



Directorate  
of Intelligence

Intelligence Memorandum

[redacted]  
29 April 1994

## Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia- Hercegovina: [redacted]

### Summary

[redacted] at least 2,151 Bosnian towns, villages, and hamlets have been ethnically cleansed since the beginning of the conflict in 1991:

- *Although all factions have been victims, Bosnian Serb forces appear to have been responsible for at least 90 percent of the ethnic cleansing that we have identified.*
- *However, since mid-1993, most of the cleansing [redacted] has been carried out by Croat and Muslim forces.* [redacted]

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## Overview

[redacted] ethnic cleansing reported in the media or by refugees shows that since late 1991, over 2,151 towns, villages, and hamlets throughout Bosnia have been ethnically cleansed.<sup>1</sup> [redacted] recent refugee and media reports, indicates that ethnic cleansing activity continues and all three ethnic groups in the conflict—Serbs, Croats, and Muslims—are perpetrators as well as victims. However, the number of villages ethnically cleansed by Bosnian Serb forces and their allied paramilitary units far exceeds those attributed to Croat or Muslim forces.<sup>2</sup> [redacted]

There are several common elements [redacted] that help to differentiate between the destruction caused by ethnic cleansing and that caused by combat between military forces. Ethnic cleansing is characterized by the selective destruction of houses, mosques, and government buildings and, in most cases, by the absence of impact craters from indirect fire weapons or ground scars made by military vehicles. In ethnically cleansed areas, buildings that are the target of ethnic cleansing almost always [redacted] [redacted] either undamaged or totally destroyed. In contrast, numerous partially damaged buildings are commonly seen in areas where combat has occurred [redacted]

[redacted] ethnic cleansing campaign by Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) forces and allied paramilitaries was acquired during the Bosnian Serb offensive in eastern Bosnia during the spring and summer of 1993. The offensive began in late February near Cerska and continued until midsummer when BSA forces reached Gorazde. During that time, siege operations were mounted by the BSA against the enclaves of Cerska, Konjevici, Srebrenica, and Zepa. Meanwhile, numerous villages in surrounding areas were ethnically cleansed. [redacted] that tens of thousands of Muslims were either killed or expelled from the area and were forced to seek refuge in remaining Muslim controlled areas such as Tuzla. [redacted]

In many villages an unmistakably deliberate method of destruction was observed. For example, [redacted] the Cerska region showed patterns of rubble that indicated hundreds of houses and four mosques were destroyed by explosive charges detonated inside the structures [redacted] This form of destruction is inconsistent with normal combat operations and suggests a well coordinated and supported effort to ethnically cleanse the area. [redacted]

<sup>1</sup>Our estimate is derived from a comprehensive review of [redacted] 70 percent of Bosnia. Within this area we identified 2,151 towns, villages, and hamlets that showed signs of destruction consistent with ethnic cleansing. [redacted] we estimate that at least 2,500 villages throughout Bosnia have suffered ethnic cleansing. [redacted]

