

## FRANJO TUĐMAN AND THE MUSLIM-CROAT WAR OF 1993\*

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### A. A flawed narrative

From the fall of 1992 through the spring of 1994, the Croatian Defense Council (*Hrvatsko vijeće obrane* - HVO) and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Armija Bosne i Hercegovine* - ABH) fought a war which proved disastrous for both Croatia and Bosnia's Croats. Franjo Tuđman's support of the HVO earned his government the sobriquet of aggressor and seemed to confirm rumors of a secret deal to divvy up Bosnia and Herzegovina that he had purportedly made with Slobodan Milošević at Karadordevo in March 1991. In central Bosnia, Muslim forces besieged Croat enclaves in the Lašva valley and occupied the towns of Travnik, Kakanj, Jablanica, Konjic, Gornji Vakuf, Fojnica, Bugojno, and Vareš. As many as 1,700 Croats lost their lives, and 150,000 fled their homes or were expelled by Muslim forces.<sup>1</sup> Among the explanations offered for the Muslim-Croat war are Franjo Tuđman's anti-Muslim bias; his deal with Milošević; the influence of Croatia's Minister of Defense, Gojko Šušak and the "Herzegovina lobby"; the divisive effects of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan in January 1993 and of the Owen-Stoltenberg Peace Plan that August; and the West's policies in general, which protected Serb gains and encouraged Tuđman not only to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina with Belgrade, but also to create the Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna (*Hrvatska zajednica Herceg-Bosna* - HZ H-B) in November 1991 and then transform it into the Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna (HR H-B) in August 1993.

But these are not accurate, nor even very useful, interpretations, if we are interested in understanding what occurred in order to learn lessons for the

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<sup>1</sup> Miroslav Tuđman, *Vrijeme krivokletnika* (Zagreb: Detecta, 2006), p. 295, lists 152,950 expelled, 1,051 civilians killed (including 121 children), and 644 POW murdered. Tuđman cites only confirmed data, from Ivica Mlivončić, *Zločin s pečatom. Genocid i ratni zločini muslimansko-bošnjačkih snaga nad Hrvatima BiH, 1992.-1994.* (Mostar, Split, Zagreb: Centar za prikupljanje dokumentacije i obradu podataka o Domovinskom ratu, 1998).

future. They are the result of a scholarly literature which is based on a profoundly flawed narrative cobbled together by observers in Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Washington, D.C., and other capitals, with a modicum of input from reporters on the ground in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most observers and journalists appear to have had a poor grasp of the history of the region and little understanding of the opposing forces operating there, and even those who understood the region have offered problematic interpretations, in no small part owing to the fragmented and misleading information available, but also because, like reporters and pundits, scholars tended to take sides. Of course, this is hardly a new phenomenon in Yugoslav studies; as Mark Pinson has noted, “Expertise on the Balkans may resemble some beverages brewed in the area: what kind of tap you use and where in the vat you put the tap may affect what comes out.”<sup>2</sup>

### ***A. 1. Journalists, pundits, scholars, and conspiracy theories***

So the reporting on the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and much of the scholarship on the war and the region must be treated with considerable skepticism. All of the parties used propaganda, and everyone involved, from Richard Holbrooke to Borisav Jović, has sought to claim credit, save face, or avoid prosecution.<sup>3</sup> Leaks of documents have been selective, as has the evidence presented at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), whose website includes hundreds of pages of indictments and thousands of pages of testimony that has been introduced either to convict or to acquit, not to explain.<sup>4</sup> Despite the impressive array of evidence presented at The Hague, the state archives of the participants in the events of the early 1990s—local, regional, and international—have not been thrown open to researchers, and we are still in the early phases of critically examining a literature distorted by the conflicts it purports to analyze. Both primary and secondary sources are therefore best approached with caution.

During the war, each side presented the truths which suited its interests, and no media were neutral. However, while the bias of Croatian and Serbian sources was a given, many who have written and commented on the war have tended to credit Muslim sources as reliable. Indeed, in his most recent testi-

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Pinson, ed., *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their Historic Development from the Middle Ages to the Dissolution of Yugoslavia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), 85, 126, also notes, “This is admittedly history writing under the sign of present development rather than more conventional academic history. . . .”

<sup>3</sup> Richard C. Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), and Borisav Jović, *The Last Days of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia* (FBIS translation of October 22, 1996 of *Poslednji dani SFRJ : izvodi iz dnevnika* (Beograd : Politika, Izdavačka delatnost, 1995).

<sup>4</sup> For the ICTY, see <http://www.un.org/icty/>; Ksenija Turković, “Povjesničari u potrazi za istinom o sukobima na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije u svojstvu vještaka pred ICTY-em,” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* (2004) 1: 15–70; and Allison M. Danner and Jenny S. Martinez, “Guilty Associations: Joint Criminal Enterprise, Command Responsibility, and the Development of International Law,” *International Law Workshop*, University of California, Berkeley, 2004, Paper No. 3, pp. 1–16.

mony at the ICTY, Robert Donia appears to have treated *Oslobođenje* as if it were a newspaper of record, like *The New York Times*. Yet even the American paper, whose op. ed. pages hosted warring factions during the conflict, has been criticized for its reporting and editorial policies<sup>5</sup>. In his study of the wartime media in Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mark Thompson concludes that the Muslim party, the Party for Democratic Action (*Stranka demokratske akcije* – SDA), controlled the media in Sarajevo and biased them toward the Bosnian government.<sup>6</sup> The American journalist David Rieff sympathized with the Bosnian people, but he also believed that Sarajevo's *Oslobođenje* had suffered "intellectual corruption," because its editors supported Alija Izetbegović and his government "uncritically," e.g., by depicting Muslims as heroes and Serbs as "fascist aggressors."<sup>7</sup> The British historian James Gow writes that the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was distorted by "dominant historical memories" and "ideological emphases," and Sandra Basic-Hrvatín believes that in Bosnia and Herzegovina a "nationalist environment" tended to dominate media which "function as a specific way of realising national fantasy, reshaping perception and understanding of everyday life."<sup>8</sup> The American journalist Roy Gutman reported that rumors abounded, regarding everything from atrocities at internment camps to bordellos kept by UN forces,<sup>9</sup> and the American scholar Sarah Kent noted that in 1997 historians could not agree on the facts, much less the interpretations, regarding the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>10</sup>

There is no doubt that interpretations regarding the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina differ sharply,<sup>11</sup> and it is clear that propaganda often shaped accounts by both journalists and scholars.<sup>12</sup> In his prize-winning book on the

<sup>5</sup> Robert Donia, ICTY, Testimony at Trial of Jadranko Prlić, et al., May 10, 2006. For *The New York Times* and media coverage in the United States, see James J. Sadkovich, *The U.S. Media and Yugoslavia, 1991-1995* (Westport CT: Greenwood, 1998), *passim*, as well as Anita Lekić, "Words as Weapons: The New York Times on the Yugoslav Civil War," *South East European Monitor* (1996) 1(5): 12-22, who critiques the newspaper from a Serbian perspective, and John Kraljić, et al., *Croatia and Croats in The New York Times* (New York: Croatian Anti-Calumny Project, June 1994), who does so from a Croatian point of view.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Thompson, *Forging War: The Media in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (London: Article 19/International Centre against Censorship, May 1994), 38-50.

<sup>7</sup> David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse. Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995), 123-6.

<sup>8</sup> James Gow, Richard Paterson, and Alison Preston, *Bosnia by Television* (London: British Film Institute, 1996), 2, 65.

<sup>9</sup> Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide* (New York: Macmillan, 1993), 44-6, 74-6, 141, and *passim*.

<sup>10</sup> Sarah Kent, "Writing the Yugoslav Wars: English-Language Books on Bosnia (1992-1996) and the Challenge of Analyzing Contemporary History," *American Historical Review* (October 1997): 1085-1114.

<sup>11</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia. Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-34.

<sup>12</sup> See Thompson, *Forging War*, *passim*; Sadkovich, *The U.S. Media*, *passim*; and Gow, et al., *Bosnia*, *passim*.

war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ed Vulliamy provides not only a first-hand account of the conflict there, but also many useful examples of how propaganda techniques were inadvertently used by journalists to savage a particular side, in his case the Croats. For example, he employs “name-calling” when he portrays Muslim soldiers as “boyish” but refers to Croats and HVO members as “louts,” “bruisers,” “thugs” and “clodhoppers.” He offers “glittering generalities” when he writes that the “sacking of Prozor was the beginning of the second war of civilian ethnic cleansing,” and that the “siege of Mostar” was “one of the most brutal offensives of the entire war. He also uses “transfer,” the association of a group or an individual with other groups or individuals, when he suggests that the HVO admired the Ustaša and that Herceg Bosna was “the mirror-image of the Bosnia-Serb state,” and when he lumps Nazis, Fascists, Croats, and Catholics together by commenting that the Catholic shrine of Međugorje was “a base for the imminent ethnic cleansing of the Mostar region” with “statuettes of the Madonna . . . on sale in trays next to others full of Swastikas, Maltese Crosses and other Nazi regalia.” Vulliamy thinks the peace plan proposed by Cyrus Vance and David Owen “played fairy godmother to the Croats,” and he is convinced that Herceg-Bosna was a “nasty sort of place” and that Franjo Tuđman sought to create a Greater Croatia. But how reliable his account might be is not clear. Vulliamy seems to confuse Croatian Defense Forces (*Hrvatske oružane snage* –HOS) with the HVO, and in his recent testimony at The Hague, he said that he was not a “political” or a “military” reporter, and had only a “layman’s” knowledge of the area and its history and politics.<sup>13</sup>

Similar techniques can be found in memoirs.<sup>14</sup> Most authors had a stake in the war and its outcome, and many saw only a small part of the conflict, arrived late, or, to paraphrase David Rieff, knew only what tourists knew. The result was less than objective reporting by journalists and participants. Like Vulliamy, the EU’s mediator, David Owen, confuses HOS and HVO units, but he notes that HV and HVO uniforms and patches were similar, making it hard to distinguish one from the other. He also dismisses reports by UN observers of thousands of HV troops in Bosnia as “gross exaggerations,” raising questions regarding the reliability of testimony by UN troops and EC monitors.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Ed Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia’s War* (London: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 209, 212, 222–9, 232–3, 237–8, 249–50, 253, 256–60, and and ICTY, Edward Vulliamy, Testimony, Prlić, et al., May 8–9, 2006. Vulliamy, reported for *The Guardian*. He did not speak the local language and knew little of the region’s history, its basic political structure, and events of the period. Nor does he appear to have spent much time in the country. The propaganda categories used here were defined by E. B. and A. M. Lee in *The Fine Art of Propaganda* (Institute for Propaganda Analysis, 1939) and cited by Severin and Tankard, *Communications Theory*, 103–117. As James Morgan Read, *Atrocity Propaganda, 1914-1919* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1941), *passim*, noted, propaganda tends to circulate and eventually to be cited by its authors to confirm their original contentions. This certainly happened with regard to the Yugoslav wars of succession.

<sup>14</sup> And obituaries, e.g., Miloš Vasić, “Dr. Franjo Tuđman, 1922–1999,” *Vreme*, [www.vreme.com/arhiva\\_html/467/08.html](http://www.vreme.com/arhiva_html/467/08.html), uses “association” when he writes that Tuđman realized the dream of the Ustaša leader, Ante Pavelić. Vasić was editor of *Vreme* and during the 1990s his comments appeared in publications like *Harper’s* and *The New York Times*.

<sup>15</sup> David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1995), 62, 381–2.

The American diplomat, Richard Holbrooke, referred to Croats as “junkyard dogs,” suggesting a less than neutral point of view,<sup>16</sup> and Britbat, the British contingent of UNPROFOR in Central Bosnia appears to have been less than impartial. Colonel Robert Stewart’s published work is a much revised version of his war diary<sup>17</sup>; Brendan Simms thinks that UNPROFOR commanders “found the Bosnian Serb army. . . compatible,” and the Canadian General Lewis MacKenzie toured for the “Serb-American lobby group,” SerbNet.<sup>18</sup>

We assume memoirs by regional actors to be biased, and relatively little use has been made of them in the existing literature in English, which has leaned heavily on comments by international actors. Yet two of Croatia’s Foreign Ministers, Mate Granić and Davorin Rudolf, have written useful memoirs; Franjo Boras, one of two Croatian members on the Bosnian Presidency, has written his account of events in the early 1990s; and Mario Nobile’s exhaustive account of his time as Croatia’s representative at the UN is indispensable to understand Croatian policies.<sup>19</sup> But compared to accounts in English, these works are rarely cited, in part because they were published after 1995 and by then the dominant narrative had already been written. So our image of Tuđman and Croatian policy continues to be influenced by the literature of the early and mid 1990s, much of it written by non-Croats, like the “last” American ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmermann, who was less than sympathetic to Croatian and Slovene leaders. He claimed that Croatia’s President “betrayed an obsession with creating nationalism,” and he had a low opinion of the Slovenian President, Milan Kučan (a reckless “human AK-47”), the Slovenian Minister of Defense, Janez Janša (a “driven” “ascetic”), and their party (an “extreme faction in a coalition that had. . . won only 54 percent of the popular vote,” then “provoked a war by stealth” and made a deal with Belgrade). Nor was the American kinder to Muslims and Serbs; if Alija Izetbegović was “mild-mannered to a fault,” he was also, like Franjo Tuđman and Vojislav Šešelj, a nationalist who had been “convicted of sowing ethnic hatred.” But Zimmermann appeared to like Milošević; if “dominated by his “dark side” and vaguely “schizoid,” the Serb leader spoke forcefully in “compe-

<sup>16</sup> Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 24, 73, 162.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Stewart, *Broken Lives* (London: Harper Collins, 1993), *passim*.

<sup>18</sup> Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour. Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin, 2002), 178–9, quotes the UNPROFOR Director of Information in Zagreb, Michael Williams, who detected “some sort of general-to-general relationship between Mladić and Rose” and who thought “there were strong elements of anti-Muslim and anti-Catholic prejudice” among British UNPROFOR commanders. Simms believes this is “why most UNPROFOR commanders, especially Michael Rose and Canadian General MacKenzie found the Bosnian Serb army so compatible. . . .” For MacKenzie and his tour for, see Daniel Kofman, “Israel and the War in Bosnia,” in Stipe G. Meštrović and Thomas Cushman, eds., *This Time We Knew. Western Responses to Genocide in Bosnia* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 91–2, and Mark Almond, *Europe’s Backyard War. The War in the Balkans* (Toronto: Mandarin, 1994), 253–4, 272, 308.

