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1OCT2013

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October 1995  
PC-1111-3-96

## Joint Intelligence Report

### Bosnia: Potential Challenges to the IFOR (U)

#### Key Judgments

- Divergent interpretations of the "Basic Principles" that establish a central government in Bosnia – unless clearly resolved in proximity talks – and continued friction within the Muslim-Croat Federation will create problems during implementation of any peace accord.
- An Implementation Force (IFOR) would most likely be at risk if key issues in a peace settlement were left ambiguous. In this case, the parties would attempt to manipulate the IFOR to enforce their individual interpretations of the peace agreement.
- During implementation of an accord, the five protagonists – Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs, Zagreb, and Belgrade – will seek to manipulate the terms of the peace agreement to further their contradictory strategic objectives. Differences within the Bosnian Muslim leadership and between Bosnian Serbs and Belgrade are also likely to impede implementation.
- The immediate challenge to the IFOR could be rolling the various factions back from land they currently command to conform with the new lines of control. This would likely provoke isolated confrontations between the IFOR and local forces from each of the warring parties.
- The Bosnian Serbs view NATO as anti-Serb. Any perception among the parties that NATO is taking sides during implementation will increase the risk to the IFOR.
- Serb and Croat opposition to the IFOR would probably increase if they believed that NATO was assisting the Muslims in establishing a strong central government. Zagreb and Belgrade might lend military assistance to the Bosnian Croats and Serbs, respectively, in resisting Muslim authority.
- The status of displaced persons will remain one of the most contentious issues, with all sides using population movements and restrictions to create an ethnic map that fits their strategic objectives. All the parties will place a high priority on equipping and training their militaries and will counter attempts by former enemies to establish military superiority.

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Declassify on: Source marked "OADR"  
Date of Source: Oct 1995

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## Assumptions

Under any implementation scenario, Bosnia's protagonists – including Croatia and Serbia – will at a minimum have agreed to implement the "Basic Principles" accepted in Geneva and New York in September, any subsequent agreement on political arrangements, a cessation of hostilities agreement, and a territorial settlement that creates a union between the Croat-Muslim Federation and the Republika Srbska (Serb Republic). The parties will also have agreed to accept an IFOR in a benign environment. This paper also assumes Croatia will have resolved the standoff over Sector East either militarily or through a political settlement.

## Divergent Objectives

During the implementation phase, the five protagonists (Bosnian Muslims, Croats, and Serbs, as well as Zagreb and Belgrade) will seek to manipulate the terms of the peace agreement and the Federation to further their own contradictory strategic objectives in Bosnia.

- The Bosnian Muslims want to guarantee their political, military, and economic viability within the Federation as they seek to infuse the new central government with broad power and authority. They will lean heavily on the United States and the IFOR to help them achieve this objective but have told US diplomats that they also expect Islamic assistance – principally from Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, and Turkey.
- The Bosnian Croats, led and supported by Croatian President Tudjman, seek de facto autonomy within the Federation and want to limit the powers of the new central government. Tudjman will work toward consolidating the Croats' newly won control over previously Serb-held territory as part of his long-term goal of creating a Greater Croatia.
- The Bosnian Serbs will push for maximum autonomy and confederation with Serbia. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic will try to keep the

implementation process moving to ensure economic sanctions are lifted. He will also support Bosnian Serb efforts to minimize institutional ties between the Federation and the Republika Srbska.

## Leadership Dynamics Will Affect Implementation

Differences within the Bosnian Muslim leadership and between the Bosnian Serbs and Belgrade are likely to impede peace implementation.

- Differences within the Bosnian government between Izetbegovic and Silajdzic have led to confusion and indecision about the Bosnian government's negotiating position. Izetbegovic is reportedly more inclined to seek one-party Muslim control of a compact state, while Silajdzic favors preservation of a multiethnic state within Bosnia's recognized borders.
- Milosevic has long sought to remove Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic and could use early elections in Bosnia for this end. Belgrade's support for the Bosnian Serbs, including movement toward creating "parallel special relationships" with Serbia might be accelerated if Karadzic were forced out.

