

**THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL  
FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA**

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**Case No. IT-05-88-T**

**IN TRIAL CHAMBER II**

**Before :** Judge Carmel Agius, President  
Judge O-Gon Kwon  
Judge Kimberly Prost  
Judge Ole Bjørn Støle – Reserve Judge

**Registrar :** Mr. Hans Holthuis

**Date Filed:** 22 April 2008

**THE PROSECUTOR**  
**v.**  
**VUJADIN POPOVIC**  
**LJUBISA BEARA**  
**DRAGO NIKOLIC**  
**LJUBOMIR BOROVCANIN**  
**RADIVOJE MILETIC**  
**MILAN GVERO**  
**VINKO PANDUREVIC**

**PUBLIC**

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**UPDATED AND REVISED TRANSLATION OF THE REPORT OF  
MAJOR GENERAL VIDOSAV KOVACEVIC**

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**The Office of the Prosecutor :**

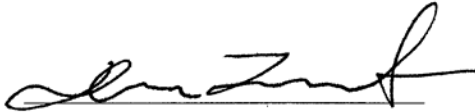
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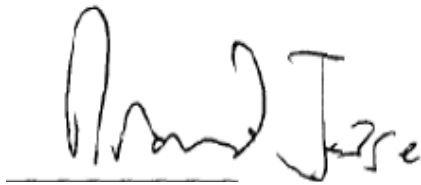
Mr. Zoran Zivanovic and Ms. Mira Tapuskovic for Vujadin Popovic  
Mr. John Ostojic and Mr. Christopher Meek for Ljubisa Beara  
Ms. Jelena Nikolic and Mr. Stéphane Bourgon for Drago Nikolic  
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Ms. Natacha Fauveau Ivanovic and Mr. Nenad Petrusic for Radivoje Miletic  
Mr. Dragan Krgovic and Mr. David Josse for Milan Gvero  
Mr. Peter Haynes and Mr. Djordje Sarapa for Vinko Pandurevic

1. The Defence for Milan Gvero (the "Defence") filed its Military Expert Report prepared by Major General Vidosav Kovacevic on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. Included in the filing was a draft translation prepared on behalf of the Defence. The Report has now been officially translated by the translation service of the Tribunal. The updated translation is annexed to this filing.

Respectfully submitted on this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April 2008



Dragan Krgović  
Counsel for Milan Gvero



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CASE IT-05-88-T

MILITARY EXPERT REPORT

**THE PLACE, ROLE AND TASKS  
OF THE ORGAN FOR MORAL GUIDANCE, RELIGIOUS AND LEGAL  
AFFAIRS IN THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA /VRS/, AND THE  
ASSISTANT COMMANDER OF THE MAIN STAFF  
FOR THESE MATTERS**

**Major General Vidosav KOVAČEVIĆ**

**Expert witness for the Defence**

**Case IT-05-88-T**

March 2008

## CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	4
I. NOTES ON METHODOLOGY.....	4
II. FORMATION, MANNING AND ORGANISATION OF THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA /VRS/.....	6
A. Formation of the VRS.....	6
B. Manning .....	8
C. Organisation.....	9
1. Relations within the military organisation .....	12
III. COMMAND IN THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA .....	13
IV. MAIN STAFF OF THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA .....	15
A. Responsibilities and Organisation of the Main Staff (GŠ) .....	15
B. The Assistant Commander.....	18
C. Method of work of the GŠ and decision-making.....	20
1. Method of work.....	20
2. Decision-making.....	22
V. SECTOR FOR MORAL GUIDANCE, RELIGIOUS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS /MVPP/.....	23
A. Organization and responsibilities of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs .....	26
1. Organization.....	26
2. Responsibilities.....	27
3. Focus of work .....	30
(a) Monitoring and assessing morale.....	30
(b) Information.....	31
(c) Religious affairs.....	32

4. Legal documents of the Sector for MVPP	33
5. Manning the Sector	33
6. Responsibilities and work of the Assistant Commander for MVPP	34
VI. FUNCTIONING OF THE SECTOR FOR MVPP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND THE MILITARY STRUCTURES IN REPUBLIKA SRPSKA	37
VII. CONCLUSIONS	41
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
ABBREVIATIONS	

## INTRODUCTION

I was engaged by the Defence of Lieutenant General Milan GVERO to prepare an expert report in relation to his case before the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (case IT-05-88-T: Prosecutor v. Popovic *et. al.*), regarding the position, role and tasks of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal affairs in Republika Srpska Army and the Assistant Commander of the VRS Main Staff for these matters.

Complex social changes took place in the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) between 1990 and 1995. The war waged in those territories produced complex problems faced by all the former Yugoslav nations. Radical reversals in society led to changes in the military. Emerging armed formations at the same time waged a war whose basic characteristic was armed combat. Political divisions and differences instigated the war, while an armed conflict simultaneously deepened the political divisions.

Faced with such a complex problem, I tried to limit the report to the subject matter dealt with by the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs of the VRS Main Staff (GŠ) headed by Lieutenant General Milan GVERO. This could not be analysed in isolation, as it exists throughout the entire system of military organization and defence of the Republika Srpska (RS).

The Report was therefore limited to six sections.

Section one consists of notes on the methodology which helped me in preparing the Report and illustrate the restrictions under which I worked. At the same time, they explain the approach for the convenience of the readers of the Report.

Section two deals with the formation, manning and organisation of the RS Army.

Section three provides an explanation of the concept of command and its structure in Republika Srpska.

Section four explains the organisation, responsibilities and method of work of the VRS Main Staff.

Section five explains the place, role and tasks of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Moral Affairs, which is in my view the central segment of this Report.

Section six deals with the functioning of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs in the light of the relationship between the political leadership and military structures in the RS in the relevant period.

## I. NOTES ON METHODOLOGY

My approach was to analyse and synthesise the documents from the point of view of the position and role of the Assistant Commander for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs (MVPP), and the functioning of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs of the Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska in the established system of military organization, which was based on legal norms.

The views presented in the expert report are the fruit of knowledge, research and conclusions about the topic within the limits determined by focusing on the analysis of documents and the contents thereof, and include my personal and professional experience and expertise.

The analysis and synthesis, relying heavily on the inductive-deductive method, came from studying and researching the following: the legal regulations on the VRS

and other armies, especially the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), historical documents, historiography (not all are listed in bibliography), VRS documents, documents of other armies in the conflict – particularly the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH Army) and the Croatian Defence Council (HVO), witness statements given as testimony in this case, the reports by Richard Butler, the statements made by General Rupert Smith, and other written material. All these documents are listed in the bibliography.

My analytical work began with the following essential facts:

1. Lieutenant General Milan GVERO was the Assistant Commander of the Main Staff of Republika Srpska Army (GŠ VRS) for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal affairs from the establishment of the VRS until the end of the war (1992-1995).
2. Throughout 1992-1995, there was a war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH) whose main characteristic was armed combat. The Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Croatian Defence Council on the one side, and the Army of Republika Srpska on the other, were at war. Paramilitary forces took part on both sides. There were differences amongst these in the degree to which they were armed, disciplined and subordinated to regular military forces.

## **STARTING POINT**

The place and role of the organs dealing with political work and moral education in the armed forces have changed throughout history. Changes were evident in our region too, with an abrupt decline in the significance of this role after the break-up of the former SFRY and the emergence of several armies in that territory.

The VRS retained the sector for moral guidance and added religious affairs to its responsibilities. In terms of personnel and financing, this organ (at all levels) was not able to carry out its tasks, particularly because it did not receive adequate support from the state and political bodies. At times, the sector did not even receive the required understanding from within the Army.

Its role was educational, and it experienced enormous difficulties in accomplishing this in full.

## **Elaboration**

This starting point is developed by presenting documented opinions on the points as set out in the Contents of this expert report.

Needless to say, it is difficult to fully understand the place and role of the Organ for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs without an analysis of the Army in its entirety. It was not possible, either, to understand and to define the role of the Army in the war without an analysis of the war *per se* and its main element – armed combat. I have not stated everything I know or have learnt in the course of my research, in order to avoid this report being too extensive.

## **II. FORMATION, MANNING AND ORGANIZATION OF THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

The war in the territory of the former Yugoslav Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was a consequence of the unwillingness and inability of the political leaders of the Yugoslav republics to arrive, through negotiation, at acceptable solutions to the internal crisis.

Internally, the secessionist intolerance of certain political leaders prevailed in Yugoslavia. Slovenia and Croatia proclaimed independence, unilaterally supported by a part of the international community and by using their own armed formations.

The political leaders of the Serbian people in BH, on the basis of popular will as expressed in a referendum held on 29 November 1991, withdrew from the collective BH organs and formed the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SR BH).

### **A. The formation of the VRS**

Until the withdrawal from Bosnia and Herzegovina following international recognition of its independence, the Yugoslav People's Army was engaged in preventing armed ethnic clashes.

The mood towards the JNA in Bosnia and Herzegovina grew gradually more hostile, as had happened earlier in Slovenia and Croatia. Its members and installations were attacked with the intention of provoking armed engagement by the army in order to justify secession. The Muslim and Croatian political leaders in BH conducted a propaganda campaign against the JNA as an «aggressor», «Serbian Chetnik» army. They agitated for recruits and reservists not to respond to call-ups for military service, and if they already had, advised them to leave the army on their own initiative, promising that they would not be criminally prosecuted for desertion, which is what happened. Most of the political leadership of the Serbian population in BH did not feel that the JNA was their own army, but rather an army to protect the equality, fraternity and unity of the nations and nationalities and which was, in an ideological sense, a «relic of the Communist past».

Defecting from regular and mobilized JNA units, conscripts and soldiers took with them personal weapons, ammunition and equipment.

The referendum on the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina was held on 29 February and the 1 March 1992, on the basis of a decision by the Muslim-Croatian leadership. Serbian deputies took no part in the decision to hold a referendum and the Serbian people took no part in the referendum.

The Units and Staffs of the Territorial Defence (TO), mainly manned by Muslims, joined the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina /the BH Army/, and those with a majority of Croats joined the Croatian Defence Council /HVO/. Officers of the former JNA also aligned themselves according to their ethnic origins.

In municipalities or regions with a majority Serb population, units and/or staffs of the Territorial defence were controlled by local authorities and the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS).

All these armed formations included paramilitary formations with different levels of subordination to regular military forces.

After the SFRY Presidency decided to withdraw the JNA from BH<sup>1</sup>, Serbian political leaders in BH proceeded to form an Army in the territory where the Serbs were in the majority, because Muslims and Croats had already formed their own army. The Decision to Withdraw was taken on the 4th of May 1992, and a deadline set for the 19th of May 1992.

The Constitution of Republika Srpska (RS)<sup>2</sup> laid the bases of the social, political and state system. Under the Constitution, the Republic is competent and responsible for seeing to and providing defence and security.<sup>3</sup> This means that Republika Srpska directly regulates, plans, organises and executes all defence activities, on the premise that all elements of the defence are linked together in an established hierarchy. Pursuant to the Constitution, the Republic determines the necessary legislative and other normative and legal regulations. Its institutions carry out the highest political and command functions, while the other elements of defence have a strong role as those responsible for carrying out defence measures and activities.

**The Army of Republika Srpska was formed** by a Decision of the National Assembly of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, at a session held on the **12 May 1992** as the Army of the Serbian Republic of BH. Lieutenant General Ratko MLADIĆ was appointed Commander of the Main Staff. The Decision was adopted pursuant to the Constitution of Republika Srpska<sup>4</sup>, in response to the current situation.<sup>5</sup> The Republika Srpska Army was formed by a decision of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska (NS RS) in keeping with its constitutional obligation to “see to and ensure the defence and security of the Republic”.<sup>6</sup> It was formed from the existing TO /Territorial Defence/ units and staffs in the municipalities and regions with a majority Serbian population. *“The existing Territorial Defence units and staffs shall be renamed into commands and units of the Army, the organization and establishment of which shall be put in place by the President of the Republic.”*<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Milorad PAVLOVIĆ, Novak POPOVIĆ, *SECESIJA U REŽIJI VELIKIH SILA, /SECESSION DIRECTED BY THE MAJOR POWERS/,* Institute for Political Studies, Beograd, 1996. p. 109.

<sup>2</sup> This name has been in use since August 1992, prior to this it was the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SR BH)

<sup>3</sup> Article 68, paragraph 1, Constitution of Republika Srpska and Amendments (Third Edition), *Glas Srpski*, Banja Luka, 1998, p. 48.

<sup>4</sup> Article 104, paragraph 1 and Article 105, paragraph 1, Constitution of Republika Srpska and Amendments (Third Edition), *Glas Srpski*, Banja Luka, 1998, p. 61.

<sup>5</sup> At the time of the adoption of the decision by the National Assembly of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the establishment of the Army, the JNA was withdrawing from BH, while the other two peoples in BH had already formed their respective armies (the Muslims: the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Croats: the Croatian Defence Council).

<sup>6</sup> Constitution of Republika Srpska and Amendments (Third Edition), *Glas Srpski*, Article 68, p.48.

