

Intelligence Report

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

27 September 1995



The Bosnian Government: Divisions Show Confusion in Peace Negotiations



Strong personal rivalries among Bosnian Government leaders and different visions of a future Bosnia will complicate reaching agreements with the Bosnian Government in future negotiations. The rivalry between Prime Minister Silajdzic on the one side and President Izetbegovic and Foreign Minister Sacirbey on the other, as well as their competing visions underlie the indecision and intransigence exhibited by the Bosnian leadership in ongoing peace talks. Based on available reporting, however, it is difficult to identify where their differences reflect personal rivalries or substantive differences. In addition, Bosnian Government leaders appear unsure of the strength of their negotiating hand and are concerned that international pressure may force them to concede too much in talks.



Sarajevo Leadership Hobbled By Personal Rivalries...

[redacted] intense personal rivalries within the top layer of the Bosnian Government.

- In the past, Izetbegovic has encouraged competition among his subordinates, particularly Prime Minister Silajdzic and Federation Vice President Ganic, as a way to control potential challengers, according to US diplomats.
- Since becoming Foreign Minister this year, Sacirbey has become Izetbegovic's right-hand man in negotiations, and has effectively isolated Silajdzic from key discussions on UNPROFOR's withdrawal and the Geneva and New York talks on constitutional principles. Silajdzic and Sacirbey have been rivals since 1991, when Silajdzic beat out Sacirbey for the post of Foreign Minister.
- The two have not attempted to hide their differences. In July, Silajdzic publicly said he could no longer work in the same government with Sacirbey, while in a press interview Sacirbey called Silajdzic a "spoiled prima donna."

[redacted]

[redacted]

- Ganic's return to duty this week after recovering from an automobile accident probably will intensify these tensions because of his long-standing rivalry with Silajdzic. [redacted]

Silajdzic's frustration with his perceived loss of influence, as well the increasing domination of Muslim hardliners over the ruling SDA party and the government, precipitated a mini-crisis in July when he tendered his resignation.

- [redacted] Izetbegovic asked Silajdzic to withdraw his resignation because of threats that five of the seven members of the presidency would also resign and the military's concern that Silajdzic's resignation would damage army morale. [redacted]
[redacted] Silajdzic remains one of the most popular Bosnian Government leaders, giving him a strong independent base of support. [redacted]

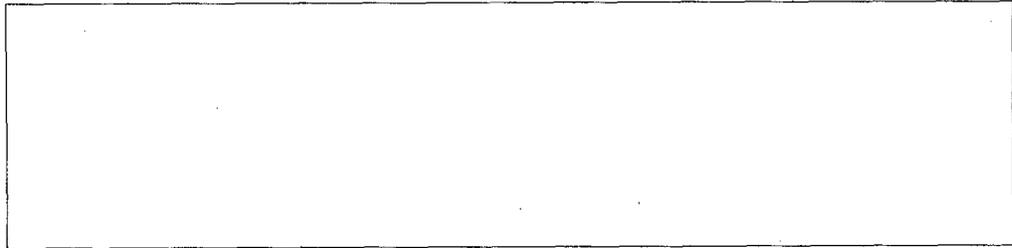
...And Different Conceptions of A Post-Settlement Bosnia

Bosnian Government leaders appear divided over how far to compromise on their long-standing goal of building a unitary multi-ethnic state. [redacted]
Izetbegovic's own statements show that he probably would prefer to head a compact Muslim state rather than enter into complicated power-sharing arrangements with Croats and Serbs.

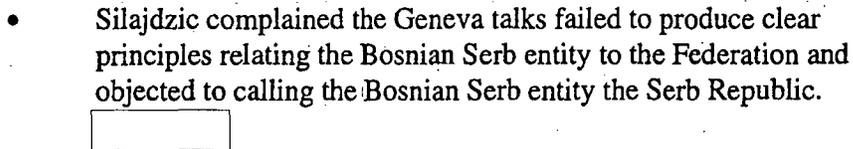
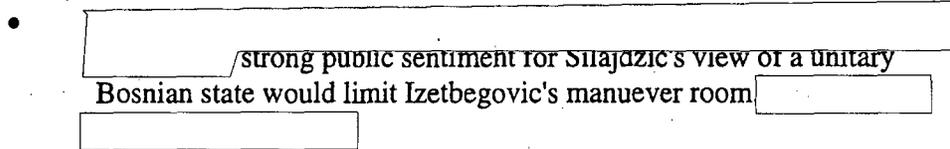
[redacted]

Despite his personal preferences, however, the government's long-standing goal of creating a unitary state and the broad support this objective enjoys with the Bosnian population, limit Izetbegovic's room to compromise unless the unitary state option is foreclosed by outside developments, such as a major breakdown of the Federation. In fact, official Bosnian Government statements between the signing of the Geneva principles and the talks this week in New York were marked by their commitment to a unitary state and strong denials that Sarajevo would agree to a weak central government.