<sup>19</sup> Mate Granić, *Vanjski poslovi. Iza kulisa politike* (Zagreb: Algoritam, 2005), Davorin Rudolf, *Rat koji nismo htjeli. Hrvatska 1991* (Zagreb: Globus, 1999), and Mario Nobile, *Hrvatski feniks: diplomatski procesi iza zatvorenih vrata, 1990–1997*. (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2000); and Franjo Boras, *Kako je umirala Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina* (Mostar: Gradska knjižnica Mostar, 2002).

tent” English and was not an “ethnic exclusivist,” like Tuđman and Karadžić.<sup>20</sup> In other words, Tuđman was not only less likeable than Milošević, he was also less important, a local warlord, like Karadžić.

### ***A. 2. The outlines of conventional wisdom***

Despite the unreliable and incomplete nature of primary sources and secondary works, there is a consensus among Western scholars and many participants that Franjo Tuđman and the Bosnian Croats were guilty of seeking to dismember Bosnia and Herzegovina. Marko Hoare, a British historian who has written the basic study in English on the creation of the Bosnian army, argued in 1997 that Tuđman, Šušak, and a minority within the HDZ followed a “covert and opportunistic policy” of partitioning Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hoare concluded that because Tuđman believed that the West did not want Serbia defeated, he sought to partition Bosnia and Herzegovina, trading the Croat areas in Posavina for those in Western Herzegovina. Among the proofs of his plan was the creation of the Republic of Herceg-Bosna in 1993 in response to the Owen-Stoltenberg Peace Plan. Hoare sees an elite conspiracy, necessarily secretive and without a mass base, given that Croatian anti-Islamic propaganda was improvised and unconvincing.<sup>21</sup>

Similarly, Norman Cigar, an American analyst whose writings on Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are basic to the literature in English, believes that although Tuđman and Šušak played up the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, both to court Israeli public opinion and to rationalize support of partition, Croatia lacked “a genuine anti-Islamic tradition.” So while the Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban and the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* – HDZ) and the HVO sought to partition Bosnia and Herzegovina, other Croats living there continued to cooperate with Muslim forces and Croatia sheltered 250,000 Muslim refugees.<sup>22</sup> Josip Manolić, one of Tuđman’s closest collaborators until their split in 1994, also blames the Croatian President for the Muslim-Croat conflict, seeing as critical his refusal to allow Mate Boban, the President of Herceg-Bosna, to accept the post of Minister of Defense in Izetbegović’s government during a “period when there were already signs that the Croat-Muslim alliance would not hold together.”<sup>23</sup> Like Ante Marković, Yugoslavia’s last Prime Minister, both

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<sup>20</sup> Warren Zimmermann, *Origins of a Catastrophe. Yugoslavia and its Destroyers. America’s Last Ambassador Tells What Happened and Why* (New York: Time Books/Random House, 1996), 20–7, 30–2, 39, 74–5, 97–9, 114–115, 119, 30–2, 142, 144–5, 175–6.

<sup>21</sup> Attila Hoare, “The Croatian Project to Partition Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1990–1994,” *East European Quarterly* (March 1997) 31(1), 121, 131–6. Also see Marko Attila Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed* (London: Saqi Books, 2004).

<sup>22</sup> Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia. The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing* (College Station: Texas A&M UP, 1995), 123–7, 137–8.

<sup>23</sup> Josip Manolić to Tonko Vulić, *Globus*, 22 April 1994, recalled Tuđman telling Izetbegović that Boban was “very popular in Herceg-Bosna, and that his entry into the central government would not be accepted well among the Croats of Herceg-Bosna.” Also see Josip Manolić, *Intervjui i javni nastupi, 1989–1995*. (Zagreb: Mislav, 1995), *passim*.

Stjepan Kljuić, President of the Bosnian HDZ in the fall of 1991, and Stipe Mesić, the current President of Croatia and one of the most powerful figures in the Croatian HDZ before 1993, have testified for the Prosecution at the ICTY. While their testimony differs on some key points, all three men appear convinced that Franjo Tuđman wanted to partition Bosnia and Herzegovina and recreate the Croatian Banovina of 1939.<sup>24</sup> So if not air-tight, the case against Tuđman and his government seems to be a strong one.

### A. 3. *Doubts*

However, Miroslav Tuđman raises serious questions regarding the accuracy of Stipe Mesić's testimony, and it is not clear why Manolić waited until after Tuđman concluded the Washington Accords to denounce his Bosnian policy.<sup>25</sup> Mario Nobilo, Croatia's representative at the UN during the early 1990s, sees the "government of smugglers and criminals in Herceg-Bosna," not Tuđman, as driving Croatian policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as does Božidar Skrašan, who blames the Bosnian Croat leaders Mate Boban and Božo Raić for having provoked the Muslim-Croat conflict. Skrašan, who served in the Bosnian government, repeated rumors that Boban had replaced Jerko Doko with Božo Raić as Bosnia's Minister of Defense in order to provoke a clash with Sefer Halilović, the Bosnian Army's Chief of Staff, and so undermine Croat-Muslim cooperation. But Skrašan also sees Sefer Halilović as culpable, and Franjo Boras blames the conflict on the Muslim insistence that Serbs and Croats accept their formula of one-man, one-vote in a unitary state. Boras also accuses Izetbegović of using unconstitutional measures to exclude the Croat members of the Bosnian Presidency and pack it with those who supported his policies.<sup>26</sup>

Indeed, as Marko Hoare notes, on July 12, 1992, Halilović succeeded in having the ABH General Staff placed under Alija Izetbegović, thereby bypassing Jerko Doko and the Ministry of Defense, suggesting that the Muslims had

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<sup>24</sup> Mesić testified in earlier trials at The Hague, as did Kljuić, who has also testified at the current trial. For example, Ante Marković, Milošević Trial, October 23, 2003, January 15, 2004; Stjepan Kljuić, Kordić Trial, July 26, 1999; and Stipe Mesić, Milošević Trial, October 1, October 2, October 3, 2002. Also see Stipe Mesić, *Kako je srušena Jugoslavija* (Zagreb: Mislav Press, 1994), *passim*, whose account suggests that Serb leaders and the international community, not Tuđman, were responsible for Yugoslavia's breakup. Tuđman, *Vrijeme krivokletnika*, 25–34, for the centrality of Mesić to OTP case at the ICTY, e.g., Mesić was cited fifteen times, half of the citations for "protected" witnesses in the judgment on Tihomir Blaškić and 21 percent of the citations for all witnesses cited by the judges. The OTP has argued that as an "intimate" of Tuđman, Mesić was in a position to know the Croatian President's intentions regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>25</sup> Miroslav Tuđman, *Vrijeme krivokletnika* (Zagreb: Detecta, 2006), 11–72, 345–441.

<sup>26</sup> Mario Nobilo, *Hrvatski feniks: diplomatski procesi iza zatvorenih vrata, 1990–1997* (Zagreb: Nakladni zavod Globus, 2000), 356; Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 95–96, 123, 126, 131–4. Božidar Skrašan served in Izetbegović's government and told Roman Majetić, *Globus*, 21 April 1995.

sidelined most Croats long before Raić arrived..<sup>27</sup> Branimir Huterer, an HDZ deputy who left the Bosnian government in 1993 ostensibly because of its pro-Muslim and anti-Croat bias, criticized a request for support from Muslim countries by the Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdžić as a symptom of the “degradation of this otherwise unfortunate situation to the level of a purely religious war.” He saw the conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a “historic clash of civilizations.” What, the Croat wondered, “would happen if Croats called on Catholic or Serbs on Orthodox countries?”<sup>28</sup>

While Huterer’s complaint can be dismissed as special pleading by a Bosnian Croat, the American scholar, Samuel Huntington, also discerned a “clash of civilizations,”<sup>29</sup> and in August 1992, a year before Huterer’s remarks, Turkey’s Foreign Minister, Hikmet Cetin, had warned the ICFY that the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina might be “increasingly viewed as a war between religions.” It was, he noted, already causing great “concern” in the Muslim world, particularly in Turkey, which had taken in 15,000 refugees and had “a large population of Bosnian origin, probably in the millions.”<sup>30</sup> Clearly, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s three constituent peoples had parted ways well before the first serious clashes between Muslim and Croat forces in late 1992; by then, the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina had already taken on confessional overtones for Muslims, who effectively controlled both the government and the army following the walkout by Bosnian Serb leaders in April 1992.<sup>31</sup>

After the Serbs left Sarajevo for Pale and Izetbegović named members loyal to the SDA and hostile to the HDZ to the Presidency, the SDA enjoyed an absolute majority in both the Presidency and the Parliament. The SDA had already controlled the country’s armed forces and security apparatus for months, and following the questionable expulsion of Boras and Miro Lasic, the two HDZ members of the Presidency, they had effective control of Bosnia’s government. Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina had become an insecure national minority, threatened by Serbian claims on their territory and powerless to influence governmental policy, which the Muslims made and implemented. Franjo Tuđman’s government lacked the forces to help them, much less attack Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>32</sup> Most Croats elected in the 1990 elections were excluded from government by 1993, but they had been pushed to

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<sup>27</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 78. There are exceptions, e.g., Stjepan Kljuić and Ivo Komšić, but they are notable precisely because they were exceptions; most Croats followed the HDZ.

<sup>28</sup> Branimir Huterer to Sasa Paparella, *Slobodna Dalmacija*, 11 August 1993.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* (Summer 1993).

<sup>30</sup> B. G. Ramcharan, ed., *The International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Official Papers* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997), vol. I, 112–115.

<sup>31</sup> Robert J. Donia and John V. A. Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), 262–7, note that “Muslim nationalist interests” dominated the government by 1993, after the Serbian walkout had given the Muslim party, the SDA, an absolute majority in the government and control of the armed forces and police. Also Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 24–26, 92–3.

<sup>32</sup> Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 123, 131–5, argues that the expulsions in October 1993 were unconstitutional; they were also moot, since Izetbegovic had effectively controlled the



the margins much earlier, While they could still react to events, they could not shape them. In March 1992, even though Croats had overwhelmingly supported the referendum to create an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mate Boban complained that Muslims occupied most major government posts, leaving the Croats only a handful of minor ones. Nor did time improve matters; that September, Zoran Buntić wondered why, despite the HVO's critical role in defending Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnian Skupština had discussed SDS, SDA, Communist, and reformist plans to reorganize the country, but had ignored Croat proposals.<sup>33</sup>

In January 1993, during a meeting in Zagreb with David Owen and Cyrus Vance, respectively the EC and UN mediators, the Bosnian Prime Minister Milan Akmadžić complained that Croats had only a "symbolic role" in the Bosnian government. Miro Lasić said that Muslims dominated public institutions and the diplomatic corps, where there were 20 or 30 Muslims for every Croat, and Gojko Šušak noted that no Croats had been consulted on Bosnia and Herzegovina's ambassador to Croatia. Mate Boban also claimed to have documents which proved that Izetbegović had promised Muslim leaders he would not implement the peace plan and which suggested that Muslims were preparing an attack on the HVO and Croat civilians in Konjic and Čapljina. Vance and Owen ignored the Croatian complaints, but they did urge Tuđman, who had asked how he might help end the war, to go to Geneva to aid them in persuading Serb and Muslim leaders to sign on to their peace plan.<sup>34</sup>

It seems that in early 1993 Croats were anxious to settle the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina peacefully, through negotiations, not to prolong the current conflict or to provoke a new one with their nominal Muslim allies. They lacked the motive and the forces to fight a war against both Serbs and Muslims. But Alija Izetbegović and Muslim leaders had both the motive and the forces necessary to attack Croat areas in Central Bosnia and the Neretva River Valley. After consolidating his hold on the rump Presidency on 20 December 1992 and then invoking Bosnia's 1974 Constitution to assume emergency powers, Alija Izetbegović had effective control of Bosnia's media, government, diplo-

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Presidency and the government since the middle of 1992. For Croatia's inability to help, see Davor Domazet Lošo, *Hrvatska i veliko ratište : međunarodne igre na prostoru zvanom bivša Jugoslavija* (Zagreb: Udruga sv. Jurja, 2002), *passim*.

<sup>33</sup> Predrag Lucić, *Stenogrami o podejli Bosne* (Sarajevo: Kultura & Rasvjeta, 2005), Vol. I, 196, 225. Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 131-5, argues that only those elected in 1990 could claim to be "legitimate" representatives of the Croatian people, unlike Ivo Komsic who replaced Boras on the Presidency, but finished behind him in the voting in 1990. Although Alija Izetbegović acknowledged in August 1995 that the Croatian Army, the HV (*Hrvatska vojna*), had raised the siege on the Muslim enclave of Bihać, he insisted the V Corps had been crucial to the operation. But in April 1992, he had credited *only* the Muslim Green Berets and Patriotic League with defending Bosnia and Herzegovina. See Alija Izetbegović, *Selected speeches, letters, statements, interviews* (Zagreb, 1995), English translation of *Odabrani ogovori, pisma, izjave, intervju* (Zagreb: Prvo muslimansko dioničko društvo, 1995), 77, 103.

<sup>34</sup> Lucić, *Stenogrami*, Vol. I, 254-60, 262-3, 265, 268-9; the transcript essentially confirms Boras's account of events in January, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 118-23.

matic corps, military, and security forces.<sup>35</sup> The rump Presidency did not meet for fourteen months, making Izetbegović, Halilović, and other Muslim leaders major actors, not passive victims, which the ICTY has implicitly acknowledged by indicting some Muslim leaders.<sup>36</sup> Like Tihomir Blaškić and Dario Kordić, the military and civilian leaders of the HVO in Central Bosnia, Muslim leaders have been indicted, including Enver Hadžihanović, the commander of the ABH (Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina) III Corps.<sup>37</sup>

While Halilović was acquitted of war crimes, his memoirs suggest that the Muslim Patriotic League began to prepare for war against “Chetnik-Ustasha forces” in October 1991, well before the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina formed the HVO on 8 April 1992.<sup>38</sup> In 1994, Alija Izetbegović told *Ljiljan*, the SDA’s official organ, that the SDA had worked to arm the Muslim nation from June of 1991.<sup>39</sup> So Izetbegović disposed of a party militia before Boban did, and when war came Muslim leaders appear to have looked to the defense of Muslim areas and to have ignored both their Croatian colleagues in the Bosnian government and Croats in areas under attack by the JNA and Serb forces. On April 14, 1992, the Commander of the Bosnian Territorial Defense (*Teritorijalna obrana* – TO), Hasan Efendić, sent “defense and liberation” plan to 73 TO commands without consulting the Croatian Minister of Defense, Jerko Doko, and most Croat areas were left to defend themselves.<sup>40</sup>

By 1993, the ABH was a Muslim-controlled force, and in Central Bosnia it had elements, like the 7<sup>th</sup> Muslim Mountain Brigade, which openly embraced a fundamentalist brand of Islam. That May, Jovan Divjak, a Serb who nomi-

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<sup>35</sup> ICTY, Stjepan Kljuić, Testimony. Kordić Trial, July 26, 1999, 5334–7; United States, Committee on Security and Cooperation in Europe, “Report,” March 22–28, 1991, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, 52, 62, 104–105. Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 97–99, 144–5, notes that after he left Sarajevo in 1992, it was difficult to return and that after April 10, 1993, all regular routes and phone lines to Central Bosnia were cut.

