

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

Case No. IT-06-90-T

BEFORE TRIAL CHAMBER I

Before: Judge Alphons Orie, Presiding
Judge Uldis Kinis
Judge Elisabeth Gwaunza

Registrar: Mr. John Hocking

Date: 9 July 2009

THE PROSECUTOR

v.

ANTE GOTOVINA, IVAN CERMAK AND MLADEN MARKAC

PUBLIC

**DEFENDANT ANTE GOTOVINA'S SUBMISSION OF
EXPERT REPORT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL IVAN POKAZ
PURSUANT TO RULE 94 *BIS***

For the Prosecution:

Mr. Alan Tieger
Mr. Stefan Waespi

For Ante Gotovina:

Mr. Gregory W. Kehoe
Mr. Luka S. Misetic
Mr. Payam Akhavan

For Ivan Cermak:

Mr. Steven Kay QC
Mr. Andrew Cayley
Ms. Gillian Higgins

For Mladen Markac:

Mr. Goran Mikulicic
Mr. Tomislav Kuzmanovic

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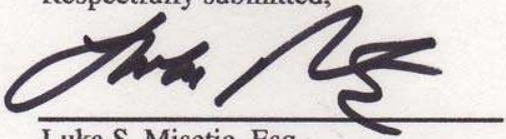
PUBLIC

DEFENDANT ANTE GOTOVINA'S SUBMISSION OF
EXPERT REPORT OF BRIGADIER GENERAL IVAN POKAZ
PURSUANT TO RULE 94 *BIS*

1. Pursuant to Rule 94 *bis* of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence, the Gotovina Defence submits the expert report of Brigadier General Ivan Pokaz ("Witness AG-43").¹ Witness AG-43 is scheduled to begin testifying on 31 August 2009.

Word Count: 48

Dated: 9 July 2009

Respectfully submitted,

Luka S. Misetic, Esq.


Gregory W. Kehoe

Defence Counsel for Ante Gotovina

¹ The expert report of Witness AG-43 is attached in Appendix "A".

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APPENDIX "A"

Draft translation

EXPERT REPORT

By Retired Brigadier General Ivan Pokaz

FOR CASE IT – 06 – 90 – T

OVERVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE MILITARY SITUATION IN

THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA AND THE REPUBLIC OF

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1991 – 1995

IN THE CONTEXT OF OPERATION 'STORM'

Zagreb, June 2009

Draft translation

INTRODUCTION

The military-police operation 'Storm' was planned, prepared and carried out as a legal, legitimate and justified solution, which in the conditions at the time enabled the reintegration of occupied areas into the legal system of the Republic of Croatia.

It was apparent for many reasons that any further continuation of the *status quo* in the area of the Republic of Croatia and in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well, would make elementary functioning and future development of the Republic of Croatia as a modern European state impossible (it would lead, in colloquial jargon – to the 'cyprusization' of the Republic of Croatia), and would intensify the existing and create new instabilities as well as a security, war and humanitarian crisis and threat to the closer and wider region.

The *status quo* was based on the fact that parts of the territory of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were forcefully occupied and ethnically cleansed by the use of military force (aggression by the Yugoslav People's Army) and paramilitary forces (rebellion of the local Serb population) in 1991 (in Bosnia and Herzegovina during 1992) with the intent to cut off this part of the territory from its mother state and adjoin the same to another state (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia /SRJ/ or some other 'designed' Serb state).

In the process, other parts of the territory of the Republic of Croatia were exposed to combat operations all with the intent to render impossible or at least hamper Croatia in organizing the defense of its territory and thus prevent the realization of goals of the planned policy of the Greater Serbia.

The key role in the planning, organization and realization of the rebellion of the local Serb population, the aggression against the Republic of Croatia and the occupation of a part of its territory lay with the Yugoslav People's Army – JNA. By itself, this had to

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result in the use of military means for the realization of the goals of the aforementioned Greater Serbia policy, and in the open aggression against the Republic of Croatia with JNA forces from Serbia and from the area of the then Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Already well-known and publicly accessible articles and publications, as for example the SANU Memorandum, Slobodan Milošević's speeches, the book by Veljko Kadijević, book by Admiral Branko Mamula, articles by General Radovan Radinović, book by General Milisav Sekulić, therefore the testimonies and statements of direct participants from the aggressor's side, which show:

- **That the rebellion of the local Serb population** during 1991
 - was planned, enticed and assisted by the then Yugoslav (read: Serb and Greater Serbian) policy and the JNA,
 - carried out as an armed and terrorist act against the Republic of Croatia,
 - was a part of the plan (strategy) for the realization of the idea and policy of the 'Greater Serbia';
- **That the establishment of the so-called 'Republic of Serb Krajina' /RSK/**
 - was not only a result but a fundamental goal of those policies,
 - a necessary step towards the realization of the idea and policy of the 'Greater Serbia' in accordance with the motto of those policies – 'all Serbs in one state' which was impossible to accomplish without destroying Croatia, or rather without occupying and separating parts of its territory by force, or without destroying Bosnia and Herzegovina and occupying the majority of its territory as well;
- That a **so-called 'Serb Krajina Army' was formed** in the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia in order to
 - after the JNA would formally withdraw, ensure the 'defense' of the established 'borders' of the 'RSK' or rather the 'western borders of the Greater Serbia' and
 - its formation as well as maintenance (financing, replenishment, development, equipping training and activity) would not be possible without the overall and continued support by the SRJ and the Yugoslav Army /VJ/;

Draft translation

- That the so-called 'RSK' with their military, material, economic, human and other resources, despite all sorts of support from the SRJ (VJ) could not ensure efficient execution of the mission (breaking off the occupied areas) and therefore the **'strategy of reprisal' or the 'strategy of real threat' was devised** which was designed to, as its creators openly stated, drive the Republic of Croatia into 'long and agonizing death';
- That the 'strategy of reprisal' **was designed to deter the Republic of Croatia** from any type of attempt to use military means to **liberate and reintegrate its then occupied areas**, under the threat of inflicting 'unacceptable losses' by using artillery-rocket systems on towns and other non-military facilities (civilian targets).

In these types of conditions either the efforts of the Republic of Croatia or the international community were no longer showing any signs of the possibility of reintegrating the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia into its state and legal system in a peaceful manner, and especially not in the near or reasonably acceptable period of time. With respect to the same it became apparent:

- That even the UNPROFOR mandate as it was defined and with the means and methods by which it was supposed to be realized, was going to provide any guarantee that the reintegration of occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia was going to be carried out successfully, while even the basic presumptions for the same didn't exist as for example:
 - demilitarization of the UNPA areas,
 - return of refugees to the UNPA areas,
 - establishment of Croatian government in the so-called 'pink' zones
 - prevention of combat operations from the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia toward western Bosnia and towns in the free part of the Republic of Croatia;

Draft translation

- That the situation in the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia was very strongly conditioned by the situation in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina given the area of the Serb Republic was:
 - providing the necessary operational depth for an efficient defense of the occupied areas;
 - enabling linking (traffic, territorial, political, economical, national) of 'Serb countries' in the absence of which the realization of the idea of the 'Greater Serbia' would not be possible,
 - one of the factors on which the implementation of the 'strategy of real threat' was based.

After nearly five years of occupation of a part of the Croatian state territory, by operation 'Storm' the major part of that area was liberated and its integration into the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia was made possible.

However, it is especially important to note that it was the military operations that were carried out in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina with the participation of the Croatian Army /HV/, Croatian Defense Council /HVO/ and the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina /A BiH/ which either preceded operation 'Storm' or were its logical continuation, that ensured the conditions for the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the defeat of the policy that threatened to cause a permanent destabilization of the region.

In the end it enabled:

- the peaceful reintegration of the then UNPA Sector 'East' into the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia,
- removing the danger of a potential military or terrorist threat from the border areas of the Republic of Croatia and
- the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the formation of the Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Draft translation

Without going into the clarifications of other (relevant) contexts in which operation 'Storm' was being carried out, as for example political, national, religious, regional, diplomatic, geo-strategic, historic etc., and by reviewing mainly the military dimension (military aspects of the causes, reasons, conditions of implementation and achievements) this expert report shows:

- that the military-police operation **'Storm' was a regular and legitimate military operation, with long-term planning and preparations¹** and finally it was carried out with the aim of liberating and integrating the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia into its state and legal system, with the use of military means, while earlier efforts by the Republic of Croatia and the international community to achieve the reintegration through political means and in a peaceful manner was not accomplishing the expected and desired results;
- that the **possibility of a military liberation of the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia was prepared from the very beginning of the aggression against the Republic of Croatia**, as an alternative if all other activities conducted for the purpose of reintegrating the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia in a peaceful manner and through political means, would not provide the desired results in a reasonable period of time, and they were particularly actualized and intensified after the emergence of the 'strategy of real threat';
- that the **time and the manner of carrying out operation 'Storm' were conditioned** by the development of the general situation in the wider and closer environment of the Republic of Croatia and particularly by the military **situation in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and mainly in the area of Bihać and Grahovo.**

¹ Referat /Report/, Staff Brigadier Obradović, Zagreb, 19 September 1995, **Annex 1-1**

Draft translation

The contents of the expert report are divided in four chapters:

- **The first chapter** points to the genesis of the (armed) rebellion of the Serb ethnic population in Croatia directed against the creation of an independent state of Croatia and for the purpose of realizing the idea of the 'Greater Serbia';
 - It explains the role of the JNA who was a determining factor for this kind of development of events, as well as the fact that the previous, at least formally Yugoslav army transformed into the Serb army;
 - It points to the connection between the idea and the policy of the 'Greater Serbia' and the realization of the same policy through the creation, functioning and sustention of the 'Republic of Serb Krajina' and its 'army' as a unified part of 'Serb territories' or rather 'Serb armies'.

- **The second chapter** explains the importance of announcing the 'strategy of real threat' as a lever and as an attempt to permanently maintain the status of occupation:
 - The focus of the first part of this chapter is on the explanation of the theoretical-doctrinal significance of the adoption and implementation of the strategy of real threat;
 - The second part presents the genesis of the inception of the ideological concept of operation 'Storm' as the only possible answer to the strategy of real threat;
 - The third part explains the situation, activities and intentions of the enemy in the period from the adoption of the 'strategy of real threat' to operation 'Storm', in order to demonstrate that this strategy was implemented in practice and that the liberation of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia and their reintegration was not possible without a military operation.

Draft translation

- **The third chapter** explains that the implementation of the UNPROFOR mandate was not able to provide any guarantee that the reintegration of the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia was going to be conducted in a peaceful manner, mainly due to the lack of cooperation from the Serb side, but also due to the indecisiveness of certain parts of the UNPROFOR contingent to compel the Serb 'side' to a cooperative attitude.

- Aside from the importance of the activities the SVK had carried out in the period of time after operation 'Flash', **the fourth chapter** also explains the significance and the influence the situation and activities of the warring parties in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina had on the final planning and carrying out of operation 'Storm'. It points out that operation 'Storm', even though it had a decisive role in the liberation of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia, was also part of the overall military activities, including the ones which preceded it and the ones that followed, and were realized by forces of the HVO, HV and A BiH in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which led to the final ending of war activities in the area of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the end to a defeat of the policy which threatened the (long)lasting destabilization of the area of southeastern Europe.

Draft translation

1.

AGGRESSION AGAINST THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA –
THE ATTEMPT TO REALIZE THE IDEA OF THE 'GREATER SERBIA'

Introduction

On 28 June 1989 on the occasion of the celebration of the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo, on Gazimestan, not far from Priština, a big gathering was organized where Slobodan Milošević delivered a speech saying among other things the following:

"Today, six centuries later, we again find ourselves in battles and before battles. They are not armed battles, even though the same are not excluded yet. However, regardless of what kind they are, battles cannot be won without determination, courage and sacrifice."

Thus, only three years after the publication of the 'Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts' which revived and actualized the 19th century-born idea of the 'Greater Serbia', Milošević openly spoke about a time before the battle, in which he didn't exclude the possibility of armed battle.

These are battles which in accordance with the idea of the 'Greater Serbia' and as a result of the assertion that *"Serbs are historically, ethnologically and anthropogeographically the most valuable population and the core of the Balkan peninsula and thus have the right to include in its state every country where there are Serbs and naturally, rule them"*² (tr. remark: free translation) and in accordance with the hypothesis of the Memorandum that *"the Serb nation was robbed after World War II and*

² Stanko Žuljević, Izvori velikosrpske agresije, pg. 328, Annex 1-2

Draft translation

every Serb outside Serbia in other federal parts of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia /SFRJ/ was in danger” (tr. remark: free translation) were undertaken in order to vivify the mentioned slogan of ‘all Serbs in one state’.

This was the time when the break of the SFRJ was already foreseeable and declared as the only ‘cohesive’ factor of the unified SFRJ which could and had to ensure the realization of the slogan *“all Serbs in one state”* was (it declared itself) the then Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA).

The mentioned ‘Memorandum’ and the leadership of the then Federal Republic of Serbia created a basis for the realization of the intent to dominate 2/3 of the area of the former SFRJ. The party-political leadership of Serbia gradually commenced the realization of that idea with the assistance of the then federal army – JNA, which gradually turned into the instrument of the Serb (‘Greater-Serb’) policy.

The idea of the ‘Greater Serbia’ could not have been realized prior to meeting certain conditions. The political leadership of the then Serbia systematically worked on meeting those conditions:

- Redefining the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Serbia which practically revoked the status of autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina within Serbia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia which presented the first step towards the creation of the ‘Greater Serbia’
- Violent suppression of movements and protests of the Kosovo Albanians in their efforts to achieve autonomy,
- Expansion of Serbia to the territories of the former republics of the SFRJ, particularly to parts of the territory of the Republic of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The fall of the SFRJ and the emergence of new states in the area of the former SFRJ, was interpreted by ideologists and realizers of the idea of the ‘Greater Serbia’ as a direct threat to Serb national interests therefore this threat had to be prevented even by armed force – by the use of the then JNA.

Draft translation

Thus, on the incentive and with the support of the SRJ and the direct engagement of the JNA a significant number of the Serb population in the Republic of Croatia participated in the aggression against the Republic of Croatia (RH) who didn't want Croatia as their state but attempted to break off a part of Croatian territory from the mother country, approximately to the line Virovitica, Kupa River, Karlovac, Karlobag, and in order to create the 'Greater Serbia'.

The book by General Veljko Kadijević³ 'Moje Viđenje Raspada'⁴ testifies 'exactly' to this point where among other things the author states the following:

"The principal ideas behind the basic concept for deploying the JNA in the Yugoslav region were:

- *Total defeat of the Croatian Army, if the situation so allowed, and certainly to the degree that would enable fulfillment of the set goals;*
- *Full coordination with Serb insurgents in the Serbian Krajina;*
- *Completion..."*

"The idea behind this maneuver embraced the following basic elements:

- *A total air and sea blockade of Croatia;*
- *The directions of offensives of the main forces of the JNA directly connected to the liberation of Serb regions in Croatia and JNA garrisons deep inside Croatian territory. To this end cut Croatia along the following lines: Gradiška-Virovitica; Bihać-Karlovac-Zagreb; Knin-Zadar; Mostar-Split. The strongest group of armored mechanized forces would liberate Eastern Slavonia and then move quickly westward, linking up with forces in Western Slavonia and proceeding on to Zagreb and Varaždin, i.e. toward the Slovene frontier. At the same time, strong forces from the Herceg Novi-Trebinje region would be used to block Dubrovnik from land and break into the Neretva valley thus linking up operations with forces working along the Mostar-Split line.*

³ At the time of the fall of Yugoslavia, General Kadijević was carrying out the duty of the Federal Secretary of National Defense which was in fact the duty of the Minister of Defense of the SFRY.

⁴ Veljko Kadijević, *Moje viđenje raspada – vojska bez države/My view of the Break-Up – A Military Without a State*, Politika, Beograd, 1993 (pg 134-135), **Annex 1-3**

Draft translation

- *After the seizure of certain installations, secure and hold the border of the Serbian Krajina in Croatia, withdraw the remaining troops of the JNA from Slovenia and subsequently pull the JNA out of Croatia;*
- *.....”*

However, it is important to note that on page 134, at the end of the third paragraph, the following is also said very clearly:

“...full awareness that the role of the Serb nation in Bosnia and Herzegovina would be instrumental to the future of the Serb nation at large. The location of JNA forces was to be adjusted accordingly.”

General Kadijević thus anticipated in a certain way what was going to happen in the end: the defeat of the Greater-Serbian policy with respect to Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina would have to occur in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, precisely in accordance with the above stated ‘location’ of the JNA, the Serb forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina occupied (controlled) over 70 percent of the territory of Bosnia in Herzegovina⁵ until 1994, and only during the joint operations by the A BiH, HVO and the HV led in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina after operation ‘Storm’ the conditions were created for a military defeat of the Army of the Serb Republic (‘VRS’) and following, the defeat of the Greater-Serbian policy.

1.1. Transformation of the JNA to the Serb army – from the Military ‘without a State’ to the military above the State

The transformation of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA) from the armed force of ‘all nations and nationalities’, as it was usually referred to in political vocabulary of the

⁵ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map "L", **Annex 1-4**

Draft translation

time, to the army of one nation or the Serb army⁶ (which continued to be used as a concept and title) which occurred during the 1980's deserves special attention.

The need for this special attention arises from the undisputable fact that precisely the transformation of the JNA to the Serb army was one of the relevant phenomena of the crisis in the former SFRJ. More precisely, this phenomenon was actually partly causing and complicating even further the political crisis in the former state, and it undoubtedly had a key role in imposing the war as the manner of its 'resolution'.

What this means is that firstly the threat of using armed force and later the use of the same with the aim of rendering impossible the realization of legitimate aspirations for independence outside the SFRJ, and under the justification of 'saving the state' inevitably led to and resulted in war in the area of the former Yugoslavia.

1.1.1. The position of the JNA in the system of defense and the Yugoslav society

From several viewpoints the position of the JNA in Yugoslav society was particular and even unusual with respect to the constitutional determinants of the armed forces of contemporary states of the second half of the 20th century. Such determinants of its position were starting to be manifested during the 1980's, therefore in the time of the intensification and complication of the Yugoslav crisis. The most important one is that the JNA acted in Yugoslav society as one of the most important political factors and we could say that in this way all the other specific characteristics of its position were being demonstrated.

In the constitutional respect, the JNA was identified as a 'common armed force of all nations and nationalities' and as a 'part of the unified armed forces' formed together with the Territorial Defense (TO).

⁶ This of course includes everyone else who for different reasons accepted the slogan of the 'fight for Yugoslavia' even though it was simply a front for unitarian Greater-Serb ambitions.

Draft translation

Its role was to 'protect the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and the constitutional social system of the SFRJ' together with the TO.

Therefore, the task of the JNA, according to the Constitution, comprised of two parts:

- defense of the country from an outer aggression and
- protection of the constitutional order.⁷

On the basis of such position in the system, the JNA was politically treated primarily as an 'important factor of internal stability' and later, as relations within the Federation were falling intensively into a crisis, as 'one of the most important' integrating factors of the state which in time reached the description of the 'only remaining true' factor of unity and territorial integrity of the country.

An important feature of the position of the JNA can be found in the fact that there was an 'Organization of the SKJ /League of Communists/ within the JNA' as a part of the SKJ which held the position almost equal to the one of the SK /leagues of communists/ of the republics and provinces of the former SFRJ. This fact by itself enabled it to act in the Yugoslav political stage as a truly independent and even as a formally independent political factor.

We could say that on the basis of the fact that aside from being the 'armed force of all nations and nationalities' the JNA objectively held the position in the system as an 'armed force of the party' or as a 'party force'. Understandably, this needs to be perceived in the ideological-political sense and not the functional sense.

This generated significant negative consequences which manifested most drastically in the political usurpations of the JNA leadership, the most grave being the transformation of the JNA into the Serb army and the act of provoking and imposing war on account of Greater-Serbian policy and under the excuse of 'saving Yugoslavia'. The stated usurpations of the political role in the Yugoslav crisis become particularly

⁷ There is a basis for the assertion that a constitutional-legal expert report would demonstrate that these were in fact two sides of one main task, the defense from outer aggression, but this is not the subject of this report, rather what the usual interpretation of the constitutional definition was.

Draft translation

apparent when you observe the system of command of the armed forces of the former state.

One should not forget that standing at the top of the command structure of the armed forces of the SFRJ was the SFRJ Presidency and the highest collective organ of command and control. On behalf of the Presidency, by the Constitution, supreme command was carried out at a given time by the current President, who was elected from the members of the Presidency according to the prescribed procedure for a period of one year. It is no less important that this procedure was instigated after the death of Josip Broz Tito, and later became permanent and the order of 'election' to that duty was already known in advance.

The SFRJ Presidency had the authority to, aside other things, determine the existence of a direct threat of war, to order a general or partial call-up, and if the SFRJ Assembly was unable, to proclaim a general state of war and accordingly approve plans for use and to order the use of armed forces.

It needs to be pointed out that the very combat use of the armed forces, or rather units and other effectives of the JNA and the TO, was under the exclusive authority of the Presidency and could not have been passed over to lower bodies in the system of command.

The highest administrative organ and simultaneously the staff organ of the supreme command, officially called the 'Supreme Command Staff', was the Federal Secretariat for the National Defense (SSNO), led by the Federal Secretary, and also within the SSNO alongside others was the General Staff of the JNA (GŠ JNA) as the highest staff organ and the operative-planning body of the SSNO.

As such, even though in peacetime it was universally responsible for the conceptual and doctrinal issues of the development and preparation of the armed forces for the country's defense in the event of an aggression, to which purpose the SFRJ Presidency as the Commander in Chief transferred a series of its authorities to the same, the SSNO had no authority to bring decisions on the use and command over the use of JNA troops.

Draft translation

In connection with the second element of the armed forces of the former SFRJ i.e. the Territorial Defense of the republics and provinces, it is sufficient to mention that command and control was under the authority of the republics' and provinces' presidencies which then had the (republic, provincial) TO Staffs as expert operative-planning organs, which were in the operational sense subordinated to the JNA commands of the strategic level, and the supreme command over those forces as well was understandably achieved by the SFRJ Presidency. The apparent dualities and interweaving in this segment of the system is not relevant for this analysis.

Even though it may not appear so from this concise outline of the highest level of the system, the system of command of the armed forces in the former state was in functional terms very complex and subject to blockades, in other words vulnerable. This entirely fundamental feature arose from the very character of the state and its social and political system, including the previously described particular position of the JNA.

Events that occurred in the late 1980's and the armed conflicts at the beginning of the 1990's have demonstrated this fact very realistically.

One should not forget that at the time the JNA leadership almost entirely openly usurped for itself the exclusive right of arbitration in actual political turmoil and conflicts. Accordingly, it tried to impose its own solutions 'in the interest of all', and on the other hand it obstructed and refused every initiative and attempt of other types of solutions, up to a less or more openly demonstrated disobedience and autonomous work or rather the use of the JNA effectives outside its authority, i.e. illegally.

In this manner it brought itself in a position above the state and by continuously accusing others of attempting the same, it objectively blocked the system of command at the highest level.

An abundance of material and evidence which confirm this fact is presented in the already mentioned book by General Veljko Kadijević.

To illustrate the same, the following will be sufficient:

Draft translation

- *"...authors of the 1974 Constitution tried to bring about the fall...by constitutional means...of the entire Yugoslav state, but without providing any constitutional means to stop this from happening...The armed forces were placed in a situation where they had to act unconstitutionally...Some of the other major questions that arose here were: which constitutional order should be protected...What legitimacy was there for such a move..."⁸;*
- *"The second major dilemma was: would the armed forces carry out their tasks within the existing legal system...or would it go against that system...if within the system, how; or rather, if autonomously, how..."⁹;*
- *"...when it came to planning...and written directives, decisions or orders from the Supreme Command, we were unable to work the way virtually all armies in the world do, because any such written document was immediately passed into enemy hands. We were forced, therefore, to work quite differently."¹⁰;*
- The author himself stated that it was a matter of *"...political issue of the first order..."* and asked himself *"...where would this really lead considering the domestic and international situation..."* but as we know he didn't yield under this responsibility. Moreover, he emphasized with self-assurance that he would never follow the example of the Soviet Army, *"which did not lift a finger and the USSR collapsed as a state..."¹¹*

As we can already see on the basis of this partial analysis, the position of the armed forces in society and the system of command allowed for various deformations, as a consequence of the possible conflicts between internal political opposites, and a probable, latent one was precisely the alignment with the unitarian, in fact Great-Serbian policy, and transformation into the means for the attempt of founding its' suitable state.

Understandably, its title is less important. In connection with the above, it hardly needs mention that the national composition of the JNA was the basic prerequisite,

⁸ Annex 1-3, - page 84

⁹ Annex 1-3, - page 87

¹⁰ Annex 1-3, page 91

¹¹ Annex 1-3, page 150

Draft translation

because it is self-explanatory. Looking back from this distance, and especially, after everything, one could say it was only a question of time and a combination of internal and external circumstances when this was going to happen.

Therefore, we need to examine the course of events of the transformation of the JNA into the Serb army and how it was demonstrated.

1.1.2. Process of transformation of the JNA into the Serb army

The gradual transformation of the JNA to the army of one, or rather unitarian and Great-Serbian political option, or so to say one nation, needs to be observed as a process within the framework of an all-round crisis in the former Yugoslav state and its society, which started to increase rapidly after the death of Josip Broz Tito.

What affected the crisis to quicken and become more complicated during the 1980's and eventually to flare it up at the end of the same period were certainly the international circumstances at the time which are not essential to this analysis.

As well as the overall mentioned crisis, the process of the transformation of the JNA itself can be examined in the manner to differentiate between three general periods or stages:

- First - from the appearance of the 'Kosovo issue' from 1981 to 1987;
- Second - from 1988 to 1990;
- Third - the period of concentrated events from the end of 1990 to the beginning of the open aggression against the Republic of Croatia in the summer of 1991.

The first period of the transformation

The first period began with the riots breaking out in Kosovo in spring 1981. After a series of unsuccessful attempts to pacify and normalize the situation, the state leadership very quickly decided to announce a state of emergency and implementation of measures which this kind of decision, in accordance with the constitution and the laws

Draft translation

at the time, enabled and ordered for. Among these measures, the most significant was naturally the use of the JNA. This was the first time the JNA was in fact presented as an armed force which was not only prepared to 'protect the constitutional order and the unity of the country', but was doing so.

Units of the Priština Corps of the JNA deployed in the Province region were brought to the level of war formation, and even though this was not formally stated, they were actively carrying out the role of the main force for the 'normalization' of the situation.

In time, the Corps Command became an 'institution' whose information and evaluation of the situation in Kosovo were perceived as credible and objective i.e. reliable and accurate. The JNA leadership was impressed by this fact, and the appearance of the then SSNO Admiral Mamula at the SFRJ Assembly or at other occasions in Serbia were starting to be used as first-class material and enticement for attacking those leaderships in the country which had a different view of the causes, consequences and manners to overcome the crisis in Kosovo.

Soon those political forces which were not interested in normalizing and pacifying the situation in the Province as to manipulating the problem with the aim of imposing a unitarian, Great-Serbian concept of relations in the state, started to gain power in Serbia.

In this 'vacuum of authority' which had occurred after Tito's death, the JNA leadership started to appear more frequently, less or more publicly, as the adjudicator and the only 'impartial observer' with respect to political issues, feigning 'political correctness' before the state and the society. The 'Kosovo issue' was convenient for them to take on this desired role as very good and strong motive for an increasingly more open expression of their dissatisfaction with the 'vacillation of the country' and particularly the Serb republic 'caused' by the current 1974 Constitution.

In the process, the military leadership pulled the JNA to the side of those forces in Serbia which by using Kosovo as a motive and an argument, started a political confrontation with the 'western republics' as Slovenia and Croatia were called at the time, and with the aim of imposing changes to the Constitution in accordance with the mentioned unitarian and Great-Serbian concept.

Draft translation

This period, among other things, was also marked by the changes in the organization and the system of command of the JNA on the strategic level, which were imposed by the military leadership, and which are still sometimes the subject of dispute and speculation as to their motives and political background.