This memorandum was prepared by [redacted] Office of European Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome and may be directed to Chief, DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force [redacted]

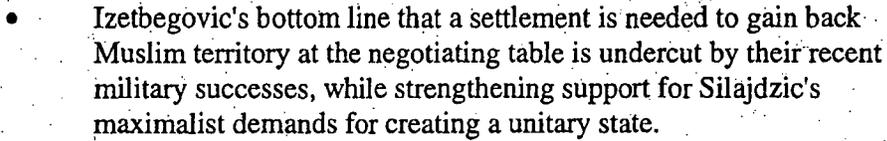


Silajdzic has criticized any compromises that would weaken ties among Bosnian Serbs, Muslims, and Croats and decrease the sovereignty of the central government.



Gains on the Ground Open Doors to More Differences...

Recent Croat-Muslim military successes, while improving the perception of Bosnian leaders of their negotiating position, have made it more difficult for the Bosnians to unify behind one plan.

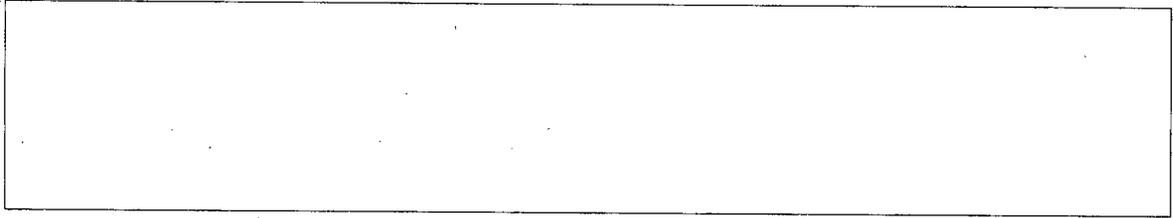


If Croatian support for the Bosnian Government wanes--as Bosnian leaders already fear--and the Bosnian Serbs stabilize the front, Sarajevo probably will see the limits of its military capabilities, and this will strengthen advocates of a negotiated settlement.





...While Indecision and Lack of Confidence Spell Trouble for Sarajevo



[redacted] Izetbegovic himself pressed for the Bosnian delegation to issue a unilateral statement at the 8 September Geneva meeting stressing that the principles guarantee the sovereignty and unity of Bosnia, and to preclude any one entity from unilaterally seceding;



[redacted] Sacirbey's reactions to the outcome of the Geneva talks as nervous and not optimistic [redacted]

[redacted] Sacirbey reportedly was concerned how to explain the agreement to Bosnian Government officials and worried that he might have conceded too much, especially on constitutional principles.

[redacted] the Geneva statement of principles would cause difficulties because Izetbegovic and Sacirbey had not consulted other government officials including Silajdzic and key SDA members of Izetbegovic's inner circle [redacted]



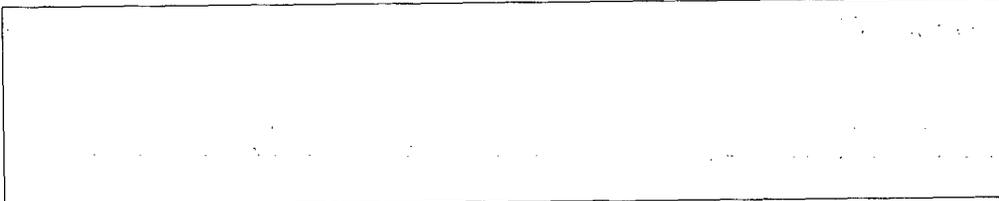


The Iranian Angle

The Bosnian Government has come to depend on Iran for military and economic support, and some Bosnian officials appear to be cultivating ties to Iranian intelligence in order to strengthen their own base of power. Izetbegovic, Silajdzic, and Sacirbey appear to share concerns, however, over Iran's efforts to support the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic state in Bosnia.

-  Bosnian leaders realize that close ties to Iran will hurt relations with the United States and Croatia. 

Lower-level Bosnian Government officials, however, probably see more advantages to establishing close ties with Iranian officials as a way to increase their influence in Sarajevo.

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Silajdzic's political views were alienating other government officials like Alispahic   Silajdzic has argued against close links with Iran, but has been overruled by Izetbegovic-- and this probably explains the efforts by the Iranians to build coalitions against Silajdzic.

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