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The Origins of Republika Srpska, 1990-1992
A Background Report

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Introduction

This is a study of the origins of the entity known as the Republika Srpska, which was proclaimed as the "Republic of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina" on 9 January 1992. The paper's first section summarizes the crisis and disintegration of the Yugoslav federal state, with particular attention to developments in the republics of Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. The second section is devoted to developments in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH – *Bosna i Hercegovina*), the context in which Bosnian Serb nationalists created separate Serbian institutions in 1991 and 1992.¹ The policies of other political parties, leaders, and polities are referenced as appropriate to show the context in which the Bosnian Serb polity arose, but they are not a central focus of the inquiry. This paper is not intended to judge the legality of any of the activities described, whether under international law, the constitution and laws of Yugoslavia, or the constitution and laws of BH.

Source citations are provided so the reader can assess the authenticity and credibility of the information provided.² The study is based in part upon the transcripts and minutes of the Bosnian Serb Assembly and other documents in the possession of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.³ Other sources include the contemporary periodical press, scholarly studies, published document collections, published and broadcast memoirs of participants and observers, and other materials in the public domain.

The Yugoslav Background: Crisis and Armed Conflict

Nationalism posed the strongest challenge to socialism in the waning years of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY- *Socijalistička federativna republika Jugoslavija*). Raif Dizdarević, President of the Presidency of the SFRY from May 1988 to May 1989, characterized the national movements as either "separatist" or "hegemonic" in relation to the SFRY, and he viewed both with foreboding.^{4 a} The separatists wanted to weaken or abolish the links between their

¹ "BH" is used in this paper for "Bosnia and Herzegovina;" "Bosnian" is used as the adjectival form.

² Direct quotes, if brief, are enclosed in quotation marks. Direct quotes of three lines or longer are indented and reproduced in slightly smaller type. When available, the BCS original is included as an endnote for convenience of translation and reference. Thus a number designates a footnote, while a letter or letters designate an endnote.

³ The assembly was called the "Assembly of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina" from 24 October 1991 to 9 January 1992 and thereafter the "Assembly of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina." Its sessions were numbered sequentially regardless of its specific name. In this text it is called simply the "Bosnian Serb Assembly," and references are to the session number, date, speaker, and the appropriate Tribunal Evidence Record Number (ERN).

⁴ Raif Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita do smrti Jugoslavije. Svjedočenja (From the Death of Tito to the Death of Yugoslavia: Testimony)* (Sarajevo: Biblioteka Svjedok, 1999), p. 295. "Today in Yugoslavia there exists a real fear of hegemonism, and separatism is also very real," he said at the time. Dizdarević was Yugoslav Foreign Minister for six years before becoming a member of the Federal Presidency.

respective republics and the SFRY; the hegemonists wanted a more centralized federation. Chief among the separatists during his term as President were nationalist Slovenes and Kosovo Albanians; many leaders of the republics of Macedonia and Croatia were also inclined to separatism. Hegemonism referred principally to Serbian nationalists, led by Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. Perversely (from the viewpoint of those seeking to preserve the institutions of the communist federal state), the two types of nationalism nourished one another: the hegemonist quest for more centralized control rallied the separatists, and separatist assertiveness instigated further support for the hegemonists.

The Mobilization of Serbian Nationalism

In 1987, rivalry among the various national movements emerged as open conflict, exacerbated by a growing economic crisis and an increasingly dysfunctional political system.⁵ On 24 April 1987, Slobodan Milošević, then head of the League of Communists (SK – *Savez komunista*) of the Republic of Serbia, visited Kosovo with instructions to help calm the rising tensions between Albanians and Serbs in that autonomous area.⁶ Instead, in what one biographer calls "an epiphanal moment," Milošević sided with the local Serbs against the province's police, telling the complaining Serbs, "No one has a right to beat you."⁷ This side-taking violated a taboo of party behavior: SK officials were expected to calm nationalist impulses, particularly those of the group to which they belonged, rather than to incite or encourage them. But the crowd of Kosovar Serbs wildly cheered Milošević after learning that he had endorsed their cause, and within hours the crowd and some in the Belgrade media hailed him as a Serbian national hero. Belgrade television stations repeatedly aired Milošević's comments and the Kosovar Serbs' euphoric response to his overt support.⁸ Six months later, Milošević was elected President of the League of Communists of Serbia, giving him "undisputed control in Serbia."⁹

The Kosovo demonstration of April 1987 highlighted the crowd's potential to influence politics at a time when many institutions of the SFRY were losing both their effectiveness and popular legitimacy. In the summer and fall of 1988, crowds were employed to challenge communist party leaders in Vojvodina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and elsewhere in Yugoslavia. A series of rallies

⁵ Mihailo Crnobrnja, The Yugoslav Drama. Second Edition (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), p. 93.

⁶ Dusko Doder and Louise Branson, Milošević: Portrait of a Tyrant (New York: The Free Press, 1999), p. 43.

⁷ Lenard Cohen, Serpent in the Bosom: The Rise and Fall of Slobodan Milošević (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001), pp. 62-64.

⁸ Slavoljub Djukić, Milošević and Marković: A Lust for Power (trans. Alex Dubinsky) (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), p. 17. This is the abridged and revised English translation of On, ona i mi (Beograd: 1997). Djukić was a veteran journalist who covered Milošević's rise to power for the Belgrade newspaper Politika.

⁹ Crnobrnja, The Yugoslav Drama, p. 101. Milošević, who had a reputation among party members as an orthodox communist opposed to nationalism and liberalism, won control of the SK Serbia at two meetings in September 1987 by ousting his long-time mentor Ivan Stambolić. These sessions are vividly described in Laura Silber and Allan Little, Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation (New York: Penguin, 1997), pp. 42-47.

variously known as "meetings for truth," "happenings of the people," or the "anti-bureaucratic revolution," were organized by the Board for Protest and Solidarity with Kosovo's Serbs and Montenegrins (hereafter "Board for Protest") led by Miroslav Šolević, who had organized Serbian rallies during Milošević's visit to Kosovo in April 1987.¹⁰ The demonstrators used the message of Serbs' endangerment in Kosovo to rally Serbs outside Kosovo in support of Milošević and his program.

Extending Serbian Centralism

The first targets of the street rallies were the predominantly Serb leaders of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina. On 9 July 1988 thousands of demonstrators were bused from Kosovo and Belgrade to Novi Sad, Vojvodina's capital. Although the demonstration's ostensible purpose was to inform the public of the plight of Kosovo's Serbs, Federal Presidency members recognized that its true objective was to force the resignation of the Vojvodina state and party leadership, which had been critical of Milošević for exploiting Serbian nationalism.¹¹ The demonstrators carried signs with anti-Albanian and pro-Milošević slogans. The Vojvodina leadership, however, bolstered by support from the Federal Presidency and officials of SK of Yugoslavia, resisted the demonstrators' demands and remained in office.¹²

The Vojvodina "happening of the people" alarmed party and government leaders in other republics. Federal security officials informed Federal Presidency members of an intercepted telephone conversation in which instructions from Serbian President Milošević were passed along to Miroslav Šolević, President of the Board for Protest.¹³ But Milošević steadfastly maintained that the demonstrations were spontaneous and showed that the people were ahead of the country's leaders in their discontent with the economic and political situation.¹⁴

The BH town of Jajce was targeted for a "happening of the people" scheduled for 10 September 1988. BH (communist) authorities, upon hearing of plans to explode a hand grenade in the crowd to provoke police intervention, banned the meeting, and it never took place. In a Federal Presidency meeting on 1 September 1988, President Raif Dizdarević read the intercepted telegram from the Kosovo protest committee to the Jajce group that was to organize the meeting. He wrote:

¹⁰ Sabrina P. Ramet, Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991 (Second edition) (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 231. For more on Šolević's role, see Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, pp. 37-40.

¹¹ Dizdarević, Od smrti Tita, p. 192.

¹² Ramet, Nationalism, p. 231.

¹³ Dizdarević, Od smrti Tita, p. 202. "From federal state security (officials) I received information and taped telephone conversations of one member of the highest forum of Serbian communists. He relayed to the leader of that board, Miroslav Šoljević, a message from Slobodan Milošević telling him what to do."

¹⁴ Dizdarević, Od smrti Tita, p. 203, citing Milošević's words at the session of the Presidency of the SK of Yugoslavia on 30 August 1988. Milošević had similarly insisted that "the people" had demanded the departure of Ivan Stambolić in 1987. Djukić, Milošević and Marković, p. 23.

The telegram sent from Kosovo to Jajce stated that the Board for organization of protest meetings had decided that on 10 September 1988 at 12:00 a demonstration of solidarity with Kosovo's Serbs and Montenegrins was to be held. According to the telegram, the meeting was to be organized by the Partisan veterans in this town... In tone and content it was an order sent to that organization in Jajce and surrounding communities.^{15 c}

In October 1988, demonstrators again rallied in Novi Sad to challenge the Vojvodina leadership. On the evening of 6 October, the crowd succeeded. Party leaders submitted their resignations to the Central Committee and were replaced by appointees loyal to Milošević.¹⁶ The resignations had been Milošević's condition for calling off the demonstrations.¹⁷

Following the Vojvodina resignations, a similar sequence of events led to a change in leadership in the Republic of Montenegro. Federal Presidency members were informed on 6 October 1988 that 40 busloads of demonstrators and a large number of private automobiles were headed for Titograd (now Podgorica), the capital of Montenegro. The demonstrators carried signs demanding weapons and accusing the Montenegrin party leadership of treason. With some 30,000 demonstrators already in town, the Montenegrin government and party presidencies, with the backing of federal authorities, declared a state of emergency during the night of 6-7 October 1988. With the aid of these measures, the Montenegrin leadership survived the first assault of the "anti-bureaucratic revolution." By January 1989, however, the Montenegrin SK was split between supporters and opponents of Milošević. After a huge demonstration on 11 January 1989, the Montenegrin leaders capitulated and resigned.¹⁸ Pro-Milošević supporters led by Momir Bulatović assumed control of the party and government of Montenegro.

During the months of the Serbian "rallies for truth," Presidency members had many indications but little concrete proof of Milošević's personal involvement in engineering the "anti-bureaucratic revolution."¹⁹ In state and party sessions, Milošević denied any role in instigating them, even though he demonstrated that he had the power to prevent them or call them off.²⁰ But the common organizing role of the Board for Protest, the similarity of slogans and demands, the widespread use of Milošević's name and picture, his defense of the right to demonstrate, and his frequent refusal to denounce the demonstrations, all contributed to the widespread impression that he was the unseen enabler of the rallies.

¹⁵ Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita*, p. 210.

¹⁶ Ramet, *Nationalism*, p. 231; and Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita*, p. 217.

¹⁷ Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia*, p. 60; and Djukić, *Milošević and Marković*, p. 28.

¹⁸ Ramet, *Nationalism*, pp. 232-233.

¹⁹ "Although the rallies were ostensibly arranged by a six-member Kosovo 'organizing committee,' official Serbian backing for the rallies was never in doubt. ... Buses were frequently escorted by police vehicles from Serbia proper, which were subordinated to Milošević's Serbian Ministry of the Interior..." Louis Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), pp. 56-57.

²⁰ In addition to terminating the demonstrations in Vojvodina in January 1989, Milošević arranged for the cancellation of a planned rally at the time of the Plenary Session of the Yugoslav SK in late July 1988. Dizdarević, *Od smrti Tita*, p. 201.

To reduce Kosovo's autonomy within Serbia, Milošević allies shifted from street demonstrations to the more traditional Yugoslav communist methods of constitutional change and federal action against organized movements. A strike at the Trepće mine in Kosovo provided the occasion to rally anti-Albanian sentiment in Belgrade, and a huge crowd demanded the arrest of Asem Vllasi, perceived as a leader of the Kosovo Albanian movement. Milošević, feigning inability to hear the demand, cupped his ear and shouted, "I can't hear you!" The crowd repeated its chants, and Milošević, using the language of circumlocution that was to become familiar in public encouragement of nationalism, made no promises but said that those who disrupted Yugoslavia had to be arrested. The next day, Vllasi and the manager of Kosovo's largest enterprise were arrested. On 28 March, the Assembly of the Republic of Serbia voted to enact constitutional amendments that eliminated most of Kosovo's autonomy within the republic.²¹

In June 1989 the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo occasioned the largest single gathering of Serbs since 1945. It was "one of the most dramatic and carefully choreographed events in modern Serbian history" that "contrasted with the unruly meetings that Milošević's lieutenants had organized as part of their populist 'anti-bureaucratic revolution' over the previous two years."²² Leaders from other republics and federal party and government organs were present on the dais as Milošević delivered the keynote speech to a crowd estimated at a million persons.²³ In his speech, Milošević struck several themes that would recur in subsequent Serbian nationalist rhetoric in other republics. He stated that Serbs were martyrs and heroes at the Battle of Kosovo (1389) and claimed, "this land is sacred to Serbia."²⁴ He referred obliquely to the prospect of impending military action. Although the Serbs' current struggles were "not armed battles ... such things cannot yet be excluded. But no matter what their character, battles can't be won without decisiveness, bravery, and a readiness to sacrifice." And he urged toleration and respect for the rights of other nationalities, rhetoric that would become a staple in the lexicon of Serbian nationalism.

Serbian nationalism prevailed in the official governing bodies of the republics of Serbia and Montenegro by spring 1989, and the nationalist message continued to be delivered to Serbs outside those two republics as well. Ivan Stambolić, Milošević's one-time mentor who was replaced by him in 1987, later observed that Milošević used the Kosovo issue to spread the message of endangered Serbs beyond the Republic of Serbia:

Milošević did not aggravate the Kosovo question just for the sake of the Serbs in Kosovo but rather because that was the way to Kosovize the Serbs on the other side of the Drina as the most suitable element for the unitarization of Yugoslavia, not Kosovo. At first he barely knew about

²¹ Cohen, Serpent in the Bosom, pp. 78-79.

²² Cohen, Serpent in the Bosom, p. 98. Another observer called it "a peaceful national mega-celebration which was organized by a stable and consolidated Milošević administration." Footnote 1.

²³ "It was the greatest gathering of Serbs ever." Doder and Branson, Milošević, p. 4.

²⁴ For text of speech, see Belgrade Home Service, June 28, 1989, in BBCSWB, Part 2, Eastern Europe; B. Internal Affairs; Yugoslavia, EE/0496/B1, June 30, 1989.

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the Serbs on the other side of the Drina, and then he suddenly realized that inducing them to revolt was the way to seize Yugoslavia.²⁵

BH again became a destination for demonstrators supporting Milošević and the Serbian nationalist cause. On 13 August 1989, buses filled with Serbs arrived in Knežina near Sarajevo, ostensibly for the consecration of a Serbian Orthodox monastery.²⁶ Despite a ban by BH authorities on the display of Serbian symbols, the gathering took on political overtones with pictures of Milošević and other nationalist signs. The meeting passed without incident and failed to elicit any response from the BH leadership. Mihailo Crnobrnja, then Yugoslavia's Ambassador to the European Community, wrote:

The 'rallies for truth' organized in the Serb communities there [in BH] did not yield the desired destabilization and retreat of the BiH leadership. By and large the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs were still not ready to disturb the centuries-old tranquility of coexistence with the Muslims and the Croats.²⁷

The Serbian Orthodox Church also sponsored activities to spread the Serbian nationalist message. In 1989 the earthly remains of Prince Lazar, Serbian hero of the 1389 Battle of Kosovo, were removed from the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchal Church in Belgrade and taken on a tour of Serbian Orthodox monasteries in Serbia, BH, Croatia, and Kosovo, "as Serbs again flocked in pilgrimage to pray before him."²⁸ His body was re-interred in the Ravanica Monastery in Kosovo on 10 September 1989.²⁹ In its journey, according to anthropologist Katherine Verdery:

Prince Lazar's skeleton thus set the boundaries of greater Serbia, on the principle 'Serbian land is where Serbian bones are.' ... Parading the dead bodies of famous men thus uses their specific biographies to reevaluate the national past.³⁰

²⁵ Cohen, Serpent in the Bosom, p. 75, citing Mladina, 6 August 1996, pp. 34-39.

²⁶ Knežina, Reuters, 13 August 1989. RFE Press Archive, Munich (now in Budapest).

²⁷ Crnobrnja, The Yugoslav Drama, p. 142. Crnobrnja relates, "A senior Serbian Socialist Party official visiting Brussels told me, in the summer of 1991, that the firm expectation all along had been that the Muslims of BiH would side with Serbia in a possible showdown with Croatia. He seemed genuinely bewildered by the fact that this had not happened." Footnote #2, p. 289.

²⁸ Tim Judah, The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 39.

²⁹ Sabrina Petra Ramet, Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to Ethnic War (Second Edition) (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1996), p. 30, citing FBIS Daily Report (Eastern Europe), 31 January 1991, p. 57.