<sup>37</sup> ICTY, Enver Hadžihanović, Mehmed Alagić, and Amir Kubura, Indictment, January 11, 2002. Kubura commanded the 1<sup>st</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Muslim Mountain Brigades; Alagić various Muslim formations. ICTY, Tihomir Blaškić, Second Amended Indictment, April 25, 1997, and ICTY, Dario Kordić and Mario Čerkez, First Amended Indictment, September 30, 1998. Also see Nežad Latić and Zehrudin Isaković, *Ratna sjećanja Mehmeda Alagića. Rat u Srednjoj Bosni* (Zenica: Bemust, 1997).

<sup>38</sup> Sefer Halilović, *Lukava strategija* (Sarajevo: Masal, 1997). I have used an English translation of this work, *The Shrewd Strategy*, 56, 65. In June 1991, Hasan Čengić created the SDA’s Council for National Defense (*Savjet za nacionalnu odbranu SDA*), ostensibly in reaction to the political crisis. For the HVO, Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 94–6, 100–101, 107–108, 122, who notes that Izetbegović blocked attempts to have the Presidency acknowledge the HVO, which Izetbegović did in his July 21, 1992 accords with Tuđman. Also see Miroslav Tuđman, ed., *Istina o Bosni i Hercegovini* (Zagreb: Slovom, 2005), 212–215, and *passim*, for documents relating to the conflict and its background.

<sup>39</sup> Izetbegović, *Selected Speeches*, 9, *Ljiljan*, the SDA’s official organ, issued its first number under the title *Muslimanski glas* in November 1990.

<sup>40</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, p. 60. Delegates from 73 municipalities had also been present at the founding of the SDA in 1990, an indication that Muslims were not scattered evenly among the country’s 110 municipalities (including Sarajevo). Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 94–5, notes that the HVO was created because Muslim forces only defended Sarajevo in April 1992.

nally commanded the Territorial Defense, tendered his resignation, complaining that his Muslim colleagues had treated him as “an ‘untrustworthy’ person” and ignored his “suggestions for forming and organising units and [resolving] cadre problems.” Critical of the government for allowing “private jails” and failing to stop “the criminal behaviour of some military personel [sic] towards Bosnia and Herzegovina citizens,” he condemned the behavior of some troops as “unsuitable even for tribal armed units in Africa.”<sup>41</sup> His letter was written a month after the ABH launched a major offensive against the HVO and suggests that the Bosnian armed forces were operating autonomously with few checks and balances in Sarajevo, much less in central Bosnia and the Neretva River Valley

#### A. 4. *The complexity of historical reality*

History, like reality, is complex, and there is more to the history of the Croat-Muslim war than a conspiracy by Franjo Tuđman, Slobodan Milošević, and some Croat leaders to dismember Bosnia and Herzegovina. The evidence we have suggests that whatever Tuđman and Milošević decided at Karadžorđevo and their subsequent meeting at Tikveš did not survive their talks with Izetbegović in Split that June.<sup>42</sup> Similarly, claims that the Croatian president was manipulated by Šušak and a “Herzegovina lobby” are as difficult to document as allegations that the Croatian diaspora made HDZ policy. Šušak had a relatively minor post in Croatia’s government in the spring of 1991 and did not become Minister of Defense until that September, after the JNA had forced a full-scale war on Croatia.<sup>43</sup> Tuđman retained control of his party and his government, and he decided policy; of that, there is little doubt. But while he was practical and prudent, he was neither omniscient nor omnipotent. In 1992, he sent Croatian army units to Bosnia and Herzegovina to defend Croatia from attacks mounted from the neighboring state and to protect Croats there from the JNA and Serb forces because the ABH could not do so.<sup>44</sup>

But he simultaneously sought an alliance with Sarajevo and he limited the engagement of the Croatian Army (*Hrvatska vojska* - HV) to Dalmatia’s hin-

<sup>41</sup> Alija Izetbegović, *Inescapable Questions. Autobiographical Notes* (Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, 2003), 452–3.

<sup>42</sup> Ivo Lučić, “Karadžorđevo: politički mit ili dogovor?” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* (2003): 7–36, and Tuđman, *Vijeme krivokletnika*, pp. 73–278, esp. 157–90. Tuđman, *Vijeme krivokletnika*, 73–278.

<sup>43</sup> Dunja Ujević, *Ministar obrane. Jedno sjećanje na Gojka Šuška* (Zagreb: Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica, 2005), 82–9.

<sup>44</sup> HV command posts were established on the periphery of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in areas contiguous with Croatia that were densely settled by Croats. The intent was clearly defensive, to protect Dalmatia’s hinterland. The first Croatian forward command post was established in Grude on April 15, 1992 under Milivoj Petković, who would later take command of the HVO. The deployment was defensive. Croatian forces were to “offer determined resistance within the city and break the enemy,” i.e., JNA and Serbian paramilitary forces attempting to overrun the predominantly Croatian city. See Janko Bobetko, *Svi moje bitke* (Zagreb: Janko Bobetko, 1996), 205 ff., esp. 217–219, 248, 263–99, 317–318, 330, and *passim*.

terland, which was under attack from Serb and JNA forces based in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>45</sup> His government allowed the Bosnian military attaché to transship arms and ammunition to the ABH, and his Defense Ministry recruited 1,400 volunteers, mostly Muslim, to fight with the ABH. On 21 July 1992, he and Alija Izetbegović signed an Agreement on Amity and Cooperation, and the HVO became an integral part of the ABH on August 6. So neither the Croatian government nor the HVO had any reason to attack Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993. Weapons continued to flow through Croatia to the largely Muslim ABH, and through 1995 Zagreb provided logistical support through Karlovac for the Muslim enclave of Bihać, where the ABH's V Corps was pressed between the Army of Serbian Krajina (*Vojska Srpske krajine* - VSK) and the Army of the Serbian Republic (*Vojska Republike Srpska* - VRS).<sup>46</sup>

The story of the Muslim-Croat War is clearly not as simple as it first seems, and although the dominant “narrative” in the West assumes Croatian guilt, there are alternate explanations for the Muslim-Croat conflict. For example, Bertrand de Roussanet believes that the Vance-Owen Peace Plan offered a real chance for peace, and he sees its obstruction by Alija Izetbegović and the Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA) as responsible for the continuation of fighting after January 1993.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, while the Muslim leader rejected the Vance-Owen and the Owen-Stoltenberg Peace Plans, as well as other proposals to end the fighting, Tuđman and Boban accepted every peace plan proposed, from the Cutilheiro Plan of early 1992—which privileged the Muslims, not the Croats—through the Dayton Agreements of 1995.<sup>48</sup> Why the SDA rejected the Cutilheiro Plan is not clear, but the reason its leaders rejected other peace proposals seemed obvious to a few observers—having lost vast tracts of territory to the Serbs in 1992, Muslim leaders sought to recoup their losses by attacking relatively weak Croat forces in Central Bosnia and driving the HVO out of areas whose population was mixed. In the words of the Washington-based analyst, Janusz Bugajski, in the spring of 1993 “Bosnian Muslim troops embarked on fruitful land-grabbing operations in south-central Bosnia against weakened Croatian forces.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Lucić, *Stenogrami*, Vol. I, 353–5. Bobetko noted that as many as 2,500 HV troops had been deployed in the Neretva Valley to hold Serb and Muslim forces, but that only 700 remained; the rest had been withdrawn, left with the HVO, or lost. He also noted that the Muslims had a 10 to 1 advantage in manpower and that he lacked the forces to retake Bugojno or secure Gornji Vakuf. Charles R. Shrader. *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia: A Military History, 1992–1994* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), xvii–xx, 24, estimates that the HVO was outnumbered 3:1 in central Bosnia by the ABH.

<sup>46</sup> Davor Marijan, “Expert Opinion: On the War Connections of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (1991–1995),” *Časopis za suvremenu povijest* (2004) 36 (1):266–70, 287–8, notes that the Bosnian military attaché operated on Croatian territory without the knowledge of the Croatian government.

<sup>47</sup> Bertrand de Roussanet, *War and Peace in the Former Yugoslavia* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997), 46. De Roussanet is the pen name of a senior international civil servant.

<sup>48</sup> For the records of negotiations and proposals, see Ramcharan, Vols. 1 and 2, *passim*.

<sup>49</sup> Janusz Bugajski, “Balkan Myths and Bosnian Massacres,” in Raju G.C. Thomas and H. Richard Friman, *The South Slav Conflict*, 140–1.

## B. Gaps and distortions in the dominant narrative

### B. 1. *Conspiracy theories*

The assumption that Tuđman, Šušak, and a minority in Croatia's Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) and Bosnia and Herzegovina's HVO conspired to conquer territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1993 is a classic conspiracy theory which privileges human agency and offers a simple explanation for a complex reality. Certainly human agency is important; Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca observed more than a century ago that elites make and implement policy. But individuals operate within structural constraints, and, as Harry Eckstein argued three decades ago, conspiracy theories cannot explain internal wars, which seldom have "a clear aim, a tight organization, [or] a distinct shape and tendency from the outset."<sup>50</sup> In reality, the exacerbation of tensions in Bosnia and Herzegovina was both structural and human, and all sides operated under certain constraints, some imposed by other actors, some by the international community. Events were also shaped by geographical features, from river valleys to mountain passes, and by the detritus of the past, from settlement patterns to the 1974 Bosnian constitution and the structure of the Territorial Defense forces.

Conspiracy theories do not explain the roles played by Jadranko Prlić, President of the civilian HVO, and Slobodan Praljak, who commanded the military HVO. Both men were natives of Herzegovina, but neither was an HDZ stalwart. Stipe Mesić, who, like Manolić, was a high-ranking HDZ member, considered Praljak one of Tuđman's "major critics," and in 1993, Prlić cooperated with Tuđman and the international community to close down detention camps.<sup>51</sup> Praljak argued that the HVO was created only because Bosnia and Herzegovina's Defense Ministry could not defend Croatian areas, and he insisted that despite the presence of some HV units in Herzegovina, local Croats held the line there. Comprised primarily of local, immobile militia, the military wing of the HVO was unable to mount offensive operations. But the ABH was capable of doing so, and Praljak believes that the ABH concentrated its forces in Central Bosnia rather than defending Eastern Bosnia in a bid to overwhelm the HVO, a less formidable enemy than the VSR.<sup>52</sup>

### B. 2. *Complex realities—other actors, structures, events, and explanations: Muslim designs on Croatian areas in Central Bosnia and the Neretva River Valley*

Muslim leaders appear to have decided to consolidate their hold on what remained of Bosnia and Herzegovina in late 1992, prodded by an increasingly radical Islamic faction in the SDA. Izetbegović had already done his

<sup>50</sup> Harry Eckstein, "On the Etiology of Internal Wars," *History and Theory* 4 (2) (1965), 136–41.

<sup>51</sup> Granić, *Vanjski poslovi*, pp. 72–6; ICTY, Mesić Testimony, Milošević Trial, October 2, 2002, 10645.

<sup>52</sup> *Hrvatski vojnik*, September 11, 1992; *Globus*, August 30, 1996, and Praljak, Opening Statement, ICTY, April 27, 2006.

best to stall peace talks in the fall and early winter, and the Muslim position was clear—a state of thirteen provinces, all mixed, with no “ethnic” cantons and a strong central government.<sup>53</sup> But the settlement patterns in Bosnia and Herzegovina did not lend themselves easily to this arrangement. The Posavina region was mixed, but few Muslims lived there, and Western Herzegovina was largely Croat. Serbs tended to be concentrated on the borders, both in the eastern and western part of the country, with pockets of Muslims and Croats; and Muslims tended to live in the center of the country, with pockets of Serbs and Croats. To create the Muslim ideal would have required at least as much gerrymandering as the creation of national cantons, and it was as unrealistic as the plan proffered by the Croat Anto Valenta, who hoped that population transfers might avoid war.<sup>54</sup>

In January 1993, as peace talks sputtered in Geneva, Izetbegović and Čengić drafted a constitution for an Islamic state, and rather than break the siege of Sarajevo, the ABH attacked Croat towns and villages and terrorized Croat and Serb residents in the capital, leading the nominal commander of the TO, Jovan Divjak, to criticize both Izetbegović and the command of the ABH.<sup>55</sup> Muslim opposition to the peace plan offered by Vance and Owen was firm, consistent, and supported by many in the West.<sup>56</sup> But why would Muslim leaders oppose a peace plan in either January or September 1993, when their forces controlled barely ten percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the international community was pressing Serb and Croat leaders to cede large tracks of land to a Muslim canton—especially after Mate Boban signed the peace “package” “in the interest of peace,” and the Serb leader Radovan Karadžić repeated his willingness to do so as well? Izetbegović’s answer, that he wanted to continue to negotiate, did not strike either David Owen or Thorvald Stoltenberg, the EU and UN mediators who had proposed the plan, as convincing, and

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<sup>53</sup> Ramcharan, *ICFY*, Vol. I, 228–30; also Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 96–100

<sup>54</sup> Anto Valenta, *The Partition of Bosnia and the Struggle for its Integrity* (Vitez, August 1991) (English translation), *passim*. Lucić, *Stenogrami*, Vol. I, 135, for Lerotić’s remark that Croat leaders were seeking to settle differences, to define new borders, and to move people, but “all this in a civilized way,” with war “the worst manner” to resolve things. Dispersion of population was clear from voting patterns; see Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 57–67, 106, 108–109, 118–123. The HDZ took 149,643 votes in the Mostar electoral district, the SDA only 48,496, the SDS 47,903, but in Tuzla the SDA was dominant (172,922 votes to 33,980 for the HDZ and 106,778 for the SDS), while the SDS controlled Banja Luka (204,859 to 82,155 for the SDA and 33,054 for the HDZ). Zenica, which encompassed Central Bosnia, gave the SDA 110,191 votes, but the HDZ 65,295 and the SDS 31,588, reflecting the mixed nature of the region; in Doboj, the SDS and HDZ an close with 59,615 and 52,103 votes respectively, while the SDA trailed with 42,160.

<sup>55</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 85–91, and also above for Divjak.

