous, so uptight that we were getting nowhere."

MacKenzie became involved and called the Bosnian presidency. When he did not get an immediate response, he drove down to the presidency and went into the office of Bosnian defence minister, Jerko Doko. Meanwhile, Collins had worked his way up to the head of military police for Sarajevo. The police chief brought Collins to the defence minister and they arrived at the office to meet MacKenzie and Doko. MacKenzie demanded that the Canadians be released. Doko said the vehicles were full of Yugoslavian ammunition being smuggled to the Bosnian Serbs. MacKenzie offered to personally check each vehicle with Doko, which did not please the defence minister. Doko agreed to send one of his officers with Collins. The vehicles were reinspected with him and the only things he found were Canadian ammunition and US M-72 antitank rockets. The Canadians after this three-hour standoff were allowed to leave but not to enter the Bosnian Serb sector. The overall situation had become so tense, headquarters decided to call the whole thing off.⁴⁷

The day after the checkpoint standoff, two RCR soldiers noticed the ABiH setting up mortar positions 50 metres from Beaver Camp. The Canadians lodged a protest with the Bosnian government but the mortars were still there at sunset. Everyone was notified that if the mortars fired, they were to take shelter as BSA retaliatory fire could quickly follow. A favourite ABiH tactic was to create a small incident to which the BSA would overreact with their heavy guns in Sarajevo.

Just after midnight the mortars fired. The 300 soldiers ran for the bunkers. Rounds landed in the kitchen, dining area, command post, and quartermaster's stores. Rounds landed in the vehicle compound and CANBAT lost 5,000 litres of fuel.

MacKenzie saw Vice-President Ejup Ganic on 22 July and informed him it was illegal to use the UN as a shield. If the mortars fired again, the Canadians would kill every last member of the ABiH team. Within hours the mortars were removed.

UN New York was aware of the operating conditions of the peacekeepers. But their spur to action was when the BSA blew the power-transmission station for Sarajevo on 13 July 1992. Boutros-Ghali requested 500 additional soldiers for Sarajevo to join the 1,100 UN troops, civilian police, and relief workers stationed there. This was approved. The Security Council then endorsed the 17 July London ceasefire agreement calling for UN monitoring of heavy weapons in Bosnia. Boutros-Ghali initially opposed the UNSC's endorsement which substantially changed the UN mandate and required a sizable increase in troops deployed to Bosnia, some 40,000 according to MacKenzie's estimate.⁴⁸ Although they never met his estimate, two years later the UN would have 23,041 troops on the ground in Bosnia.⁴⁹ Troop strength was increased again in 1995 with the deployment of the Rapid Reaction Force.

MacKenzie's attempt to take the middle path and perhaps his upfront military attitude had made him unpopular with all the belligerents. He received numerous death threats. But what worried him were the threats being made against UN forces in his name. When a search for "MacKenzie" at a checkpoint resulted in an AK-47 being discharged near the face of a UN military observer, MacKenzie requested he be replaced. The Canadians were returning to Sector West at the end of July. The new Sarajevo force was to be composed of the French, Ukrainians, and Egyptians, so it was an opportunity for the UN to replace him without losing face, by simply stating they wanted the Sarajevo commander to come from one of the three contingents serving at the airport.⁵⁰ In October, French Major-General Philippe Morillon returned to Bosnia as commander, B-H Command, under the authority of the UNPROFOR force commander who had relocated to Zagreb in late July.

The Canadians' last mission in Sarajevo was to participate in the first overland humanitarian convoy. Twenty-five trucks with 200 tonnes of supplies were driven from Split. The Danish drivers, however, would only take the convoy to Kiseljak. Seven Canadian drivers were sent out to Kiseljak to bring the vehicles in the rest of the way. The Canadians escorted the convoy to Sarajevo and a splinter convoy to Maglaj (a little over 50 miles north of Sarajevo).⁵¹

On 28 July the Canadians handed control of the airport to a 400-strong French contingent. Reconnaissance parties were sent to scout the first 20 kilometres of possible routes to Daruvar. LCol Jones decided to return to Croatia via Serbia. The first company left Sarajevo the morning of 29 July and the last departed before sunrise 1 August.⁵²

Lessons Learned

During the month MacKenzie spent in Belgrade, he felt the UN in Sarajevo had become too passive in their responses. Hijacking of UN vehicles had become endemic by the time he returned. He actively encouraged a more robust response. Certainly, LCol Michel Jones was of the robust school as evidenced by his firm response to an obstructionist Bosnian Serb commander, which ended with the Canadians ploughing through a Bosnian Serb checkpoint on their trip from Daruvar to Sarajevo. It was in an effort to respond with the exact amount of force in which they were attacked that caused the deployment of French and Canadian anti-sniper teams in Sarajevo. Their efforts greatly decreased (although they did not eliminate) sniping, particularly regarding attacks on the UN.

The warring factions, whether in Sector West or Sarajevo, discovered an advantage in emplacing themselves near UN forces. This does not appear to have been tackled by the UN quite as vigorously as it should have been. The Canadians caught the ABiH setting up mortars on 21 July and quickly lodged a protest. However, it was not until the ABiH had attacked the BSA and the Canadians were subject to the BSA response that MacKenzie stormed into Ganic's office and demanded their removal. His threat, with the force to back it, ensured quick results. The ABiH position was dismantled within hours of the meeting.

Perhaps the most tricky situation facing peacekeepers was what to do when a belligerent demanded to search a UN vehicle. UN policy stated no searches were allowed. Yet, on a number of occasions, UN contingents had allowed their vehicles to be searched to defuse a situation or hasten action. This caused a precedent to be established with the warring factions. If you held the UN vehicles long enough, they would allow a search. Major Collins engaged in a standoff with ABiH checkpoint guards. Collins never allowed them to disarm the Canadians and maintained full control of his convoy, but he did come to feel that the best way to defuse the situation was to allow a search. Even MacKenzie agreed to this, telling Defence Minister Doko they would allow a second search with an official of his choosing. While this appeared to the Canadians to be the best option at the time, and ensured that the platoon returned safely to Beaver Camp, it solidified the precedent. It confirmed that any UN unit held under gunpoint for long enough would allow a search. This had devastating consequences in Sarajevo on 9 January 1993.

Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic of Bosnia was being transported in a French APC to a Bosnian Croat controlled area to attend a negotiating session. When the BSA learned of this, it stopped the APC and demanded access. The French refused, and the BSA brought in a tank to block the way for some eight to ten hours. The French soldiers were probably unaware that the BSA knew who was travelling with them,⁵³ and from past experience, they thought that the best way to defuse the situation was to allow a search of the APC. The BSA opened the APC and sprayed the back with machine-gun fire, killing Turajlic.⁵⁴

Violations of UN standard operating procedures may not have had an immediate adverse effect on the unit. But the contingents that followed them into theatre would pay a price. The Turajlic incident caused the UN's stock in Bosnia to plummet. The Bosnians asked how they could trust the UN if an official was killed while in their custody? The UN had a long upward haul in 1993 to recover from this one incident, while UN peacekeepers were at increased risk.

The Sarajevo airport operation was not the peacekeeping to which Canadians were used. In a little over six weeks, CANBAT sustained 19 casualties, almost all caused by shrapnel or from sniper fire. Their efforts, though, ensured the operation of the Sarajevo airport agreement. Under fire, Canadians had unloaded Airbridge aircraft and delivered desperately needed food to the Sarajevo populace. By risking their lives, the Canadians were able to engender some positive feelings toward the UN. They also paved the road for full UN deployment to Bosnia.

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52. "Canadians pulling out of Sarajevo," *Ottawa Citizen*, 28 July 1992, p. A1; Samir F. Ghattas, "Canadians' mission accomplished," *ibid.*, 29 July 1992, p. A6; "UN convoy arrives in Sarajevo," *ibid.*, 30 July 1992, p. A6.
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3. The Kings of Sector West

The UNPROFOR mandate in Croatia was to demilitarize the UN Protected Areas (UNPAs) and protect the people within those areas from attack. This meant UNPROFOR would control access to the four sectors, monitor the local police forces, monitor the withdrawal of the federal army (JNA), and ensure weapons were either removed from the sector or stored in UN-designated weapons storage facilities. UNPROFOR was also tasked with assisting UN civilian agencies in resettling refugees.¹

Brigadier-General Carlos Maria Zabala in conjunction with UN civil affairs representative Gerald Fisher decided to use a “carrot and stick” approach to accomplish the mission. Neither warring party within Sector West was aware the Vance plan provided for demilitarization. UNPROFOR coordinated a series of meetings to inform all parties of the plan’s provisions. The warring factions were encouraged to turn in their weapons with awards such as village visitation visits (where displaced personnel could cross the confrontation line to visit their home village), UN-sponsored infrastructure repair, and humanitarian aid. As well, the awards were distributed through local civilian leaders, rather than local military commanders, to restore their authority. The stick was that Zabala had no qualms about using force to demilitarize the sector and made the warring factions aware of that from the outset.²

Zabala had a five-step plan to demilitarize the sector:³

Step 1 — Artillery, mortars, rocket launchers, and tanks were to withdraw 30 kilometres from the Sector West demarcation line.

Step 2 — The territorial defence (TO) units and any paramilitary forces would be demobilized.

Step 3 — APCs, anti-aircraft systems, heavy machine guns, and short-range antitank weapons were to withdraw ten kilometres from the Sector West demarcation line.

Step 4 — All remaining forces were to withdraw at least five kilometres from the Sector West demarcation line.

Step 5 — Minefield clearance would be conducted by HV and JNA forces under UNPROFOR supervision.

UNPROFOR began demilitarization of Sector West in early June. The HV withdrew their weapons, while the Croatian Serbs placed theirs within designated UN storage areas. There were two large storage depots for light weapons in the Canadian area (near Pakrac) and another depot for heavy weapons in the Nepalese area (at Staragadiska on the Sava river south of Okucani). The storage areas were “dual key.” Local military commanders retained one key and UNPROFOR the second key. The local military was allowed access to the site to perform maintenance.⁴

Demilitarization did not proceed as smoothly in Sector South. On 21 June the HV attacked the Krajina Serb army (RSK) positions in the pink zone near Drnis. The RSK retaliated by bombarding Sibenik. The following day the HV shelled Knin. The shelling and resultant military buildup caused the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 762 which demanded the HV retreat to pre-21 June positions and authorized the deployment of UN forces into the pink zone.⁵ Their deployment did not ensure the demilitarization of Sector South and in fact the only sector that achieved temporary demilitarization was Sector West.

The UN mandate in Croatia expanded again in August when UNSC Resolution 769 gave UNPROFOR permission to take control of international borders and customs posts where the UNPA coincided with an international border. UNPROFOR was given additional authority to prevent the entry of arms and ammunition to the sectors. In fact, the Krajina Serbs never allowed UNPROFOR to establish customs posts which they saw as an infringement of their “sovereignty.”⁶

Status Quo under PPCLI

A warning order was sent to 3 Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry (PPCLI) at CFB Esquimalt, British Columbia, in April 1992 advising them they would replace the Van Doos and 3RCR in Sector West in September. The battalion was reconfigured for the Yugoslav mission, adding 180 reservists to bring its strength to 876 deployable soldiers. A reconnaissance of Sector West was performed in mid-July 1992 and the battalion arrived for duty in September 1992. Two months earlier Sector West had been declared demilitarized. There were six or seven checkpoints at the entrances to the Canadian section of the sector and two checkpoints established at major crossroads. Battalion headquarters had been established at Camp Polom near Daruvar. Four company headquarters were established at Pakrac, Lipik, Toranj, and Novo Selo.⁷ Seventy-five personnel from the Canadian support group established themselves at Camp Polom in September to provide logistics



Company headquarters at Novo Selo. Photo by Capt Greg Burton.



CANBAT 1 checkpoint. Photo by Capt Greg Burton.

support to the Canadian battalions. They would eventually expand to 265 and be known as CANLOGBAT.

Aside from providing security and controlling access to the sector, 3PPCLI sent out roving patrols and established mobile checkpoints. The patrols checked which routes were passable and produced maps of their findings. They catalogued towns, noting how much damage had been done to individual buildings. The company at Novo Selo, responsible for a remote wilderness area, performed helicopter reconnaissance once or twice a week with UN helicopters from Zagreb. 3PPCLI also initiated joint patrols with the Croatian police. The checkpoints were set up to seize any contraband weapons entering Sector West. The Canadians had discovered that a checkpoint was only good for about an hour and then word spread and people stopped coming through. They therefore had mobile checkpoints that changed every hour or so. Sometime raids would be carried out. Any weapons seized would have their serial numbers recorded and be placed in storage. Ammunition and mines that were collected were destroyed in a gravel pit.⁸

The Canadians engaged in a number of confidence-building measures and humanitarian-aid projects. They moved grain from the farmers to the mills, provided security to farmers who wished to harvest their crops, set up orphanages, provided convoy escort for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and UNHCR, and assisted refugees. There were other nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) at work in the sector, but CANBAT quickly discovered they had to be careful with their assistance. Many of the smaller NGOs were far from impartial and had arrived with the aim of assisting only one side. These were carefully watched. Nonetheless, the Croats received inordinately more aid than the Croatian Serbs. By 1993 the difference in the infrastructure of the two sides was enormous. A visitation program was started which allowed displaced Croatian Serbs and Croats to visit their old homes. Equal numbers participated on each side. There were some tense moments for the Canadians when "war criminals" caused local tension, but for the most part the visits were quite friendly. Checkpoint visits occurred one day a week. This allowed people from each side to meet friends or relatives at the checkpoint to exchange news. The Canadians made sure that there were no police or soldiers.⁹

The UN had planned to inform the populace of its mandate through the media. To the surprise of the Canadians, the warring factions' control of the media was absolute. When they gave interviews they found the questions pointed and the tone indicated there was no feeling that a peaceful solution was possible. The average citizen was unable to acquire an independent viewpoint except through immediate contact with the UN forces. With the media working against them, it was difficult to build any degree of trust.