³⁰ Katherine Verdery, The Political Lives of Dead Bodies (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 18. In Verdery's words, "Demoting the corpses and statues of the 'visibles' of socialism does the reverse." (pp. 19-20) Her analysis aptly accounts for Tito's posthumous fate. In October 1991 the body of the socialist-era Yugoslav leader was removed from its place of honor in the "House of Flowers" in Belgrade and reburied in more modest quarters. Partisan veterans and others protested his demotion as "a spreading of the ideology of fascism and its practice in the territory of Yugoslavia." Oslobodjenje (Sarajevo), 3 October 1991, p. 4.

Serbian nationalists also reburied thousands of anonymous corpses removed from caves in Herzegovina. In many instances local Serbs knew of these bodies and recalled that they were Serbian victims of Ustasha slaughter in the Second World War. Local Serbs organized to give them a proper burial in their home villages.³¹ But in summer 1991 all the exhumed remains were transported to Belgrade and reburied in a common grave, even though it was unclear that all the victims were Serbs. Robert Hayden described the "massive political event" reported by Radio Belgrade:

After 'nine months of recovering bones from Herzegovinian caves,' the 'victims of the Ustaša' were buried in a mass grave. The line of coffins stretched for one and a half kilometers; the liturgy was sung by the patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox Church, and speakers included Serbian politicians from Bosnia and Herzegovina, politicians from Serbia, and leading Serbian nationalist intellectuals.³²

This event symbolically highlighted Serbian victimization at the hands of the Ustasha and underlined Belgrade's importance as the center of Serbian national revival. For Serbian nationalist leaders, these ostentatious reburials were visual reminders of the physical extermination of Serbs by members of other Yugoslav nationalities some fifty years before.

Toward Multiparty Rule

Both the Yugoslav SK and the SFRY government were in deep crises by the beginning of 1990. In what many felt would be a final attempt to reach a compromise among the increasingly strident leaders of republican SK organizations, the party convened the Fourteenth Extraordinary Congress in Belgrade in January 1990. Neither backroom negotiations nor public debates led anywhere. On 23 January, the Slovene delegation walked out of the session. Within hours the resumption of the Congress was postponed indefinitely. The SK of Yugoslavia, the primary decision-making institution in the SFRY since World War II, was dead. This left the Yugoslav National Army (JNA – *Jugoslovenska narodna armija*) as the only institution with a constitutional mandate to hold the federal republic together. The SK's six republican components went their separate ways, each to play a role dependent on the political situation in its particular republic.

The Yugoslav SK collapsed as a democratic revolution was sweeping Eastern Europe and the demand for free, multiparty elections was rising throughout the region. In each Yugoslav republic the socialist assemblies passed legislation providing for multiparty elections. The enabling legislation for each of these elections was different in each republic, and each republican assembly selected a different date. The various elections were scheduled between April and December 1990.

³¹ Two instances of these events are reported in *Oslobodjenje*, 30 August 1990, p. 4; and 16 December 1990, p. 3. In the waning days of the communist regime, the Presidency of BH discussed a proposal to provide a uniform, state-financed method of determining the identity of those buried in the estimated 30 caves in Herzegovina. Presidency members noted that communist leaders had previously concluded that the caves would be a suitable final resting place for victims of the Ustasha but had no objection to reburial by the families of those concerned. *Oslobodjenje*, 2 November 1990, p. 3.

³² Robert M. Hayden, "Recounting the Dead: The Rediscovery and Redefinition of Wartime Massacres in Late- and Post-Communist Yugoslavia," in Rubie S. Watson (ed.), *Memory, History, and Opposition under State Socialism* (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press, 1994), p. 179.

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The first multiparty elections took place in Slovenia and Croatia in April 1990. The Slovenian elections resulted in the victory of DEMOS (Democratic-United Opposition of Slovenia), a seven-party coalition, and of Milan Kučan, leader of the Party of Democratic Renewal (the new name taken by the SK), as President. Regardless of party affiliation, the victors in Slovenia favored autonomy and/or independence from the SFRY, and in a major step toward independence, the Assembly of Slovenia adopted a resolution in July 1990 declaring Slovenia's sovereignty.³³

In Croatia, the communist-controlled assembly adopted a "winner take all" system that assured the leading vote-getting party of more assembly seats than its proportion of the popular vote. Croatian nationalists organized the Croatian Democratic Union (**HDZ – Hrvatska demokratska zajednica**) led by former Partisan general and historian Franjo Tuđman. Serbs in Croatia formed the Serbian Democratic Party (**SDS – Srpska demokratska stranka**) and elected Jovan Rašković, a highly regarded psychiatrist from Dalmatia, as its President. The HDZ won 41.5% of the popular votes and received 58% of the seats (206 out of 356) in the tricameral legislature. The SDS did relatively poorly, as Serbs split their votes between the SDS and the renamed SK, the "League of Communists of Croatia – Party for Democratic Change" (**SKH-SDP – Savez komunista hrvatske – stranka demokratske promjene**). The SDS won five seats in the assembly, but there were 24 Serbs among the delegates elected on the SKH-SDP slate.³⁴ In local elections, the SDS won control in three municipalities with majority Serbian populations (Knin, Gračac and Donji Lapac), but failed to prevail in other Serb-majority municipalities.

In Serbia and Montenegro, the last of the republics to hold elections, Milošević and Bulatović swept to victory in December 1990. In preparation for those elections, the Milošević-led Serbian SK merged with the Socialist Alliance and became the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), a party that was socialist in nomenclature but nationalist in public appeal. A similar fusion occurred before the elections in Montenegro to the advantage of Milošević admirer Momir Bulatović. In the aftermath of these elections, the renamed SK retained the dominant rule in Serbia and Montenegro. But successful retention of power by a renamed SK was unique to Serbia and Montenegro. The renamed SK's in other republics failed to translate their communist-era, single-party domination into victory in multiparty elections, and they emerged from the 1990 elections either dependent on coalition partners or, as in BH, excluded completely from power.³⁵

Elections and Constitutional Change

After the multiparty elections in Croatia and Slovenia in April 1990, leaders of several republics proposed changes to the Yugoslav federal constitution and to the constitutions of their own

³³ Susan Woodward, Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War (Washington: Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 119-120.

³⁴ Srđan Radulović, Sudbina Krajine (Beograd: Dan Graf, 1996), p. 16.

³⁵ Macedonia was the only other Yugoslav republic in which reformed communists (renamed the Social Democratic League of Macedonia) retained a major role after the 1990 elections. That party formed a tripartite center-left coalition with liberals and the leading Albanian party, even though the Macedonian nationalist party, the "IMRO – Democratic Party for Macedonian National Unity," was the leading vote-getter in November 1990. Meier, Yugoslavia, pp. 193-194.

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republics. Proposals to restructure the Yugoslav constitution ended in deadlock, whereas the individual republican assemblies passed numerous amendments or enacted entire constitutions.

In accord with campaign promises to seek greater freedom of action for their respective republics from the federal government, newly elected leaders of Slovenia and Croatia jointly submitted on 10 May 1990 a declaration of intent to restructure Yugoslavia into a loose confederation of states with few powers left to the central government.³⁶ Serbian leaders and the JNA Main Staff responded with measures and proposals to strengthen the central state and weaken the Croatian and Slovenian prospects for secession. A few days after the joint Slovene-Croat declaration, the JNA ordered that arms of Territorial Defense units throughout Yugoslavia to be turned over to JNA arsenals, a measure intended principally to deprive the Slovenian and Croatian republican authorities of the potential to create their own armed forces.³⁷ Borisav Jović, a close associate of Serbian President Milošević, submitted proposals to limit the regulation of political life by individual republics and to strengthen the role of the Yugoslav federal state. The 8-member Presidency approved these measures by majority vote, but the proposals were abandoned after the Federal Assembly declined to enact them at its session on 28 May 1990.³⁸

Even as Serbian leaders acted to weaken the powers of other republics in the federation, they moved to consolidate republican authority within Serbia by proposing a new constitution. Unlike in Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia, the vote for a new constitution in Serbia (1-2 July 1990) preceded rather than followed the first multiparty elections, which were held in December 1990. The new constitution gave additional powers to the President of the Republic, including the power to command the armed forces in peace and war (Article 83). It assured the centralization of the Serbian republic by eliminating the autonomy formerly enjoyed by Kosovo and Vojvodina.³⁹

Contention in Croatia

In the drive to reduce the role of federal Yugoslavia in their republic, Croatia's newly elected leaders faced one problem that the Slovenes did not: the rising demands of Croatia's nearly 600,000 Serbs, who made up about 12% of the total population and constituted the largest group of non-Croats in the republic. Serbs were accorded the status of a "constituent nation" in the 1974 Constitution of the Republic of Croatia, but the Tadjman government, after its electoral triumph in April 1990, proposed amendments to reduce Serbs to the status of a recognized minority. The proposed demotion in status became a flashpoint for Croatia's Serbs, who launched a campaign shortly after the election for a recognized separate status.

³⁶ Meier, Yugoslavia, p. 147.

³⁷ Borisav Jović, Poslednji dani SFRJ: Izvodi iz dnevnika (The Last Days of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: Excerpts from Diary, Second Edition (Kragujevac: Prizm, 1996), 17 May 1990, p. 146. Hereafter "Jović Diary."

³⁸ Meier, Yugoslavia, p. 148.

³⁹ "Where the other republican constitutions represent more or less serious attempts to provide the basis for a nation-state grounded on constitutional nationalism, the primary purpose of the Serbian constitution of 1990 was to provide the basis for the one-man rule of Slobodan Milošević." Robert M. Hayden, Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p. 73. See also Meier, Yugoslavia, p. 151.

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The Serbian campaign in Croatia was characterized by discord among Serbian leaders in the Croatian SDS. The disharmony arose from the selective backing of some Serbs by Milošević supporters and the media in Belgrade, from the leaders' differing approaches to the promotion of Serbian national goals in Croatia, and from recurrent personal rivalries.^{40 d} Intra-party contention resulted, among other things, in the proclamation of three different Serbian territorial units in areas of Croatia inhabited by substantial numbers of Serbs: Knin and surrounding municipalities (27 June 1990); the area in northeast Croatia of Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srem (SBWS) (7 January 1991), and Western Slavonia (13 August 1991).⁴¹

Some of Croatia's Serbs had already shown themselves willing to support the cause of Serbs elsewhere. On 27 February 1989, Croatian Serbs held a rally in Knin to express support for Kosovo's Serbs.⁴² Shortly after Milošević's address on the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, an estimated 80,000 Serbs attended another rally in Croatia in July 1989. But these well-attended rallies in 1989 did not translate into major success for the SDS in the April 1990 elections, as noted above. Even so, HDZ leaders offered SDS Party President Jovan Rašković a position as Vice President in the new Croatian government.⁴³ He declined this offer. Croatia's HDZ leaders then excluded the SDS from the governing coalition they assembled after the election. But HDZ leaders realized that the issue of Croatia's Serbs was vital, for it figured into the responses of the international community and the Serbian leadership to Croatia's aspirations for independence.⁴⁴

SDS Party President Rašković, despite the inflammatory nationalist rhetoric in his public speeches, in fact limited his demands to cultural autonomy for the Serbs of Croatia and resolutely opposed territorial separatism.^{45 e} On 23 July 1990, he met with newly elected Croatian President Franjo Tuđman to request cultural autonomy in the form of a constitutional guarantee for the Serbs of Croatia. The complete transcript of the meeting was published in the Croatian press a week later.⁴⁶ It showed that Tuđman readily agreed to cultural autonomy on 23 July and invited Rašković to draft language for a prospective amendment to the Croatian constitution. Rašković, on the other hand, revealed himself to be an unreliable negotiating partner. When challenged by Tuđman about having used inflammatory language at rallies of Croatian Serbs, Rašković replied, "I never write my

⁴⁰ Radovan Karadžić identified outside meddling as the primary reason for Serbian factionalism in Croatia. "Krajina was first politically demolished, we know who demolished it and from where, demolished it into parties, was gobbled up, divided into small pieces, so that a political structure didn't exist." Bosnian Serb Assembly, 53rd Session, 28 August 1995, Radovan Karadžić. BCS ERN 0215-4329.

⁴¹ "Decision on the Establishment of Community of Municipalities," English ERN L005-9543; and Radulović, Sudbina Krajine, p. 25.

⁴² Radulović, Sudbina Krajine, p. 11.

⁴³ Lenard J. Cohen, Broken Bonds: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia (Boulder: Westview, 1993), p. 131.

⁴⁴ Meier, Yugoslavia, p. 146.

⁴⁵ "We won't create another Serbian state on Croatian territory," Rašković said at a rally on 25 July 1990. "We want only the autonomy of a free and sovereign Serbian existence." Radulović, Sudbina Krajine, p. 19.

⁴⁶ Danas (Zagreb), 31 July 1990, pp. 12-15.

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speeches in advance. I really want communication with those people. I speak to them very often and say what they want [to hear], not what I would like to say."⁴⁷ He further reported that he harbored fundamental disagreements with Serbian President Milošević: "We will never find ourselves at the same table, nor will we ever sign the same declarations and resolutions."

Leaders of the HDZ and SDS agreed only on one matter: removing the word "socialist" from the republic's name.⁴⁸ The talks took place in a context of heated public polemics between the Belgrade press, which stepped up its denunciation of Croatia's leaders as reincarnations of the Ustasha authorities who had slaughtered Serbs during the Second World War, and the HDZ-controlled press in Croatia, which denounced Serbian separatism as inimical to Croatian state interests. Rašković, a highly regarded psychiatrist and a dynamic public speaker, continued to be the main attraction at many Serbian rallies in Croatia and in BH, but his influence in party circles waned after the failure to reach an agreement on Serbian cultural autonomy in Croatia.⁴⁹

Milan Babić, the Mayor of Knin elected in the 1990 multiparty elections and a member of the SDS Main Board, wanted more than just cultural autonomy for Croatia's Serbs. He became the prime mover in a campaign for separate Serbian territory in Croatia, a movement that began in areas with Serbian-majority populations around Knin.⁵⁰ On 27 June 1990, his initiative resulted in formation of the "Community of Municipalities of Northern Dalmatia and Lika" (*ZOSDL – Zajednica općina Sjeverne Dalmacije i Like*), consisting of the six Serbian majority municipalities of Knin, Benkovac, Obrovac, Donji Lapac, Gračac, and Titova Korenica.⁵¹ Although the Constitutional Court of Croatia declared this decision to be invalid, other municipalities with substantial Serbian populations subsequently proclaimed membership in the ZOSDL.

Milošević and his allies in the Republic of Serbia supported Babić and his notion of a distinct Serbian territorial unit. On 28 June 1990, one day after the ZOSDL was proclaimed, Milošević and his colleague Borisav Jović, President of the SFRY Presidency, agreed on a proposal to expel Slovenia and Croatia from the Yugoslav Federation but to keep ZOSDL territory "on our side."⁵²

⁴⁷ Danas, 31 July 1990, p. 12.

⁴⁸ Danas, 31 July 1990; Cohen, Broken Bonds, pp. 131-132; and Meier, Yugoslavia, p. 154. According to Meier, "Tudjman repeated to me, in those days (August 1990), that he was ready to assure full 'cultural autonomy' but never political or territorial autonomy. As for the content of such 'cultural autonomy,' Tudjman said it would relate to school curricula and cultural activities."

⁴⁹ "... Tudjman foolishly had the entire text of this conversation published, word for word, in Danas. This move discredited Rašković and the moderate line no longer had any chance in the Serbian Democratic Party." Meier, Yugoslavia, p. 154.

⁵⁰ BCS ERNs 0217-2142 and 0214-1845.

⁵¹ "Decision to Establish and Constitute an Association of North Dalmatia and Lika Municipalities," English ERN L006-4035 – L006-4039. BCS ERN 0214-1845 – 0214-1848.

⁵² Jović Diary, entry of 28 June 1990, p. 161. "Sloba had two ideas: First, that the separation of Croatia be achieved such that the Lika-Banija and Kordun municipalities, who created a community, remain on our side, such that later the people there, by referendum, will express whether they wish to remain or go; and second, that the SFRY Presidency members from Slovenia and Croatia be excluded from the voting, for they represent that part of Yugoslavia that the decision affects." The two men abandoned this plan after learning that the

Milan Babić visited Belgrade on 13 August 1990 and met with Boris Jović, then the President of the SFRY Presidency. "We were not given any specific promise, but I was left with no doubt that we would receive support from Belgrade," Babić later recalled.⁵³

Milošević's preference for Babić's territorial approach was mirrored in the respective views of Rašković and Babić regarding the role of the Belgrade leadership. Rašković wanted Croatian Serbs to speak for themselves rather than give a proxy to Milošević, and he saw the hand of Milošević in Babić's initiatives: "I was opposed in principle to such cooperation and dependence on Belgrade," he said, "so that for everything we do we seek confirmation from Belgrade and some kind of consent."⁵⁴ Babić, on the other hand, accepted Milošević as an authentic spokesman. "Serbs in Croatia have always believed that Milošević is a true representative of the Serbian people," said Babić, "and he will not betray the interests of any part of the Serbian people in Yugoslavia."⁵⁵

The creation of the ZOSDL was followed by Serbian efforts to achieve de facto control over local police stations and government institutions using crowds of enthusiastic Serbs. On 5 July 1990, a Serbian crowd gathered outside the police station in Knin and refused to let the Croatian police commander leave the building.⁵⁶ The Croatian commander capitulated, leaving the security organs of Knin in Serbian hands. This episode aroused great resentment in Croatia and made a local hero out of Milan Martić, an inspector in the Knin police station who had provoked the visit of Croatian authorities by protesting the order to wear the uniform and symbols as ordered from Zagreb.