What this means is that until then the existing organization of the JNA mostly corresponded to the areas of the republics and provinces, thus each of them had its 'own' army (or armies), which was the designation of the strategic-operative group, or rather Monte Negro and the provinces had 'their own' corps. The military leadership started to assess this as the consequence of the *"...the spirit of dismantling all that was federal, including the army."*¹², in the 1974 Constitution.

As the subject of the *"...fiercest attacks by the destroyers of Yugoslavia..."* as Veljko Kadijević put it in his book, there was a reorganization in the mid-1980's, and instead of the previous six armies, three intermediate zones were formed (strategic groups – northwest, central and southeast), whose territorial division ignored the borders of the republics and provinces. Alongside, the staffs of the republican and provincial Territorial Defense were operationally subordinate to the intermediate commands, which was particularly indicative. According to Kadijević, the aim was to undermine the *"republics' and provinces' already established control of their territorial defense units"* and reduce *"their already legalized influence on the JNA"*.¹³

Therefore, regardless of the attempts during those years (mid 1980's) to make the persuasion that reasons of a military, i.e. strategic-operative, nature were the ones which predominantly caused these changes, there can be no doubt that the true motive was political, and more precisely, directly unitarian, regardless of how the creators designated it and even perceived it. V. Kadijević's assessment that this was the subject of 'fiercest attacks' as well as the fact that the stated changes took place despite this opposition, and even without the approval of Slovenia, which was a precedent, portray

¹² Annex 1-3, - page 75

¹³ Annex 1-3, - page 78

Draft translation

how the military leadership by involving itself in the political domain, really did create and exacerbate the Yugoslav crisis.

Understandably, it was no accident that this period was also marked by the 'appearance' i.e. public proclamation of the well-known 'SANU Memorandum' by which the Serb intellectual 'elite' presented to the public the 'problem of the Serb nation in another Yugoslavia'.

This was a truly significant political event in the circumstances at the time, and we could also say, a political event with long-term political effects. Nevertheless, it is important and sufficient to state regarding this issue that the appearance of the 'Memorandum', unlike many other events of significantly less importance, caused a very tepid reaction by the JNA. We could almost say that it 'went by unnoticed'. This, naturally, confused the opponents, but even more important and encouraging for the supporters of the 'Memorandum' view of the then political and other issues in the country.

At the end, what also needs to be mentioned is that the very 'ending' of this period was marked by the establishment of control of the bureaucratic – nationalist and unitarian powers in the Serb SK /League of Communists/ and the sudden appearance of Slobodan Milošević on the political stage of the country. What followed was the period in which the military leadership tried to maintain a public appearance of distancing themselves from Milošević's policy, while actively supporting it, not merely by creating conditions and 'opening room' for politically corresponding requests and initiatives but already with simply showing no opposition. We will attempt to demonstrate this more directly in the continuation.

The second period of the transformation

The second period (1988 – 1990) as the logical continuation of what preceded it was marked by intensified political activity of the JNA. The same activity was directed toward imposing and even forcing changes to the Constitution which would, among

Draft translation

other things, enable more secure financing of the JNA and therefore bigger autonomy in decision-making, but also obstructing and compromising the activities of those powers in the country which were increasingly more strongly requesting for democratic change and the establishment of a multi-party system.

Based on the initiatives from Serbia and the JNA in 1988 some of these changes were introduced in the Constitution of the SFRJ. However, what were the true intentions behind those initiatives can be found in the following assessment by Veljko Kadijević:

*"...The only truly positive results came from those amendments which dealt with the position of the autonomous provinces...and which, through the amendments to the Constitution of the SFRJ enabled the creation of the integral Republic of Serbia."*¹⁴

The factual abolishment of the previous autonomies of the provinces was assessed by the military leadership as 'useful' on the one hand, but on the other hand as a failed attempt to 'relatively strengthen the federal state with the introduction of the 1988 amendments.' The full ambitions at the time are further clarified by Kadijević only in 1993 when he publicly stated that the 'military leadership' even then (1988/1989) *"called for rapidly creating a new Yugoslavia"* from those nations which *"truly wanted to live in a common state"*

Therefore, this shows that the pretended position of principle: that *"the army would not take any political decisions but would take part in preparing all political decisions in whose implementation it was involved"*¹⁵ was merely an empty phrase, and that even in the time of the 1988 amendments to the Constitution the military, entirely directly even though not publicly took the side of 'those' who according to their judgment 'wanted to live in a common state'.

The political nature of this decision is quite clear. Since then, the military leadership of the former state definitely usurped itself the right of passing political judgment and labeling in the lines of 'for or against the state' thus bringing itself,

¹⁴ Annex 1-3, - page 104

¹⁵ Annex 1-3, - page 90

Draft translation

dissatisfied with the current state, to the position of a 'military without a state' (Kadijević) and truly – a military above the state.

Parallel with the strong pressures directed toward 'fixing the country' to their own standards, the military leadership conducted a military-expert planning and preparation for the use of the armed forces in accordance with the current assessments of the domestic and international situation, and for the purpose of creating a 'new Yugoslavia'. The plans were modified and elaborated depending on the development of the situation.

For illustration purposes it is worth mentioning some of the guidelines of the basic concept of the deployment of the armed forces. Thus Kadijević wrote, that they planned to *"take action and engage in activities that would enable the armed forces to perform their tasks by means of deterrence..."*

This should be interpreted, among other things, as a 'demonstration of force' which in fact resulted in the continuous rising of tensions within the society and instigating 'war psychoses.

Furthermore, *"to let the enemy attack first so that the whole world could see who the real aggressor was and what it wanted"*

Only someone very naïve could interpret this as a course toward passively waiting, because it is evident, and events have confirmed it, that there truly existed a plan to provoke conflicts in order to create a motive for an intervention of JNA units. With respect to the above stated, we also need to analyze the causes of the Serb rebellion against the Republic of Croatia.

And finally, the guideline of the idea, the realization of which was interpreted very controversially in the public, is the following: *"paralyze territorial defense in those parts of the country where it might provide a basis for creating the armies of secessionist republics"*.

Kadijević here continues to write lies that with this aim *"all territorial defense units were disarmed"* and goes on to immediately refute himself by clarifying that they *"used*

Draft translation

*the territorial defense of Serb regions in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in tandem with the JNA”.*¹⁶

As was the decision to disarm the territorial defense units brought by the SFRJ Presidency after tremendous pressures by the JNA leadership, the realization of other ‘ideas’ of deployment of the armed forces also presumed the persistent effort to legally legitimize the same. This is why the end of this period was marked with the effort to provoke in various ways and impose the decision on the proclamation of the state of emergency in the country, in order to ‘cover up’ the intentions and activities aimed at rendering impossible the instigated democratic changes. The obstacle in this direction was the absence of a ‘real state’ and a ‘real Commander-in-Chief in the form of the SFRJ Presidency’, as described by the then JNA leading officer.

For the purpose of removing or at least alleviating this ‘absence’, the military leadership attempted to put S. Milošević at the duty of the President of the Government (SIV – Federal Executive Council) but Milošević and the Serb leadership rejected this proposal. However, what is important is that their different appraisal *“concerned not the goals, but how they were to be achieved.”*¹⁷ It goes without saying that this was merely Milošević’s well-known sense of pragmatism. It is indicative that in those years Milošević in fact almost never made statements in his appearances in favor of the JNA and particularly referred to the JNA. This was obviously a ‘silent partnership’ on a joint ‘task’ because there was not even the least criticism from the military leadership directed at the Serbian leadership or public support.

The first half of 1990 which so to speak represents the end of this period, was, aside from the mentioned disarmament of the TO, marked by attempts of the JNA leadership to ‘push through’ certain decisions through the SFRJ Presidency and the Federal Executive Council which would to all purposes render impossible and delay indefinitely the multi-party elections in Slovenia and Croatia.

¹⁶ Annex 1-3, - pages 93-96

¹⁷ Annex 1-3, - page 106

Draft translation

At that time, alongside other things, direct pressure was also made at the leadership of the then Federal Republic of Croatia at the specially held meeting in Zagreb one month prior to the elections, and on the initiative of the SSNO. When even that didn't succeed, actions were made which would occur prior to and were the direct preparations for the total and open appearance in the role of the army which 'is creating a new state'.

The third period of the transformation

Thus we enter the third period of this process, which was significant for its concentrated set of events in a relatively short period of time, the strong psychological and propaganda activities aimed at compromising the multi-party system, and particularly the policy of the parties that were elected to power, and provoking 'international conflicts' in order to create a motive for JNA intervention, either under the legitimacy of acting in a state of emergency or in the manner of some variation of a 'coup d'etat'.

With respect to the above stated, further modifications of the plans for deployment of JNA units were made and according to this newly-defined task – "*defend the right of those nations which wish to live in the common state of Yugoslavia*", which in fact means to *enter into armed conflict with those who no longer wish to live in Yugoslavia*.

Clearly, this kind of decision in the then current conditions couldn't have been accepted through regular procedure and by everybody, in its form it was autonomous and the result of the usurpation of impartial political and even less legal role. What follows is that this 'defense' could have been carried out only in the manner of a conspiracy or a criminal endeavor.

Furthermore, this entails certain according, hidden and secret activities of specialized services i.e. elements of the security-intelligence system of the JNA, relying on the Serbian SDB /State Security Service/ and others.

Draft translation

In a relatively short period of time the first significant effect of such concealed activity became apparent in the form of the well-known 'Log Revolution' in the Knin area and parts of Lika and Kordun which were primarily populated by Serbs, in August 1990.

From that point on, the exacerbation of created tensions was enticed and in fact a 'crisis situation' was being managed. This management depicts the course of events from the continuous emphasis of the increasingly less acceptable political demands toward the Republic of Croatia as a state, to the known 'incidents' regarding the opening of new police stations (Plitvice, Kijevo) and the policemen 'rebellion' (Pakrac, Glina).

A specific course of such action was the discovery and monitoring of the preparations for defense against anticipated JNA intervention in the Republic of Croatia which was labeled as illegal armament and formation of paramilitary armed compositions.

This area was assessed as the most favorable for **all types** of political compromising of the new government of the Republic of Croatia including a realistically feasible attempt to sanction the same pursuant to the then Law on Military Courts as a criminal offence of 'preparing an armed rebellion' and others within the scope of 'counter-revolutionary threat to the social order determined by the SRFY Constitution'.

At the same time, this was perceived as an opportunity for a new stronger attempt to force the decision on the proclamation of the state of emergency in the state.

However, when that also failed on the well-known session of the SFRJ Presidency (12-15 March 1991) the military leadership directed everything toward provoking armed conflicts.

A particularly significant component of the overall activity of the JNA during this period was contained in the enticement and assistance to the military organization of the 'defense of the Serb people in Croatia'. Naturally, this meant arming the Serb population with weapons from the JNA storage, and the secret training of units from the war composition of the JNA and the TO in the areas which were later declared as the "SAO

Draft translation

Krajina /Serbian Autonomous District of Krajina/”¹⁸. How this was carried out according to the ‘modified role of the JNA in relation to its role as defined by the Constitution’, according to Kadijević, is presented in the *“principal idea of the basic concept”* and its goal that was *“to protect the Serb nation in Croatia...and to enable it to....and militarily organize itself for defense...to fulfill its task within the scope of ‘preventing clashes between the nations’, as worded in the SFRJ Presidency...”*¹⁹

On the basis of this the ‘strengthening of military organization’ followed which meant enlarging the units by forming a higher lever of command, of course, with replenishments in personnel and other military-expert activities from the JNA.

All of this was directed toward the realization of the fundamental and unique idea to carry out the ‘protection of the Serb nation in Croatia’ *“in such a way that all regions with a majority Serb population would be completely freed from the presence of the Croatian army and the Croatian authorities...”*²⁰

Therefore, the goal was radical, and the same was the occupation and plunder of parts of someone else’s territory.

What the plan was, is particularly evident in the idea behind the maneuver of the ‘operative-strategic assault operation’ (read: aggression), as revealed by V. Kadijević²¹:

“....

- a total air and sea blockade of Croatia;*
- The directions of offensives of the main forces of the JNA directly connected to the liberation of Serb regions in Croatia and JNA garrisons deep inside Croatian territory. To this end cut Croatia along the following lines: Gradiška-Virovitica; Bihać-Karlovac-Zagreb; Knin-Zadar; Mostar-Split. The strongest group of armored mechanized forces would liberate Eastern Slavonia and then move quickly*

¹⁸ The types of deceptions that were attempted is also evident in the fact that in the Knin area in January 1991 within the ‘action of disarming paramilitary formations’ there was in fact a certain amount of weapons ‘collected and handed over’, which was supposed to be the proof of the ‘equal’ approach by the JNA and the ‘cooperation’ of the Serbs.

¹⁹ Annex 1-3, - page 127

²⁰ Annex 1-3, - page 134

²¹ Annex 1-3, - page 135

Draft translation

westward, linking up with forces in Western Slavonia and proceeding on to Zagreb and Varaždin...

..At the same time, strong forces from the Herceg Novi-Trebinje region would be used to block Dubrovnik from land and break into the Neretva valley thus linking up operations with forces working along the Mostar-Split line.

- after the seizure of certain installations, secure and hold the border of the Serbian Krajina in Croatia..."

If we take into account the when and how this plan was designed and created, and particularly the consequences its implementation created, there cannot be even the slightest doubt regarding the fact that the JNA leadership is truly responsible for the war caused by the criminal endeavor.

Equally, it is absolutely clear that definitely in spring 1991 by the policy of the military leadership even the last admixtures of Yugoslav character disappeared, which truly left only the empty usual designator 'JNA'.

Without attempting to presume that the phenomenon of the transformation of the JNA into the Serb army was sufficiently integrally covered, the presented contents show to the validity of certain important assertions regarding this issue:

- The transformation of the JNA to the Serb army is one of the particular and especially important phenomena of the crisis in the former SFRJ;
- This type of deformation of the JNA arose from the character of the very social and political system in which it (JNA) as an entirely ideologized and politicized armed force which, based on the nature of things, latently strived to get involved and arbitrate in the political and even in other social domains, naturally, personalized in appearance and activity of individuals who for a long period of time presented the "military leadership";
- During the Yugoslav crisis, the military leadership gradually usurped itself with more and more right of passing political judgment and labeling in the lines of 'for or against' Yugoslavia which didn't belong to them and in its activities further complicated the existing and created new political problems and conflicts, and given that it misused the 'authority' of armed

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force, including the threat of its use, is objectively most responsible for the war(s) in the area of the former SFRJ. This, and particularly because it placed armed force in the service of one policy and one nation, deciding without authority to 'create a state of nations who wish to live in it';

- In the final period of the crisis, the activities of the military leadership were marked by the maneuvering on the very edge of the constitution and the law of the former state, and in the first half of 1991 the preparations for use began and the use of the armed forces which was against the law and at the beginning by voluntary interpretation of the superiors' decisions, and later by complete autonomous action;
- The stated activities had all the marks of a conspiracy and of a criminal endeavor because they were carried out outside and against the existing institutions of the system even with directly and publicly waiving obedience to their superiors who were 'in the process' labeled as the 'destroyers of Yugoslavia' and 'haters of the Serb nation' and the initial evidence of the stated can be found in the mentioned book by V. Kadijević. Its credibility in this respect is significant because it was written not long after the events it describes and while the author still didn't anticipate that the 'mission' was going to fail, he is certain that he 'did the right thing'.

1.2. Support in maintaining the established status of occupation

1.2.1. Establishing occupation and the 'Serb Army of Krajina'

In accordance with the principal ideas behind the basic concept the JNA carried out its tasks and General Kadijević also spoke about this as a witness during the trial against General Vlado Trifunović, and the Belgrade daily newspaper 'Borba' wrote about it in the issue dated 18 May 1993:

"If the Vance Plan hadn't been signed, we would have even gone to Zagreb", with this statement the Army General Veljko Kadijević started his testimony in the

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process against General V. Trifunović. For the first time before the Criminal Council of the Military Court the previous first man of JNA publicly stated the Army's tasks in Croatia. The phrasing of the SFRJ Presidency "preventing clashes between the nations" actually meant "liberating Serb regions, and pulling out JNA units to the borders of one future Yugoslavia". This first task was carried out to the full because 1/3 of the Croatian territory remained in Serb hands, said Kadijević. Aside from this, he continued, one army managed to create three – the army of Yugoslavia, army of the Serb Republic and enabled the creation of an army in Serb regions. Veljko Kadijević claimed that "the entire SFRJ Presidency was not informed of this plan instead was presented with only partial and initial ideas, while the orders to corps commanders were issued orally so that the enemy wouldn't discover them." As their enemies he declared the "Croatian army, the indoctrinated Croatian people, the international community and the very organized and synchronized peace movement of pacifists and mothers". One of the questions was also why the JNA didn't also occupy Zagreb after Vukovar, and Kadijević answered the following: "we didn't proceed to Zagreb because the Vance plan had been signed and we didn't want to violate it. If this hadn't been done, we would have freed up our units." In the end he added that he knows that Croatia convicted him for war crimes and the destruction of Osijek, Dubrovnik, Vukovar...still he concluded: "I was acting on my conscience and I would do the same again". (tr. remark: free translation)

In reality, after the fall of Vukovar, General Kadijević intended (wanted) to continue JNA activity in the direction of Zagreb (the corridor along the Sava River) and Varaždin (the corridor along the Drava River) however, this type of activity was not approved by the state leadership.²²

The JNA practically established and organized the state of occupation in parts of the territory of the Republic of Croatia by providing continuous support to all activities and particularly those related to the formation of the 'Serb army', the transformation

²² "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume II", Central Intelligence Agency, October 2003, pages 207-208, **Annex 1-5**

Draft translation

(organization, manning, formation, training) of the 'territorial defense' to the 'Army of the Serb Krajina' (SVK) whose formation became formal on 19 March 1992.

The **Army of the Serb Krajina** was formed (among others) into 6 operative compositions (corps') of different formations and strength, deployed across regional divisions of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia (the then RSK – Republic of Serb Krajina). These were the following:

- **11th East-Slavonian Corps**, composed of:
 - 6 motorized (infantry) brigades (the 35th, 37th, 39th, 40th, 43rd, 45th)
 - 1 mixed artillery regiment (map)
 - 2 batteries of Medium Self-Propelled Air Defense Rocket Regiment /ssrp/ "KUB"
 - and a total strength of
 - 10.000 – 11.000 men²³
 - 120 to 130 tanks
 - 65 to 70 OT /armored personnel carrier/ BVP /infantry combat vehicle/
 - 120 to 130 artillery weapons 105mm caliber or larger

- **18th West-Slavonian Corps**, composed of:
 - 3 light (infantry) brigades (the 51st, 54th and 98th)
 - 2 squads (59th and 63rd)

²³ Information regarding the numerical strength of soldiers in the corps' and other units of the SVK do not relate to the wartime formation but rather to the average level of manning in the period of time prior to the signing of the 'Zagreb Agreement'. These are generally information from the assessments of the Intelligence Administration of the GSHV ('Prosudba stanja, mogućnosti i namjera neprijatelja' /Assessment of the situation, capabilities and intentions of the enemy/ dated 07 November 1993, **Annex 1-6**, or rather the "Intelligence assessment of the possible development of events on the military-political aspect and a possible threat to the Republic of Croatia in the upcoming period , particularly in the different possibilities of engagement of the Croatian Army', 26 March 1994, **Annex 1-7**.). The numerical strength was somewhat larger immediately after the formation of the SVK and evidence of the same can be found in the statement by General Mile Novaković, **Annex 1-8**.

Draft translation

- and a total strength of
 - 4.000 to 4.500 men
 - 25 to 30 tanks
 - 20 OT/BVP
 - 50 to 55 artillery weapons of 105mm caliber or larger

- **39th Banija Corps**, composed of:
 - 4 infantry (light) brigades (the 24th, 26th, 31st and 33rd)
 - 1 squad
 - 1 armored battalion (okb)
 - 1 mixed artillery regiment (map)
 - and a total strength of
 - 5.000 to 6.000 men
 - 40 to 50 tanks
 - 20 OT/BVP
 - 110 to 120 artillery weapons of 105mm caliber or larger

- **21st Kordun Corps**, composed of:
 - 4 light brigades (the 3rd, 11th, 13th and 19th)
 - 2 mixed artillery battalions (mad)
 - and a total strength of
 - 4.500 to 5.000 men
 - 45 to 50 tanks
 - 20 OT/BVP
 - 65 to 70 artillery weapons of 105mm caliber or larger

- **15th Lika Corps**, composed of:
 - 1 mtbr /motorized brigade/ (the 9th)
 - 4 infantry (light) brigades (the 18th, 50th, 70th and 103rd)
 - 2 mad
 - and a total strength of

Draft translation

- 5.500 to 6.000 men
 - 60 to 70 tanks
 - 25 to 30 OT/BVP
 - 70 to 75 artillery weapons of 105mm caliber or larger
- **7th North-Dalmatian Corps**, composed of:
 - 2 mtbr (the 75th and 92nd)
 - 2 light brigades (the 1st and 4th)²⁴
 - 2 infantry brigades (2nd and 3rd)
 - 1 map
 - 1 PZO light artillery regiment (ltp)
 - 2 PZO KUB ssrp batteries
 - and a total strength of
 - 8.000 to 9.000 men
 - 90 to 100 tanks
 - 45 to 50 OT/BVP
 - 110 to 120 artillery weapons of 105mm caliber or larger
 - 1 air force squadron (12 to 16 'Jastreb' and 'Galeb' airplanes)
 - 1 air force squadron (3 'Gazela', 4 'Ga-MA' and 2 MI-8 helicopters)
- **1 R-65 'Luna' rocket division o**
 - **4 'Orkan' multiple rocket launchers**
 - **a PZO rocket brigade**
 - **75th mabr /mixed artillery brigade/**
 - **other staff units and institutions of the GS SVK /Main Staff of the SVK/**

This was thus an army with the composition of approx. 40.000 – 50.000 men, which also had a substantially and absolutely large number of various weapons and weapons systems and could present and did present a real threat, from which the

²⁴ The 4th light brigade was not formed immediately with the formation of the corps, but later in 1993

Draft translation

'strategy of real threat' was carried out in 1993 and the same was based on at least three factors of 'deflection' from attempts to possibly liberate the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia by military means, and these were the following:

- the threat the SVK presented with its strength and operative deployment
- the threat of SVK artillery (rocket and artillery weapons) in range of numerous larger (including Zagreb) and smaller cities in the Republic of Croatia;
- the possibility of engaging part of the forces from the composition of the Yugoslav Army (VJ) and/or the Army of the Serb Republic (VRS) (border areas of the Republic of Croatia) as an operative or strategic reserve, as direct reinforcements or as direct support.

However, since the SVK could not have been formed at all without the overall and diverse help and support of the JNA, equally so its further activity in the function of maintaining the state of occupation of part of the territory of the Republic of Croatia where the self-proclaimed 'Republic of Serb Krajina' ('RSK') existed, would not be possible without the constant support of the VJ.

1.2.2. Support the SRJ (VJ) gave to the 'RSK' (SVK)

The support the SRJ or rather the JNA (VJ) provided to the 'RSK' or rather the SVK, can be differentiated according to its form into three time periods:

- prior to the rebellion,
- from the first signs of rebellion to the establishment of the 'RSK' and the SVK,
- from the formation of the SVK to Operation 'Storm',

still, **the aim of this support** had always been to ensure conditions for the secession of the so-called 'Serbian territories' from the mother country Croatia and their incorporation into a 'unique Serbian land' in order to form the 'Greater Serbia' (new Yugoslavia), and across all three periods of time, two 'constants' can be recognized:

Draft translation

- Political – establishment of the 'RSK' and secession from the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of achieving the idea of the 'Greater Serbia'
- Military – direct support to the stated policy with no limitations as regards to the manner and funds of realizing the same support.

Various contents and forms of military support (i.e. cooperation), particularly in the period after the formation of the SVK, clearly **point to the uniformity of the functioning of the VJ, the VRS and SVK**, which undoubtedly points to the intentions of unifying the 'Serbian lands' into one state.²⁵

- **Until the formation of the SVK the support from the JNA was demonstrated primarily in the following:**
 - Disarmament of the territorial defense of the Republic of Croatia (takeover of storages) in the areas with the majority of Croatian population;
 - Deployment of JNA units in the areas of larger concentrations of Serb population;
 - Arming the local Serb population;
 - Preventing Croatian Police intervention in the focal points of rebellion ('buffer zones');
 - Transformation of JNA units (equipment) into SVK units;
 - Direct combat support in the occupation of certain areas and settlements;
 - Direct assault operations for the purpose of occupying certain areas of the Republic of Croatia (Srijem, Vukovar, Konavli etc.);

- **After the formation of the SVK, support from the SRJ or rather the VJ became even more intensified and diverse**, and it was particularly expressed with respect

²⁵ The unique functioning also relates to the VRS or rather the RSK with whom even a Declaration was signed in 1995 on the consolidation into a unified state, however, this is not the case of the same level of cause and effect relation as with the FRY. "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za radoblje od 14.-21. veljače 1994 /Analysis of intelligence information for the period of 14-21 February 1994/, 21 February 1994, **Annex 1-9**

Draft translation

to providing personnel where the SVK was practically operating as an integral part of the VJ.²⁶²⁷

The support the VJ (SRJ) provided to the SVK (RSK) can be divided into the following categories, and due to the amount of materials which prove this support, only some of the stated categories will contain document references:

➤ **Personnel support**

- Manning of the highest officers' personnel assigned to SVK units from the VJ and vice versa:
 - ***General Dušan Lončar**, until then the commander of the 37th Uzica Corps of the VJ, appointed on 4 April 1994 as the commander of the 11th SVK Corps;²⁸*
 - ***Colonel General Mile Mrkšić** was assigned to the duty of SVK Commander on 16 May 1995 after the previous commander, Major General Milan Čeleketić resigned from that duty. General Mrkšić transferred to this duty immediately from the duty of the Assistant Chief of the Main Staff of the VJ /GS VJ/ for special units. It needs to be mentioned that General Mrkšić at the beginning of the aggression against the Republic of Croatia participated in the attacks in the area of Srijem and Vukovar as the commander of the 1st Guards Mechanized Brigade.*
 - ***Colonel Slobodan Tarbuk**, from mid 1992, the commander of the 39th Banija Corps and in 1993 on his own request transferred to the SRJ to the duty of Chief of Staff of the Kragujevac Corps of the VJ, and at the end of May 1995 was returned to the duty of the*

²⁶ 'Podaci za analizu komandnog kadra' /Information for the analysis of command personnel/, 15th Corps Command, 5 January 1995, **Annex 1-10**

²⁷ 'Information to units', (regarding the speech of General Mrkšić in the RSK Assembly), 2nd Infantry Brigade Command, 3 June 1995, **Annex 1-11**

²⁸ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 4.-11. travnja 1994' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period of 4-11 April 1994/, 12 April 1994, **Annex 1-12**

Draft translation

commander of the 39th Banija Corps of the SVK²⁹ after Colonel Radiša Gačić was relieved of that duty because he received the order to fire the 'Orkan' on Zagreb on 1 May at 13.00 hrs and authorized the activity only on 2 May (based on the security officer's assessment, 'he acted cowardly'). (tr. remark: free translation)

- Manning with officers of various missing military specialties (air force, armor, EI /electronic reconnaissance/ and PED /counter-electronic operations/, rocket, PZO)
 - *Relying on the personnel and material support by the VJ³⁰ the ED /electronic operations/ units were also beginning to be formed within the SVK corps' and SVK EI and PED Centers at the Plitvice Lakes. On the basis of an order issued by the Chief of the VJ Main Staff, two complete ED platoons were also transferred to the composition of the SVK from the VJ.³¹*
(tr. remark: free translation)
- Manning with personnel mobilized in the area of the SRJ (reserve personnel, conscripts)
 - A typical example is the operation led during June and July 1995 in the area of the SRJ under code name 'Storm' and which will be further discussed in the fourth chapter.
- Specialist training for conscripts in certain specialties³² which was not able to be organized in the SVK

²⁹ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 22.-29. svibnja ' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period of 22-29 May/, 31 May 1995, **Annex 1-13**

³⁰ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 16.-23. svibnja 1994' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period of 16-23 May 1994/, 23 May 1994, **Annex 1-14**

³¹ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 31. siječnja do 7. veljače 1994' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 31 January to 7 February 1994/, 7 February 1994, **Annex 1-15**

³² 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 7.-14. veljače 1994' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 7-14 February 1994/, 14 February 1994, **Annex 1-16**

Draft translation

- When reviewing the reports on the numerical strength of certain commands of the SVK it is evident that a certain number of conscripts were undergoing training in the VJ and VRS.³³
- Education of cadets in military schools and academies
 - Complete education of the future officer personnel was conducted in the area of the SRJ because there were no military schools in the SVK;

➤ **Theoretical – doctrinal cooperation**

- Defining strategy of defense
 - The strategy of real threat was created under the leadership of General Radinović.³⁴
- Drafting the doctrine of the use of units
 - The SVK incorporated into their use the rules from the VJ ('Rules of Service in the VJ', 'Formation Rules in the VJ'³⁵);
- Preparations for the reorganization and modernization
 - *When with the arrival of General Mrkšić as commander of the SVK the initiative was put into motion for the formation of special (maneuver) units on the level of the SVK and within the corps³⁶, in order to provide expert assistance a crew of officers – instructors from the VJ Special Forces Corps (KSS) arrived at Slunj led by the Commander of the VJ KSS, General Miodrag Panić.³⁷ (tr. remark: free translation)*

³³ 'Pregled popune jedinica 7. korpusa po RF' /Overview of the manning level of units according to wartime formation/, 7th Corps Command, 28 October 1994, **Annex 1-17**

³⁴ The 'Strategy of Real Threat' will be further discussed in the next chapter (Chapter 2).