## Stumbling Blocks to Implementation

Divergent interpretations of the peace plan's key elements and continued friction within the Federation will stymie implementation. These could prove significant stumbling blocks if unresolved.

## Structure and Function of the Government

In signing the "Basic Principles," the parties agreed to a central Bosnian government with a multiethnic presidency and parliament. These institutions would be elected by popular vote, with representatives from each of the three communities – two-thirds from the Federation and one-third from the Republika Srbska. The central government would be responsible for foreign policy. The interests of the

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minorities would be protected, and a constitutional court would arbitrate disputes.

The parties continue to have widely divergent interpretations of both the structure and the functions of a central government operating under the agreed principles.

- Bosnian government leaders have told US diplomats they expect a central government – necessary to safeguard Muslim interests in Bosnia – to oversee not only foreign policy as stipulated in the "Basic Principles" but also a wide range of other responsibilities, including international economic relations and monetary policy.
- Croatian President Tudjman and Foreign Minister Granic have told US and other diplomats they would accept only a small central government whose functions would be limited to foreign affairs and a small parliament. Zagreb and the Bosnian Croats believe they can best protect the interests of the Bosnian Croats by limiting the role of the central government – in part because of their fear of Muslim domination of the Federation.
- The Bosnian Serbs will seek to block at every opportunity the functioning of the central government in the hope that denying it real power will ultimately allow them to "confederate" with Serbia.
- Bosnian Serb leaders have publicly declared they will have virtual veto power over central government action.

### Elections

In September, the protagonists agreed to democratic elections within the Federation and the Republika Srbska. To establish conditions for open and free elections, the parties have agreed to freedom of movement, the right of return or compensation to displaced persons, freedom of speech and press, and the protection of human rights. These steps will be very difficult to implement.

- The Bosnian government views early elections as essential to the creation of a viable central government. It has, however, told US diplomats that refugees must be returned to their original place of residence before elections – or at a minimum have their votes counted in their place of original domicile along with a symbolic movement of some refugees – to prevent ratification of the results of ethnic cleansing by elections.
- The Bosnian Croats are likely to proceed cautiously on elections, looking for substantial international oversight to ensure their interests are represented within the Federation and the central government.
- The Bosnian Serbs will seek to block national elections that would facilitate the creation of a central government and resist the Bosnian proposal that refugees be allowed to vote in their original domicile. Bosnian Serb leaders have said they will use elections in the Republika Srbska to guarantee representation by Serb nationalists.

### Refugees

Although the right of return or compensation for displaced persons has been accepted by all parties, this issue will remain one of the most problematic. Each is likely to try to use population movements and restrictions to create an ethnic map that fits its strategic objectives.

- Sarajevo hopes the return of refugees to areas that were heavily ethnically cleansed will preclude Croat domination. The most difficult problems between the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims will concern resettlement in recently reacquired territory. Few refugees are likely to want to return to territory controlled by the Bosnian Serbs.
- Zagreb and the Bosnian Croats will manipulate the resettlement of displaced peoples to consolidate Zagreb's control and political support within the

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Bosnian Croat part of the Federation. This policy will also support Tudjman's desire for an ethnically pure Croatian state. Within the Federation, disagreement over the return of displaced persons could lead to limited Croat-Muslim clashes.

- Milosevic may attempt to resettle ethnic Serb refugees in Bosnian territory to prevent them from becoming a resource drain on Serbia and a potential political challenge to him. The Bosnian Serbs will be reluctant to accept the refugees and will deflect Muslim and Croat demands for compensation for ethnic cleansing by citing the need to compensate Serbs displaced from the Krajina and western Bosnia.