There were occasional incidents that did little to alleviate the mistrust. The Dragovic road ran from Pakrac east to the UNPA border and continued through Croatia proper to Slavonska Pozega. Much of the road traversed "no man's land" and was therefore controlled by UNPROFOR. On the eastern edge of the UNPA

it was easily accessible to both sides. In October, three Croatian Serbs shot up a vehicle near Checkpoint Whiskey Charlie Nine, killing one Croat and wounding two.

CANBAT 1 patrols were sent out to track down the culprits. One patrol tracked back to a burnt-out house where the Croatian Serbs had stayed before the shooting incident. The Canadians staked it out awhile, but the three men never returned. Patrols were increased along the Dragovic road to keep an eye on the traffic and prevent any reoccurrence.

On Christmas night, two Croatian police were kidnapped, roughed up, and abandoned in the forest. The Croats notified the Canadians that they wished the guilty Croatian Serbs punished. After an investigation 3PPCLI suspected the Croats had done the deed themselves in order to cast the Croatian Serbs in a bad light.¹⁰

While the Croatian Serbs were sometimes guilty of violent incidents, the effort of the Croats to prove definitively to the UN that the Croatian Serbs wore the black hats increased tensions, prevented a peaceful accord, and made the UN's job more difficult as it tried to establish responsibility for each incident.

Operation Round-Up

In mid-January a group of Croatian Serb TO soldiers were drinking. A TO commander was dared by his companions to touch a church on the Croat side of the confrontation line. The intoxicated officer ran over and touched the church, but on his way back to his lines was apprehended by the Croatian police.

The TO commander's captivity set off a week of riots. The Croatian Serbs threatened to attack the Croatian police station, and Croatian Serbs fired a RPG round into a Canadian APC which wounded a soldier in the ankle while the driver narrowly missed being skewered by shrapnel. When things calmed down 3PPCLI battle group commander LCol Glen Nordick asked the UN for permission to conduct a cordon weapons search tagged Operation Round-Up. He was given the authority to search 15 to 25 locations in one day. At that time 2RCR was in theatre in preparation for deployment to Bosnia. Nordick requested their assistance with the operation. 2RCR agreed to take over a number of OPs and checkpoints freeing 3PPCLI personnel for the operation.

A battalion task force was formed and Operation Round-Up began on 18 January 1993. There was some resistance. Crowds gathered to deter the Canadians. Although it never became a full riot, to the UN peacekeepers it seemed "touch and go." Not all the areas earmarked were searched, but the Canadians did seize some 800 weapons, including a 20-mm anti-aircraft gun, antitank guns, and recoilless weapons. The serial numbers of the weapons were recorded and they were placed in weapons storage. The ammunition was destroyed in the gravel pit.¹¹

Before tension could ease off in Sector West, the HV launched an invasion into Sector South.

Operation Maslenica

UN intelligence indicated the Croatian government had two priorities. The first was to secure the Maslenica bridge which provided an important link to the Dalmatian coast. The second was to secure the Zagreb-Belgrade highway, of which some 20 miles ran through the southern portion of Sector West. Both had fallen to the Croatian Serbs in 1991.

In the new year President Franjo Tudjman approved Operation Maslenica. It had a twofold purpose: to capture key areas in Sector South, and to place pressure on the UN, whose mandate to operate in Croatia was up for renewal on 21 February 1993. On 22 January the HV launched a three-prong attack into a pink zone aimed at capturing the Maslenica bridge, Zadar's airport which was at Zemunik, and the Peruca dam (with its power station) northeast of Split.¹²

The RSK announced a general mobilization and broke into several UN weapons depots, seizing tanks and artillery pieces. They launched a counteroffensive and were successful in retaking several small villages in the area of Maslenica. The UN Security Council demanded the withdrawal of HV forces on 25 January 1993 after the death of two French peacekeepers and the wounding of six more in the fighting. The HV pushed ahead with their actions and captured the Peruca hydroelectric dam three days later. The RSK had tried to blow the dam before their retreat, but it was still standing when the HV entered the station.¹³ The whole front in Sector South was now active. The Maslenica bridge and Peruca dam were subjected to heavy RSK shelling.¹⁴ The fallout from the operation would continue into the autumn when the Canadians would become involved.

Of course, one group of Canadians was already involved to some extent, 3PPCLI in Sector West. CANBAT feared an HV invasion of Sector West to secure the Zagreb-Belgrade highway, and as well, many officers in the battalion felt the UN might step back and allow it to happen. However, Brigadier-General Zabala was supportive of the Canadian actions and like them was determined to enforce the mandate. For 72 hours the Canadians dug in. They also dug positions in the Nepalese area which they took over as the Nepalese were only armed with light weapons. 3PPCLI arranged for defence of the routes from the north and kept 2RCR (part of which was still in Croatia) in reserve. The UN prepared explosives to blow the Sava bridge if the BSA attempted to enter the fray. They also made plans to blow the dikes in the south and lay defensive minefields, although these were never carried out.

None of these preparations prevented the Croatian Serb TO from mobilizing and attempting to retrieve their weapons from storage. Zabala and civil affairs coordinator Gerald Fisher patiently explained that no one was taking the weapons

from storage. If the UN withdrew from the sector's defence, then they would pass out the weapons. Zabala and Fisher were able to do this credibly because they had four UN battalions (two fully mechanized) to back them and had never demonstrated an unwillingness to use them.¹⁵ They had no sooner talked the Croatian Serbs from rash action when the HV mobilized and moved forward to the UNPA demarcation line. Again Zabala and Fisher went through a series of negotiations and convinced the HV to stand down.¹⁶ By mid-February tension in the sector had eased somewhat. However, the confidence-building measures were much less successful following Operation Maslenica. The Croat leaders were convinced the Croatian Serbs were intractable, the Croatian Serb leaders were doubly convinced their only choice was independence as the Ustasha state would destroy them. The villagers seemed to want to live together peacefully, but they were just too afraid they would be killed if they did so.

This is illustrated by the Daruvar agreement which was signed by Croatian Serb leaders and Croatian government authorities in Sector West on 18 February 1993. The agreement reaffirmed intentions to repair infrastructure, open the Zagreb-Belgrade highway, and return displaced people to their homes. The Croatian Serbs asked that the agreement be kept secret for the time being due to the ongoing hostilities in Sector South. One day later the Croatian press announced the Daruvar agreement. The Krajina Serbs declared it an act of treason. The RSK arrested Veljko Dzakula, the senior Serb signatory of the agreement, and took control of the police stations and TO units in western Slavonia. They fired Colonel Obric, considered a moderate, and replaced him with the radical Colonel Celeketic. The RSK halted all initiatives in Sector West and encouraged the rearming of the population.¹⁷

The active front line in Sector South and the ongoing troubles caused the UNSC to reconsider the UN mandate in Croatia. On 19 February 1993 it passed Resolution 807, invoking Chapter VII. UNPROFOR in Croatia could take whatever measures were necessary to ensure its freedom of movement and security.

Equipment Shortfalls

3PPCLI had some 300 direct-fire incidents during their tour to Sector West. After an APC struck a mine damaging the engine side of the compartment and another APC was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade which blasted a hole through it (the vehicle was empty at the time) there were questions in Canada about the suitability of Canadian equipment. This concern was reinforced after 2RCR deployed to Bosnia in February and came under heavy fire during the course of its duties.

The Canadian M113 APC was produced in 1965 and the Cougar was a 1970s vehicle that had been purchased as a tank trainer. Battlefield armour-piercing weapons greatly improved in the intervening years. The Danish battalion in theatre had a similar vintage APC and had added fitted turrets and snap-on armour.

The British brought the Warrior, a heavy infantry fighting vehicle that had proved itself in the Gulf War. While the Canadians were acknowledged to be the heaviest armoured unit after the British,¹⁸ the Department of National Defence later admitted “there were serious deficiencies in firepower, mobility and capacity,” with the M113. Furthermore, “self-defence firepower is ineffective against hostile light armoured vehicles due to inadequate weapon calibre, exposure of the fire, and lack of an effective fire control system.” Canadian commanders in theatre confirmed the gun-shield kits attached to the vehicles in 1992 were not sufficient to stop anything more than a 7.62 round. Consequently, 85 M113s, 38 Grizzly APCs, and 16 Bisons in theatre were fitted with additional armour in 1995.¹⁹

Other equipment shortfalls discovered early on were lack of a counter-mortar radar system. If the HV had attacked Sector West in 1993, 3PPCLI feared they would have had problems locating artillery. Several battalions complained of a shortage of anti-armour weapons and individual night sights. Many times warring factions succeeded in getting close to (or actually penetrating the outer perimeter of) Canadian OPs. Maintenance officers complained of a shortage of technical manuals for the equipment they had to repair in theatre. More tellingly, there were insufficient helmets and flak jackets to distribute to all the battalions that were deployable. As a result, each unit in theatre would pass its helmets and flak jackets on to the incoming battalion. By 1994 the replacement units complained of the poor quality of the flak jackets and helmets — small wonder as they had been in daily use for two years.²⁰

More critically, the longer Canada remained in the former Yugoslavia the greater the strain on Canadian Forces personnel. Aside from the soldiers provided to CANBAT 1, CANBAT 2, and CANLOGBAT, Canada provided a ship, Sea King helicopter crews, and two CP-140 Aurora maritime patrol craft (supported by 78 personnel in Sigonella, Italy) to Operation Sharp Guard beginning in June 1993. Another 43 Canadian Forces personnel at Ancona, Italy, supported Hercules transport aircraft for the Sarajevo Airbridge operation.²¹ General John de Chastelain, chief of the defence staff, emphasized that Canada was at its maximum limit of expeditionary capability.

In November 1992 de Chastelain commented

Essentially we now have a brigade group deployed on UN operations: an infantry battalion and engineer regiment in Croatia, a battalion and engineer squadron in Bosnia; a battalion, a reconnaissance squadron and some engineer elements in Somalia; a battalion in Cyprus; logistic elements in Cambodia and the Golan Heights and engineers in Kuwait ... These can be replaced once with current resources. We will be stretched to replace these commitments a third time with regular forces, so we have only undertaken to do the task in Bosnia and Somalia for one year. To do it a third time we would be using troops who have less than six months back in Canada, which would interfere with the training process that allows us to remain professional. We must allow a minimum of one year for troops between taskings.²²

Despite de Chastelain's misgivings, Canada remained with UNPROFOR until the end of its mission in December 1995.

Canadians posted to Egypt in 1973 had concluded that ad hoc units perform poorly on peacekeeping missions. Peacekeeping demands an integrated regiment that has trained and worked together.²³ Doubtless that was why 2RCR was deployed to Bosnia with only eight months between peacekeeping missions.²⁴ However, Canada simply did not have enough infantry battalions to meet its UN peacekeeping commitments in the mid-1990s. Starting with the deployment of 2PPCLI in March 1993, there was a heavy reliance upon the reserve forces. By 1994 there would be an increased number of reservists serving in theatre in ad hoc battalions as the Canadian Forces spliced units together in an effort to save soldiers from back-to-back deployments.

2PPCLI

2PPCLI in Winnipeg, Manitoba, was notified in October 1992 it would replace 3PPCLI in Croatia. The regiment was unable to muster a full compliment, therefore had to bring in augmentees. Reservists joined the regiment in January 1993, participating in deployment training that included machine-gun, driver, and radio-operator courses. At the end of February the regiment went to Fort Ord, California, for a month of training on open ranges. There the battalion zeroed rifles and ran a live ammunition exercise. They also spent extra time training the 4th Platoon, which was entirely reservists and served as backup for the deployment.

In March, 875 soldiers were selected for deployment: 325 were 2PPCLI, 165 regular force augmentees, and 385 reservists. The battalion flew to Croatia in three parties over a two-week period. The soldiers brought their own weapons and personal kit on the plane and received their helmets and flak jackets from the outgoing 3PPCLI members in Sector West. They quickly dispersed to their operating locations to learn the patrol routes, location of mine fields, and the various local leaders before 3PPCLI passed command on 4 April 1993.

The regiment had not been on the ground for two weeks when it discovered the dangers of Sector West. On 6 April 1993, Major Greg Burton was leading two APCs along a patrol route. His APC drove over a spot in the road without incident. However, the APC that followed struck an antitank mine that blew the APC's track off and threw it into the air. Miraculously, the two soldiers inside were not badly hurt. Private Ricketts, the driver, broke his nose and sprained his left ankle, while his companion was merely shaken and bruised.

The Croatian Serbs continued to fear that the UN would not protect them if the HV invaded Sector West. Their fears were undoubtedly intensified by the departure of General Zabala in March,²⁵ which marked an end of the UN's carrot-and-stick approach in Sector West. To increase confidence 2PPCLI conducted Operation

Backstop. It rehearsed operations to prevent an HV attack and did a dry run for a Nepalese evacuation (as they were lightly armed). The Canadians felt the main attack would be aimed at the Zagreb-Belgrade highway and planned accordingly. CANBAT 1 dug defence positions for Operation Backstop and it was not long before the TO set up positions nearby.

2PPCLI continued performing vehicle searches and seized a large number of contraband weapons. It manned OPs and conducted patrols. In contrast to 3PPCLI, which had wanted the warring factions to be aware of their movements, LCol Jim Calvin ordered his battalion to practice radio silence. The Canadians decided to cut the infiltration routes for contraband and would send a patrol to watch the infiltration routes for a seven- to ten-day period.²⁶

Operation Spider Web

From almost the moment CANBAT 1 was deployed, the Croat leaders filed reports of excessive Croatian Serb TO activity behind Croat lines. Any small incident involving Croatian Serbs was presented by the media as a full-scale invasion. LCol Michel Jones had received numerous complaints that the hills on the Croat side were full of Serb guerillas. A lieutenant from Jones' battalion reported that in three weeks he had spotted exactly one Serb behind Croat lines and he was dead.²⁷

The Croats complained of "Serb commandos" along the Dragovic road where one incident had occurred during the tenure of 3PPCLI. During Operation Backstop, a Canadian patrol had been sent to the Dragovic road for two days to catch Croatian Serbs who had sneaked across the frontier during the night and would be returning to their homes on the Serb side at first light. The patrol failed to find a single individual engaged in these activities.