<sup>7</sup> DECISION ON THE FORMATION OF THE ARMY OF THE SERBIAN REPUBLIC OF BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the Law on Defence and the Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, Article 2, p. 183.

In the defence and security system of the Republic, the VRS is defined as an **armed force** whose **task is to defend the sovereignty, territory, independence and constitutional order** of Republika Srpska<sup>8</sup>. Police units of the Ministry of the Interior (MUP) of Republika Srpska are also engaged for defence tasks during an imminent threat of war or state of war. The VRS and the police units were two separate parts of the Armed Forces (OS) of Republika Srpska. The state authorities in the Republic are responsible under the law for organising and preparing the armed forces.

## B. Manning

The manning of the VRS was regulated by the Law on the Army and sub-laws. The VRS units are manned by RS citizens. A small number of professional military personnel of the former JNA, who were citizens of the RS, were also recruited, in accordance with Law and their personal preferences.<sup>9</sup>

Pursuant to the Law, the VRS was manned by permanent and reserve forces. Permanent forces consisted of officers, non-commissioned officers, contract soldiers, soldiers doing their military service, military school cadets, and workers in the army. The reserve forces were composed of conscripts. **The percentage of permanent forces in the VRS war units** (excluding soldiers doing military service and cadets) **was only about 2%, and that of the reserve forces 98%,**<sup>10</sup> with different specialities (mostly inadequate) and different levels of qualification and training, ranging in age from 18 to 65 years. **There were units of regiment and brigade level without any members from the permanent (professional) forces.** The reinforcement of war units by reserve forces was exclusively on the territorial principle. Permanent forces were deployed as needed, with a marked tendency to be deployed in their native areas.<sup>11</sup>

The Constitution also established the right and duty of all citizens to defend and protect the sovereignty, territory, independence and constitutional order of the Republic<sup>12</sup>, with the law envisaging how such rights and duties are exercised.

Ensuring men (mobilisation) as manpower for the Army was not the responsibility of the GŠ, but of the President of the Republic and the Defence Ministry. **“The President... 2) shall declare a state of emergency, state of imminent threat of war and state of war, and shall order a general or partial mobilization”.**<sup>13</sup> **“The Ministry of Defence: 1) shall carry out the mobilization of**

<sup>8</sup> Law on the VRS, Article 1, source: the Law on Defence and the Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, Article 1, p. 61.

<sup>9</sup> On average, there were about 2,000 of these, about 1,000 officers and 1,000 non-commissioned officers.

<sup>10</sup> ANALYSIS of the combat readiness and activities of the Army of Republika Srpska in 1992, GŠ VRS, Han Pijesak, 1993, p. 71 (ERN 00607409).

<sup>11</sup> ANALYSIS of the combat readiness and of the activities of the Army of Republika Srpska in 1992, GŠ VRS, Han Pijesak, 1993, p. 72 (ERN 00607410).

<sup>12</sup> Constitution of Republika Srpska and Amendments (Third Edition), *Glas Srpski*, Banja Luka, 1998, p. 61.

<sup>13</sup> Article 7 of the Law on Defence, Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 10.

**the army, state organs and organizations, units and staffs of civilian protection, monitoring and reporting services, communication units ...**<sup>14</sup> The Main Staff was neither a part of the RS Government nor was it in the structure of the Ministry of Defence.

### C. Organization

The organisation<sup>15</sup> of the VRS<sup>16</sup> was established after its formation. The policy and doctrine of defence of Republika Srpska, which should have been the basis for organising an Army, were not defined. **The Army of Republika Srpska was organized along the lines of the former JNA,<sup>17</sup> with due respect for the specific demographic, territorial, political and material-technical conditions and capabilities of the RS.** In comparison with the JNA, the VRS units were smaller, with a very small number of professional personnel, a markedly lower level of responsibility, discipline and poorer in terms of materiel and technical equipment.<sup>18</sup>

The extensive nature of the territory of Republika Srpska and the great length of the front line, as well as certain political beliefs led to tactical units being organized on the territorial principle, which was reflected in weaker and uneven combat efficiency, insufficient mobility, and on strong links with their home turf. In most units this had a negative impact on discipline.

**The Republika Srpska did not have a war plan in the form of a document<sup>19</sup> that would set the objective and the basic idea of waging war, the use of the armed forces and provide guidelines for engaging other resources in a war – the elements from which organisation of the armed forces arises. Just after it emerged, Republika Srpska had no idea that it would wage a war or how to wage it, nor had it regulated its defence.<sup>20</sup> When the war started, it responded to the challenges imposed on it.** A war plan (defence plan) is prepared in peace and,

<sup>14</sup> Article 10 of the Law on Defence, Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 12.

<sup>15</sup> Slobodan KOSOVAC, *OSNOVI ORGNIZACIJE VOJSKE JUGOSLAVIJE /BASES FOR ORGANISATION OF THE YUGOSLAV ARMY/*, Final Thesis, School of National Defence, Belgrade, 1995, p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Polish author Jerzy WIATR gives a sociological definition of the army as a social institution: (1) the army is an organization where formal relations dominate over personal relations; (2) the army is a bureaucratic institution with a hierarchical structure; (3) the army is a social environment with its own system; (4) the army is a combat group existing to achieve victory in combat. See, Jerzy WIATR, *SOCIOLOGY OF THE ARMY, VIZ*, Belgrade, 1987, preface (Mensur IBRAHIMPAŠIĆ), p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ's testimony, 29 May 2007, p. 12161;

<sup>18</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ's testimony, 29 May 2007, pp. 12161-12162;

<sup>19</sup> A war plan consists of: an assessment of the military and political situation in a given period, and of the capabilities of potential adversaries per type and variant of war; the purpose of the war; the forces and means for its accomplishment; the idea of the strategic use of armed forces (strategy of armed combat, type and character of operations, strategic development). The state and military leadership of the RS were not familiar with all these elements immediately after taking office and for this reason relied on the knowledge gained in the SFRY and in the JNA. For more about the war plan, see *VOJNA ENCIKLOPEDIJA /MILITARY ENCYCLOPEDIA/* (8), p. 33.

<sup>20</sup> Defence was regulated only on 12 May 1992 by Amendments I-IV of the RS Constitution, Constitution of Republika Srpska and Amendments (Third Edition), *Glas Srpski*, Banja Luka, 1998, pp. 77-79.

therefore, it could not be created in the newly-established state. The war plan is enacted by the President of the Republic.<sup>21</sup>

**An establishment<sup>22</sup>** was prepared taking into consideration the above conditions, documents, combat rules and instructions, and the objective (to defend the Serbian people), **defined upon the principles of a single command structure and subordination.**

The President of the Republic, as Supreme Commander, was responsible for determining the organization and establishment of the Army.<sup>23</sup> The President passed the Decision on the Formation, Organization, Establishment and Command System of the RS Army on 15 June 1992.<sup>24</sup>

The VRS was organized on three levels:

- strategic level (Supreme Command);
- operational level (Main Staff);
- operational-tactical level (the various corps, the air-force and anti-aircraft defence, the Military Schools Centre, rear and logistic bases, brigades, regiments).

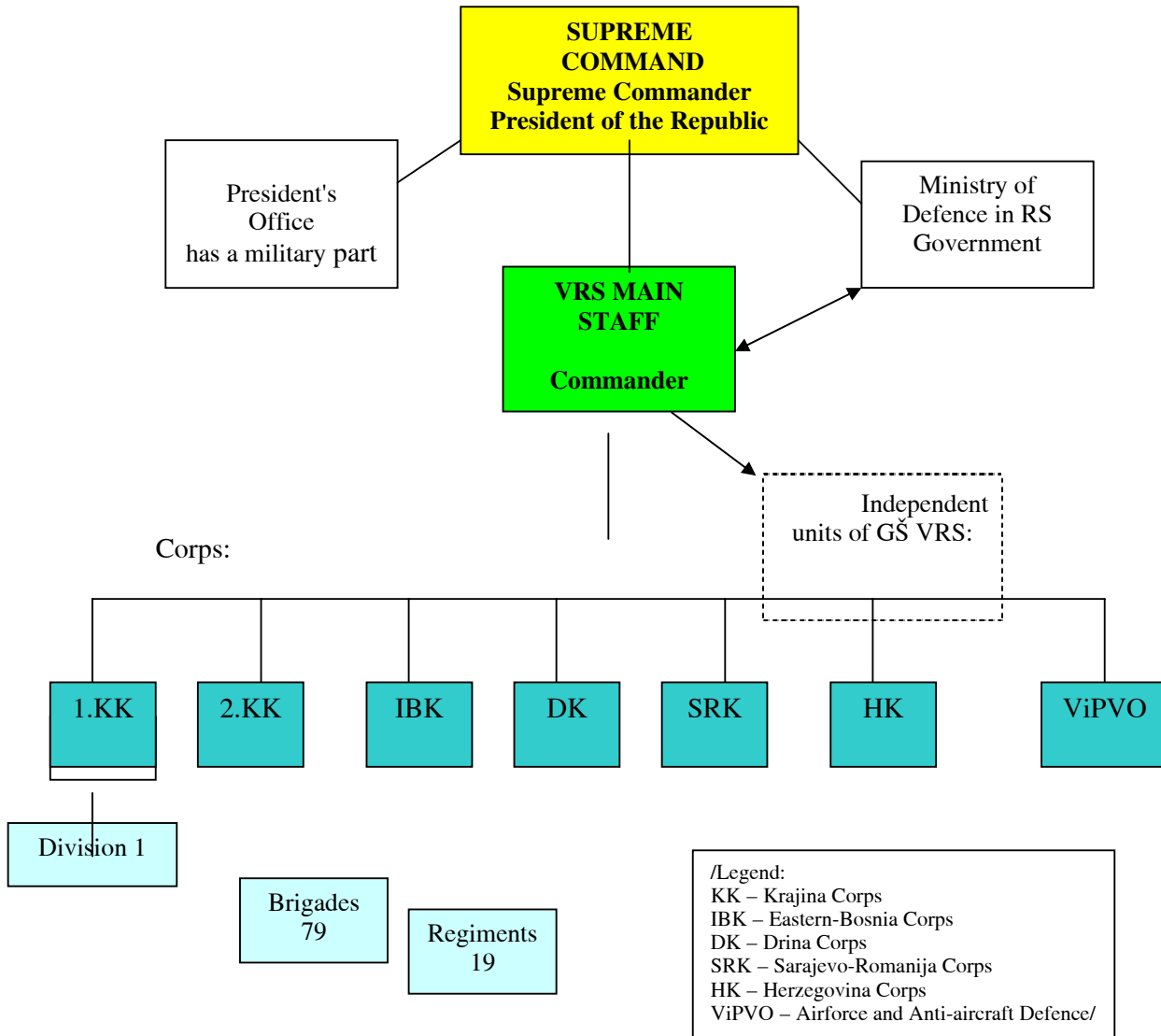
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<sup>21</sup> Law on Defence, Article 7, Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 10.

<sup>22</sup> Slobodan KOSOVAC, *OSNOVI ORGNIZACIJE VOJSKE JUGOSLAVIJE*, p. 16.

<sup>23</sup> Law on the Army, Article 174, Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 110.

<sup>24</sup> ANALYSIS of the combat effectiveness and activities of the Army of Republika Srpska in 1992, GŠ VRS, Han Pijesak, 1993, p. 63 (ERN 00607401).



**Legend:**

- Strategic level
- Operational level
- Operational-tactical level

Diagram 1 Command in RS

**The Army of Republika Srpska was formed and regulated pursuant to the Constitution of Republika Srpska, the Law on Defence, the Law on the Army, and by an Organisational Order of the RS President.**

### **1. Relations within the military organisation**

**The command relationship** is the basic social relationship in the Army expressing the essence of the superior-subordinate relationship in the system of command and control. »The *command relationship* is founded upon the principle of unity, a single command structure and subordination, and is established as a superior – subordinate relationship.«<sup>25</sup> Command was entrusted to commanders – *komandanti* and/ *komandiri*.<sup>26</sup>

**The single command structure is the basic principle** of command and control of the Army, used in most modern armies.<sup>27</sup> Command and control is »based on the indivisible right and responsibility falling exclusively within the competence of the commander of a unit, or chief of an institution, who, according to the principles of the single command structure, has the exclusive right to command all organic and attached units, and is accountable for the condition, combat readiness, use, adequate and correct execution of all assignments, decisions and orders of the superiors, in war and peace.«<sup>28</sup>

**Formal relations**<sup>29</sup> in the VRS were based on the organisational structure, and personal relations on personal contact and solidarity. Formal relations came before personal, because they were regulated by the rules of the service. From brigade command level downwards, personal relations predominated over the formal, because that part of the Army was mainly formed from the local population. There were also family and regionally based informal groups in the Army. The Army tried to avoid any links with groups formed on an ideological basis (various volunteer and other groups with insignia different from those of the VRS).

The Army was also a **bureaucratic institution**<sup>30</sup> as evidenced by: (1) the exclusively vertical top-down subordination; (2) hierarchy of exclusively bottom-upwards positions and titles, with the right to promotion. The function of a commander meant both the duty and the right to regulate the actions of his subordinates through orders. The commander of the GŠ VRS was not merely a natural leader acting by example and influence, but a link in the hierarchical system of power and subordination.