The disagreement over constitutional treatment of Croatia's Serbs came to a head on 25 July 1990. On that date, the Assembly of Croatia enacted constitutional amendments that demoted Serbs from the status of a "constituent nation" that they had enjoyed in the socialist-era constitution. Simultaneously, Serbian leaders addressed a rally of 100,000 or more Serbs at the "First Serbian Convention" in Srb, a town in one of the municipalities that made up the ZOSDL. SDS President Rašković and the well-known Serbian nationalist Vojislav Šešelj were given rousing welcomes, and some at the rally carried signs with Chetnik symbols and slogans. The crowd acclaimed a resolution declaring invalid any changes in the constitution or laws of Croatia that negated the sovereignty of the Serbian people. The assembly adopted a "Declaration on Sovereignty and Autonomy of the Serbian People in Croatia" and formed a Serbian National Council (SNV Knin - *Srpsko narodno vijeće Knin*) as the executive organ of the ZOSDL.⁵⁷ Although a new Croatian constitution was not

Constitutional Court of SFRY would only rule on its constitutionality after the law was published in the official gazette. Jović Diary, entry of 2 July 1990, p. 162.

⁵³ "Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation" (videotape), Part II. See also Silber and Little, Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation (New York: Penguin, 1997), p. 100.

⁵⁴ Borba, 12 April 1991, as cited in Radulović, Sudbina Krajine, p. 27.

⁵⁵ Radulović, Sudbina Krajine, p. 28, quoting Babić.

⁵⁶ For extensive description of this turbulent day, see "Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation" (video), Part II; and Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, pp. 98-100. The intimidated Croat commander was told by a colleague, "Promise them a Serb state; anything to get us out of here." Milan Martić later recalled, "That was the end of Croatian authority in Knin."

⁵⁷ "Declaration of the Sovereignty and Autonomy of the Serbian People in Croatia," BCS ERN 0214-1952 - 0214-1953; English ERN L006-4356 - L006-4358; and Oslobodjenje, 26 July 1990, p. 4. The designation

proclaimed until 22 December 1990, the amendments of July 1990 and the formation of the SNV Knin doomed prospects for a constitutional compromise that would satisfy Serbian nationalist leaders in Croatia.

At its first session on 31 July 1990, the SNV Knin authorized a plebiscite of the Serbian people on the question of autonomy from Croatia. Before the plebiscite was scheduled to begin, Croatian police attempted on 17 August to secure control of police stations in several Serb-majority towns. A "staff for city defense" in Knin, headed by Babić, proclaimed a "war situation," and barricades were erected on roads leading into several towns. The Croatian government dispatched three helicopters to the area, but they were forced to turn back when two Yugoslav Air Force MIGs threatened to shoot them down. This first armed confrontation was resolved by negotiation. The Croats called off their offensive and Serbian leaders ordered the barricades removed. Babić denied that the "staff for city defense" had declared a state of war and attributed the barricades to spontaneous popular action.⁵⁸

In the plebiscite of late August and early September 1990, all but 232 of the 756,780 voters (including over 189,000 voters who were not residents of the Republic of Croatia) were in favor of autonomy.⁵⁹ Speaking for the "Serbian people," the SNV Knin on 30 September 1990 proclaimed "Serbian autonomy on the ethnic and historical territory on which they live, and which lies within the present boundaries of the Republic of Croatia as a federal unit of SFRY."⁶⁰ The proclamation, however, did not define what constituted Serbian "ethnic and historical territory."

On 21 December 1990, the ZOSDL transformed itself into the "Serbian Autonomous District of Krajina" (SAO Krajina – *Srpski autonomna oblast Krajina*), proclaimed its own statute, stopped paying taxes to the Republic of Croatia, and declared its police to be separate from those of the republic.⁶¹ On 7 January 1991, the Serbian National Council for Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srem (SNV-SBWS - *Srpsko narodno vijeće Slavonije, Baranje i zapadnog Srema*) was formed, and that body approved a Declaration of Autonomy in late February 1991.⁶²

Violence between local Serbs and the Croatian police came to involve the JNA in spring 1991. In Pakrac, Serbian paramilitary forces seized the municipal headquarters building and the police station. They disarmed and arrested Pakrac policemen who refused to accept their authority. A unit from the Croatian MUP counter-attacked, took the town, and arrested the perpetrators. Although no one had been killed in these operations, rumors swirled among local Serbs and in the Belgrade press of ten or more Serbian deaths, including a Serbian Orthodox priest. The JNA

"SNV Knin" is used to distinguish it from a Serbian National Council of Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Srem (SBWS) formed in December 1991, which will be called SNV-SBWS.

⁵⁸ Radulović, *Sudbina Krajine*, p. 21.

⁵⁹ Radulović, *Sudbina Krajine*, p. 22; and Tanjug (Belgrade), 7 August 1990, English ERN R028-8753.

⁶⁰ Radulović, *Sudbina Krajine*, p. 22.

⁶¹ "Decree to Enforce the Statute of the SAO Krajina," BCS ERN 0217-2148, and Radulović, *Sudbina Krajine*, p. 23.

⁶² Radulović, *Sudbina Krajine*, p. 25.

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intervened with an incursion of armor into the town, but as had happened earlier in Knin, both sides stood down before the confrontation turned into war. Later in March, local Serbs seized the resort hotel complex at Plitvice, a National Park of lakes and waterfalls. In the ensuing Croatian police raid to capture the park, one Serb and one Croat died in an exchange of fire. Again the JNA intervened.

In an incident reminiscent of the Pakrac events, Serbian paramilitaries seized the police station in the village of Borovo Selo on 2 May 1991. When the Croatian MUP unit arrived to reinforce local policemen, they were ambushed by Serbian paramilitary forces under Vojislav Šešelj. Twelve Croatian police officers were killed and many more wounded. The JNA again intervened and sealed off the village from outside assistance. The gravity of the Borovo Selo attacks was increased when Šešelj appeared on Belgrade television and bragged that his forces had participated in the attack.⁶³ This was followed by numerous incidents of individual violence throughout May 1991; with each of them, the prospect of further escalation increased.

Even as the Croatian state was acquiring arms from Hungary and other countries, Serbian separatists were acquiring the means to contest Croatian authority in several areas of the republic. Beginning in spring 1991, JNA officers distributed thousands of weapons to SDS members and others who supported Serbian separatism. Croatia's Serbs received various infantry weapons, anti-aircraft guns, mortars, and ammunition from the JNA armories. By the beginning of June, one JNA officer reported, 15,000 weapons had been transferred.⁶⁴

Domestic Diplomacy

During the first half of 1991, the presidents of all Yugoslav republics held a series of meetings (known as the "YU" talks) to discuss possible compromises on Yugoslavia's future status. In these talks, Serbian President Milošević and Montenegrin President Bulatović advocated retaining or strengthening the existing federal arrangement. Presidents Kučan and Tudjman of Slovenia and Croatia, respectively, promoted a loose confederation, and Presidents Izetbegović and Tupurkovski of BH and Macedonia, respectively, offered various compromises in an effort to bridge the gap between federalist and confederalist views.

In the midst of these discussions, Presidents Tudjman and Milošević met alone at Karadorđevo in Serbia and discussed a possible division of BH between their two republics.⁶⁵ This discussion led to no agreement on territorial division, but the parties agreed to convene a joint commission to propose a partition. The commission's deliberations were also inconclusive, but the talks between Tudjman and Milošević marked the beginning of their quest for a territorial division of BH at the expense of the Bosnian Muslims.

The last of the "YU" talks produced an agreement in principle. Meeting in Sarajevo on 6 June 1991, the presidents of the six republics agreed to a compromise put forth by the Macedonian

⁶³ Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia*, p. 142.

⁶⁴ Colonel Dušan Smiljanić to General R. Mladić, Knin, 15 October 1994. English ERNs 0300-4728 - 0300-4733.

⁶⁵ The Karadorđevo meeting has been the topic of many interpretations and much speculation. These are summarized in Miloš Milić, *Dogovori u Karadorđevo o podeli Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: Rabic, 1998).

and Bosnian presidents, but the agreement amounted to little more than a rhetorical exercise. Among other provisions, the agreement called for the Presidents of Croatia, Serbia, and BH to meet within seven days to resolve tensions developing within BH. After the three Presidents – Izetbegović, Milošević, and Tudjman – met in Split on 12 June, press reports speculated that the three had agreed on a plan for "cantonization" of BH. US Ambassador Warren Zimmerman later expressed amazement that Milošević and Tudjman openly discussed partition in the presence of the BH President.⁶⁶

War in Slovenia and Croatia

Assemblies of the republics of Slovenia and Croatia passed resolutions of independence on 25 June 1991. Two days later the JNA moved to secure Slovenia's international border-crossing points and airports, which it claimed were under federal jurisdiction. Slovene Territorial Defense units, bolstered by arms purchased from abroad and seized from within Slovenia, contested the JNA move. They took more than 2,000 prisoners, obstructed the movement of JNA support columns, and seized control of the border crossings from JNA troops. The Yugoslav Air Force bombed the Ljubljana airport and other targets, but the Slovene forces proved surprisingly effective, and widespread desertions plagued the JNA in Slovenia.

The EC, responding rapidly to the escalation of the Yugoslav crisis into war, dispatched mediators on 28 June. Rather than further escalate the crisis and risk a disastrous defeat, the JNA agreed to withdraw from Slovenia. The "Brioni Accord," reached on 18 July 1991, formally ended the "Ten Day War" in Slovenia. The JNA agreed to withdraw, and the effective date of Slovene and Croatian independence was deferred three months, to 8 October 1991. The JNA's future role in Croatia was not addressed in the Brioni Accord, but the accord gave impetus to the Slovene and Croatian movements for independence from the SFRY.

Not long after armed conflict ended in Slovenia, skirmishes in Croatia escalated into full war. Kijevo, a Croat village on the road connecting Knin and Split, was surrounded by rural Serbian settlements. In spring 1991, Croats from Kijevo erected barricades to prevent Serbian intrusions into their village. In August 1991, Serbs from nearby villages appealed to the Knin Corps of the JNA to remove the barriers and to give them weapons.⁶⁷ The newly appointed deputy corps commander, Ratko Mladić, soon obliged them. In cooperation with Milan Martić, the Minister of Interior of SAO Knin, Mladić's JNA artillery bombed the village on 28 August 1991. Kijevo, characterized by Croats as the "Croatian Alamo," was conquered by Martić's police in short order. Local Serb forces killed some Croats and drove others from the village. Martić later recalled, "It was a joint action between the army and in two days we liberated Kijevo. The army provided the heavy weapons and I provided the infantry."⁶⁸ Fleeing inhabitants were bombed by the Yugoslav Air Force.

General Veljko Kadijević, Federal Secretary of Defense in 1991, later wrote that the JNA changed its self-assigned role in "later summer" 1991 from separating the two contending parties to "defense of the Serbian people in Croatia so as to liberate, in all respects, all areas with a majority

⁶⁶ Zimmerman, Origins of a Catastrophe, p. 132.

⁶⁷ Radulović, Sudbina Krajine, pp. 36-37; and Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, pp. 171-172.

⁶⁸ Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, p. 172.

Serbian population from the presence of the Croatian military and Croatian authority."^{69 k} The JNA's use of heavy weapons against civilian settlements, in support of assaults by local Serbs, became a pattern repeated elsewhere in Croatia and later in BH.⁷⁰ However, Branko Kostić, acting President of the Presidency of SFRY, characterized such actions not as liberation from Croatian authority but as defending Serbs: "It is not an exaggeration to say that in those first days of the war the JNA protected the Serbs from physical liquidation and prevented a massive exodus."⁷¹

At the top, Federal Defense Minister Veljko Kadijević and senior JNA generals maintained close contact with Presidency members Jović and Milošević and responded to many of their requests and directives. In March 1991 Jović, Milošević, and Kadijević withdrew, with their respective spouses, for a weekend of relaxation and discussions at the resort of Kupari. Such open access was denied Stipe Mesić, who after international mediation was confirmed to a one-year term as President of the SFRY Presidency in July 1991. "Not a single general, either from the General Staff nor from the Ministry of Defense, came to see me," he later recalled.^{72 1} Senior JNA officers freely ignored Mesić's directives and deliberately kept him isolated, according to General Kadijević, who wrote, "We treated him as if he didn't exist."^{73 m}

Simultaneously with the attack on Kijevo, the JNA stepped up its artillery and mortar assault on Vukovar in eastern Slavonia. In subsequent days, Knin Corps forces launched a broad offensive, moved toward the Adriatic Coast, and in September 1991 besieged Zadar. JNA forces in Eastern Slavonia besieged Vukovar, and Dubrovnik came under sustained bombardment and siege shortly thereafter. By October 1991 the territory controlled by the JNA and the Croatian Serbs was extensive but fragmented into three parts, each adjacent to part of BH. Large-scale combat began to wind down in Eastern Slavonia in November 1991 after Serbian forces had largely destroyed and then conquered the city of Vukovar. The JNA siege of Dubrovnik continued, however, and the city was subjected to heavy artillery barrages in December 1991.

Following extensive mediation by former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, the JNA and Croatia agreed to end hostilities in an agreement signed in Sarajevo on 2 January 1992.

Milan Babić, however, balked at accepting the "Vance Plan." For this, Serbian President Milošević denounced him "with the greatest bitterness" in a letter published on 10 January 1992 in Politika. Milošević charged that Babić's stubbornness endangered the "the most essential interests of

⁶⁹ Veljko Kadijević, Moje Vidjenje Raspada: Vojska bez države (My View of the Break-up: Army without a State) (Beograd: Politika, 1993), p. 134. Radulović states, "JNA definitively took sides with one side, the Serbian side, and the war entered a new phase characterized by a large number of victims and much destruction." Radulović, p. 34.

⁷⁰ Silber and Little characterize this pattern in Croatia as "JNA artillery supporting an infantry that was part conscript and part locally-recruited Serb volunteers." Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, pp. 172-173.

⁷¹ Silber and Little, Yugoslavia, p. 172.

⁷² Stjepan Mesić, "Rasprava" ("Discussion"), in Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić (eds.), Rat u Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini, 1991-1995 (War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1991-1995) (London: Bosanski Institut, 1999), p. 130.

⁷³ Kadijević, Moje Vidjenje, p. 38.

the Serbian people." Milošević put the future of aid to the RSK from the Republic of Serbia in doubt if Babić persisted in opposing the plan:

Just because Serbia renders widespread and selfless assistance to the Krajina, does not mean that you have the right to decide on the lives of its citizens. Neither are the citizens of Serbia your hostages, nor will they be. Assistance of Serbia to the people of the Krajina will not be brought into question in the event of peace, but the citizens of Krajina must know that you have lost all our confidence because of your positions.⁷⁴

In response, a spokesman for Babić denounced Milošević's letter as an "arrogant, blackmailing ultimatum in a tone unbecoming for a president."⁷⁵ Like Rasković before him, Babić was marginalized in the ensuing few months and then lost his job. In February 1992, Goran Hadžić replaced him as President of the Republic of the Serbian Krajina (RSK – *Republika srpska krajina*).

On 19 December 1991, the SAO Krajina announced its transformation into the RSK. Two months later, on 26 February 1992, the SAO SBWS and the SAO Western Slavonia proclaimed their unity with the RSK. The declarations of political unity represented the apogee of the Serbian separatist project in Croatia, just as the military conflict was winding down in the aftermath of the Vance Agreement.

The Bosnian Context: Independence and Separation

The 1990 Elections in BH

In 1990 the communist-led Assembly of SRBH adopted constitutional changes and electoral laws in two stages. On 21 February 1990 the assembly passed a law that permitted political parties to organize but forbade parties based on nationality or religion.⁷⁶ This decision reflected the aversion of the BH party leadership to division along national lines. However, on 11 June 1990, the Constitutional Court of SRBH declared this prohibition unconstitutional, giving a green light to aspiring leaders to establish political parties based on national identity.⁷⁷ Such parties were already being formed at the time of the court decision, although their activities were carefully cloaked in various subterfuges to avoid transparent transgressions of the assembly's February law.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Glas (Banja Luka), 10 January 1992, p. 2.