Still the Croats complained that the Croatian Serbs were infiltrating across the front line and reported numerous firing incidents involving these Serb soldiers. CANBAT decided to stage a full-scale operation nicknamed Operation Spider Web to capture the Serb guerillas. Ten covert OPs were set up on all possible routes to watch for any hint of Croatian Serb movement. In ten days not a single Croatian Serb was spotted: for that matter, neither was a single Croat. As the Croatian police had been notified of the operation, a couple of 2PPCLI officers suspected the reported incidents were being staged by the Croats. As if to confirm their suspicions, as soon as the operation ended the Croats again began reporting Croatian Serb infiltrations and shootings.

This is not to say there were no armed Croatian Serbs in Sector West. A long-range patrol from B Company came across an armed six-man TO patrol in a remote mountain region. They captured three of the patrol members and radioed battalion headquarters for guidance. LCol Calvin was frustrated with the UN procedures, which had the guilty parties returned to their own sides. The infiltrators invariably escaped punishment and were released to rearm. Calvin decided to initiate a new

procedure whereby the guilty party would be released to the opposite faction's authority under UN Civilian Police supervision. He ordered the patrol to give the Croatian Serbs to the Croatian police, which the patrol did when they reached the bottom of the mountain they were on. Calvin had been in the process of notifying UNCIVPOL and had not anticipated that the patrol would find the Croatian police so quickly. He asked the B Company patrol to retrieve the prisoners until he could get UNCIVPOL representatives to observe the arrest and subsequently follow the trial process.

The Croatian police had to travel a road passing through B Company headquarters at Novo Selo. Major Burton, the company commander who was with the patrol, called ahead and told them to lower the gate and detain the Croatian police. The Canadians in Novo Selo detained the police with the Croatian Serb prisoners. However, the police had time to radio that they had been captured. The chief of police called B Company and told them he would mobilize 500 men and attack their headquarters. CANBAT sent a platoon from A Company to assist B Company and there was a standoff.

UN negotiators tried to calm the situation. When an UNCIVPOL representative arrived B Company was told to release the prisoners to the Croatian police. The three Croatian Serbs were subsequently sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment.

Calvin proceeded to draft formal procedures that stated the conditions under which detainees could be passed to the opposing authorities. The main points were: a warring faction soldier had to be well-armed and had to be a certain distance into the opposing faction's territory; an UNCIVPOL representative had to be on hand to observe the entire process; and anyone found near the front lines would continue to be disarmed and returned to their own authorities.

Shortly after the arrest of the three Croatian Serbs, a Croat crossed the confrontation line and shot a TO soldier at point-blank range in his OP near Lipik. The Croat authorities in Sector West were notified that the shooter would be handed over to Croatian Serb authorities if he was caught. However, despite an intensive CANBAT manhunt, he avoided capture.²⁸

Krajina Serb Referendum

While Croats felt the Vance plan's aim was to integrate the Krajina with Croatia, the Croatian Serbs saw it as confirming their independent status. The Krajina Serbs were thus increasingly frustrated with the UN's inability to evict the HV from the captured pink zones. On 5 June 1993 the Krajina Serb assembly decided to schedule a referendum for 19-20 June. The question proposed was whether the Krajina and eastern Slavonia should unite with the self-proclaimed Serb Republic in Bosnia and also whether they should unite with other Serb territories. Three days after the assembly's announcement, RSK military officials declared a general mobilization.²⁹

Colonel Celeketic, the TO commander in Sector West, was pressured to rearm as a sign of support. No one broke into the UN storage areas, but small arms appeared among the Croatian Serbs, then machine guns. As soon as the weapons appeared the Canadians seized them. On 10 June, Brigadier-General Shabsoh, the commander of UN Sector West, ordered a halt to all weapons confiscations. He planned to halt the remilitarization through strict negotiations, without a commensurate show of force. There was escalation on both sides. The HV increased its activity along the UNPA border. When the Canadians caught the HV building artillery pits outside Pakrac near Lipik they were prevented by sector headquarters from filling them in. Eventually the HV were granted permission to maintain several OPs with six assault rifles each. During the course of the summer numerous illegal HV OPs sprung up. The longer UNPROFOR allowed soldiers to walk around armed in Sector West, the more difficult it became to seize the weapons. By July there were reports a BSA unit of 1,500 had crossed into Sector West doubtless to support the Croatian Serb TO.³⁰

The 19-20 June referendum showed that a majority of Croatian Serbs were in favour of a union with the Bosnian Serbs. To their disappointment neither Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, nor the vice-president of the Bosnian Serb assembly, Milan Milanovic, endorsed a merger. Both declared that a union was eventually possible but the present timing was inconvenient to ongoing Bosnian negotiations. Goran Hadzic, Krajina Serb leader,³¹ had to back down publicly declaring there were no immediate plans for unification. A joint assembly meeting scheduled for 28 June was cancelled.³²

Highlighting the murkiness of the UN's changing policy, some of the company commanders in Sector West believed it was still illegal for Croatian police to carry any weapons other than handguns. At the end of June, A and B Companies, 2PPCLI, conducted a weapons seizure operation aimed at the Croatian police. Three OPs were set to survey a new police checkpoint. The observers were told that if they spotted any weapons larger than a pistol they were to break radio silence and call in a codeword.

The codeword was called. Major Burton notified battalion headquarters, UNCIVPOL, and at the last moment asked the Croatian police commander to accompany the Canadians. B Company conducted a silent raid on the police post. The police officer in charge had apparently abandoned the post and his young recruits. The Canadians confiscated several rifles and returned to base.

Another OP broke radio silence with the codeword at an old high school. B Company again prepared for action. Using silent dismounted attacks followed by noisy mounted reinforcement they raided the school and found rifle grenades, antitank weapons, and rifles. Major McComber and A Company had been equally successful that day.

Brigadier-General Shabsoh had considered allowing the weapon seizures to resume early in July. However, the commanding officers of JORBAT and NEPBAT were against any further raids. They convinced Shabsoh to continue the

moratorium. Major Burton and Major McComber were ordered by the UN sector commander to return several rifles seized in the recent operation. In due course four rifles were returned to the Croats.³³ The situation in Sector West deteriorated through the summer. New weapons were delivered to the TO and artillery pieces again appeared in the sector. The number of ceasefire violations steadily climbed.³⁴

Erdut Agreement

Despite the UNSC resolution, the HV had never withdrawn from the Maslenica pink zone. On 6 July 1993, President Tudjman announced he would officially open Zadar's airport at Zemunik and a new 250-metre pontoon bridge at Maslenica. The RSK immediately responded by shelling Karlovac, Gospic, and Zadar and threatened to launch FROG-7s at Zagreb. Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali issued a warning to Tudjman not to open the bridge and again urged the HV to withdraw from the pink zone areas seized in Operation Maslenica.³⁵

Under UN pressure, Croatia signed the Erdut agreement 15-16 July in which it agreed to withdraw all forces from the pink zone by 31 July and place the Maslenica bridge, the Zadar airport, the Peruca dam, and the Milivaki plateau under UN control. Tudjman went ahead with his ceremonies opening Zadar's airport at Zemunik and the Maslenica bridge on 18 July. The Maslenica ceremony was briefly interrupted by RSK shelling of the site.³⁶

Tensions had greatly increased in the area. The shelling of Karlovac was the worst since 1991. The RSK had also shelled Sinj, a Dalmatian city south of Sector South. There were reports the HV were burning houses and crops in the areas due to pass to UN control. LGen Jean Cot, UNPROFOR commander, wanted to deploy the UN troops quickly to enforce the Erdut agreement. LCol Jim Calvin was asked to send forces from CANBAT 1. Over a 24-hour period Calvin moved half his battalion the 500 kilometres to Sector South. Part of his unit moved into the Kenyan area to watch the Peruca dam. The remainder operated in the French area, quickly establishing OPs three kilometres from the Maslenica bridge.³⁷

As the Canadians were deploying south, Tudjman linked the withdrawal of HV forces to the surrender of RSK heavy weapons to UNPROFOR. There had been no direct linkage in the Erdut agreement, but the Vance plan did specify that heavy weaponry within the UNPAs would be placed under UN control. The RSK felt their territory had been invaded in defiance of the Vance plan and held a bitter grudge against UNPROFOR who had neither warned them of, nor protected them from, the HV invasion in January. As a consequence, they were in no mood to return their weapons to UN storage. The Croatian government used this as an excuse to back out of the Erdut agreement. The 31 July deadline passed and in retaliation the RSK bombarded the Maslenica pontoon bridge on 2 August, sinking the structure.³⁸

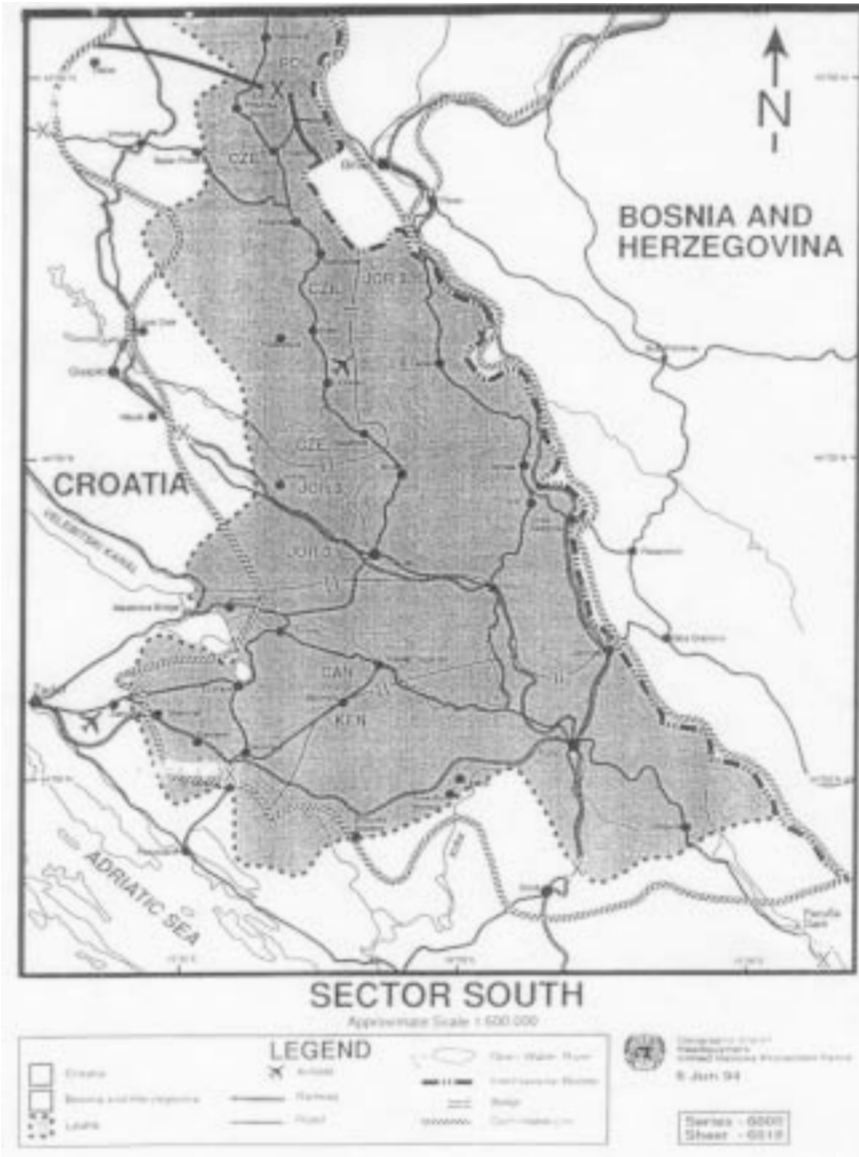
When it became obvious the Erdut agreement would fail to be executed, Calvin queried UNPROFOR headquarters on whether the Canadians would be returning to Sector West. He had anticipated a temporary deployment and their supplies had run out. They were having difficulty with resupply which was coming 500 kilometres from Sector West. As FREBAT 1 had lost all credibility in Sector South, LGen Cot decided to redeploy the battalions. A Nigerian battalion had been stationed to Glina in Sector North. They had departed in 1993 but had not been replaced by another contingent. Consequently, ARGBAT had sent a couple of companies from Sector West to cover Glina. Cot decided the Argentines could return to Sector West and FREBAT 1 would be moved to Sector North. The French had another battalion stationed over the Bosnian border in Bihac. Therefore, two of the French battalions were deployed contiguously. CANBAT 1 would be deployed to Gracac in Sector South to take over the former French positions.³⁹

CANBAT 1 Relocates to Sector South

From late August until early September the members of 2PPCLI who had remained in Sector West⁴⁰ relocated to Sector South. Everything at the Canadian camps had to be packed into sea containers and sent to Gracac. CANLOGBAT also relocated to Sector South and would eventually find permanent quarters at Primosten and Sibenik (both on the coast north of Split). Major Craig King (the new commander) and A Company were the last to leave Sector West and they engaged in one last weapon-seizure operation before their departure.

ARGBAT was going to take over the Canadian area of the sector. Tensions were now as high as when CANBAT 2 had arrived in Sector West in March 1992. There were kidnappings and ambushes. Croats and Croatian Serbs exchanged fire across the Dragovic road. On 5 August a Croatian police car travelling on a small road north of the Dragovic road was ambushed, in all likelihood by Croatian Serbs who had killed three Croats and wounded five more. LCol Roberto Bendini, ARGBAT's battle group commander, wished to reinforce in the minds of the factions that the Dragovic road was UN-controlled. In late August Argentine officers met with Croatian authorities and told them all that unauthorized OPs had to be dismantled within 72 hours. The Croats actually took a week to comply. Meanwhile, the Argentines registered the serial numbers of all Croat weapons they encountered while patrolling and seized any unauthorized weapons. The Argentines then met with the Croatian Serbs and told them they had 48 hours to comply with the UN mandate. When nothing happened ARGBAT seized weapons from individuals on the street and issued them receipts.