The Army was only formed **by the Decision of the National Assembly** because of the need to achieve victory in the fighting<sup>31</sup> that had already started. It had some specific features: **internal compactness and solidarity**, a specific feeling of

<sup>25</sup> Instructions for the work of commands and staffs, draft, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 12.

<sup>26</sup> Slobodan KOSOVAC, *OSNOVI ORGNIZACIJE VOJSKE JUGOSLAVIJE*, p. 29

<sup>27</sup> Witness Richard BUTLER, 29 January 2008, p. T20634

<sup>28</sup> Military Encyclopaedia, *Vojnoizdavački Zavod*, Belgrade, 1981, pp. 200 - 201

<sup>29</sup> Jerzy WIATR, *THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE ARMY*, *VIZ*, Belgrade, 1987, preface, pp. 34-42.

<sup>30</sup> The term originates from Max WEBER

<sup>31</sup> Jerzy WIATR, *THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE ARMY*, *VIZ*, Belgrade, 1987, pp. 355-356.

honour, group pride, fear of being captured, fear of death, the feeling of being unjustly burdened by combat, and the like.

### III. COMMAND IN THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA

In view of the subject matter and objective of this expert report, it is very important to define command, and then the functional competence of the right to command.

Command<sup>32</sup> is a continuous, unified and interconnected process “*the substance of which is issuing assignments through command documents (the order, /naredjenje, naredba, zapovest/, directive, and instruction). The command document communicates the commander’s decision and activates the process of carrying out an assignment.*”<sup>33</sup>

Commanders are responsible for command in the army. The commander is the main entity of the command system<sup>34</sup> »with the exclusive right to make decisions and issue orders (to command) (...)*«.*<sup>35</sup> The Staff is deemed to be the main part of the command. Commanding is an individual rather than a collective function.

The strategic level of command in the RS was the Supreme Command, the Main Staff at operational level, while other levels (corps and brigades) were operational-tactical.

»*The highest entity of military control or strategic control (waging war) was the president of the state (...)*«.<sup>36</sup> The key competence of the President of the RS within his rights and duties in the defence system is to «**command and control the Army in peace and at war**».<sup>37</sup>

The President of the Republic is the **supreme commander of the armed forces. The Armed Forces of Republika Srpska consist of the VRS and police units of the Ministry of the Interior.**<sup>38</sup>

**The Supreme Commander of the armed forces forms the Supreme Command.** The Supreme Command as an institution generated the most important defence and security decisions. “*The Supreme Command discusses and determines recommendations concerning control of the defence and command over the armed*

<sup>32</sup> Mitar KOVAČ and Božidar FORCA, *ISTORIJA RATNE VEŠTINE /THE HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR/*, (period 1920-2000), p. 145.

<sup>33</sup> Instructions for the work of commands and staffs, draft, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education 1983, p. 14.

<sup>34</sup> Witness Richard BUTLER, 14.01.2008, p. T19619

<sup>35</sup> Mitar KOVAČ and Božidar FORCA, *ISTORIJA RATNE VEŠTINE*, (period 1920-2000), p. 145.

<sup>36</sup> Mitar KOVAČ and Božidar FORCA, *ISTORIJA RATNE VEŠTINE*, (period 1920-2000), p. 146.

<sup>37</sup> Law on Defence, Article 7, source: Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> Article 2 of the Law on Application of the Law on Defence in Circumstances of Imminent Threat of War or State of War, *Official Gazette*, Special Edition, vol. 1, p. 2. (ERN 00497360).

*forces and other matters concerning the defence and security of the country that are the responsibility of the President of the Republic”<sup>39</sup>*

**«The Supreme Command consists of: the Vice-Presidents of the Republic, the President of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska, the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska, the Minister of Defence and Minister of the Interior.»<sup>40</sup>** No member of the VRS was a member of the Supreme Command.

**Therefore, the RS Army is part of the united armed forces of Republika Srpska and is under the command of the President of the Republic as Supreme Commander. “The President of the Republic commands the Army of Republika Srpska in peace and war pursuant to the Constitution and the law.”<sup>41</sup>**

At operational level, the Commander of the VRS Main Staff was the person in command. The responsibilities of the Commander of the Main Staff were regulated by the Law.<sup>42</sup> *“The Commander of the Main Staff commands the Army in accordance with the powers delegated to him by the President of the Republic and in keeping with law.”<sup>43</sup>*

The GŠ Commander was, in accordance with the principle of a single command structure, superior to all organs of the Main Staff and to the units and institutions of the Army. The Commander exerted command over the GŠ organs through their senior officers, and command over units and institutions of the Army through the commanders of these units and institutions.

The Main Staff had a chief who was at the same time the deputy commander of the Main Staff. By virtue of his function and position he was the only person competent to replace the commander in the latter’s absence and to issue orders to all parts of the Army. *“The Chief of Staff shall stand in for the commander in the absence of the latter, with all rights and duties.”<sup>44</sup>* In practice, the Chief of the GŠ often commanded the VRS units in war and signed documents within the responsibility of the GŠ commander, in his capacity of deputy commander. *“In the case of the simultaneous absence of the Commander and the Chief of Staff, an officer appointed by an order of the Commander shall stand in for the Commander”<sup>45</sup>* According to the

<sup>39</sup> Law on Application of the Law on Defence in Circumstances of Imminent Threat of War or State of War (Article 3), *Official Gazette*, Special Edition, vol. 1, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> Law on Application of the Law on Defence in Circumstances of Imminent Threat of War or State of War (Article 3), *Official Gazette*, Special Edition, vol. 1, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Constitution of Republika Srpska and Amendments (3<sup>rd</sup> Edition), Article 106, paragraph 1, *Glas Srpski*, Banja Luka, 1998, p. 61.

<sup>42</sup> The Law on the Army, Article 10, Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 65.

<sup>43</sup> Article 175 of the Law on the Army, Law on Defence and Law on the Army – with comments and attachments, Ministry of Defence of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, June 1992, p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> Rules on the Responsibilities of the Command of a Corps of the Ground Forces in Peace, Federal Secretariat of National Defence, General Staff of the SFRY Armed Forces – Administration III, 1990, p. 7.

<sup>45</sup> Rules on the Responsibilities of the Command of a Corps of the Ground Forces in Peace, Federal Secretariat of National Defence, General Staff of the SFRY Armed Forces – Administration III, 1990, p. 7.

available documentation, during the war the commander did not appoint by order any other person as his stand-in.

Command at operational-tactical level belonged to the unit commanders. «A commander shall command and control subordinate units and institutions within the framework of the authority bestowed on him. He shall be responsible to his superior for his work and the state of subordinate units and institutions, as well as for appropriate and timely execution of the work and tasks falling within the competence of the command organs. »<sup>46</sup> The Chief of Staff of operational-tactical units acts as stand-in for the commander in the absence of the latter, with all the rights and duties of the commander.

The chain of command in the VRS was supposed to extend from the President of the Republic as Supreme Commander to the GŠ commander, to the commanders of operational-tactical and tactical units, and through the commanders of smaller units to each individual. However, it was the habit of the President of the Republic to command, while disregarding the commander of the GŠ.<sup>47</sup> Contrary to regulations, the Supreme Commander sometimes issued assignments to corps and even brigades.

At no level of the military organization were persons other than commanders (in their absence, the Chief of Staff) in the chain of command. Therefore, assistant commanders, chiefs of organs and officers fulfilling other duties did not have command functions, and accordingly did not have command competence.

#### **IV. MAIN STAFF OF THE ARMY OF REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

In view of the subject of this expert report, the focus of consideration will be the organization of the GŠ VRS, and the position and role of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs (Sector for MVPP).

##### **A. Responsibilities and Organization of the Main Staff (GŠ)**

The Main Staff is an expert staff organ for commanding and controlling the Army in peace and war. The GŠ is responsible for work and assignments relating to:

- command and control of the Army in accordance with legal responsibilities and powers and/or orders of the Supreme Commander;
- preparation of the VRS for armed combat;
- monitoring and studying enemy forces and adjusting plans for using the VRS;

<sup>46</sup> Rules on the Responsibilities of the Command of a Corps of the Ground Forces in Peace, Federal Secretariat of National Defence, General Staff of the SFRY Armed Forces – Administration III, 1990, p. 4.

<sup>47</sup> Transcript of the testimony of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ, 29 May 2007, pp.12152; 12178-12179; Transcript from a TV programme, of Radovan KARADŽIĆ approving the Srebrenica operation, ERN 00873506.

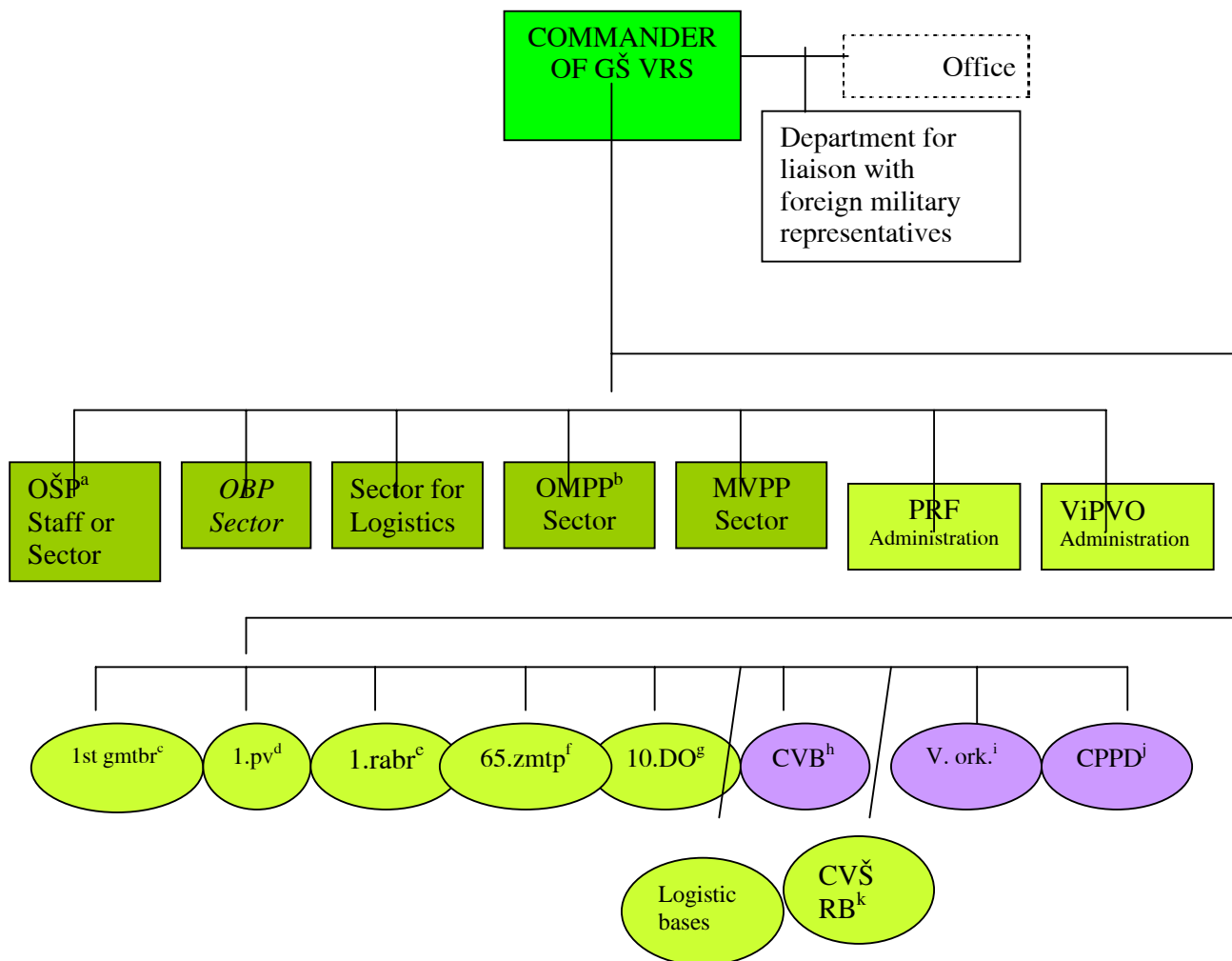
- organisation of the overall logistical support of the Army;
- monitoring, building and maintaining army morale;
- dealing with administrative, legal, organizational, establishment, personnel and staff affairs;
- organising Army security;
- implementation and control of the material and financial security of the Army;
- organising operations duty, information gathering and submission of reports on the situation in the Army;
- making recommendations, undertaking and implementing measures for developing and using the Army within the scope of its powers.

The GŠ was organized into organs (sectors and administrations):

- Staff or Sector for Operations and Staff (Sector for OPT)
- Sector for Intelligence and Security (Sector for OBP)
- Sector for Organisation, Mobilisation and Personnel (Sector for OMPP)
- Sector for Logistics
- Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs (Sector for MVPP)
- Air Force and Anti-Aircraft Defence Administration (Administration for ViPVO)
- Planning, Development, and Finance Administration (Administration for PRF)

The organization and division of work in the Main Staff was carried out in accordance with the organisational principles of work in the Staff, while taking into account the particular situation.