⁷⁵ Glas, 11 January 1992, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Službeni List Socijalističke Republike Bosne i Hercegovine, 21 February 1990.

⁷⁷ "The presumed damaging consequences which can follow from the abuse of free association on the basis of nationality, in the assessment of the Constitutional Court, cannot be the reason to ban the use of that freedom." Službeni List SRBiH, 11 June 1990.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Radovan Karadžić's remarks in "Stenogram Taken at the Session of the Bosnia and Herzegovina SDS on St. Peter's Day, 12 July 1991 in Sarajevo." English ERN 0300-2102 – 0300-2103. "Before the feast of St. Peter last year, when the Steering Committee was at work with the participation of over 2,000 people from Sarajevo and BH, it was prohibited to form parties whose name contained the ethnic element. At that time we did not know whether we would be arrested or allowed to proceed."

The second round of legislation, enacted on 31 July 1990, determined the structure of governing institutions for which elections would be held. The laws provided for a seven-member collective SRBH Presidency as the republic's supreme executive body, to consist of two Serbs, two Croats, two Bosnian Muslims, and one representative of "Others," a category that included self-declared "Yugoslavs" and members of various minorities. Each voter was allowed to vote for seven candidates for the Presidency: two in each national category (Serb, Croat, and Bosnian Muslim), and one in the "Other" category. This compromise was designed to reassure leaders of the smallest nationality in BH – the Bosnian Croats – of equal representation with the more numerous Serbs and Bosnian Muslims. A proposal for approximately proportional representation – three Bosnian Muslims, two Serbs, and one Croat – had been rejected during negotiations among assembly members.

Nationalists from the three major groups had hoped the legislation would provide for a "Chamber of Peoples," a body that would represent the three major nationalities, with authority to veto laws deemed harmful to the interests of any one nation. Socialist-era constitutions provided for such a Chamber of Peoples, but it had rarely been convened. The BH Assembly voted instead for a bicameral legislature to consist of a 130-member Chamber of Citizens and a Chamber of Municipalities with 110 deputies, one from each of BH's 109 municipalities and one from the City of Sarajevo.⁷⁹ The law authorized the assembly to create a Council for National Equality with powers similar to that of a Chamber of Peoples. Members of the Council were to be drawn from both chambers of the assembly. Despite enactment of this provision, leaders of all three nationalist parties regularly spoke out during the electoral campaign in favor of creating a Chamber of Peoples once the new assembly convened.

Finally, the legislation provided for elections to assemblies in each of the republic's 109 municipalities (*opština*, pl. *opštine*).⁸⁰ Although they had expanded in number and undergone some functional changes, the municipalities had been the primary units of local administration in BH since Ottoman times. The municipal assemblies had been developed in the socialist era to encourage popular participation more than to expedite decision-making, since the SK typically determined conclusions before making recommendations to the municipal assemblies for discussion. The 1990 electoral legislation effectively extended participatory socialism into the era of multiparty pluralism by leaving in place the ungainly, oversized municipal assemblies that had existed under socialism.

With these changes approved, elections in BH were scheduled for 18 November 1990.

⁷⁹ The legislation consisted of amendments 59 through 80 to the 1974 Constitution. Part of Amendment 70 provided for a Council for Questions of Equality of Nations and National Minorities of Bosnia and Hercegovina, to be made up of an equal number of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats, and a proportionate number of "others." If a given issue were to be referred to the assembly by the council, a 2/3 majority would be required for passage. None of the nationalist parties were satisfied with this measure, but after the November elections they were unable to agree on legislation to implement these measures. Suad Arnautović, *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini '90. Analiza izbornog procesa* (Sarajevo: Promocult, 1996), pp. 179-195. Amendment 70 is on pp. 180-81.

⁸⁰ The term "*opština*" is conventionally translated into English as "municipality," but many *opštine* consisted of rural areas surrounding a small town that served as the seat of government. Thus some *opštine* were truly urban aggregations, while others were overwhelmingly rural.

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Political Parties

As was the case in other republics, in BH dozens of parties were organized and registered to compete in the 1990 elections. Two major parties voiced support for multiethnic life and rejected most forms of nationalist appeal. The SK in BH renamed itself the League of Communists – Social Democratic Party (SK-SDP - *Savez komunista – Socijalna demokratska partija*) and fielded candidates on all levels. An estimated 100,000 people attended its first election rally in Sarajevo in May 1990. In location, symbols, and rhetoric, the May rally was consciously modeled on Tito's dramatic appearance at the same place in November 1945.⁸¹

The Alliance of Reformist Forces of Yugoslavia (SRSJ – *Savez reformskih snage Jugoslavije*), founded by federal prime minister Ante Marković, held its founding rally in northwestern BH at the famed Partisan monument on Mt. Kozara near Prijedor. The location emphasized the party's allegiance to Partisan values and its leaders' hopes to capitalize on public antipathy to national divisiveness. The SRSJ thus shared with the SK-SDP a fealty to Partisan ideals and multiethnic society. Fatefully, however, Marković rejected an offer to ally his party with the reorganized SK and the Socialist Alliance. The two leading non-nationalist parties thus entered the BH elections with no working arrangement between them, adding to the prospect that nationalist parties together would outpoll them.

In addition to the parties formed on multiethnic principles, three major nationalist parties were formed in 1990. At first the three major nationalist parties functioned more as counterparts than as rivals. Each identified its constituency as members of a single ethnonational group; none sought to draw votes away from either of the other two nationalist parties. During the campaign, these parties cooperated to defeat their common opponents, the SK-SDP and SRSJ.

The Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ - *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*) of BH was the offspring of a party of the same name in Croatia headed by former general, dissident, and historian Dr. Franjo Tuđman. The HDZ held its Founding Assembly in the Great Hall of the Skenderija sports complex on 18 August 1990 amid symbols that testified to the party's association with Croatia and its leader. Croatian flags with the distinctive Šahovnica (checkerboard pattern) and pictures of Croatian President Tuđman were draped on the walls, and the meeting opened with the Croatian national anthem, "*Lijepa naša domovino*."⁸²

Muslim activists led by Alija Izetbegović formed the Party of Democratic Action (SDA - *Stranka demokratske akcije*) as the leading party of Bosnia's Muslims. Izetbegović had been released from prison in 1989 after serving 6 years of a 14-year sentence for anti-state activities. The party supported the preservation of Yugoslavia as a federal unit, opposed any revision of borders, and called for a stabilized BH as a unified state of Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. The SDA held its Founding Assembly on 26 May in Sarajevo, attended by delegates from 73 municipalities.⁸³

⁸¹ Tihomir Loza, "Počelo je – kako će završiti," *Naši Dani*, XXXVII, broj 995, 8 June 1990, pp. 4-7.

⁸² Arnautović, *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini*, p. 43.

⁸³ *Naši Dani* (Sarajevo), 8 June 1990, p. 9.

Radovan Karadžić was elected President of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS -*Srpska demokratska stranka*) of BH and soon became its most visible spokesman. At a press conference on 5 July 1990, he announced that the Bosnian SDS would model its "program and strategy" after the Croatian SDS, the leading party representing Serbs living in Croatia.⁸⁴ Around 3,000 Serbs attended the Founding Assembly on 12 July 1990 at Sarajevo's Skenderija Hall.⁸⁵ Croatian SDS party leader Jovan Rašković was enthusiastically received. But it was Karadžić who set forth the party's guiding principles at this meeting. In his speech, Karadžić stated that the SDS sought to lure Serbs away from the SK-SDP and its communist ideology, and he declared that the party would insist on preserving the federal Yugoslav state.

The Election Campaign

Early in the election campaign, the leaders of the three nationalist parties reached verbal "inter-party agreements" to refrain from attacking one another directly and to cooperate on the division of power should they together command a majority in the elections. These agreements were respected in large measure during the electoral campaigns for republican offices and in most municipalities in which no group held an absolute demographic majority.

Because of the inter-party agreements and the leaders' fear of alienating members of other nations to the point of voting for SK-SDP or Reformist candidates, national antagonisms were muted in the campaign rhetoric of the three major nationalist parties. At times party leaders praised members of other nationalities. The conciliatory tone was evident in the speeches of party presidents (Karadžić, Izetbegović, and Perinović) at their respective Founding Assemblies. At the SDS meeting, Karadžić had kind words for the Muslims:

Our goal is to repair relations between the nationalities and to establish equality, reciprocity, and civil peace. ... I believe in the great potential of the Muslim nation, I believe in its simple human good.⁸⁶

Each nationalist party faced challenges in formulating its appeal to members of a single nationality. Unlike in the Republic of Serbia, where Milošević's Serbian Socialist Party claimed to be heir to the SK, the BH SDS had to distinguish itself from the front-running contenders, the SK-SDP and SRSJ. As part of its strategy, the SDS adopted a slogan portraying its rivals as extremists and itself as a moderate alternative: "Neither Partisan nor Chetnik, but democratic."⁸⁷

Cooperation among the three nationalist parties did not obscure their fundamental differences on one key issue: the future constitutional relationship of SRBH to Yugoslavia. The HDZ and SDS held diametrically opposing views on the future structure of Yugoslavia. HDZ candidates, looking beyond BH's borders to Croatia's quest for autonomy or independence, favored a "confederation" in

⁸⁴ *Oslobodjenje*, 6 July 1990, p. 3, reports on the press conference of July 5.

⁸⁵ Arnaudović, *Izbori u Bosni i Hercegovini*, p. 41; *Oslobodjenje*, 13 July 1990, p. 3; *Sedam Dana* (a weekly magazine section of *Oslobodjenje*), 15 July 1990, p. 4; and *Naši Dani*, 20 July 1990, p. 12.

⁸⁶ *Oslobodjenje*, 13 July 1990, p. 3. Karadžić's expressions of hope for consensus and coexistence were further spelled out in an interview. *Naši Dani*, 20 July 1990, pp. 13-15.

⁸⁷ Mirko Pejanović, *Bosansko pitanje i Srbi u Bosni i Hercegovini* (Sarajevo: Bosanska knjiga, 1999), p. 19.

which the republics would be linked only loosely. SDS President Karadžić advocated a "federal Yugoslavia" and gave notice that the party would never consider loosening federal ties:

For the Serbian nation it is not acceptable for BH to be an independent state in a confederal community with other states, or any other form of state organization in which it would be divided from the whole of the Serbian nation or be relegated to the status of a national minority. ... A confederal status for BH cannot be achieved without civil war.^{88 p}

This view corresponded with that being espoused at the time by Milošević. At a meeting of the expanded Presidency of the SFRY in October 1990, he stated:

Concerning the Serbian people, they want to live in one state. Thus any kind of division into multiple states that would divide part of the Serbian people and distribute them into various sovereign states cannot, from our viewpoint, be acceptable. The Serbian people will live in one state and every people that wishes to live equally and in the same state with the Serbian people is welcome.^{89 q}

The Muslim SDA, caught in the conflict between the Croatian and Serbian parties, sought to carve out a middle ground and defer the painful decisions until after the elections. In the words of SDA President Alija Izetbegović:

We want a contemporary state. That is not a confederal concept as proposed by Slovenia and Croatia, nor a hard federation as offered by the Presidency of the SFRY. BH wants something in the middle, a formula that can span the two concepts, thus a new agreement for a Yugoslav state community.^{90 r}

On 13 October 1990, in the midst of the electoral campaign, SDS leaders proclaimed a Serbian National Council (*Srpsko narodno vijeće*) at a large public rally in Banja Luka.^{91 s} This body bore the same name as the institution proclaimed by Serbs in the Croatian Krajina in July 1990. The SNV was necessary, said its promoters, because the SRBH Assembly had rejected the proposal for a Chamber of Peoples, leaving members of the Serbian nation in BH unprotected. The rally's conveners announced plans for regional SNV branches and subsequently formed them in Trebinje and Tuzla.⁹² Although all three nationalist parties criticized the omission of a Chamber of Peoples, only the SDS sponsored the formation of such a single-national body.

Shortly thereafter, on 2 November 1990, the Constitutional Court of SRBH ruled that the Serbian National Council was an illegal formation that usurped the constitutional authority of the

⁸⁸ Glas (Banja Luka), 9 Nov 1990, p. 2. Dateline Sarajevo, 8 November, Tanjug.

⁸⁹ Srđan Radulović, Sudbina Krajine (Dan Graf, 1996), p. 28.

⁹⁰ Nedeljni Glas (Banja Luka), 3 and 4 November 1990, p. 4.

⁹¹ "In the BH constitutional amendments and election laws all the conditions were created for a complete constitutional annihilation of Serbs in BH." Javnost (Sarajevo), 19 October 1990, p. 1. Javnost was the official newspaper of the SDS. This was its first issue.

⁹² Oslobodjenje, 3 November 1990.

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republican government. The court referred the issue to the BH Assembly for further action.⁹³ Unlike in Croatia, where the SDS-led Serbian National Councils actively pursued the creation of separate Serbian institutions, the Serbian National Council in BH never became active. Serbian nationalist leaders continued for the next year to make their decisions primarily within the SDS.

The New Governing "Partnership" in BH

As partner parties, the SDA, HDZ, and SDS swept to victory in the November elections by decisive margins that exceeded their leaders' most optimistic forecasts. The SDA won 86 of the total 240 seats in both chambers, the SDS won 72 seats, and the HDZ won 44 seats. Eight different parties shared the remaining 38 seats. The three nationalist parties also dominated in votes for the Presidency, winning two seats each in their respective electoral categories of Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim. Additionally, SDA candidate Ejup Ganić won the seventh seat on the Presidency by garnering the most votes in the category of "Other." The soundly defeated SK-SDP and Reformists joined with several other parties in a coalition known as the "Opposition" or the "Left Bloc," but they were shut out of power in all republican bodies and nearly all municipalities.

Following the election, nationalist party leaders Alija Izetbegović (SDA), Radovan Karadžić (SDS), and Stjepan Kljuić (HDZ) faithfully implemented the inter-party agreements. The SDA designated Izetbegović to be President of the Presidency, the SDS selected Momčilo Krajišnik to be President of the Assembly, and Jure Pelivan was named by the HDZ to be Prime Minister. Agreement on the Council of Ministers proved much more difficult. Ministerial appointments were approved by the assembly on 30 January 1991, over two months after the elections.⁹⁴

The nationalist leaders expanded their mutual inter-party agreements to apportion executive positions in each municipality according to several formulas, depending on the national composition of the municipality in question. The agreements specified term limits for some offices and procedures for successor appointments on a rotating basis. Members of the Left Bloc were completely excluded from this power-sharing arrangement.⁹⁵ But the nationalist parties found many reasons to disagree among themselves, and the division of power in municipalities proceeded unevenly in the months after the election.⁹⁶ In some municipalities the parties were unable to agree,

⁹³ "The Serbian National Council, established on 13 October, is not a legal entity and its acts do not represent a part of the legal system. ... The formation of this council. ... is an attempt to take questions that are under the constitutional jurisdiction of legitimate state organs and decide them outside of constitutionally foreseen legal procedures and institutions of self-government. That constitutes an egregious violation of constitutionality and legality." *Nedeljni Glas* (Banja Luka), 3 and 4 November 1990, p. 3, citing Tanjug, Sarajevo, 2 Nov 1990.

⁹⁴ *Oslobodjenje*, 31 January 1991, p. 1.

⁹⁵ Adil Zulfikarpašić, *The Bosniak* (London: Hurst, 1996), p. 56. The interparty agreement was not reported in the press at the time, but its footprints are visible in hundreds of disputes arbitrated by party leaders from late 1990 into early 1992.

⁹⁶ In Sarajevo, for example, the SDA candidate was elected Mayor, the SDS nominee was chosen as President of the City Assembly, and the HDZ designee was selected as President of the Executive Council at a meeting on 20 December 1990, the same day that the Republican Assembly held its first session to confirm the selection of the republic-level government. *Oslobodjenje*, 21 December 1990, p. 10.

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and in a few instances local party units rebelled against the dictates of the republic-level party leaders.⁹⁷

Regionalization in BH

"Regionalization" was the name given to the SDS campaign in BH to secure one-party rule and single-nationality control in order to remove territory inhabited by Serbs from the jurisdiction of the Republic of BH. The regionalization campaign was orchestrated from above but executed from below, at the level of Serb-inhabited local communities, municipalities, and regions. The campaign employed three strategies: forming SDS-dominated regional communities of municipalities where Serbs were a majority; carving out Serbian-dominated territories from municipalities where Serbs did not enjoy a majority; and establishing rival Serbian governing bodies parallel to existing institutions. Each of the three strategies replicated steps that had been taken by Serbs in Croatia.