³⁵ 'Organizacija života i rada u 7. Korpusu, naređenje' 'Order to organize life and work in the 7th Corps', 7th Corps Command, 22 June 1994, **Annex 1-18**

³⁶ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 14.-21. lipnja 1994' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 14-21 June 1995/, 21 June 1995, **Annex 1-19**

³⁷ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 7.-14. lipnja 1995' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 7-14 June 1995/, 16 June 1995, **Annex 1-20**

Draft translation

- Security – intelligence cooperation
 - *Linking up and centralized control of activities of intelligence services of the VJ, VRS and the SVK.*³⁸ (tr. remark: free translation)
 - *On 7 February 1994 in the Intelligence Administration (ObU) of the VJ Main Staff, an analysis was held on the work of the units for EI /electronic reconnaissance/ which the representatives of the SVK also participated in.*³⁹ (tr. remark: free translation)
- Going to consultations and briefings to the VJ Main Staff
 - *One of the regular meetings between representatives of the SVK and VJ was held in Belgrade on 5 June 1995 and the main topic was how to mobilize militarily capable men in the SRJ for the manning needs of the SVK.*⁴⁰ (tr. remark: free translation)
 - *General Mile Mrkšić together with several officers of the SVK Main Staff and the Commander of the 11th Corps (General Dušan Lončar) was at a meeting with the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević (issue of the election of the Minister of Defense) and the Chief of the VJ Main Staff (analysis of the realization of tasks and combat readiness of SVK units).*⁴¹ (tr. remark: free translation)
- Inter-military cooperation
 - *On 20 August 1993 General Mladić (Commander of the VRS) visited the 18th SVK Corps⁴² and on 5 September the 7th SVK Corps talked about the joint defense of Serb countries.*

³⁸ Annex 1-20

³⁹ Annex 1-20

⁴⁰ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 30. svibnja do 6. lipnja 1995' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 30 May to 6 June 1995/, 7 June 1995, **Annex 1-21**

⁴¹ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za 5. srpnja 1995' /Analysis of intelligence information for 5 July 1995/, 6 July 1995, **Annex 1-22**

⁴² 'Informacija potčinjenim jedinicama' /Information to subordinated units/, 7th Corps Command, 20 August 1993, **Annex 1-23**

Draft translation

- *The meeting between Milan Martić and Radovan Karadžić on 17 February 1994 discussions were held on the obligations of military cooperation and other activities directed at the incorporation into a joint state.*⁴³ (tr. remark: free translation)
- *Coordination of work of the SVK and the VRS in activities in the area of Dinara and Bosansko Grahovo and western Bosnia.*⁴⁴ (tr. remark: free translation)

➤ **Logistic support**^{45, 46, 47, 48, 49}

- Replenishment of all types of ammunition
- Fuel replenishment
- Replenishment with spare parts for various combat means
- Replenishment with military and police uniforms
- Overhaul of technical means of the SVK in the SRJ
- Help in sending personnel for technical maintenance

➤ **Reinforcements**

- Artillery units until the level of division
- Rocket units until the level of division
- Tank units until the level of battalion
- EI and PED units until the level of company

➤ **Equipment and modernization**

- Artillery and rocket weapons

⁴³ **Annex 1-9**

⁴⁴ Document of the 2nd Krajina Corps, **Annex 2-38**

⁴⁵ 'Informacija o ojačanjima u tenkovima pristiglim na područje sektora 'Istok',/Information on replenishment with tanks in the area of Sector East/, 7 February 1994, **Annex 1-24**

⁴⁶ Informacija /Information/ no. 512-06-06/1-93-3067, dated 24 September 1993, **Annex 1-25**

⁴⁷ 'Pokazatelji i značajke potpore SRJ prema 'RSK' /Indicators and characteristics of support from the SRJ to the 'RSK'/ dated 30 March 1995, **Annex 1-26**

⁴⁸ 'Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 3. do 10. listopada 1994' /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 3-10 October 1994/, 11 October 1994, **Annex 1-27**

⁴⁹ 'Report on questions of combat readiness, 7th Corps Command, 15 April 1994, (page 0418-0154), **Annex 1-28**

Draft translation

- For example, artillery and rocket weapons for the formation of the Special Units Corps (KSJ) which will be further discussed later on;
- Tanks
 - *During January 1994 there were 35 T-34 tanks delivered for the needs of the 11th Corps (in the function of strengthening the defense),*
 - *Replenishment with M-84 tanks from the composition of the Special Brigade (Niš) in June 1995, for the needs of the formation of the SVK KSJ,*
- Rocket launchers
- Helicopters
- Communications systems

The significance and the amount of support is particularly illustrated in the information of the support coming from the SRJ (VJ) to the RSK (SVK) after August 1994 when an embargo was installed against the SRJ on any type of financial, economic and military assistance directed toward the Serb Republic and the 'Republic of Serb Krajina' which will be further discussed in the third chapter and also in the information on support immediately prior to the beginning of the final stage of the assault operation against Western Bosnia.⁵⁰⁵¹

⁵⁰ 'Podaci o potpori koju VJ pruža SVK' /Information on support from the VJ to the SVK/, dated 22 June 1995, **Annex 1-29**

⁵¹ 'Pregled ojačanja upućenih iz VJ u 'RSK' tijekom lipnja 1995' /Overview of reinforcements sent from the VJ to the 'RSK' during June 1995/, dated 28 June 1995, **Annex 1-30**

Draft translation

2.

STRATEGY OF REAL THREAT – ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN THE STATE OF OCCUPATION

Introduction

In less than 8 years from the creation of the SANU Memorandum, at the beginning of 1994, when the military structures of the 'RSK' were considering reorganization (partial professionalization) of the 'Serb Krajina Army', as the result of the implementation of the idea of the 'Greater Serbia', the creator of the military strategy of the 'Republic of Serb Krajina', Yugoslav Army Colonel General Radovan **Radinović**⁵² was obviously justifiably claiming in an interview given to the paper 'Vojska Krajine' /Army of Krajina/⁵³ that:

"Without a decisive defeat on the battlefield of specifically that army (meaning the SVK) Croatia cannot count on the realization of its still unfulfilled dream – reintegration of the RSK into its constitutional and territorial order". (tr. remark: free translation)

Until that time, three separate "Serb states" were formed in the area of the former Yugoslavia and their corresponding armies:

- Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ) and its pertaining
 - **Yugoslav Army (VJ – *Vojska Jugoslavije*)**
- Serb Republic (RS) and its pertaining
 - **Army of the Serb Republic (VRS – *Vojska Republike Srpske*)**

⁵² Colonel General Prof.Dr. Radovan Radinović is a well-known military theoretician in the former JNA. At the time of the publication of the Strategy of Real Threat he was performing the duty of the Chief of the Administration for Strategic Studies and Defense Politics of the Ministry of Defense of the FRY. In other words, he was the head of the highest expert institution of the state in charge of finding scientific methods of using the army and other state means in accordance with its policies.

⁵³ 'Uzroci i ciljevi preustroja Srpske Vojske Krajine' /Causes and goals of the reorganization of the Serb Krajina Army/, April 1994, Intelligence Administration of the GSHV /Croatian Army Main Staff/, **Annex 2-1**

Draft translation

- Republic of Serb Krajina (RSK) and its pertaining
 - **Serb Krajina Army (SVK – Srpska Vojska Krajine)**

Even earlier, in February 1993 the so-called strategy of 'real threat' or also called the 'strategy of deterrence' was publicly announced which in fact represented the continuity of the Great-Serbian military strategy.

This is a fact which the creators and the propagators of the strategy (General Radinović primarily) did not even attempt to seriously conceal. Even more, by emphasizing that the *"Croatian aggression* (meaning aggression of Croatia against the RSK) *would in fact impose war against the entire Serb people"*, this fact was openly used to strengthen the impression of the 'real threat'.

The strategy of real threat was actually the product of the development of the Great-Serbian military strategy – from the *"strategy of liberation"* (this was in fact a strategy of occupation from the beginning of the 1990's) to the *"strategy of defense"* (this was the strategy of 'real threat' or 'deterrence') which was designed to enable the preservation of the results of aggression i.e. the up to then established 'borders' of the 'Greater Serbia'.

2.1. The Strategy of Real Threat – the strategy of terrorism

2.1.1. Basic starting point

While the strategy has its

- **sources** in the idea of the 'Greater Serbia' and
- **foothold** in the overall strength of the Serb countries,

the forms and methods of its realization undoubtedly fall within the domain of terrorism.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Izvorišta i bitne značajke vojne strategije RSK – informacija' /Sources and important characteristics of the military strategy of the RSK – information/, GS HV ObU /Intelligence Administration of the Croatian Army Main Staff/, 11 October 1993, **Annex 2-2**

Draft translation

This is without a doubt evident in the text published in the paper of the Serb Krajina Army "Vojska Krajine", double issue 4-5, July – August 1993⁵⁵ with the superscript caption 'Advantages of the Krajina Strategic Position' /Prednosti krajiške strateške pozicije/ and title 'Real Threat at Work' /Realna prijetnja na dijelu/, by Colonel General Radovan Radinović.

It was clearly the intent of the editors to use the author's authority to increase the credibility of the set assertions and clarifications, in order to use the article to create a psychological and promotional effect i.e. to encourage their own forces which was much needed at the time.

This conclusion is also suggested by the fact that in those days the media of the RSK published a series of statements containing direct threats of an assault on Zagreb as a response to the *"potential HV attack on Knin"*.⁵⁶

This act of 'encouragement' has all the characteristics of "liberating" the remaining ethnic 'obstructions' which might, possibly, hinder typically terrorist 'fire strikes' on civilian facilities regardless if the facility was a residential building, school, sacral object or other cultural facility, or even a hospital or other similar facilities. Because, the General continued to clarify and prove, 'reprisal is the basic strategy of the defense of the RSK'.

The following quotation from the above stated article best affirms the aforementioned statement:

"The Zagreb area and its infrastructure and industrial capacities are located 24 kilometers from the Serb positions, and this is the distance of a successful range of the rocket systems and the best artillery systems for support which are deployed in the Kordun and Banija part of the battlefield.

⁵⁵ Radovan Radinović, 'Realna prijetnja na dijelu' /Real Threat at Work/, 'Vojska Krajine', no.4-5/93, **Annex 2-3**

⁵⁶ Obavještajna informacija 'Prosudba aktualnih grožnji neprijatelja o odmazdi po gradovima u RH' /Intelligence information – Assessment of current enemy threats of reprisal against cities in the Republic of Croatia/, 1 September 1993, **Annex 2-4**

Draft translation

In the case of a Croatian aggression against Krajina all these systems would focus their activity on Zagreb and its closest surroundings. There would be no calculations made here, because every Serb would be aware that this would be the final reckoning between the Krajina and Croatia, or rather a fight for survival. Krajina would in fact have no other choice but to defend itself with all available means and methods.

Zagreb would be exposed to such destruction which would make life there impossible for a long period of time and the losses in civilian life would be enormous.

There is no such urban concentration in the Krajina area with the exception of Knin therefore survival of combat strikes is simpler than can be ensured in Croatia. This threat is realistically achievable regardless of the impetus and intensity of Croatian strikes including mass rockets and air strikes for which Croatia is not prepared at the moment, but in perspective and with the assistance of its powerful mentors it could achieve the capacity.” (tr. remark: free translation)

The author equally threatened Karlovac which would be *“exposed to destructions of all support systems with no serious capabilities of Croatia to efficiently prevent it”* as well as the threatening the *“Dalmatian battlefield”* with *“efficient fire”* on the towns of *“Sinj, Split, Šibenik, Biograd and Zadar”* and *“placing under total fire control”* the main roads between Šibenik and Zadar, Novigradski Ždril, and the Zemunik airport and the Peruča hydroelectric power plant.

Further on in the article the General claimed that the strategy of real threat *“...had very efficient results and will continue to do so in the future.”* It is self-explanatory that the publication of the article was supposed to increase the ‘credibility of the threat’ and therefore prove the *“advantages of Krajina’s strategic position”*.

Particularly important in several ways is the fact that the content of the article in an obvious wish to achieve the best possible promotional effects (intimidation on one side and encouragement and boosting morale on the other) possibly even unnoticed by the author and the editors, revealed the true, terrorist essence of the strategy. Also,

Draft translation

alongside the phrase “all available means and methods” (meaning all types of weapons) what ‘slipped’ was the direct statement that the “losses in civilian life would be enormous.”

Further more, the towns and everything they are and represent, particularly mentioning Dubrovnik again, were according to this strategy the main ‘objects of fire strikes’ i.e. reprisal.

2.1.2. Underestimating others⁵⁷ is an important characteristic of the creators and realizers of the idea of the ‘Greater Serbia’

In order to more fully observe the achievements of the ‘strategy’ it is also interesting to review the text underneath the subtitle ‘geo-strategic chaos of Croatia’.

The subtitle itself sufficiently illustrates the manner in which the author brought his conclusions. Even more, it was not enough to assess the geo-strategic position of Croatia with respect to the ‘RSK’ as being ‘extremely unfavorable’ which is to a certain extent correct, but he had to emphasize this fact by developing a disparaging syntagm of ‘geo-strategic chaos’, and in addition he added the following claim:

“There is no state in Europe which has such an unfavorably composed and shaped state area as Croatia...and for those who haven’t even read a single letter of the strategy there is no dilemma that the state is...so vulnerable that its efficient defense of its integral area in war is impossible, regardless of the type and size of its enemy’s military force....” (tr. remark: free translation)

Understandably, nothing can follow after this type of disparaging approach except from the further presentation of intentions which is evident in the following statements:

“...By establishing the RSK as an independent state Croatia was driven away from the Danube which represented the most important link between southeast and

⁵⁷ This refers to people of other nations and national minorities in the former Yugoslavia or states founded in the area where the former Yugoslavia used to exist.

Draft translation

middle Europe. The RSK practically cut off Croatia in several parts....Possible directions of cutting off Croatia into separate individual parts would be the following:

- *Grubišno Polje – Hungarian border*
- *Karlovac – Metlika*
- *Maslenica Bridge.⁵⁸...*

(tr. remark: free translation)

The strategy also answered the question of how to carry out this “*cutting off*” of Croatian territory quickly into “*four, five and even more parts*” which was also proposed as a strategic response to the possible decision by Croatia to “*solve the Serb issue in its former administrative borders by military means*”.

This “*could be achieved with relatively small forces and even by merely placing the most sensitive facilities in the areas on the stated axes under fire control*”, claimed the author not reframing from writing that “*Croatia had no means to defend it.*” (tr. remark: free translation)

At the end, the author claimed:

“Tormented between the two final solutions – to decide not to recognize the independence of the Serb state and the inability to support this decision militarily – Croatia as a state has been condemned to a long and agonizing death...” (tr. remark: free translation)

That the ‘strategy of real threat’ was not going to remain a simple subject of theoretical discussion or academic debate, was proven by the events which followed and in the documents which were supposed to lead to its further practical application.

One of these documents is the ‘*Directive for the activity of the SVK*’ which the RSK President issued in February 1995.⁵⁹ In trying to find answers to potential military threats which the various forms of offensive activities of the HV might have on the ‘RSK’,

⁵⁸ This also shows the ambitions of the initial strategy of the aggression against the Republic of Croatia (see the book of General Kadjević) where General Radinović according to his duty and function had a significant if not the principal role and the reasons for the later (1994) offensive in the area of Western Bosnia.

⁵⁹ Direktiva za djelovanje SVK /Directive for the activity of the SVK/, GŠ SVK /SVK Main Staff/, February 1995, **Annex 2-5**

Draft translation

the Directive offered the solution not only in the defensive activities of the SVK but also implicitly included offensive (counter-attack) activities. This entailed offensive activities which would result in the state area of the Republic of Croatia being cut off on the already mentioned directions but also in 'liberating' those 'Serb areas' which at the time were not within the composition of the 'RSK'. Among other things, the Directive included breaking out to the Adriatic coast.

Mile Martić⁶⁰ also spoke of further captures and 'cutting off' when from 25 - 27 April 1995 he and the SVK Commander, General Čeleketić, were visiting Western Slavonia. In speaking of strengthening the defensive capabilities of the SVK, therefore its 18th West-Slavonian Corps, he also stated that this corps would be capable of even 'liberating the currently occupied areas'.

There is no doubt that the 'strategy of real threat' was the result of the feeling of powerlessness on the one hand and arrogance and disparagement on the other. Equally so, it is without a doubt that this strategy was implemented and that it was the expression and the result of the policy which did not accept any solutions that didn't implicitly include the permanent secession of the 'RSK' from the Republic of Croatia.

The understanding of this approach is important for the understanding of everything that followed⁶¹ which will not be discussed here from aspects other than the military one, and which inevitably led to the search of a military solution for the reintegration of the then occupied areas into the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia.

⁶⁰ See information on the visit to Western Slavonia in Chapter Four, **Annex 4-7**

⁶¹ Rejection of the Z-4 Plan (January 1995) by the 'competent' structures of the RSK which offered the 'Krajina' larger autonomy within the Republic of Croatia than the RSK had realistically had at the time, is the consequence of the fact that they were not prepared to accept the formulation of the Plan which defined the 'Krajina' as part of the Republic of Croatia with practically confederate status.

Draft translation

2.2. In search of an appropriate answer to the strategy of real threat

A significant part of the preparations for the carrying out of the offensive operation with the aim of liberating the then occupied parts of the areas of the Republic of Croatia was conducted before all on the intelligence level within the overall preparations of the armed forces of the Republic of Croatia.

The preparations of the military intelligence segment were carried out the entire time through practical and specific research of the current and real enemy.

The result of the work of this system only on the level of the Intelligence Administration of the GS HV until the end of operation 'Storm' was the following:

- More than a thousand of daily intelligence information
- Over a hundred of topic related intelligence information
- 150 weekly analyses of intelligence information
- dozens of intelligence assessments

More intensive intelligence activities in the role of intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB – IPOE) for the purpose of carrying out the offensive operation with the aim of liberating the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia started with the appearance of the 'strategy of real threat'.

They of course were not directed at that time (directly and only) toward the preparation for operation 'Storm' but were directed toward investigating the enemy in order to find the most efficient answers to neutralize the damaging effects of the 'strategy of real threat' and finding the best solution for carrying out the offensive military operation to liberate the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia.

2.2.1 Drafting the first conceptual idea of the offensive operation for the liberation of all of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia

The 'proclamation' of the strategy of real threat and its further interpretation by General Radinović undoubtedly demonstrated that the chances for a peaceful

Draft translation

reintegration of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia were sustainable only in theory.

This was sufficient reason to approach the analysis of effects that this 'strategy' might have on the strategic issues of defense or rather integration of the entire state territory of the Republic of Croatia into a unified state and legal system.⁶²

This also resulted in the drafting of the first vision of the offensive operation presented in the material of the Intelligence Administration of the GS HV titled 'Attachment to the Consideration of the Military Strategy of the Republic of Croatia' with the subtitle 'Outline of the possible model of 'response' to the implementation of the 'strategy of real threat of the RSK'.

Following are the main points of this document.

Firstly, it raised the question of the necessity to find specific 'answers' to the basic issues (main issues) imposed by the implementation of the 'strategy of real threat':

- How to neutralize the enemy's advantages which arose from the possibility of using a *'more favorable geo-strategic position'*, and *'opening of the front from Baranja to Prevlaka'*?
- What was the sufficient ratio of forces required for carrying out a blitz offensive with the aim of liberating the then occupied areas and how to ensure them?
- How to avoid the consequences of the initial strike (reprisal) and to prevent the enemy from retaliating with rocket-artillery means in the shortest time possible?
- How and along which axes to surprise the enemy and deliver blows which will most quickly disorganize their defense system and ensure breaking out to the state border in the then occupied areas and create conditions to defeat the SVK?

⁶² 'Prilog razmatranju Vojne Strategije RH' /Attachment to the analysis of the Military Strategy of the Republic of Croatia/, Intelligence Analysis, October/November 1993, **Annex 2-6**

Draft translation

- How to prevent bringing in reinforcements or engagement of strategic reserves from the area of the SRJ and the RS (Serb Republic), or rather from the systems of the VJ and the VRS?

Given that the enemy's strategy of reprisal was based on the use of long-range rocket-artillery systems which enabled them to carry out strikes on urban centers and economic infrastructure in the free parts of the Republic of Croatia, the model of response needed to involve a complex of activities aimed at:

- Precisely determining and monitoring the types, amounts and location of those weapons on one side, and
- Arming Croatian Army units with means to efficiently detect those positions and destroy the mentioned enemy rocket-artillery systems on the other.

Therefore, it was important to prevent the enemy from materializing their potential strategic advantage to execute their idea of inflicting Croatia with "*unacceptable losses and destruction* " or rather it was important to create conditions which would ensure an "acceptable" (rational) level of destruction and other losses.

Given that this would eliminate the advantage on which the enemy was building its entire defense strategy, it alone would ensure a more favorable strategic position.

Furthermore, it would enable a relatively fast realization of a strategic initiative and other prerequisites for realizing the idea of crushing the enemy and achieving the final liberation of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia.

The main strategic problem was to fulfill the basic condition for the undertaking of the offensive operation in accordance with the principles of the 'blitzkrieg doctrine'. One should not forget that the creators of the Serbian strategy reached another correct conclusion that Croatia would have to apply the principles of this very doctrine.

There is a lot of evidence to support this evaluation, and in this sense it is sufficient to state only the following: not a single idea of an operation for the liberation of the then occupied areas which had not been based on fast breaches on selected axes for the purpose of cutting off enemy forces into smaller parts and disorganize their

Draft translation

system of defense, and to break out to the state border with the aim of preventing assistance coming from the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, would not have a chance of success.

Naturally, this primarily refers to the areas of Banovina, Kordun, Lika and Northern Dalmatia which the enemy referred to as the 'territorial strategic focal point' for a reason, even though the same previously applied equally to the parts of Western and/or Eastern Slavonia and Baranja.

There was an indisputable need for organization and preparation of the necessary number of units of adequate strength who would also be adequately armed and trained, and capable of carrying out the tasks of the bearers of the offensive.

Even though we would need to review in more detail the specific tasks which would generally, and on certain directions more specifically, show what their appearance and general characteristics would have to be⁶³, it was possible even then to determine that those units would have to be:

- on the composite tactical level,
- strength of 3.000 – 4.000 of chosen, professionally trained and highly motivated men,
- armed with modern armored transporters, means for strong autonomous fire support and capable for fast relocation, and
- equipped with means for PO/anti-armor/ combat and protection against air attacks.

It is apparent that given their purpose and main tasks, their main characteristic would have to be the capability:

- to carry out strong strikes and
- breaches of the battlefield on the chosen heading and
- to continue a fast breakthrough deep into the enemy's positions,

⁶³ Exactly this type of approach was one of the main criteria in bringing the decision on the use of Special Police Units of the Ministry of the Interior in Operation 'Storm' on the heading leading from Velebit toward Gračac and Medak, because the doctrine of the use of such units and accordingly their training and equipment was appropriate for precisely this type of task, on this type of terrain.

Draft translation

- transfer to defense to secure the success and/or carry out an attack on the cut off or encircled enemy elements.

It was entirely certain that the described units, even if they were supremely equipped, would not be able to carry out their tasks if the other conditions were also not previously met and they were as follows:

- first of all, this refers to carrying out planned frontal combat activities, at the least with the purpose of stretching and tying up enemy forces and preventing their maneuver along the battlefields in order to close off those axes where our forces would strike with the aim of achieving a breaches and penetrating in depth of enemy space;
- understandably, it would be most optimal to activate the entire battlefield ('strategic front') and inflict the highest possible losses upon the enemy's initial positions and wherever possible, push them back from their fixed positions and thus disrupting the deployment of forces and gradually disorganizing their defense system.
- Under the assumption of achieving surprise even on the operative level, the stated type of activity would lead the enemy to the problem of an imposed 'activation of the strategic front'. Namely, in this manner the enemy would be preempted in their intention to open the front '*from Baranja to Prevlaka*'. This would ensure the strategic initiative as an important prerequisite for efficient activity of the bearers of the offensive and the overall planned development of the operation.

However, the gravity of the problem of preventing the enemy in realizing their strategic idea of '*activating the front from Baranja to Prevlaka*' implies the need to point out some of the other aspects of planning such an operation:

- the strategy of real threat involved the undertaking of "*appropriate actions by the RSK and the RS along all operative axes leading from these 'republics' to the territory of Croatia*", where there was reason to recognize the 'announcement' of similar 'actions from the area of the SRJ'".

Draft translation

- This in itself resulted in a string of questions regarding the forces and their activity against the enemy in the then occupied areas of Western Slavonia and eastern Croatia, and the defense of Posavina from attacks from northern Bosnia and closing off the operative axis Šid – Vinkovci and axes leading toward the area of southern Croatia (especially Konavli), where in the least favorable version the VJ forces would engage in attacks from the SRJ.

It was estimated that reinforcements (strategic reserve) of certain strength could be introduced in the following areas on the following axes:

- Eastern Slavonia and Baranja:
 - 2 to 3 mbr /mechanized brigade/
 - 3 to 4 mad /mixed artillery battalion/
 - 2 mpoad /mixed anti-tank artillery battalion/
 - on the Šid – Vinkovci axis and over the bridges at Bogojevo and Batine
- Banovina and Kordun:
 - 2 mtbr /motorized brigade/
 - 2 lpbr /light infantry brigade/
 - 2 mad
 - on the Prijedor – Dvor (Glina or Virginmost) axis and
 - on the Prijedor – Kostajnica – Dubica axis;
- Lika:
 - 1 mtbr
 - 1 lpbr
 - on the B. Petrovac – Vrtoče – K. Vakuf – D. Lapac – Udbina axis
- Northern Dalmatia:
 - 1 mtbr
 - 1 lpbr
 - on the Bosansko Grahovo – Knin axis

Draft translation

With the introduction of the complex of issues into the overall analysis, two following conclusions (two assessments) quickly imposed themselves:

- the offensive operation with the task of liberating the occupied areas would not be able to encompass all of the then occupied areas at once,
- the realistic idea would be that strategic idea which would direct the offensive to the already mentioned 'territorial strategic focal point' of the enemy while the other stated battlefields would envisage individual combat activities with the purpose of preventing enemy breaches or rather the carrying out of a set of combat activities of the 'defensive operation' type.

A significant place in the string of questions which the military strategy was supposed to answer was the choice of the time of the start of the operation.

This pointed out to the need to establish cooperation with the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the HVO in order to carry out such operations, in order to use their coordinated activity to tie up forces of the VRS which would in this manner be prevented from realizing their role as the strategic (in some segments only operative) reserve of the SVK.