<sup>56</sup> For arguments against the peace plan, see Kasim Trnka, “The Degradation of the Bosnian Peace Negotiations,” and Stjepko Golubic, Susan Campbell, and Thomas Golubic, “How Not to Divide the Indivisible,” both in Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz, *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan War* (Stony Creek CT: The Pamphleteer’s Press, 1993).

they worried that “the danger is high that further conflict could break out and could even intensify and expand.”<sup>57</sup>

A more convincing answer is given by Adil Zulfikarpašić, the leader of the MBO and a former ally of Izetbegović. According to Zulfikarpašić, Izetbegović had begun to consider creating a Muslim political entity as early as February 1992, and his party became increasingly militant as the “Young Muslims” around him gained influence. “We can no longer live together,” Izetbegović told Zulfikarpašić. “Here, my experts say that this part of Central Bosnia—Sarajevo, Visoko, Tuzla—is the most valuable part and that we can build a state there.”<sup>58</sup> The SDA leader also told Halilović that, like the Palestinians, Bosnia’s Muslims needed “a chunk of land with room for some two million people.”<sup>59</sup> That “chunk of land” appears to have included Central Bosnia. In August 1993, Germany’s *Frankfurter Zeitung* published a Muslim map which divided up Bosnia and Herzegovina between Serbs and Muslims—leaving only ten percent of the territory to the Croats, with no Croat enclaves in Central Bosnia. Izetbegović also demanded Donji Vakuf, Mostar, Travnik, Jajce, and Prozor, and in January 1994, the SDA leader added Novi Travnik, Fojnica, Gornji Vakuf, Vitez, Vareš, Kiseljak, Kreševo, and Busovača to his list.<sup>60</sup>

In mid January, 1994, Izetbegović again delayed a peace settlement. He rejected Croatia’s offer of the use of the Croatian port of Ploče for 99-years, and instead demanded the largely Croatian town of Neum. He also insisted that the “Muslim-majority Republic” have “certain areas in eastern and western Bosnia where the Muslims had been in the majority before the outbreak of the conflict, as well as certain areas in central Bosnia,” where they were nei-

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<sup>57</sup> Ramcharan, II, 896–7. On September 1, 1993, the Croat delegation accepted the entire “package” of the Owen-Stoltenberg Peace Plan, including a series of “collateral agreements.” But Izetbegović refused to sign, insisting that Bosnia’s Muslims receive more territory, even though Muslim forces held only 10 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina and would receive 30 percent after Serb forces withdrew from 24 percent of the territories they held. Karadžić then “reiterated that he accepted the package and the collateral agreements, accepted implementation and was ready to sign on the understanding that bilateral negotiations would continue.” Boban noted that,

“although the Croats had felt that their rights as a constituent people had been whittled down in the package to the barest minimum, yet they were ready to sign it and the collateral agreements in the interest of peace if the others did so. He urged that the Co-Chairmen proceed with signature of the package and cautioned against any side imposing conditions. He regretted that president Izetbegović was setting up condition after condition. He cautioned that if the package were not accepted the result would be chaos and further war.” Izetbegović replied that he wished to continue negotiations and the ceasefire. The Co-Chairmen “expressed their grave fears for the fate of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. . . [and] urged the parties to keep their word to observe the cessation of hostilities. . . .”

<sup>58</sup> Adil Zulfikarpašić, Vlado Gotovac, Miko Tripalo, and Ivo Banac, *Razgovor okovana bosnakovana* (Zurich: Bosnjački Institut, n.d., but c. 1995), 86, 89–92, 97, esp. 91.

<sup>59</sup> Halilović, *Shrewd Strategy*, 23.

<sup>60</sup> Bertrand de Rossanet, *War and Peace in the Former Yugoslavia*, 65, 79, and *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping in Yugoslavia* (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1996), 57; and Mladen Klemenčić, *Territorial proposals for the settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Durham: International Boundaries Research Unit, 1994), 53–57.

ther a majority nor a plurality of the population. Izetbegović wanted a compact Muslim “republic” covering a third of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and he was willing to trade land to get it; this was not a “moral” posture, but a geopolitical policy.<sup>61</sup>

Indeed, Izetbegović offered to trade Herzegovina for Central Bosnia on several occasions. In early 1993, he told David Owen and Cyrus Vance that Bosnia had a “different identity” from Herzegovina and offered to give Livno and Duvno to the Croats and Kupres to the Serbs, provided the Muslims retain the rest of Central Bosnia.<sup>62</sup> On 10 and 19 January 1994, Izetbegović again offered to trade Herzegovina for Central Bosnia.<sup>63</sup> According to Mate Granić, the Croatian Foreign Minister, the Muslim leader repeated his offer to give the Croats “everything below Prozor” in return for Central Bosnia.<sup>64</sup> But the Croats rejected his overtures, in part because they believed “that the areas sought by President Izetbegović in central Bosnia were vital for the Croat-majority Republic”—another geopolitical calculation. Whether Izetbegović was deliberately obstructing a peace settlement, there is no doubt that he refused to submit to binding arbitration after Serb and Croat leaders had agreed to do so, leading David Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg to express their “considerable concern” that “increased fighting” would occur.<sup>65</sup>

The areas Izetbegović sought in central Bosnia were precisely those municipalities contested during the Muslim-Croat war, which began in January 1993, just after Vance and Owen introduced a comprehensive peace proposal, and ended in March 1994, after the United States pressed the Muslims to accept a confederation with Croatia. These were all mixed areas, not primarily Muslim strongholds. Muslims were a majority of the population in Kakanj, Konjic, Jablanica, and Gornji Vakuf (Uskoplje), and they were a plurality in Fojnica, Bugojno, and Travnik. But in Novi Travnik, Vitez, Kiseljak, Kreševo, and Busovača, Croats had either a plurality or a majority. Yet the ABH repeatedly attacked these areas and besieged much of Central Bosnia’s Lašva Valley from January 1993 through the spring of 1994. In October and November 1993, the ABH attacked and occupied Vareš, which had a Croatian plurality and had been neutral in the Muslim-Croat conflict, aside from serving as a safe haven for thousands of Croats driven from their homes in Kakanj by Muslim forces the previous June. Muslims had a slim plurality in Mostar, which the ABH also contested, but it was of recent origin; a decade earlier Croats had enjoyed a slim plurality there.

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<sup>61</sup> Ramcharan, *ICFY*, II, 910–911.

<sup>62</sup> Lucić, *Stenogrami*, 297–98.

<sup>63</sup> Granić, *Vanjski poslovi*, 85–7.

<sup>64</sup> Granić, *Vanjski poslovi*, 85–7; De Rossanet, *Peacemaking and Peacekeeping*, 57–9; Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, 267–8, 270–2.

<sup>65</sup> Ramcharan, II, 910–911.



Table 1: Mixed Areas Attacked by ABH Forces during 1993

Municipality	Muslims (%)	Croats (%)	Serbs (%)	ABH Occupation
Jablanica	9,136 (72.1)	2,253 (17.8)	504 ( 4.0)	April–May 1993
Gornji Vakuf	14,086 (56.1)	10,709 (42.6)	106	Oct 1992-Jan 1993
Kakanj	30,445 (54.5)	16,625 (29.8)	4,937 ( 8.8)	June 1993
Konjic	23,791 (54.5)	11,354 (26.0)	6,645 (15.2)	March-May 1993
Fojnica	8,010 (49.4)	6,639 (40.9)	154	April 1993
Travnik	31,862 (45.3)	26,008 (36.9)	7,751 (11.0)	March–June 1993
Busovača	8,486 (44.9)	9,089 (48.1)	634	Held by HVO
Bugojno	19,724 (42.1)	15,963 (34.1)	8,854 (18.9)	July 1993
Vitez	11,679 (41.4)	12,679 (45.7)	1,502 ( 5.4)	Held by HVO
Kiseljak	9,843 (40.9)	12,441 (51.7)	747	Held by HVO
Novi Travnik	(38.0)	(39.6)	(13.3)	Held by HVO
Mostar	43,931 (34.8)	42,648 (33.8)	23,909 (19.0)	Held by HVO
Vareš	6,721 (30.4)	8,982 (40.6)	3,630 (16.4)	Oct.–Nov. 1993
Kreševo	1,527 (22.8)	4,738 (70.7)	33	Held by HVO

Sources: *Leksikografski Zavod 'Miroslav Krleža,' Narodnosna karta Republika Hrvatska i Republika Bosna i Hercegovina (Zagreb); Klemenčić, Territorial Proposals p. 49, and passim; Franjo Marić, Pregled pučanstva Bosne i Hercegovine između 1879. i 1995. godine (Zagreb: Katehetski Salezijanski Centar, 1996), passim.*

Whatever the national composition of these areas, arguing a group's claim to a given municipality purely on the basis of majorities and pluralities is an odd way to organize a state and its subunits, and doing so gives a false impression of the nature of the issues dividing the warring parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>66</sup> It was already clear *before* 1992 that a Bosnian state must be organized on the basis of nationality. Under the Ottoman millet system these two areas had been organized as confessional affiliation which effectively divided their peoples into national groups, and the 1974 Yugoslav Constitution had

<sup>66</sup> Positions remained remarkably consistent; see, e.g., Ramcharan, *ICFY*, Vol. II, 722. On March 26, 1993 the Secretary-General of the UN reported that the "Bosnian Government side" had "a fundamental difference . . . over issues of legitimacy" with the Croat and Serb sides, because it "insists that . . . the existing constitutional order, government and governmental institutions should be preserved and endorsed in any peace settlement by all the parties." Of course, this violated earlier agreements to revise the Bosnian constitution, which was only a slightly amended version of the 1974 document. Anto Valenta's proposal to effect population transfers in order to make sub-units more nationally homogeneous in order to *lessen* friction and avoid war, does not seem to have become either Croatian or HVO policy. See Valenta, *The Partition of Bosnia*, op. cit.

defined Bosnia and Herzegovina as the homeland of three constituent peoples—Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. So the socialist republic was historically and constitutionally a multi-national polity, and the question in 1992 was not one of determining local national majorities and pluralities, but one of how the state should be organized as a whole—as a single federation with a centralized government or as a confederation with cantons. By 1993, the question became one of how to organize the cantons—on the basis of history, geography, economics, communications, nationality, and other factors, or solely on the basis of nationality. The Muslims demanded the latter, the Croats the former, just as the Muslims preferred a single Bosnian polity and the Croats a cantonal system. What is striking is that so many observers appeared to agree with the Muslims that rejection of a centralized system was tantamount to partition. Although in the real world centralized multi-national states tend to fail, advocates of centralism insisted that the only choice was a centralized state because cantons could not be nationally homogeneous. But to reject cantons which were not nationally homogeneous was to embrace an exclusivist assumption—that political units must be nationally homogeneous. Rejecting confederation in favor of centralism also ignored Yugoslav history.

With the exception of the Serbs, *no* people in Yugoslavia had been satisfied with the centralized Yugoslav state, which is the main reason the country broke apart in 1991. Why then would Croats and Serbs be content to live in a centralized Bosnian state, having just decided to leave a centralized Yugoslav state? Franjo Tuđman specifically rejected secession—and therefore partition—in favor of cantons in early 1992. Like other Croat leaders, he put his faith in the EC-sponsored peace talks in Lisbon and hoped that Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina could be protected by the creation of Croatian cantons through a negotiated settlement. He did not reject a Bosnian state, even though he doubted it could survive, owing to Serb pressure and because it suffered from the same problems as Yugoslavia. But if it did, as he said in March 1992, he wanted equality for its Croats; he did not want them relegated to a ghetto.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, it was difficult to imagine another *practical* solution; even Ivo Banac, a harsh critic of Franjo Tuđman, reluctantly acknowledged cantonization as the most practical way to avoid war.<sup>68</sup> Judging from the peace proposals they put forward the mediators for the international community did so as well, which may be why they came under such heavy fire from supporters of the centralized option in 1993 and 1994. Mirolsav Tuđman argues that the Muslims sought to depict anyone who refused to accept a “unitary” state as effectively “partitioning” Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>69</sup> This seems to have been the case—merely to propose cantonization was to “divide” and “parti-

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<sup>67</sup> Lucić, *Stenogrami*, Vol. I, 195, 202; Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 93-94, recalls that in the spring of 1992 both Alija Izetbegovic and Rusmir Mahmutcehajic rejected a proposal from him and Miljenko Brkic to offer the Serbs their own canton with 35 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina and organize the remainder as a Croat-Muslim area, with half to the Muslims. Both Muslim leaders insisted on a unitary state.

<sup>68</sup> Ivo Banac, *Protiv straha. Clanci, izjave i javni nastupi, 1987-1992*. (Zagreb: Slon, 1992), 214.

<sup>69</sup> Tuđman, *Vrijeme velikokrivnika*, 164-90.

tion” the Bosnian state. Conflating partition and secession with cantonization and confederation made sense within the rhetorical universe in which SDA leaders and their supporters operated, but it ignored both the situation in the real world *and* the rights of the other two constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as did Serb arguments that they could *unilaterally* secede, regardless of whether their collective and individual rights were respected.<sup>70</sup>

In early 1992, Croats supported the referendum for independence for Bosnia and Herzegovina, but they did not want a unitary state, and the Serbs were preparing to leave. So the question became one of whether organizing cantons might avoid war, and if so, how one should go about organizing them—on the basis of history, geography, economics, communications, nationality, and other factors, or solely on the basis of nationality. As noted, the Muslims demanded the latter, the Croats the former, just as the Muslims preferred a single Bosnian polity and the Croats a cantonal system. The question was not a “moral” one, nor was it one of who was “right” and who was “wrong.” Rather, the question was practical, and there were plenty of precedents to guide the country’s three peoples, from the demise of the Habsburg Empire in 1918 to the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.<sup>71</sup> In the real, historical world, rather than the idealized universe of models and ideology, centralized multinational states tend to fail.<sup>72</sup> In Bosnia and Herzegovina cantons could not be nationally homogeneous; to protect both groups and individuals they had to be delineated using a variety of practical criteria.<sup>73</sup> But both Muslims and Serbs insisted that wherever members of their group resided, they should have

<sup>70</sup> The term “self-determination” is not a synonym for secession. So long as a group’s rights are respected, they have no inherent right to secede from state in international law. See Antonio Cassese, “The Helsinki Declaration and Self-Determination,” in Thomas Buergenthal and Judith R. Hall, *Human Rights, International Law and the Helsinki Accord* (New York: Allanhead, Osmun, & Co., 1977), and Antonio Cassese, “The Self-Determination of Peoples,” Louis Henkin, et al., *The International Bill of Rights. The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981).

<sup>71</sup> Ramcharan, *ICFY*, Vol. I, 531 ff., esp. 542–4. The Secretary-General’s report noted that negotiators had “recognized from the beginning that the views of the three parties diverged widely on the structure of the future Bosnia and Herzegovina.” While the Muslim side “advocated a centralized, unitary State, arranged into a number of regions possessing merely administrative functions,” the Serbs “considered that the country should be divided into three independent States, respectively for the Muslim, Serb and Croat peoples, with each of these States having its own international legal personality, which States might form a loose confederation for the purpose of coordinating certain of their activities.” The Croats “supported a middle position.” While Serbs and Croats “contend that in designing a government for the country a predominant role [sic] must be given to [its] ‘constituent peoples,’” the Muslim side “considers that there should be no such overt recognition, although it admits that the political processes of the country have been and are likely to continue to be characterized by religious and ethnic factors.” Vance and Owen “recognized. . . that a centralized state would not be accepted by at least two of the principal ethnic/confessional groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina, since it would not protect their interests in the wake of the bloody civil strife that now sunders the country.”