The SDS was not the only political party in BH to pursue single-party domination of selected territory, but it was the first of the three nationalist parties to undertake each step, and it was the most consistent and persistent in unilaterally carrying out regionalization.⁹⁸ The idea of consolidating territory under SDS control was contemplated before the election. Mirko Pejanović, then the President of the Democratic Socialist Alliance (*DSS – Demokratski socijalistički savez*), recalled a discussion in August 1990 with Radovan Karadžić concerning the formation of Serbian municipalities:

I noticed that Karadžić was preoccupied with the problem of creating Serbian municipalities. ... I said to him openly that such a thing could only happen in places with an absolute Serbian majority, and that there are very, very few such places in BH. I also told him that getting carried away with such a concept would sooner or later lead to conflict among the nationalities that live in BH. ... We stood on completely opposite sides of that issue.⁹⁹

The SDS began its campaign to create regional associations in the northwestern region of the Bosnian Krajina. On 21 January 1991, presidents of 21 municipal assemblies who were SDS members met to launch an initiative to form the Community of Municipalities of the Bosnian Krajina (*ZOBK – Zajednica opština Bosanske Krajine*).¹⁰⁰ Although many Serbian leaders publicly supported the concept of regionalization in winter and spring 1991, the plan to form ZOBK did not become widely known until April.

⁹⁷ "Pogledi i stavovi o budućoj Bosni i Hercegovini," Klub srpskih poslanika (SDS i SPO) u Skupštini SRBiH, Sarajevo, 14 February 1991, and *Oslobodjenje*, 29 March 1992, p. 2.

⁹⁸ As stated by Viktor Meier, "On the occasion of a visit to Sarajevo at the end of May 1991, I found that the Serbian party was pressing for a regionalization of the republic according to primarily national criteria. ... The Muslim politicians did not completely reject the concept of the 'cantonization' of their republic, but they wanted to limit the competence of these units to the bare minimum." Meier, *Yugoslavia*, p. 206.

⁹⁹ Pejanović, *Bosansko pitanje*, p. 19.

¹⁰⁰ *Nedeljni Glas*, 13 and 14 April 1991, p. 3, reporting on an SDS press conference. Shortly after this conference, the Serb-majority municipal assembly of Titov Drvar directed its Executive Committee to contact other municipalities regarding the formation of a new community of municipalities. ERN 0040-3781.

In their campaign to establish the ZOBK, SDS leaders publicly contended that their aims were economic, cultural, and informational rather than political in character.¹⁰¹ SDS spokesmen cited provisions of the 1974 BH constitution that authorized the formation of regional associations and defended the newly formed body as comparable to the Bihać and Banja Luka communities of municipalities that had been formed during communist rule. However, looking back on these events some sixteen months later, SDS leaders explained that the intended nature and purpose of the association had been to resist the authority of the BH government. Radovan Karadžić stated, "Out of fear that we would be governed or dominated by the Izetbegović government we worked out some political, and less state mechanisms of resistance to abuses of the center."^{102 w} At the time he said this in July 1992, Karadžić was advocating the dismantling of regional associations because they were inhibiting the effective functioning of the Bosnian Serb state.^{103 x}

The SDS regional board, meeting on 7 April 1991, formally approved the initiative to create the ZOBK.¹⁰⁴ The campaign began on 10 April 1991 as assemblies of municipalities with large Serb majorities voted to affiliate with the as-yet non-existent ZOBK.¹⁰⁵ Other Serb-dominated municipalities followed on 11 and 12 April. But the fast-moving campaign soon encountered opposition. The BH Assembly, meeting in Sarajevo, interrupted its scheduled debate on economic matters at the insistence of an SDA delegate who complained that "a number of northwest Bosnian municipalities are joining SAO Krajina" and passed a resolution asking that regionalization be suspended until a political agreement could be reached.¹⁰⁶

The leaders of most other Bosnian political parties condemned the campaign to form the ZOBK as hasty, secretive, or politically motivated. Critics included Serbs in other political parties as well as Croats and Muslims. Milorad Dodik, a Serb leader in the SRSJ, denied that his party was involved and criticized the SDS for unilaterally promoting it:

We as a party have not been engaged in all this. The initiative comes from only one party, the SDS. ... Therefore our position is that it is mandatory to submit the initiative to the

¹⁰¹ Examples of such public declarations are found in Glas, 12 April 1991, p. 7; 18 April 1991, p. 4; 3 May 1991, p. 5; and 10 May 1991, p. 8.

¹⁰² Bosnian Serb Assembly, 17th Session, Radovan Karadžić, BCS ERN 0214-9509.

¹⁰³ Said Karadžić, "We will inform everyone immediately that we are dealing with a born Serbian tendency for autonomy, a tendency to create little principalities and little princes, always with private interests, and never the interests of the people, behind them." Bosnian Serb Assembly, 17th Session, Radovan Karadžić, BCS ERN 0214-9509.

¹⁰⁴ Nedeljnji Glas, 13 and 14 April 1991, p. 3. This decision was announced by an SDS spokesman at a press conference on 12 April 1991.

¹⁰⁵ On 10 April 1991, the municipalities of Čelinac, Srbac, Ključ, Titov Drvar, and Bosanski Petrovac voted to join. ERNs 0040-3779, 0040-3780, 0040-3805, and Glas, 11 April 1991, p. 5. On 11 April 1991, SDS-majority municipal assemblies in Bosanska Gradiska (ERN 0040-3785), Bosansko Grahovo (ERN 0400-3734), Bosanska Dubica (ERN 0040-3738), Laktaši (ERN 0040-3783), Prnjavor (ERN 0040-3790), and Glamoč (ERN 0040-3782) voted to affiliate with ZOBK. On April 12, the municipal assembly of Skender Vakuf voted to join. ERN 0040-3739.

¹⁰⁶ Glas, 12 April 1991, pp. 1, 3, and Javnost, 4 May 1991, p. 5.

Republican government of BH, to approach this problem more seriously and studiously, along with obligatory public discussion.¹⁰⁷

SDP spokesman Igor Radojičić stated, "We as a party learned of this initiative through our representatives in assemblies of municipalities which were, in general, extraordinary sessions." Noting that neither the opposition parties nor the "parties in power" – the nationalists – had agreed in advance on this initiative, he called it a "further step toward conflict between national groups."¹⁰⁸

The SDA went beyond declarations and organized a rally in Banja Luka on 21 April to protest the "national regionalization" of BH. The crowd of 30,000 to 100,000 heard party leaders voice support for a "united and integral BH without nationally homogeneous regions, for that is against the interests of Muslims and also of Serbs, Croats and others."¹⁰⁹ Party President Alija Izetbegović emphasized the diverse character of the Bosnian Krajina:

Those who say that there are 51% Serbs here and that therefore this is a Serbian municipality are not well-intentioned. ... What about the 49% who are Muslims and Croats; to what do they belong? Bosnia is nationally mixed and no one can divide it, except if someone wishes disorder and blood. And we won't do that.

The criticism did not deter SDS leaders. Party President Radovan Karadžić denounced the concentration of power in Sarajevo and insisted that the Bosnian Krajina's economic backwardness was the sole motive for forming the association. "All political connotations of this matter are attributed by others," he stated.¹¹⁰

The Founding Assembly of the ZOBK was held on 25 April in the Hotel Turist in Čelinac.¹¹¹ Speeches at this meeting incorporated complaints about Sarajevo-based centralization in BH. Representatives of 21 municipalities attended, although only 14 municipalities had voted to join the association. The assemblies of these 14 municipalities each had SDS majorities, and all but one had an absolute majority of Serbian residents according to the 1991 census.

Following the lead of the ZOBK, two other communities of municipalities were formed in May 1991: "Romanija" (8 May) and "Eastern and Old Herzegovina" (27 May).¹¹² These were renamed SAO's (sing. SAO – *Srpska autonomna oblast*) in September 1991, in imitation of Serbian institutions that had been created in Croatia, and three additional SAO's were newly proclaimed in

¹⁰⁷ Glas, 18 April 1991, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ Glas, 18 April 1991, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Glas, 22 April 1991, pp. 1 and 5.

¹¹⁰ Glas, 17 April 1995, p. 5.

¹¹¹ Glas, 27 and 28 April 1991, p. 6, provides the best coverage of this event and the source for quotes from it.

¹¹² Javnost, 11 May 1991, p. 3, reports the formation of the Community of Municipalities of Romanija. See Javnost, 1 June 1991, p. 4, for the formation of the Community of Municipalities of Eastern and Old Herzegovina.

September. The ZOBK was renamed the "Autonomous Region of Krajina" (ARK – *Autonomna regija Krajine*) on 16 September 1991 and was considered the institutional equal of the five SAO's.¹¹³

Toward Serbian Unification

In spring 1991, SDS leaders in both Croatia and BH were creating local institutions to resist the jurisdiction of the governments of their respective republics. On 3 March 1991, they held a joint rally in Banja Luka (BH) with the intention, in the words of Radovan Karadžić, "to confirm the mandate we received from the Serbian people at the elections."¹¹⁴ The rally, attended by an estimated 50,000 persons, took place only one day after the incident in Pakrac, which was characterized as "a declaration of war on the Serbs in Croatia" by Jovan Rašković, President of the Croatian SDS. Dušan Zelenbaba, another member of the SDS in Croatia, urged those in the crowd to "buy or acquire the only thing that can defend freedom – a rifle." Radovan Karadžić told the crowd, "The more the likelihood of Yugoslavia declines, the greater is the likelihood of a Greater Serbia." He voiced optimism that Bosnian Muslims would want to be part of a Greater Serbia. "All Serbs and a large majority of Muslims would vote for Serbia," he said. In the words of Goran Trkulja, writing in *Glas*, it was the first time that Greater Serbia "emerged as the clear and official orientation of the Serbian Democratic Party – albeit, as always, as an alternative to Yugoslavia."¹¹⁵

Leaders in the ZOBK were eager to support fellow Serbs in Croatia. Despite their continuing assurances that the ZOBK had nothing to do with nationality or politics, ZOBK leaders convened a "special session" of the ZOBK Assembly on 5 May 1991, its first meeting after the founding assembly, to express solidarity with the Serbs in Croatia:

... from today, every attack on the Serbian people in Croatia is considered an attack on all citizens in the Bosnian Krajina, for the political endangerment of one nation endangers other nations that live together on this territory.¹¹⁶

On 8 June 1991, Milan Martić's Serbian paramilitary units crossed from Croatia into BH and held "maneuvers" in Titov Drvar, a Serb-majority municipality along the border with Croatia. The President of the Titov Drvar Municipal Assembly, an SDS member, ceremoniously received the paramilitary commander, who announced that their incursion had "dissolved the border" between BH and Serb-controlled territory in Croatia.¹¹⁷

Initiative for Union of the Two Krajinas

Led by Milan Babić, some members of the SDS parties in Croatia and in the Bosnian Krajina made plans to declare the unity of the Krajinas of Croatia and BH. On 24 June 1991 they met in

¹¹³ ARK Assembly, 7th Session, 16 September 1991. BCS ERN 0400-3854 – 0400-3855. English ERN 0300-1754 – 0300-1755.

¹¹⁴ *Glas*, 4 March 1992, pp. 6-7. Quotes from speakers at the rally are taken from this article.

¹¹⁵ *Glas*, 5 March 1992, p. 7.

¹¹⁶ *Glas*, 6 May 1991, p. 6.

¹¹⁷ *Oslobodjenje*, 9 June 1991, p. 1.

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Banja Luka, signed an "Agreement on Cooperation" between the two regions, and decided to hold a joint session of the assemblies of the ZOBK and the SAO Knin a few days later.¹¹⁸

Karadžić, for several reasons, viewed the prospective unification of the two Krajinas with alarm. First, he feared the involvement of Croatian SDS leaders with members of his party in the Bosnian Krajina.¹¹⁹ And despite rhetorically supporting Greater Serbia in spring 1991 and favoring organization of the ZOBK, Karadžić did not want to provoke the BH government into measures that would make it more difficult for Bosnian Serbs to aid fellow Serbs in Croatia.¹²⁰ Furthermore, a premature unification declaration contravened the party's policy of deferring such actions until other actors (HDZ and SDA in BH, and the republics of Croatia and Slovenia) had violated Yugoslavia's constitutional order and thereby incurred the wrath of the international community.¹²¹

One day after the "Agreement on Cooperation" was signed, Nikola Koljević visited Banja Luka to caution local SDS authorities against taking further steps to unify the two Krajinas. "The agreement signed in Banja Luka yesterday was legal, but political union would be illegal," Koljević said. He reminded local SDS leaders of the positions of the EC, the US, and "other military-political elements in the world, that don't wish to accept any kind of unilateral political act."¹²² bb

Koljević's warnings failed to avert the proclamation of unity. Serbian leaders of the ZOBK and the Serbian Krajina in Croatia met on 27 June 1991 in the Bosnian Krajina town of Bosansko Grahovo at a hall named after native son Gavriilo Princip, the assassin of Habsburg Archduke Francis Ferdinand in 1914.¹²³ Speakers called for the abolition of the boundary separating the two Krajinas. Milan Babić, President of the SAO Krajina in Croatia, complained, "after the fall of the Berlin Wall, we [Serbs] became the only nation in free Europe that is divided."¹²⁴ cc Delegates then unanimously endorsed the "Agreement on Cooperation" that had been signed in Banja Luka three days before.

¹¹⁸ Glas, 26 June 1991, p. 6.

¹¹⁹ In a telephone conversation with Serbian writer Dobrica Ćosić on the day of the Croatian Serb incursion into Drvar, Karadžić stated, "This Milan guy has just made a stupid mistake, and then my guys. I have just spoken with the vice-premier, he is our man. About this thing with this drill in Drvar." Telephone intercept, 9 June 1991. BCS ERN 0205-2747 - 0205-2758. English ERN 0305-1311.

¹²⁰ Talking with Ćosić on 9 June 91, Karadžić stated, "They would like to do things off-hand, totally unmotivated and with no reason and no common sense. ... Here we have a battle going on, and they should now slowly organize their, their Krajina thing, and so on. ... Because they wanted to get Knin involved too, and so on. I told them not to do anything like that. At all. ... And most concretely, say, it could cause the Bosnian MUP to control that border crossing more intensively. ... No, I can't prevent that, and that's the only place through which they can be helped. ... We supply them with food through there, we supply them with blankets through there, etc. And the only border they should spare of incidents, they're making stupid mistakes there." Telephone intercept, 9 June 1991. BCS ERN 0205-2747 - 0205-2758. English ERN 0305-1311.

¹²¹ "Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Stenogram Taken at the Session of the Bosnia and Herzegovina SDS on St. Peter's Day, 12 July 1991 in Sarajevo." English ERN 0300-2120.

¹²² Glas, 26 June 1992, p. 7.

¹²³ Glas, 28 June 1991, p. 7, and Oslobodjenje, 28 June 1991, n.p.

¹²⁴ Glas, 28 June 1991, p. 7.

Taking the step that Koljević had warned them against, they also passed a "Declaration of Unification." Its purpose was described as the "integration of Serbian people as a whole, all with the goal of creating a united state in which all Serbs in the Balkans live."^{125 dd}

The proclamation evoked a strong denunciation from the assembly and presidency of the SRBH. After the delegates of several parties walked out in protest, SDA and HDZ delegates in the SRBH Assembly garnered the votes on 27 June 1991 to proclaim the union an illegal act. The next day, the SRBH Presidency, noting that the union infringed upon the territorial integrity of BH, denounced the proclamation, and asked the republic's "judicial organs" to rule on its constitutionality.¹²⁶

In the days following the Bosansko Grahovo proclamation, the SDS central leadership allowed the union of the two Krajinas to perish from neglect. The unification declaration went unnoticed in Javnost, the official SDS newspaper. SDS BH Party President Karadžić, speaking at a press conference in early July, contradicted the meeting's primary theme of dissolving the Croatian-Bosnian border. "It must be clear to everyone that the Serbian nation will energetically defend the western boundary of BH," he stated.^{127 ee} (Recognizing BH's border with Croatia was part of the SDS effort to prevent Croatian forces from entering BH.) Shortly thereafter, Bosnian Serb leaders changed the composition of an SDS Regional Board in the Bosnian Krajina.^{128 ff}

Milan Babić led further efforts to unify the two Krajinas in fall 1991. These, too, were opposed by leaders of the SDS BH, who feared handing a propaganda victory to Croatian President Tudjman and arousing the ire of international negotiators.¹²⁹ In October 1991 Babić acquired a proxy from Bosnian Krajina Serbs to negotiate for them at the international talks then being held in The Hague.¹³⁰ As in June 1991, this initiative came to naught without being publicly renounced. Leaders

¹²⁵ Glas, 28 June 1991, p. 7.

¹²⁶ Oslobodjenje, 29 June 1991, p. 5.

¹²⁷ Javnost, 13 July 91, p. 3.

¹²⁸ "SDS of BH. Stenogram Taken at the Session of the Bosnia and Herzegovina SDS on St. Peter's Day, 12 July 1991 in Sarajevo." English ERN 0300-2116. Karadžić stated, "We did have a regional board, which we had to change, it was in fact in Bosnian Krajina, which had become completely alienated and became a power above the municipal boards." Not all SDS leaders were purged, however. The elected President and Vice President of the ZOBK, Vojo Kuprešanin and Radoslav Brdjanin, among others, remained in their posts. Radulovic, Sudbina Krajine, p. 31, states, "This time Milošević reacted indirectly, through the leader of the Bosnian SDS Radovan Karadžić, who dismissed the Banja Luka leadership of the SDS."