Bendini had been a strong advocate of the weapon-seizure operations and was doubtless appalled at the state into which Sector West had fallen. On his own initiative he scheduled an operation for 4 September. The Argentines mustered three infantry companies and held A Company 2PPCLI (with its APCs) in reserve.



On 1 September the Argentine officers visited every TO OP and told them what was expected. The night of 3 September the UN peacekeepers cut the radio lines to the TO OPs. Ten men and one APC were dispatched along each road to a Croatian Serb barracks or OP to block reinforcements. In the early morning hours of 4 September the peacekeepers seized all the weapons in the OPs and issued receipts to the soldiers. All actions were completed by 0800.

Although the TO commanders protested, they never took any action against the UN forces in Sector West. It is worth noting, however, no UN action was initiated against the Croatian Serb forces in the Nepalese or Jordanian areas. Nor was any action taken against the BSA brigade in Sector West.⁴¹ Brigadier-General Zabala's concept of demilitarization had been abandoned by sector headquarters.

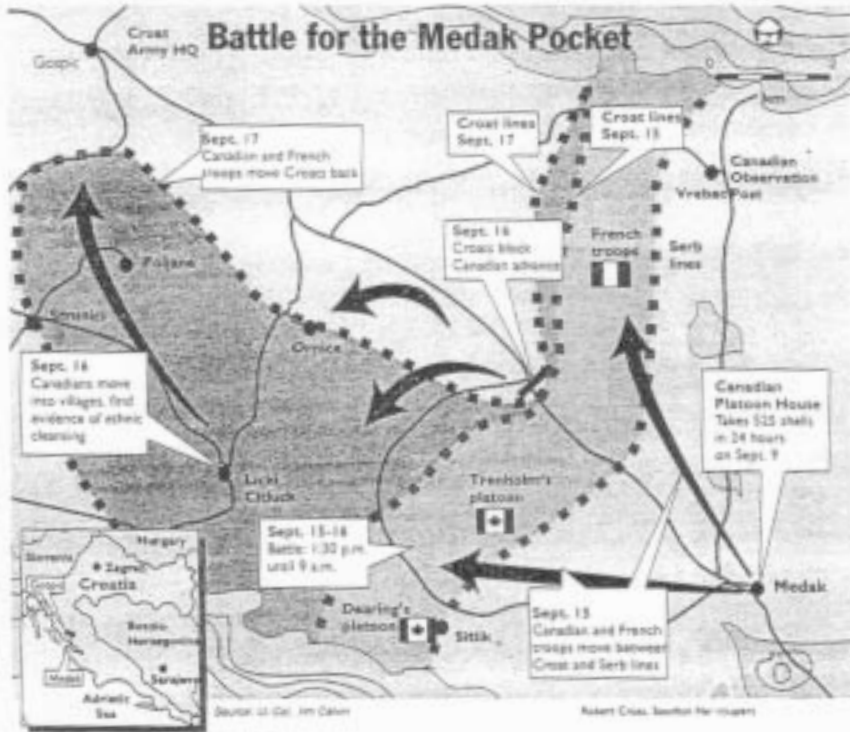
The last of CANBAT 1 departed Sector West on 9 September 1993. The Canadians deployed to the Peruca dam had been called north to Gracac. The new camp had little accommodation, forcing 2PPCLI to build a new headquarters from scratch. There was a warehouse inside the camp that the Canadians were able to use. They spent the end of August and early September clearing junk from the camp, disposing of old equipment, unloading new equipment, setting up generators, and stringing lights. Buildings were reinforced with sandbags and bunkers constructed. The new area of operations was split by the Velebit mountains. North of the mountains were woods and farms. South of the mountains were swaths of bare rock reminiscent of a moonscape forcing the APCs to stick to the roads. New OPs had to be sited and built to record ceasefire violations which were frequent. The observers recorded an average of 200 artillery impacts and 400 small-arms rounds being fired per day. The OPs at Maslenica were left intact and in late August, D Company endured four straight days of shelling.⁴² The Canadians had gone from peacekeeping to peacemaking.

Medak Pocket

In early September CANBAT 1 scouted locations for a series of OPs slightly southeast of Gospic. Lt Andrew Green established a platoon forward in Medak, a small Krajina Serb village of about 50 buildings located on the north side of the bare rock Velebit mountains. 9 Platoon decided to relocate from an old school to a house on 2 September and were interrupted by 15 to 20 RSK soldiers who attacked the Canadians. Green's soldiers beat off the RSK and then secured themselves in their new location.⁴³

President Franjo Tudjman grew impatient with the RSK shelling of Gospic and was determined to end it.⁴⁴ On 9 September HV forces launched an artillery barrage upon the Krajina Serb villages of Licki Citluk, Donji Selo, and Strunici. The HV used a pincer movement involving tanks and infantry coming down from the north and HV special forces moving up from the south (about 2,500 personnel in all). During the offensive the 25 soldiers of 9 Platoon in Medak were shelled for 12 hours. Three received minor shrapnel wounds. Fortunately, there was a French surgical team attached to CANBAT 1 to tend to the casualties.

The RSK immediately reinforced the area with tanks, artillery, and infantry. They renewed shelling of Gospic and Karlovac and launched FROG-7s at Zagreb and Somobor on 12 September. The rocket attack on Zagreb seemed to make the Croatians more amenable to a UN-brokered ceasefire. On 13 September



CANBAT 1 received a warning order that it would enforce the Medak Pocket agreement, signed that day. The HV were to withdraw to their pre-9 September front lines, and UNPROFOR would patrol a buffer zone between the two opposing forces. CANBAT was to receive two FREBAT companies as reinforcements. UNPROFOR LGen Jean Cot warned Calvin that the operation must be successful. The UN had untold difficulty in Sector South following its failure to prevent the HV invasion of the Maslenica pink zone. If UNPROFOR failed again it might as well pack its bags and go home, was the feeling.

CANBAT received confirmation of its orders the next day and was issued a four-phase plan.

Phase 1 — Two companies (Canadian and French) would replace the RSK in their frontline positions. UNMOs would confirm the pre-9 September HV frontlines.

Phase 2 — CANBAT 1 would open a crossing from the RSK frontline to the HV frontline. An anti-armour platoon would provide overwatch and engineers would be prepared to clear mines.

Phase 3 — Two companies (Canadian and French) would occupy the HV frontline and the pre-9 September HV frontline. Again the anti-armour

platoon would provide overwatch and the tactical command post and reconnaissance platoon would move into the pocket.

Phase 4 — CANBAT to ensure HV withdrawal to pre-9 September line. Sweep team to search villages for bodies and survivors, and to assist with humanitarian relief.

While UNPROFOR prepared to enact the agreement, four Croatian MiG-21s were launched to knock out the RSK FROG sites. They failed and the RSK destroyed one of the MiGs. The continuing action did not bode well for the UN peacekeepers.⁴⁵

Everyone tasked for Phase 1 had to be in place by 0900 on 15 September. The UN troops moved to occupy the RSK front-line positions and had pretty much accomplished that by the early afternoon. Throughout the day the UN forces were engaged with machine-gun fire and in some instances 20-mm cannon fire. Bigger UN flags were raised over the positions, but this failed to prevent HV fire. LCol Calvin believed that RSK sniping at HV positions might be contributing to the HV response. He initiated negotiations with RSK 9 Brigade to stop their sniping and it quickly ceased. The HV fire, however, did not. There were fire fights throughout the area of operations over the next 15 hours, sometimes lasting as long as 90 minutes. The UN troops ensured that they replied with the same calibre weapons that were being used against them. This did not make their job easier. Only the French were equipped with 20-mm cannon that could readily blast HV positions and vehicles.

Sgt Rod Dearing and seven men (five of them reservists) from 8 Platoon had been ordered to dig in near the village of Sitlik. Around 1600 they came under HV fire which included 20-mm cannon and mortars. The initial onslaught drove the Canadians into their trenches. The Croatian fire tore up trees and a fence near the Canadian foxholes serving further to camouflage them. When the second onslaught occurred, the Canadians spotted where their adversaries were hiding, a hedgerow and tree line some 150 metres away. Dearing barked the orders to his platoon, "One group, hedgerow, rapid fire. Two group, tree line, rapid fire." Aside from the standard issue C7 (the equivalent of the American M-16), the platoon had the heavy C6 and C9 machine guns. The HV fire died off. The HV made a third try on Dearing's group and were again forced to retreat.

When night came, a burning barn illuminated the blue helmets of 8 Platoon. Dearing ordered his men to remove them. Luckily the platoon was equipped with a long-range night observation sight. Dearing used it to track the movements of the HV soldiers and directed the platoon's fire. Around midnight the sight malfunctioned and the Canadians lost their technological advantage, but the HV attacks were fading.

The HV made another try around 0800 on 16 September. Private Scott Leblanc became so frustrated he half leapt from his position and strafed the hedgerow with his C9. The HV machine-gun fire died off but mortars continued to fall.

Around 0900 the French moved forward with their APCs and the HV soldiers fell back.

General Ademi, the HV operational zone commander, agreed to meet with UNPROFOR representatives on the evening of 15 September. Colonel Mike Maisonneuve, the chief operations officer from UNPROFOR (a Canadian) and LCol Neilsen (a Swede) came down from Zagreb to attend and LCol Calvin joined them. Accusations flew. General Ademi accused CANBAT of illegal actions. He demanded a copy of the so-called Medak agreement that President Tudjman had signed. Calvin handed over a copy of the agreement to the HV commanders.

It was finally agreed that UNPROFOR could establish a crossing point on the Medak-Gospic road that night. Ademi said two companies could cross to the HV side. The first crossing at 1200 on 16 September could cover the front line and the second company crossing at 1330 could occupy the pre-9 September front line.

While platoons from CANBAT and FREBAT remained under fire near RSK lines on the night of 15 September, engineers cleared mines from the crossing point road and D Company moved forward to the HV side around midnight. They were stunned by the sight that greeted them at dawn. Thick, black smoke coiled from the villages of Donji Selo and Licki Citluk. Explosions were heard punctuated by sporadic small-arms fire. The Canadians feared they were about to witness the remains of ethnic cleansing.

Maisonneuve and Nielsen were recalled to meet with the HV authorities in Gospic. The deadline for full HV withdrawal was extended by 24 hours. At noon Major Dan Drew led D Company 2PPCLI forward to take over the HV frontline. However, the HV barriers and mines remained in place. A T-72 tank had its turret aimed at the UN peacekeepers. During the night the HV had deployed Sagger antitank missiles. Drew, in turn, trained his TOWs at the HV but knew he was trapped in a standoff. Calvin appeared and had a heated discussion with Brigadier Mezic, the HV operational zone senior liaison officer, who offered a variety of excuses for the delay. While the two argued, further explosions and small-arms fire were heard.

When the HV refused to budge, Calvin decided to have an impromptu press conference on the road within HV view. A European television crew and a couple of Serb journalists had accompanied D Company the previous night. Mezic became nervous and dismantled the barrier. D Company crossed the line at 1330. The French company was delayed by the Croats until 1430 when they were allowed to enter Ornice. But they were not allowed to enter the village of Licki Citluk until 1800. Calvin went to Gospic to meet with the UNPROFOR representatives at 1630 to complain of the delay. He was positive that ethnic cleansing was ongoing in the area. It was emphasized to him that UNPROFOR had to keep to the negotiated timelines.

When the French entered Licki Citluk they found it razed. There were hundreds of surgical gloves scattered about. All the cattle had been slaughtered and the wells poisoned. A couple of Croats fled with loot. CANBAT was notified that

there were Krajina Serb survivors in the vicinity of Strunici. A French platoon was sent to the village but failed to discover any survivors. Every building between Licki Citluk and Strunici was burning or already destroyed. Every animal was dead. A quick sweep was made for survivors between D Company and the French company. Three Krajina Serbs were discovered and dispatched to Medak.

The UN forces continued moving forward gradually and occupied the entire pre-9 September area by 1800, 17 September. For the next two days there were incidents involving the UN forces and the HV over where the exact buffer zone was located. Final negotiations were held on 22 September and all parties signed a map with the agreed boundary lines.

Shortly after (27 September), a French peacekeeper became trapped in a minefield. During the night, Warrant Officer Bill Johnson moved forward using a stick to probe for mines. All he had for illumination was his flashlight. He reached the soldier and carried him to safety. Johnson would receive the Medal of Bravery for his actions.

Four Canadians and seven French soldiers had been wounded during the Medak operation and one CANBAT peacekeeper, Captain Jim DeCoste, had been killed in a vehicle accident behind Medak. There were an estimated 27 HV casualties.

The Canadian and French soldiers were aghast at the ethnic cleansing that had ensued in the Medak Pocket. Every single building in the pocket — 164 homes and 148 barns and outbuildings — had been destroyed. The area was littered with the bodies of pigs, horses, goats, cattle, sheep, and dogs. Most of the wells and cisterns in the pocket had been poisoned. The Canadians believed that every Krajina Serb in the area must have been executed. It was believed their bodies were hauled away in trucks, thus accounting for the hundreds of surgical gloves found (as did the UN, the Croats tried to equip their forces with surgical gloves if bodies had to be handled). There were 16 bodies discovered in the pocket, all killed between 15 and 16 September. They seemed to have been missed by the Croats when they were clearing the area. An old woman between 70 and 80 years was found in a field. She had been shot four times, once in the head. Two women between 15 and 25 were shot and burned beyond recognition in a basement, their bodies still hot from the blaze. Soldiers had to pour water over them to cool the bodies before they could be handled. An old man was found with 24 bullet wounds, all fired from behind. A few days later Croatia would return 50 more bodies. It was a sore lesson for UNPROFOR. They had failed to anticipate that the territory passed to them might first undergo ethnic cleansing.⁴⁶

With the Medak Pocket operation barely completed 2PPCLI passed its duties to 1R22eR, who had returned to Croatia for another tour of duty. The Van Doos officially took command of CANBAT 1 on 7 October 1993.