<sup>72</sup> Reneo Lukić and Allen Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals. The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 281–2.

<sup>73</sup> For a proposal to avoid war by transferring populations, see Valenta, *The Partition of Bosnia and the Struggle for its Integrity*, *passim*.

the right to dictate the form the state should take; only the Croats were willing to compromise with the other groups in order to reach a practical resolution to the impasse.<sup>74</sup>

### **B. 3. *SI and ICTY as master narratives***

The dominant narrative is flawed not only in its presentation of facts and its interpretation of events, but also in the basic assumption on which it rests—that Bosnia and Herzegovina could have, or should have, been organized either as a centralized state or as confederated nationally homogeneous cantons.<sup>75</sup> In reality, there was no choice, largely owing to the hard positions adopted by the Muslims and Serbs. There is also a great deal of confusion about what constitutes a “civil society,” with a narrow definition of the concept applied in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet there is nothing magical about the term, a catch-all for those organizations and institutions which do not fit in the governmental or economic sectors and include phenomena which are hardly compatible with an ideal liberal or democratic society.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> For example, Lučić, *Stenogrami*, 75–128, for the December 27, 1991 of Tuđman with HDZ leaders, which concluded by naming a committee to negotiate with Serb and Muslim leaders; its members included Sjteta Kljuić, who has testified against his former colleagues, Mate Boban, President of Herceg-Bosna, Vlado Šantić, Iko Stanić, Martin Udovičić, Miro Lazić, and Dario Kordić. During the meeting, Stjepan Kljuić said that he favored a cantonal system that would give the Croats Livno, half of Kupres, Bugojno, Travnik, and Gornji Vakuf—roughly the area encompassed by the HZ H-B.

<sup>75</sup> Ramcharan, *ICFY*, Vol. I, 13–16, 24 ff. The 1974 Constitution defined the polity as a state of three constituent peoples and collective rights were protected in both the November 4, 1991 Draft Convention by the Conference on Yugoslavia and the March 18, 1992 Statement of Principles for Constitutional Arrangement for Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Izetbegović signed, then repudiated the latter; Croatia used the former as a template for its laws on minorities. The November, 1991 Draft Convention guaranteed the “Rights of members of nation or ethnic groups” in Art. 2 (b); it extended guarantees to groups of non-discrimination, cultural rights, protection against threat to their existence, equal participation in public affairs, the right of groups to “self-administration, to the extent that it is practicable” in Art. 3; it assured the right to autonomy if a group was a majority in an area, with a separate legislative body, administrative structure, and judiciary in Art. 5; and it guaranteed minority rights in Art. 7. The March 1992 Principles defined Bosnia and Herzegovina as “a secular state system with full religious freedom and separation of church and state, separation of power between the branches of government. . . .”; the section on government established two legislative chambers, and stipulated that the civil service and judiciary “reflect proportionally the national composition of Bosnia and Herzegovina.” Constituent Units were assigned broad powers, including the power “to legislate and to administer in matters of concern to the constituent units, namely, the administration of the services and officials of a constituent unit, expropriation of property for public use, land registries. . . . saving banks and credit institutions. . . social assistance, education schools, police, trade. . . .” “Each constituent unit” was to “organise its own institutions” and could “establish and maintain relations and links with the other republics and with organisations in them. . . .”

<sup>76</sup> A well-functioning civil society should guarantee *both* individual and collective rights, not privilege one over the other, yet supporting a unitary state did precisely that in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where it privileged individual rights over collective rights. It seems safe to conclude that the concept of civil society is *not* useful if applied in a formal or procedural manner; it must be linked to concepts of social justice and democratic behavior. For definitions of civil society, see Caroline Hodges Persell, “The Interdependence of Social Justice and Civil Society,”

But the dominant narrative remains dominant. Even the Scholars Initiative, an ambitious collaborative research project generously funded by such organizations as the United States Institute for Peace, has failed to produce the original research and careful analysis it promised. Instead, with rare exceptions, its “teams” have churned out reports which are based on secondary sources and tend to repeat, rather than critically assess and revise, the information and interpretations in them.<sup>77</sup> However, this is hardly exceptional; in most of the literature on Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, errors of fact and forced interpretation are the norm, not the exception. Like journalists, scholars have tended to take sides, and those working for think tanks have usually reflected or openly defended preferred policy choices.<sup>78</sup> The result is a literature which is more akin to an intellectual minefield than a critical, informed consideration of events.

One way out of this minefield seems to be offered by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, where what might be called a “master narrative” regarding Croatia and Bosnian-Herzegovina is being compiled by the Office of the Prosecution (OTP), which offers legal briefs, and the Trial Chamber, which renders opinions and establishes “adjudicated fact.” None of this is historical analysis, but as an institution of transitional justice, the ICTY definitely aspires to “tell history.”<sup>79</sup> However, precisely because it is part of such an institution, the OTP has produced indictments which seem to many to be politically motivated, and the quality of its prosecutors seems to vary—otherwise, it would be hard to explain why Halilović, the Chief of Staff of the ABH, which stands accused of numerous crimes in Central Bosnia, was acquitted, while the civilian leader of the

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*Sociological Forum* 12 (1997) 2: 149–72; Nancy Birdsall, “Life is Unfair: Inequality in the World,” *Foreign Policy* 76–93; Thomas Carothers, “Civil Society,” *Foreign Policy* (Winter 1999): 18–29; Michael Bernhard, “Civil Society and Democratic Transition in East Central Europe,” *Political Science Quarterly* 108 (1993) 2: 307–326. Like other Croats, Tudman feared that adopting a “civil society” model of one-man, one-vote would mean the loss of Bosnia and Herzegovina to a Muslim majority in the near future; see Lucić, *Stenogrami*, Vol. I, 240.

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/history/facstaff/Ingrao/si/scholarsprospectus.htm>. I left the project because I found the methodology, data base, and conclusions of too many of its reports questionable, including tendentious citations of my own remarks.

<sup>78</sup> For example, Charles Shrader worked for the Defense at the ICTY, as did I, while James Gow worked for the OTP and Robert Donia has testified for the Prosecution. Susan Woodward worked for the UN, and the CIA analysis reflects both its sources, which are largely Serbian, and US policy. One UN commander, Colonel Robert Stewart, openly sided with the Muslims, another, General Lewis MacKenzie, with the Serbs, while a third, Sir Michael Rose, sabotaged NATO air strikes. Shrader, Gow, Donia, Woodward, Stewart, and the CIA have all shaped scholarship on the wars. Donia and Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, *op. cit.*; James Gow, *The Serbian Project and Its Adversaries: A Strategy of War Crimes* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2003); Shrader, *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia*, *op. cit.*; Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and the Dissolution of Yugoslav after the Cold War* (Washington DC: Brookings Inst., 1995); and Stewart, *Broken Lives*, *op. cit.*; also see James J. Sadkovich, “Balkan Battlegrounds,” *Journal of Military History* (January 2006).

<sup>79</sup> For the concept of transitional justice and the tendency to use criminal trials to tell history, see Danner and Martinez, “Guilty Associations,” 1–16.

HVO in Central Bosnia received the equivalent of a life sentence and its military leader was set free by the Appeals Chamber, which overturned most of the judgment by the Trial Chamber.<sup>80</sup> At least one observer considered the Tribunals' sentences "seemingly random," and two others worry that its broad use of the concept of joint criminal enterprise could undermine, rather than reinforce, the legitimacy of international law. Certainly, to the extent that the judges allow transitional justice and human rights law to overwhelm criminal law, lower the standards of evidence, and erode the principle of individual culpability, the Tribunal is less a criminal court than a political body.<sup>81</sup> Nonetheless, the ICTY indictments both reflect and reinforce existing narratives of the war, and the Tribunal is a powerful force for shaping our understanding of the early 1990s. So it is worth considering the most recent form its narrative appears to be taking.

### C. Gaps and Distortions in the Narrative: The Prosecution's Case

#### C. 1. *Tuđman and Bosnian leaders wanted Greater Croatia*

The indictment against the six Croats now on trial alleges that from November 18, 1991 to April 1994, Franjo Tuđman and other members of the government of Croatia, in collusion with certain Croat leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina and with the tacit and sometimes active assistance of Serbian leaders, organized a "joint criminal enterprise" to undermine the neighboring state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to occupy its territory, to expel its Muslim citizens, and to annex areas roughly corresponding to the 1939 Croatia Banovina to the newly created Republic of Croatia.<sup>82</sup> In the words of Kenneth Scott, the Chief Prosecutor in this case, this "joint criminal enterprise" sought "to politically and militarily subjugate, permanently remove and ethnically cleanse Bosnian Muslims and other non-Croats from Herceg-Bosna" in order to create a "Greater Croatia."<sup>83</sup> For Scott, Tuđman was clearly a Croatian *capo dei capi*, a species of mafia don who used Croatia's government to implement a criminal enterprise.

<sup>80</sup> ICTY, Dario Kordić and Mario Čerkez, Judgment, December 17, 2004, and ICTY, Sefer Halilović, Judgment, November 16, 2005. For Muslim crimes, see the indictments by the ICTY, esp. ICTY, Enver Hadžihasanović, Mehmed Alagić, and Amir Kubura, Indictment, January 11, 2002, and Mlivičević, *Zločin s pečatom*, *op. cit.*, and The Croatian Information Center, *Ratni zločini muslimanskih vojnih postrojbi nad Hrvatima Bosne i Hercegovine* (Sarajevo: CPD, 1997). In 1997, Ante Beljo, an HDZ leader, oversaw the CIC, whose information appears to be confirmed to a major degree by the ICTY proceedings but has yet to find a major audience in the West.

<sup>81</sup> Danner and Martinez, "Guilty Associations," esp. 52–6 and 38, 47, 74–7, for Rachael S. Taylor's comment in 2004 on sentencing, and their concerns.

<sup>82</sup> ICTY, Amended Indictment, Jadranko Prlić, Bruno Stojić, Slobodan Praljak, Milivoj Petković, Valentin Čorić, Berislav Pušić, November 16, 2005. The ICTY in turn has depended heavily on the work of two journalists based in Belgrade during the war, Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin/BBC Books, 1996), and two American scholars, neither an expert on contemporary history or military affairs, Donia and Fine, *Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*, *op. cit.*

<sup>83</sup> Prlić, et al., Transcript, Kenneth Scott, Opening Statement, 26 April 2006, p. 812.

These are serious charges that put Tuđman and his collaborators on the same level as Milošević and his henchmen. Yet they rest to a surprising extent on our interpretation of a meeting between Tuđman and Milošević in March 1991 at a hunting lodge in Karadžorđevo and our assumption that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a cohesive, tolerant, liberal, multi cultural entity before being torn apart by competing Serb and Croat nationalisms.

### ***C. 2. Karadžorđevo and the conspiracy to dismember Bosnia and Herzegovina***

The indictment and the opening remarks by Mr. Scott in April 2006 reflect the popular and the scholarly image of Franjo Tuđman and his government and their relationship to Bosnia and Herzegovina. But they also contain misconceptions about Bosnia and Herzegovina, the nature of nationalism, and Croatia, and Croats, and they display the same methodological shortcuts that have too often compromised scholarly studies on the wars of Yugoslav succession. The OTP seeks to establish a chain of causation which links events fifty-four years apart, from the creation of the Croatian Banovina by the Yugoslav government in 1939, through the publication of Tuđman's book on nationalism in 1981 and the formation of the Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* - HDZ,) in 1989, to the outbreak of the Muslim-Croatian war in late 1992 and its resolution in early 1994. But the prosecution does not provide a detailed historical analysis; instead, it tends to collapse its chronology and ignore context in order to assert causation. For example, Scott seeks to link the meeting between Tuđman and Milošević at Karadžorđevo in March 1991 to events two years later, in April 1993.<sup>84</sup>

### ***C. 3. A prosecution brief, not a historical analysis***

Whenever historians come across efforts to collapse chronology and ignore context to demonstrate cause and effect or to establish a pattern, they immediately ask what has been left out and why. In this case, Mr. Scott—like many journalists, social scientists, and historians—skips over some significant events in the life of Franjo Tuđman and the recent history of both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. For example, he ignores the attack on Croatia by Serb forces supported by the JNA, operating from Bosnia and Herzegovina, in the summer of 1991 and the occupation of a quarter of Croatia, and he appears to believe the Croatian Banovina was a nostalgic construct. But to ignore the aggression against Croatia from bases in Bosnia and Herzegovina leaves the war in the latter republic unexplained, and referring to the 1939 Croatian Banovina as if it were a nostalgic construct by Croatian nationalists ignores the reality that it was a legal, constitutionally established part of Yugoslavia, which Bosnia and

<sup>84</sup> The Prosecution's case can be surmised from the Amended Indictment of November 16, 2005 and Scott's opening remarks on April 26, e.g., 817–818, 831, for the Banovina and the similarity of its borders with those of Herceg-Bosna, and the testimony of Robert Donia on May 10, 2006, *passim*.

Herzegovina were not in 1939. And ignoring Franjo Tuđman's actual biography in favor of a few excerpts chosen to make him appear to be an extreme nationalist enables one to argue that the root of Tuđman's purported criminality lies in his desire to reestablish the 1939 Banovina. In neither case, do we learn what the Banovina might have been nor who Tuđman actually was.

## D. The Outlines of an Alternative Narrative

### D. 1 Assumptions

There are four basic assumptions which underlie the current dominant narrative on the Muslim-Croat War, all of which tend to present the Muslims as the protagonists of the narrative and the Croats and Serbs as the antagonists.

1. Contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina can trace their cultures and societies to the medieval kingdoms of Bosnia and formed a cohesive whole from the middle ages to the early 1990s.

2. Prior to the wars, Croats, Serbs, and Muslims lived together in harmony, making the regions a species of multi cultural paradise.

3. Muslims were victims, while Serbs and Croats were aggressive, autonomous actors, little influenced by the international community.

4. Franjo Tuđman was a radical nationalist whose writings, speeches, and actions support the allegations that he sought to create an ethnically pure Croatian state which would include all regions where Croats lived.

Because these assumptions present the Muslims as the protagonists of the narrative and the Croats and Serbs as the antagonists, we have tended to read the "story" of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a novel in which Muslims are heroes, Croats and Serbs villains—a satisfying and even understandable interpretation of events, but too pat to be true. Historical narratives share many of the conventions of fiction, but they differ because while writers of fiction seek to craft a satisfying narrative, historians strive to tell a "true" story based on verifiable evidence.<sup>85</sup> Reality was much more complex than the current dominant narrative allows. It was also more complex than these four assumptions suggest, but by examining them we can lay bare some of the historical misconceptions surrounding the conflict and begin to understand why Croats and Muslims fought one another in Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Elazar Weinryb, "If We Write Novels, So How Shall We Write History?" *Clio* (1988) 17 (3): 265-9. Weinryb considers a historical text to be professional, rhetorical, and mimetic. The distinction between fiction, which is purely mimetic, and history, which contains mimetic elements, is that the latter is also epistemic, i.e., contains correct information that attempts to represent reality accurately, not to create an illusion of reality.