¹²⁹ In a telephone conversation on 6 September 1991, Karadžić told General Blagoje Adžić; "I had a problem today. They wanted to make a stupid decision about the unification of these Krajinas. And now the image I have in my mind is of Genscher and Tudjman in difficulties and suddenly a telefax arrives saying the Serbs have abolished the border between Bosnia and Croatia." Adžić responded, "It's literally almost as if Zagreb was behind this." Karadžić then claimed that he thwarted the initiative: "I prevented it but I'm worried, let the other side be on the offensive, let it be seen that they are attacking, it is now clear to the English and the French that it is they who are attacking." Telephone intercept, 6 September 1991. BCS ERN 0091-3371 - 0091-3375.

¹³⁰ Glas, 17 October 1991, p. 1.

of the SDS in BH met in Banja Luka and issued a general declaration of Serbian solidarity that omitted any mention of Babić's announced role as spokesman at The Hague for the Bosnian Krajina Serbs.¹³¹

International Diplomacy

International diplomatic efforts to achieve a comprehensive solution to the Yugoslav imbroglio were first formalized in the European Community Conference on Yugoslavia (ECCY), convened in The Hague, in early September 1991. Between 12 September 1991 and 14 August 1992, the ECCY sponsored 13 plenary sessions and 10 rounds of "working group" talks under the chairmanship of former British Foreign Minister Lord Carrington.¹³² Cyrus Vance, a former US Secretary of State acting as the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary General, soon joined the effort. Talks were held in The Hague, Brussels, Lisbon, and Sarajevo. (In August 1992, the ECCY was superseded by the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, the ICFY.)

In the opening days of the peace conference, the participants promptly reached an agreement in principle to grant independence to Croatia provided its Serbian citizens were guaranteed their civil rights.¹³³ In practice this formulation meant the recognition of a separate, Serb-dominated territorial unit within Croatia. In broad outline the September agreement became the key component of the internationally sponsored solution to the Croatian war. On 2 January 1992, the JNA and the Republic of Croatia signed an agreement in Sarajevo that ended the Croatian war and provided for deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force (UNPROFOR – United Nations Protection Force) to separate Serb and Croat forces. A final political solution was deferred. At the beginning of 1992, the ECCY was transferred to Brussels, where its focus gradually shifted from Croatia to BH.

In its approach to BH, the ECCY sought a territorial division that would create three largely autonomous entities while nominally preserving a central BH state. These notions were incorporated in the "Statement of Principles" agreed to on 23 February 1992, which read in part:

BH would be a state, composed of three constituent units, based on national principles and taking into account economic, geographic and other criteria. ... BH would continue to have its existing borders and neither the government of BH nor the governments of the constituent units will encourage or support claims to any part of its territory by neighboring states.¹³⁴

These principles involved more than one transparent fiction. The "constituent units" being foreseen were based not on economic or geographic criteria, but on ethno-national claims. And it was widely expected that both Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb leaders would seek unity with Croatia and Serbia, respectively, at the earliest opportune moment. And it exposed what David Campbell calls a

¹³¹ Glas, 21 October 1991, p. 1.

¹³² David Campbell, National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 125-131; and Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1999), pp. 84-87 and 108-117.

¹³³ Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation (videotape), Part III, and Gow, The Triumph of the Lack of Will, p. 53.

¹³⁴ Campbell, National Deconstruction, p. 128.

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"profound tension" between the notion of a sovereign unitary Bosnia and "a separatist logic hostile to the adoption of overarching authority."¹³⁵ The principles catered to those Croatian and Serbian leaders who dreamed of ruling their respective ethnically separate polities. Each "constituent unit" was to be dominated by a single group – Serb, Croat, or Muslim – but include many inhabitants belonging to each of the other two groups. Bosnian Serb leaders, returning to Sarajevo after the session on 23 February at which these principles were accepted, expressed elation with the principles and agreement reached in Lisbon.

The President of the BH Presidency and of the SDA, Alija Izetbegović, was a reluctant partner in this agreement, and he backed away from the agreement shortly after returning to Sarajevo from Lisbon in late February. But the sticking point proved not to be the principles but a map. ECCY negotiators spent weeks drawing proposed boundaries between the "constituent units." In the meantime, BH moved inexorably toward the EC's recognition of its independence.

The Transformation of the JNA in BH

The formation and conduct of military and paramilitary organizations in BH took place in the long shadow of the war in Croatia. By early 1992, each of the three nationalist parties in BH had taken measures to prepare militarily for war and were able to call upon paramilitary organizations to support their aims.¹³⁶ But the decisive role in the militarization of BH was played by two socialist-era military organizations: local Territorial Defense forces and the JNA. As in Croatia, the JNA underwent a transformation in its composition and role to become an ally of local Serb forces committed to establishing their own polity. The change was gradual and took place in BH later than in Croatia, but by spring 1992 the JNA in BH had become a major armed protagonist of Serbian national aims.¹³⁷ As in Croatia, the change in the JNA in BH was influenced significantly by the inclinations and policies of individual commanders.

Territorial Defense (TO - *Teritorijalna odbrana*) forces were an essential element of socialist Yugoslavia's preparations for defending homeland defense. Based on the Partisan experience, military theorists were convinced that the country should be ready to defend local territories in isolation if necessary. In the event of an invasion, TO units were to operate in the absence of the JNA, so each unit was provided with light weapons suitable for mobile guerilla fighters.¹³⁸ Many units were based in factories or enterprises and stored their weapons under lock and key at their local bases.

The JNA's alliance with Croatia's Serbs contributed to an expanded role in BH during the second half of 1991. Massive defections from the JNA during the Croatian war created perpetual manpower shortages. The JNA responded by calling up reservists in BH. These call-ups, known as "mobilizations," drew in reservists of all nationalities at first, but as the war in Croatia intensified, mostly Serbs responded. Kadijević explained the army's changed role:

¹³⁵ Campbell, National Deconstruction, p. 129.

¹³⁶ For a summary of paramilitary formations of all groups, see Woodward, Yugoslavia, pp. 253-54.

¹³⁷ Meier, Yugoslavia, pp. 207-208.

¹³⁸ James Gow, Legitimacy and the Military: The Yugoslav Crisis (London: Pinter, 1992), pp. 46-47.

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When the JNA failed in its efforts to orient the Muslim part of Bosnia's leadership toward a new Yugoslav state made of those Yugoslav nations who still wanted it, we had to orient ourselves toward concrete cooperation with the representatives of the Serbian nation and with the Serbian people as a whole. Thus we assured that during the war in Croatia we executed maneuvers and movements of JNA forces through BH, which was of vital significance for the JNA. ... That made it possible for the mobilization in Serbian parts of BH to be very successful.¹³⁹

SDS leaders in BH supported the JNA mobilizations, while the HDZ and SDA (at various times and at different levels) either ignored or opposed them. On 30 September 1991, the Presidency of BH declared illegal a JNA-ordered mobilization of the previous day and demanded the dismissal of Nikola Uzelac, the commander of the Banja Luka Corps, who had ordered it.¹⁴⁰ Thousands of Serbs from BH fought in the Croatian war, leading to a sense of solidarity among Serbs living in BH and Croatia and giving combat experience to many Bosnian Serb volunteers.

The JNA also increased its presence and activities in BH. In September 1991 reservists from a JNA corps based in Užica (Serbia) were deployed to the JNA barracks at the Mostar airport, ostensibly to calm local ethnic tensions aroused by Croatian paramilitaries operating in the area. The JNA reservists went on several rampages in the next two months. They engaged in shootouts with local police and Croatian paramilitaries and terrorized Muslims and Croats. In October 1991 JNA forces and Serbian TO units attacked the Bosnian Croat village of Ravno in the hills above Dubrovnik, killed some of its residents, and burned many of its houses.¹⁴¹ In November 1991, JNA reservists based in Mostar paraded through Sarajevo, firing weapons into the air and evoking a furious protest from city officials.¹⁴² The JNA's behavior in BH in the fall of 1991 confirmed the fears of many non-Serbs that the JNA was becoming a pro-Serbian force.¹⁴³

In the transfer of arms into nationalist hands, the decisive role was played by the JNA. Many small arms and hand-carried weapons were distributed by the JNA to local committees of the SDS

¹³⁹ Kadivić, *Moje Vidjenje Raspada*, p. 147.

¹⁴⁰ *Oslobodjenje*, 1 October 1991, p. 1.

¹⁴¹ A retrospective summary of these events is found in *Oslobodjenje*, 31 January 1992, p. 4, and 2 February 1992, p. 2.

¹⁴² *Oslobodjenje*, 8 November 1991, p. 7; 9 November 1991, p. 8; and 15 November 1991, p. 3.

¹⁴³ Radovan Karadžić was informed in advance of the arrival of the Užica Corps reservists. Telephone intercept, T000-0969. He further hoped that the JNA reservists would remain in BH: "We calmed the thing in Hercegovina slightly, I think it is calmer and that...the situation is slightly better, the army is staying, that is the most important thing...that the army does not go anywhere..." Telephone intercept, BCS ERN 0212-8762 - 0212-8771. But the BH Presidency on 30 September 1991 demanded that the JNA reservists be withdrawn. *Oslobodjenje*, 1 October 1991, p. 1. Other JNA commanders in BH condemned the "unsoldierly behavior of individual reservists" stationed in Mostar. *Glas*, 17 October 1991, p. 3. General Milutin Kukanjac, Commander of the Second Military District beginning in January 1992, sought to disassociate them from regular units under his command: "... reservists cannot be the measure for assessing the position of the JNA. That our citizens understand." *Oslobodjenje*, 25 February 1992, p. 4.

and to TO units in Serb-majority municipalities.¹⁴⁴ Warplanes, tanks, heavy artillery, and anti-aircraft weapons remained under JNA control until spring 1992. At that time some of them were transferred from BH to Serbia and Montenegro, but most were left with their units to prosecute the war in BH. General Kukanjac later claimed, "We withdrew, saved, and preserved everything with exceptional organization. ... Not a single plane, helicopter, tank, APC, cannon, mortar, nor motorized vehicle fell into the hands of the Muslim-Croat hordes."¹⁴⁵ gg

At the end of 1991, plans were laid in Belgrade to keep JNA units in BH even if that republic were to become an independent state. In his published diary, Presidency member Borisav Jović reports that on 5 December 1991 Milošević ordered that Bosnian-born recruits serving in other Yugoslav republics be transferred to BH, while soldiers in BH who were natives of other republics be deployed closer to home. According to Jović's notes, Milošević anticipated that several Yugoslav republics would be recognized as independent states, and the Serbian President wanted to be sure that the JNA in BH could qualify as an indigenous fighting force. At the same time, Milošević made different plans for Macedonia: "If Macedonia wishes to separate, we must reach an agreement with them for a withdrawal of the army and the division of military property." But withdrawing the JNA from BH was not an option. "We immediately called Veljko Kadijević and included him in the conversation. Sloba told him directly that it would be necessary to execute a swap of troops: Everyone from BH to BH, and vice versa."¹⁴⁶

On 25 December 1991, General Kadijević reported to Milošević and Jović that these transfers were 90% complete.¹⁴⁷ Jović told BBC journalists Laura Silber and Allen Little that by April 1992 (the month that the EC recognized BH as an independent state) all but 10 – 15% of the 90,000 JNA troops in BH were Bosnians.¹⁴⁸ On 8 May 1992 the Presidency of the SFRY announced the resignation of General Blagoje Adžić as head of the General Staff and Federal Minister of Defense, his replacement by General Života Panić, and the simultaneous forced retirement of more than 30

¹⁴⁴ Bosnian police on 9 April 1991 detained four trucks containing arms and munitions from JNA stores. *Oslobodjenje*, 8 June 1991, p. 1. One Bosnian SDS member appealed directly to Serbian government officials to expedite the distribution of JNA arms. Petar Janković, President of the SDS Board of Kalesija in eastern Bosnia, described receiving arms from JNA stocks in August 1991 after meeting with Serbian government leaders in Belgrade. International Court of Justice, *Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Reply of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 23 April 1998, Annex 103. On 29 May 1991, Radovan Karadžić asked Milošević in a phone conversation if he could "arrange for the weapons of the Territorial Defense in Šipovo and Mrkonjić Grad to be given to me." Milošević replied, "Hey, that's a piece of cake," and suggested that JNA General Uzelac was already authorized to do so. In August 1991, Federal Prime Minister Ante Marković played the tape of this conversation at a news conference for all to hear. In the assessment of Mark Mazower, "For Milošević, who has taken pains to distance himself publicly from the actions of the Serbs in Bosnia, this was a damning moment, for he could distinctly be heard informing Karadžić about a fresh delivery of arms." Mark Mazower, *The War in Bosnia: An Analysis* (London: Action for Bosnia, December 1992), p. 4.

¹⁴⁵ *NIN* (Belgrade) 27 January 2000.

¹⁴⁶ Jović Diary, 5 December 1991, p. 420.

¹⁴⁷ Jović Diary, 25 December 1991, p. 421.

¹⁴⁸ Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia*, p. 218.

JNA generals.¹⁴⁹ These changes signalled at the command level the transformation of the JNA in BH into a Serbian army.

On 1 January 1992, the JNA was reorganized to reflect its exclusion from Slovenia and much of Croatia. Sarajevo was elevated from the headquarters of an army corps to that of the Second Army District with responsibility for five army corps. In the new structure, the 9th and 10th Corps were assigned responsibility for territory that included both Serb-controlled areas of Croatia and parts of western BH.¹⁵⁰ In early January General Milutin Kukanjac was appointed Commander of the JNA Second Army. In March 1992, General Kukanjac made clear that the JNA's mission in BH included continued support for the Serbs of Croatia in the event that the Vance Plan (signed on 2 January 1992) fell apart. The JNA would withdraw from Croatia, he stated,

but not so far that we couldn't -- were that plan to break down -- move in to assist the people of the Knin area to prevent genocide. The army will, to be perfectly clear, act to defend the Serbian people as a minority if they are threatened with fascism.¹⁵¹

In late March 1992, the Croatian ZNG attacked the Serbian village of Sjekovac, located near Bosanski Brod just across the Sava River from the Republic of Croatia, and killed the villagers inside their homes.¹⁵² The attacks were condemned by the BH Presidency, the JNA General Staff and SDS President Karadžić, among others. In condemning the attack, the JNA General Staff declared, "the army will be forced to act decisively to every threat to civilians."¹⁵³ Speaking on Radio Belgrade, Karadžić announced that this event marked a turn in the army's role in BH. "Since a massacre has been perpetrated on an innocent Serbian population, we expect that the army will actively engage the aggressors."¹⁵⁴ In their respective declarations, the JNA General Staff and Karadžić each subtly broadened the incident into a more general threat to Serbs and invoked the threat as potentially leading to a much more active role for the JNA. Karadžić's words presaged the transformation of the JNA into an overt protagonist of Serbian aims in BH, analogous to its role in supporting Croatia's Serbs beginning in 1991.

Toward Independence and Division in BH

SDS leaders accelerated their campaign to establish separate Serbian institutions in BH following the tumultuous events of 14-15 October 1991. At a meeting of the SRBH Assembly that went late into the night, SDS Party President Radovan Karadžić made an impassioned speech raising the possibility that Muslims would disappear as a group if they declared the independence of BH from the SFRY.¹⁵⁵ SDA Party President Alija Izetbegović responded that Karadžić's threatening

¹⁴⁹ Oslobodjenje, 9 May 1992, p. 1, citing Tanjug, Belgrade, 8 May 1992. The Tanjug announcement listed 34 generals by name.

¹⁵⁰ Oslobodjenje, 5 January 1992, p. 4.

¹⁵¹ Oslobodjenje, 25 February 1992, p. 4.

¹⁵² Oslobodjenje, 29 March 1992, p. 1, and Bosnian Serb Assembly, 14th Session. English ERN 0092-6786.

¹⁵³ Oslobodjenje, 29 March 1992, p. 8, citing Tanjug.

¹⁵⁴ Oslobodjenje, 29 March 1992, p. 8, citing Tanjug.