Lessons Learned

Under General Zabala, 3PPCLI felt they had made great progress toward implementing the Vance plan. It was well-known among the warring factions that the UN troops would quickly confiscate contraband weapons. While there were direct fire incidents aimed at the UN forces and mines were a continual hazard, Sector West was considered the only demilitarized sector and certainly the quietest. The UN civil affairs coordinator was able to implement a number of humanitarian programs in the sector.

The biggest challenge to 3PPCLI came during Operation Maslenica when the Croatian Serbs attempted to rearm, followed by the HV. It took all of Zabala's and Gerald Fisher's skill to prevent an outbreak of violence. CANBAT's quick actions to implement defence plans for the sector maintained local confidence in the UN.

Nonetheless, Operation Maslenica had done its damage. Following the HV invasion, many civil programs were cancelled in Sector West due to a pullout by both sides. 2PPCLI had little success in restarting the checkpoint visits which had fared well in the autumn of 1992. The UN's plans to resettle the centre of Pakrac with families from both factions in April 1993 failed to get off the ground.⁴⁷ The UN's failure to prevent an HV invasion in Sector South caused a serious blow to its credibility. The RSK pulled their weapons from the UN storage areas (another blow to UN credibility) and through 1993 there was an active front in Croatia.

Even the one success, the demilitarization of Sector West, was allowed to slide from UNPROFOR's hands. Although negotiation backed by force was absolutely proven to be a successful combination, in June 1993 it was discarded for a purely "negotiate, negotiate, negotiate" response. The result: within two weeks armed men in uniforms crossed the sector. The Wild West atmosphere experienced by the Van Doos returned. Both Croats and Croatian Serbs viewed the UN's new stance as a sign of weakness.

Lieutenant-General Cot was well aware of the UN's rapidly declining status. He had to deal with a force that was composed of fairly strong, militarily competent professionals, and battalions composed of lightly armed (or unequipped), untrained draftees. He struggled to improve the UN's position by arranging for a tactical (rather than political) deployment of his battalions in the second half of 1993. Each sector had a combination of strong and weak battalions. When the Canadians were moved to Sector South they were told they would ensure the HV retreated from the Medak Pocket. Cot was not going to witness another failure to enforce UNPROFOR's mandate.

LCol Calvin realized what was at stake. He had his own weaknesses to deal with. Some 42 percent of his unit were reservists. The combination was actually greater in the rifle companies (as the regulars filled the technically skilled positions) which could have 65 percent reservists. While the riflemen worked well (the training at Fort Ord proved invaluable), the reservist NCOs proved less qualified than their regular counterparts. Many struggled to maintain control of their

sections and several were put on recorded warning.⁴⁸ 2PPCLI in some respects displayed the Canadian scramble for forces that General de Chastelain warned of in the autumn of 1992.

Nonetheless, like General Cot, 2PPCLI believed in negotiation backed with force. They underwent several days of combat (in which they were restricted to responding only after attacked and then at the same level of the attack) to ensure the Croatian government kept its word to withdraw from the Medak Pocket. Undoubtedly they had to face that force because under similar circumstances UN forces had withdrawn in January 1993. That withdrawal led the belligerents to believe if they applied enough force, the UN would back down. It was one advantage the warring factions would always retain. UNPROFOR regularly changed commanders, along with national contingents, each with its own military philosophy. The warring factions maintained the same leaders, the same goals, and an ever-increasing knowledge base. The longer the conflict, the more at a disadvantage was the UN.

Both Sector West during the tenure of 3PPCLI and Sector South under 2PPCLI proved that negotiations backed with force worked. Unfortunately, UNPROFOR as a whole did not take these lessons to heart.

Notes

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. 106, 108.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 107; Military interviews.
5. UNIDIR, pp. 30-31.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.
7. During the course of the deployment, LCol Jones decided to break his two enlarged companies into four small companies.
8. Military interviews.
9. Military interviews.
10. Military interview.
11. Military interview.
12. *Ibid.*; "Croatian Forces Push away from Zadar," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 4 February 1993, p. 5; Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 2d ed. (London: Penguin, 1993), p. 232; UNIDIR, p. 38.
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- Situation Update," *ibid.*, 28 January 1993, p. 5; "Croatian Situation Update," *ibid.*, 29 January 1993, p. 4.
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 15. Military interviews.
 16. UNIDIR, pp. 108-9.
 17. Military interview; UNIDIR, pp. 185-86.
 18. "Vintage vehicles drive up risk," *Globe and Mail*, 22 March 1993, p. A1; "Equipment 'appropriate,' military assured cabinet," *ibid.*, 22 March 1993, p. A6.
 19. Canada, Report of the Auditor General to the House of Commons, *Peacekeeping*, May 1996, pp. 7-24, 7-25.
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 21. Capt Laurie Kannegiesser, "Bosnian Arms Embargo Lifted," *Defence Matters* 1 (October 1996): 32; Canada Land Force Command, "Canadian Peacekeeping Commitments in the Balkans," 17 July 1996 (<http://www.1fc.dnd.ca/english/oper/onu/missions/yougo1.htm>).
 22. "The Jane's Interview," *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 14 November 1992, p. 48.
 23. Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Toronto: HarperCollins, 1994), p. 47.
 24. It returned from Cyprus in late February 1992 and deployed to Yugoslavia in late October 1992.
 25. He was replaced by Jordanian Brigadier-General Shabsoh.
 26. Presentation by LCol James Calvin, Battle Group Commander, 2PPCLI, at CFB Kingston, Ontario, 21 October 1996; Military interviews.
 27. Bruce Wallace, "On the Firing Line," *Maclean's*, 4 May 1992, p. 25.
 28. Military interviews.
 29. "Krajina Serbs to Hold Unity Referendum," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 7 June 1993, p. 6; "Krajina Serbs Warn of Total War," *ibid.*, 9 June 1993, p. 5; "Krajina Serbs Conclude Vote," *ibid.*, 21 June 1993, p. 4.
 30. Lieutenant-Colonel T.J. Calvin, *2PPCLI After Action Report*, p. 3a (Calvin interview); UNIDIR, pp. 109-11 (Hague interview).
 31. Milan Babic had been reduced to his former post of mayor of Knin.
 32. "Tense Situation in Krajina," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 17 June 1993, pp. 5-6; "Krajina Serb Leader says No to Early Unity," *ibid.*, 23 June 1993, pp. 5-6; "Final Results of Krajina Serb Vote," *ibid.*, 24 June 1993, p. 5; "Croatian Serb leader wins hollow victory," *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 June 1993, p. A7.
 33. Military interviews.
 34. UNIDIR, pp. 109-11; Calvin, *After Action Report*, p. 3a.
 35. UNIDIR, p. 39; "Serb-Croat Conflict Heating Up," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 16 July 1993, p. 5; "Croatian bridge could spark fighting, UN fears," *Globe and Mail*, 16 July 1993, p. A8.

36. UNIDIR, p. 39; Calvin, *After Action Report*, p. 3b; "Tudjman Reopens Maslenica Bridge," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 19 July 1993, p. 6.
37. "Serb-Croat Conflict Heating Up"; Calvin, *After Action Report*, p. 3b; "Croatian Update," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 27 July 1993, p. 5; "Will the Croats withdraw from Maslenica?" *ibid.*, 30 July 1993, p. 5.
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39. Military interviews.
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41. UNIDIR, pp. 109-11; Calvin, *After Action Report*, p. 3b-d.
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46. Military interview; "Report on Medak Pocket Operations," 31 October 1993, pp. B-2/11-B-6/11; "Canada's secret battle"; "Croatia sets tough terms for UNPROFOR," *RFE/RL Daily Report*, 24 September 1993, p. 4.
47. "Next-door enemies go home," *Ottawa Citizen*, 10 April 1993, p. A10; Military interview.
48. Calvin, *After Action Report*, pp. 8-11.

4. *Destination — Bosnia*

President Franjo Tudjman and President Alija Izetbegovic signed a military alliance on 16 June 1992. Tudjman gave his blessing for the Croatian Army (HV) and the Bosnian Croatian defence council (HVO) to be used against the Bosnian Serb army (BSA). It was a critical alliance for the Bosnian government as it was dependent upon Croatia for weapons deliveries. The Croatians actually pushed for a much closer Bosnian-Croatian confederation but Izetbegovic balked at that step. It is possible that he was considering the Bosnian Serbs who had remained loyal to his government, whom he had no wish to alienate. It might also have been that Tudjman was not averse to dividing Bosnia with President Milosevic of the FRY. Unsympathetic to Izetbegovic's juggling act, Mate Boban, Bosnian Croat leader, placed intense pressure on Izetbegovic to orchestrate a confederation. When it did not happen, Boban declared the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna on 3 July.¹ There were now three political entities claiming Bosnian territory.

Nonetheless, the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims did maintain a military alliance throughout the summer. The HVO and HOS (the military arm of the Bosnian-Croatian Party of Rights) supported by HV forces broke the BSA siege of Mostar. The BSA were pushed back into eastern Herzegovina. In central and northern Bosnia, the ABiH (Bosnian government army) pushed the BSA back from Tuzla during the summer and autumn. Their campaign made BSA movement through the Posavina Corridor more difficult.²

The HOS promoted an undivided Bosnia, albeit one in confederation with Croatia. This clashed with Mate Boban's wish eventually to see western Herzegovina incorporated into Croatia. During the summer of 1992 many HVO fighters deserted to the HOS. The HOS philosophy encouraged Bosnian Muslims to join them as well. In Mostar, some 30 to 40 percent of the HOS were Muslim. In August 1992 the HVO, probably with HV support, assassinated Blaz Kraljevic, the leader of the HOS, and nine of his men.³ Following the assassination, the HOS dramatically declined in influence, and radicalism increased in Herzegovina.

The full-scale battles that raged in the summer of 1992 did not make the UN's job any easier. The increasing attacks on UN personnel and convoys caused the UN Security Council to pass Resolution 770 on 13 August which invoked Chapter VII and endorsed "all measures necessary" to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid. The resolution did not approve the use of force to end the war. Only Turkey and France rushed to offer troops to support the new operation. The WEU immediately declined to send forces to maintain a land corridor for humanitarian convoys from Split to Bosnia or to support any other armed action. The next day NATO turned down a proposal to deploy 100,000 soldiers to open a relief corridor.⁴

Two weeks later at the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) in London, Britain, Italy, and Canada pledged troops to support the UN resolution. Canada promised 1,200 peacekeepers who external affairs minister, Barbara McDougall, said would escort convoys of relief supplies to the isolated villages and besieged cities of Bosnia. In Britain there was talk that the operations would include mine-clearing and the removal of roadblocks. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed concern at the increase in the UN mandate which seemed to be mixing protection and combat, but reluctantly concurred to receive the Europeans support.⁵

The Geneva conference of the ICFY in September ordered the warring factions to place their heavy weapons deployed at Sarajevo, Gorazde, Bihac, and Jajce into UN supervised storage. This was partly carried out. The UN Security Council authorized 6,000 more troops for Bosnia. UNPROFOR was again authorized to use force for self-defence or when prevented from carrying out its mandate.⁶

Operation Cavalier

The 2nd Battalion, Royal Canadian Regiment (2RCR), returned from a tour in Cyprus in February 1992. Their commander, LCol Thomas Geburt, felt the regiment would be called upon to replace the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry (3PPCLI), in Croatia in March 1993. Instead 2RCR were notified in August that they would be heading to Bosnia come November. Their task would be to provide security for UN convoys, specifically UNHCR operations for the Bosnian Serbs.

LCol Geburt flew to Croatia with a large reconnaissance team that included representatives from operations, logistics, engineering, armoured reconnaissance, and signals. He was met in Zagreb by Colonel Irving, who provided him with a map and told him to reconnoitre the area from Banja Luka to Doboje as the British were being stationed to Vitez. Geburt and his team proceeded to Daruvar and were outfitted by 1R22eR with vehicles, drivers, and translators.

The reconnaissance team was met by the Bosnian Serbs at the Bosanska Gradiska bridge on the Sava river, which divides Croatia from Bosnia. From there

they were escorted to Banja Luka. At Banja Luka, Geburt decided to divide his team. The administrative team headed by the logistics officer would negotiate with local officials for accommodations, rations, and the setup of a base camp. The second operational team, headed by Geburt, would see as much of the area of operations as possible. The entire reconnaissance was controlled by the BSA, but the team did get as far east as Dobož and crossed the front line south of Skender Vakuf to meet with UNHCR officials operating at Vitez. While travelling the mountain route to Vitez the team witnessed first hand the destructiveness of the fighting and sites subject to ethnic cleansing. Refugees were scattered throughout the mountains.

The reconnaissance team crossed back to Croatia on 4 October. Two days later Geburt had the opportunity to meet MGen Philippe Morillon at his hotel. Geburt decided to recommend a base camp at Banja Luka as it was an established site, with a satellite camp at Dobož where there was a UNHCR warehouse. Morillon noted the recommendations and informed the Canadian commander, “I want you back in Belgrade 19 October for the battle group planning session.” Things were apparently going to move as quickly for 2RCR as they had for 1R22eR.

Back at CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick, the deputy commander of operations (DCO), Major Mark Sellers, was running the training program for the regiment. Training stressed the basics: chain of command, working in teams, and preparing for a rough time. They fully expected the convoys to become engaged by the warring factions and so practiced that on the range. The final composition of the battle group was extensively discussed. It was decided the engineering squadron could be cut to a field team. Mine clearing and upgrade training could be provided by the Canadian Engineering Regiment in theatre, but communications needed to be strengthened. A field surgical team was desirable. To meet its requirements, 2RCR was augmented by a rifle company of 1RCR from CFB Petawawa and with units from the parent 5 Brigade. This made the unit roughly bilingual with a 60-percent anglophone, 40-percent francophone, mix. In all there were 970 personnel, including 55 reservists.

Geburt and two of his officers had to meet Morillon in Belgrade on 19 October, so Major Sellers was charged with the deployment to Daruvar, where the regiment would unite with its equipment. As Lahr and Baden-Söllingen were closing, Ottawa wanted 2RCR to take the equipment from the German bases rather than their own at Gagetown. However, everything that was needed had not been stored in Germany. This meant 2RCR had to wait for the arrival of equipment from four bases: Lahr, Baden-Söllingen, CFB Gagetown, and CFB Valcartier. Amazingly, all the equipment and troops arrived at Daruvar as scheduled.