The strategy of the 'realistically coordinated steps'

In the conclusion of the stated document the following was concluded:

"Given that, as it was already stated, in the course of the implementations of the enemy's strategy of 'real threat', the 'answer' to the same would also have to begin immediately and systematically. Taking into account the previously stated, it is evident that this involves an entire complex of activities and measures, gradually and thoroughly aligned with the realistic possibilities and circumstances, but systematically directed to the final purpose – liberating the currently occupied areas and establishing the sovereignty of our state in these parts as well, even through war, as the only legitimate means, having in mind the stated contents, it seems to impose on itself that the Strategy of 'real threat' needs to be countered

Draft translation

by our military strategy of 'realistically coordinated steps" (tr. remark: free translation)

Therefore, even then, in October 1993, it was assessed that the strategy of real threat left no doubt regarding the determination of the 'RSK' to use even the SVK to enable the permanent separation of a part of the territory of the Republic of Croatia and annexation of the same to the 'Serb countries' and that the likelihood of a peaceful reintegration of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia was practically negligible.

The accuracy and validity of this assessment was confirmed by future events which resulted in the necessary application of military force for the purpose of liberating the occupied parts of the Republic of Croatia.

2.2.2. Training personnel for intelligence activity for support during operations

The drafting of the Assessment of the possible development of events in the military-political field and the possible threat to the Republic of Croatia in the upcoming period, particularly in the different options of the use of the Croatian Army⁶⁴ (March 1994) points to the fact that the enemy intentions on the military field were significantly conditioned by the UNPROFOR mandate and that in the end, they could result in long-term conflicts of low intensity (in case there was a change of the UNPROFOR mandate in accordance with the propositions of the Republic of Croatia), or they could lead to conflicts of high intensity in case there is no change in the UNPROFOR mandate and the Republic of Croatia was brought into a situation to use military means to solve the issue of integrating the then occupied areas into its state and legal system.

⁶⁴ Prosudba mogućeg razvoja događaja na vojno-političkom planu i moguća ugroza RH u narednom razdoblju, osobito u varijantama angažiranja HV /"Assessment of the possible development of events on the military-political field and a possible threat to the Republic of Croatia in the upcoming period, particularly in the different options of the use of the Croatian Army"/, 26 March 1994, **Annex 2-7**

Draft translation

From a military standpoint, the second version (high intensity conflict) involved a strong and timely introduced and efficiently used operative (strategic) reserve from the composition of the VJ and VRS.

Furthermore, it involved replenishment and manning of SVK units, good engineering work on the first and second defense zone and a flexible defense (tr. remark: fluctuating defense with units in movement in the first zone of defense).

According to assessments, the weakest point was the timely introduction of the operative reserve (up to 36 hrs) which resulted in the conclusion that a systematic and centralized direction of intelligence activity was required.

The following was proposed (quote)⁶⁵:

- *Increase offensive intelligence penetration into the operative and strategic depth of the enemy and thus ensure the systematic intelligence research for the purpose of timely discovery and efficient monitoring of activities which may point to preparations from the areas of 'grey' operations (low intensity conflicts) or to the changes which may significantly alter the ratio of forces, in order to prevent surprises;*
- *Establish a unique system of gathering intelligence information (engage all services – SIS /Security and Information Service/, SZUP /Service for the Protection of the Constitutional Order/, COB /Information Center/, Liaison offices attached to the UN and the EC, which are currently operating independently and sometimes use military intelligence information incorrectly) in order to ensure the Intelligence Administration with a more complete and integral analysis and assessment on this same basis.*

(end quote) (tr. remark: free translation)

Following this assessment and given proposals, a series of measures were taken which undoubtedly fall into the string of measures for intelligence preparation for the conduction of the operation.

⁶⁵ Annex 2-7

Draft translation

Those measures are as follows:

- Organization of the system of gathering information and reporting:
 - Horizontal linking on the state level (request and proposal of the Intelligence Administration) for the purpose of establishing coordination between all services on the State level, in order to ensure exchange of intelligence information;
 - Horizontal, vertical and expert linking within the military system of management and gathering of intelligence in order to ensure timely availability of information;
- Formation and equipping of units within the scope of professional activities of the Intelligence Administration (special focus on unmanned aerial vehicles and ED platoons within the Guards Brigades) in order to enable the application of all forms of gathering intelligence information that would not lead to provocations on the battlefield which would surely make training of HV units more difficult;
- Conduction of tasks of gathering information in accordance with the possible alternatives of carrying out of offensive operations (use of intelligence resources in the planned areas and/or axes of engagement in the operation):
 - Systematical AFS /aerial photography/;
 - Of the entire separation line (battlefield),
 - Axes which lead in depth,
 - Deployment of elements of the implementation of the strategy of real threat,
 - Command posts and communications centers,
 - Engineering work of the second defense zone (up to 10 km)(A total of 6.000 km² of enemy controlled territory was photographed)

Draft translation

2.3. Enemy activities – implementation of the ‘strategy of real threat’

Introduction

According to the Assessment of the current situation⁶⁶ (beginning of 1994) of the strength and deployment of enemy forces in the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia including the possibility of reinforcements and support from the Yugoslav Army and the Army of the Serb Republic, the conclusion was reached that these were respectable forces located in a relatively favorable operative position.

This conclusion also arose from the following facts:

- That the enemy disposed of a respectable amount of heavy weapons, particularly rocket-artillery and armored-mechanized weapons, including long-range systems (‘Orkan’, R-65 ‘Luna-M’, P-21 and P-22 anti-ship missiles modified for hitting land targets) which the enemy used to threaten with reprisal on towns⁶⁷ and civilian facilities of vital importance,
- That the enemy conducted strong fortifications and engineering work⁶⁸ of their positions and that its manpower was still relatively motivated which partially alleviated the increasingly more evident problem of the lack of manpower and realistically, they could count on the already mentioned overall assistance by the SRJ and the RS.

However, the operative position of the enemy was slowly becoming weaker due to the more frequent and more severe problems. Aside from the constants contained in the stated facts that this was a very long battlefield across disconnected parts of ‘krajinas’, which had very little depth in certain areas, which were the source of nearly unsolvable problems of maneuvering forces and ensuring the flexibility of the defense,

⁶⁶ "Obavještajna prosudba" /Intelligence Assessment/, **Annex 1-7** (Chapter One)

⁶⁷ Aerial photography of positions for an ‘Orkan’, **Annex 2-8**

⁶⁸ Aerial photography of engineered positions for defense on the first **Annex 2-9** and second line **Annex 10**

Draft translation

one of the problems which was becoming more and more evident was the lack of manpower and economic resources for maintaining the army.

In connection with the need to solve this problem is one of the causes for the reorganization of SVK brigades which commenced at the beginning of 1994.

The reorganization was intended to solve two major problems:

- protection of the 'border' which became relevant after the signing of the 'Zagreb Agreement' and
- a smaller and more equal composition of the brigades, of the basic composite tactical units of at least three different types.

In the attempt to solve the *problem of the protection of the 'border'* or rather to secure defense on the battlefield and in depth of the territory, in conditions of extremely limited human and material resources, they developed a solution which had no basis in the military practice and theory at the time.

Namely, the proposed solution entailed that a squad was assigned with a zone of responsibility of a width of up to 2 kilometers where three groups would be deployed each consisting of three soldiers.⁶⁹

Taking into account the standard rotation of manpower according to the principle where 1/3 was on the battlefield , 1/3 on leave and 1/3 preparing for tasks, it arises that there would be a total of only a couple of thousand of soldiers engaged in the defense of the entire battlefield.

This kind of situation best demonstrates the magnitude of the problem the SVK was facing and due to the same was never able to function independently.

The problem of maintaining the Army also represented a large burden, for the manpower engaged and the economy as well. With respect to the same, immediately after the Zagreb Agreement, a temporary formation was drafted by which the existing units were reduced to 'border' units, where the border companies (one from each

⁶⁹ Order of the 7th Corps Command on the transition to the new organizational-formational structure, 22 April 1994, **Annex 2-11**

Draft translation

battalion) also represented the peacetime core of wartime battalions.⁷⁰ The number of border companies within individual corps' and brigades, alongside corresponding sections of the 'border' is presented in the document 'Composition of border units'.⁷¹

This situation was upheld practically until spring 1995 and the units were prohibited from engaging a number of personnel exceeding the approved limit⁷², which put into question the normal conduction of daily tasks.

For the purpose of balancing the compositions and the combat capabilities of the brigades, a proposal was drafted in cooperation with the GŠ VJ /Yugoslav Army Main Staff/ for the reorganization of the "light infantry brigade"⁷³.

In the light of the above, the following was investigated during 1994:

- Reorganization of the SVK and support from the SRJ and the RS;
- Combat activities;
- Changes of the strategic position.

2.3.1. Beginning of the reorganization of the SVK

At the beginning of 1994, the newspaper "Vojska Krajine" published interviews with Milan Martić, the President of the RSK, and the already mentioned General Radovan Radinović.⁷⁴

Martić stated the main priorities of strengthening the 'RSK' and its determination as a state, among which the principal is to⁷⁵:

⁷⁰ Temporary Establishment of the 7th Corps Command, 23 April 1994 (example for the 3rd pbr and 92nd mtbr), **Annex 2-12**

⁷¹ *Sastav graničnih jedinica SVK /Composition of border units of the SVK/, **Annex 2-13***

⁷² Order of the 15th Corps Command on the approved average daily numeric strength, dated 7 February 1995, **Annex 2-14**

⁷³ "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 31. svibnja do 06. lipnja 1994" /Analysis of Intelligence Information for the period from 31 May to 6 June 1994/, dated 6 June 1994, **Annex 2-15**

⁷⁴ **Annex 2-1**

⁷⁵ The same priorities were defined by Borislav Mikelić at the first session of the Government of National Unity held on 22 April 1994

Draft translation

“Realize an efficient and stable system of defense, as a prerequisite for the realization of the proclaimed political and other goals, which requires changes in organization, formation and personnel”. (tr. remark: free translation)

General Radinović pointed out that without a doubt the *“SVK was going to have the most prominent role in the fight for the acquirement of political independence of the Serb people”* (tr. remark: free translation) and that precisely for this reason *“it is necessary to reorganize it”*, which among other things was aimed at enabling the SVK for tasks of *“strategic deterrence with a high level of risk and threats for the attacker and an efficient strategic reception, including the capacity for a strategic offensive on the chosen axes”*. (tr. remark: free translation)

This shows that the ‘RSK’ had no alternative to the process of reorganization because from all of the attributes of statehood this ‘state’ was able to (to a certain extent) materialize (realize) only one – the army.

The goal of the ‘RSK’ leadership was to form such an army which would be capable of maintaining the existing situation (the status of occupation of parts of the Republic of Croatia) until the time when possibly the attitude of the international community toward the problem of reintegration of those areas (UNPA) might change.⁷⁶

Taking into account the limited resources (human, material) and territorial conditioning of the system of ‘defense’, a solution was presented as a compromise (necessary evil) for a **combined composition of the army** which implied three components:

- *Professional units*
as the first strategic line-up
- *Peacetime units (standing army),*
as the second strategic line-up and
- *Reserve units (people’s army),*
as the third strategic line-up.

⁷⁶ Precisely in this interview General Radinović presented his theory of the impossibility of reintegration of the RSK into the Republic of Croatia without a decisive defeat of exactly that army on the battlefield.

Draft translation

This type of organization of the army (and/or the system of defense) was intended to ensure the realization of several strategic tasks:

- Defense of every part of the territory, in depth and across;
- A relatively favorable ratio of forces in the initial grouping for strategic defense (up to 50.000 men in the "territorial strategic focal point" of the 'RSK');
- Quick growth of the army to the wartime formation and mobilization of the people for the needs of waging war;
- Strategic deterrence with a high level of risk and threat for the attacker;
- Strategic reception including the capacity for strategic offensive activities on several chosen axes.

➤ **Professional units**

Would consist of a smaller segment of the army, however in combat readiness and equipment they should be most effective. They would be the basic force for preventing strategic surprise and for conducting strategic counter-attacks on targets in depth of the free territory of the Republic of Croatia, therefore the **force of strategic deterrence and strategic reprisal**. They should be capable of successfully countering the strategy of the "action of limited scope".⁷⁷

The doctrine of use would be based on the following:

- Realization of the 'real threat' as the basis of the strategy of 'deterrence' and which would be manifested through activity of artillery-rocket systems on significant economic facilities in the free territory of the Republic of Croatia;
- Carrying out offensive activities against HV units which have wedged in depth of the defense with the aim of regaining control of lost territory;

⁷⁷ Designator which was used in the SVK for HV operations which were in fact part of the strategy of 'realistically coordinated steps'

Draft translation

Therefore, these would be units which would represent the strategic reserve of the GŠ SVK /Main Staff of the Serb Krajina Army/ which would be equipped with contemporary combat means and systems, deployed in depth of RSK territory, on one or several axes of activity (use), and which could use the internal tactical and operative axes for maneuvers.

➤ **Peacetime army**

Would be manned according to the following:

- In peacetime, with active duty officers, and the military formation would consist entirely of conscripts;
- In wartime, with reserve soldiers and officers who in the case of mobilization would report to their units.

Combat readiness of these units was ensured and maintained through periodic summons of reserve formation for military exercises, and for the conscript formation through regular training.

These units would be included into the system of forces for the prevention of strategic surprise and for the reception of the first strategic strike of the attacker.

The peacetime formation and operative development would be coordinated with the military-geographic and military-territorial divisions, geo-political position and situation and therefore in accordance with the analysis of the battlefield, front line and operative axes.

➤ **People's army**

These would be units which would represent the territorial component, and they would be used only in the case of war for ensuring the required density of the defense along the entire area of the RSK and the required numeric ratio of forces.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ It should be mentioned that the SVK leadership and the majority of the reserve formation accepted without criticism the positive 'experiences' of the system of Territorial Defense from the time of the former state, transferring almost directly those 'experiences' of an 'armed people' to the formation of the SVK, neglecting among others the fact that those 'experiences' were not put into practical use themselves.

Draft translation

The main problem with the formation of this type of armed forces was the lack of the two main resources: personnel and contemporary (efficient) combat means.

While the lack of combat means seemed to cause the biggest problems regarding the formation of maneuver and special units, the lack of personnel was evident in the formation of all three components of the army.

Precisely this example of 'manipulating' this resource and with the aim of forming an 'Army', or rather manning the army according to wartime formation, shows the full disagreement between what was proclaimed and what was achievable, and therefore all the irrationalities of one policy which based the emergence and survival of the 'state' on military means.

In evidence of the same is the following information:

- The resources for manning the SVK with personnel were definitely limited by the number of inhabitants which was in mid 1994 in the area of the 'RSK' close to 430.000, thus meaning that with the maximum efforts and by respecting certain worldwide established norms, this would enable the formation of an army of approx. 50 – 60.000 men;
- At the same time, documents of the 7th Corps from July 1994⁷⁹ reveal assertions that the area from which the Corps is manned (North Dalmatia) has nearly 70.000 inhabitants, out of which 15.000 can be used for manning units of the 7th Corps, while the wartime formation of the corps envisages approx. 17.000 men. Therefore, they counted on engaging over 24 percent of the entire population which is an entirely incomprehensible calculation even if we were to ignore the unfavorable age structure of the population that lived in that area at the time;
- The following is also evident from the documents of the 7th Corps Command⁸⁰: even though the wartime formation envisaged a composition of 17.000 men, the number of people envisaged (found) for manning according to this type of formation was 13.523 military conscripts, which

⁷⁹ Conclusions from the mobilization assessment (pages 10-11), 7th Corps Command, June 1994, **Annex 2-16**

⁸⁰ 7th Corps Command, Summary of manning levels as per wartime establishment, 9 August 1994, **Annex 2-17**

Draft translation

was a level of manning of approx. 80 percent. The situation with the manning of officer personnel was even worse, because from the 1276 formation posts, 693 were filled;

- Due to the constantly present process of emigration which was particularly present with the younger population, the situation regarding manning was gradually deteriorating, which is again illustrated in the documents of the 7th Corps Command from that time.⁸¹ Only nearly three months later, the number of manpower envisaged according to wartime formation was increased to 17.355, and according to manning plans manning was ensured for only 12.466 formation posts which presented a realization of manning on the level of 72 percent.

It is without question that the situation regarding the possibilities of manning the army with domicile population was continuously deteriorating which was the case with other corps' deployed in the area of the "territorial strategic focal point" as well, and it is obvious that the manning of units according to wartime formation had to rely on support from the RS and the SRJ, or the 'strength' of the army was consciously manipulated either to boost the morale of their own population or to attempt to deter the Croatian leadership from the potential undertaking of military operations for the purpose of liberating the occupied areas.

In accordance with this situation the only realistic danger which may have arisen from the reorganization of the SVK was connected with the possibility of forming maneuver forces and professional units.

2.3.2. Combat activities

A significant 'problem' for the 'RSK' remained to be the undefined 'borders' and with the aim of 'establishing and finally defining' the same with the use of SVK forces,

⁸¹ 7th Corps Command, 7th Corps wartime strength by wartime establishment, **Annex 2-18**

Draft translation

and using the activities of the UNPROFOR in setting up checkpoints, the carrying out of actions under the designation 'Granica-94' /Border 94/ started.⁸²⁸³⁸⁴⁸⁵

The goal of the action was to conduct fortifications and engineering work on the most part of the existing separation lines which after the deployment of UNPROFOR checkpoints would be designated as the 'state border'.

This led to the systematic creation of new focal points of conflicts and their provocation was particularly directed at the area of Lika and Northern Dalmatia unlike the previous situation, when the focal point of such activities was in the area of Eastern Slavonia.

The purpose of provoking constant tensions and low intensity conflicts along the entire 'border' was to demonstrate force on one hand which was intended to be a factor of deterrence from a potential intention to conduct an offensive operation, and on the other hand, they wanted to demonstrate that the integration of occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia into its state and legal system was not possible, which was intended to result in the prolongation of the UNPROFOR mandate at the time and to keep the status of 'krajinas' (tr. remark: occupied areas of the RH) unchanged.

In this sense the transfer of the focus of activities of military provocation onto the "territorial strategic focal point" was logical.

Engineering work was conducted in order to fortify the first zone of defense even more but also to organize defense in depth which was intended to caution of the organization of a decisive defense and also to deter the RH from possibly carrying out a military operation to liberate the occupied areas.

⁸² "Raščlamba djelovanja neprijatelja u periodu 15. veljače do 17. ožujka 1994 – specifičnosti provođenja strategije realne prijetnje" /Analysis of enemy activities in the period from 15 February to 17 March 1994 – characteristics of the implementation of the strategy of real threat/, 17 March 1994, **Annex 2-19**

⁸³ Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 21. do 28. ožujka 1994 /Analysis of intelligence information for the period 21-28 March 1994/, 29 March 1994, **Annex 2-20**

⁸⁴ Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 21. do 28. veljače 1994 /Analysis of intelligence information for the period 21-28 February 1994/, 28 February 1994, **Annex 2-21**

⁸⁵ "Obavještajna informacija o tijeku realizacije operacije Granica-94" /Intelligence information on the course of realization of operation Border 94/, 13 March 1994, **Annex 2-22**

Draft translation

The GS SVK /Main Staff of the Serb Krajina Army/ issued an order to the corps' on a systematic approach to conducting engineering work on old and new defense positions, on the prohibition of entering negotiations and concluding cease-fire agreements on the levels of local military commands, and across battlefields on all occupied areas the number of 'crisis' points and the occurrence of provoking conflicts started to increase.

The Main Staff of the Yugoslav Army (GS VJ) brought a decision according to which all officers from the composition of the VJ who had been sent as assistance to the composition of the SVK, were to remain permanently in the composition of the SVK (realization of the concept of one army), and various support by the VJ continued to increase.

The implementation of the agreement on cease-fire (first stage, pulling out artillery weapons in depth and pulling out manpower from the zone of depth of 1 kilometer from the separation line) was systematically delayed and hindered, which in fact represented an attempt to realize the set out plan to 'establish and protect the borders' as the main determinant of RSK's statehood.

The artillery didn't pull out to the defined locations, they even remained on the same locations they were supposed to pull out from, and the manpower dressed in civilian clothes or police uniforms continued to stay in the 'demilitarized' zone.

Every corps and brigade commander of the SVK received a Decision on the formation of sector (regional) and local (municipal) commissions for determining and making modifications of the separation line, and which were responsible for their work to the central 'republican' commission led by General Mile Novaković, advisor to the President of the RSK for military issues. The commissions were established with the purpose to 'interpret' certain points of the agreement in order to ensure modification of the agreed separation lines, or to keep the artillery within the prohibited zone.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 18. do 25. travnja 1994" /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 18-25 April 1994/, 25 April 1994, **Annex 2-23**

Draft translation

2.3.3. Attempts to improve the strategic position by occupying the area of Western Bosnia

Undoubtedly the area of Western Bosnia, most of which was at that time under the control of the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps and a smaller part under the control of the forces of the People's Defense of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia (NO APZB)⁸⁷, was an area of strategic importance to the RSK,

- with respect to the possibility of maintaining the status of occupation of western parts of the RSK,
- And with respect to the potential aspirations to further threaten parts of the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

This kind of importance of the area of Western Bosnia also arose from the facts that this area (while under control of A BiH):

- **Impaired traffic connections** of the occupied areas of Banovina, Kordun and Lika, and substantially of Northern Dalmatia as well, with the other 'Serb lands',
- **Significantly reduced operative depth** of the forces of the 39th, 21st and 15th Corps of the SVK, without which there was no possibility for a quality defense, or any type of offensive activity (in the event of occupying the area of Western Bosnia, operative depth would increase from the 25-30 kilometers at the time to even 100 kilometers);
- **Tied up a significant number of forces** of the mentioned three SVK corps' which due to this fact were not able to be engaged in the battlefield toward

⁸⁷ These were paramilitary formations organized in the Cazin Krajina, composed of Bosnians loyal to the local political leader Fikret Abdić, who fought against legal units of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (forces of the 5th Corps under the command of General Atif Dudaković), and for political and territorial autonomy of Western Bosnia from Bosnia and Herzegovina. These forces were formed with the assistance and on the initiative of the Serb Republic and the Republic of Serb Krajina, thus they collaborated with the SVK forces.

'Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 23, **Annex 2-24**

Draft translation

the Republic of Croatia, and the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps of the VRS, which were supposed to serve as the strategic reserve of the SVK;

- **Prevented an efficient defense** of the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia (Banovina, Kordun, Lika, and Northern Dalmatia) in the case of an offensive operation by the HV (Croatian Army).

In these kinds of conditions the carrying out of offensive activities by the joint forces of the SVK and VRS in the area of Western Bosnia with the aim of crushing the forces of the 5th Corps of A BiH and placing that area under VRS control, were to be anticipated. The offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia was launched in the fall (September) of 1994.

Course of the operation in fall 1994

The course of the offensive operation of the 'Serb' armies in the area of Western Bosnia is presented in somewhat more detail here, regarding the chronology and content and the particular details of certain activities, in order to obtain a fuller view of its significance in connection with the carrying out of operation 'Storm'.

At the end of August the offensive operation of the 5th Corps of A BiH ended successfully⁸⁸ and led to crushing the forces of the NO APZB⁸⁹ therefore it prevented the earlier plan of the 'Serb' armies which was based on assessments that by a long-term and exhausting combat between two Muslim (Bosnian) armies the overall strength of the Bosnians in the area of Western Bosnia would also be weakened, which would allow the Serb forces to more easily conduct an operation with the aim of placing the right shore of

⁸⁸ "Aktivnosti i namjere snaga SVK i VRS glede snaga 5. korpusa A BiH" /Activities and intentions of SVK and VRS forces regarding the A BiH 5th Corps/ 5 September 1994, **Annex 2-25**

⁸⁹ 'Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 49, **Annex 2-26**

Draft translation

the Una River and the Una railway under their control and subsequently the entire area of Western Bosnia.

At the same time, the Serb 'authorities' in the occupied areas of Banovina and Kordun were faced with a large number of refugees, civilians and members of military units loyal to Fikret Abdić (a total of 19.000 – 20.000 men) deployed mostly in the area of Turanj and Batnoga.

Assessing that the operative position of the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps was very unfavorable, because they were:

- Encircled by 'Serb' armies,
- Engaged on a very long battlefield,
- Their abilities for manning the units were diminished due to the large number of refugees and conflicts with Abdić's forces,
- Continuously exposed to the lack of heavy artillery weapons and tanks, and
- Any kind of logistic support was continuously hampered,

the Command of the 39th Corps of the SVK decided to carry out the attack.

Forces engaged in the attack on the Bojna – Golubići and Žirovac axes on 1 September 1994 were the forces of the 24th (Glina) lbr /light brigade/ and the aim of the offensive operation was to place the northern part of Western Bosnia under Serb forces' control.⁹⁰

However, by conducting a fast and well-organized counter-attack the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps already on 2 September stopped and then on 2/3 September crushed the forces of the attacker and broke through to the border with the Republic of Croatia. During the attack, and according to the reports of the Commander of the 39th Corps, the 24th lbr had 11 killed, 10 captured and dozens of wounded soldiers, whereas the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps had 7 dead.

⁹⁰ 'Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 37, **Annex 2-27**

Draft translation

Since that period and onward, the forces of the VRS and SVK commenced with preparations for the launching of a large-scale offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia with the aim of completely crushing the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps and joining (connecting) 'Serb lands' (RS and 'RSK').

However, due to a lack of operative reserve and the forces for maneuver (there are other active battlefields in BiH and the VRS doesn't have the necessary reserve forces) and also on the basis of an assessment that the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps would not engage in offensive activities on a larger scale, the forces of the VRS and the SVK, particularly those from the composition of the VRS 2nd Krajina Corps, indecisively and slowly prepared for an offensive operation.

In order to relieve the pressure of the Serb forces which in the course of their preparations for an offensive operation engaged in unsystematic and rather disorganized (uncoordinated) combat (mainly artillery) activity against the forces of the 5th Corps, the units of the 5th Corps during September engaged in a series of smaller (counter)-attacks thus forcing the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps in the area of Grabež and Otoka, and the forces of the 39th Banija Corps in the area of Bojna and Žirovac, to transfer to defense and conduct a large number of sabotage operations in the wider battlefield area.⁹¹

These types of activities by the forces of the 5th Corps undoubtedly slowed down the preparations of the joint Serb forces for an offensive operation and also led the forces of the 5th Corps to the point of entirely taking over the systematic initiative across the entire battlefield.

In general terms, this however did not significantly change the operative position of the forces of the A BiH 5th Corps which were still in encirclement, and exposed to

⁹¹ It needs to be mentioned that the units of the A BiH 5th Corps developed a specific doctrine of offensive activities, with which they compensated for the lack of artillery. More precisely, by engaging numerous sabotage groups in depth of enemy positions, on targets which were usually engaged with artillery, they achieved even better results than if they were actually using artillery.

Draft translation

fatigue due to constant combat activities, hampered logistics and nearly no manning possibilities.

Assessing that it was not possible to maintain a long-term initiative in these kinds of conditions, and given the continuously anticipated pressures and somewhat slowed down but nevertheless present preparations (reinforcements) of the Serb forces for the offensive operation, units of the 5th Corps undertook an offensive operation in the Bihać part of the battlefield.⁹²

The operation was launched on 24 October⁹³, with an attack on the following (main) axes⁹⁴:

- Grabež – Veliki Radić – Bosanska Krupa, and
 - Bihać – Ripač – Bosanski Petrovac (Kulen Vakuf).
- during the offensive activities on the Grabež part of the battlefield, the lines of defense of the 17th Ključ and 15th Petrovac Brigade of the VRS 2nd Krajina Corps were breached and the Bihać – Bosanska Krupa traffic route was cut off in the area of Veliki Radić.
- during 25 October the units of the A BiH 5th Corps succeeded in taking control of the area up to the line Grmuša – Veliki Radić – Ripač – Lohovska brda.
- during 26 October offensive activities continued with the engagement on the majority of forces on the Ripač – Gorjevac – Vrtoče (Kulen Vakuf) axis and with smaller forces on the Grmuša – Kezlovac – Mali Radić axis.
- until the end of the day the forces of the 5th Corps in the south part took control of the line Lohovo – Račić brdo – Veliki Ljutoč – trig point 707 – Gorjevac.

⁹² Evidently, when this decision was made it was taken into account that other battlefields were also active (Posavina, Kupres) which weakened the possibilities of the forces engaged in the Bihać battlefield which were forced into a position to even send reinforcements to other areas (Posavina).