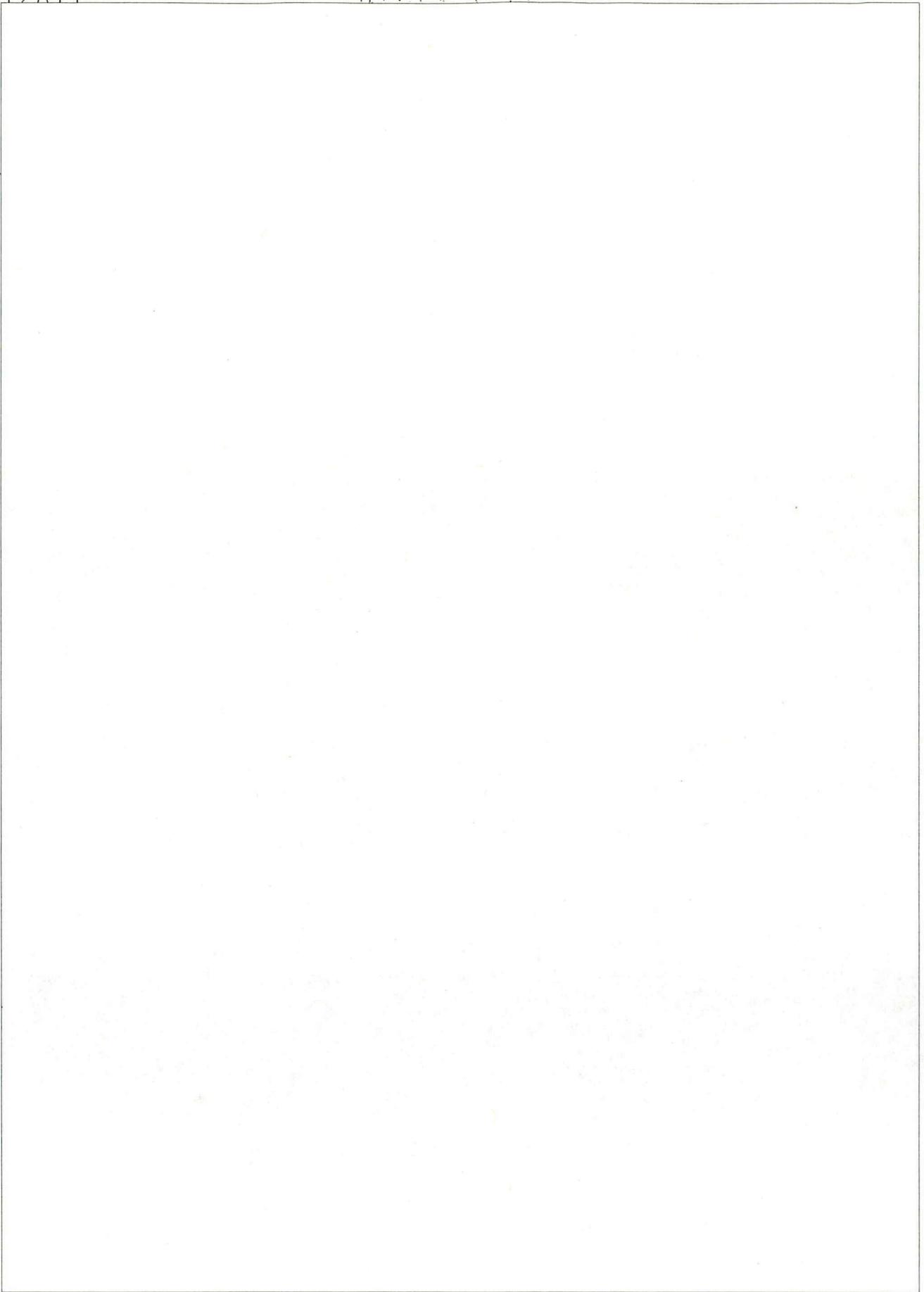
<sup>2</sup>Bosnian Serb paramilitary groups include units such as Arkan's Tigers and Seselj's White Eagles. Most resemble heavily armed gangs and refugee reporting suggests paramilitary groups have been responsible for much of the looting and violence against unarmed civilians in Bosnian Serb controlled territory. [redacted]

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### **Ethnic Cleansing by Bosnian Serb Forces**

The Bosnian Serbs apparently have seized control of about two-thirds of Bosnia through military conquest and by driving off the local Muslim and Croat populations. Before the war, the Serbs constituted only about a third of the population but occupied a larger percentage of the territory than the primarily urban Muslim population. As fighting broke out, the BSA and paramilitary groups sought to drive out the more numerous Muslims from major cities and isolated farming villages and the Bosnian Serbs sought to establish effective domination over the territory they claimed.<sup>3</sup>

As part of their effort to secure military and political control over these areas, the BSA and their allied paramilitary forces have expelled Muslim and Croat residents from occupied territories and have stolen or destroyed their property, probably to dissuade them from returning to the area. Although we have no information concerning a Serbian "master plan" to cleanse Muslims and Croatians from Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia, [redacted] reported by the media or refugees to have been ethnically cleansed shows that at least 2,000 towns, villages, and hamlets have been ethnically cleansed by BSA forces since October 1991. Most of these areas were destroyed shortly after they were occupied by the BSA. [redacted] elements of BSA military units routinely secure a village, help suppress any armed resistance, and quickly move on toward their next objective. Territorial Defense Force units and paramilitaries then occupy the town and ethnically cleanse it. [redacted]