<sup>86</sup> Tuđman, *Vrijeme krivokletnika*, p. 46, who is particularly interested in rebutting the case made by the OTP and the testimony of Stipe Mesić at the ICTY, lists six questions he considers relevant to the Croatian role in Bosnia and Herzegovina—1. The relationship of the HDZ to the HDZ BiH; 2. The context and importance of the meeting at Karadordevo; 3. Whether Croatia was following a "two-track" policy; 4. Intervention by the HV in Bosnia and Herzegovina; 5. The Vance-Owen Peace Plan; and 6. The effect of Croatian electoral laws on the neighboring state.



## D. 2 Was Bosnia and Herzegovina a Cohesive National Polity Over Time?

The first assumption is that prior to 1992 Bosnia and Herzegovina formed a cohesive political, economic, and ethnic polity which continued the medieval kingdoms of Bosnia. Among others, Robert Donia argues that contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina is heir to a “thousand-year” history, a claim which owes more to rhetoric than to history.<sup>87</sup> The region’s Muslims, as their current appellation of “Bosniaks” implies, are considered the primary autochthonous people of these regions and therefore the proper heirs to its history and its land, unlike Serbs and Croats, who are generally depicted as loyal to either Belgrade or Zagreb and therefore not truly “Bosnian,” an adjective which is short-hand for a complex political reality and implies that Bosnia and Herzegovina form a single region.<sup>88</sup> Certainly, Croats and Serbs are not Bosniaks, a term coined in 1993 to refer to the new state’s Muslims. But there are reasons to doubt such claims, not least the historical reality that the population of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been “partly Serb and partly Croat” prior to the Ottoman conquest between 1463 and 1483.<sup>89</sup>

Even if Orthodox, Catholics, and Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina were all from a similar, albeit mixed, “racial” stock before the Ottoman conquest, it is analytically meaningless to conclude that Bosnians are the Slavs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, since Bosnia itself did not exist as a national entity after 1483, but as disparate territories on a military frontier where Croatian and Serbian cultures had established themselves before the conquest. Prior to the Ottoman conquest, Bosnia and Herzegovina was a congeries of regions with local rulers occasionally subjugated by a Croatian Ban or a Croatian or Bosnian or Serbian King, not an enduring political entity. After the conquest, the regions were ruled separately, as parts of a military frontier. Like the Muslims of these two regions, Croats and Serbs are also Bosnians and Herzegovinians, separated from one another by their regions, their religions, their cultures, and their joint history, a separation encouraged by the Ottoman occupation—making Bosnia and Herzegovina, as Justin McCarthy notes, “an inherently difficult

<sup>87</sup> ICTY, Prlić Case, Robert Donia, Testimony, May 10, 2006.

<sup>88</sup> Donia testimony, citing Imamović, *Historija*, p. 17. John V. A. Fine, “The Medieval and Ottoman Roots of Modern Bosnian Society,” in Mark Pinson, *The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 1–3, 20–1, equates Croats with Serbs and seems uncritically to accept Communist ideology. He sets up a straw man—“the wrongness of partitioning Bosnia between its expansionist neighbors or of transferring populations to create three states based on ethnicity”—then argues that “the Bosnian cause is not simply a Muslim cause but a cause that includes all three nationalities” because the “true Serbian cause is that of the Bosnians.” Both “Serbs and Croats,” he continues, “must reject their chauvinistic leaders and return to the spirit of *bratstvo-jedinstvo* (brotherhood and unity). . . .” But Wayne Vucinich, ed., *Contemporary Yugoslavia. Twenty Years of Socialist Experiment* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 248, 275–6, discerned “a certain degree of friction among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims over economic and political benefits” under Tito’s regime, and he saw Muslims as seeking to salvage a “Bosnian culture” in order to distinguish themselves from Croats and Serbs.

<sup>89</sup> Fred Singleton, *Twentieth-Century Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia UP, 1976), 36.

region to rule.<sup>90</sup> Nor was it easier to rule in the contemporary era, even after Tito's regime designated it a socialist republic and defined Serbs and Croats, as well as Muslims, as its constituent peoples in the 1974 Constitution, which remained in force through the early 1990s. From 1918 to 1990, Bosnia and Herzegovina was part of Yugoslavia and ruled from Belgrade, leading Mark Pinson to observe that ". . .Bosnia for almost all of its history has been under the rule of some other state. . ."<sup>91</sup>

So rather than a single, continuous political, social, economic, and cultural entity, Bosnia and Herzegovina was in reality a fissiparous set of regions lying on a political and cultural fault line, with constantly shifting populations and a succession of rulers, both local and foreign, making it more than a little difficult to rule.

### ***D. 3 Was Bosnia and Herzegovina a Multi Cultural Paradise Undone by Nationalism?***

The second assumption, that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a species of multi cultural paradise is at best a fond wish, not a historical reality. While Ottoman rule created a millet system which allowed Christians to retain their confessional and cultural identities, it was both harsh and repressive. To become full citizens of the empire, Christians had to renounce Christianity, which a great many did. Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived together, but they did not intermarry and there was never any question of which group was the dominant one.

After 1463 Bosnia-Herzegovina lay along a military frontier, and until 1878 both regions had a feudal structure, their thirty-nine hereditary fiefs a mirror image of the Military Frontier in Croatia and Slavonia. During the 1850s, as the Ottoman system of *ziamets* and *timars* degenerated, the economic obligations of Bosnia and Herzegovina's peasantry increased and their personal security and independence declined. Bosnia's Muslim elite were conservative, autocratic, and anti-Western, and they resisted reforms proposed by Istanbul. Instead, they imposed an increasingly onerous regime on the region's mostly Christian serfs, leading the latter first to appeal to foreign governments for protection, then to revolt in 1875.<sup>92</sup> During the uprising, Muslim irregulars (*bashi-bazouks*) killed as many as 5,000 Christian peasants and forced between 100,000 and 250,000 to flee.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> McCarthy, "Ottoman Bosnia, 1800 to 1878," in Pinson, et al, 55–66, 71, notes that Bosnia and Herzegovina were separate provinces until 1850, with Bosnia itself divided seven *sanjaks*, each with districts (*kazas*), with Muslims a little more than half the population of the two regions, and the conditions of peasant uncertain, although it is clear that few Muslims were *kmets* (serfs).

<sup>91</sup> Pinson, "The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina," 85.

<sup>92</sup> Jozo Tomašević, *Peasants, Politics and Economic Change in Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1955), 98–100, 102–103, 107–111.

<sup>93</sup> Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia. A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 125–33.

The revolt gave Austria a pretext to intervene on behalf of the Christian serfs and subsequently to occupy the region. Like the Ottoman conquest of the fifteenth century, the Austrian occupation of the nineteenth marked a watershed in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it did not resolve its problems because Vienna continued its policy of divide and rule in the newly acquired regions.<sup>94</sup> The inter-war regime in Yugoslavia marked a third watershed. This time Serbs forcefully asserted their claims to ownership of the area and further divided the region's three confessional groups.<sup>95</sup> Tito's regime then imposed a forced tolerance on Bosnia and Herzegovina's peoples, but it did not resolve the basic national question there.<sup>96</sup> So it is not surprising that national differences resurfaced in 1990; they had been masked, not resolved.

#### ***D. 4 Were Tuđman and the Croats free to do as they pleased?***

**The third assumption**—that Croats were autonomous actors—is not confirmed either by their behavior or the actual events of 1989–1995. Tuđman and other Croatian leaders reacted to the actions—or lack of action—by a number of groups, including the international community. Serbs, Croats, and Muslims displayed varying degrees of autonomy. The Serbs were most likely to act alone, because they controlled the resources of the Yugoslav state and they could count on the support of the Yugoslav Army. But even the Serbs looked to the international community for their cues, and it seems from the records which have been made public that Franjo Tuđman did so as well. Initially, he counted on the support of the EC, the UN, the Vatican, and Germany. But ultimately he shaped his policies to conform to what he understood to be the wishes of the United States. The Muslims in turn looked to the OIC for material support and sought to win over Western public opinion through the UN and the EU. Any analysis which does not discuss—or at least note—the interlocking links among these actors is both incomplete and misleading. So great did Stipe Mesić think the influence of others that he held the international community responsible for the course which the conflicts in both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina took.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Ivo Banac, *The National Question in Yugoslavia. Origins, History, Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1984), 92.

<sup>95</sup> Serb efforts to consolidate their control of these regions and the effect on Muslims is discussed by Nedim Šarac, *Uspostavljanje šestojanuarskog rezima 1929. godine sa posebnim osvrtom na Bosnu i Hercegovinu* (Sarajevo: Svetlost, 1975), and Atif Purivatra, *Jugoslavenska muslimanska organizacija u političkom životu Kraljevine Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1974).

<sup>96</sup> For example, Neven Andjelic, *Bosnia-Herzegovina. The End of a Legacy* (London: Frank Cass, 2003), *passim*, argues that the key to understanding the regions is the failure of Communist policy.

<sup>97</sup> Stipe Mesić, in Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić, *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991–1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 8, 13, considered both Serbian leaders and the international community responsible for the war and the course it took.

### ***D. 5 Was Tuđman a dangerous nationalist or a patriotic Croat?***

**Nor is the fourth assumption** valid—that Franjo Tuđman was an aggressive nationalist and that Croats unilaterally attacked their erstwhile Muslim allies. Both the chronology of the conflict and the ICTY indictments suggest that Muslims were not only victims; they were victimizers as well.<sup>98</sup> The chronology of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina indicates that the initial attacks in both states were carried out by Serb paramilitaries with the support of the JNA. During the Croatian conflict, Muslim leaders effectively aided Serb and JNA units by allowing them to use Bosnia and Herzegovina to attack Croatia and during the first phase of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina Croats and Muslims conducted what might be called “parallel defenses” against Serb and JNA units, with a minimum of cooperation by either side. Beginning in the fall of 1992, Muslim units began to harass Croatian areas and HVO units. In January 1993, the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by then an almost entirely Muslim organization and, judging from ICTY indictments, a Muslim nationalist organization in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, initiated probing attacks against HVO positions, which it followed with large-scale offensives in April. Muslim leaders sought to occupy Croatian and mixed areas and to settle Muslim refugees from areas seized by Serb forces in them.<sup>99</sup> The HVO lacked the forces to attack the ABH, and the HV could not send enough help to turn the tables for a variety of reasons, including continued attacks on Croatian territory by Serb forces operating from Bosnian territory and Croatia’s own lack of mobile forces.<sup>100</sup>

To say that Tuđman was a “nationalist” is to state the obvious, but not to say anything meaningful in an analytic sense regarding the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It would have been impossible for him *not* to have been a nationalist since, as Ivo Banac noted, “the essence of Yugoslav politics has been the national question.”<sup>101</sup> Prior to 1918, the “national question” had also preoccupied the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>102</sup> After 1918, the “national ques-

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<sup>98</sup> For example, the information in the ICTY indictments, cited above, and *Balkan Watch*, September 20, 2004, which reported the indictment of Abdullahim Maktof for war crimes committed between 1992 and 1995, including the beheading of hostages. Most mujahedin had by then left Central Bosnia, but Maktof had stayed and opened a shop in Travnik. Mehmed Alagić, commander of the Bosanska Krajina Operational Group and the 7<sup>th</sup> Muslim Brigade, has not yet been formally arraigned. Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 97–8, 102–107–109, 132–5, dismisses the role of mujahejin as peripheral and minor; Marijan, “Expert Opinion,” 281–4, does not; also see Evan F. Kohlmann, *Al-Qa’idin džihad u Europi. Afganistansko-Bosanska Mreža* (Zagreb: Mljevak, 2005), *passim*.

<sup>99</sup> Shrader, *Muslim-Croat War*, *passim*.

<sup>100</sup> Croatia’s *inability* to aid the HVO is a leit motif in Tuđman’s meetings with Bosnian Croats and military leaders, see Lucić, *Stenogrami*, I, 433–46, 543–8, for Anto Roso, the HVO commander. He believed his men could hold the ABH without Serb help, but he warned that his units were scattered along a thousand-kilometer front and lacked mobile forces, so static, trench warfare was destroying morale and taking a heavy toll among his units. The HVO, he told Tuđman, desperately needed mechanized forces, but Croatia had almost none to lend.

<sup>101</sup> Ivo Banac, ed., *Eastern Europe in Revolution* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 169.

<sup>102</sup> Charles Jelavich, “The Nationality Problem in Austria-Hungary,” *Austrian History Yearbook* (1967).

tion” was a problem for the Yugoslav state until its dissolution.<sup>103</sup> As Sabrina Ramet observed, ethnicity, not ideology or class, were “the ultimate source of political identity in intergroup conflicts” in Yugoslavia, with nationalism as a “variable.”<sup>104</sup> Like Yugoslavism, Communism could only mask national differences by covering the national divisions in Yugoslavia with heavy coats of ideological cosmetics; it could not resolve or reconcile them.

So the question is not whether Tuđman was a nationalist, but what sort of nationalist he was. But this is a deceptively simple question, given that, there are many definitions of the nation, nationalism, and nationalist; indeed, there are at least as many varieties of nationalism as there are theories about the phenomenon.<sup>105</sup> If Anthony Smith is correct—that national sentiment and nationalism are distinct because the nation is not identical with the nation state,<sup>106</sup> then nationalism has to do with power, not feelings of belonging to a people, even though Louis Snyder insists that patriotism (identification with a group) is the most basic characteristic of nationalism.<sup>107</sup> John Breuilly would agree with Smith; he argues that nationalism is not about identity at all, but solely about politics, power, and control of the state. If so, it is ideologically neutral, a mere political tool that can be liberal and democratic or reactionary and authoritarian.<sup>108</sup> It can even be Communist, and, as Chalmers Johnson notes, during World War II, Communist leaders in both China and Yugoslavia grafted nationalism unto communism to create “national communism.”<sup>109</sup> So it is not clear what a “nationalist” might have been in the Yugoslav context of the 1980s and early 1990s, nor, if we adopt Hans Kohn’s Cold War definitions, is it clear why Croatian and Serbian nationalism should be “bad” nationalisms and Muslim nationalism a “good” nationalism.<sup>110</sup>

There is no doubt that Tuđman was both a Croatian nationalist *and* a communist, like Tito and Mao Tse Tung. He was neither a racist nor a radical nationalist like Alfred Rosenberg or Adolf Hitler. With rare exceptions,

<sup>103</sup> For example, Jill Irvine, *The Croat Question. Partisan Politics in the Formation of the Yugoslav Socialist State* (Boulder CO: Westview Press, 1993); Josip Broz Tito, *The National Question* (Beograd: Socialist Thought and Practice, 1983); and Gilles Troude, *Yugoslavie, un pari impossible? La question nationale dans la République Fédérative Socialiste Yougoslave vue par les diplomates et experts français de 1944 à 1960* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998).