⁹³ "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 24. listopada do 31. listopada 1994" /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 24-31 October 1994/, 1 November 1994, **Annex 2-28**

⁹⁴ Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 38, **Annex 2-29**

Draft translation

Forces of the 5th Corps also captured (took control of military storages) large amounts of weapons and ammunition (3 tanks, destroyed 7 tanks and captured a division-size number of 105mm howitzers).

Replenishment with ammunition and weapons and the disintegration of the system of defense of VRS units led to the continuation of offensive activities, and so units of the 5th Corps reached the line Mali Radić – Vrtoče – Kulen Vakuf on 28 October, and in the northern part until 30 October they established control over the Bihać – Bosanska Krupa traffic route and placed Bosanska Krupa in encirclement.

However, the main goal of the operation – linking with the forces of the A BiH 7th Corps which were carrying out attacks from the direction of Kupres was not accomplished, and until 30 October the VRS and SVK forces took a series of measures to prevent the attack of the units of the A BiH 5th Corps and to create conditions to transfer into a counterattack.

It is without a doubt that the insurmountable obstacles in the continuation of offensive activities of the 5th Corps were the following:

- inability to introduce fresh forces;
- deep breach (wedge) in the direction of Kulen Vakuf without the possibility to secure the flanks and
- a lacking and hampered logistics support.

On the other hand:

- Radovan Karadžić declared a state of war alongside a notice to all military conscripts to report to their units no later than 30 October;
- Numerous reinforcements and volunteers were sent to the western-Bosnian battlefield, among others members of the SVK (600 men from the 11th Corps, a Special Police platoon from Okučani, 1 battalion from the composition of the 7th Knin Corps to the area of Drvar, and a company from the composition of a special battalion of the RSK RSUP /Republican Secretariat of the Interior/ was transferred from Plaški to the Bihać battlefield etc.)

Draft translation

- A general mobilization was announced in Bosanski Petrovac and Drvar of conscripts from the ages of 18 to 55;
- The 'Pantere' /Panther/ special battalion from the composition of the East-Bosnian Corps of the VRS was sent as reinforcement to the Bihać battlefield;
- Every corps of the VRS gathered volunteer companies and deployed the same to the western-Bosnian battlefield;
- An operative command of VRS forces was established under the code name 'Pauk' /Spider/, and the Chief of the Main Staff of the VRS, Colonel General Manojlo Milovanović, was assigned as the Commander of this operative command.

At the beginning of November 1994 the operation of the joint forces of the VRS and SVK was launched⁹⁵ and until 15 November the first stage of the operation was basically accomplished in the course of which the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps regained the majority of the area lost during the previous operation by the forces of the 5th Corps and regained control of the area of the Grabež plateau, and with the participation of the forces from the composition of the 15th Lika Corps they put Bihać in danger (they reached the line Lohovska Brda, Golubić, Ripač, Pritoka).⁹⁶

Immediately after, the 2nd stage of the operation started with the engagement of the forces of the 21st and 39th SVK Corps and the forces of the NO APZB⁹⁷. The goal of this stage of the operation was to increase pressure on the Kordun-Banovina part of the battlefield with maximum use of the pressure of returning refugees to the Cazin Krajina.

⁹⁵ "Operativni položaj i prosudba namjera snaga VRS i SVK na području Zapadne Bosne" /Operative position and assessment of intentions of VRS and SVK forces in the area of Western Bosnia/, 13 November 1994, **Annex 2-30**

⁹⁶ Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 39, **Annex 2-31**

⁹⁷ "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 15. do 24. studenog 1994" /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 15-24 November 1994/, 25 November 1994, **Annex 2-32**

Draft translation

General Milovanović then issued an announcement⁹⁸, calling the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH to surrender with the threat that otherwise:

“the VRS will be forced to pursue members of the 5th Corps wherever they may be, which will make the separation of those who are guilty from the innocent more difficult and lead to the suffering of a large number of innocent Muslim civilians.” (tr. remark: free translation)

Given the extremely difficult situation in the area of Western Bosnia, on 18 November 1994 President Tuđman addressed the President of the Security Council of the UN, Madeleine Albright. He informed her of the attacks by the rebel Croatian Serbs on Bihać. Regarding the same, he requested assistance from the UN or rather air strikes on Serb forces.

On 19 November 1994 the UN Security Council brought Resolution 958. It included a reminder of Resolution 836 which expressed the concern over the deterioration of the situation in Bihać. The Resolution confirmed the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Republic of Croatia which was obviously a manner of saying that the Serbs from the UNPA areas cannot attack Bihać. It was stated in the conclusion of the Resolution that air strikes were going to be implemented for the purpose of protecting Bihać and that those air strikes could be implemented on targets in Croatia as well.

The same day the UN Security Council also brought Resolution 959. It condemned any form of violation of the internationally recognized borders of the Republic of Croatia with Bosnia and Herzegovina and demanded from all participants in the conflict and particularly the Krajina Serbs to fully respect the borders and to refrain from their violation which also related to attacks on Bihać.

As the conditions were gradually being fulfilled for the 3rd stage of the operation i.e. the fall of the protected area of Bihać and crushing the 5th Corps of the A BiH, NATO

⁹⁸ "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 24. studenog do 5. prosinca" /Analysis of intelligence information for the period from 24 November to 5 December/, 5 December 1994, **Annex 2-33**

Draft translation

forces conducted an air strike on 21 November on the Udbina airport and on 23 November it also attacked VRS targets in the area of the western-Bosnian battlefield.⁹⁹

Even though the offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia was not thereby entirely prevented its intensity was significantly diminished and a humanitarian disaster was prevented which would have occurred with the fall of Bihać, and the delivery of humanitarian aid was enabled for the area of Cazin Krajina and Bihać.

This outcome of the offensive operation undisputedly pointed out some significant shortcomings in its planning and execution:

- **Lack of maneuver forces** and forces for fast breaches in depth of the opponent, which enabled the forces of the 5th Corps to organize their defense on the battlefield because there was no need to organize defense in depth of the territory, and in this manner they were able to ensure some kind of reserve to replace the forces which were exhausted the most during combat activities;
- **Protracted carrying out (leading) of the operation** left enough time for the international community to react, which couldn't allow a humanitarian crisis of great proportion and a large number of civilian casualties which would certainly take place as General Milovanović himself announced in his threat;
- **Insufficient coordination of activities** of the forces of the VRS, SVK and NO APZB, with respect to time, goals and forms of activity.
- **Acute lack of manpower for manning the units** of the SVK (and VRS) led to excessive exhaustion of the engaged manpower which in combination with a lack of motivation and the increasing feeling of having no perspective significantly lowered morale and the efficiency of the manpower and units.

⁹⁹ "Operacija zračnih snaga NATO na području Zapadne Bosne (23.11.1994)' /NATO Air Force Operation in Western Bosnia (23 November 1994/, Intelligence Administration of the GS HV /Croatian Army Main Staff/, 23 November 1994, **Annex 2-34**

Draft translation

Attacks in the area of Western Bosnia continued with lower intensity in the first half of 1995 when the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH managed to achieve certain advances in the southeast and east part of the battlefield with respect to the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps but lost a part of the territory in the northwestern part of the battlefield where the forces attacking were the forces of the 'Spider' Operative Group¹⁰⁰ composed primarily of members of the NO APZB who were trained and commanded over by instructors from the SDB SRJ /State Security Service of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia/.

The importance of occupying the area of Western Bosnia is illustrated in the letter which the Commander of the 2nd Krajina Corps, Brigadier Radivoje Tomanić, sent to the VRS Main Staff on 16 February 1995, to General Manojlo Milovanović personally.¹⁰¹

In his letter he reported on the meeting that the President of the Serb Republic Radovan Karadžić organized in Grahovo on 15 February 1995, where he met with government representatives in the municipalities within the area of responsibility of the 2nd Krajina Corps and brigade commanders from the composition of the same corps and officers from the Corps Command.

In informing the VRS Main Staff of the content of Radovan Karadžić's presentation, Tomanić stated that he said that:

"The A BiH 5th Corps must be destroyed, that he was decisive, and not to have rumors circulating that the international community and the political leadership prevented the fall of Bihać....He pointed out that Bihać was the key to the war and that's why he was asking to cooperate with the RSK and solve – destroy the 5th Corps of the A BiH".

The report ended with the conclusion: *"the President didn't make any specific conclusions, aside from saying that the country will attempt to use the cease-fire to ensure ammunition and fuel for the needs of the VRS, and that the 5th Corps of the A BiH needed to be crushed, and that plans were made to establish a joint Council of Defense of the RS and RSK".* (tr. remark: free translation)

¹⁰⁰ Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 55, **Annex 2-35**

¹⁰¹ 2nd Krajina Corps Command, str. conf. no.: 3-36 dated 16 February 1995, **Annex 2-36**

Draft translation

The importance of Bihać is also demonstrated in the statement from the book 'Balkan Battlegrounds'¹⁰² where in the Annex 62 Operation 'Zima-94' /Winter 94/ the following is stated:

"Although a resounding battlefield success, Operation "Zima 94" failed to achieve its immediate strategic objective of relieving Serb pressure on Bihać. This was not a reflection on the HV/HVO strategy but rather the result of a conscious choice made by the VRS Main Staff to continue its assault on the enclave rather than detach troops to relieve the threatened sector. This reflected the perpetual strategic dilemma faced by the VRS Main Staff—the lack of strategic and operational-level troop reserves. The difficult choice forced on Mladić and Milovanović in 1994 would be amplified during 1995.

The VRS's failure to shift forces to cover Livno, however, definitely contributed to the Croats' success in achieving the second important objective of the campaign. The HV's goal was to bite off a portion of Serb territory in the Dinara-Livno sector so that HV troops might eventually reach positions from which they could more easily strike Knin, the Krajina Serb capital. Despite their long frontages and limited resources, the VRS defenders rallied enough to slow the able HV assault and stop the HVO. If the VRS command had been able or willing to commit more units to the battle, the HV gains could have been curtailed even further. That might have made it more difficult for the HV to position itself for its mid-1995 offensive in time to defeat the RSK."

Even though the aforementioned sufficiently demonstrates the importance for the Serbs to crush the A BiH 5th Corps, the significance of crushing the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH and the occupation of that area is even better demonstrated in the urgent letter¹⁰³ that the Commander of the 2nd Krajina Corps Radivoje Tomanić sent to the VRS Main Staff, directly to the Commander of the VRS Ratko Mladić.

¹⁰² Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume II', Central Intelligence Agency, October 2003, Annex 62, page 547, **Annex 2-37**

¹⁰³ 2nd Krajina Corps Command, str. conf. no. 701-18, dated 27 February 1995, **Annex 2-38**

Draft translation

Providing information regarding his conversation with General Mrkšić with whom he met in Bosansko Grahovo on 22 May 1995, during which it was stated that: *"this kind of behavior by the SVK and the NO APZB is untenable"* because *"this Muslim corps while being in complete encirclement is successfully battling three SVK corps, the 2nd Krajina Corps and members of the NO APZB"*, and he asked the Commander of the VRS Main Staff that he *"together with General Mrkšić evaluate the possibility and urgently devise a joint plan for an operation to crush and destroy the 5th Corps of the A BiH because it is imperative for the RS and the RSK.....because it would achieve strategic goals in this decisive and difficult time."* (tr. remark: free translation)

And the time referred to above was the time when Operation 'Skok-1' /Jump 1/ and Operation 'Bljesak' /Flash/ had already been carried out.

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3.

INEFFICIENT UNPROFOR MANDATE WAS NO GUARANTY OF PEACEFUL REINTEGRATION

Introduction

The documents from the time when the UNPROFOR mission was carried out in the area of the Republic of Croatia clearly show that the basic tasks of the UNPROFOR mandate were not carried out in the manner they were supposed to be carried out nor was it realistic to expect that they would be carried out in a foreseeable period of time. A known fact can be confirmed that the UNPROFOR mandate was inefficient and that there were no guaranties it was going to ensure the peaceful reintegration of the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia into its state and legal system.

Numerous factors influenced the inefficiency of the UNPROFOR mandate and the most significant factor was certainly the lack of political decisiveness and agreement of the most relevant international factors to recognize and prevent the project of creating the 'Greater Serbia'.

In these conditions, what seemed to be the biggest problem was the unwillingness of Knin to agree to any type of modality of integration into the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia and the UNPROFOR didn't have a mandate which could force them into agreeing to the same. The UNPROFOR offered nothing more but a *status quo* or monitoring of unsuccessful agreements on cease-fires or separation of conflicted 'parties'.

The *status quo* was absolutely unacceptable for the Republic of Croatia because it signified the obstruction of any kind of development and functional survival of the State, precisely as it was worded by the creator of the Serb-Krajina 'strategy of real threat': *Croatia as a state has been condemned to a long and agonizing death...*

Furthermore, future military-occupational intentions of the 'Serb armies' were also directed toward the area of Western Bosnia, an enclave which with its geographical

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position presented a large obstacle toward a quality unification of the 'Serb lands' ('RSK' and RS). The potential success of a combined offensive operation by the SVK and the VRS would not only lead to a humanitarian crisis and a new genocide in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but it would also bring the so-called 'Republic of Serb Krajina' into a significantly more favorable geo-strategic position with respect to the Republic of Croatia, which would make more achievable the carrying out of further conquering intentions, and less achievable the reintegration of the UNPA areas into the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia.

Concurrently, the Serb conquering intentions toward the enclaves in Bosnia and Herzegovina were being realized which were accompanied with ethnic cleansing for the purpose of ensuring ethnic homogeneousness of the envisaged 'Greater Serbia'.

According to information stated in the document of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination¹⁰⁴ dated September 1993, it is stated that 9.998 people were forcefully relocated from the UNPA areas in the period from April 1992 to September 1993. These persons were relocated under the escort of UN representatives. Without the help of the UN, another 13.470 persons were exiled from the UNPA areas and the 'pink zones' thus the total number of persons who were exiled after the UN assumed responsibility of the protected areas reached 23.470. In the same period of time 273 persons were killed in the UNPA areas.

Even though these processes were occurring 'before the eyes' of the UNPROFOR and there were no indications from their side that they were going to do anything to prevent it. It can be established that the inefficiency of the UNPROFOR was one of the basic reasons for the State leadership to bring a decision to use military means for the purpose of liberating the then occupied areas of the state territory.

¹⁰⁴ United Nations, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination, CERD/C/249, 17 September 1993, Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, Forty-third session, **Annex 3-1**

Draft translation

3.1. Establishment of the UNPROFOR

3.1.1. Aggression against Croatia and Croatian efforts in establishing peace

In order to protect itself, Croatia has from the beginning of the aggression made efforts to internationalize the issue and call in the peace forces. It wasn't successful among other things due to the fact that it still wasn't recognized as an independent state (independent international subject) therefore it needed the approval (accord) of the Yugoslav authorities for the arrival of peace forces.

This wasn't convenient for Yugoslavia (Serbia) at that time because its authorities were counting on defeating with its military means the defense of Croatia which was still in the process of creation, and thus occupy parts of its territory which in accordance with the idea of the 'Greater Serbia' were supposed to enter the composition of this formation.

Only later, after the JNA and the local paramilitary Serb troops occupied nearly one third of the Croatian state territory and when Croatia's military capabilities started to grow, the then Yugoslav authorities started to move in favor of the arrival of UN peace forces.

As the events that followed have clearly demonstrated, the cessation of war activities and the establishment of peace in Croatia were needed by Serbia as well in order to disencumber forces which would be used to carry out the aggression in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3.1.2. Chronology of the acceptance of the Vance Plan and the establishment of the UNPA areas

- 25 September 1991 – Resolution 713 imposed an embargo on armament on all republics of the SFRJ. The JNA and Serbia used their supremacy in armament and intensify an open war against Croatia.
- 26 September 1991 – JNA withdrawal from Slovenia completed.

Draft translation

- 20 November 1991 – After destroying the town with artillery fire, JNA took control of Vukovar. After the occupation it conducted crimes: executions of civilians, prisoners of war and the wounded.
- 23 November 1991 – In Geneva a cease-fire agreement is signed and the Vance Plan of UN Peacekeeping Mission is accepted. The agreement is signed by Croatia, Serbia and the JNA.
- 02 January 1992 – the Sarajevo Cease-fire Agreement is signed by which the agreement on the cessation of war activities signed in Geneva became operational.
- 15 January 1992 – beginning of the process of international recognition of the Republic of Croatia as an independent and sovereign state.
- 21 February 1992 – by **Resolution 743** the Security Council establishes the UN *Peacekeeping* Mission, UNPROFOR, and orders the peace operation to start as soon as possible. Vance's concept was declared the *Peacekeeping* plan of the UNPROFOR Mission.

At the time just prior to the signing of the Sarajevo Cease-fire Agreement, Croatia was already considerably militarily organized and strengthened and in several places it successfully carried out operations for the liberation of occupied territory. This was particularly significant in the area of Western Slavonia where, precisely as the result of Croatia's orientation toward a peaceful solution, further continuation of the successful operation by the Croatian army which would have probably liberated that area even then, was stopped.

At the end of June and the beginning of July 1992, approx. 6 months after the signing of the Sarajevo Cease-fire Agreement, the deployment of the UNPROFOR to every UNPA sector was concluded. At that time, the UNPA areas were nearly completely ethnically cleansed of Croats and other inhabitants of non-Serb nationalities. The remaining population of non-Serb nationality who stayed in these areas was exposed to constant discrimination, terror and pressures to leave these areas.

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3.1.3. UNPROFOR/UNCRO mandate

The mandate of the UNPROFOR consisted of the *Peacekeeping Plan* (Vance Plan) and other tasks and functions determined by the resolutions of the UN Security Council.

The Vance Plan¹⁰⁵ envisaged, in a brief outline, the following:

- establishment and demilitarization of UNPA areas therefore withdrawing and demobilizing every armed force besides the UNPROFOR. Deployment of military observers (UNMO) to the UNPA areas in order to monitor and verify the demilitarization; Withdrawal of the JNA from all areas of the Republic of Croatia;
- establishment of civilian police in accordance with the ethnic composition prior to the breakout of conflicts and CIVPOL supervision of the work of the local police stations for the purpose of protecting human rights and preventing all forms of discrimination, regardless nationality, religion, etc.;
- return of all displaced persons and refugees to their homes in the UNPA areas and protection of the population in the UNPA areas from fear of armed assaults.

The protective role the international forces of the UN were supposed to fulfill envisaged deploying forces in depth of the UNPA areas, and with respect to the border lines of the UNPA areas it envisaged the establishment of checkpoints on traffic routes. The protective role was intended to be assumed simultaneously with the process of demilitarization. The deployment of military forces of the UN between the conflicting parties was intended only in the UNPA areas and on the border UNPA areas as well. The purpose of the presence of protection military forces of the UN was to ensure conditions in which the UNPA could be demilitarized and to prevent interethnic conflicts after the return of displaced persons of non-Serb nationality.

¹⁰⁵ Concept for a UN peace keeping operation in Yugoslavia, **Annex 3-2**

Draft translation

The Vance plan envisaged the UNPROFOR mandate to be temporary without prejudging a political solution. Concurrently with the UNPROFOR peacekeeping operation, a political negotiating process was also envisaged. This process was led by the ICFY¹⁰⁶. Even though the plan envisaged establishment of three UNPA areas, four UNPA areas were formed which operated as UN Sectors 'East', 'West', 'North' and 'South'¹⁰⁷. The implementation of the UNPROFOR mandate was envisaged solely in the UNPA areas.

Resolution 762 dated 30 June 1992 approved the Plan of the Secretary General of the UN contained in point 16 of his report dated 26 June 1992 which determined the priority reintegration of the 'pink zones' into the RH¹⁰⁸:

- the JNA must withdraw into the FR Yugoslavia, and until the withdrawal all heavy weaponry must be placed in UN custody;
- the Croatian Army and other armed units must withdraw from the 'pink zones'
- CIVPOL would be deployed with the aim of re-establishment of Croatian authority in these areas;
- A joint commission would be established under the chairmanship of the UNPROFOR and consisting of representatives of the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the local 'Serb' authorities with the participation of the European Community to oversee the process of the restoration of Croatian authority in the 'pink zones'.

The 'pink zones' were the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia which according to the Vance plan were not a part of the UNPA areas. The majority of these zones were in Sector South.

¹⁰⁶ International Conference on Former Yugoslavia

¹⁰⁷ 'Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I', Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map 'J', **Annex 3-3**

¹⁰⁸ Report of the UN Secretary-General dated 30 June 1992, **Annex 3-4**

Draft translation

Resolutions 815 (1993), **871** (1993), **947** (1994) determined that the negotiating solution for the status of the UNPA areas should be explored within the framework of their reintegration in the Republic of Croatia. The stated was also expressed in the Declaration on the 'Situation in the occupied areas of Croatia' which the General Assembly of the UN brought on 9 December 1994. FR Yugoslavia was asked to respect the territorial integrity of Croatia and to immediately cease all administrative, military and traffic measures of integration of the UNPA areas into its own composition. FR Yugoslavia was also asked to immediately end all military and logistic support to the self-proclaimed Serb authorities in the UNPA areas and a request was also made that Croatia and FR Yugoslavia mutually recognize their independence in their internationally recognized borders.

The UNCRO Mission was established with Resolution 981¹⁰⁹ dated 31 March 1995. Since the UNPROFOR was not able to initiate the implementation of the Vance plan in three years, the Government of the Republic of Croatia decided to rescind its accord for the continuation of the peacekeeping mission. Under diplomatic pressure of the international community, and particularly the USA, the Republic of Croatia agreed to the continuation of the peacekeeping mission, but with certain modifications. The proposal of the Republic of Croatia for the modification of the *peacekeeping* plan was not adopted, but the request for reorganization and separation of the peace missions was. Separation was carried out at the request of the Republic of Croatia and Macedonia, while Bosnia and Herzegovina was in accordance with requesting changes in the functioning of the UNPROFOR.

The following were formed: UNCRO¹¹⁰ Mission for Croatia, UNPROFOR¹¹¹ Mission for Bosnia and Herzegovina and UNPREDEP¹¹² Mission for Macedonia. The organizational structure of the missions was defined in paragraph 84 of the Report¹¹³ of

¹⁰⁹ UN Resolution 981, **Annex 3-5**

¹¹⁰ United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation

¹¹¹ United Nation Protection Forces

¹¹² United Nation Preventive Deployment

¹¹³ Report of the UN Secretary-General dated 22 March 1995, **Annex 3-6**

Draft translation

the UN Secretary-General dated 22 March 1995. The stated missions are marked in the report under the designators UNPF-1, UNPF-2 and UNPF-3. In the new structure the following is significant:

- The Missions will operate independently and each will have a civilian Chief of Mission at the assistant secretary-general level and would have its own military commander;
- In order to avoid the expenses and in view of the interlinked nature of the problems, overall command and control of the stated peacekeeping operations would be exercised the Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) and the Theatre Force Commander;
- The theatre headquarters (UNPF HQ) would be in Zagreb and the administrative, logistical and public information responsibilities would be coordinated there;

Even though the Resolution 981 unequivocally set the request for the separation of the operative elements of the missions, this was not carried out in practice. Instead of limiting itself only to the coordination of the logistical, administrative and public information responsibilities, the UNPF HQ directly subordinated the UNMO and CIVPOL to itself, thus their field reports were not even sent to the UNCRO HQ but directly to the UNPF HQ.

Given that all of the key functions were in fact centralized in the UNPF HQ; the importance of the UNCRO Chief of Mission and the UNCRO Mission Military Commander was marginalized and insignificant. The reorganization of the mission resulted in an unchanged status and additional accumulation of paper work.

The UNCRO mandate was the following:

- The *Peacekeeping* plan remained the same (Vance plan)
- Tasks of UN forces were defined in the Cease-Fire Agreement dated 29 March 1994 (surveillance and verification of the separation of forces)

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- Facilitating the implementation of the Economic Agreement dated 2 December 1994 were verified
- Controlling, by monitoring and reporting, the crossing of military personnel, equipment, supplies and weapons over the international borders of the RH and BiH and the RH and Yugoslavia
- Monitoring the demilitarization of the area of the Prevlaka peninsula taken over from the UNMOP Mission
- Facilitating to the delivery of humanitarian aid for BiH across RH territory
- Implementation of all prior relevant Security Council resolutions

Resolution unequivocally defined in point 5 that the negotiations on the solution can be searched only in alignment with the reintegration of UNPA areas in the RH while respecting civil rights of all communities.

On the basis of Chapter VII of the UN Charter, UNCRO was allowed to use military force only for the purpose of self-defense and ensuring own freedom of movement.

3.2. Inefficiency of the UNPROFOR / UNCRO

The implementation of the mandate of the UNPROFOR and later UNCRO was not based on Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which means that the UNPROFOR/UNCRO was not able to apply force in the implementation of its mandate. Use of force was permitted only in self-defense and later for the purpose of ensuring its own freedom of movement. The implementation of the mandate depended solely on the willingness of the parties to respect the signed agreements and resolutions of the Security Council. However, aside from the stated, UNPROFOR/UNCRO had a significant possibility of influencing the development of events.

Draft translation

3.2.1. Obstructions of the Vance Plan and the Security Council's Resolutions

The only fulfilled element of the Vance plan was the withdrawal of the JNA from RH, at least formal. In fact, in the occupied areas the JNA in most cases merely transformed into the "milicija" /militia/, "territorial defense" or the "Serb Krajina Army" (SVK), which never ceased to function without the support of the JNA or rather the Yugoslav Army (VJ) later on.

Given that the basic goal of the Serb rebellion and the JNA aggression against the RH was the secession of the occupied parts from the Republic of Croatia, the Knin authorities did not agree to solutions which would lead toward reintegration of those areas into the RH, which is evident in the following evaluations:

- David Owen, the Co-Chairman of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia at the time, wrote in his book that he and Cyrus Vance, the other Co-Chairman of the same Conference, visited the UNPA areas on 19 and 20 November 1992. "It became clear" wrote Owen, "that the Vance plan is not being implemented". "A part of the Plan was to rebuild the Maslenica bridge in order for the continental part of Croatia to establish connection with the Dalmatia region. However in the Knin negotiations the Krajina Serb leadership refused to support anything other than the secession from Croatia or rather the existence of an independent Serb republic in parts of Croatian territory."¹¹⁴
- In his report S/25777 dated 15 May 1993 regarding the UNPROFOR mandate, the UN Secretary-General expressed his concern over the current situation in the UNPA areas and the 'pink zones'. At that occasion, the UN Secretary-General concluded that the UNPROFOR did not succeed in implementing the peacekeeping plan in Croatia due to the refusal of the Serbs to agree to the principle, as stated in the report, that "the only basis for pacification is their acceptance of Croatia's sovereignty in exchange for guarantying their minority rights".

¹¹⁴ David OWEN, *Balkanska Odiseja*, Zagreb 1998, pg 106-107, **Annex 3-7**

Draft translation

- The UNPROFOR Civil Affairs Coordinator (CAC) in Sector South, Jeannie Peterson, in her letter dated 25 March 1993 sent to the Deputy Chief of Mission and the Head of Civil Affairs, Cedric Thornberry, stated the following:

“Croatian expectations for the return of resettled persons to the areas occupied by the Serbs were large, and this was not accomplished. Croatia is now requesting the same amount of determination in the attempts to find a peaceful solution in Croatia, with the implementation of the Security Council’s resolution and under the auspices of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia, in the same manner as with respect to Bosnia. They are proposing a continuation of 6 months for a reinforced UNPROFOR mandate.

The Serb side has become determined to keep the occupied territory for centuries and obtain the recognition of its state (RSK). They claim that those areas were never a part of the Croatian state and insist on the equal right to self-determination as other territories of the former Yugoslavia. The local authorities may....”¹¹⁵

(tr. remark: free translation)

- The President of the Republic of Croatia in his letter to the UN Secretary-General dated 21 March 1995¹¹⁶ requested a change of the peacekeeping plan while neither the stated peacekeeping plan was being implemented nor there were no other achievements which would suggest that the Serb insurgents were going to accept reintegration into the Republic of Croatia. The letter also stated that in the course of the duration of the UNPROFOR Mission not a single displaced person returned to the UNPA areas and another 600 or so people of non-Serb nationality were killed at the time of UNPROFOR’s presence in the UNPA areas, and another 12.000 were exiled from the same areas.