The requirements dictated the GŠ's organization into sectors and independent administrations. Sector organisation means the separate monitoring of the situation, analysis, channelling of personnel, preparation of necessary regulations, providing interpretation to subordinates, and providing instructions, information and recommendations to superiors on matters falling within the sector's responsibility and activities.



<sup>a</sup> OŠP /Operations and Staff Affairs/

<sup>b</sup> OMPP /Organisation, Mobilisation and Personnel/

<sup>c</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> gmtbr /Guards Motorised Brigade/

<sup>d</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> pv /Infantry Platoon/

<sup>e</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> rabr /Rocket Artillery Brigade/

<sup>f</sup> 65<sup>th</sup> zmtpr /Motorised Protection Regiment/

<sup>g</sup> DO /Sabotage Detachment/

<sup>h</sup> CVB /expansion unknown/

<sup>i</sup> V.ork. /Army Band/

j CPPD /expansion unknown/

k CVŠ /Military Schools Centre RB /expansion unknown/

## Diagram 2: VRS Main Staff

The Sector for Operations and Staff Affairs (staff) was headed by the Chief of the Main Staff. The OŠP sector represented the staff of the Army Command. The organs of the staff<sup>48</sup> were: the chief of staff, the organ for operations and training, the organs for the combat arms and the operations centre. According to the rules then in force, the staff was supposed to, but in practice did not include the following organs: an organ for intelligence operations (it came under the Sector for OBP), an organ for organization, mobilization and personnel (was an independent Sector for OMPP), and an information technology organ (never developed). Sectors of the Main Staff and other assistant commanders<sup>49</sup> were not organs of the staff,<sup>50</sup> but independent organizational units subordinated to the GŠ commander.

Sectors and Administrations had their prescribed responsibilities. The responsibilities of a sector came from the internal division of work in the Main Staff on the one hand and from the prescribed responsibilities of the organs of that sector in the Army, on the other. “*Responsibilities (...) mean the rights, obligations and range of activities of the command organs and of the officers of such organs in carrying out their established work and tasks*”.<sup>51</sup>

## B. The Assistant Commander

Assistant commanders controlled their relevant sectors and were accountable for their work to the commander. Main Staff Assistant Commanders had to present opinions and recommendations from their particular sphere of work or, if required to do so by the commander, identify problems for which they had analysed the reasons and proposed what seemed to them the most effective solution. The commander did not have to accept such opinions or recommendations. His decision was binding and was to be implemented as quickly and as fully as possible. It needs to be emphasized, though, that the right to make a recommendation and to provide other opinions was possible only up to the point when the commander came to a decision. “When the

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<sup>48</sup> More details in: Rules on Responsibilities of the Command of a Corps of the Ground Forces in Peace, Federal Secretariat for National Defence, and General Staff of the SFRY Armed Forces – Administration III, 1990, p. 7-22.

<sup>49</sup> Transcript of recorded conversation with Nedeljko TRKULJA of 11 July 2005 (ERN T000-3223-T000-322-BCS), p. 35.

<sup>50</sup> Witness Richard BUTLER, 28 January 2008, second part of the transcript, p. 3

<sup>51</sup> Rules on Responsibilities of the Command of a Corps of the Ground Forces in Peace, Federal Secretariat for National Defence, General Staff of the SFRY Armed Forces – Administration III, 1990, p. 1.

assessment and consultations are over the commander takes a decision and notifies it to the command organs.”<sup>52</sup>

Each assistant commander was **assistant “FOR”** a specific area (sector responsibility). Their responsibilities did not duplicate each other or overlap. The title of each assistant includes the area „FOR“ which he was assistant.<sup>53</sup> The idea of an „assistant” implies assisting, advising and making recommendations to the commander. Assistant Commanders of the GŠ VRS were: the Assistant Commander **for** Intelligence and Security, Assistant Commander **for** Logistics, Assistant Commander **for** Organisation, Mobilization and Personnel, and Assistant Commander **for** Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Operations. Later an Assistant Commander **for** the Air Force and Anti-Aircraft Defence and an Assistant Commander **for** Development Planning and Finance were introduced.

Sectors or Assistant Commanders may not transfer their work to other sectors, subordinated organs or lower commands. Assistant Commanders were not interchangeable.<sup>54</sup> Each assistant had the appropriate education and prior experience for his respective area. ***“Command organs may neither transfer the work falling within their responsibility to other command organs nor may they take over the work of the corresponding organ of a higher or lower command, unless specifically authorized to do so.”***<sup>55</sup>

It is necessary to note the difference between the Chief of the Main Staff, who was at the same time Deputy Commander of the Main Staff, and who had the power to command and issue orders, and the Assistant Commander who was not vested with such powers.

Assistant commanders and chiefs of organs were responsible for controlling the organs they headed, for planning, organising and directing their work, and were accountable to their own commander for their own work and the work of the organ.

An erroneous conclusion regarding the role of an assistant commander is possible, and sometimes happens in practice, when two or more defence systems of countries with different social orders are compared.

The command structure in the British army and the VRS is different.<sup>56</sup> Therefore, analogies between the systems obtaining in these two armed forces are difficult to make and potentially misleading. By way of example, the command (staff) organisation in the British armed forces has a commander and a staff with several parts. In their terminology, the term “commander” (Commander of Staff – CofS;

<sup>52</sup> See Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, draft, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 63.

<sup>53</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 30 May 2007, pp. 12244; Transcript of General Petar ŠKRBIĆ’s testimony, 18 September 2007, p. 15540;

<sup>54</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 30 May 2007, p.12245; Transcript of General Petar ŠKRBIĆ’s testimony, 18 September 2007, p. 15515; Transcript of Nedeljko TRKULJA’s testimony, 10 September 2007, p. 15144;

<sup>55</sup> Rules on Responsibilities of the Command of a Corps of the Ground Forces in Peace, Federal Secretariat for National Defence, General Staff of the SFRY Armed Forces – Administration III, 1990, p. 2.

<sup>56</sup> Statement of witness General Sir Rupert SMITH, 13 July 2006.

commander of logistics; commander of artillery, etc.) is used instead of “chief”.<sup>57</sup> In the VRS command, the staff is the principal organ, but there are assistant commanders heading corresponding organisational parts (logistics, intelligence and security, moral guidance, etc.), and in their respective titles the term »commander« is never used, but “assistant”.

The British Defence Staff consists of the Chief of Defence Staff and chiefs of staff of the various branches of the British armed forces. These chiefs of the branches are responsible for carrying out combat activities in military operations which they command.<sup>58</sup> In contrast, assistant commanders of the GŠ VRS were not responsible for carrying out combat in operations, and did not have command competence. They **were not commanders**, even when they were in the field.

Assistant commanders in the VRS did not have the competence to command operational-tactical units,<sup>59</sup> or even their own specialist organs in depth of the territory. This was because they were subordinated to the unit commander and had to carry out his orders.<sup>60</sup>

**The Assistant Commander had the right and the power to order and command only his immediate subordinates who belonged to his organizational entity (sector – administration).**<sup>61</sup> Assistants were specialist organs who provided assistance to unit commanders in matters falling within the responsibilities of the organ they headed.

**Assistants did not have the right to adopt or sign command documents** without the written authority of the commander.<sup>62</sup> They could adopt and sign other documents in official correspondence, but only within their own competence.<sup>63</sup> **Competence to sign command documents falling within an assistant commander’s range of activities lay with the commander.**

## C. Method of work of the GŠ and decision-making

### 1. Method of work

Insufficient personnel,<sup>64</sup> few qualified and experienced officers, meagre financial and technical resources, having the GŠ organs in two locations (nine kilometres apart), the dynamics of the fighting, the fact that some GŠ officers remained permanently in lower level commands and units, the extent of the territory and unit deployment, the need to take decisions quickly and a lack of trust (constant fear of information leaks about the planned activities) all crucially affected the method of work of the Main Staff.

<sup>57</sup> Mitar KOVAČ and Božidar FORCA, *ISTORIJA RATNE VEŠTINE /HISTORY OF THE ART OF WAR/*, (period 1920-2000), p. 521.

<sup>58</sup> Mitar KOVAČ and Božidar FORCA, *ISTORIJA RATNE VEŠTINE*, (period 1920-2000), p. 457-459.

<sup>59</sup> Transcript of Colonel Mirko TRIVIĆ’s testimony, 21 May 2007, pp. 12007-12008; Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 29 May 2007, pp. 12169-2171;

<sup>60</sup> Witness Richard BUTLER, Testimony transcript, 14 January 2008, p. T19644;

<sup>61</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 30 May 2007, pp. 12242-12243;

<sup>62</sup> Rules of official correspondence and office work in the Yugoslav Army, 1994, p. 43.

<sup>63</sup> Rules of official correspondence and office work in the Yugoslav Army, 1994, p. 19.

<sup>64</sup> ANALYSIS of combat readiness and activities of the VRS in 1992, GŠ VRS, Han Pijesak, 1993, p. 64 (ERN 00607402).

Combat reports and other combat-related documents arrived at the Staff Operations Sector of the Main Staff. This Sector was kept informed of the entirety of combat operation reports and with most other documents that came in.<sup>65</sup> Other Staff organs (sectors and administrations) were individually informed of segments of the combat reports relating to their respective fields.<sup>66</sup> Combat-related and other documents addressed to individual Staff organs, or which exclusively referred to their field, were forwarded to them. From the combat reports and other documents they received, the Staff organs undertook the necessary measures falling within their responsibilities.<sup>67</sup> Combat reports were short, most often incomplete, and sometimes incorrect.<sup>68</sup> *“It goes without saying that the level of information of the higher Staff, abstractly speaking, depended on the information coming from lower level units. If the reports were not precise and specific, or if there was an attempt to provide erroneous information, it could distort the picture that the higher Staff was getting.”*<sup>69</sup>

**Circumstances permitting, meetings were held of the GŠ Commander’s Collegium, or daily meetings of the representatives of the command organs who were present, at which they were informed about the combat reports and other documents that had arrived.** Each morning, officers of the Sector for OŠP (of the Staff) used to assemble and familiarise themselves with the operations reports, while officers of other organs did not attend such meetings.<sup>70</sup>

Therefore, the knowledge of the Staff organs about the situation and activities in operational-tactical units was based on a limited insight into combat and other reports, and on direct insight during the visits by officers to lower commands and units. The sectors worked separately, and one sector had no insight into the work or information of another. There was no exchange of information among sectors.

For these reasons, the sessions of the GŠ commander’s collegium, whether with core members or in expanded form,, were held irregularly and rarely. There was no official document about the composition, responsibilities and mode of work of the GŠ VRS Commander’s Collegium. It met regularly to discuss personnel matters and only rarely to discuss other matters when the commander so decided, and attended by people as decided by him. Sessions of the Collegium were held on an *ad hoc* basis and were mostly dedicated to personnel issues.<sup>71</sup> In periods of intensive combat activities, these sessions were not held at all.<sup>72</sup> Usually, when the commander decided to discuss a certain matter with the collegium, collegium members present at the KM /Command Post/ were invited. Some assistant commanders often opposed the commander on different issues (GVERO, ĐUKIĆ, MARIĆ, SALAPURA), which partly contributed to sessions of the commander’s collegium not being held.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>65</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 29 May 2007, p. 12188; Transcript of recorded conversation with Nedeljko TRKULJA of 11 July 2005, (ERN T000-3223-T000-322-BCS) p. 11-12.

<sup>66</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 29 May 2007, pp. 12188-12189;

<sup>67</sup> Transcript of General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ’s testimony, 31 May 2007, p. 12306;

<sup>68</sup> Transcript of Nedeljko TRKULJA’s testimony, 10 September 2007, pp. 15130-15131;

<sup>69</sup> Transcript of Richard BUTLER’s testimony, 29 January 2008, p. T. 20637

<sup>70</sup> Transcript of Nedeljko TRKULJA’s testimony, 10 September 2007, pp. 15099; 15128-15129;

<sup>71</sup> Transcript of General Petar ŠKRBIĆ’s testimony, 17 September 2007, p. 15515

<sup>72</sup> Transcript of General Petar ŠKRBIĆ’s testimony, 18 September 2007, p. 15579;

<sup>73</sup> Statement of General Đorđe ĐUKIĆ, ERN 00996141-00996144

## 2. DECISION-MAKING

The work of the GŠ on the preparation and organisation of combat operations was continuous, often limited by time and in the absence of some of its members, with only limited information available, in circumstances of a complex and changing combat situation. The Main Staff issued assignments to the operational commands for longer periods of time.

Relevant instructions for the work of the commands and staffs in **decision-making** for preparing and organising combat operations envisage various methods. The methods most frequently mentioned are: **the complete** method, **abbreviated** method, and **work without consulting the command**.<sup>74</sup>

**The complete method** may be applied through:

- a) team work by the command,<sup>75</sup>
- b) command work in establishment organs,<sup>76</sup>
- c) command work in specially formed teams, and
- d) command work by organising consultations.