A problem occurred when what was to be known as CANBAT 2 tried to deploy to Banja Luka. The BSA refused to allow the Canadians to cross the Bosanska Gradiska bridge. The Bosnian Serbs wanted a formal application for deployment from the UN to be addressed to the Serbian Republic of Bosnia. As the UN did not recognize the “Serbian Republic of Bosnia,” they refused to submit the

requested document. CANBAT 2 remained in Sector West. Each day they attempted to cross the bridge, without success.

As it became evident that CANBAT 2 was going to remain in Croatia more than a few days, 2RCR made arrangements to relocate to smaller base camps. CANBAT 2 headquarters was established at Lipik, the site of an old Lipizan stallion farm complex. Other companies were dispersed to Bijela and Pakrac. To keep the soldiers “keyed up” they practiced patrolling and disarming factions, assisted 3PPCLI with drawing up plans to defend Sector West, and took over CANBAT 1’s OPs and checkpoints so they could perform Operation Round-Up, a major cordon sweep operation. In November, an RCR company assisted in establishing a mini-refugee camp in Sector North.

Geburt and his operations officer, Major Andrew Butters, were given permission to make a second reconnaissance through Bosnian Serb territory in November. Their escorts were congenial but they could often smell liquor on their breath. When travelling, the BSA officers insisted on stopping at the local pubs for a drink. It was emphasized by 2RCR that you could have one drink to show respect, but sip it. Do not *ever* try to match the Bosnians at drinking. By this time 2RCR were more than familiar with the sight of drunken warring faction soldiers and “night music” — inebriated soldiers firing off their weapons for the fun of it.

They went southwest toward Livno and witnessed ethnically cleansed areas. The war was having an effect. There was less available in the shops, and fewer vehicles were driving around. Geburt managed to convince the BSA escort that he needed to visit B-H command at Kiseljak. He intended to travel through Donji Vakuf to Travnik and then to Kiseljak. The BSA commander at Jajce/Donji Vakuf was not pleased when the Canadian appeared. He told Geburt he could cross the next day. But the next day there was heavy fighting at Travnik. Therefore, they headed to Bugojno to cross. The BSA were quite nervous. They had no means of communicating with the ABiH to warn them the Canadians were crossing. There were several tense moments, but the vehicle came through and they were escorted to Vitez where they met Colonel Robert Stewart, the British battle group commander. They went on down to Kiseljak and to the shock of several individuals there, handed in their report. Geburt’s philosophy at crossing the front lines was, “Sometimes you need to push your luck.”

The two officers had made arrangements with the BSA to cross the lines at the same time the next day. The BSA met them as promised, but suspiciously they were shelled just as they crossed the line. The unofficial opening of this route came in handy in December when LCol Geburt needed to escort LGeneral Nambiar from a meeting with General Mladic at Banja Luka to Kiseljak. The reconnaissance reconfirmed Geburt’s opinion that Banja Luka should be CANBAT 2’s base camp with Doboj and now Mrkonjic Gard as satellite camps.

In early December the BSA agreed to allow a Dutch transport platoon into Banja Luka to assist UNHCR. Geburt thought this was his opportunity to establish CANBAT 2 in BSA territory. The Dutch were authorized a protection team.

Geburt selected an enhanced platoon with maintenance, logistic, medical, and engineering support. About 100 Canadians and Dutch deployed to Banja Luka. However, the BSA never allowed the platoon to conduct convoy operations. They lived in a tent camp in a parking lot (not the site agreed to during the reconnaissance mission) and were not allowed to move from there. The unit was harassed and received some small-arms fire. Finally, UN New York ordered the platoon out on 24 December 1992.⁷

Macedonia

President Kiro Gligorov of Macedonia had feared conflict in his ethnically diverse state from the beginning. Surprisingly, Macedonia remained remarkably free of conflict in 1992. However, an ethnic Albanian riot on 6 November, which left one dead and four wounded, renewed Gligorov's fear of conflict in his small nation. The Macedonian interior ministry believed the riots had been instigated by the FRY. Greece had prevented EC recognition of Macedonia⁸ and the country feared Greece could have been encouraging the FRY in its claims to Macedonia.⁹ Gligorov sent a letter to Boutros-Ghali requesting a preventive force to monitor Macedonia's borders with Albania and Serbia and thus avoid the spread of the Yugoslav conflict. Both ICFY chairmen David Owen and Cyrus Vance advised the secretary-general to accede to Gligorov's request.¹⁰

The UN sent 14 UN military observers (UNMOs) at the end of November to determine the feasibility of a preventative deployment. On 11 December, following Boutros-Ghali's determination, the Security Council passed Resolution 795 approving the stationing of an UNPROFOR presence in Macedonia to monitor and report any developments that could undermine the stability of Macedonia or threaten its security. The mandate covered the borders with Albania and the FRY.¹¹

In December, LCol Geburt was asked to undertake a second UN reconnaissance in Macedonia. The reconnaissance, which was performed from 27 December 1992 to 1 January 1993, determined the tasking was feasible and the company could drive from Daruvar to Belgrade then down to Macedonia. There were six major access routes into Macedonia which could be monitored with joint patrols along the border. The FRY border extended 285 kilometres from Albania in the west to Bulgaria in the east.

The UN gave the go-ahead and Major Ron Furlotte was selected to command the 175 soldiers deployed to Macedonia. They established two base camps, one at Tetovo in the west and the other at Kumanovo in the east. The Canadians were going to monitor the border from north of Tetovo to the Bulgarian border. UNMOs would monitor the border from Tetovo to Albania. Both static and roving OPs were established, and 2RCR arranged for joint patrols with the Macedonian police. The Canadians thought the large ethnic Albanian minority could cause a

problem and were prepared to watch for any sign of ethnic conflict. By 10 January their presence was established. The only problem the company encountered in the next three months was when a JNA patrol wandered across the border. This was not considered necessarily threatening as the terrain was extremely mountainous.¹²

In February the UN renamed the mission in Macedonia UNPREDEP and gave it its own force commander. The Canadians were replaced in March by a 700-strong Nordic battalion (Norway, Finland, and Sweden) commanded by Danish Brigadier-General F. Siermirk Thomsen. They were joined by US forces in June 1993. There was a dangerous confrontation between Macedonian and FRY forces in June/July 1994 regarding border demarcation. Each engaged in a force build-up at Cupino Brdo, a massif on the border in northeast Macedonia. The UN obtained border information from both sides and proposed an administrative border that became known as the UN Line. In July 1994, both parties accepted the boundary for UN patrolling and it in effect became a *de facto* border. The UN also mediated a withdrawal of the JNA forces that had entered Macedonia during the confrontation.¹³

In some ways UNPREDEP was the most successful of the UN deployments in the former Yugoslavia. For once, the forces were sent early enough to prevent the outbreak of conflict. The US and EU presence worked to urge the Macedonian government to moderate its ethnic policies, thereby defusing internal tension. The presence of UN peacekeepers on the border undoubtedly prevented a conflict between Macedonia and the FRY. It is to both Canada's and 2RCR's credit that they laid the groundwork for this operation.

Visoko

LCol Geburt met with MGen Morillon in Sarajevo in early January. Morillon told Geburt to find a spot near Kiseljak as he was going to have the Canadians provide convoy escort for the eastern enclaves: Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde. Morillon warned Geburt not to get too comfortable as he still planned to deploy CANBAT 2 to the BSA side of the battle lines. The reconnaissance team found an old manufacturing complex in the mountainous terrain of ABiH-controlled Visoko and a brickwork factory up the road from HVO-controlled Kiseljak. Both sites offered a hard shelter for the troops. At Visoko they could set their tents up inside the buildings which would mask their electronic signature, provide bunker protection, and keep things warmer. Both sites were within an easy commuting distance of Sarajevo and the supply route to the Dalmatian coast. Visoko was established as the main base, with Kiseljak as a satellite base (combat support company and rifle company).

In February, CANBAT 2 had to load all its equipment in Sector West onto a train to go to Rijeka, on the coast. From there it sailed to Ploce. At Ploce they drove to Mostar (which had been heavily shelled in the fighting) and travelled the

Tarcin-Kresovo road, which at this point was little more than a snowy, icy lumber road with dangerous S-bend turns.

CANBAT 2 was basically tasked to conduct security for infrastructure repair missions inside Sarajevo, provide security for the daily convoys from Kiseljak to Sarajevo, perform traffic control from Tarcin to Kiseljak and from Visoko to Tuzla, provide security for the eastern enclave convoys, and conduct VIP escorts. CANBAT 2 was not tasked with establishing OPs, although they engaged in patrolling and were asked to establish a standing patrol at a coal mine north of Visoko. Two Cougars (general purpose armoured vehicles) were stationed there to ward off sniper fire.

It was not long before RCR discovered that the Kiseljak-Visoko road was subject to constant sniper fire. Things were particularly bad near the hamlet of Buci. Buci was a wooded area near the Bosnian Serb front line (1,000 metres or less). Geburt sent out two Cougars to set up a static overwatch position to protect the vehicles travelling along the Kiseljak-Visoko road. There were two sniper teams deployed with 2RCR. They were sent out to Buci to gather information. They determined that there were ten to twelve BSA positions in the area. Their assessment was that *if needed* they could effectively eliminate seven of those positions. They could likely take out two others. The remaining position(s) could only be harassed by the Canadians. Geburt considered mounting offensive actions as the harassing fire became intense and continuous. However, after discussion with headquarters, it was decided not to take sniper action. RCR continued to respond to harassing fire with the overwatch vehicle's machine gun.

For infrastructure repair missions a platoon would link up with sector headquarters. They would take local tradespeople out to repair infrastructure such as roads, power stations, or telephone lines. There was about a 50-percent chance of completing the mission. The team frequently came under heavy fire and would have to retreat.¹⁴

Escorting convoys the 30 kilometres from Kiseljak to Sarajevo could be frustrating and dangerous. A convoy would have to go through an HVO checkpoint, cross no man's land, proceed through two BSA checkpoints, and then an ABiH checkpoint into Sarajevo. On a good day the trip would take 45 minutes and three or four convoys would enter Sarajevo. If a convoy made it through all the checkpoints it could be subject to sniper fire in Sarajevo or on the return trip. On one trip an escort platoon was waiting at the airport for a convoy when the airport came under mortar fire. Every Canadian vehicle parked there was hit by shrapnel. On a bad day, the vehicles might return to Kiseljak fully loaded or decide to wait at the checkpoints for permission to cross. The BSA often engaged in stalling tactics and would insist on inspecting the vehicles. UN peacekeepers were told to refuse all inspection requests. RCR heeded this procedure. As a consequence, one convoy waited three days and two nights.¹⁵

Traffic control was one of CANBAT 2's most important tasks as it provided security for the entire network of humanitarian-aid routes. It was while performing

this duty that Master Corporal John Ternapolski became Canada's first fatality in the former Yugoslavia. On 25 March his APC was returning from Kiseljak on a wet, cold, snowy evening. A section of the road collapsed when the APC drove over it and the vehicle tumbled down the ravine to the river bed. Ternapolski was killed while the others in the vehicle escaped with minor injuries.¹⁶

Although Morillon had stated that CANBAT's primary task would be to escort convoys into the eastern enclaves, CANBAT escorted only one convoy into Gorazde. The rest were turned back. The Canadians experienced many complications with maintaining a united front with UNHCR and other UN contingents. These parties compromised UN procedures, and were engaging in such activities as opening vehicles to inspection at checkpoints. These units' efforts at short-term gain worked against the UN in the long run by limiting its ability to operate and reduced the flow of aid.

Srebrenica

The BSA strategic routes campaign of March 1992 had caused the Bosnian Muslims of eastern Bosnia to flood into several enclaves. But contrary to popular belief, while the Muslims were outgunned, they did not sit idly by. From May 1992 to January 1993, Naser Oric led a territorial defence (TO) unit (what would become ABiH 28th Division), centred in the town of Srebrenica, on an offensive campaign to retake the Srebrenica *opstina*. Oric's soldiers tortured, mutilated, and burned alive Bosnian Serbs in villages such as Brezani, Zalazje, Ratkovici, Fakovici, and Glogova. By January, Oric had captured and ethnically cleansed 95 percent of the Srebrenica *opstina* and half the Bratunac *opstina*.¹⁷ Through a series of hit and run raids he pushed the BSA across the Drina river into the FRY.¹⁸

The first UNHCR convoy reached Srebrenica in late November 1992. Two weeks later, Oric launched an attack on the Bosnian Serb village of Bjelovac. Oric may have been creating a military diversion for a 2nd Corps, ABiH, attack on the Posavina Corridor, but to the BSA it appeared that UNHCR was in cahoots with Oric. The BSA hindered further food convoys into the enclaves and UN credibility was undermined.¹⁹

There was a second jar to Bosnian Serb sensibilities. During the autumn of 1992 Lord David Owen and Cyrus Vance met with leaders of the warring factions, Croatia and the FRY, to secure peace in the former Yugoslavia. By January 1993 the Vance-Owen agreement was written, proposing a decentralized state composed of ten cantons. The plan's maps were drawn to ensure that each party would be the majority in three cantons apiece, with the tenth canton of Sarajevo open. There was a Muslim-dominated canton covering the Drina valley from Gorazde through Zepa to Srebrenica.²⁰ The success of the Srebrenica TO offensive and the Vance-Owen proposal to establish a Bosnian Muslim canton in eastern Bosnia spurred the BSA to action.