¹⁵⁵ Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation (videotape), Part IV.

message and method of presentation illustrated why the SRBH might be forced to separate from the SFRY. After the session had been adjourned for the day by Assembly President Momčilo Krajišnik and Serbian delegates had departed, HDZ and SDA delegates reconvened without them and passed a "Declaration of Sovereignty," a measure bitterly opposed by SDS delegates, that moved BH a step closer to independence.¹⁵⁶

The SDS delegates to the SRBH Assembly met separately on 24 October and declared that they constituted the "Assembly of the Serbian People of BH" (called here the "Bosnian Serb Assembly").¹⁵⁷ Among its first decisions, the assembly voted to hold a plebiscite on 9 and 10 November 1991 to determine if BH's Serbs wished to remain in Yugoslavia. Voters were segregated by nationality: non-Serbs were given yellow ballots to distinguish their votes from those of Serbs.¹⁵⁸ Few Muslims or Croats voted in the SDS-organized referendum; the vast majority of Serbs voted to reject independence for BH and to remain in Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁹

Serb steps toward forming a separate state were followed by similar measures by HDZ leaders in municipalities with substantial Croatian populations. The Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosnia (HZ H-B - *Hrvatska zajednica - Herceg-Bosna*) was formed in Grude on 18 November 1991 as the "political, cultural, economic, and territorial union" of the Croats of BH as a "concrete response to the formation of Serbian autonomous regions."¹⁶⁰ Mate Boban was selected as its first president. Boban declared that the HZ H-B restored the territory made part of Croatia by the 1939 Cvetković-Maćek Agreement, and he stated that Croat support for the BH government was conditional.

The Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna represents a geopolitical, cultural, and economic whole and proceeds from the former Banovina, in whose borders the Croatian people awaited World War II. ... As long as the government of BH exists as legal, legitimate, and democratic, our Community will fully respect this Republic, but if its authority is curtailed or ceases to exist, there is for us no other alternative.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁶ Silber and Little, *Yugoslavia*, p. 216. This event was covered in all media in BH, and the legality or illegality of the HDZ-SDA maneuver has been debated ever since.

¹⁵⁷ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 1st (Founding) Session, 24 October 1991. "Decision Establishing the Assembly of the Serbian People in Bosnia and Herzegovina," ERN 0301-5398; and *Yugoslav Survey*, 1(1992), p. 125. The decision to form a separate Bosnian Serb Assembly was announced by the SDS Delegates' Club on 20 October 1991. "All current delegates of the SDS and SP from both chambers of the Assembly of SRBiH will enter this body, and it will authorize the inclusion of all Serbian delegates from opposition parties." *Glas*, 21 October 1991, p. 5.

¹⁵⁸ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 2nd Session, 21 November 1991, Petar Čančar. English ERN 0093-0305 - 0093-0311.

¹⁵⁹ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 2nd Session, 21 November 1991. ERN 0093-0291 *et seq.*, and *Oslobodjenje*, 22 November 1991, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ *Oslobodjenje*, 20 November 1991, p. 3.

¹⁶¹ *Oslobodjenje*, 20 November 1991, p. 3.

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On 17 December 1991 the EC foreign ministers approved a procedure for Yugoslavia's republics to apply for independence and created a commission to assess such applications. The EC's Badinter Arbitration Commission thereafter invited applications from republics seeking independence from Yugoslavia so that it could evaluate their applications based on adherence to certain guidelines such as legal provisions for respecting individual and minority rights.¹⁶² On 20 December, the SRBH Presidency voted to apply to the Badinter Commission for BH to be recognized as an independent state. SDS members Koljević and Plavšić dissented, calling the move toward independence a violation of the SFRY constitution.¹⁶³

The next day, 21 December 1991, the Bosnian Serb Assembly met and approved "preparations for the formation of a Serbian Republic."¹⁶⁴ On 9 January 1992, these "preparations" became reality as the assembly proclaimed the "Serbian Republic of BH."¹⁶⁵

On 14 January 1992, the day before the Badinter Commission was scheduled to announce its recommendations, SDS Presidency member Nikola Koljević told a press conference that he had informed Croatian President Tudjman in advance of the SDS intention to proclaim the Serbian Republic. Koljević admitted to the press that he viewed the proclamation of the Serbian Republic on 9 January as unconstitutional, but he justified that act by contending that steps taken by other parties, including the republic's application to the EC to recognize its independence, were likewise unconstitutional.¹⁶⁶ There will never be a "civic republic," he declared. "The Serbs, Croats, and Muslims should each form their own assemblies, and later they will form a single organ, which may be able to work in the interests of all nations."¹⁶⁷

On 15 January 1992, the Badinter Commission reported its recommendation that BH be required to hold a referendum to determine the will of its people regarding independence. On 20 January the BH Assembly voted to hold such a referendum on 29 February and 1 March, over the objections and maneuvers of SDS delegates. At its next session on 26 January 1992, the Bosnian Serb Assembly denounced this decision as illegal and demanded that the "transformation of BH" be carried out before the holding of such a referendum.¹⁶⁸ But the government of BH proceeded with plans for the referendum, and international monitors were assigned to observe the voting. Just hours before the referendum was to begin, the Bosnian Serb Assembly proclaimed a "Constitution of the

¹⁶² Woodward, Balkan Tragedy, p. 276, and Gow, Triumph, p. 63.

¹⁶³ Oslobodjenje, 21 December 1991, p. 3.

¹⁶⁴ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 4th Session, 21 December 1991, "Decision on the Establishment of the Republic of Serbian Bosnia and Herzegovina," English ERN 0093-9650 – 0093-9651. This decision cited the plebiscite of November 1991 as authority to move forward with establishing a separate republic.

¹⁶⁵ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 5th Session, 9 January 1992, English ERN L004-6789, and Oslobodjenje, 10 January 1992, p. 8.

¹⁶⁶ Oslobodjenje, 15 January 1992, p. 4.

¹⁶⁷ Oslobodjenje, 15 January 1992, p. 4.

¹⁶⁸ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 6th Session, 26 January 1992, Momčilo Krajišnik. English ERN 0301-8049 – 0301-8050.

Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina" that had been in preparation for some weeks.¹⁶⁹ Article One specified, "The Serbian Republic of BH is a state of the Serbian people and citizens who live in it."¹⁷⁰ ^{kk}

Making History

The Bosnian Serb leaders put forth a distinctly Serbian version of history that sought to link past events with the Serbs' contemporary situation and to justify creating a separate Serbian state. Their vision emphasized the past greatness of the Serbian people and their more recent suffering at the hands of others.

The time of the medieval Serbian state (c. 800 – 1450) was seen as a golden era that began the process of realizing the Serbian people's historical destiny. Milovan Milanović, in introducing to the Bosnian Serb Assembly the "Declaration on the Future Structure of the Serbian Republic of BH" in August 1992, stated that Stefan Nemanja had first given the Serbian people freedom and unity some nine centuries ago, and "it is left to us to complete it."¹⁷¹

The Ottoman Empire's advances into Southeast Europe caused the demise of the medieval Serbian state in the 14th and 15th centuries. Among the many skirmishes and battles between the Ottomans and forces supporting the Serbian medieval state, the Battle of Kosovo on 28 June 1389 was invested with mythological significance that far exceeded its relatively inconsequential historical role. The myth was perpetuated by epic poetry that was passed from generation to generation in oral recitations. As described by literary historian Svetozar Koljević:

In one of the poems the Serbian Tsar Lazar, on the eve of the decisive battle, is faced with the choice between the Heavenly and the Earthly Kingdom. Lazar chooses the Heavenly Kingdom. ... His choice of the Heavenly Kingdom is the first major literary metaphor of Yugoslav history, and it embodies the image of triumph of moral will over reality.¹⁷²

In Serbian epic poetry and nationalist mythology, the Battle of Kosovo became more than the moral choice of an individual leader; it became a metaphor for the death and promised rebirth of the Serbian nation.¹⁷³ The promise of national rebirth in the form of a reconstituted grand Serbian state remained

¹⁶⁹ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 7th Session, 15 February 1992. A draft of the constitution was discussed extensively at this session. English ERN 0110-5039 – 0110-5092. Adoption of the constitution was planned for 25 February 1992 but postponed. Bosnian Serb Assembly, 8th Session, 25 February 1992. English ERN 0084-0447. It was eventually approved on 28 February 1992. Bosnian Serb Assembly, 9th Session, 28 February 1992. English ERN 0110-9190.

¹⁷⁰ Službeni glasnik srpskog naroda u Bosni i Hercegovini (Official Gazette of the Serbian People in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Godina I – Broj 3 (Year 1, number 3), Sarajevo, 16 March 1992, p. 1.

¹⁷¹ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 18th Session, 11 Aug 1992. Milovan Milanović. BCS ERN 0214-9610.

¹⁷² Svetozar Koljević, "Introduction," in Yugoslav Short Stories (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), x.

¹⁷³ Branimir Anzulović, Heavenly Serbia: From Myth to Genocide (New York: New York University Press, 1999), p. 22. Anzulović notes, "The difference between Byzantium and Serbia in this regard is that the Byzantines regarded the emperor and his court as heavenly, whereas the Serbs conferred heavenly status on the nation as a whole."

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the all-encompassing mega-myth of Serbian nationalist thought into the modern era.¹⁷⁴ But although the Kosovo metaphor provided Serbs with the sense of having made immense sacrifices in expectation of a long-awaited renewal of their state, the Serbian nationalist recounting of twentieth century events, particularly of the Second World War, was far more important in the day-to-day rhetoric of the Bosnian Serb leaders.

In the Serbian historical narrative, the two twentieth-century variants of Yugoslavia (Royal Yugoslavia, 1918-1941, and communist Yugoslavia, 1945-1991) constituted a chronicle of immense Serbian sacrifice, betrayal by others in the Yugoslav state, and the prospect of rebirth after the collapse of communism. In the view of Rajko Kasagić, Royal Yugoslavia had been established in 1918 by Serbian generosity as a favor to other South Slavs:

Yugoslavia was created in four wars: two Balkan wars and two world wars. It was created not through the wish of the Serbs, but through the wish of other peoples who, with tears in their eyes, came to the Serbs to ask for help in freeing them from the Austro-Hungarian yoke. The Serbs were compassionate and wanted to help their Slav brothers.¹⁷⁵

The Second World War, in the view of Bosnian Serb leaders, had been a time of great Serbian sacrifices that had put them at a disadvantage ever since. This viewpoint was spelled out at the Congress of Serbian Intellectuals held in Sarajevo on 28 March 1992, just days before BH independence was to be recognized by the EC. The SDS sponsored the congress, paid the expenses of 85 guests, 40 of whom were from Serbia, and arranged to publicize the presentations.¹⁷⁶ Professor Slavko Leovac, President of the SDS Political Council, presided over the congress's one-day session, and Karadžić welcomed the participants in the name of the SDS.

Professor Milorad Ekmečić, Professor of Modern History at the University of Sarajevo and a member of the SDS Political Council, told the 500 participants that the Serbs' disproportionate losses in both world wars had destroyed their demographic advantage in BH. Of 1.9 million victims in the First World War, he asserted, 65% were Serbs, and their losses were proportionately even greater among the 3.2 million victims of World War II. "In the history of the world only the Jews have paid more than the Serbs for their freedom."¹⁷⁷ These wartime sacrifices caused the Serbs to fall from first to second place among the peoples of BH, so Serbs "bear the invisible brand of the battle for biological existence."¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁴ Anzulovic, *Heavenly Serbia*, p. 5. "Even when statehood was regained in the nineteenth century, the myth retained its vigor because it carried the promise that Serbia would resurrect as a mighty empire, instead of remaining a small, landlocked country."

¹⁷⁵ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 6th Session, 26 January 1992, Rajko Kasagić. English ERN 0301-8035.

¹⁷⁶ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 11th Session, 18 March 1992. English ERN 0190-4751. "Rajko Dukić informed the Assembly that Serbian Cultural and Education Society Prosvjeta and the SDS Political Council are preparing for 28 March 1992 in Sarajevo a congress of Serbian intellectuals entitled 'The Yugoslav Crisis and the Serbian Question.' ... The costs will come to about 1½ million dinars, the party will take care of the financing."

¹⁷⁷ *Oslobodjenje*, 29 March 1992, p. 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Oslobodjenje*, 29 March 1992, p. 2.

Estimates of Yugoslav victims in the Second World War have been employed for political advantage ever since the conflict ended. Shortly after the war, Tito's government provided a figure of 1.7 million victims. This estimate was submitted as part of reparations claims against Germany and Italy before lists were compiled to substantiate it.¹⁷⁹ It remained the standard and widely accepted figure for most of socialist rule: In the book History of Yugoslavia, of which Ekmečić himself was one of four co-authors, Vladimir Dedijer stated that "over 1,700,000 Yugoslavs had lost their lives" in the Second World War.¹⁸⁰ Franjo Tujman, a dissident former Partisan general in the 1970's, challenged the figure as excessive and offered a figure of 700,000 – 800,000 Yugoslav victims.¹⁸¹ In the 1980's two demographers, Vladimir Žerjavić, a Croat, and Bogoljub Kočević, a Serb, concluded independently that Second World War deaths were just over 1,000,000 for all of Yugoslavia.¹⁸² Since these surprisingly similar findings were published, they have been widely cited by scholars who reject the politically-motivated estimates of both Croatian and Serbian nationalists.¹⁸³

These are, of course, still massive numbers that speak to horrific deeds committed against Serbs and great suffering by Serbs. But the Serbs were not the only ones who suffered atrocities at the hands of others, nor were all deaths the result of violence targeted against Serbs because of their nationality or religion. Of the total Yugoslav deaths, Serbs accounted for something between 48% (Kočević) and 52% (Žerjavić) of total deaths, so the proportion of Serbs among total deaths was well below the 2/3 suggested in Ekmečić's speech. Furthermore, Serb deaths were only slightly higher as a percentage of their group (6.9% according to Kočević) than those of Muslims (6.8%) in the Second World War. And the Serbs' demographic fall from first to second place in BH did not happen during the war and cannot be attributed to wartime genocide. Earlier research by a Serbian scholar established that the percentage of Muslims did not surpass that of Serbs until the 1971 census. Đorđe Pejanović's 1955 study showed that the number of Serbs in BH increased slightly from 1931 to 1948, a period that spanned the war years; 1,028,139 in the 1931 census to 1,067,728 in the 1948 census, while their percentage fell only slightly, from 44.25% to 41.62%. Between those same years, the number of Muslims increased from 718,079 to 890,094, and so did their percentage of the total population, from 30.9% to 31.74%.¹⁸⁴ Thus the conclusions drawn from statistics presented at the

¹⁷⁹ Vladimir Žerjavić, Yugoslavia – Manipulations with the Number of Second World War Victims (Zagreb: Croatian Information Center, 1993), p. 9.

¹⁸⁰ Vladimir Dedijer, Ivan Božić, Sima Ćirković, and Milorad Ekmečić, History of Yugoslavia (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974), p. 670.

¹⁸¹ Franjo Tujman, Nationalism in Contemporary Europe (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1981), p. 163.

¹⁸² Bogoljub Kočević, Žrtve Drugog svjetskog rata u Jugoslaviji (Victims of the Second World War in Yugoslavia) (London: Naše Delo, 1985), and Vladimir Žerjavić, Gubici stanovništva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu (Population Losses of Yugoslavia in the Second World War) (Zagreb: 1989).

¹⁸³ For example, Aleksa Djilas, The Contested Country: Yugoslav Unity and Communist Revolution, 1919-1953 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 125-127.

¹⁸⁴ Table 11, "Changes in Population According to Official Censuses from 1851 to 1948," "Kretanje stanovništvo po zvaničnim popisima od 1841 do 1948 godine." Đorđe Pejanović, Stanovništvo Bosne i Hercegovine (The Population of Bosnia and Herzegovina) (Beograd: Srpska Akademija nauka, Posebna Izdanja, Odeljenje društvenih nauka, 1955), n.p.

Congress of Serbian Intellectuals, namely that the Serbs were the principal victims of the Second World War second only to the Jews, was an inflammatory exaggeration that ignored research widely available at the time.

At the congress, Serb intellectuals voiced the view that the catastrophic wartime situation was about to be repeated, and they linked genocide against the Serbs with a political plan to deny the Serbs a unified Serbian state. Radomir Bulatović stated, "the reason for genocide was not only to prevent unification of Serbian lands but annihilate them along with the Serbs themselves."¹⁸⁵ Bulatović asserted that the current situation was like the Second World War in that he was witnessing "the destruction of Yugoslavia in the identical manner 50 years later, only in somewhat altered international circumstances, with even greater damage to the Serbs."¹⁸⁶

In other contexts outside the Congress of Serbian Intellectuals, the fear of a recurrence of genocide was cited as justification for Serbian military action, both in Croatia and in BH. "The purpose of war is to protect the Serbian people from Croatia's unilateral secession decision, to prevent genocide against the Serbian people and protect the Serbian territories," said Aleksa Buha.¹⁸⁷ General Nikola Uzelac, commander of the Banja Luka Corps, concurred. "Our main task is to protect the people from genocide. We must save our people who are still encircled. The question now is who is preventing us/ from going for the jugular."¹⁸⁸ Bihac should be conquered, according to a resolution passed by the ARK Assembly, because of prior genocide:

Before the Second World War there was a majority Serbian population in Bihac municipality (43.7% of the population was Serbian, 35.5% Muslim and the rest Croatian). In the wake of the genocide this percentage was virtually halved as it has been following the renewed expulsion of Serbs from the town of Bihac in this war. All of these are reasons for the town of Bihac to be liberated and to comprise an integral part of the Serbian Republic.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁵ Radomir Bulatović was President of the Municipal Assembly of the Centar Municipality in Sarajevo and a member of the SDS Political Council. His presentation at the Congress of Serbian Intellectuals, "Genocid i sjedinjenje srpskih zemalja" ("Genocide and the Unity of Serbian Lands"), summarized the findings of his research into the concentration camp at Jasenovac, which had been published only two years before. Radomir Bulatović, Koncentracioni logor Jasenovac s posebnim osvrtom na Donju Gradinu: Istorijsko-sociološka i antropološka studija (The Jasenovac Concentration Camp with Particular Attention to Donja Gradina: An historical-sociological and anthropological study) (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1990). See also Oslobodjenje, 30 March 1992, p. 6.