The implementation of each of these methods depended on many factors, especially on personnel (manning levels, qualification and experience),<sup>77</sup> financial and technical resources (“*primarily technical equipment for gathering, transmitting, presenting and processing data*”)<sup>78</sup>, the area where the elements of the staff were located (“*distance has an impact on ensuring team work in the applying certain methods and on rationalising work procedures*”<sup>79</sup>), the time available, required degree of secrecy and mutual confidence, etc.

**The team work** method of the command in the process of decision-making **by organising consultations** “*is implemented in all commands ... when there is not sufficient time, when all members of the command are not present, and similar. The commander, either alone or with certain assistants, studies and analyses the assignment ... identifying problems and seeking opinions and proposals for their solution from certain members of the command, subordinate commanders or organs that he deems capable of making him useful proposals.*”<sup>80</sup> This method of work was often used during the war at the Main Staff of Republika Srpska Army (GS VRS). It

<sup>74</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 53.

<sup>75</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 54.

<sup>76</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 54.

<sup>77</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 19.

<sup>78</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 20.

<sup>79</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 20.

<sup>80</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 62-63.

is also called the **method at the call of commander**, whereby the commander called only some of his assistants for the purpose of a more comprehensive and more precise assessment of certain matters.<sup>81</sup>

The **abbreviated method** of decision-making was practised by the Main Staff “*when it is necessary to make a decision quickly, in the course of combat operations, when time is short, when the situation is familiar, as a set assignment is being carried out, while the next – new- assignment is being prepared, when there is a sudden change in the situation... The commander holds brief consultations with only some of the command bodies, and only regarding significant problems.*”<sup>82</sup>

Finally, the work of a commander on decision-making, **without consulting the command**, “*is applied during surprise enemy operations, combat operations, sudden changes in the situation and in some other circumstances, when there is no time for consultation with the command bodies.*”<sup>83</sup> This method is often applied in practice.<sup>84</sup>

In essence, combat decisions were made without broader deliberations and in the absence of some /staff/ members, often consulting only a couple of participating assistants. More important decisions were made, especially after 1994, with the commander consulting only the Chief of Staff and the Assistant for Intelligence and Security.<sup>85</sup> **The most important decisions were made by the commander himself, without consulting anyone else, especially when the decision was to be made urgently and in extreme secrecy.**<sup>86</sup> This is how decisions were also made in daily communication between the commander or the chief of staff and commanders of subordinate contingents.

## V SECTOR FOR MORAL GUIDANCE, RELIGIOUS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

The organisation and responsibility of the organ and work in this area in the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) of the former SFRY changed over time, and adapted to the prevailing conditions. Changes in the names of the organ confirm this, showing how it evolved in terms of the volume, substance and nature of its activities. First, there were **political and party organs, then organs for political and educational training (PPV)**, there were also **organs for moral and political education (MPV)**, there were **organs for political work (PR)**, **organs for moral guidance**, and finally **organs for information and legal affairs (IPP)**.

<sup>81</sup> Compare, VOJNA ENCIKLOPEDIJA, MILITARY ENCYCLOPAEDIA, Volume 6, p. 273; Statement of General Đorđe ĐUKIĆ, ERN 00374378 – 00374379.

<sup>82</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 63.

<sup>83</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 63.

<sup>84</sup> Colonel Mirko TRIVIĆ, testimony transcript, 21.05.2007, p. 11841-11842.

<sup>85</sup> See: Record of amendments to the deposition of General Đorđe ĐUKIĆ, (ERN 00374375-00374382).

<sup>86</sup> Record of amendments to the deposition of General Đorđe ĐUKIĆ, 5 December 2006, p. 4-5 (ERN 00374378-00374379).

With the acceptance of political pluralism in society, the JNA was depoliticized, its focus then shifted to moral guidance and information and the organs were called **organs for moral guidance, or organs for information.**

**The period of depoliticising** the Army started with the establishment of a multi-party political system and establishing governance on this basis (in **1990**). With the acceptance of political pluralism and the disappearance of the ideological foundations and social values on which the Yugoslav socialist society was based (social ownership, socialist self-management, non-aligned foreign policy, brotherhood and unity), significant new grounds emerged for activity in the Army. **Political organisation and activity in the JNA were suspended. The Army was transformed** from an ideologically instrumentalised organisation under the influence of a single party **into a party neutral – de-politicized organisation.**

Of all the sectors and activities in the army, **the area that underwent the greatest change due to the advent of a multiparty system was that of political work (PPV, MPV).** A significant part of the subject-matter was deleted (political and party work, political education and training, political activities within the army and in the non-army environment), there were some innovations (moral guidance, co-operation with civilian authorities, public relations), and new subject-matter was introduced (religious affairs). In general, the subject-matter was considerably reduced.

This in itself served to change the role and importance of the assistant commander for this area of work. The role and importance of the assistant and organ for moral guidance was diminished.

### **Crucial changes in the VRS**

In this area, the VRS did not fully follow the organisation, internal structure, system of command and control of the former JNA, so in that sense we can only speak of partial continuity. In the work, importance and real role of these organs and their activities, and in normative and legal enactments, there was a clear discontinuity with the JNA. This is obvious from the names of the organs and the new subject-matter.

With the changes in the ideological values that had prevailed in the past in the RS, corresponding changes took place in the work and responsibilities of the VRS organs. These led to the area being differently organised.

The Army of Republika Srpska quite clearly decided in favour of separating party and politics from the Army. Political organisation and party activities in the Army were prohibited, and participation in political life on the ground was regulated.<sup>87</sup> Attempts were made to prevent party influence. Attempts to appoint SDS party members to certain ranking posts (Assistant Commander for Moral Guidance) were rejected decisively and with good arguments. Political and ideological issues were erased from

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<sup>87</sup> See: Attendance at meetings, gatherings and other forms of organised events on the ground, guideline, the Main Staff of the Republic of Srpska Army (GŠ VRS), confidential no. 07/21-141 of 15 March 1995 (ERN 0529-6277).

the work of these bodies and a new department of religious affairs was introduced in the sense of allowing the expression of religion and the practice of religious traditions.

The basic subjects in this area of the VRS were:

1. the moral, psychological and patriotic education of soldiers;
2. information;
3. monitoring and developing morality, nurturing tradition, culture and entertainment;
4. co-operation with civilian authorities for the purpose of resolving welfare problems of soldiers;
5. legal affairs;
6. religious affairs;

In keeping with the changes, **the name of the Sector for Information and Legal Affairs and its organs were changed, renamed to the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs; this also applied to all the assistant commanders and organs in depth of the territory.**<sup>88</sup>

In the VRS, this area was not officially neglected in the VRS, but in actual practice it was treated in a demeaning manner.<sup>89</sup>

Assistant Commanders for Moral guidance were called “**moralists**”, but in a derogatory sense, they were also called “**Yugo-nostalgics**”, supporters of “**brotherhood and unity**”, and similar.<sup>90</sup> The political leadership of Republika Srpska (RS) wanted to suppress moral guidance and introduce political work in order to secure the dominant role in the Army for the SDS, and to place party members in these positions.<sup>91</sup> These attempts were openly opposed by the Assistant Commander of the Main Staff of Republika Srpska Army for MVPP, who rejected the idea of a party-aligned army. He was fighting for the importance and reputation of people who worked in the organs for moral guidance.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> Decision of the Commander of the GŠ VRS, confidential no. 30/18-68 of 03 December 1992;

<sup>89</sup> General Milomir SAVČIĆ, testimony transcript, 13 September 2007, p. 15340; 15344-15345; Nedeljko TRKULJA, testimony transcript, 10 September 2007, p. 15140-15141;

<sup>90</sup> General Milomir SAVČIĆ testimony transcript, 13 September 2007, p. 15346.

<sup>91</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Jugoslav TUBIĆ, deposition, Skelani Independent Infantry Battalion, confidential no. 01/1-190 of 4 October 1994 (ERN 04367613-04367614);

<sup>92</sup> General Milomir SAVČIĆ, testimony transcript, 13 September 2007, p. 15346-15347; General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-15564; Official note of 27 May 1995;

## **A. Organisation and Responsibilities of the Sector for Moral guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs of the Army of Republika Srpska**

### **1. Organisation**

A Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs (MVPP) was established at the level of the Main Staff, with the Assistant Commander of the Main Staff for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs heading this Sector.

The Sector for MVPP was organised along the departmental principle. In the formational sense, a department is a lower organisational unit than an administration.

The sector for MVPP was organised in four departments:

- Department for moral guidance and religious affairs,
- Department for information,
- Department for civilian affairs,
- Department for legal affairs.

The departments were headed by chiefs who controlled them, and in every one of these departments the establishment required a certain number of personnel, a total of between 30 and 40 people in the Sector, while in fact there were only nine.<sup>93</sup>

A part of the Department for Information was the Information Service, or PRESS CENTRE. This department also included the editorial board of the *Srpska Vojska* (Serbian Army) magazine.

The Department for Moral guidance and Religious Affairs was located at the main command post of the Main Staff (Crna Rijeka) until the first half of 1995,<sup>94</sup> and the Departments for Information and Legal Affairs had always been located at the rear command post (Han Pijesak).<sup>95</sup> The Department for Civilian Affairs was never formed (because of the shortage of staff), and their work was taken over, as much as possible, by the people from other departments. This was why it often happened that many of the tasks could not be methodically done, or to the proper professional level,

<sup>93</sup> Working map of the VRS (ERN 0505-7626-0505-7732)

<sup>94</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ, testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-15564; Nedeljko TRKULJA, testimony transcript, 10 September 2007, p. 15138-15139; Bogdan SLADOJEVIĆ's testimony transcript, 27 August 2007., p. 14405

<sup>95</sup> A small part of the Sector was located at the main command post, while the large part was at the rear command post. The Assistant Commander of the GŠ for MVPP /Moral Guidance and Psychological Preparation/ (General Milan GVERO), Chief of the Department for Moral Guidance (Colonel Savo SOKANOVIĆ) and the administrative officer for moral guidance (Major Blagoje DUBOVINA) were at the OKM /main command post/ until the first half of 1995, and the Department for Information (the Chief was Colonel Milovan MILUTINOVIĆ) while the PRESS Centre and the Department for Legal Affairs (Chief was Colonel Nikola SEKULIĆ) were located at the PKM (rear command post), in the municipal offices in Han Pijesak.

or in time, and some jobs were left undone (especially analytical work).<sup>96</sup> Even more so as the chief of the Sector (assistant commander), because of various requirements and obligations, was very often absent from the KM.

The level of financial and technical resources available for operations was exceptionally low, especially in the information service (none initially).<sup>97</sup>

Some of the organisational units of the GŠ, subordinated to the commander, and whose work was monitored and guided by the assistant for MVPP, were located in Banja Luka (Central Club, Central Library, the Army Band), while some of the organisational units of the GŠ were never formed (Military Museum, Military Archives, Centre for information and propaganda activities).

Assistant Commander of the GŠ  
for MVPP  
Chief of Sector  
Lieutenant General  
Milan GVERO

Department for Moral guidance and Religious Affairs – Chief Savo SOKANOVIĆ	Department for Information and PPD* – Chief Colonel Milovan MILUTINOVIĆ	Department for Civilian Affairs Chief vacant	Department for Legal Affairs Chief Colonel Nikola SEKULIĆ
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\* PPD /Political and Propaganda Activities/

Diagram 3: Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs

## 2. Responsibilities

The Organ for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs of the VRS was responsible for the following areas and activities:<sup>98</sup>

- moral guidance, tradition and cultural activities,
- information,
- co-operation with state authorities and other social entities,
- religious affairs,
- legal affairs.

<sup>96</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ, testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15574-15578;

<sup>97</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ, transcript of testimony, 18 September 2007, p. 15574-15578;

<sup>98</sup> Elaborated on the basis of a document of the GŠ VRS, Responsibilities and Staffing of the Organ for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs, Strictly confidential no. 07/21-88 of 10 February 1995 (ERN 04260506-04260512);

Among its many responsibilities, the Organ for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs of the Army, the Sector for MVPP of the Main Staff of Republika Srpska Army was also responsible for the following:

- **monitoring the state of morale in the VRS**, drafting and proposing to the Commander of the Main Staff (GS) assessments of morale, reports and information, and recommending measures for maintaining and strengthening combat morale;
- **drafting of a Programme** for the moral, psychological and patriotic training of soldiers, and providing instructions for carrying it out;
- **drafting instructions and guidelines** for monitoring and assessing morale in the VRS; internal and external information; public appearances by VRS personnel; commemorations of national, military and religious holidays; military oath-taking ceremonies; organisation of funerals and commemorations; the display and wearing of state and military symbols; furnishing and seeing to the running of unit memorial halls; collecting historical material; organising and conducting cultural activities and seeing to the work of cultural institutions; visits of authorised reporters to the units, ensuring good working conditions for them while protecting secret information; nurturing spiritual traditions.
- **at the request of the commander, proposing measures** for moral and psychological support;
- **drafting information** about the situation in the VRS and transmitting information from the state organs for internal dissemination;
- **releasing information** to the media;
- **providing conditions** for preparing, printing and distributing the *Srpska Vojska* magazine;
- **monitoring the effects** of enemy psychological propaganda activities against our forces, and undertaking measures to counteract rumours and other forms of hostile psychological propaganda operations;
- **establishing co-operation** with educational, sports and cultural institutions, veteran and other non-government organisations, humanitarian organisations, government and other institutions, for the purpose of organising joint activities and the resolution of status and welfare problems of soldiers, families of fallen soldiers and the disabled;
- **co-operating with** the Serbian Orthodox Church and clergy to provide conditions for the members of the armed force to fulfil their religious requirements;

- **is directly involved in organising the celebration religious holidays of Vidovdan** – Patron Saint's Day of the VRS, Christmas and Easter, and participates in planning the form of religious activities, the commemoration of national and military holidays and other events;
- **participating in the drafting of** normative and legal documents elaborated by the GŠ VRS;
- **monitors and studies** regulations adopted by the relevant state authorities and informs Army personnel accordingly;
- **participates in the resolution of appeals, complaints and applications** within the responsibilities of the GS, representing the Army before military and civilian courts in administrative procedures and offering legal advice and legal remedies to members of the armed forces in matters pertaining to the service and work in the Army;

The unit commanders<sup>99</sup> were responsible for the state and development of Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs, while the senior officers in the organs for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs were professionals who carried out the requests of the commander, planned, organised and, to a certain extent, dealt with certain subject-matter, proposing measures for the promotion of this activity.