Finally able to muster enough forces in eastern Bosnia, the BSA counterattacked Srebrenica on 8 February 1993. The fighting made the situation in the enclave desperate. A contingent of British UN forces commanded by Major Abrams was sent to Konjevic Polje to oversee the evacuation of the wounded from Cerska which had been overrun by the BSA. Abrams eventually had to withdraw as the battle progressed to Konjevic Polje. The counteroffensive that took Cerska spurred on the UN Security Council. On 3 March the UNSC requested the secretary-general to “take immediate steps to increase UNPROFOR’s presence in eastern Bosnia.” As the convoys were unable to reach the enclaves, the United States Air Force began to make airdrops of food and medicine.²¹

Srebrenica stimulated a further use of airpower in Bosnia. The BSA had used light planes to bomb the eastern enclaves. This was despite UNSC Resolution 781 banning military flights in Bosnian air space. On 31 March 1993, UNSC Resolution 816 was passed allowing NATO to shoot down any aircraft violating Bosnia’s no-fly zone. On 12 April, Operation Deny Flight was in place. Dutch, French, and American aircraft patrolled the Bosnian skies enforcing the no-fly zone.²² Within several months other NATO members including Great Britain, Turkey, and Spain would join them.

Major General Morillon took the UNSC’s tasking seriously. Bravo Company of 2RCR left Kiseljak with eight APCs and French-provided ambulances and snow-clearing equipment, to meet Morillon and the relief trucks for Srebrenica coming from Belgrade. The two groups linked up, but were stopped at Zvornik, a Bosnian Serb-controlled border town on 11 March. The local BSA commander suggested that the convoy could proceed without their military escort or radio equipment, but this was rejected by the Canadians.

Since he could not get clearance for the convoy, Morillon decided to proceed to Srebrenica on his own. Without consulting LCol Geburt, Morillon took two Canadian APCs and their crews from Zvornik. Morillon reached Srebrenica to an enthusiastic reception. Refugees had swollen the enclave from 8,000 to 40,000. Médecins sans frontières (a French aid agency) estimated 5,000 refugees were sleeping in the open in sub-zero temperatures. The refugees were eating gruel made from wheat chaff and corn husks. Many were shoeless and clad in little more than rags. Yet more Bosnian Muslim refugees were heading into Srebrenica from Konjevic Polje, Cerska, and Kamenica.

Morillon was not indifferent to their plight. The French general clambered to the top of an APC and told the crowd standing in the snow, “*Nous ne vous abandonnerons pas!*” (We will not abandon you!) Morillon met with the Srebrenica war council and suggested that Srebrenica be demilitarized. The Bosnian government in Sarajevo agreed with this recommendation. His suggestions did not impress Naser Oric and his men. Morillon was blocked from leaving the enclave until the UN agreed to intervene to protect them from the BSA. An air evacuation failed when the UN helicopters came under fire.

Morillon made the best of the situation. He established a headquarters in the post office and ran up the UN flag. He addressed the residents of Srebrenica from the post office balcony, using a megaphone. Morillon even supported the war council's bid for attention. In a radio interview he stated that what was happening in Srebrenica was "a crime against humanity."²³ The war council told Morillon he could depart 13 March, but he chose to stay. He was going to negotiate to bring in a company from CANBAT 2.²⁴

Morillon negotiated with the BSA and received permission to bring a humanitarian convoy into Srebrenica. The French general proceeded to Mali Zvornik, a Serbian town across the border from Zvornik. On 19 March he led the convoy past the JNA into Bosnia only to have the trucks stopped by BSA soldiers. Morillon yielded to the BSA demand that the vehicles proceed without their UN military escort (against the wishes of the officers in the convoy). He also promised that UNMOs would not be stationed in Srebrenica. The BSA then allowed the convoy to proceed.

The Danish relief drivers were unhappy with this decision. They worried that Morillon had set a dangerous precedent which would endanger their lives. UNHCR's stated policy was convoys that had to cross warring faction front lines would have a military escort. It was why the troops had been deployed to Bosnia. And there had been a history of hijackings and deaths that had led to the troop deployment.

When the convoy arrived it was greeted by weeping crowds. The next morning the 17-truck convoy was packed with some 680 people who had swarmed aboard the trucks in a bid to leave the enclave. Morillon led them to Tuzla, thus departing the enclave for the time being, but left the Canadians and their APCs behind to reinforce to the refugees that help was coming.²⁵ The Canadians did their best to keep morale up in the enclave. They swept up litter before the headquarters which seemed to inspire the locals who the next day cleaned the streets as well. They also provided entertainment. Some 5,000 people delighted in watching the Canadians splash about in the mud playing frisbee football.²⁶

On 24 March, four French Puma helicopters stopped at Zvornik for a BSA inspection before proceeding to Srebrenica for an arranged air evacuation of the wounded. At Zvornik the helicopters and passengers were stripped of all arms and ammunition. One of the helicopters was detained and two Western journalists were held. The three remaining Pumas landed on a soccer field that had been cleared in Srebrenica and lifted out 21 wounded civilians. Just after the helicopter lifted, a mortar hit the field killing a civilian and wounding two Canadian soldiers, Master Corporal Donald Paris and Private Timothy Parrell. Two British Sea Kings flew in to evacuate the wounded Canadians. They were fired upon as they left, but made it intact to Tuzla. The soldiers were confined to a bunker while shelling went on, then were transferred to the city's hospital. The UN suspended the airlift.²⁷

The winter weather was harsh. There was more than a metre of snow on the ground in Srebrenica. Sarajevo endured 60 hours of snowfall. On 28 March, Morillon announced that an agreement had been reached on Srebrenica. The wounded and refugees could be evacuated provided they left their weapons behind. A Bosnia-wide ceasefire would be in effect. Morillon had not secured permission to send a company of Canadians into the enclave, but BSA General Ratko Mladic did say he would take it under advisement.

The Canadians escorted 19 trucks with 200 tonnes of supplies into Srebrenica. When the convoy prepared to return to Tuzla thousands rushed the trucks, fighting to get aboard. Two children were crushed in the stampede. Another five died on board the suffocatingly packed trucks en route to Tuzla. Bosnian Muslim soldiers had tried to empty the trucks to allow the 650 wounded that were selected for evacuation to get on, but the crowds refused to budge. The soldiers had begun to pull people off but then had to fire their weapons into the air to keep the angry crowd at bay. Despite the altercation, 2,114 Bosnian Muslims arrived in Tuzla.²⁸

Another convoy prepared to leave Srebrenica on 31 March. The TO soldiers were suppose to guard the trucks overnight, but when the drivers came out in the morning some 2,000 had jammed themselves into 14 trucks. Six had died in the crush. One refugee commented, “it was everyone for himself. It didn’t go by the list.” Other refugees had paid the soldiers \$200 to get on the trucks. When the convoy was leaving Srebrenica, soldiers whose families had not got on board stopped the trucks, fired warning shots, and threatened to blow up the lead truck with a grenade. The ordeal did not end there. When the trucks reached Tuzla, infuriated Bosnian government officials had the ABiH mine the roads to prevent the refugees’ entry, and ordered the soldiers to fire on the trucks to drive the refugees back to Srebrenica. UNHCR special envoy, José Maria Mendiluce, called President Alija Izetbegovic and asked him to intercede. The convoy was then allowed through.²⁹

Vice-President Ejup Ganic wanted all evacuation from Srebrenica stopped. If only ABiH/TO soldiers remained in the enclave, the Bosnian government would not generate international sympathy. Ganic argued that the UN would be assisting in ethnic cleansing if they removed the refugees. The foreign minister, Haris Silajdzic, suggested Srebrenica was lost and it was the people who were important. Izetbegovic decided he would allow the evacuation of people over 60, women with small children, and wounded civilians. Everyone else would stay. The Srebrenica war council decided that not even Izetbegovic’s exceptions could depart. A 4 April convoy returned to Tuzla empty and when a convoy arrived on 6 April with the intention of carrying out evacuations the 1,000 residents who had assembled to board the trucks were ordered home by the ABiH soldiers.³⁰

The BSA finally lost patience and attacked Srebrenica on 5 April. Major-General Morillon set out for Srebrenica with a Canadian escort and ordered the Canadian company assembled in Tuzla to follow him. The BSA refused to allow the Canadians access. Meanwhile, the civilians of Srebrenica endured artillery

bombardments. The town itself was shelled on 12 April. The seven Canadians in the enclave went out in their APC and used it as an ambulance, loading wounded and taking them to the hospital. At day's end the APC floor was red with blood.³¹

After Morillon's earlier actions, UNPROFOR commander, Lars-Erik Wahlgren, had warned Morillon he was not to act on his own in regards to Srebrenica. After the 12 April shelling, Morillon demanded that Wahlgren agree to his return to Srebrenica. He set out from Tuzla, but before long his APC was attacked by Bosnian Serb widows who hammered steel spikes into his bulletproof glass windows, slashed the tires, ripped off radio antennas and UN flags, and tried to dismantle the machine gun. Morillon had to be rescued by BSA chief of staff, General Manojlo Milovanovic. Milovanovic evacuated Morillon with his helicopter in defiance of the no-fly zone and dropped Morillon in the no man's land before Tuzla.³²

As the enclave was about to fall (16 April 1993), and acting under Chapter VII, the UNSC adopted Resolution 819 declaring Srebrenica a safe area. The resolution did not specify what a safe area was or how it could be achieved. It did state that the safe area was to be based on mutual consent. The UN was not going to send troops to enforce the area, but it would monitor the situation.³³ Mostly, this resolution was aimed to show the international arena that the UN was doing something about Srebrenica while in reality UN New York failed to provide UNPROFOR with the resources necessary to carry out the increased mandate.

Generals Morillon and Wahlgren met with ABiH General Halilovic and BSA General Mladic at Sarajevo airport to discuss implementation of the resolution. After 14 hours of negotiation it was agreed on 17 April that:³⁴

1. a ceasefire would begin at 0500, 18 April;
2. a company of CANBAT 2 could enter Srebrenica at 1100;
3. within 72 hours the ABiH in Srebrenica had to give their weapons to CANBAT 2; and
4. five hundred wounded could be evacuated by helicopter.

The agreement simply stated the demilitarization of Srebrenica. It did not define Srebrenica which was an *opstina*, an enclave, and a town.

LCol Thomas Geburt led a 175-person strong company to Srebrenica on Sunday 18 April. His 40 vehicles included 22 APCs, and there were medical and engineering troops included. Despite the agreement, the Canadians were stalled at numerous checkpoints. When they finally arrived in Srebrenica it was to an emotional welcome. The crowd cheered and threw flowers. The Canadian soldiers were hugged and kissed.

RCR did not have time to bask in the attention. There was going to be a helicopter evacuation using French Pumas and British Sea Kings. The Canadians had to secure a landing zone and decide who was going to fly out. A headquarters was established in the local telephone building and Geburt met with the local

government, including the mayor. A mini-cooperative council was established to decide who would leave in the evacuation. A doctor from Médecins sans frontières, an RCR doctor, and a Bosnian Muslim doctor did the screening. Three hours after their arrival, three helicopters landed and evacuated the first 133 casualties.

There was a great deal of tension in deciding who was to be evacuated. The Srebrenica authorities had made it clear they would not allow the enclave to be evacuated en masse. Desperation caused many people to lay down in front of the transport vehicles in a bid to be placed on the helicopters. The situation in Srebrenica remained grim. There was a severe shortage of water. Medical facilities were inadequate. Despite a few truck convoys the population remained dependent on the USAF airdrops. In the evening people would crowd out to the edge of the town to wait for the drops. There were dead dogs in the streets and dead cows floating in the river. The next day, 19 April, another 354 were evacuated fulfilling part four of the safe-area agreement.³⁵

The next task was to demilitarize Srebrenica. To begin, Geburt had to get agreement from the two parties as to what “Srebrenica” constituted. The Canadian commander was well aware that 175 soldiers were not going to be able to demilitarize the entire enclave. Geburt met with Naser Oric. They climbed a mountain near the town and together defined the boundaries of “metropolitan Srebrenica,” an area 4.5 by 0.5 kilometres. Geburt then visited the local BSA commander, Colonel Vukic, and convinced him to agree to the same boundaries.

The next step was to engage in a weapons turn-in campaign with the assistance of the local council. Weapons storage sites were set up, checkpoints were established to confiscate weapons, signs were posted advising of the weapons turn-in requirement, and patrolling was initiated.³⁶ The Bosnian Muslims handed over two tanks for which there was no gas or shells, an APC, 23 artillery pieces and mortars, and 260 small arms.³⁷ This was probably half of the weapons in the TO’s hands. Most of the soldiers left the town of Srebrenica for the nearby hills. Within a few months the TO soldiers were formally reorganized as ABiH and supplied with weapons from central Bosnia.³⁸ Oric, whose headquarters was in Srebrenica town, was warned by Geburt that he could not walk through town armed or have armed bodyguards, so he moved his headquarters north to Poticari. By 1200, 21 April, there were no weapons or uniforms visible in the designated safe area. Geburt wanted to destroy the weapons he had collected but the UN denied him permission. He was only allowed to destroy dangerous ammunition.

An inspection team came to Srebrenica, including UNSC Ambassador Diego Aria. Geburt warned him, if they wished to expand the safe area to the entire enclave, an entire battle group would be needed, but Aria felt the safe-area concept was valid. Despite his company’s limitations, LCol Geburt had been tasked to protect Srebrenica. His best chance to do that was to deter an attack. OPs were set up well north of Srebrenica town at Poticari and south of the town near the confrontation line. (By summer eight OPs would be established around the enclave.) TOWs were deployed to the OPs. The Canadians patrolled as far out as possible.

Geburt had continual discussions with BSA Colonel Vukic. The early conversations started out with a half-hour history lesson, but later as the two established a working relationship, Vukic would get quickly down to business. At the beginning Vukic warned Geburt not to send the soldiers out, as it was not safe. Geburt told Vukic he was being advised of where the Canadians were patrolling, so they had better be safe. Another time the Canadians were told to move their OP, which was south of Srebrenica, or it would be destroyed. Geburt went to visit Vukic and asked him, "You'll destroy the OP with your tank?"

"Yes," replied Vukic.

"Go ahead," Geburt suggested. "Then, I'll destroy your tank."

Vukic allowed the OP to remain where it was.