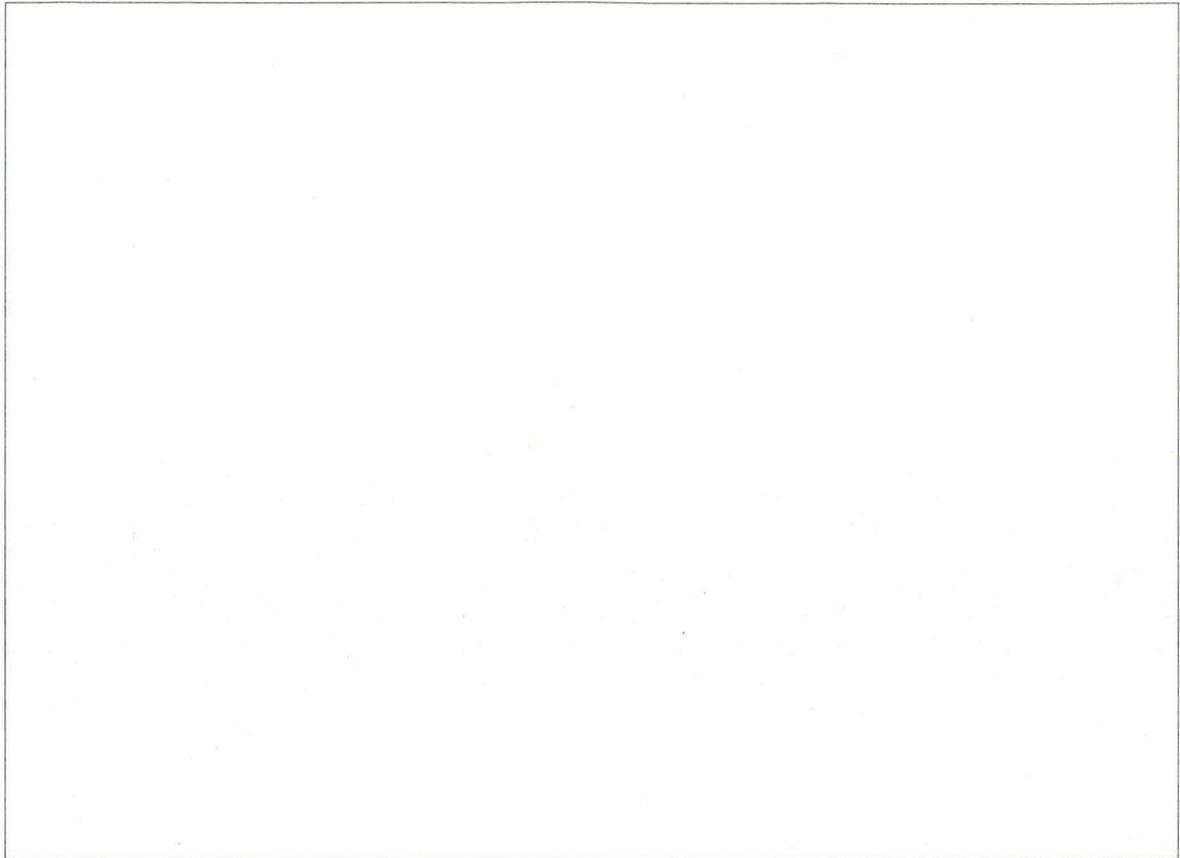
In addition to homes and government buildings, Bosnian Serb forces typically destroy cultural features, such as mosques. [redacted] practically all mosques in Bosnian Serb-controlled areas have been destroyed since late 1991. An example of the deliberate destruction of mosques by Bosnian Serb forces was observed in early September 1993 in Banja Luka. [redacted] after Bosnian Serb forces gained control of the city, three mosques were destroyed [redacted] within a five day period [redacted] Other buildings surrounding the mosques were undamaged, indicating that the mosques were selectively destroyed. [redacted]

### **Ethnic Cleansing by Muslim Forces**

The first media reports of ethnic cleansing by Muslim forces appeared in March 1993. Since then, Muslim forces have ethnically cleansed at least 22 villages near the cities of Konjic, Travnik, and Novi Travnik, according to various reporting. We have identified 15 of these villages [redacted] seven of which showed patterns of ethnic cleansing [redacted] We also identified four villages in the same area with similar damage that were not mentioned in [redacted] media reports. [redacted]