¹¹⁵ Letter by Jeannie Peterson dated 25 March 1993 sent to the Deputy Chief of Mission and Head of Civil Affairs, Cedric Thornberry. **Annex 3-8**

¹¹⁶ Letter from the President of the Republic of Croatia to the UN Secretary-General, **Annex 3-9**

Draft translation

No resolution of the Security Council has averted the Knin authorities from their intentions to create, and with the use of military means, maintain the status of occupation and their own 'state' in the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia. To them, the resolutions represented a violation of the Vance plan and they based their position on the provision which stated that the UN mission was not going to prejudge a final solution. This is referred to in the internal memorandum of the ICFY dated 14 February 1994¹¹⁷ where McLeod informed Stoltenberg of the following:

"3. The Vance Plan stated that implementation of the plan did not prejudge the final political solution, and this is an element that Knin hangs on to. However, resolution 815 and others have specified that the UNPAs are an integral part of the Republic of Croatia, rather prejudging the final political solution. This is the first problem."

The stance of the Government of the 'RSK' was that it can negotiate with Croatia only from the position of an 'independent and sovereign' 'state'. In accordance with the same, the subject of negotiations cannot be any of the documents of the UN Security Council requesting the integration of the 'RSK' (UNPA) in the Republic of Croatia. Negotiations can only be held on the cease-fire and the separation of the 'RSK' and the Republic of Croatia.

The position of the 'RSK' Government on the resolutions of the Security Council was the following: The RSK Assembly has authorized the Government of the 'RSK' to conduct a revision of all resolutions whose provisions are contrary to the premise of the Vance plan according to which they would not prejudge a political solution. In this sense the 'RSK' Government was supposed to work on the revision of resolutions 762, 769, 815 and 820. The 'RSK' Government rejected these resolutions at its session in Beli Manastir held on 10 October 1993. For this reason the Government of the 'RSK' was obligated to insist on the changes of these resolutions with the UN Security Council, the Co-Chairman of the Conference on Former Yugoslavia and the UNPROFOR. According

¹¹⁷ ICFY Memorandum from McLeod to Stoltenberg, 14 February, 1994, **Annex 3-10**

Draft translation

to this the following would have to be discarded from the resolutions, the term 'pink zones' from Resolution 762, and from Resolution 769 the postulation on the application of Croatian customs and other regulations on the borders with the UNPA areas with other states, from Resolution 815 the provision on the UNPA areas as a constituent part of Croatian territory and from Resolution 820 the postulation that the Croatian side would have to give permission for the traffic of merchandise in and out of the UNPA areas. It is evident that the Krajina Serbs were rejecting the postulations of the relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council.

Speaking of the signed agreements between Zagreb and Knin, the following can also be observed:

The **Zagreb Agreement on Cease-Fire** and the separation of forces was signed on 29 March 1994. For the Croatian side, the ceasefire was intended to be an introduction into the reconstruction of traffic and infrastructural connections with the UNPA areas which would further lead to their reintegration in Croatia. However, the ceasefire was convenient for the Serb leadership on the 'western border' with the RH due to the strategic turning point in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Eleven days earlier, on 18 March 1994 the Washington Agreement was signed which established an alliance between the A BiH and the HVO, and this presented a direct threat to the Serb forces in general.

However, even aside from the above stated, the SVK didn't respect the basic guidelines of the Zagreb Agreement. The Agreement, among other things, envisaged the withdrawal of artillery weapons (depending on the range) from zones of certain depth from the separation line and placing those weapons to locations under supervision of the UNPROFOR.

These are only some of the examples of this type of breaches of the agreement, and the fact that they occupied artillery or rocket positions along the very line of separation is undisputed evidence of the intentions of the implementation of the 'strategy of reprisal' and are in no case evidence to the 'needs of organizing the defense'.

Draft translation

- *On 13 February 1995 the unmanned aerial vehicle took photographs of firing positions for a 130mm artillery battery (4 pieces)¹¹⁸not far from the settlement Draksenić (in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina), on the right shore of the Una and Sava rivers, directed toward the area of the Republic of Croatia (probable targets in the area of Novska or rather Kutina).*
- *On 8 May 1995 an UAV took photographs of a firing position for an 'Orkan' VLR /multiple rocket launcher/¹¹⁹whose position not far (6 kilometers of air distance) from the separation line (battlefield) clearly points out the intention of operating on 'targets' in depth of the free territory of the RH, which was conducted on 2 May 1995 during operation 'Flash' when Zagreb was fired on from those positions.*
- *In cases when heavy weaponry was placed under the supervision of the UNPROFOR, the units of the SVK used various justifications and motives to extract those weapons from UNPROFOR custody.¹²⁰*
- *Information regarding preparations, implementation and the targets of the offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia are presented in Chapter 4 in order to demonstrate that these were activities which with respect to their scope, the forces used and duration could not have passed unnoticed by UNPROFOR members and if they did pass unnoticed, than this is evidence of the lack of interest of the UNPROFOR for carrying out the tasks of their mandate.*

The **Economic Agreement** between Zagreb and Knin was signed on 2 December 1994 which included the opening for traffic of the highway through Western Slavonia.

This agreement was supposed to represent the next step in the reintegration of the occupied areas in the Croatian state. However, the Economic Agreement was extremely significant for the 'Serb' lands and armies as well, for which any kind of abatement toward the RH was convenient with respect to conducting combat activities in the area of Western Bosnia. In December 1994 the joint Serb forces were carrying out one of their

¹¹⁸ Marked location on a map and an aerial photograph of occupied firing positions, **Annex 3-11**

¹¹⁹ Marked location on a map and an aerial photograph of firing positions, **Annex 3-12**

¹²⁰ "Raščlamba obavještajnih informacija za razdoblje od 18. do 25. srpnja 1994" /Analysis of Intelligence Information for the period from 18-25 July 1994/, 26 July 1994, **Annex 3-13**

Draft translation

largest operations in the area of Western Bosnia. Bihać was about to fall and the RH was faced with a decision on immediate military intervention.

Due to the disregard of the assumed responsibilities, the RH sent a series of protests to the UNPROFOR and later to UNCRO. For demonstrational purposes, only some are stated here:

9 August 1992

Letter from General A. Tus, Chief of the GSHV, sent to General Satish Nambiar, Commander of the UNPROFOR.¹²¹ UNPROFOR was requested to prevent the shelling of Slavonski Brod and other towns and settlements and that the UNPROFOR re-establish its checkpoint in the village of D. Varoš which was after the withdrawal of the UNPROFOR occupied by rebel Serb forces and the same were opening infantry fire from the stated checkpoint on the village of Pivare.

9 April 1993

A letter from Defense Minister Gojko Šušak sent to General L. E. Wahlgren, Commander of UNPROFOR forces¹²². In the letter, the Defense Minister warned of the continuous attacks by Serb paramilitary forces in the areas of Zadar and Šibenik and the UNPROFOR was requested to *“take necessary steps to increase the strength of UNPROFOR forces in Sector ‘South’, particularly along the battlefield and in localities of the grouping of aggressor artillery...in order to in the spirit of the signed agreement in Geneva establish supervision of the aggressor artillery which is a prerequisite for the implementation of quoted agreement and the UN Security Council Resolutions 815 and 802.”*

(tr. remark: free translation)

8 June 1993

A letter from the Defense Minister Gojko Šušak sent to General L. E. Wahlgren, Commander of UNPROFOR forces¹²³.

¹²¹ Letter from the Chief of the GSHV dated 9 August 1992, **Annex 3-14**

¹²² Letter from the Defense Minister dated 9 April 1993, **Annex 3-15**

¹²³ Letter of the Defense Minister dated 8 June 1993, **Annex 3-16**

Draft translation

The letter contains a protest regarding the artillery attack of the 'SVK' units on HV positions in the area of Svilaja and Vrlika, in the course of which more than 50 shells of different calibers were fired, and they fired on civilian targets, and the UNPROFOR was requested to procure cessation of fire.

26 April 1994

A letter from Hrvoje Šarinić, the Head of the Croatian Delegation for Negotiations with the Serbs and the State Commission for Relations with the UNPROFOR, sent to Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General.¹²⁴

The letter contained information that the Cease-Fire Agreement of 29 March 1994 was being violated and that the implementation of the agreement is being obstructed by rebel Serbs and that the UNPROFOR was unable to ensure the implementation of the Agreement.

It also pointed out the fact that on the occasion of the signing of the Agreement a question was put forward if the UNPROFOR was going to be able to implement the Agreement and the response was something in the lines that there were not going to be any problems. It proved to show that the assertion was not correct and that the doubt in the abilities of the UNPROFOR was justified.

22 December 1994

An analytical material was drafted under the title 'Overview of the status and implementation of the UNPROFOR mandate with annexes'¹²⁵. It is evident that during 1994 over 2.000 protests were sent.

¹²⁴ Letter of Mr. Hrvoje Šarinić dated 26 June 1994, **Annex 3-17**

¹²⁵ "Pregled stanja i provedbe mandata UNPROFOR-a" /Overview of the status and implementation of the UNPROFOR mandate", **Annex 3-18**

Draft translation

3.2.2. Lack of objectivity and neutrality in the implementation of the mandate

In general terms, when speaking of nearly every unit of the UN in the Republic of Croatia, the conclusion can be reached that they showed a certain amount of partiality toward the Serb population in the occupied areas of the RH. This attitude was undoubtedly influenced by the following factors:

- Socialization in the living surroundings, because the majority of UN members were living in the occupied areas of the RH (UNPA areas) where the Serbs were the majority, and neighbors and 'hosts';
- Prejudice of Croats and Croat-Serb relations, which in the time of Yugoslavia, and stemming from the Serb lobby, were systematically being created after World War II;
- Lack of knowledge of the real causes of the conflicts in the area of the former Yugoslavia and acceptance of the explanations given by the local population (Serbs) according to which they were the victims of 'Ustasha' attacks.

However, this attitude was also influenced by the desire of the majority of members of the UN for the mandate to last as long as possible, because these were professional soldiers who were much better paid while on mission than in their mother countries. Given that it was precisely the Serb 'side' for whom the maintaining of the *status quo* was convenient and that Croatia was constantly requesting for the status and end of the UN mandate to be resolved, their sympathies toward the Serbs can to a certain degree be understood, but not justified.

The policy of the country a certain unit came from also left a significant mark on the overall behavior and attitudes.

The critical oversights were made in the work of the UN Sector services of public information which completely failed to explain to the local population the mandate of the UN mission and the meaning of the resolutions of the Security Council, which resulted in a completely distorted form of interpretation of the Vance plan in the UNPA areas.

The Serbs in the occupied areas of the RH felt and believed that the mandate of the protection forces of the UN was to protect and guard them 'from the Croats', and to

Draft translation

protect the UNPA areas (which were as 'Serb autonomous provinces' and 'Serb provinces' on 19 December 1991, therefore prior to the signing of the Sarajevo Cease-Fire Agreement, declared as the so-called 'Republic of Serb Krajina') from the Republic of Croatia.

Prevalent was the absurd interpretation according to which the mandate of the peacekeeping forces in the UNPA areas was the protection of the ethnically cleansed areas and the local Knin authorities.

UNPROFOR/UNCRO in the process of their activity was the only element of the international community which created an illusion of statehood with the population of the 'RSK'. In the process, unprecedented concessions were made: the Knin authorities didn't even want to hear of the fact that the UNPA areas were in RH, and the UN took account that the name 'Croatia' was not even mentioned in the mission's designation.

The below stated names of UN Missions in the period from 1991 to 1997, demonstrate the principle of inserting the name of the country in the mission's designation:

MINURSO United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (the acronym of the designation in French);

UNOMIG United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia;

UNMIK UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo;

MONUC UN Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

UNMEE United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea;

UNMIL United Nations Mission in Liberia;

UNOCI United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire;

MINUSTAH United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti;

UNMIS United Nations Mission in the Sudan;

UNMIT United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste;

UNAMID African Union/United Nations Hybrid operation in Darfur;

MINURCAT United Nations Mission in the Central African Rep. and Chad;

Draft translation

After conducting an analysis of every mission beginning in 1991 and until the end of 2007, it is possible to reach the conclusion that in that period a total of 45 missions were opened. In no more than 6 the (unwritten) rule was not applied that the designator should contain the name of the state where the mission was being carried out. And those are as follows:

UNPROFOR United Nations Protection Force;
UNCRO United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation;
UNPREDEP United Nations Preventive Deployment Force;
UNTAES United Nations Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia, ...
UNMOP United Nations Mission of Observers in Prevlaka;
UNPSG United Nations Civilian Police Support Group

It is indicative that 5 missions (of the stated 6) were conducted in Croatia. The only mission outside Croatia is the UNPREDEP, in Macedonia, where the name of the state was excluded due to the well-known dispute with Greece regarding the name 'Macedonia'.

Regarding missions which were carried out in the area of the Republic of Croatia it is unquestionable that the exclusion of the state name of Croatia in the designation of the mission represented a concession toward the (local, rebel) Serbs for which any type of association of the occupied areas with Croatia was unacceptable.

To what extent the Knin authorities were sensitive (allergic) to the issue of using the name 'Croatia' is demonstrated in the problem of the former UNPROFOR Commander of Croatia Command (COCC) General Tayyeb.¹²⁶ The title of his duty, which contained the word 'Croatia' was unacceptable to the Serbs from the occupied areas to the degree that the UNPROFOR Command was considering of renaming it to

¹²⁶ Letter from the Head of the Civil Affairs of Sector North to Akashi dated 10 February 1994

Draft translation

'UNPA Commander'. The proposal for the modification was prompted by General de Lapresle.

The issue with the name 'Croatia' continued with the UNCRO mission as well during 1995. The Knin authorities would not even accept the designation of the mission UNCRO, even though 'CRO' didn't stand for Croatia but for "*Confidence Restoration Operation*". Due to the 'CRO' in the mission's designation, the UNCRO Command in Sector North sent formal letters to the RSK authorities on memorandums without a mission designator, most often using only the title "*United Nations*". Their view of neutrality assumed that they used these types of memorandums for written correspondence with the bodies of the Croatian authorities.

The same problem occurred during the appointment to duty of the UNCRO Commander, General Al Rodan.¹²⁷ In commenting the stance of General Janvier, the recording clerk at the meeting, Colonel Žarko Novaković, recorded the following:

"It is obvious that he is trying to manifest and moderate our decisive position regarding our unacceptance of any type of discussions with General Rodan in which he would declare himself as the Commander of the UNCRO mandate of the UN which is unacceptable for us." (tr. remark: free translation)

Despite the entirely clear stances of the Knin authorities which serve to show that the concept of reintegration in the Republic of Croatia is rejected entirely, there was a shared interest of Knin and the UN to prevent a potential outbreak of war between the HV and the SVK. This shared interest was present from the beginning and it is difficult to distinguish to what extent the stated corresponds to the UN principle of neutrality.

International negotiators of the ICFY launched negotiations between Zagreb and Knin knowing beforehand that they wouldn't result in any specific agreements that would lead to reintegration. Their goal was to open the negotiation process as a preventive measure to prevent the HV from entering the war. This shared interest is evident in the

¹²⁷ Record of the meeting Janvier – Mrkšić, Knin, 7 June 1995, **Annex 3-20**

Draft translation

record of the meeting between Martić, Bildt and Stoltenberg held in Knin on 4 July 1995.¹²⁸

“BILDT – We are slipping into a new war between the RSK and the RH. In order to prevent it, we must enter a new round of peace negotiations. The RH wishes to enter the European integration processes (Trade and Cooperation Agreement, European Council,...). Based on the conclusions of the last years European Summit in Knin, the dynamics and intensity of that integration will be in accordance with the cooperativeness and respect of the universal norms of behavior in the aspect of domestic and foreign affairs of the Republic of Croatia. The West has made clear to Croatia that the option of war and threat of force as an alternative to a political solution of the crisis can be counterproductive.

MARTIĆ – a trip to Geneva is useless, it is pointless. If there is a chance for any agreement that the Croats will not violate – I will agree to negotiations...

If the Croats would demonstrate a minimum of good faith and withdraw their troops from the Dinara Mountain, the possibility of a meeting in Geneva would become a realistic one.

BILDT - ...to begin with, we should not use the term negotiation, but rather discussion. If the Republic of Croatia was to attack again, it will be faced with serious, long-term and damaging consequences related to its inclusion in the European integration processes.” (tr. remark: free translation)

The assistance of the UNCRO in preventing a potential HV military operation became operational at the meeting between Martić and Akashi held in Knin on 30 July 1995. Akashi reported on the same to the Secretary-General Annan on 2 August 1995.¹²⁹ Even though it was absolutely clear that no positive results could be achieved on the planned meeting in Geneva, Akashi offered UNCRO assistance to Martić in preventing a potential military operation by the HV in return for their acceptance of 6 points relating to Bihać.

¹²⁸ Record of the meeting between Martić, Bildt and Stoltenberg, Knin, 4 July 1995, **Annex 3-21**

¹²⁹ Letter from Akashi to Annan, 2 August 1995, **Annex 3-22**

Draft translation

"In return for these commitments, I was prepared to order an active deployment of UNCRO forces along the likely main axis of any potential HV advance into the Krajina."

"Martić said: "We cannot accept that there are borders between the Serbs. Mr. Akashi, you are asking me to capitulate...Let me be honest. The 'RSK' is really in a very difficult position, and we want to find a peaceful solution. But...it will be a capitulation."

"The term "UNPROFOR" was often used by our interlocutors, but never UNCRO."

The stated document can serve to conclude that the deployment of the UNCRO on the presumed main axes of attack by the HV was offered merely as a possibility, but already on 24 July 1995 the operative order was signed for the stated operation under the designator *"Active Presence"*¹³⁰ and information of the same was delivered to the ICFY on 1 August 1995. This type of order is in direct contravention with the basic principles of peacekeeping according to which the mandate and deployment of UN forces would have to be defined in accordance with the parties in conflict.

More precisely, the exposure and vulnerability of the UN forces which would be caught between two fires in the separation zone at the beginning of the conflict would significantly endanger the safety of the soldiers who were neither equipped nor prepared, and finally sent to operate in conditions of an open war.

The inaccurate reports of the HV supposedly taking UNCRO members hostage¹³¹ during operation 'Storm' are witness to the fact that a part of the members of UNCRO was using false reporting to create a platform for a political / diplomatic pressure for the purpose of preventing a HV operation.

The Protest of the SVK Commander sent on 4 August 1995¹³² to the UNPF HQ demonstrates that the SVK was the source of the disinformation on the HV supposedly

¹³⁰ UNCRO operation order 'Active Presence', **Annex 3-23**

¹³¹ Report from Janvier to Annan, 5 August 1995, **Annex 3-24**

¹³² Protest from Mrkšić to Janvier, 4 August 1995, **Annex 3-25**

Draft translation

taking hostages. The structure of the content shows the intention to disseminate disinformation, because it is illogical that the SVK Main Staff would express larger concern for the safety of the UN than its own units.

"We are addressing you for the second time today because we are still restrained and we are not carrying out retaliation in the territory of the Republic of Croatia. Army of the Serbian Krajina respects all instances of the Geneva conventions which is not typical of the Croatian side. Croatian Army is still targeting exclusively civilian targets in the whole territory of the Republic of Srpska Krajina and particularly Knin and other town centers. As you know, members of the peace forces are also under a continuous fire. Particularly notable are attacks against UN personnel in the areas of separation, where the Croatian Army has, according to our information, taken 7 UN posts and taken hostages 70 members of the peace forces. Please use your authority and take measures to protect civilian population and the UN personnel, by engaging NATO forces."

The impression is that the Serb civilians and UN members were the main goals of the attack of the HV, which is absurd, because each and every kind of incident presented a significant problem for the HV and opened the possibility of diplomatic pressure for the purpose of preventing the operation. Being aware of the stated, the HV Main Staff took a series of preventive measures in order to avoid the stated or to reduce the same to the least possible degree.

Taught by experience of the ICTY indictment against Martić which charged him of shelling Zagreb, and which was brought and publicly announced prior to the beginning of operation 'Storm', one of the important elements of the campaign of disseminating disinformation conducted by the SVK leadership were also the protests in which they falsely accused the HV regarding artillery activity.

An impression was trying to be created that HV artillery was engaged in massive activity on civilian targets, while the SVK was abiding by international laws of war. At the

Draft translation

same time this was used to attempt to create conditions for undertaking 'legitimate' rocket strikes on Croatian towns in accordance with the 'strategy of real threat'.

The protest of General Mrkšić¹³³ sent to the UNPF HQ on 4 August at 06:30 hrs states that the HV had attacked nearly every area (tr. remark: occupied area) and target in those areas. The very statement that at 05:00 hrs the HV engaged in artillery activity on targets in Eastern Slavonia, West Sirmium and Baranja is inaccurate, because this was the area of Sector 'East' where the HV was organizing its defense against a potential attack from the UNPA areas and it was not suitable for the same to open a front in that area. In the protest the following is also stated:

"Long-range artillery fire began at exactly 0500 hours this morning, on 4 August, against all civilian targets in the towns of Knin, Benkovac, Obrovac, Drniš, Vrginmost, Vojnić, Glina, Petrinja and most populated places in the western part of Krajina and in areas of Eastern Slavonia, Western Sirmium and Baranja.

We demand that you take immediate measures to stop the aggression.

We demand that you immediately inform the UN Security Council and the Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali. We wish to point out that the Serbian Army of Krajina did not fire on civilian targets in the Republic of Croatia."

The campaign of disseminating disinformation was continuous and full-scale. The goal was to persuade the international community to apply diplomatic pressures in order to prevent the operation, and this was the point of the existence of a shared interest of the UN forces, the SVK and a part of the international community which was inclined toward Milošević's policy.

¹³³ Protest from Mrkšić to Janvier, 4 August 1995, 06:30 hrs, **Annex 3-26**

Draft translation

4.

SITUATION AND ACTIVITIES OF THE VRS AND SVK PRIOR TO OPERATION „STORM“

Introduction

Passing the decision to undertake Operation “Storm” as the final means for the implementation of the policy of reintegration of the then occupied areas into the state and legal system of the Republic of Croatia was influenced by the processes indicated in Chapters 2 and 3, which can be summarized as follows:

- *The determination of the politics of the Serb “authorities” in the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia to use military means to prevent any attempt of reintegration of these areas into the state legal system of the Republic of Croatia;*
- *The unwillingness of the international forces, but also of the most important factors of the international community, to impose more pressure on the overall “Serb” politics in order to provide for the implementation of what had been defined by the relevant resolutions of the UN SC concerning the reintegration of the occupied areas.*

The decision to carry out the Operation “Strom” as well as the very course and implementation of the operation were also influenced by the processes on the territory of BiH presented in this chapter. This particularly refers to the military activities that were conducted and in which the VRS forces were engaged, in some cases even in joint operations with the SVK forces. These activities can be concisely defined as follows:

- *the culmination of the offensive combat operations of the VRS aimed at the occupation of the remaining Bosnian and Bosnian-Croatian enclaves or at the retention of the occupied areas within the Republic of Srpska.*

Draft translation

This set of reflection does not exclude the influence of the overall situation and the activities in the territory of BiH, first of all the political and diplomatic activities, furthermore the activities of the international forces (UNPROFOR), the economic and humanitarian situation, the influence of Serbia, etc., but the influence of the military forces and their activities was certainly more direct and transparent.

4.1. The Washington Agreement – effects on the activities in BiH and the Republic of Croatia

Introduction

The focus of the outline is on the military system, in particular on the Army of the Republic of Srpska and on the influence that this system had on the planning and implementation of Operation “Storm”. The intention is to demonstrate how the situation and the activities of this system significantly influenced (directly and indirectly) the choice of the axes of attack, the structure of the forces engaged, the time of the commencement of the operation, but also on the planned and implemented dynamics of the conduct and the defining of the center of gravity of the operation.

When speaking of the situation and the activities of the VRS, it refers in particular to 1995; however, it is absolutely clear that the situation was also conditioned by what had happened the years before, especially in 1994. The year 1994 was strongly marked by the signing of the Washington Agreement which, as an important political event, had extremely significant repercussions on the plan of military relations: it concerned changes in the relation of the forces and contents, as well as the modality of the forces engagement, which was clearly evident that year.

Draft translation

4.1.1. The relation between the Washington Agreement and the Zagreb Agreement

The significance of the Washington Agreement

The Washington Agreement, signed on 01 March 1994, was preceded by meetings of the HVO and A BiH commanders in mid-February in Kiseljak and on 23 February in Zagreb. Already during the second meeting a ceasefire agreement was signed, which came into effect on 25 March. Immediately after the Washington Agreement, on 12 March the "Split Agreement" was signed, which further formulated the issue of forming a joint army of the Federation of BiH.

Namely, the Washington Agreement formally established the joint Federation Army, but even after the Split Agreement was signed it was far from what is called a functional unified army. The main achievement of the Washington Agreement was the cessation of all serious military conflicts between the HVO and A BiH (units) and the establishment of a coordination, such as it is, of a joint or at least parallel (synchronized) operation against the mutual opponent – the VRS.

The establishment of an alliance relationship between the A BiH and HVO caused that the VRS, an army that in late 1993 and early 1994 conducted offensive operations and was successful in all parts of the battlefield in BiH, by the end of 1994 had become an army that suffered significant losses and occasionally or permanently lost parts of the territories occupied and held since the beginning of the aggression of the JNA against BiH.

At the time of the signing of the Washington Agreement, almost three fourths of the BiH territory¹³⁴ were held by the VRS, and those were not only areas in which prior to

¹³⁴ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map "L", **Annex 4-1**

Draft translation

the war the Serbs were the majority population, but also a significant part of the territory in which prior to the war the Bosnians and Croats respectively were in absolute majority, as well as a significant part of the territory in which none of the constitutive peoples in BiH had the absolute majority population prior to the war.¹³⁵

It was a result of the aggression and occupation that was absolutely clearly anticipated by the concept of the strategic offensive operation of the JNA. General Kadijević explicitly stated in his book¹³⁶ that this operation among other things implied the following:

“to take into account that the role of the Serb people in Bosnia and Herzegovina will be a crucial one for the future of the Serb people as a whole ... and the location of the JNA forces has to be adapted to that.”

While assessing at the end of 1995 the individual participants in the war in BiH, the authors of the book titled “Balkan Battlegrounds”¹³⁷ also provided the following assessment of the VRS:

The VRS generals, Mladić and Milovanović, and the VRS Main Staff displayed to the end their prowess at engineering strategic shifts of their limited formations. The move of seven major formations from halfway across the country despite heavy damage to its command and control structure during the NATO air campaign was a triumph of the VRS Main Staff professionalism and skill. The Serbs' rapid execution of major counterattacks also showed how powerful the VRS remained at the end of the war, particularly against the ARBiH.

¹³⁵ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map "D", **Annex 4-2**

¹³⁶ **Annex 1-3**, page 134

¹³⁷ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, page 393, **Annex 1-4**

Draft translation

Furthermore, while referring to the impacts of the NATO air strikes on the VRS units (September 1995) they stated the following:

The VRS' capabilities were certainly degraded, but it still functioned as a coherent military force throughout its operational area and was able to move multiple brigade-sized combat formations clear across Bosnia even at the height of the air campaign.

On the next page of this book it is stated that General Milovanović still made some errors that cost the VRS dearly. There is an attempt to explain the dilemmas he encountered and had to solve, particularly those concerning the choice of the focal point for the implementation or maneuver of the forces or the inclusion of reinforcement.

It is obvious that when making these assessments the authors of the book forgot or overlooked an important fact:

Only one strategic error, the most important one, was made, namely the aggression and occupation of the territories that could not be claimed by the Bosnian Serbs by any means or on any basis, which was executed with the direct and “comprehensive” engagement of the JNA.

The Serb forces were by no means capable of permanently defending (retaining) the areas that had been occupied and ethically cleansed in that way and waging a war without any serious defeat. This was in particular not possible after the A BiH and the HVO had organized, fairly armed and joined in an alliance relationship.

As long as the A BiH and the HVO were mutually conflicted the VRS was able to successfully defend the occupied areas and wage a war without any serious defeat. It was not before the VRS experienced a defeat during the operations that followed Operation “Storm” that the Serb politics was willing to give up the war of conquest for the territories that could not be claimed by the Serbs.