### Key Territorial Issues

Even after reaching general agreement on territorial issues, some hotly contested areas will remain points of confrontation during the initial stage of implementation. This is true especially where opposing forces must be rolled back to meet the lines of control specified by a peace agreement. Local territorial defense forces on all sides may be the most recalcitrant and resist calls by their leadership to abandon their homes and move their families after defending them for more than 3 years.

- The Serbs will be called upon to give up territory between Sarajevo and Gorazde and in the Ozren pocket. The Bosnian government and the Croats will be required to withdraw from territory they currently control, primarily in the Posavina corridor.
- Sarajevo will also remain a contentious area. The Bosnian government and the Serbs will continue to compete for control of the airport and certain areas of the city, with the Serbs maneuvering to protect the rights of the Serb population and the Bosnian government trying to ensure that it will not be vulnerable to a Serb blockade.

Friction between the Croats and the Bosnian government has increased as each vies for control of formerly Bosnian Serb territory. The Bosnian

government is likely to continue efforts to link Muslim territory in central Bosnia to territory in Bihac, a move the Croats probably will continue to resist.

### Military Reconstitution

The protagonists will place a high priority on equipping and training their militaries in an effort to effectively solidify and defend their territorial holdings. Each will also counter attempts by former enemies to establish military superiority.

- The Bosnian government is counting on the United States to provide substantial military equipment and training. At the same time, it will almost certainly keep its Iranian and other Muslim supply options open. Bosnian UN representative Muratovic has told US diplomats that Sarajevo expects major US contributions to reconstruction efforts but also expects Islamic nations to play a role.
- Bosnian Croat forces will also seek military assistance from the United States, but a variety of reporting indicates that they have no intention of pursuing the formation of a Federation army. The Bosnian Croats are likely to use their control of essential logistical routes and ports to block deliveries to the Bosnian government if relations deteriorate.
- The Serbs will reject efforts to subordinate the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) to any central authority and will seek to maximize their rights to establish "special relations" with the Yugoslav Army (VJ) regardless of limitations imposed in keeping with Bosnia's sovereignty. The Bosnian Serbs will try to expand ties to the VJ and Serbian security services and possibly the Russians as a counter to a Western-sponsored equip-and-train program for the Federation.

### War Crimes

The Bosnian government has said that it will not cooperate with war criminals and has stipulated that any reconstruction assistance to the Bosnian Serbs be tied to strict political conditions, including the

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### Iran: Opposing the Peace

Iran opposes the US-backed Balkans peace plan and will try surreptitiously to undermine its implementation. Iran's capabilities to achieve this are judged limited, but it could play a "spoiler" role. Tehran is genuinely committed to defending Bosnian Muslims and has charged that the peace plan does not favor long-term stability or territorial sovereignty for the Bosnian government. In particular, Iranian official and press statements highlight Tehran's worries that the existing military imbalance leaves Bosnia vulnerable to Serb and Croatian intimidation. Tehran is also concerned that Bosnia will distance itself from Iran to court the United States and the West during implementation, which would be viewed domestically as a policy failure.

Given these concerns, Iran is likely to adopt a multipronged approach aimed at dissuading Bosnian officials from implementing the peace terms and encouraging them to return to military operations.

- Iran likely will continue to provide military supplies to Bosnia and push the Islamic Conference Organization to send military support and play a direct role in implementing the peace plan – including participation in the IFOR.
- Iran's intelligence network in Bosnia is capable of conducting harassing operations against the Serbs, and possibly IFOR elements, much as it continues to support radical Palestinian attacks against targets in Israel to try to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

If the peace agreement appears to be holding, Tehran's policy options include playing up economic, humanitarian, and diplomatic support to Bosnia while expanding its subversive activities in the country. If Iran follows the pattern it has established in other countries, the Iranians in Bosnia will step up their efforts to promote militant Islam within the Bosnian government, military, and Muslim communities with an eye to recruiting, organizing, and training radical Bosnian Muslims.

prosecution of Karadzic and BSA commander Mladic for war crimes.