<sup>104</sup> Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism*, 23.

<sup>105</sup> For a survey, Louis L. Snyder, *Varieties of Nationalism: A Comparative Study* (Hinsdale, Ill.: The Dryden Press, 1976), 16, 18–25, 29–32, 32–42, and *passim*.

<sup>106</sup> Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 168.

<sup>107</sup> Snyder, *Varieties*, 43–53.

<sup>108</sup> John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1, 12–13, and *passim*.

<sup>109</sup> Chalmers A. Johnson, *Peasant Nationalism Communist Power: The Emergence of Revolutionary China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1962), 177.

<sup>110</sup> See Davorka Matić, “Je li nacionalizam stvarno toliko loš: slučaj Hrvatske,” in Sabrina P. Ramet and Davorka Matić, *Demokratska tranzicija u Hrvatskoj. Transformacija vrijednosti, obrazovanje, mediji* (Zagreb: Alinea, 2006), esp. 262–3, who notes the tendency to dismiss East European nationalism as unhealthy and West European and America variants as healthy.

Tuđman and other contemporary Croatian nationalists were secular and liberal; they sought to reintegrate Croatia into a Western democratic system after decades in a one-party Communist state. Indeed, the mainstream of Croatian nationalism had always been liberal and secular.<sup>111</sup> So the question of whether Tuđman was a nationalist is essentially irrelevant; the real question is whether he was in the mainstream of Croatian nationalism or embraced its fringes. The answer is that he and the HDZ were well within the main current of Croatian nationalism, unlike the HSP, which veered considerably to the right. Tuđman rejected Yugoslav integralism in favor of national sentiment and his nationalism sought sovereignty for Croatia, but he was also willing to compromise and worked with Milan Kučan to reorganize Yugoslavia as a democratic confederation. In this sense he was not unlike Tito, whose political acumen he admired.<sup>112</sup> Tuđman was a nationalist, but neither a racist nor a radical. Nor was he a militarist; he preferred diplomacy to war. The question, then, with regard to the Muslim-Croat war is not whether he was a Croatian nationalist, but whether his brand of nationalism led him to attack Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the answer is that there is no proof that it did so. But there is considerable evidence that he acted to protect Croats in the neighboring republic.

### E. By way of a conclusion—a series of unfortunate comparisons

When Kenneth Scott notes that it is “no coincidence” that the Banovina’s borders roughly coincide with those of Herceg-Bosna, he is suggesting a criminal conspiracy.<sup>113</sup> But he is also ignoring the history of border changes in Yugoslavia, from the formation of *oblasti* to the creation of the Croatian Banovina. And he is ignoring population movements after 1945, the distribution of Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the existence of the Croatian Community of Posavina, which was created at the same time as Herceg-Bosna. Like many others, he appears to assume nationality to be the *only* criterion for creating a polity, whether a state or a canton, and he discounts both the history of the region and the concept of geopolitics, which has at least as long a pedigree—and as much heuristic and practical usefulness—as the concept of national self-determination. He is also glossing over regional, confessional, and national differences in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which Izetbegović tactfully acknowledged in early 1993 when he told David Owen and Cyrus Vance

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<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, 282–4, and *passim*.

<sup>112</sup> For Tuđman’s intellectual positions, see James J. Sadkovich, “Franjo Tuđman : An Intellectual in Politics,” in Sabrina Ramet, Konrad Clewing, and Reneo Lukić, eds., *Croatia during the 1990s* (on press). During the SKJ’s VIII Congress in 1964, Tito admonished those who “confuse the unity of nations with the liquidation of nations,” noting that to create an “integral Yugoslav nation” was tantamount to advocating assimilation, bureaucratic centralism, unitarism, and hegemony, so “chauvinism,” “national deformations,” “bureaucratism and hegemony” could not be tolerated. The goal of the League of Communists, he said, must be the “flowering of all our national cultures” and a better understanding of each other. See Josip Broz Tito, *The National Question* (Belgrade; Socialist Thought and Practice, 1983), 110–22.

<sup>113</sup> ICTY, Prlić et al., 26 April 2006, 831.

that Bosnia had a “different identity” from Herzegovina and offered to give Livno and Duvno to the Croats and Kupres to the Serbs, provided the Muslims retained the rest of Central Bosnia. Finally, he is glossing over the reality that the borders of Herceg-Bosna also closely coincided with the proposals put forward by international mediators from early 1992 through early 1994.<sup>114</sup>

The key to the alleged conspiracy hatched at Karadžević and which supposedly led to the Muslim-Croat War may well be the Croatian Banovina, but not in the sense Scott has asserted. Rather, it is the mistaken interpretation of the Banovina and the weight Tuđman gave it that is the key to grasping the flawed logic of the current narrative. To argue that Franjo Tuđman sought to create a Greater Croatia by resurrecting the Croatian Banovina is to misconstrue entirely what the Croatian Banovina was and what it meant to Tuđman’s generation. Like his mentor, Vaso Bogdanov, Tuđman interpreted the 1939 entity as a “first step” toward resolving the Croatian Question because the bulk of its population was Croatian and most of these areas were either historically or geopolitically linked to Croatia. It did not displease those Muslims who found themselves in it, although it worried those who did not, because they would be assigned to its Serbian counterpart. But, as Tuđman noted in his study of inter-war Yugoslavia, it upset both Serbian and Croatian nationalists, including Ustaša and Chetnik leaders, who saw its creation as precluding—not furthering—the creation of either a Greater Croatia or a Greater Serbia.<sup>115</sup> Ivo Banac also saw the creation of the Croatian Banovina as a step toward stabilizing Yugoslavia by resolving tensions between Serbs and Croats. As Lukić and Lynch note, it was a legal entity, an integral, constitutional party of Yugoslavia which approximated a “nation-state” and met Croat demands for decentralization and self-rule within a Yugoslav federation.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>114</sup> Lukić, *Stenogrami*, 297–98. For example, Boras, *Kako je umirala SRBiH*, 103–104, 118–31, notes that Vares, Zepce, and Kakanj were not in the Croatian cantons under the Vance-Owen proposal, even though Kakanj’s hydroelectric plant supplied power to parts of both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, that the May 18, 1993 accords at Medugorje named Croats to head the provinces of Mostar and Travnik, with a Muslim for Zenica, and that the Croats made Herceg-Bosna a republic in August 1993 on the strength of the Owen-Stoltenberg proposal.

<sup>115</sup> Franjo Tuđman, *S vjerom u samostalnu Hrvatsku* (Zagreb: Narodne novine, 1995), 16–17, and *Hrvatska u monarhističkoj Jugoslaviji 1918.–1941.* (Zagreb: Hrvatska Sveučilišna Naklada, 1993), Vol. 2, *passim*. Vaso Bogdanov wrote a number of influential studies, among them, *Historija političkih stranaka u Hrvatskoj* (Zagreb: Novinarsko izdavačko poduzeće). For his differences with Ljubo Boban over the meaning of the Croatian Banovina, see Vaso Bogdanov, “I još nešto zapažanja uz jednu doktorsku disertaciju, a ponešto i o metodama,” *Telegram*, January 6, 1967; Ljubo Boban, “Još neka zapažanja uz jednu doktorsku disertaciju,” *Telegram*, January 13, 1967; Tuđman, *Usudbene povjestice*, 120–133; Bogdan Krizman, “U čemu je bit?” *Telegram*, March 3, 1967; Šerif Šehović, “Mistifikacije umjesto argumenta,” *Telegram*, March 17, 1967; Ljubo Boban, “I još nešto zapaž uz jednu doktorsku disertaciju, a ponešto i o metoda ‘znanstvene’ diskusije autora te disertacije,” *Telegram*, March 10, 1967; Bogdan Krizman, “Mussolini, Ciano i Šerif Šehović,” *Telegram*, April 7, 1967; and Darko Hudelist, *Tuđman: Biografija* (Zagreb: Profil, 2004), 343–6, 350–3, who reports Boban’s attack on Tuđman during a conversation with Bakarić on April 6, 1964, and his apparent denunciation of Tuđman with Mirjana Gross.

<sup>116</sup> Banac, *Eastern Europe*, 170; Lukić and Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals*, 69.

The Croatian Banovina was destroyed by war in 1941; it was not dissolved by plebiscite nor was it legally abolished. Revolution then consigned it to the dustbin of history when the victorious Partisans precluded its reconstitution by creating two new entities—the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the autonomous Province of Vojvodina. Tuđman believed that the Communists had erred in not assigning Bosnia and Herzegovina to Croatia, given that the geopolitical and historical ties between the two were much stronger than were Serbia's with Vojvodina, which had belonged to Austria-Hungary before 1918 yet became part of Serbia in 1945.<sup>117</sup> During the 1960s, Communist reformers in Croatia also considered many areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be Croatian. Nor was this a new attitude; in 1919, the Croatian Peasant Party leader, Stjepan Radić, had urged the Paris Peace Conference to allow plebiscites in Croatia, Slovenia, *and Bosnia* because he considered most Muslims, including JMO deputies, to be ethnic Croatians and assumed that Bosnia would join Slovenia and Croatia in a “federated peasant republic of Yugoslavia.”<sup>118</sup>

Because he was a historian, Tuđman considered the Croatian Banovina of 1939 as one possible solution, and from a Croatian perspective, a good one, for the problem posed by the existence of an unstable multi-national state on Croatia's borders. While he has been roundly denounced for his positive remarks regarding the Banovina, the 1939 province was a legal entity within a recognized state, established by royal decree and an amendment to Yugoslavia's 1931 constitution, encompassing “core Croat lands.” It was *not* a model for aggression, but rather a practical way to resolve part of Yugoslavia's national question by creating an autonomous Croatian political entity within a South Slav state. The Banovina was compatible with Tuđman's proposal to create a sovereign Croatian state within a Yugoslav confederation. But Tuđman never embraced the Ustaša-state, which included all of Bosnia and Herzegovina, including areas which were predominantly Serb and Muslim. Nor did he seek to create a sovereign Croatian polity unilaterally or through force; he sought to do so through legal means and through negotiations with *both* Slobodan Milošević and Alija Izetbegović. That, not secession and partition, appears to have been his intention during his meetings with the Serbian leader in the spring of 1991 at Karadorđevo and Tikveš, and his efforts to persuade the Muslim leader that cantons were preferable to war during their meeting at Split that summer. The formation of the Croatian Banovina should not be confused with the NDH; both were seminal events in Yugoslav history, but while one was the creation of foreign powers, the other was created by the major political actors and the legal government in Yugoslavia and offered one possible model for resolving the crisis in Yugoslavia fifty years later.

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<sup>117</sup> Franjo Tuđman, *Nationalism in Contemporary Europe* (Boulder CO: East European Monographs, 1981), 112–114.

<sup>118</sup> Sabrina P. Ramet, *Nationalism and Federalism in Yugoslavia, 1962-1991* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1992), , 123–5; Bogdan Krizman, ed., *Korespondencija Stjepana Radića* (Zagreb; Institut za hrvatsku povijest, 1973), vol. II, 226, 338, 342, 469, 561–3. Both Radić and Tuđman also proposed loose confederations as alternatives to the annexation of Bosnian areas to Croatia.



Tuđman later recalled that during their meeting at Karađorđevo he had told Milošević that Croatia could not allow Bosnia and Herzegovina to belong to Serbia because Dalmatia, from Dubrovnik to Split, would be threatened—a geopolitical, not a nationalist position. So, he said, he had suggested that Bosnia and Herzegovina become a confederation of three nations. Barring that resolution, he suggested recreating the outlines of the 1939 Banovina, which in its modern form would include western Herzegovina and Central Bosnia with Bosanska Posavina.<sup>119</sup> On 15 April, 1991, Tuđman again saw Milošević at Tikveš, evidently at the Serbian leader's invitation. They apparently discussed Bosnia and Herzegovina, but Hrvoje Šarinić, Tuđman's Chief of Staff, insists that nothing was decided.<sup>120</sup> During an interview with German TV in 1994, Tuđman explained that he had urged Milošević to meet with Izetbegović to discuss how to avoid war.<sup>121</sup> On June 12, the Croatian and Serbian leaders indeed met with the Muslim leader at the Villa "Dalmacija" in Split, where they pressed him to agree to a cantonal reorganization of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Davorin Rudolf, then Croatia's Foreign Minister, recalls Tuđman as nervous and wary of both Izetbegović and Milošević during the meeting, suggesting that he had not made a deal with either, but was negotiating with both. Apparently, Izetbegović later told Adil Zulfikarpašić that he had not agreed either to partition or to cantonize Bosnia, making it clear that *both* options had been under discussion, as Tuđman later recalled.<sup>122</sup>

We cannot know for certain whether this account is true, but it fits the context of the period better than the conspiracy theory based on a single meeting at Karađorđevo. During the early part of 1991, the presidents of Yugoslavia's republics met on several occasions to resolve the crisis. At the same time, the international community was pressing Yugoslavia to restructure, and Tuđman joined Milan Kučan, Slovenia's President, to present a plan for a confederation in which the republics would be sovereign nations. There is no reason to suppose that adjustments to borders were not on the table; the internal borders of Yugoslavia had repeatedly been adjusted during its history and the international community had ruled out only violent change, thereby giving its tacit consent to negotiated change. Because Bosnia and Herzegovina was not a state with a single "constituent people" (*temeljni narod*), Tuđman did not see it as a national polity in the literal meaning of that phrase. It was a confederation of peoples, not a nation-state, because its peoples were both united and divided by religion, culture, and history, and Tuđman doubted that the fragile, multinational polity would survive Yugoslavia's demise. The question was how to manage its collapse, should that become necessary. One way was to ask its peoples. "Croatia and Bosnia," he explained to the Austrian journalist Sibylle

<sup>119</sup> Franjo Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ svijetu: Razgovori sa stranim predstavnicima* (Zagreb: Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada/Hrvastki institut za povijest, 1999), , 324–5.

<sup>120</sup> ICTY, Milošević Trial, Šarinić Testimony, 31253–57, 31265, for Šarinić comment that the Serbian side proposed the second Tuđman-Milošević meeting.

<sup>121</sup> Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, 290.

<sup>122</sup> Lučić, "Karađorđevo," 11–17; Rudolf, *Rat koji nismo htjeli*, 54–5.

Hamann in May 1990, “form a geographic and political whole, and in the course of history they were generally in a single united state.” So he suggested that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovian “decide their own fate electorally.” There would be, he vowed, “no pressure from our side.” He repeated this suggestion that the neighboring republic’s citizens should “decide their own fate through a referendum” to another journalist, Silvio Tomašević.<sup>123</sup> Like Radić in 1919, Tuđman was confident that, if given a choice in 1991, Bosnians and Herzegovinans would opt for Croatia.