The sector for MVPP did not engage directly in matters of conducting combat operations and did not have an influence on the use of units.<sup>100</sup> **As far as substance and time spent on work is concerned, this sector dealt predominantly with the morale of soldiers in the army and the relationship with civilian institutions on the ground.**

**Special attention was dedicated to those units that for various reasons faced morale problems due to loss of territory, loss of human life, having seriously wounded men, mass abandonment of positions, or expressions of mass discontent.** For the most part it was involved in humanitarian matters, caring for the troops, for dead or wounded combatants and their families, providing them with the requisite financial and welfare support.<sup>101</sup> The Sector did not participate in the planning of combat operations. Regarding the operations carried out at the level of lower units, the Sector did not have any part and neither was this any of its responsibility. None of the few personnel of the Sector had any operational and command experience, or the formal education for such assignments.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Instructions for monitoring and assessing morale in the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 16/10-48 of 1 August 1992, p.1;

<sup>100</sup> Nedeljko TRKULJA testimony transcript, 10 September 2007, p. 15141-15142;

<sup>101</sup> Decision on compensation for fallen and wounded soldiers and their families, request, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 18/28-109, 16 December 1992; GŠ VRS document, strictly confidential number 17/4-207, 11 November 1993.

<sup>102</sup> Nedeljko TRKULJA testimony transcript, 10 September 2007, p. 15144; Transcript of the recorded talk with Nedeljko TRKULJA on 11 July 2005 (ERN T000-3223-T000-322-BCS), p. 36; Personal file of Lt. General GVERO.

### 3. Focus of Work

The Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs, as a specialised organ of the commander, focused on monitoring army morale.<sup>103</sup> In addition, in the role of preserving and building morale, the Sector was engaged in information activities, religious and legal affairs and certain subject-matter in connection with the relationship between civilians and the military.

#### a) Monitoring and assessing morale

**The main substance** of the work of the Sector for MVPP was monitoring and assessing army morale (evaluating the factors of positive and negative effect on morale, drafting evaluations and reports, proposing measures and procedures for strengthening combat morale and eliminating negative effects).

“All persons in the unit are responsible for building and upholding morale, especially senior officers leading and commanding units and institutions in the Army.”<sup>104</sup> The organs for moral guidance were specialised bodies providing expert assistance to unit commanders for monitoring, assessing, building and maintaining combat morale.

Commanders monitor and assess morale on a daily basis, “*and the final assessment is given within the analysis of combat readiness, analysis of executed combat assignments and training at the training centres. The final assessment of morale is given by the commander.*”<sup>105</sup>

“*Commands of regiments, brigades and corps, or units equivalent to them, shall report on a daily basis to their superior commands on the state of combat morale in the daily combat reports, under a separate item, **and once a month** they shall send a special report on the state and problems of combat morale, important measures for upholding and boosting it within their own responsibilities and proposals for measures to be taken within the responsibilities of the superior command.*”<sup>106</sup> These are approved, i.e. signed by the commander.<sup>107</sup> In actual practice, the report on the state of morale in the daily combat reports was very meagre.<sup>108</sup> The state of morale was not dealt with in interim combat reports.<sup>109</sup> The Sector, on the basis of available daily and monthly reports of commands of the subordinate units and on the basis of its

<sup>103</sup> General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ, testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12245-12246;

<sup>104</sup> Instructions for monitoring and assessing morale in the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 16/10-48 of 1 August 1992, p. 1, and witness Richard BUTLER, 14 January 2008, p. T19626;

<sup>105</sup> Instructions for monitoring and assessing morale in the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 16/10-48 of 1 August 1992, p. 4;

<sup>106</sup> Instructions for monitoring and assessing morale in the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 16/10-48 of 10 August 1992, p. 5;

<sup>107</sup> Report on the state of morale, strictly confidential number 01-162, 28 May 1995. (ERN 0432-3826-0432-3828)

<sup>108</sup> Regular combat report of the Drina Corps Command, Strictly confidential number 03/2-208, 17 July 1995. , p.5 (ERN 0426-9540-0426-9541)

<sup>109</sup> Interim combat report of the Drina Corps Command, Strictly confidential number 2, 6 July 1995. (ERN 0426-9536-0426-9536)

own insight, drafted information on the state of morale in the VRS,<sup>110</sup> which was to be discussed by the GŠ Collegium of commanders. In practice, the Collegium rarely discussed such information. On the basis of discussion at the collegium and the conclusions drawn by the commander, a report was drafted on the state of morale in the VRS, together with the necessary measures to be undertaken at the various command levels for maintaining and strengthening morale. The report was submitted to the Supreme Commander, Ministry of Defence and the commands of operations units.

The Sector for MVPP was not responsible for implementing the measures set out in reports dealing with army morale. But the Sector, as a specialised organ, could point out problems affecting morale and propose measures that, in its opinion, needed to be taken. There are many factors affecting morale. They can be social, psychological, involving welfare factors, or even political by nature. There was no single body within the RS which was able to solve this, and the Sector for Moral Guidance was not responsible for solving such complex problems, regardless of the fact that they impacted on morale.

Monitoring, assessing and building morale is very complex and specialised work, which in itself contains much more than mere information and propaganda. Neither the Sector, nor the GŠ, had the appropriate staff, financial or technical resources needed for organising any kind of propaganda.<sup>111</sup>

A part of the work was developing a programme for the moral, psychological and patriotic training of soldiers and instructions for conducting it. The objective of this programme was: *“To develop an awareness and knowledge of the Army of the Serbian Republic of BH among the troops, a feeling for the Army and for man as the basic factor in the armed combat, to develop their patriotism, love of freedom and sense of combat traditions, courage, discipline, loyalty and motivation.”*<sup>112</sup> This Programme was a part of the overall efforts in moral education in the VRS. However, the educational significance of the programme and the educational role of the specialists in charge of the programme (organs for MVPP) were continuously being challenged, making the process a difficult one. The organs for MVPP and individuals engaged there were reproached for being *“nostalgic for the former Yugoslavia ... supporters of the idea of brotherhood and unity”*<sup>113</sup>, and *“nationally unenlightened”* individuals.<sup>114</sup>

## **b) Information**

Information as an activity of command and control in the Army, whose specialists in charge of carrying it out were the organs for MVPP, meant keeping members of the Army up to date with the most important events and developments both inside and outside of the Army on the one hand, and informing the public of the activities and

<sup>110</sup> Information on the state of morale in the Army for August 1993, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 17/4-177 of 15 September 1993 (ERN 04260356-04260365);

<sup>111</sup> General Milomir SAVČIĆ testimony transcript, 13 Septber 2007, p. 15341;

<sup>112</sup> Programme of moral, psychological and patriotic training of soldiers, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 6/10-35 of 1 August 1992, p. 1;

<sup>113</sup> General Milomir SAVČIĆ testimony transcript, 13 October 2007, p. 15346-15347;

<sup>114</sup> Official note, 27 May 1995;

results achieved by the Army on the other. In that sense, there was: (a) internal military information, and (b) information given to the public about the Army.

Internal military information was keeping the troops informed of the most important current events in the Army, primarily the course and results of combat action, and of current developments in the country and abroad, relevant to boosting combat morale. Those in charge of internal information work were the commanders at each level of command with specialist assistance in preparing, planning and organising information being provided for them by the organs of the MVPP.

For the purposes of internal information, the Sector for MVPP prepared the most general guidelines and instructions for informing members of the Army, and at times drafted reports on activities and results achieved by the VRS<sup>115</sup> and disseminated information about current developments in the RS<sup>116</sup> and elsewhere<sup>117</sup> that were important for combatants and the Army in general.

Information for the general public was to acquaint the public with the role and tasks of the VRS, with the actual assignments and results of combat actions, with the actual situation on the battlefield, with success and problems of the units. Professionals preparing the information for release to the general public were the press centres (public information services) of the operational and operational-tactical level.

### c) Religious affairs

The Army of Republika Srpska, and the Republic itself, clearly distanced themselves from Communist ideology. Conditions were created for the introduction and practice of religion and the development of spirituality in the Army. Knowledge, experience and solutions to that effect were not to be found in past military practice. Thus an important part of the work of the Organ for MVPP was focused on producing religious subject matter in the Army, the study of the spiritual traditions, study of the experiences of other armies, drafting the necessary instructions and guidelines, and co-operation with church representatives.

It became necessary to devise how the faithful among the Army personnel could fulfil their religious requirements in a specific (military) environment and a very particular (wartime) situation.<sup>118</sup> A special part of the work of the Organs for MVPP was organising and commemorating major events, the most important holidays, such as for example, *Vidovdan* (St. Vitus Day on 28 June) – the Army's patron saint and VRS Day - Christmas, Easter and the patron saints' days of the units. These events, in addition to their spiritual side (religious services, memorial services for the dead, the

<sup>115</sup> Report on the status and results of combat operations in the western part of the RS, GŠ VRS, Sector for MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-388 of 21 August 1995 (ERN 00518877-00518878);

<sup>116</sup> Report on the Decision of the President of Republika Srpska to suspend the envisaged changes, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 07/21-383 of 17 August 1995 (ERN DA08-6723-6723 – DA08-6725);

<sup>117</sup> Report on the Military Peace Agreement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, GŠ VRS, no. 02/2-637 of 11 August 1993, or Report on the Peace Conference in Geneva, GŠ VRS, Sector for MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-411 of 9 September 1995 (ERN 04260559-04260560);

<sup>118</sup> Celebration of national, military and religious holidays, instructions, GŠ VRS, Sector for MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-112 of 3 March 1995;

lighting of candles, the breaking of bread on the Patron Saint's Day, taking the Eucharist, confession, baptism), were accompanied by numerous educational, cultural and sports events that took place over an extended period on the occasion of these events.<sup>119</sup> It was necessary to come up with ideas and enrich the spiritual content of other special activities, such as the ceremony for taking the military oath, funeral ceremonies and suchlike.<sup>120</sup>

#### 4 Legal documents of the Sector for MVPP

In the initial period of its existence the VRS had not drafted or adopted the required legal documents. In practice it relied on documents of the former JNA. Many of these were used until the very end of war. The Sector for MVPP, however, could not adopt the documents of the JNA, because the subject-matter had completely changed. Shortly after the formation of the Army, in early August 1992, the following were passed: **Instructions for monitoring and assessing morale in the VRS**<sup>121</sup>, **Programme for moral, psychological and patriotic training of soldiers.**<sup>122</sup> The Responsibilities and Staffing of the Organ for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs in the Units and Institutions of the VRS were prepared and approved.<sup>123</sup> In June 1992, the Sector also drafted the Order of the Commander of the GŠ VRS on the implementation of the international laws of war in the VRS, and Interim Regulations for Service in the VRS.<sup>124</sup>

#### 5. MANNING THE SECTOR

During the war, the Sector had an extremely low percentage of staffing, ranging from 10 percent to 30 percent. This was primarily due to a general shortage of officers, but also to how the command system treated the Sector. There was a broadly present perception that the work of this Sector was of "lesser importance" or "unnecessary", and that priority in recruitment of personnel went other establishment posts, primarily to those with command and operations duties.<sup>125</sup> Staff assigned to the organs for Moral Guidance, Religious and legal affairs were mostly those with little or no command experience,<sup>126</sup> of ailing health or with some disability, and if someone

<sup>119</sup> Order of the commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> Zvornik pbr /Infantry Brigade/ on the commemoration of *Vidovdan*, the day of the patron saint of the VRS, confidential no. 01-170 of 31 May 1995 (ERN 04323833-04323834);

<sup>120</sup> Richard BUTLER's Report on Command Responsibility in the VRS Main Staff, p. 12 (ERN 0600-6255-0600-6283)

<sup>121</sup> Instructions for monitoring and assessing morale in the Army of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 16/10-48 of 1 August 1992;

<sup>122</sup> Programme for the moral, psychological and patriotic training of soldiers, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 6/10-35 of 1 August 1992;

<sup>123</sup> Responsibilities and Staffing of the Organ for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs in the Units and Institutions of the VRS, GŠ VRS, Strictly confidential no. 07/21-88 of 10 February 1995 (ERN 04260506-04260512);

<sup>124</sup> GŠ VRS, Interim Regulations for Service in the VRS, August 1992;

<sup>125</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 18 October 2007, p. 15574-15578;

<sup>126</sup> General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12251; Nedeljko TRKULJA, testimony transcript, 10 September 2007, p. 15141;

should happen to stand out for his command abilities, he would soon be transferred to a command or operations post.