¹⁸⁶ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 10th Session, 11 March 1992, Rakić. English ERN 0083-7018. The reconstitution of the 1941 situation was a recurrent theme in SDS presentations. For one example, Delegate Rakić: "we will not allow them to create concentration camps like Jasenovac again."

¹⁸⁷ ARK Assembly, 9th Session, 6 November 1991. BCS ERN 0040-3858 – 0040-3861. English ERN 0190-1021 – 0190-1024.

¹⁸⁸ ARK Assembly, 9th Session, 6 November 1991. BCS ERN 0040-3858 – 0040-3861. English ERN 0190-1021 – 0190-1024.

¹⁸⁹ ARK Assembly, 18th Session, 17 July 1992: Vojo Kuprešanin, President. BCS ERN 0040-4038. English ERN 0040-4038.

Slobodan Bijelić cited fear of genocide as a reason to form the Bosnian Serb Assembly:

For a long time now, there has been a conspiracy aimed at reducing the Serbian people, a constitutive people of BH, into a national minority. However, taught by the tragic events the Serbian people experienced in this century, particularly the genocide it was exposed to, we have established the Assembly of the Serbian People in BH, because danger now threatens from new and similar events.¹⁹⁰

In evoking fears of renewed anti-Serbian genocide, Bosnian Serb leaders relied upon the notion that the political foundation of the Ustasha regime from 1941 to 1945 was being reconstituted in the government of BH in 1991-1992. This premise reduced the complex alliances and events of the Second World War into a simple story of collaboration among Croats and Muslims against the Serbs. As with the numerical overstatements of genocide, this generalization was not without some factual foundation, but was a considerable oversimplification that conflated the conflict into an unrelenting campaign by other nations to annihilate the Serbs. Some Muslims had indeed collaborated with the Ustasha during the Second World War. A small group of Muslims headed by Džafer Kulenović joined the Zagreb Ustasha government. And in 1944 the "13th Muslim SS Division," organized by the Germans over Croatian opposition, rampaged through eastern Bosnia and committed atrocities against Serbian civilians. But other prominent Muslims had opposed the Ustasha excesses in a series of appeals from various towns of BH in 1941, and thousands of Muslims had joined the Partisans to fight against German and Ustasha rule.¹⁹¹

Sava Knezević, a delegate to the Bosnian Serb Assembly and a Serbian Orthodox priest, linked Serbs' loss of demographic advantage to control of land:

We need to be particularly aware of another issue – genocide against Serbian people, because many areas were depopulated thanks to the certain enemies of ours that have arisen once again. That crime must not be allowed to benefit anybody, either.¹⁹²

Others shared the view that genocide justified territorial claims beyond Serb-inhabited areas, and they proposed to make it part of the constitution of the Bosnian Serb state. In proposing a draft of that document, Goran Zekić explained how history provided elasticity for Serbian territorial claims:

This Article 3 has been outlined so that it leaves open the possibility for most Serbian territories and areas to become parts of Serbian BH. ... Perhaps we should still include a reference to a historical standard, a reference to territories that belonged to us once historically. In case of conflict, for instance, the Constitution would provide for the possibility that the territories which used to be ours but were lost, not only as a result of genocide but because of migrations, too, but which are necessary. For instance, this stretch along the Drina, to connect Romanija with Serbia and others, we must take them and make a breakthrough.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ Bosnian Serb Assembly, 1st (Founding) Session, 24 October 1991, Slobodan Bijelić. English ERN 0301-5435.

¹⁹¹ Šaćir Filandra, *Bošnjačka politika u xx. stoljeću* (Sarajevo: Sejtarija, 1998), pp. 163-164.

¹⁹² Bosnian Serb Assembly, 4th Session, 21 December 1991, Sava Knezević. English ERN 0093-9655.

¹⁹³ 4th Session, 21 December 1991, Goran Zekić. English ERN 0110-5060.

Article 2 of the constitution, as approved by the Bosnian Serb Assembly on 28 February 1992, provided a definition of Serbian territory that included areas where genocide was committed regardless of whether that area had ever had a Serbian majority: "The territory of the Republic consists of autonomous regions, municipalities and other Serbian ethnic entities, including territory on which genocide was committed against Serbs in the Second World War."¹⁹⁴ pp

Conclusion

The movement to create a Bosnian Serb polity was advanced by several developments: a popular indigenous Serbian nationalist movement in BH, sponsorship from the Milošević government, the transformation of the JNA from the multinational army of socialist federal Yugoslavia into a pro-Serb force, and the precedents established by Serbs in Croatia. The project was influenced by the decision of BH's non-Serb leaders to seek independence and the international efforts to arrive at a definitive resolution to the Yugoslav imbroglio. In support of their aims, leaders of the SDS in BH promoted a Serbian nationalist interpretation of history, implemented strategies to undermine the authority of the government of BH, oversaw the militarization of the Bosnian Serbs, and established the basic institutions of a separate Bosnian Serb polity.

¹⁹⁴ "Ustav srpske republike Bosne i Hercegovine" ("Constitution of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina"), Službeni glasnik srpskog naroda u Bosni i Hercegovini (Official Gazette of the Serbian People in Bosnia and Herzegovina), Godina I – Broj 3 (Year 1, number 3), Sarajevo, 16 March 1992, p. 1. The Decision on Proclamation of the Constitution of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is dated 28 February 1992.

- ^a "danas u Jugoslaviji postoji realan strah od hegemonizma, a realan je i separatizam."
- ^b "Iz savezne državne bezbjednosti dobio sam informaciju i snimljene telefonske razgovore jednog člana najvišeg forum srbijanskih komunista. Prenosio je kolovodi tog odbora, Miroslavu Šoleviću, poruke Slobodana Miloševića šta treba da čine."
- ^c "U telegramu upućenom sa Kosova u Jajce kaže se da je Odbor za organizovanje protestnih skupova odlučio da se 10. septembra 1988 godine u 12 sati u Jajcu održi miting solidarnosti sa Srbima i Crnogorcima na Kosovu. Miting je, po ovom telegramu, trebalo da organizuje organizacija partizanskih veterana u tom gradu (SUBNOR). Bio je to i po tonu i po sadržaju diktat oslonjen na prethodno organizovane grupe u Jajcu i okolnim mjestima."
- ^d "Krajina je prvo bila politički razorena, znamo ko je razarao i odakle, razorene u stranke, bile razjedinjene, podijeljene usitnjene, dakle politička struktura nije postojala."
- ^e "Mi nećemo stvarati drugu srpsku državu na teritoriji Hrvatske. Nama se to podvaljuje. Mi nećemo Srbiju u Hrvatskoj. Mi hoćemo samo autonomiju slobodnog i suverenog srpskog nacionalnog bića."
- ^f "Ja nikada svoje govore unaprijed ne pišem, ja hoću stvarno komunikaciju s tim narodom, govorim im vrlo često i ono što oni hoće, a što ja ne bih volio."
- ^g "Sloba je dao dve ideje: prvo, da se 'odsecanje' Hrvatske izvrši tako što će Ličko-Banijske i Kordunaške opštine, koje su stvorile zajednicu, ostali sa naše strane, s tim da se tu kasnije narod referendumom isjasni da li hoće da ostane ili izađe, i, drugo, da se članovi Predsedništva SFRJ iz Slovenije i Hrvatske isključe iz glasanja o odluci, jer oni ne predstavljaju onaj deo Jugoslavije koji tu odluku donosi."
- ^h "Ja sam u principu bio protiv takve saradnje da mi zavisimo o Beogradu i da za sve što radimo tražimo iz Beograda potvrdu i neku vrstu pristanka."
- ⁱ "Srbi u Hrvatskoj uvijek su vjerovali da je Milošević pravi predstavnik srpskog naroda i da neće izdati interese nijednog dijela srpskog naroda u Jugoslaviji."
- ^j "srpski narod izjasnio za srpsku autnomiju na etničkim i istorijskim teritorijama na kojima živi, a koje se nalaze unutar sadašnjih granica RH kao federalne jedinice SFRY."
- ^k "zaštititi srpski narodu u Hrvatskoj na način što će se svi krajevi sa većinom srpskim stanovništvom oslobododiti u svakom pogledu od prisustva hrvatske vojske i hrvatske vlasti."
- ^l "Opet tvrdim i to da nijedan general ni iz Generalštaba niti iz Ministarstva obrane nikad nije došao k meni."
- ^m "odnoseći se prema njima kao da i ne postoje."
- ⁿ "To što Srbija pruža svestranu i nesebičnu pomoć Krajini – ne znači da ste dobili pravo da odlučujete o životima njenih građana. Niti su građani Srbije Vaši taoci, niti će to biti. Pomoć Srbije narodu Krajine neće ni u miru biti dovedeno u pitanje, ali građani Krajine treba da znaju da ste svojim postupcima izgubili svako naše poverenje..."
- ^o "arogantnog, ucenjivačkog, ultimativnog i za predsjednika nedoličnog tona..."
- ^p "Za srpski narod nije prihvatljiva BiH kao samostalna država koja egzistira sama ili u konfederativnoj zajednici s drugim državama, ili bilo koja druga forma državnog organizovanja kojom bi on bio odvojen do

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cjeline srpskog naroda ili bio sveden na status nacionalne manjine. ... konfederalizacija BiH ne može ostvariti [se] bez gradjanskoj rata."

^q "Što se srpskog naroda tiče on želi da živi u jednoj državi. Zato bilo kakva podjela na više država, koja razdvaja delove srpskog naroda i smesta ih u okvire različitih suverenih država ne može, sa našeg stanovišta, biti prihvatljiva.... Srpski narod će živeti u jednoj državi i svaki narod, koji želi da sa srpskim narodom ravnopravno živi u istoj državi, je dobrodošao. Za nas, moram da kažem, konfederacija nije država."

^r "BiH želi savremenu državu. Ona nije ni za konfederativni koncept, kakav predlažu Slovenija i Hrvatska, niti je za tvrd federativni sto ge je ponudilo predsjedništvo SFRY. BiH želi neku sredinu, formulu koja bi mogla momoriti ova dva prijedloga, dakle za novi dogovor, za povelju o jugoslovenskoj državnoj zajednice."

^s "U samoj BiH ustavnim amandmanima i izbornim zakonom stvoreni svi uslovi za sasvim ustavno uništavanje Srba u BiH."

^t "Srpsko nacionalne vijeće, osnovano 13. okt, nije pravni subject i njegova akti ne predstavljaju dio pravnog sistema – ocijenio je Ustavni sud BiH. Formirancje tog vijeće, po mišljenju Ustavnog suda, pokušaj je da se mimo ustavnom predvidjenog postupka i izvan skupština i drugih institucija sistema samovlasno odlučuje o pitanjima iz ustavne nadležnosti legitimnih državnih organa, a to znači grubo narušavanje ustavnog poretka i kršenje ustavnosti i zakonitosti."

^u "Primijetio sam kod Karadžića da je veoma okupiran problemom stvaranja srpskih opština. I to pitanje je otvorio u razgovoru. Rekao sam mu sasvim otvoreno da tako nešto može postići sam u mjestima gdje postoji apsolutna većina srpskog naroda a da je takvih mjesta u Bosni i Hercegovina veoma, veoma malo. ... Također sam mu rekao da će zagovaranje takvog koncepta prije ili kasnije dovesti do konflikta među narodima koji žive u BiH."

^v "Na sjednici Skupštine opština održanoj 25. januara 1991. godine, Skupština je svojim zaključkom zadužila Izvršni odbor opština za obavljanje kontakata sa određenim opštinama radi nove regionalizacije opština, odnosno osnivanja nove Zajednice opština." "Obrazloženje, Titov Drvar, marta 1991. godine."

^w "Naime, pred bojazni da budemo ovladani ili dominirali od strane Izetbegovićeva vlada mi smo izradili nek političke, a manje državne mehanizme otpora zloupotrebi centra..."

^x "Odmah ćemo svi znati da se radi o jednoj urođenoj srpskoj tendenciji autonomastva, tendenciji stvarana malih kneževina i malih knezova, iza kojih uvijek stoji privatni interes, a nikad interes naroda."

^y "Mi kao stranke u svemu ovome nismo bili angažovani. ... pogotovo što je inicijativa potekla samo od jedne stranke, SDS-a. Lično mislim da je politički krajnje nepismeno i drsko da se o inicijativi glasa na pojedinim opštinskom skupštinama, mada niko od odbornika nije dobijao materijale, obrazloženja su dijeljena 'usmeno' i direktno na licu mjesta glasalo za ovako veoma važne odluke. Stoga je naš stav da se obavezno mora podržati inicijativa republičkih vlasti BiH, te da se ovom problemu pristup ozbiljnije i studioznije, uz obavezno provodjenje javne rasprave."

^z "Mi smo ovdje došli da ovjerimo mandat koji smo od srpskog naroda dobili na izborima..."

^{aa} "od danas svaki napad na srpski narod u Hrvatskoj smatrati napadom na sve gradjane u Bosanskoj krajini, jer se politikom ugrožavanja jednog naroda ugrožavaju i drugi narodi koji zajednički žive na ovom podrucja."

^{bb} "ugovor koji je potpisan juče u Banjaluci je zakonit, dok bi političko udruživanje bilo nezakonito."

"Podsjećajući prisutne na stavove Evropske ekonomske zajednice, SAD i drugih vojno-političkih faktora u svijetu, koji ne žele da prihvate bilo kakve jednostrane političke akte."

cc "...nakon pada berlinskog zida i ujedinjenja Nijemaca mi Srbi bili bismo jedini narod u slobodnoj Evropi koji bi graničio sam sa sobom."

dd "...pravni akt koji obavlja sve subjekte koji djeluju na teritoriji Krajine da postupaju u skladu sa njenom izrekom i suštinom. ... usmjeriće na sopstvenu integraciju u cjelini, a sve s ciljem stvaranja jedinstvene države u kojoj će živjeti svi Srbi na Balkanu."

ee "Svima treba da bude jasno da će srpski narod energično braniti zapadne granice Bosne i Hercegovine..."

ff "Ovog puta Milošević je reagovao posredno, preko lidera SDS BiH Radovan Karadžić, koji je smjenio Banlajucko rukovodstvo SDS..."

gg "u izvanrednoj organizaciji mi smo izvukli, spasili i zadržali sve; ako je i bilo neke otimačine od neprijatelja, to smo ubrzo višestruko nadoknađivali; u ruke muslimansko-hrvatskih hordi nije pao ni jedan jedini avion, helikopter, tenk, oklopni transporter, top, minobacač, motorno vozilo."

hh "ali ne take daleko da ne bismo – u slučaju da se taj plan izigra – mogli priskočiti u pomoć narodu kninske krajine da sprečimo genocid. Armija će, to neka bude svima jasno, djelovati da zaštiti srpski narod, kao manjinski ako mu fašizam zapreti."

ii "s obzirom na to da su krenuli masakri nedužnog srpskog stanovništva, očekujemo da će se armija aktivno postaviti prema agresorima."

jj "Srbi formiraju svoju, Hrvati svoju, i Muslimani svoju skupštinu, a kasnije da se oformira jedan organ, koji bi mogao raditi u interesa svi naroda."

kk "Član 1: Srpska Republika Bosna i Hercegovina je država srpskog naroda i građana koji i njoj žive."

ll "U istoriju svijeta samo su Jevreji za svoju slobodu platili više cijena od Srba."

mmm "nose na sebi nevidljive žig borbe za biološki opstanak."

nn "se vidi [da] genocid nad Srbima i razlozi njegovi ne samo da se srpske zemlje onemoguću u sjedinjavanju, nego i da ih nestane zajedno sa Srbima."

oo "nego se razbija Kraljevina Jugoslavija 1941. godine na gotovo identičan način kako pedeset godina kasnije samo nešto u izmjenjenim međunarodnim okolnostima na još veću štetu Srba."

pp "Teritoriju Republike čine područja autonomnih oblasti, opština i drugih srpskih etničkih cjelina, uključujući i područja na kojima je nad srpskim narodom u drugom svjetskom ratu izvršen zločin genocida."