Draft translation

The Zagreb Agreement – there is a causal relation with the Washington Agreement

During 1994 many battlefields on the territory of BiH were active. However, in the context of the present outline we refer to those battlefields and areas which were in direct causal relation with the events in the territory of the Republic of Croatia in 1995, namely:

- the corridor through Bosanska Posavina which had a general significance both for the VRS and the SVK, because it was the only direct connection of the “western Serb states” with the mother state (Serbia);
- the area of Western Bosnia (Cazin Krajina, Bihać), which had a special military significance for the VRS and SVK, because it enabled a quality linking-up of the RS and “RSK”, essentially reduced the operative depth of the “RSK” territory and linked up significant forces of the VRS and SVK (while it was under the control of the 5th Corps of the A BiH);
- the area of Kupres, Glamoč and Livno, which represented a strategically important rear for the occupied area of the Knin Krajina, both from the point of view of the defense of this area and from the point of view of its liberation.

Although the aforesaid three areas and their retention under the Serb control, i.e. putting under Serb control in the case of Western Bosnia, were not equally significant or ranked in priority for the RS and the “RSK”, they all still reflected instability and insecurity to both of the “Serb” “states”. They were their common interest.

Thus, the agreement of the “RSK” authorities to sign the Zagreb Agreement must be taken into consideration within this context. The Zagreb Agreement was entered into at the Russian Embassy in Zagreb on 29 March 1994 through the mediation of the Russian special envoy Vitalii Churkin. This Agreement facilitated the cessation of significant combat activities in the territory of the Republic of Croatia at the time when the conditions were generated for the intensification of combat activities in BiH (Washington Agreement).

Draft translation

The ceasefire in Croatia could be of avail for both RS and “RSK”:

- the SVK forces were available to provide assistance to the VRS forces (in the operations carried out in the area of Western Bosnia), and
- the VRS forces were *de facto* relieved of the obligation of operational and/or strategic reserve of the SVK and they could focus on “solving” their own problems that emerged with the alliance of HVO and A BiH.

The two agreements had two different effects in two states:

- The Washington Agreement facilitated the intensification of combat activities in BiH in which the forces of the A BiH and HVO gradually became more and more dangerous to the VRS. During fall and winter (November and December) this resulted with two operations: in the area of the Livno – Kupres battlefield and in Western Bosnia, during which the VRS forces suffered their first significant territorial losses;
- The Zagreb Agreement “inaugurated” a certain climate of negotiation, which in December resulted in the economic agreement and opening of the highway between Novska and Nova Gradiška. However, this Agreement also facilitated to show on the political level to what extent the positions of the two side differed as regards the finding of a final peaceful solution and to what extent the structures of the “RSK” authorities were internally subdivided as regards the two options: negotiation with the Croatian authorities (only if it was of any benefit for the “RSK” and did not include any talks on reintegration) or *a priori* refusal of any talks concerning the integration within the Republic of Croatia.

4.1.2. In(direct) effects of the two agreements

Effects within the territory of BiH

With regards to the first effect, the VRS suffered its first significant loss of territory in the second half of October, when the forces of the 30th Partisan Division were

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suppressed in an attack by forces of the 7th Corps of the BiH Army, and in an attack by the HVO parts of the 2nd Krajina Corps¹³⁸ were suppressed so that the HVO forces entered the city of Kupres and liberated it in early November.

At that time an offensive operation by the SVK in the territory of Western Bosnia was underway, as was explained in Chapter 2, item 2.3.3.. Although after the NATO air strikes (on 21 and 22 November) the intensity of the operations weakened, the danger of the occupation of Bihać was still a reality. In order to weaken the pressure of the Serb forces on the 5th Corps of the A BiH, and as the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps of the VRS were for the most part engaged in the attack, forces of the HVO and the HV conducted Operation "Zima" (Winter) on 29 November whereby they attacked the forces of the 2nd Corps in the Livno Valley and Dinara areas.

By the end of the year the battlefield had been shifted some 20 kilometers toward the northwest¹³⁹ and the VRS had lost some 200 square kilometers¹⁴⁰ of land within the Livno-Kupres battlefield and the Dinara region.

During these activities the following key weaknesses of the VRS became evident:

- A shortage of reserve forces and forces for maneuver (specifically within the 2nd Krajina Corps structure)
- An indecisiveness of the command structure in passing decisions regarding priority tasks (should the focus be the defense in the Livno Valley or in an offensive on Western Bosnia), and

¹³⁸ ¹³⁸ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 48, **Annex 4-4**

¹³⁹ ¹³⁹ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 40, **Annex 4-5**

¹⁴⁰ ¹⁴⁰ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, page 251', **Annex 4-6**

Draft translation

- Fatigue and a loss of motivation among the manpower which had become exhausted as a result of the long-lasting conflicts within the numerous battlefields in BiH.

The said problems were evident within all of the VRS structures but were especially emphasized within the 2nd Krajina Corps, which was located in semi-encirclement so to say, battling in the Bihać, Livno and Kupres battlefield.

It is true that one of the main goals of the Operation "Winter-94" (Zima-94) – the weakening of the pressure of the Serb forces in an attack on Bihać – was not directly accomplished, but it is a fact that the VRS (2nd Krajina Corps) did not succeed in crushing the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH, nor did they seize Bihać, which surely resulted in the incapability of replenishing forces and/or new forces which would be capable of successfully completing the operations regarding Bihać.

Effects within the Republic of Croatia

As mentioned, the Zagreb Agreement enabled a certain level of negotiation but at the same time it exposed the part of the "RSK" politics which refused negotiations with the RH Government and which would not accept any form of reintegration into RH.

The Economic Agreement as a direct result of the cease-fire Agreement (Zagreb Agreement) implied a modified UNPROFOR mandate which the rebel Serbs refused. They especially refused the termination of the UNPROFOR mandate which the RH requested due to its inefficiency.

There were increasing divisions within the structures of the "RSK" Government as a result of these circumstances:

- On the one hand were those forces which requested a more radical approach towards the RH and more intense ties with the Republic Srpska in BiH, forces which through constant provoking of tensions along the

Draft translation

battlefield wished to demonstrate how the UNPROFOR presence was essential and their mandate needed to remain as was. Simply, members of these factions were politically tied to Martić, militarily to General Čeleketić, territorially to the “territorial strategic focal point” of the area of the “RSK”, and their policy was to refuse any form of agreement with RH, even in those cases when the population within the occupied territories of the RH would directly benefit from such negotiations.

- On the other hand were the forces which supported a certain (commercial) cooperation with the RH, which were against any form of institutional linking to the Republic of Srpska (RS) and supported ties with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ), which simply could be politically tied with Goran Hadžić, support the program of the President of the “Government” Borislav Mikelić, territorially support the occupied territories of Easter Slavonia, Baranja and Srijem. These forces nevertheless counted on the fact that time was in their favor and how any hasty moves in the military sense could only be beneficial on a short-term basis.

Considering the first group had an increasingly difficult time “communicating” with the SRJ, especially taking into consideration the embargo which was imposed on that country with regards to BiH (Republic of Srpska), the true military capabilities of the corps within the “territorial and strategic focal point” (the 7th, 15th, 21st and 39th Corps) including the 18th Corps within the area of Western Slavonia suffered constant weakening.

The reality of the “strategy of real threat” was all that remained, which in itself had become less of a threat as the HV forces became more significant. Regardless of this fact, Martić policies which supported such a strategy easily refused talks regarding the Z-4 plan (January 1995) confirming thus how these policies did not consider any form of reintegration into RH as acceptable.

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On the other hand, the military capabilities of the 11th Corps had not been significantly reduced, on the contrary thanks to the strong ties to the Yugoslav Army (VJ) and especially to the 12th Corps, these forces felt they were incorporating themselves into that Corps. The commander of the 11th Corps (General Dušan Lončar) significantly contributed to this feeling of incorporation; he was surely one of the finer officers of the Serb Krajina Army (SVK) and supported the program of the Prime Minister of the "RSK" Mikelić, although he did not support Hadžić's policies which allowed for his professional affirmation. Clearly, the economic potentials of that part of the "RSK" were somewhat greater again due to strong ties to the SRJ.

In its attempts to compromise any form of cooperation with the RH, Martić's politics led to the circumstances which resulted in the RH Government deciding to conduct Operation "Flash" as the only way to cease the obstructing of the concluded agreements.

Even when the approval for the prolongation of the UN's stay under a modified mandate (UNCRO) had been given, which implied the UN's control of the "border" crossings between the BiH and the "RSK" and the SRJ and the "RSK", the "RSK" leadership, as a sign of protest, decided to close down the highway where it passed through the UNPA Sector "West" for the first time on 24 April and then again on 29 April.

It is indicative that on 29 April the highway remained closed on 30 April as well despite attempts and warnings from UNPROFOR. The decision not to open the highway was made by the commander of the 18th Corps and the Commander of the Serb Krajina Army Main Staff (GŠ SVK) General Čeleketić¹⁴¹. Attempts made by the Minister of Defense of the "RSK" (Rade Tanjga) to open the highway also failed although an agreement had been reached to such an effect on 30 April.

It is also revealing that Martić and General Čeleketić visited Western Slavonia from 25 to 27 April when they announced "*that the situation in regards to the highway*

¹⁴¹ "Izveštaj o uzrocima i načinu pada Zapadne Slavonije" /Report on the fall of Western Slavonia/, Republic of Serb Krajina, state commission for establishing the causes and manner of the fall of Western Slavonia, page 4, Knin, 11 July 1995, **Annex 4-7**

Draft translation

*would soon become complicated” and that the “SVK was prepared to defend Western Slavonia and even to return part of the occupied territories.”*¹⁴²

Although the book “Balkan Battlegrounds” states¹⁴³ how the “*attack struck with almost no warning leaving it minimal time to call up its reservists*” clearly this was not the case, Martić and Čeleketić expected an attack because they ordered full mobilization which was conducted¹⁴⁴ until 30 April.¹⁴⁵

Operation “Flash” demonstrated the fundamental weaknesses of the SVK which were especially noted in the defense that was “organized” by the 18th Corps forces:

- Disorganized defense and especially weaknesses which emerge from manning of the units with reservists;
- A shortage of reservist and maneuver forces although the 18th Corps had a possibility to undertake this manning
- The fact that the remaining SVK forces were unwilling to send reinforcements to the area of Western Slavonia;
- The unwillingness of the VRS Main Staff to provide operative reserves which was depended on in the defense of Western Slavonia;
- The inability to undertake a counter-attack and/or to cut off the relatively deep wedges of the enemy forces.

The fact was that at that time the 7th Corps SVK forces were mostly engaged in combat in the Dinara region and part of the 5th, 21st and 39th Corps forces were engaged in the battlefield towards Western Bosnia.

¹⁴² Ibid, page 3, **Annex 4-7**

¹⁴³ ¹⁴³ “Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I”, Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map “D”, **Annex 4-8**

¹⁴⁴ Information of the fall of Western Slavonia (point 1), SVK Main Staff, Information Sector, 4 May 1995, **Annex 4-9**

¹⁴⁵ “Izvještaj o uzrocima i načinu pada Zapadne Slavonije” /Report on the fall of Western Slavonia/, (page 5), **Annex 4-7**

Draft translation

Furthermore a minimum of 24 to 36 hours were needed to bring the forces there whereby their participation in combat (a counter-attack) would be channeled in the direction of Stara Gradiška – Okučani which lacked the necessary capacities to accept forces which could undertake a successful counter-attack.

When reinforcements or operative reserves from the VRS are concerned, it is questionable whether the VRS would have had significant enough forces that it could have engaged in Western Slavonia, even if there had been political will for its involvement in the conflict in RH.

Specifically, at that time the forces of the 1st and 2nd Krajina Corps were engaged in combat activities in the area of the Grahovo-Glamoč battlefield, Western Bosnia, Doboj, Ozren, Vlašić and the Posavina corridor, without planned reserves.

With regards to the implementation of the strategy of real threat it was evident that Martić and the Serb Krajina Army Main Staff (GŠ SVK) did not withdraw from its implementation (shelling Zagreb for example) and it is in this context that we can interpret the engagement of “....armor-mechanized combat groups for attack” from the 36th armored brigade, 12th motorized brigade and the 453rd motorized brigade to the bridge areas of the Danube and to the area of Šid-Tovarnik.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁶ "Raščlamba obavještajnih podataka o tijeku i rezultatima operacije "Bljesak" /Analysis of intelligence information on the course and results of Operation Flash – chapter "Reinforcements from the Yugoslav Army/, 21 February 1994, **Annex 4-10**

Draft translation

4.2. The state and activities of the Serb Republic Army (VRS) and the Serb Krajina Army (SVK) in early Summer 1995

4.2.1. General aspects of the situation

The military and political situation within the occupied territories of RH (Republic of Serb Krajina - RSK) and BiH (Republic of Srpska – RS) at the beginning of June 1995 was strongly influenced by numerous interdependent and significantly interdependent processes:

- **The weakening of the morale** of the population and the members of the SVK units within the occupied territories of the RH;
- The strengthening of the attempts and undertaking of political steps to **unite the RSK and RS** into one state;

When discussing the weakening of the population's morale we can conclude how this was a result of the fact that the "Serb Army" in the previous period suffered a number of significant defeats:

- Failure of the operation to widen the corridor in Bosanska Posavina.
- Failure in the offensive operation of the VRS units in Western Bosnia,
- The embargo imposed upon the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia regarding economic, financial, military and other forms of cooperation with the RS and the RSK,
- NATO air force activities on the Udbina airport and on anti-aircraft facilities in Bosanska Krajina,
- The failure of the VRS forces, especially the 2nd Krajina Corps in the Livno-Kupres and Glamoč-Grahovo battlefields,
- Crushing of the 18th SVK Corps forces and liberation of areas in Western Slavonia in Operation "Flash"

Draft translation

This state of affairs resulted in:

- The strengthening of a sense of a hopelessness and abandonment by Serbia among the majority of the RSK population;
- Conflicting political views in the highest “state” leadership of the RSK and discord regarding plans to unite the “Serb states”;
- Intensified pressure on the population to move to Serbia;
- Problems in manning SVK units (professional soldiers, conscripts and reserves).

All of these processes and problems were present in a significantly lesser degree in the occupied areas of Eastern Slavonia (this conclusion does not concern the problem of political discord as it was the most prominent precisely between the eastern and western parts of the “RSK”), where the majority of the problems arose due to the arrival of a greater number of refugees from Western Slavonia (problems of securing lodging) and due to constant requests to send reinforcements (men and units) to the RS and to the occupied areas of Banovina, Kordun, Lika and Northern Dalmatia.

With regards to the requests for unification, in the case of the Western part of the “RSK” they were predominantly focused on the unification of the RS and the “RSK”, while in the case of the eastern part they were focused towards unification with Serbia (SRJ) whereas the unification with RS was denied.

Namely on 28 May 1995 a meeting of the “RSK Council” was held in Knin at which meeting a vote of no confidence to the Government of Borislav Mikelić was passed and a unanimous decision was passed to unify the “RSK” and RS.

However the “Coordination Board” for Eastern Slavonia and Baranja headed by Goran Hadžić was against the unification with RS claiming that Eastern Slavonia and Baranja were a “natural part of Yugoslavia” and announced the secession of the “Eastern parts” from the “RSK” should the unification with the RS occur.

A no confidence vote for the Government of Borislav Mikelić was passed primarily due to the fact that he too was against the unification of the RS and the “RSK” and,

Draft translation

although he was born in the Banovina region he was inclined to support Hadžić's "Coordination Board" position.

The problems of the restructuring and manning of units also significantly differed in the two aforementioned parts of the "RSK".

Namely, owing to a large number of refugees from the liberated territories of Western Slavonia, many of whom were conscripts, the manning the 11th Corps units was significantly less of a problem than within the remaining SVK corps.

In addition, the direct support in weapons and equipment as well as cooperation with the Yugoslav Army in forming corps maneuver units was also a significant advantage of the 11th Corps with respect to other corps' of the SVK.

In this respect, Martić considered the Commander of the 11th Corps General Dušan Lončar as a "Mikelić staff" and considered his possible replacement¹⁴⁷, even though he was one of the most capable military individuals in the SVK, who did not belong to the "radical wing" within the highest command structure and without which the command capabilities of the 11th Corps would be at stake. For this reason he was offered the position of the SVK deputy commander which he refused threatening to submit a retirement request.

The emigration problems were also completely different and significantly less prominent in Eastern Slavonia than in the western parts of the "RSK".

Such a state of affairs forced the creators and the enforcers of the idea to unify the "Serb lands" to urgently undertake the necessary steps which would allow for a faster and more complete unification of the "Serb lands" into one state. As this "unification" by military and political means was accomplished, the arising problem was the "unsettled status" of the two key areas (territories):

- The corridor through Bosnian Posavina without which there could be no substantial ties between the "western Serb states" and Serbia and

¹⁴⁷ "Tjedna raščlamba obavještajnih informacija" /Weekly analysis of intelligence information/, dated 7 June 1995,

Draft translation

- The area of Western Bosnia without which there could be no substantial ties between the western part of the “RSK” with the remaining “Serb states”.

As the operation for the “expansion” of the corridor failed, the possible (probable) military success of the joint forces of the SVK and the VRS in Western Bosnia became imperative.

The importance of the taking over of territory in Western Bosnia is evident in a letter by the Commander of the 2nd Corps Brigadier Radivoje Tomanić sent on 16 February 1995 to the Main Staff of the VRS, to the personal attention of General Manojlo Milovanović.

4.2.2. Indicators of the strategically significant activities and changes within the Serb Krajina Army (SVK)

Intelligence information collected in the period after Operation “Flash” indicated that preparations by joint forces from the SVK and VRS and by the People’s Defense of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia (NO APZB) were underway to undergo a new (final) offensive operation in western Bosnia, that is against the forces of the 5th Corps of the Bosnian Army (A BiH).

Truly the offensive operation of the joint forces of the SVK and VRS was being carried out the whole time, therefore even after NATO air force intervention, but it was in fact of a lesser intensity (especially shelling activities) and lacked any significant mutual activities at the level of both “armies”, as it lacked significant advancements of the battlefield.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no. 55', **Annex 4-11**

Draft translation

However, there was the matter of other activities which were to result in the strengthening of military power of the "RSK", meaning the strengthening of the SVK capabilities to guarantee the survival of the "RSK" .

These activities (indicators) were as follows:

- Manning of units with manpower from all categories (professional soldiers, conscripts and reserve components);
- The commencement of the formation of the Special Units Corps;
- Grouping forces in accordance with the plan of the offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia (forming tactical groups and operative group "Pauk" (Spider).

Introduction of military conscripts mobilized within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SRJ)

The decision to mobilize all military conscripts who originated from the then occupied territories of RH and BiH, who had either on a temporary or permanent basis inhabited the territory of SRJ was passed on 1 June 1995, and operationally put into force under codename "Storm"¹⁴⁹ on 5 June 1995.

From the beginning of this operation until mid-June, approximately 4500 to 5000 military conscripts had been brought to the occupied territories of Banovina, Kordun, Lika and Northern Dalmatia, and as of 5 July they had planned to bring in a total of 8.000-8.500 military conscripts.¹⁵⁰

Introducing such a large number of conscripts considerably decreased the problem of manning SVK units, especially if the fact that officers from the Yugoslav Army

¹⁴⁹ "Pripreme za napadnu operaciju združenih snaga SVK i VRS na područje Zapadne Bosne" /Preparations for the assault operation of the joint SVK and VRS forces in the area of Western Bosnia/, dated 24 June 1995, **Annex 4-12**

¹⁵⁰ Intelligence information "information on personnel and material support the VJ (SRJ) extended to the SVK (RSK)" /Podaci o kadrovskoj i tvarnoj potpori koju VJ (SRJ) pruža SVK (RSK)" dated 22 June 1995. Table "Overview of reinforcements from the VJ to the SVK during June 1995", **Annex 1-30**

Draft translation

and volunteers from various Serb “political” origins were sent as well alongside the mobilized conscripts.

Reinforcements were sent to all the SVK corps, but particularly to the 39th (Banija), 21st (Kordun), 15th (Lika) and 7th (Knin) corps.

Regarding problems with the mobilization of conscripts in SRJ, a meeting was held in Belgrade on 5 June between representatives of the Ministries of Defense of the SRJ and the “RSK”, at which the technological issues regarding the mobilization process and transportation and receipt of the mobilized within the “RSK” were formulated.

Collection centers were formed in Batnoga (Banovina) and Slunj as well as a smaller camp in the area of Lika, and collection centers in SRJ (Novi Sad, Bujanj Potok).

The course of the mobilization was discussed in an radio broadcast “news” on Radio “Petrova Gora” (16 June at 1700 hrs) according to which “*today's Politika notes....how convoys of busses full of military conscripts are arriving in Krajina, to their native land to help defend it...*” and how those soldiers “*would man the military formations*”.¹⁵¹

However, apart from manning SVK units, the effect the arrival of the mobilized military conscripts had was of even more importance with regard to the following:

- The strengthening of the morale of the population and members of the SVK units;
- The removal of the sense of isolation and being left to “fend for themselves” on behalf of Serbia (SRJ),
- The manifestation of “care” and Serbia’s (SRJ) readiness to “defend the western Serb states) and

¹⁵¹ “Pripreme za napadnu operaciju združenih snaga SVK i VRS na područje Zapadne Bosne” /Preparations for the assault operation of the joint SVK and VRS forces in the area of Western Bosnia/, dated 24 June 1995, **Annex 4-12**

Draft translation

- A partial delay of the departure of the population from the western parts of the RSK to SRJ.

On account of the manning with military conscripts which were either recruits, mobilized or volunteered to be manned in SRJ, the manning situation in the corps and other SVK components was significantly improved in comparison to March 1994¹⁵², so that their numerical strength in mid July 1995 was as follows:

- **11th Corps ("Slavonia-Baranja")**
 - March 1994 10.000-11.000
 - July 1995 **12.500-13.000**
- **18th Corps ("Western Slavonia")**
 - March 1994 4.000-4.500
 - July 1995 **practically non-existent**
- **39th Corps ("Banija")**
 - March 1994 5.000-6.000
 - July 1995 **9.500-10.000**
- **21st Corps ("Kordun")**
 - March 1994 4.500-5.000
 - July 1995 **7.000-7.500**
- **15th Corps ("Lika")**
 - March 1994 5.500-6.000
 - July 1995 **6.500-7.000**
- **7th Corps ("Northern Dalmatia")**
 - March 1994 8.000-9.000
 - July 1995 **9.500-11.000**

¹⁵² "Obavještajna prosudba mogućeg razvoja događaja na vojno političkom planu..." / "Intelligence assessment of the possible development of events on the military-political aspect and a possible threat to the Republic of Croatia in the upcoming period, particularly in the different possibilities of engagement of the Croatian Army", 26 March 1994, **Annex 1-7.**)

Draft translation➤ **Special Units Corps**

- March 1994 did not yet exist
- July 1995 **3.500-4.000**

▶ **Remaining SVK units**

- March 1994 2.500-3.000
- July 1995 **2.500-3.500**

Total:**March 1994 39.500-44.500****July 1995 51.000-56.000**

As a result of this organized manning of SVK units, the army's strength which was deployed in the "western parts of the RSK" reached a number count of approximately 43000 men.

If reinforcements from the 11th Corps (the equivalent of one battalion) and numerous "volunteer" groups (Chetnick oriented) from the SRJ are added to this figure the number surpassed 45.000 men by the end of June.

The change of the personnel structure with regard to its quality and motivation should also be taken into consideration. This especially pertains to the manning with professional personnel the ratio of which in these structures by the end of July had grown (approx. 15% participation) in comparison to March 1994 (approximately 10% participation).

Alongside this fact, the professional structure in the "western parts" amounted to even 20% as the Special Units Corps (KSJ) was located there which was manned with up to 40% participation of professional personnel.

It should be noted that the manning of units was a continual process which developed intensely until the beginning of Operation Storm when difficulties arose within the SVK units regarding ensuring the necessary personal firearms for the newly arrived

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troops¹⁵³, which is evident in requests made by the Commander of the 39th Corps requesting automatic rifles for 485 new arrivals from the former 18th "Western Slavonia" Corps.

One can conclude that the numerical count of personnel in the SVK structure approximately numbered 50.000 and as such was in line with assessments given by General Radinović with regards to the numerical personnel count necessary for the "*successful defense of the RSK from aggression*".

Beginning of the reorganization of the SVK and the structuring of the Special Units Corps of the SVK

On 31 May, General Mile Mrkšić, Commander of the SVK Main Staff (GS) held a meeting with the highest ranking officials of the GS SVK, corps commanders and commanders of the independent brigades (regiments) at which meeting he informed them of two key tasks¹⁵⁴:

- The beginning of the transformation and professional reorganization of the SVK and the strengthening of the defense system;
- The upcoming meeting within the SRJ Ministry of Defense where the issue of the mobilization and recruitment from the territories of the SRJ (Operation Storm) to man SVK units would be discussed.

Despite the fact that the reorganization of the SVK had began in early 1994, it was only upon the arrival of General Mile Mrkšić as Commander of the GS SVK (May 1995) that efforts were made to implement the reorganization. Intense efforts were made to structure the special maneuver units at the SVK corps level¹⁵⁵, and to structure the Special Units Corps (KSJ) at the SVK level.

¹⁵³ Request by the Commander of the 39th Corps sent to the SVK Main Staff for delivery of needed weapons for 485 newly arrived soldiers in the 26th pbr, **Annex 4-13**

¹⁵⁴ Weekly analysis of intelligence information dated 7 June 1995, **Annex 1-21**

¹⁵⁵ A maneuver battalion was formed only in the 11th Corps while the other corps' rescinded from the formation of this type of unit because the Special Units Corps were starting to be formed on the level of the entire SVK.

Draft translation

The purpose of the structuring of such units was to remove the main weaknesses with regards to the operative capabilities of the SVK such as:

- **Manning with professional personnel**, as opposed to manning based on reserve personnel;
- Equipping with weaponry which enables **greater firepower and greater mobility** (maneuver) instead of the existing weaponry intended for executing defense operations;
- **Creating SVK components for maneuver** in order to avoid the army drawbacks based solely on territorial components;
- **Securing operative** (at corps level) that is **strategic reserves** (at the SVK level) in order to avoid the disadvantages of a defense organized solely on the first line (in one combat formation) and attacks not allowing for commitment of fresh and quick maneuver attack forces.

With regards to the corps level, it regarded the intention to organize the so-called “armor-mechanized combat groups for attack” which were the equivalent of a battalion (300 to 350 members), reinforced by a tank company, an armored transporter company, self-propelled gun battery (howitzers), self-propelled anti-air gun battery, as had already been organized and proven in combat activities within BiH (especially within the units of the Eastern-Bosnian and Drina corps of the VRS).

However, this concept was quickly abandoned so that two such units were formed only within the 11th Corps of the SVK and with regards to the other corps, it was concluded that it would be a better solution to organize maneuver units at the SVK level after which the organization of the Special Units Corps began.

In this regard specifics regarding the problem of all the other SVK corps with regards to the 11th corps arose. Namely, even though, due to the restricted capabilities of the so-called lateral /rokadne/ routes in the areas of responsibility of the 39th, 21st, 15th and 7th Corps, and on the other hand the clearly channeled attack directions (defense) it

Draft translation

was necessary to provide these specific corps an operative maneuver reserve but due to restrictions in manpower this was not possible.

For this reason the Special Units Corps was organized at the SVK level which entailed the following combat units within its composition:

- 2nd guards brigade (motorized brigade with part of the personnel on the OT (armored personnel carrier)
- 2nd armored brigade
- 71st special brigade (mainly gun and anti-armor support)

The total composition and command of the KSJ were located in Slunj at a training post at the end of June¹⁵⁶ and were in the final organizational and manning phase, but this process did not develop at the desired rate with regards to equipment or with regards to equipping specially organized units for combat use¹⁵⁷.

The positioning of the Special Unit Corps, or rather their location, was done in such a manner to be able to primarily represent the operative reserve of the 21st and 15th Corps and the strategic reserve or the attack force for executing offensive operations the purpose of which was the severing of RH territory at the “chosen routes”.

The launching of Operation Storm before the completion of the formation of this Corps significantly reduced the possibility to use the units of this corps and in turn the whole of the SVK in an efficient manner.