The sectors and administrations of the Main Staff were staffed with officers of the relevant qualifications and necessary experience. For example, officers with air force rather than infantry or armoured-mechanised specialities were assigned to the administration for ViPVO /Air Force and Anti-Aircraft Defence/ or to head it. The posts of commander or chief of staff required relevant command experience, but for the Sector for MVPP, no command experience was necessary and officers without any experience were appointed to these duties. The Assistant Commander for Moral Guidance would not be able to discharge the duties of the Assistant Commander for Finance.<sup>127</sup> *“The qualification profile is important for the efficient work of the Command. The diversity of the problems to be solved by the command, and especially the problems of armed combat, imposes the need for diversified personnel in the commands and staffs. Furthermore, it is necessary for officers in commands and staffs to have experience in controlling the activities and units in whose interest they fulfil a certain function in the command.”*<sup>128</sup>

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES AND WORK OF THE ASSISTANT COMMANDER FOR MVPP**

The responsibilities of the assistant derive from his place and role at the Main Staff and from the responsibilities of the Sector that he heads. These responsibilities are the following:

- controls the work of the Sector for MVPP and is accountable to the commander for his work;
- monitors the state of Army morale and factors of positive and negative impact on morale, organises drafting of morale assessments and reports on Army morale, proposes these to the commander and recommends measures and procedures for boosting combat morale and eliminating negative influences;
- in accordance with the command documents of superior officers, controls the writing up of necessary instructions and guidelines in the field of MVPP for the lower levels of command, or for the Army in general;
- attends meetings at the Main Staff if necessary;
- at the request of the commander, proposes measures of moral and psychological support;

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<sup>127</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15539-15541;

<sup>128</sup> Instructions for the Work of Commands and Staffs, draft, *Maršal Tito* JNA Centre for Higher Military Education, 1983, p. 19;

- co-operates with the Serbian Orthodox Church, government institutions, educational, sports and cultural institutions, veteran and other non-government organisations, humanitarian organisations and other institutions;
- controls and directs the activities of the Central Club, Central Library and the Army Band.

The Assistant Commander, within the scope of his responsibilities, drafted and signed official documents on Moral Guidance, Religious and legal affairs: information,<sup>129</sup> reports, instructions, guidelines, notifications, and warnings.<sup>130</sup>

Command documents in this area were signed by the commander.<sup>131</sup>

The actual work of the Assistant Commander of the GŠ for MVPP covered various jobs within the range of his responsibilities . **Regarding the subject-matter and the time spent, a predominant place was occupied by work pertaining to the**

<sup>129</sup> *Vojna Enciklopedija* - Military encyclopaedia, Volume 3, p. 588.

<sup>130</sup> EXAMPLES OF SIGNED DOCUMENTS of the Assistant Commander for MVPP, in accordance with his responsibilities:

- Celebration of state, military and religious holidays, **instruction**, GŠ VRS, Sector MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-112 of 03 March 1995;
- Celebration of the state holiday and Patron Saint's Day of the Republic of Srpska Army, **instruction**, GŠ VRS, Sector MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-179 of 13 April 1995 (ERN 05296281-05296282);
- Ensuring communication with parents and relatives, **guideline**, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 07/21-318 of 14 July 1995 (ERN 052966336);
- Work of lawyers mobilised into the units of the VRS at regiment or brigade level, **guidelines**, GŠ VRS, Sector MVPP, confidential no. 07/22-102 of 16 August 1995 (ERN 04008439);
- Session of the National Assembly of the Republic of Srpska, **report**, GŠ VRS, Sector for MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-430 of 17 October 1995 (ERN 04260576);
- Collecting, systematising and keeping historical documents of war units, **instruction**, GŠ VRS, Sector MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-40 of 1 February 1996 (ERN 04387417-04377419);
- Wearing and displaying insignia and other symbols of the Republic of Srpska Army, **instruction**, GŠ VRS, Sector MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-111 of 2 March 1995 (ERN 05296266-0529667);
- Attendance at meetings, gatherings and other forms of organised assembly on the ground, **guideline**, GŠ VRS, Sector MVPP, confidential no. 07/21-141 of 15 March 1995 (ERN 05296277);
- Attitude towards members of the UNPROFOR in the Srebrenica enclave, **warning**, Main Staff of the VRS, strictly confidential no. 03/4-1617 of 11 July 1995.

<sup>131</sup> EXAMPLES OF SIGNED DOCUMENTS of the Commander of the GŠ VRS in accordance with his responsibilities, which refer in part or entirely to the subject-matter of the Sector for MVPP:

- **Decision** of the Commander of the GŠ VRS on re-naming the Sector for Information and Legal Affairs in the GŠ VRS into the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs, GŠ VRS /Army of the Serbian Republic/ of BH , confidential no. 30/18-68 of 3 December 1992 (ERN 0529-6966);
- Disposition and appointment of officers to the Organs for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs, **order**, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 07/21-310 of 5 July 1995 (ERN 0529-6327 – 0529-6328);
- Allocation of war banners (flags) of the Republic of Srpska Army, **order**, GŠ VRS, confidential no. 07/21-314 of 9 July 1995;
- Preventing leaks of secret military information in the zone of combat operations, **order**, GŠ VRS, strictly confidential no. 03/4-1638 of 13 July 1995 (ERN 0529-6800).

**problems of the combatants and army morale, and links with the civilian structures on the ground.**

**Work on the problems of morale especially focused on units and contingents that for some reason experienced a fall of morale due to loss of territory, loss of lives, serious injury, mass abandonment of positions or mass dissatisfaction.** “It shall be the duty of the assistant commander for political work to act directly within the unit... which ... has several difficulties and problems with the morale and political situation (high losses, effects of enemy propaganda...) ... in order to eliminate the negative effects of surprise and increased losses caused by an enemy break-through...”<sup>132</sup> This required fuller insight into the regular combat reports, sending someone from the Sector, or making a personal visit to these units.

In the spring and summer of 1995 the most difficult situation with morale was in the western part of Republika Srpska and in the Sarajevo area, because of intensified Muslim and Croat operations, and major losses of territory and life.<sup>133</sup>

Due to the high percentage of engagement in the Army of able-bodied men, army morale was directly dependant on the situation in the territory (the functioning of the economy, social security of the combatants’ families, health care, etc.). In order to obtain an insight into this aspect of morale, it was necessary to spend a lot of time in the territory, with different institutions and with the units on the ground.

A special Task of the Assistant Commander of the GŠ for MVPP was to organise and conduct major events celebrating the most important holidays, such as the patron saint’s day, *Vidovdan* (28 June), also VRS Day. This was a major occasion in terms of events, engaging almost all structures of society (educational, academic, economic, sports, cultural institutions, and citizens’ associations) and all units of the Army, it went on for almost half a year, finishing with a central, state and military manifestation. The assistant commander was either vice-president of the organisational committee, or its president,<sup>134</sup> as in 1995.

For feastsdays other occasions when combat activities allowed, various cultural events and entertainment were organised (literary evenings, concerts, shows, creative competitions, sports and competitions involving traditional skills).<sup>135</sup>

Due to the fact that the office of the Commander of the Main Staff was not fully staffed, the Assistant Commander for MVPP and his Sector were engaged in protocol activities during some meetings and gatherings.<sup>136</sup>

<sup>132</sup> Instructions for work of political organs in conditions of mobilisation and war, SSNO, Belgrade, 1976, p. 20. General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12247

<sup>133</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15580; Nedeljko TRKULJA, testimony transcript, 10 September 2007, p. 15145-15146;

<sup>134</sup> Excerpt from the Daily Bulletin, *DESK Radio Sajgon*, 20 April 1995. (ERN 0504-1375-0504-1376)

<sup>135</sup> General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ, testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12247-12248;

<sup>136</sup> Order of the Commander of the GŠ VRS for a farewell on the retirement of General ŽIVANOVIĆ, confidential no. 03/4-1668 of 17 July 1995 (ERN 04257967); Colonel Mirko TRIVIĆ testimony transcript, 21 May 2007, p.11879-11880; General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12247;

A variety of new subject-matter demanded special attention, as a result of depoliticizing the Army and the introduction of new concepts (religious affairs). In addition to this, these did not have their own set of rules and literature at the time the Army and the Republic were formed. An important part of work was in drafting documents, instructions and guidelines in this field and coming up with ideas for new subject-matter. A lot of time was spent on contacts with members of the Church, and in the study of experiences of other armies and designing a religious content as part of the march of civilisation, to help develop spirituality, peace and tolerance.

## **VI FUNCTIONING OF THE SECTOR FOR MVPP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND MILITARY STRUCTURES IN REPUBLIKA SRPSKA**

The position and role of General GVERO and the Sector for MVPP was affected by the situation of mistrust and intermittent public conflicts between the political leadership and certain military structures in the RS.

Among a part of political leadership of the RS was a constant degree of reserve and even intolerance towards the professional career officers of the VRS, and especially the Assistants for Moral Guidance. Most of the political leadership of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, before the formation of the VRS, did not feel the JNA was their army, but an army protecting national equality, the brotherhood and unity of the Yugoslav peoples and nationalities. This sentiment continued in regard to the professional military personnel of the VRS, who were often demeaned as “communists”.<sup>137</sup> The Army was aware of this detrimental attitude and pointed out to the political leadership that it was necessary to “*take a more specific and public stand regarding the officers, because in certain environments there are still significant reservations and different attitudes towards this part of Republika Srpska Army staff.*”<sup>138</sup>

Basically, the intolerance and mistrust were ideological prejudice against officers of the former JNA as “communists”, and “nationally unenlightened individuals”.<sup>139</sup> They considered them to be the supporters of the Yugoslav idea, togetherness, brotherhood and unity.<sup>140</sup> They were labelled as “weak Serbs”, “communist hard-liners”, “BROZ’s officers”, “JNA relics”, and similar.<sup>141</sup> Specialist qualifications, respect for rights, good discipline and applying the rules of engagement – for which the organs for MVPP strove - were demeaned, and there were also a number of cases of open interference with command and control. This diminished their professional and specialist authority, which had a negative effect on discipline and combat quality of the units.

<sup>137</sup> Richard J. BUTLER, Report on command responsibility at the Main Staff of the VRS, p. 13.

<sup>138</sup> ANALYSIS of combat readiness and activities of the Republic of Srpska Army in 1992, GŠ VRS, Han Pijesak, 1993, p. 51 (ERN 00607389).

<sup>139</sup> Official note, 27 May 1995;

<sup>140</sup> General Milomir SAVČIĆ, testimony transcript, 13 September 2007, p. 15346-15347;

<sup>141</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ, testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-15564;

This type of intolerance was additionally fuelled by criticism of the political leadership from the fighting population, because of the tolerant attitude towards deserters and war-profiteers, inequality in how people were engaged in combat, indifference to supplying the Army, and an absence of care for combatants, the families of fallen fighters and the disabled.

Intolerance was directed at some officers who pointed out problems, who conveyed the real mood of the fighting population and their dissatisfaction with the attitude towards the fighting. The organs for moral guidance were responsible for the preparation of such information and the personnel working in these organs enjoyed the least sympathy from the authorities, and not infrequently there was manifest and extreme animosity towards them. Information and requests from the VRS were repeated, but no answers were received. When there were no replies after repeated appeals to the relevant state authorities regarding the objectives of the war and a solution for the basic welfare and status issues of the soldiers and officers of the VRS, General GVERO issued the warning that "in case we do not receive a reply, we will be forced to inform the units that, in spite of all the appeals and insistence, we did not receive any reply."<sup>142</sup>

At the lower levels of government in RS, where things happened more overtly, these problems were even more obvious. Municipal and other structures interfered with command of the army,<sup>143</sup> although military subordination does not tolerate this. The GŠ VRS often drew their attention to the fact that under the Constitution and by law, they were supposed to see to other defence tasks, not command the army.