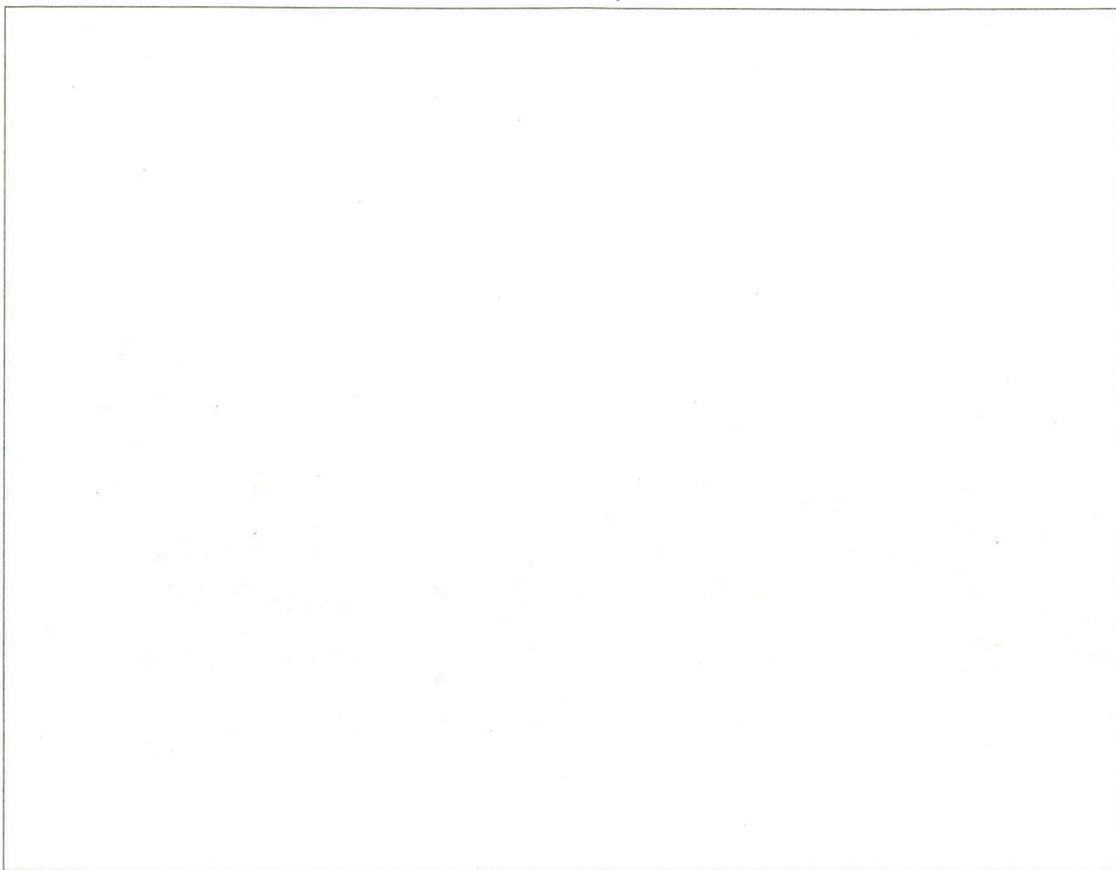
<sup>3</sup>The Bosnian Serb Army is composed of two elements: a group of professional military officers and enlisted men, most of whom served in the Yugoslav National Army before the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and Territorial Defense Force units, which are analogous to a local militia. [redacted]

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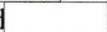
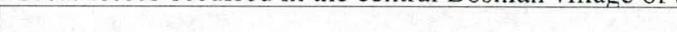


Ethnic cleansing by Muslim forces includes several characteristics that differentiate it from ethnic cleansing carried out by Bosnian Serb and Croat forces:

- [redacted] Muslim ethnic cleansing is probably a form of retribution or revenge for atrocities committed against Muslims, as opposed to Serbian attempts to secure political and military control of an area. There are no reports of ethnic cleansing by Muslim forces before March 1993, and those incidents occurring since then have been directed mainly against Croats, probably because of recent fighting between the two groups.
- [redacted] no damage to churches, suggesting Muslim forces respect religious structures, including those belonging to Serbs and Croats. For example, the Croat village of Radesinc was reportedly ethnically cleansed by Muslim forces in mid-1993. [redacted] 11 of the 12 houses in the village were destroyed, but the church at the south end of the village was undamaged. [redacted]



### **Ethnic Cleansing by Croatian Forces**

There are fewer reports of ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Croat forces. The majority of reported ethnic cleansing incidents by Bosnian Croat forces appear to have occurred since mid-1993, and have been directed against Muslims. According to Bosnian media reporting, Bosnian Croat forces attacked and ethnically cleansed the Muslim village of Velika Bukovica in early June 1993, and  at least half of the houses in the village had been destroyed . The most recent incident of ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Croat forces occurred in the central Bosnian village of Stupni Dol on 23 October 1993.  the village's only mosque and nearly all of the homes were destroyed .  media reports indicate that Bosnian Croat forces secured the village with minimal force, and then proceeded to ethnically cleanse it in apparent retaliation for the capture of the nearby predominantly Croat village of Kopjari by Bosnian government troops the week before. 