Geburt developed a plan to defend Srebrenica. If the enclave was attacked, the OPs would be drawn in toward the town and the company would defend the town of Srebrenica. The Canadians found the UN evacuation plans to be ill-conceived. If they needed to withdraw, helicopters would be flown in and the Canadians would destroy all of their equipment. The populace, though, was not accounted for in the withdrawal plan.³⁹

With the Canadian presence established, Geburt returned to Visoko with the soft-skin vehicles. APCs were preferred for travel inside the enclave, although even an armoured vehicle was not proof from harm. Two Canadians were wounded when their APC drove over an antitank mine in late April. The co-driver had to be evacuated from Srebrenica.⁴⁰

On 11 May seven 2RCR soldiers were sitting on a hillside one kilometre from Srebrenica town watching for ceasefire violations. Master Corporal Andrew Achtenberg was sitting six metres from the APC writing a report. Suddenly, the soldiers came under fire and they ran for the APC. A bullet slammed through Achtenberg's right leg and lodged in his left calf. The wound did not stop him from quickly crawling into the vehicle. The men immediately returned fire, but did not know if they hit the attacker. The driver pulled the APC out and took Achtenberg to the hospital.⁴¹

Srebrenica was the grimmest posting a Canadian peacekeeper could pull in the former Yugoslavia. The BSA continually restricted the movement of the UN and convoys entering the enclave. Through the second half of 1993 Srebrenica averaged one convoy a month. The Canadians could not receive their mail, fuel, or food. They would spend much of their posting on combat rations. Often they could not get out of the enclave to take their UN leave. And despite their observation mission, and the time spent in negotiations, there is no doubt they were in a combat environment. The ABiH would send military patrols out of the enclave at night to strike at the BSA then run back into the safe area. In retaliation the BSA would enter the safe area, seize key terrain, then retreat a couple days later. The Canadians were targeted by both sides.

The Canadians' equipment made a tempting target. The thieves were armed and had no qualms about shooting at the peacekeepers if caught in the Canadian

compound or the OPs. When 2R22eR replaced 2RCR in May they were plagued with thefts. One night, four to five ABiH soldiers broke into a CANBAT OP. A Canadian soldier inside, unaware of the breach, set his weapon against a wall, then stepped outside the hut to fill his lantern from a fuel can. An ABiH soldier shot at the Canadian who ducked back inside. He grabbed his weapon, shot at the shadows and called for the other Van Doos in the OP to join him. The Canadians chased the intruders away. The next day an ABiH soldier showed up at Srebrenica hospital with a gunshot wound consistent with that made by a C7. The Van Doos decided to mount extra security to discourage the break-ins.

To stop the ABiH raids into BSA territory, the Van Doos conducted patrols in the early hours before dawn to catch soldiers when they were re-entering the safe area. The patrols were apparently too successful. The company was ordered to stop them, possibly after an official of the Bosnian government launched a complaint.⁴²

The Safe Area Mandate

The Canadian government discovered within two days of entering Srebrenica that insufficient force had been deployed to fulfill the mission assigned. One company in a Bosnian Muslim town surrounded by Bosnian Serbs was not going to prevail should the BSA decide to attack. Also, since they were such a small detachment they became de facto hostages to the BSA as the enclave was completely dependent upon the BSA's cooperation to receive supplies. They also aided the Bosnian government in its policy of maintaining an untenable territory. By shying away from an evacuation because it would contribute to ethnic cleansing, the Bosnian government condemned 30,000 Bosnian Muslims to a refugee camp deep in Bosnian Serb territory for two years to be followed by an uncontrolled evacuation by the BSA. The external affairs minister, Barbara McDougall, called on other nations to pledge troops to Srebrenica. When that call failed to generate support, she asked the French and British to provide forces. Neither was keen to place themselves in such an indefensible situation. The British promised they would provide air support if the Canadians were attacked.⁴³

Morillon had set in motion a dramatic expansion of the UN mandate in Bosnia. The UN was now placed in a position where it had to defend civilians on the ground, a task it had until that point adamantly refused. On 6 May, the UNSC passed Resolution 824 expanding the safe areas to include Sarajevo, Zepa, Tuzla, Gorazde, and Bihac. The resolution authorized "all necessary measures through the use of air power ... to support UNPROFOR in the performance of its mandate." UNPROFOR took this to mean it was now authorized to use airstrikes in addition to close air support (CAS) of forces on the ground. The wording sounded tough. UNPROFOR requested 34,000 troops to carry out the new tasking. The UNSC provided 7,600 and only 3,600 were deployed in support of the safe area concept.⁴⁴

To further undermine the idea, UNSC Resolution 836 passed 4 June 1993 allowed ABiH forces to remain in the safe areas. The resolution referred to Chapter VII without any qualification, allowing the peacekeepers in Bosnia officially to become peacemakers within the safe areas, but then it stated that UN ground forces would not enforce the safe areas.⁴⁵ The UNSC probably contemplated enforcing the concept through airpower, a cheap way out of the dilemma, but a rather unsound idea considering the deployment of UN forces on the ground.

Demilitarization was an initial requirement for a safe area, yet only Srebrenica and Zepa were even partially demilitarized. The June resolution indicated the safe areas did not have to demilitarize but would retain safe area privileges. There were never enough UN forces deployed to act as a deterrent. As a result the safe areas became a base for the ABiH to rest, rearm, and then conduct raids and military operations against the BSA. The BSA used the areas to tie down ABiH forces and exert control over the UN by commanding access to the areas (except Tuzla).⁴⁶ This abuse of the safe areas drew the UN into taking the Bosnian government's side in the conflict. ABiH soldiers would conduct raids, the BSA would retaliate with a bombardment of the safe area to which the ABiH had retreated, and the UN would then punish the BSA for violating the safe area.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with expanding a UN mandate, to expand the mandate while refusing to provide the necessary military support verged on being criminally irresponsible. While Canadians did resolutely carry out their duties in Srebrenica, it was the Dutch, who replaced the Canadians in March 1994, who would pay the price of a rather reckless deployment. On 11 July 1995, the enclave was overrun by the BSA. The seriously outgunned Dutch airmobile brigade company was exposed in its hilltop OPs. When they decided to withdraw and establish a fall-back position to protect the town (similar to the Canadian plan), Private Raviv van Renssen was killed by ABiH troops and another platoon of Dutch were held in a village by Bosnian Muslims, rather than being allowed to proceed to Srebrenica. Even their relocation of vehicles within the town of Srebrenica and at Poticari was blocked by the Bosnian Muslims who were dictating how the UN should conduct its defence. The Dutch fatally delayed a request for air support. Finally, they sent out a call, expecting 40 targets to be destroyed. Almost 20 hours later four F-16s arrived and destroyed two targets. Shortly after, the BSA threatened to kill the Dutch soldiers they had captured in the advance should any further airstrikes occur.⁴⁷ The vaunted air support the Canadians had been assured of in April 1993 failed to materialize due to UN bureaucracy and the indecision over what air actions were allowed during the same hours the enclave was falling.

While the UN discussed what tactical activities were allowed, BSA General Ratko Mladic acted. His plan to take the enclave was executed with military perfection. After the enclave was overrun, and the UN were off balance, he immediately had busses on site to evacuate the 23,000 women, children, and elderly of Srebrenica. All the captured men of military age were hustled away for

“interrogation.” Within a few days, the UN presence had been removed, and the Bosnian Muslim men executed.

Lessons Learned

No one in 2RCR had received negotiation training before they dispersed. Yet the officers were engaged in constant negotiations at all levels, whether it was for establishing a camp in Banja Luka or the more delicate task of demilitarizing Srebrenica. Such skills as being fair, firm, yet friendly, were important to achieving success. In conjunction with this, it was important that the Canadians had accurate and timely intelligence so they would not be at a disadvantage in discussions. There was a serious neglect of intelligence support to the Canadian battalions. Few of the battalions deployed with trained intelligence officers. None of the CANBATs had a LOCE hookup to NATO, standard equipment for the Dutch and British, to access daily NATO intelligence. Accurate data about troop dispositions, command structures, and political background of the warring factions would have been invaluable to the Canadian officers during their daily negotiations.

While being billed as peacekeepers, the Canadians were enduring a daily combat environment. One of the best ways to keep morale high was to ensure the soldiers were busy and occasionally changed their duties. 2RCR was particularly lucky to have drawn such a variety of tasks. This helped to offset the disappointment of soldiers who had expected their humanitarian efforts to be more appreciated, and enabled the battalion to shake loose from the shock of Master Corporal Ternapolski's death.

CANBAT 2 had been determined to be firm but fair in their dealings with the warring factions. The soldiers had been ordered to return fire at the same level it was received. No one was to conclude the Canadians were easy targets. As a result the Canadians carried out assigned tasks in incredible circumstances, as witnessed by Colonel Vukic's acceptance of the Canadian OPs in Srebrenica. It is also worth noting that the BSA waited until the Canadians had evacuated Srebrenica and the new untested Dutch airmobile company was in place before acting against the enclave.

Unfortunately, other UN contingents undermined the Canadians' efforts by a failure to follow UN standard operating procedures. LCol Geburt was frustrated by other contingents who allowed warring faction searches of their vehicles, which made Canadian passage through checkpoints that much more difficult. MGen Morillon himself undermined the UN's overall effort when he allowed the Srebrenica convoy to be searched and dismissed the military escort. While Morillon's overriding concern with the humanitarian disaster he had witnessed in Srebrenica was understandable, the man who had been in theatre when Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlic was assassinated while under UN escort should never have thrown away long-term objectives for short-term gain. The lesson the

BSA took from 1993 was that it could exert control over the UN convoys. In 1994 it would restrict freedom of movement weeks and months at a time and demand a convoy “percentage” when it did deign to allow one through. Srebrenica was lucky to receive a convoy a month due to BSA intransigence.

Finally, the UN was increasing its mandate without a commensurate increase in personnel. This led it toward choosing sides in the conflict as a matter of simple survival. It had to protect its personnel on the ground, although this contradicted its basic philosophy of impartiality. The mission was doubly difficult to accomplish while standing between two warring factions. In the spring of 1993 it would become even more torturous as the Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats threw away their alliance and went to war.

The Canadians at Visoko were now astride *three* warring factions, and the UN was preparing again to widen the mandate.

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3. Glenny, *Fall of Yugoslavia*, pp. 196-98.
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5. *Conclusion*

When the 175 men of 2RCR gazed across the snow-covered hills of Srebrenica in April 1992, they knew they had been assigned an impossible task. Yet professional soldiers that they were, they never hesitated in carrying out their duty. In 72 hours they evacuated 500 wounded from the enclave and demilitarized “metropolitan Srebrenica” as requested by the UN Security Council. Their deployment, as well as that of the Canadian battalions, represents a microcosm of the UN deployment to the former Yugoslavia.

For the Canadians, negotiation skills should be more emphasized in officer training and all the units could have used better national and international intelligence support. To ignore intelligence because a unit was “peacekeeping” was to tie officers’ hands in the critical military and civil negotiations they were constantly called upon to do. Further, considering the ongoing combat operations, intelligence was key to protecting the peacekeepers in their daily environment.

Wisely, the Canadians decided to do their own assessment of what equipment was necessary for the mission. If the Canadians had indeed appeared in Sector West with the 15 APCs recommended by the UN or in Srebrenica without TOW missiles, they would have seriously handicapped their ability to act. The Canadians in Srebrenica would undoubtedly have been caught in the situation in which the Dutch found themselves in July 1995.

The mission also proved what all good commanders know, the importance of situational training, chain of command, and the adherence to standard operating procedures. It was unfortunate the UN as a whole did not adhere to Canadian standards. Each slip in carrying out procedure, whether it was allowing a vehicle to be searched, or a convoy proceeding across front lines without a military escort, increased the UN’s difficulty in carrying out its mandate and more critically, endangered the lives of the personnel who had to follow.

While negotiation should always be a first resort, the UN should never have hesitated to display force if it was necessary. No one in the Balkans respected the

UN for soft-peddalling or backing down. On the contrary, every display of weakness was seized upon and exploited. This was amply demonstrated in Sarajevo in spring 1992 when the warring factions seized weapons and vehicles from the UN and sniped and shelled UN personnel at will. The trick for the UN was to respond in kind without escalating. The anti-sniper teams were a start.

Credibility is essential, as was vividly illustrated by the deployment in Sector West. General Zabala's carrot-and-stick method of rewarding cooperation and punishing violators of the Vance plan made Sector West the quietest of the four sectors in Croatia and the only one to achieve demilitarization. When Zabala departed and the UN eschewed force the situation in Sector West rapidly deteriorated. The summer of 1993 was punctuated by hijackings and random violence.

Sector South provides an equally relevant example. The UN's failure to prevent Operation Maslenica and the HV seizure of a pink zone spurred seven months of renewed fighting between the Croats and Krajina Serbs. It was only when the UN took a stand at Medak and forced the HV to retreat that LGen Cot was able to negotiate a series of ceasefires that ended the violent confrontation.

The UN clearly made the choice to maintain the minimum involvement necessary to avert the worst effects of the war and to prevent a spillover of the conflict to surrounding countries. But once enacted, the Security Council incrementally increased the mandate over the next three and a half years, edging toward occupation and a forced solution. The problem is that it refused to support the increased mandates with a requisite military enlargement. Even worse, the UN sent forces into Bosnia under a Chapter VI mandate when it was clearly a Chapter VII engagement. This troublesome situation was acknowledged by the subsequent UN resolutions which left UNPROFOR to sort out the muddled mandates.

This being said, the UN did have some successes in the former Yugoslavia. Macedonia was one. If forces can be deployed before conflict breaks out, fewer may be needed and humanitarian disaster might be avoided. Although Bosnia could have been better handled, some 350,000 lives were saved by the Sarajevo Airbridge operation. And while hardly an unqualified success story, the UN contained the conflict in Croatia and saved lives there, too.

It is perhaps at the unit and therefore the most personal level that the Canadian soldiers who served in the former Yugoslavia can feel they made a difference: the villagers of Sector West who welcomed the arrival of the Canadians with baked sweets because they could finally live in peace, or people like Aida Kekic who was rescued by Captain Belisle and Sergeant Forest. While the Canadian government has many reasons for participating in UN peacekeeping, for the individual soldiers it is the lives they touched that they will remember the most.

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