A month later, he again suggested a referendum to allow Croats, Serbs, and Muslims to express their choice of national allegiance, but he cautioned that should Serb leaders attempt to create a Greater Serbia by breaking up Yugoslavia, then Croatia would raise the question of its “natural and historical border.” How the “Bosnian Question” was resolved, he explained, depended on whether Belgrade sought to create a Greater Serbia, either “in the framework of a Yugoslav federation or outside it.” Zagreb supported Bosnia and Herzegovina, but not as part of a Greater Serbia, so should Belgrade press, then Croatia would as well, because Croats could not “reconcile” themselves to their “unnatural and absurd borders.” But he was reluctant to do so, because even though he considered areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina to be an extension of Croatia for geopolitical reasons, he accepted the inviolability of its borders because Croatia required its neighbors to do so for its own frontiers.<sup>124</sup>

In July 1991, he publicly warned that should Bosnia-Herzegovina’s sovereignty be jeopardized, then he would raise the question of its Croatian population.<sup>125</sup> But he was talking about negotiations, not war. This is clear from a meeting in early January 1992 between Tuđman and other Croatian leaders with Nikola Koljević. One of two Serb members on the Bosnian Presidency, Koljević was speaking for Radovan Karadžić, President of the newly proclaimed Republika Srpska.<sup>126</sup> Noting that he had come to find a “political resolution” to the crisis there, Koljević apologized to the Croats for the errors and excesses of the Croatian SDS, prompting Tuđman to ask why he should believe him, given that Milošević had broken his word and provoked a “terrible war” (*užasan rat*) in Croatia—a comment which suggests that the two leaders had discussed a negotiated, not a military, solution to the crisis at Karadžić and Tikveš. The Croatian leader was clearly interested in avoiding war by redrawing Bosnia and Herzegovina’s borders, and Bosnian HDZ leaders were obvious-

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<sup>123</sup> Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, 82–3, and FBIS, May 10, 1990.

<sup>124</sup> Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, 95–6, interview with *Der Spiegel*, 18 June 1990, and pp. 187, 239, for his assurance that even though he considered Bosnia and Herzegovina an integral part of Croatia, he accepted the inviolability of its borders because Croatia required its neighbors to do so for *its* frontiers.

<sup>125</sup> United States. Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Daily Report. Eastern Europe, Tanjug, July 19, 1991.

<sup>126</sup> On the Presidency, Alija Izetbegović and Fikret Abdić represented the Muslim SDA; Stjepan Kljuić and Franjo Boras the Croat HDZ; Biljana Plavšić and Nikola Koljević the Serb SDS. Ejup Ganić, a member of the SDA and a Muslim nationalist, was the “Yugoslav” representative.

ly ready to secede. But the Croats eschewed violence; they wanted everything done in a “civilized” and “very democratic manner” (*na jedan fin demokratski način*). Bosnia and Herzegovina was the key to Serb-Croat relations, and Tuđman believed that history pointed the way to a settlement, an obvious allusion to the 1939 *Sporazum* which had created the Croatian Banovina. When the HDZ BiH leader, Franjo Boras, also a member of the Bosnian Presidency, asked whether Koljević was proposing three states in a Bosnian confederation, the Serb answered in the affirmative, and Tuđman noted that cantons were the best solution to prevent war. Europe, he added, must realize Bosnia and Herzegovina was also their problem. He promised not to influence events there, but he was curious about the position of the JNA, which he saw as a crucial actor, and he noted his desire for a “lasting peace and good neighborly relations” with Serbia. Croatia, he said, wanted to avoid war and was seeking a “general solution” that would include Serbs in Croatia. So he wanted “serious people” to work together to find a “political solution.” It was not, he added, in anyone’s interest to go to war.<sup>127</sup>

A week after his meeting with Koljević, Tuđman told Alessio Altichieri of Italy’s *Corriere della Sera* that the crisis which had torn Yugoslavia apart had “settled in Bosnia” and that international intervention would be “useful.”<sup>128</sup> A month later, during an interview with Guido Alferi of *Il Messaggero*, the Croatian leader said that by rejecting confederation in 1990, Alija Izetbegović had made it more difficult to resolve the crisis in Bosnia. Given the situation created by Bosnia’s Serbs, who had effectively seceded, Tuđman argued that Bosnia’s Croats were justified in asking the republic be divided into cantons. But he had urged Croats in Western Herzegovina not to rush matters nor to further destabilize the situation and increase tensions with either Serbs or Muslims. Still, it would be natural for them to react, he added, should the conclusion of a Serbian-Muslim accord include them in a rump Yugoslavia.<sup>129</sup>

Tuđman’s position then, right up to the referendum, was that creating cantons would resolve the crisis and avoid war. What he said privately to Koljević was precisely what he was saying publicly. The problem was that some international actors and Bosnia’s Muslims would not accept a cantonal solution, and that while the Serbs would agree to cantons, they did so only as a first step toward secession. Yet Tuđman had few choices. Given plans by Serb leaders in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to consolidate their newly formed political entities, for him to abandon Bosnia and Herzegovina to Serbia would have been tantamount to reinforcing the “Republic of Krajina” and relinquishing

<sup>127</sup> Lucić, *Stenogrami*, August 1, 1992 meeting, *passim*, 129–54. Koljević claimed that Milošević could not control Milan Babić.

<sup>128</sup> Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, 193, and 209, for his comment in *Herceg-Bosna* in March 1992 that with the defeat of Serbian forces by the HV and the withdrawal of the JNA to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the crisis had migrated there. Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 131, echo Serbian apologists who argue that the HV was at fault for the war in Bosnia because its presence there hindered the JNA’s withdrawal.

<sup>129</sup> Tuđman, *Hrvatska riječ*, 202.

the quarter of Croatia occupied by Serb forces, leaving the country fragmented and vulnerable. To give a green light to Bosnia's Croats would have resulted in charges of aggression against Croatia and a Muslim-Serb front which would have quickly overwhelmed Croat areas in Bosnia and consolidated Serb occupied areas in Croatia by protecting their rear and flanks. To attack with the Croatian Army was never an option; it was barely strong enough to check Serb forces in late 1991 and early 1992. A political solution, a negotiated resolution to the crisis, was therefore the only option Tuđman realistically had, and it is the one he pursued through March of 1992, when Bosnia and Herzegovina declared its independence and Serb forces, supported by a largely Serbian JNA, attacked the new state.

Indeed, he continued to pursue a negotiated solution through the Dayton Accords, despite having to shore up the defenses of Bosnia-Herzegovina by funneling arms to the ABH and lending arms and a handful of units and commanders to the HVO. This is the joint criminal enterprise for which he would have been indicted by the ICTY and for which he has been roundly condemned by pundits and scholars. But Tuđman did not break up Bosnia and Herzegovina. He merely pointed out that, like Yugoslavia, it was unstable because it is a multi-national state. If we note the distinction between a multi-national and a multi-ethnic state, then there is no question that while there are a great many multi-ethnic states, there are very few multi-national states remaining in the world, precisely because over the course of the past two centuries they have proven to be fissiparous, whether we are discussing the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Soviet Russia, or India.<sup>130</sup> As Reneo Lukić and Allen Lynch have observed, history has shown that to be viable multi-national ("ethno-federal") polities should be organized as loose federations, like Switzerland or Spain.<sup>131</sup> This is, of course, exactly what Tuđman and Kučan had proposed for Yugoslavia in 1990 and what Tuđman, and José Cutilheiro acting for the European Community, proposed for Bosnia and Herzegovina two years later. Ivo Banac, who was Tuđman's political opponent, also considered cantons one way to avoid war, even if he personally did not favor this solution to the crisis.<sup>132</sup>

Why then all the criticism of Tuđman? One reason is that those who embraced the concept of *bratstvo i jedinstvo* sincerely believed that Tito's regime managed to do what the Ottomans, the Habsburgs, and the Karadževićs all had failed to do—resolve the tensions among nationalities and confessions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Another is that those who embrace a Western ver-

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<sup>130</sup> Ivo Banac told Jasmina Bojić, *Borbe*, May 6, 1991 that Yugoslavia was "a mosaic" of "developed historical nations" and so did not fit American "conceptions of multinational states." The American term "ethnic group," he noted, refers to "various minority groups in their own country," a very different social phenomena than "ancient historical nations, like the Serbs, Croats. . . , nations which have their own long history as states." See Ivo Banac, *Protiv straha* (Zagreb: Slon, 1992), 80.

<sup>131</sup> Lukić and Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals*, 382–5.

<sup>132</sup> Banac, *Protiv straha*, 214.

sion of this myth—multi culturalism—believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina *should* have been a place of tolerance, if not of brotherly love. But the sociological and historical record both suggest that this was not the case.<sup>133</sup> The idea of a multi cultural paradise was always a normative political program, not a depiction of reality. But even Tuđman had his version of this myth—that Croatia was a *bridge* between East and West, with Croatian outposts in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In 1981, he wrote that uniting the two republics would foster harmony and encourage the political, economic, and cultural development of both.<sup>134</sup> This particular observation, of course, is not cited by Mr. Scott or Tuđman's critics, and, sadly, it never happened, despite the conclusion of accords between Sarajevo and Zagreb in 1992, 1993, and 1994.

What seems clear is that a “dense narrative” of the Muslim-Croat conflict tends not only to diffuse responsibility for the war between the two sides of this fragile alliance, but it also suggests that the Muslims, not the Croats, had the motive to attack and the forces to do so. This is the conclusion reached by Charles Shrader, but not by the Prosecution at the ICTY nor by most scholars who have written on the conflict. However, if we are indeed just beginning to undertake a critical revision of the simple setting down and copying of events, then it is possible that Shrader, albeit in the minority, is closer to the “truth” than most works which make up the existing literature, given that they essentially echo one another. As James Morgan Read noted in his classic study of atrocity propaganda more than a half century ago, the repetition of charges does not validate them. Nor are official inquiries more reliable than intellectuals—the former have been used to mislead and the latter tend to be patriotic in time of war. Indeed, just as intellectuals chose sides between 1991 and 1995, during World War I, Max Planck and other German intellectuals squared off against their French and Russian counterparts to contest allegations of atrocities in Belgium. Yet repetition, intellectual endorsement, and official sponsorship is precisely what makes atrocity propaganda so convincing, even though intellectuals rarely visit battlefields and governments regularly shape facts to suit their policies. Read's observation that the 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions outlawed indiscriminate civilian resistance in “occupied” territory, as well as sniping in any territory, explained some apparently atrocious actions by German troops, who were allowed legally to execute snipers. But German denials and explanations were rarely translated and Germans

<sup>133</sup> For example, the low rate of intermarriage among national groups suggests that Bosnia and Herzegovina was among the *least* socially permeable regions in Yugoslavia. See Nikolai Botev, “Where East Meets West: Ethnic Intermarriage in the Former Yugoslavia, 1962–1989,” *American Sociological Review* 59 (1994): 461–80. The rate of intermarriage, an indicator for the permeability of cultural and social boundaries, was higher in Croatia than in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, or Slovenia, with no statistically significant change between 1962 and 1989. Between 15.8 and 17.4 percent of marriages in Croatia were exogamous, compared to 13.0 percent in Serbia and Slovenia, and 11 to 12 percent in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These figures overstate the extent of intermixing, because individuals tended to marry within the same cultural group.

<sup>134</sup> Tuđman, *Nationalism*, 115.

lacked access to the world's media.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, English-language accounts have shaped our perception of these wars because relatively few works have been translated from Croatian, Serbian, or Bosniak.

Certainly, it seems naive at this point to accept a conspiracy theory based on a meeting which occurred two years before the event which it supposedly caused, particularly since there are no reliable historical documents which support the theory and the most logical explanation is that Tuđman and Milošević were negotiating, not conspiring. Nor can we rely on the ICTY, which is a legal tribunal, not a historical research institute, and it seems that collective efforts, notably the Scholars' Initiative, tend to repeat conventional wisdom, rather than encourage original research. So we are left with a flawed literature which is still useful if used with care, even though it is in need of careful, thoughtful analysis and revision. But, as Reinhardt Koselleck has noted, this is simply the way that history is written.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Read, *Atrocity Propaganda*, 57, 74, 101–102, 126, 142, 285–6, and *passim*, like Mockaitis, above, also notes reports that 20,000 of 200,000 women and children forced into British concentration camps died during the Boer War.

<sup>136</sup> Reinhardt Koselleck, "Linguistic Change and the History of Events," *Journal of Modern History* (1989), 665–6, divides historical writing into three phases—writing down, copying, and revising. We appear to be just entering the third phase.

## **Franjo Tuđman und muslimisch-kroatischer Krieg aus 1993**

### Zusammenfassung

Die Konflikte zwischen muslimischen und kroatischen Kräften in Bosnien und der Herzegowina im Laufe des großen Krieges zwischen bosnisch-herzegowinischer und kroatischer Bevölkerung gegen die Kräfte von Serbien und Montenegro waren Gegenstand der Untersuchung vieler Journalisten, internationaler Beobachter, Propagandisten, aber auch seriöser Historiker. Im Vordergrund steht bei den meisten von ihnen die These über das Abkommen zwischen Tuđman und Milošević über die Teilung Bosniens und Einmischung kroatischer Streitkräfte in den Krieg auf dem Territorium dieses Landes. Auf der anderen Seite gibt es auch Autoren, die diese These ablehnen und zu völlig unterschiedlicher Beurteilung der Natur des Krieges zwischen Kroaten und muslimischen Bosniaks in Bosnien und der Herzegowina kommen.

Der Autor analysiert kritisch viele von diesen Beurteilungen kroatisch-muslimischer Konflikte und ordnet sie in angemessene Kategorien ein. Insbesondere ist es ihm daran gelegen, auf Vereinfachungen und bloßes Nichtverstehen der Geschichte in Bezug auf diese Gebiete hinzuweisen. Der Autor ordnet viele Auffassungen des Krieges in Bosnien und der Herzegowina in einige Geschichten ein und unterwirft jede von ihnen kritischen Betrachtungen und Urteilen: Theorie der Verschwörung, Theorie der Initiative seitens der Wissenschaftler und Theorie des Internationalen Strafgerichts für das ehemalige Jugoslawien in Den Haag (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia – ICTY).

Der Autor schlägt eine andere Geschichte vor, die auf die historischen Gegebenheiten Rücksicht nimmt, weiterhin auf das Verhältnis der Kräfte auf dem Terrain, internationale Umstände und Versuche, Krise vor den Konflikten und während ihrer Dauer zu überwinden. Genauso untersucht er kritisch die Voraussetzungen, auf denen andere Geschichten aufgebaut sind. Im Unterschied zu den meisten anderen Autoren untersucht dieser Autor die politischen und militärischen Pläne der bosnischen Muslime und betrachtet sie im Kontext der entgegengesetzten Bestrebungen der kroatischen Bevölkerung in diesem Land, was ein völlig anderes Licht auf den Charakter militärischer Konflikte wirft.