¹⁵⁶ Aerial photography using a UAV during the Vidovdan parade (The Day of the RSK) which shows the equipment of the Special Units Corps, **Annex 4-14**

¹⁵⁷ Intelligence information dated 15 July 1995, “Stanje i aktivnosti SVK, VRS i VJ” /Status and activities of the SVK, VRS and the VJ/, **Annex 4-15**

Draft translation

4.3. Beginning of Operation Storm conditioned by the latest developments in the western parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Along with all aforementioned activities, constant combat activities were ongoing on the battlefield towards Western Bosnia.

However, the difference from fall 1994 was that this time the carriers of the activities in the offensive operation were the units of the Serb Army of the Krajina (SVK) and not the Army of the Republic Srpska (VRS).

After the Special Units Corps had been established and presented at the military parade organized at the training range near Slunj on the occasion of the Day of the SVK on 28 June¹⁵⁸, almost everything was ready for the commencement of the final stage of that operation.

In the first half of June the battlefields in the area of Bosanska Posavina, Dinara and the Livanjsko polje were active.

During May and in the beginning of June in the area of Bosanska Posavina the forces of the 1st Krajina Corps conducted offensive operations against the forces of the Croatian Defense Council (HVO) Orašje MD, thereby trying to enlarge the corridor and secure the northern side of the corridor. The intensity of the offensive operations decreased in the end of the first decade of June, while the forces of the VRS suffered another failure.

In the area of Dinara and the Livanjsko polje the HV and HVO forces started on 04 June the offensive operation „Jump-2“, the aim of which was to tie up the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps and thereby reduce the pressure of that Corps's units on the Bihać battlefield and impede a potential enforcement by new forces in the area of the corridor. At the same time, the shift of the battlefield to the north – northwest in the

¹⁵⁸ Intelligence information for 28 June 1995, dated 29 June 1995, **Annex 4-16**

Draft translation

direction of Grahovo and to the west in the direction of Vrlika¹⁵⁹ was intended to create conditions for the direct threat of Grahovo. The operation was completed by the end of the first decade of June.

4.3.1. Plan for the conduct of the offensive operation against the 5th Corps of the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (A BiH)

The final preparations for the offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia were supposed to be finalized by 10 July 1995, while the offensive operation was supposed to be conducted in three phases:

- First phase (preparation, mostly completed by the end of June)
 - With the engagement of the National Defense of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia (NO APZB), the task of which was to occupy the broader area of Vrnograč and force back the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH to the positions from which they could no longer threaten the route Dvor-Glina with artillery. All of this was supposed to be accomplished with the artillery support of the 39th Corps of the SVK.
 - With the engagement of the artillery of the 2nd Krajina Corps in the Bihac area exhaust the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH and weaken the morale of the population in the Bihac enclave.
- Second phase (decisive)
 - With the engagement of the forces in contact with the units of the 5th Corps of the A BiH tie up most of the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH by offensive operations on the entire battlefield.

¹⁵⁹ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no.52, **Annex 4-17**

Draft translation

- With the engagement of the striking maneuver forces from the Corps's special units from the area of Slunj cut off the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH on the main axis of attack and link up with the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps of the VRS.

- Third phase (final):
 - (Re)-establish the so-called Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia in the area north from the axis Kordunski Ljeskovac – Cazin – Otoka;
 - Break the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH in encirclement south from the aforesaid axis and establish total control over the Una railway, the broader area of Bihać and the air base Željava.

At the same time the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH were in an extremely unfavorable operative position, particularly due to:

- The joined forces of the SVK and VRS that multiply outnumbered the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH;
- The exhaustion due to long lasting combats which were particularly intensive during the period September – November 1994;
- The constant encirclement with aggravated conditions of logistic support, which had almost been interrupted after the helicopter had been taken down in which Minister Ljubijankić was traveling (the helicopter was taken down in the night 27th/28th May in the area of Batnoga);
- The division within the Bosnian population from the area of Western Bosnia, whereas the forces of the NO APZB were constantly engaged on the side of the SVK units in offensive operations against the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH;

Draft translation

- The loss of the broader Vrnograč area, which had been occupied by the NO APZB forces with the artillery support of the 39th Corps by the end of June, due to which the forces of the A BiH were forced to withdraw towards the south;
- The constant artillery fire by the units of the 2nd Krajina Corps on the town area of Bihać with the aim to exhaust the forces, to impede the command and supply and to reduce the morale of the population and the members of the 5th Corps of the A BiH.

Due to problems concerning the organization and establishment, particularly in view of the fact that the establishment of the Special Units Corps (KSJ) had been delayed, phase 2 of the operation did not even start before 19th July¹⁶⁰, the forces of the NO APZB were still mainly engaged and there was no explicit axis of attack (artillery and offensive operations of smaller proportions were conducted along the entire frontline, mainly in order to tie up and exhaust the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH.

4.3.2. Grouping of the SVK forces for the offensive operation

The grouping of the forces to conduct the offensive operations¹⁶¹ spoke in favor of the seriousness and decisiveness in the approach to the operation that was supposed to result in the final capturing of the area of Western Bosnia.

The following forces were prepared and organized for the operation:

- **OG (Operative Group) "Pauk" (Spider)** (approx. 10.500 men)¹⁶² composed of members of he:
 - 3rd NO APZB Brigade 4.500 men
 - Reinforcement from the 21st Corps 1.500 men
 - Reinforcement from the 39th Corps 2.000 men

¹⁶⁰ Intelligence information dated 19 July 1995, **Annex 4-18**

¹⁶¹ Intelligence information for 20 July 1995, dated 21 July 1995, **Annex4-19**

¹⁶² Regular daily combat report by the Commander of OG 'Pauk', Colonel General Mile Novaković, dated 2 August 1995, **Annex 4-20**

Draft translation

- Police forces 300 men
- Volunteers from the FRY and BiH 600 men
- Commander Colonel General Mile Novaković
 - Task: attack from the line Cetingrad – Vrnograč on the axis towards Pećingrad;

- **TG (Tactical Group) “Kordun”** (approx. 1.500 men) composed of members from the:
 - Battalion of the 2nd Armored Brigade / KSJ
 - Battalion of the 2nd Guards Brigade / KSJ
 - Battalion of the 71st Special Brigade / KSJ
 - Battalion/21st Motorized Artillery Battalion
 - Task: in the 2nd phase of the operation carry out an attack on the axis Rakovica – Tržačka Raštela – Cazin and to link up with the VRS forces attacking from the direction of Bosanska Krupa;

- **TG “Lika”** (approx. 1.500 men) composed of members of the:
 - battalion / 2nd Armored Brigade / KSJ
 - battalion(-1) / 2nd Guards Brigade / KSJ
 - mechanized artillery battalion(-1) / 71st Specialized Brigade /KSJ
 - Task: in the second phase of the operation carry out an attack on the axis Selište – Velika Gata in order to link up with the VRS forces;

- **TG “Zapad” (West)** (approx. 1.200 men) composed of members of the:
 - 1/13th Infantry Brigade
 - 1/19th Infantry Brigade
 - 2/21st Border Detachment
 - 21st Mechanized Artillery Battalion(-1)
 - Task: carry out attacks from the line Cetingrad – Rakovica along the axis Šturlić and Tržaška Raštela

Draft translation

- **TG “Jug” (South) (15th Corps)** (approx. 3.500 men) composed of members of the:
 - 1/50th Infantry Brigade
 - 1/103rd Light Brigade
 - Ministry of the Interior (400 men)
 - Volunteers (400 men)
 - 15th Light Infantry Brigade / 2 Krajina Corps
 - Task: carry out attacks from the area of Željava on the axis Izačić – Gata.

- **TG “Istok” (East)** (approx. 1.800men) composed of members of the:
 - 1/24th Infantry Brigade
 - 1/33rd Infantry Brigade
 - 1/1st Light Brigade /1st Krajina Corps
 - 1/43rd Motorized Brigade /1st Krajina Corps
 - Task: to carry out attacks from the line Vrnograč – Žirovac – Ivanjska along the axis towards Bužim.

- **Forces composed of members of the 1st and 2nd Krajina Corps** (approx. 6.000 men)
 - under the direct command of General Manojlo Milovanović, from the FCP in Jasenica;
 - Task: to break out at the right Una river shore in the area from Bosanska Krupa to Spahići and Grmuša, and to link up with the SVK forces in the area Otoka – Cazin, in the second phase of the operation.

Draft translation

4.3.3. Conditions and the course of the offensive operation of the SVK

By 24th July most of the conditions had been created for the commencement of the second phase of the offensive operation¹⁶³, which implied the introduction of the main forces (TG "Kordun" and TG "Lika")¹⁶⁴ and more intensive offensives of the units of the 1st and 2nd Krajina Corps along the axes towards Ripač, Grabež and Grmuša and the units of the 39th Corps towards Bužim.

It became clear then that the offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia, although with a certain delay, was carried out as planned and that the forthcoming realization of The second phase in case o success would inevitably lead to the break up of the forces of the 5th A BiH Corps and occupation of the area of Western Bosnia.

Under these conditions the direct preparations for the offensive operation "Storm" started. The successful implementation of this operation was the only solution for the prevention of a humanitarian catastrophe of significantly larger proportions than that in Srebrenica.

The following indicated that such a catastrophe would be inevitable in the case of the fall of Western Bosnia:

- Long lasting combats aimed at occupying the area of Western Bosnia resulted in many victims, which would certainly lead to a mass retaliation over the members of the 5th Corps of the A BiH, but over the civilian population as well;
- As early as in the winter 1994 General Manojlo Manojlović pointed out in his notification that civilian victims would be possible if the members of the A BiH refused to surrender;

¹⁶³ Intelligence information dated 23 July 1995, **Annex 4-21**

¹⁶⁴ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no.56', **Annex 4-22**

Draft translation

- The inter-Bosnian conflict (A BiH – NO APZB) was radicalized to that point (the members of the NO APZB collaborated with the SVK) that it would represent another motive (reason) for mass retaliation over the civilian population as well;
- The significantly larger territory than in the case of Srebrenica and the significantly larger density of population would inevitably have the consequence of directly proportional rate of crime, while the consequences of combat operations would certainly be much more serious;
- In the course of the offensive operations of the units of the 5th Corps of the A BiH in the direction of Kulen Vakuf in fall 1994 the VRS units (2nd Krajina Corps) and the civilian population in the areas of combat operations suffered major losses and victims, which would certainly represent a strong motive for retaliation against the Muslim population from the area of Western Bosnia.

4.3.4. Operation "Summer '95"

After the fall of Srebrenica and the genocide committed against the Bosniak population, after the inevitable and expected fall of Žepa and the undefined attitudes presented at the London Conference (21st July) concerning the protection of the "safe areas", it was clear that it was necessary to prevent the breaking of the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH and the occupation of the areas of Western Bosnia by the SVK-VRS forces.

Due to the delay of the second phase of the offensive operation in the area of Western Bosnia and the appeal of the Bosnian leadership to the Republic of Croatia for military assistance (on 22nd July the Split Agreement was signed) it was possible to engage intensively the HV forces in the offensive operation on the Grahovo-Glamoč frontline that was conducted under the code name "Summer '95".

As early as in early June the "Serb" forces (and, of course, politics) had the option to choose concerning the priority of engagement of their own forces and defining

Draft translation

the significance of the goals. It was clear that there were two critical points in the west of BiH: Cazin Krajina and Dinara-Grahovo. From the Bosnian side the forces of one of the VRS corps' that was smaller in numbers – the 2nd Krajina Corps – was engaged on these frontlines.

It had obviously been decided that capturing the area of Cazin Krajina was a priority task, although from the military point of view it might be considered a dubious decision, considering the situation as it was in the area of Dinara and Livansko polje, to which the commander of the 2nd Krajina Corps had already alerted already in May.

Apparently, the “Serbian” (Greater Serbian”) politics’ position was that the occupation of territories in the area of BiH was still the priority issue. This was also supported by the fact that throughout BiH offensive operations were carried out aimed at the occupation of Bosnian (and Croatian) enclaves, mostly in the “safe areas”¹⁶⁵.

Considering these conditions, it was logical to conduct an offensive operation aimed at the seizure of the Glamoč area. The expected results would in any case be unfavorable for the VRS and SVK:

- An offensive against the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps and the combat units of the SVK would have to result in the withdrawal from offensive operations in the Cazin Krajina due to the necessity to engage the forces for the defense of Grahovo and the Knin hinterlands, which would prevent the occupation of the area of Cazin Krajina.;
- Insisting on the realization of the second phase of the offensive operation in the Cazin Krajina brings the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps, engaged in the defense of Grahovo and the Knin hinterlands in the Dinara area, into a very difficult position, because they have no reserves that could replace the already

¹⁶⁵ “Obavještajna informacija za 16. srpanj 1995” /Intelligence information for 16 July 1995/, 17 July 1995, **Annex 4-23**

Draft translation

exhausted manpower of the brigades engaged. In that way the option is to cut off Knin and liberate the occupied areas.

Operation "Summer '95" started on 25 July. This report does not intent to analyze the details of this operation.(However, it was carried out under the conditions of a very well prepared and organized defense, and the defense of the units of the 2nd Krajina Corps was rammed on 28th July in front of Grahovo¹⁶⁶ and on the next day in front of Glamoč. By the 30th July the forces of the 2nd Krajina Corps had withdrawn from Glamočko polje and the southern part of Grahovsko polje; thus the line had been achieved as indicated in the appended map.¹⁶⁷

The situation on the frontline for Cazin Krajina

As the risk of the threat for Knin from the direction of Grahovo and the Dinara increased, the SVK General Staff finally decided to relocate one part of the forces, which had participated in the second phase of the operation in Cazin Krajina, as reinforcement to the forces of the broken 2nd Krajina Corps and the 7th (Knin) Corps. Thus the 2nd Guards Brigade of the Special Forces Corps was relocated to the area of Northern Dalmatia and attached as support to the 7th Corps of the SVK in order to stop the breach of the HV and HVO forces on the axis towards Strmica and Knin.

As a consequence, the strike that was necessary to carry out the breach on the main axis of attack towards Cazin was weakened. This led to a gradual decrease of intensity of the overall activities in the offensive operations in Western Bosnia.

Having realized that the open continuation of the offensive operations in the area of Western Bosnia was gradually radicalizing the position of the international community, that the set task would probably not be accomplished and that on the other hand the HV

¹⁶⁶ "Obavještajna informacija za 29. srpanj 1995"/Intelligence information for 29 July 1995/, 30 July 1995, **Annex 4-24**

¹⁶⁷ "Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995, Volume I", Central Intelligence Agency, May 2002, Map no.57, **Annex 4-25**

Draft translation

threatened to attack towards Knin and Gračac and along the axes leading to Izačić and Cazin Krajina, the “RSK” leadership (Martić and Mrkšić) met on 30 July with the Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi. He convinced them to “agree” to terminate further offensive operations in Cazin Krajina.

A minor part of the forces was indeed withdrawn from the frontline towards Cazin Krajina and redirected to the frontline towards the HV forces; however, the pressure on the units of the 5th Corps of the A BiH stopped only after the beginning of Operation “Storm” (04 August 1995). The offensive operations of the SVK and VRS forces and the forces of the NO APZB in the area of Western Bosnia lasted until that date. The following information confirms this:

- The SVK General Staff issued on 01 August an order¹⁶⁸ to the 39th Corps saying that according to the request of the Command of Operation “Spider” and with the aim of concealing the artillery support of the SVK in the combat operations carried out by the OG “Spider”, one 122 mm howitzer battery should be relocated to the territory of Western Bosnia according to the decision of the OG “Spider” commander;
- On 02 August the OG “Spider” Command submitted to the Commander of the SVK General Staff a “regular combat report”¹⁶⁹ containing information about the combat activities during the day;
- On 03 August the Intelligence Department of the VRS 1st Krajina Corps submitted to the Intelligence Administration of the SVK General Staff and the intelligence department of the SVK Corps’ Commands an “intelligence report”¹⁷⁰ containing information as to the situation on the frontline towards the 5th Corps of the A BiH, where “combats were ongoing and soldiers of the 5th Corps were being killed every day” who “were hoping that the HV action would

¹⁶⁸ Order by the Commander of the SVK Main Staff General Mrkšić dated 1 August 1995, **Annex 4-26**

¹⁶⁹ Regular combat report by the Commander of OG “Pauk” dated 2 August 1995, **Annex 4-27**

¹⁷⁰ Intelligence Report with the situation until 17.00 hrs dated 3 August 1995, **Annex 4-28**

Draft translation

start and the Cazin Krajina would be unblocked soon, because it is a question of time as how long they could offer resistance”;

- The newly formed 15th “Light Brigade” from the SVK 15th “Lika” Corps (domiciled in the area Gornji Lapac – Srb) was deployed in the area Baljevac – Ličko Petrovo Selo. According to the report of the Security Department of the 15th Corps’ Command¹⁷¹ the brigade was manned with conscripts who had been engaged from the area of Serbia;
- On 04 August 1995, after the commencement of the Operation “Storm” the OG “Spider” reported¹⁷² that “the forces are holding firmly the front end” and that “defectors to the free territory of the Republic of Western Bosnia” were observed;

4.4. Other factors that determined the choice of the time for the commencement and the modality of implementation of Operation “Storm”

The aforementioned information and statements reveal that the maintenance of the *status quo* represented a huge risk concerning the security and perspective for the preservation and development of the Republic of Croatia. Such risk was additionally increased by the activities of the SVK (and the VRS) that were ongoing immediately before Operation “Storm”.

It is beyond doubt that the further successful realization of all these activities would have improved the strategic position of the “RSK” concerning the defense (prolongation of the occupation) of the “western territories” and weakened the position of the Republic of Croatia. In addition, it would have lead to a new large-scale humanitarian crisis.

The choice of the time for the commencement of Operation “Storm” was conditioned by a number of other circumstances:

¹⁷¹ Report from the Security Department of the 15th Corps Command dated 2 August 1995, **Annex 4-29**

¹⁷² Regular combat report of OG “Pauk” dated 4 August 1995, **Annex 4-30**

Draft translation

➤ *The Split Agreement*

The signing of the “Split Agreement” was certainly one of the more significant events in political terms, which in the military sense enabled the shift in the relation of forces that was strategically significant concerning the defining of the center of gravity of Operation “Storm”.

However, the significance of this agreement comes fully into its own only after the military activities that followed after Operation “Storm” have been considered. Those were the operations “Maestral” and “Southern Move”, which on the strategic level contributed to the conclusion of the Dayton Accord, i.e. to the defeat of the politics that wished to realize the idea of all Serbs in one state with military means. Furthermore, it was only after the remaining Serb forces in BiH were defeated in military terms that the end of war and the peaceful reintegration of the UNPA sector “East” into the Republic of Croatia could be achieved. The offensive operations “Maestral” and “Southern Sweep” were conducted synchronized with the offensive operations of the A BiH. During the last week of the Operation “Southern Sweep” intense air strikes were simultaneously carried out by NATO airplanes on facilities and installations of the VRS.

➤ *Active battlefields on the territory of BiH*

Simultaneously (in summer '95) numerous battlefields on the territory of BiH were very active, such as:

- The area of Posavina (corridor) where the offensive operations were carried out by the VRS;
- The area of Sarajevo, where on 15 June the offensive of the A BiH forces started as an attempt to penetrate the blockade and link up the forces of the 1st Corps of the A BiH and the forces of the 7th Corps of the A BiH. It was exactly that area where the risk was big that the operation would fail if the time of the implementation was significantly prolonged (the attack was mostly

Draft translation

carried out by the forces that were in the encirclement), and this is exactly what happened;

- The area of Majevisa and Ozren, where the offensive operations were conducted by the VRS forces following the prior offensive of the A BiH forces;
- The area of the battlefield Livno-Kupres and Grahovo – Glamoč;
- Srebrenica and Žepa;
- The area of Goražde – Rogatica.

The major part of the VRS forces was engaged in the operations at these and other battlefields, while at the battlefield Grahovo-Glamoč parts of the forces of the 11th and 7th Corps of the SVK were engaged as reinforcement in that area. A possible maneuver of the VRS forces merely implied the relocation of one or two battalions, mainly from the 1st Krajina Corps, from one battlefield to another in the area of responsibility of that corps, depending on the situation on the battlefields.

➤ *Impeded possibilities of introducing reinforcement*

Under such circumstances it was estimated that the time of potential introduction of the operative and, in particular, the strategic reserve on the axes towards Kordun, Lika and Northern Dalmatia would be prolonged from 36 hours under “normal” circumstances to least at 48 to 60 hours.

Significant reinforcements from the VRS, for the introduction of which less than 36 hours would be required, were almost impossible, because those were forces that had to be withdrawn from combat operations (mostly in the area of responsibility of the Eastern-Bosnian Corps of the VRS) and they could not be introduced into combat immediately under circumstances in which offensive (counter-offensive) operations were conducted.

The introduction of the reinforcement from the Yugoslav Army (VJ) (from the territory of the SRY) was event more questionable, except to the area of Eastern Slavonia and Srijem, where these forces could be introduced in less than 12 hours;

Draft translation

however, in this case the intention was to introduce these forces to carry out offensive operations against a well organized defense, which reduced the probability of engagement of the VJ due to the negative political implications of such an act for the SRY.

One of the conditions for the successful implementation of the Operation "Storm" was to reach as fast as possible the border with BiH on the main axes of attack that overlapped with the main traffic routes towards BiH. BY that the introduction of reinforcement would be impeded, if there would be an attempt at all to introduce the forces.

It has to be pointed out that Operation "Storm" was a part of a strategic operation within which, along with the offensive operations in the area of Sectors "North" and "South", defensive operations on the frontline towards Sector "East" and in the area of the "Southern frontline" were also conducted. The HV guards brigades represented the striking force in these operations, whereas five guards brigades (1st, 2nd, 4th, 7th and 9th) were engaged in the offensive operation "Storm" and two (3rd and 5th) participated in the organization of the defensive operation in the area of Eastern Slavonia and Srijem.

➤ *Discord within the political leadership of the "RSK"*

Not less significant is the fact that at that time dissensions in the attitudes of the leadership of the eastern "RSK" part and the leadership mainly from the western "RSK" part came to the surface, which referred to the issue of "unification" of RS.

Concerning the aforesaid, one must not forget about the fact that the Serb population from the eastern part of the "RSK" was more and more developing an averseness to the "Krajina people" from the western part of the "RSK", to which aid and reinforcement had to be sent all the time.

Draft translation

➤ Non-objective assessments of the RSK military leadership

For the assessment of the operational position of the overall “Serb” forces the analysis of the SVK Command had to be taken into consideration as well.

The decisions of this command indicate that the SVK General Staff assessed that there was a possibility that the HV would commence an offensive operation aimed at the liberation of the “western parts of the RSK”, but he could not find an adequate response to such a possibility for two significant reasons:

- reprisal was considered a sufficient factor of determent, and
- the combat abilities of the HV were assessed with a significant amount of underestimation.

The order for the 11th Corps to perform constant movements of the forces in order to tie up as many of the HV forces as possible in that part of the frontline and reduce the pressure in the area of Banovina, Kordun and Lika represents one of the decisions illustrating this assertion.

That the opponent was non-objectively assessed, which was observed throughout the time of occupation, particularly from the time the “strategy of real threat” emerged (as stated by General Radinović) until the beginning of Operation “Storm” is sufficiently implied in the content of the “*Decision for further activities, orders*” issued on 02 August 1995 by the SVK GS Commander Colonel General Mile Mrkšić.¹⁷³

Although it was a time when observing the activities of the HV it could be concluded that the possibility of an offensive operation was immense, the SVK GS wrote a decision full of unnecessary formalities and demagogical phrases in an underestimating tone stating, among other things, that the *Ustasha*¹⁷⁴ *launched attacks*

¹⁷³ Decision for further activities, Order by the Commander of the SVK Main Staff dated 2 August 1995, **Annex 4-31**

¹⁷⁴ The ‘Ustasha’ was a term also used in official documents of the RSK and the SVK as a synonym for Croats and Croat soldiers.

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only when soldiers (referring to the SVK soldiers), terrified by the artillery fire abandoned their positions without fight”.

➤ *The possibility of the use of operational axes from the territory of BiH*

Another important factor in the assessment of the time of the conduct of the Operation “Storm” was also the possibility of use of the operational axis leading from the area of Bosansko Grahovo to Knin, which in the case of Operation “Storm” was significant in strategic terms.

Already in late 1993, after the initial concept for the conduct of the offensive operation had been drafted, on the basis of an analysis of the combat operations for the liberation of Knin within the final operations during WW 2, it was established that the long-lasting combats for the liberation of Knin then were successful only after the forces from the territory of BiH had been introduced.

Concerning the aforesaid, it was especially important to observe the course of the operations conducted by the HV and HVO forces in the area of Livanjsko polje and behind the Dinara mountain, because only after the HV forces had emerged in the Knin hinterlands could the center of gravity be defined, the realization of which would make the liberation of the occupied territories efficient in the way as it actually was...

➤ *Choice of the axes of attack*

With regards to the defining of the center of gravity of the Operation “Storm”, and this was Knin as the actual and symbolic, military and political, administrative and cultural center of the “RSK”, the liberation of which also meant the actual and symbolic defeat of the rebellion and the collapse of the artificial formation of “RSK”, it was determined that the main axis of attack would be the one towards Knin.

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Most of the other main axes of attack were chosen in accordance with the following criteria:

- to emerge as soon as possible at the state border with BiH in order to close down the assessed axes for possible introduction of reinforcement and reserve forces from the territory of BiH;
- to secure as fast as possible the penetration of the blockade (encirclement) in which the forces of the 5th Corps of the A BiH were held and enable the provision of (logistic) support to these forces;
- In territorial sense to separate the individual (regional) parts of the so-called "territorial strategic center" of the "RSK" in order to prevent the maneuver with the strategic reserve forces (Special Units Corps) and weaken all aspects of coordination (disorganization of the defense system);
- Favorable geographic features of each operational axis (capacity) and the characteristics the opponent's defense system on that axis in order to secure the conduct of the operations with as few losses as possible.

With regard to the aforementioned criteria, the axis leading from the area of Velebit to Sveti Rok, i.e. Gračac and Medak, was specific to a certain degree, on which the attack was carried out by the special police units of the Ministry of the Interior.

Since this axis in fact represented a natural axis leading from the area of Gospić to Gračac and further towards the BiH border, i.e. Knin, that was very important in the function of cutting off the occupied areas of Northern Dalmatia from the other parts of the occupied areas, in this area the defense was carried out by the forces of the 9th Motorized Brigade / 15th Corps, one of the most powerful brigades of the SVK, in the area of defense of which approx. 2.000 men were engaged.

Under the conditions of a well organized defense, the attack on the axis Gospić-Gračac would not have guaranteed a fast penetration in the direction of the border, thus it was decided that the attack should be carried out along the left flank of the defense of the 9th Motorized Brigade. Such an attack was possible only with the implementation of

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the forces trained for combat operations on rugged mountain terrains with specific limestone features.

On the other hand, the terrain features prevented a possible fast maneuver of the 9th Motorized Brigade aimed at organizing the defense on the flank axis, as well as a fast introduction of reinforcement from the level of the SVK (15th Corps did not dispose of adequate operational reserves because a significant part of the forces was engaged on the frontlines within or towards BiH – 15th Light Brigade towards Bihać and the 103rd partly in the direction of Strmica and Grahovo).

Instead of a conclusion:

The peaceful reintegration of the occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia was not possible. Therefore, Operation “Storm” was conducted, during which most of the then occupied areas of the Republic of Croatia were liberated.

On the other hand, the Operation “Storm” also resulted in the emergence of the HV at the state border with BiH, which provided a favorable operational basis for the operations that were afterwards conducted in the area of BiH and led to the end of the war.

Namely, it was not before the military defeat of the Serb forces in BiH that the conditions could be created for the implementation of the peace plan of the Contact Group that was put into effect with the Dayton Accord.

Within the scope of the aforesaid, the agreement on the peaceful reintegration of the UNPA Sector “East” into the Republic of Croatia was reached and the UNTAES mission was established, which successfully conducted the reintegration.

The end of the war was at the same time the beginning of a period of building up the security, stability and mutual trust amongst the people, nations, ethnic groups and states in the areas caught in the war, which provided the basic preconditions to start solving the complex issues of the return of refugees and displaced persons.