- Milosevic is unlikely to extradite Karadzic and Mladic to stand trial for war crimes. Their removal – Karadzic's in particular – would rid him of potential rivals who have proved difficult and unreliable partners, but they are icons of Serb nationalism, and Milosevic is probably unwilling to further antagonize Serb nationalists, the BSA, and the VJ.
- Although evidence shows that Serbs have committed the preponderance of atrocities in Bosnia, new discoveries are likely to point to similar Croat and Muslim perpetrations, causing tensions within the Federation to flare.

### Threat to IFOR and Likelihood of Renewed Hostilities

While an implementation force will have a more robust mandate than the current UN peacekeepers in the region, any international force deploying to Bosnia will face many of the same problems the UN faced.

- The threat does not lend itself to deterrence by overwhelming response. Provocations are often anonymous, at low levels, and fleeting. In an environment where each side is reluctant to claim responsibility and eager to blame the other, culpability is difficult to determine for every incident of sniper and mortar fire.
- The wide distribution of weapons among the population and lower standards of soldiers' professionalism and command and control creates opportunities for incidents. There are over 300,000 armed personnel in the armies of the three warring parties. UNPROFOR frequently had to deal with drunken troops – alcohol is widely available and discipline in many units is sometimes tenuous – from all three factions, often with the use of deadly force.

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- All of the warring parties have made extensive use of land mines, which have taken a toll on peacekeepers and would pose a major threat during the initial deployment of an implementation force. In Croatia, the leading cause of UNPROFOR casualties has been land mines.
- A major threat will be the very nature of the theater. The rugged terrain and occasionally harsh climate have caused a number of traffic accidents leading to UNPROFOR casualties.

The IFOR would most likely be at risk during implementation if key issues were left ambiguous in a peace settlement. The parties would attempt to manipulate the IFOR to enforce their interpretation of the peace agreement. Even if key differences are reconciled before implementation and the parties' leaders impose control on their forces to stop military operations, IFOR will probably face localized threats.

- The most immediate challenge to the IFOR would be rolling forces back from land they currently command to conform with the new lines of control as part of a territorial settlement. Firm action may be necessary, and this would likely provoke isolated confrontations between the IFOR and local forces from each of the warring parties.
- Attempts to return refugees could spark violence as parties seek revenge and others attempt to block a change in the local ethnic mix. In 1993, warfare between Muslims and Croats erupted partly because of Croat concerns that the influx of Muslim refugees was shifting the ethnic balance in central Bosnia. Both the Muslims and Croats have blocked the return of refugees from the other ethnic group in recently captured Serb territory. Potential flashpoints include Mostar, Jajce, Mrkonjic Grad, Bugojno, and the Croat enclaves in central Bosnia.

Any perception among the parties that the IFOR is taking sides during implementation will also increase the risk to the force.

- The Bosnian Serbs have consistently portrayed NATO as anti-Serb. This perception would be reinforced if the IFOR were seen as favoring the Muslims and was unable to prevent attacks from Federation territory – reminiscent of similar attacks from the UN safehavens while UNPROFOR was incountry.
- The Bosnian Croats might actively resist US efforts to provide assistance to the Bosnian government, especially if they believed the US equip-and-train program for the Federation favored the Bosnian Army.
- Serb and Croat opposition to the IFOR would probably increase if they believed NATO was assisting the Muslims in establishing a strong central government. Zagreb and Belgrade might lend military assistance to the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs, respectively, to resist Muslim authority.

(U) Each classified title and heading is properly marked; all those unmarked are unclassified.

(U) This report contains information as of 18 October 1995. Questions and comments may be directed to Mr. Tod Roy, Yugoslav Focus Group, Southeast European Division, Office for National Security Issues, Directorate for Military Assessments, National Military Intelligence Production Center, Defense Intelligence Agency (DISTS 981-2564, Commercial 202-373-3188, DSN 243-3188) and

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