The existing intolerance often caused disputes, and at times even strife between civilian and military structures. Based on this there was a marked and continuous intolerance on the part of the President of the Republic towards the Assistant Commander of the GŠ for the MVPP and his Sector.<sup>144</sup>

The initial suspicion and reserve grew into sporadic disputes about the assistants for Moral Guidance, Religious and legal affairs.<sup>145</sup>

The leadership of the SDS was of the view that the assistant commanders for moral guidance, from the Main Staff to the battalions, ought to be proven SDS members appointed by the party.<sup>146</sup> There was prejudice that the Assistants for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs were what used to be the organs for political and party work in the JNA. At all the levels they hunted down mistakes made by these men, used every opportunity to compromise them and turn public opinion against them. Intolerance and widespread public opinion about the staff for moral guidance

<sup>142</sup> Request of the GŠ VRS, strictly confidential no. 10/21-357 of 6 December 1994, sent to the President of the RS, Prime Minister of the RS and Ministry of Defence of the RS, for a solution to the status and living standards of members of the VRS (ERN 04259631-04259632);

<sup>143</sup> See: Lieutenant Colonel Jugoslav TUBIĆ, deposition, Skelani Independent Infantry Battalion, confidential no. 01/1-190 of 04 October 1994 (ERN 04367613-04367614);

<sup>144</sup> General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ, testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12253-12257;

<sup>145</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ, testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-15564;

<sup>146</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Jugoslav TUBIĆ, deposition, Independent infantry battalion "Skelani", confidential no. 01/1-190 of 04 October 1994, p. 2 (ERN 04367613-04367614); General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-155564;

brought about the destruction of their reputation among political structures. Simply put, they had hardly any authority and were not considered to be trustworthy by them.

The conflict escalated along these lines in 1994. First, a PRESS-CENTRE of the RS Government was formed. Conflicts surfaced about information for the public about military activities, accreditation of local and foreign reporters and the appearance of professional officers in the mass media. What followed was the order of the President of the Republic to the Main Staff, which stipulated that “*all press statements must be issued through the cabinet of the President of the Republic.*”<sup>147</sup> This was followed by a ban on all public appearance by military personnel. “*All military personnel in the Republika Srpska Army are prohibited from giving statements for the public (...).*”<sup>148</sup>

The leadership of the RS and SDS were of the view that the results achieved so far had given the Army a great reputation, much greater than the one the politicians enjoyed, and that it presented a threat to them of losing power, and that a great part in this was being played by the Assistant Commander of the Main Staff for MVPP by his actions in public and affirmative information about the Army. Problems appeared about decisions to withdraw the Army from certain territories, and integration into some percentage of a territorial division of Bosnia and Herzegovina until then unknown to the Army.<sup>149</sup>

In July of 1994, the President of the RS ordered a ban on Army personnel making “*any appearance in public whatsoever, except on the violations of the truce.*”<sup>150</sup> Threats and labelling of Army personnel continued. The President of the RS, in a document on “preventing leaks of secret information” warned about the disclosure of data significant for the defence and security of the country in contacts with foreigners, describing this as “**grand treason**” and prohibiting official personnel from “*unauthorised contacts with the representatives of foreign services*”, saying that “*in authorised contacts it is allowed only to disclose information for which there is authorisation.*”<sup>151</sup>

Two documents of the President sent to the Main Staff (GS) in late December 1994 speak of the intention to discredit General GVERO, intended to pave the way for his replacement.<sup>152</sup>

At a session of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska in the spring of 1995, after numerous insulting verbal attacks on the organs for moral guidance of the VRS, it was proposed to the President of the Republic to retire a number of the senior officers, including General Milan GVERO, Assistant to the Commander of the GŠ VRS for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs, and Colonel Milovan MILUTINOVIĆ, chief of the PRESS Centre of the GŠ VRS. All reports confirmed as

<sup>147</sup> Order of the President of the RS, number 01-139/93 of 11 June 1993;

<sup>148</sup> Order of the President of the RS, number 01-226/93 of 10 October 1993, quoted on the basis of a document of the GŠ VRS, strictly confidential no. 10/24-25 of 10 January 1994;

<sup>149</sup> General Manojlo MILOVANOVIĆ, testimony transcript, 30 May 2007, p. 12254-12255;

<sup>150</sup> Order of the President of the RS, number 01-1326/94 of 02 July 1994 (ERN Y0071659);

<sup>151</sup> Preventing leaks of secret information, Republic of Srpska, President of the Republic, Sarajevo, strictly confidential no. 01-1378/94 of 8 July 1994 (ERN 04373739-04373740);

<sup>152</sup> Document of the President of the RS, strictly confidential no. 01-2480-1/94 of 14 December 1994 (ERN 00868986), and strictly confidential no. 01-2480-2/94 of 18 December 1994 (ERN 00868983);

indisputable the replacement of the Assistant Commander of the GŠ for MVPP, who was considered, baselessly, to be the author of an exposé on the Commander of the GŠ, which included criticism of the political leadership for their lack of care for the army and people.<sup>153</sup>

In late May, the President of the Republic stated that a part of the senior officers had turned against the state and that “it was a case of its life or death”, that foremost among them were the “moralists”, and that the most responsible was GVERO, “and this is why he must go, and there is no chance of him staying on.”<sup>154</sup> This quarrel escalated to the point of death threats.<sup>155</sup>

In order to repair and normalise relations, the activities of the PRESS Centre of the GŠ VRS were reduced, the officers of the Organ for MVPP appeared less frequently in the media, and the Commander of the GŠ VRS decided in future to send General Milan GVERO much less frequently to sessions of the National Assembly of Republika Srpska.<sup>156</sup> This caused the responsibility and work of the Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs to be additionally reduced, and the importance and work of the Assistant Commander of the GS VRS for this area to diminish.

However, this did not calm relations or put a stop to the disputes between the President of the Republic and the GŠ, especially with the Assistant Commander of the GŠ for MVPP, who was again threatened with removal.<sup>157</sup>

There followed an order from the President of the RS that information for the public would be issued exclusively via the Ministry of Information of the RS, which was the establishment of a monopoly over information activities in the Army and provided grounds for additionally deepening the dispute.<sup>158</sup> *“The dissemination of information and any kind of statement will be done exclusively via the Ministry of Information... Information for the mass media outside the RS, the work of the news correspondents’ offices, news agencies and other information entities will take place with the prior approval of the Ministry of Information.... Writing and presenting commentaries to the public can be done only with prior approval of the Ministry of Information. Statements by VRS personnel... shall be subject to censorship prior to broadcast or transmission... Persons or institutions acting contrary to the above shall be subject to sanctions.”*<sup>159</sup> In this way he prohibited the PRESS CENTRE of the GŠ VRS from communicating with the public. This activity was transferred to the PRESS CENTRE of the RS, which at the same time had the exclusive authority to accredit journalists for reporting on combat operations, and to issue permits for movement in the territory, including the zones of combat operations.

<sup>153</sup> Information of the 1<sup>st</sup> Krajina Corps Command, Intelligence Sector, Strictly confidential number 5-249, 22 April 1995 (ERN 0531-5997)

<sup>154</sup> Official note of 27 May 1995;

<sup>155</sup> Letter sent to General Milan GVERO, delivered on 3 April 1996;

<sup>156</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ, testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-15564;

<sup>157</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 17 September 2007, p. 15485;

<sup>158</sup> General Petar ŠKRBIĆ testimony transcript, 18 September 2007, p. 15554-15564;

<sup>159</sup> Order of the President of the RS, no. 01-1029/95 of 31 May 1995, quoted according to: “Arbitrariness, Prohibition and Censorship”, Information Service of the GŠ VRS, 22 August 1995 (ERN 00869075-00869076).

## VII CONCLUSIONS

1. After the SFRY Presidency adopted the Decision on the withdrawal of the JNA from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Serbian political leadership in BH proceeded to form an army in the territory where the Serbs were in the majority, since the Muslims and Croats had already formed their army. The VRS was formed by a decision of the National Assembly of the RS on 12 May 1992. Pursuant to the Constitution and laws the VRS was put under civilian control with the President of the Republic being responsible for supreme command.
2. Those in charge of commanding the VRS were: the President of the Republic, the Commander of the Main Staff (in his absence, the Chief of Staff as deputy commander), the commanders of the Corps and the commanders of lower level units. The principles of a single command structure and subordination were the basis of the command relationship, which was the fundamental relationship in the Army.
3. The Main Staff of the VRS was the operational staff organ of the Supreme Command, divided into Sectors. The Main Staff was not a collective command body. The sole command responsibility lay with the Commander and in his absence, the Chief of the Main Staff.
4. One of the Main Staff sectors was the Sector for Operations and Staff Affairs. This Sector had the role of the staff of the Main Staff. Its role was to plan operations. Other sectors, or their Assistant Commanders, were not part of that Sector.
5. The Assistant Commanders headed sectors and independent administrations whose duties did not overlap. The Assistant Commanders were responsible for controlling the organs they headed. They were accountable for both their own work and that of their organs to the Commander of the Main Staff. They did not have the power to command, they were not responsible for carrying out combat operations and they did not have the right to sign command documents. The assistants were specialist organs who provided assistance to the Commander concerning issues falling within the scope of responsibility of the organ that they headed. Assistant commanders were not mutually interchangeable.
6. The Sector for Moral Guidance, Religious and Legal Affairs of the GŠ VRS was created and developed in conditions of transition and war. It marked an absolute break with analogous organs in the former JNA. There was no ideology or politics in this Sector of the VRS, innovations were made in moral training and religion was introduced. The volume of material was substantially reduced. The role and importance of the Sector for MVPP and its Assistant Commander was greatly diminished and marginalized. Even this reduced role was ridiculed by some commanding officers within the VRS. This department was abolished in the VRS in 2003, and in the VJ /Yugoslav Army/ in 2005.
7. The responsibilities of the Sector were general: monitoring and assessing morale, moral, psychological and patriotic education of soldiers, cooperation with civilian authorities for resolving welfare problems of combatants, information, cherishing of traditions, cultural and entertainment activities,

- religious and legal affairs. As in armies all over the world, the specific implementation of these issues was dealt with at lower levels of command. The responsibility of the Sector did not include dealing with or participating in military operations.
8. The Assistant Commander for MVPP in the GŠ was primarily engaged in following-up and assessing the morale of the Army. He dealt with humanitarian issues and saw to the combatants, the wounded, their families and the families of dead combatants. He proposed measures for their financial and welfare support. His attention was particularly focused on units and contingents where for some reason a decline in morale had occurred due to loss of territory, massive casualties, the abandonment of positions en masse, and cases where massive dissatisfaction was expressed. The Sector very obviously lacked manpower. The existing personnel lacked the appropriate education and experience, and had only very modest financial and technical resources at their disposal.
  9. An important part of this Assistant Commander's work was related to religious matters, particularly organising the *Slava* (Patron Saints' Feasts), the celebration of state and religious holidays, organising funerals and memorial services for the dead. A part of his work included providing information to the troops, directing the work of providing public information, as well as the organization of cultural events and entertainment.
  10. The work of the Assistant Commander and the small number of people in the Organ for MVPP in the GŠ was made additionally difficult by a lack of understanding, intolerance and disputes between the political leadership and military authorities in Republika Srpska. Some of the political leadership of the RS and parts of the SDS humiliated the professional career officers in the VRS, particularly those in the Organs for MVPP. Doubts about their patriotic and national "awareness" were expressed openly alongside those about their ideological views and professional abilities. This ongoing conflict escalated during the final years of the war. It escalated most directly between the President of the Republic and the SDS on the one hand, and the Assistant Commander of the GŠ for MVPP on the other. The conflict manifested itself in verbal attacks and belittlement, through several repeated threats that General GVERO would be relieved of duty, to anonymous death threats against him. The already reduced role and significance of these organs was additionally marginalized by such treatment.
  11. Lieutenant General Milan GVERO was the Assistant Commander of the Main Staff for MVPP and headed this Sector from the formation of the VRS until the end of the war (1992-1995). He was one of the seven Main Staff Assistant Commanders.
  12. Lieutenant General Milan GVERO did not have any operational and command experience. His entire professional work was in the field of education, training and specialist duties relating to social issues. Apart from the very beginning of his career, when he was at the lowest post of command, he worked all the time in a teaching capacity and at duties in the organs for moral guidance.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ARBH – Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
BH – Bosnia and Herzegovina  
DK – Drina Corps  
GŠ - Main Staff  
GŠ VRS – Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska  
HK – Herzegovina Corps  
HVO – Croatian Defence Council  
IBK – Eastern Bosnia Corps  
IKM – Forward Command Post  
IPP – Information and Legal Affairs  
JNA – Yugoslav People's Army  
KM – Command Post  
MPS – Morale and political situation  
MPV – Morale and political education  
MUP – Ministry of the Interior  
MVPP – Moral Guidance, Religious and legal affairs  
NS RS – National Assembly of Republika Srpska  
OBP – Intelligence and Security  
OKM – Main Command Post  
OMPP – Organisation, Mobilisation and Personnel  
OS – Armed Forces  
OSP – Operations and Staff Affairs  
PKM – Rear Command Post  
PPR – Party political work  
PPV – Political educational training  
PR – Political work  
RS – Republika Srpska  
SAD – USA  
SDS – Serbian Democratic Party  
SFRY – Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia  
SR BH – Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina  
SRK – Sarajevo Romanija Corps  
TO – Territorial Defence  
UN – United Nations  
ViPVO – Air Force and Anti-Aircraft Defence  
PRF – Development and Financial Planning  
VJ – Yugoslav Army  
VRS – Army of Republika Srpska  
1KK – 1<sup>st</sup> Krajina Corps  
2<sup>nd</sup> KK – 2<sup>nd</sup> Krajina Corps