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# Intelligence Report

*DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force*

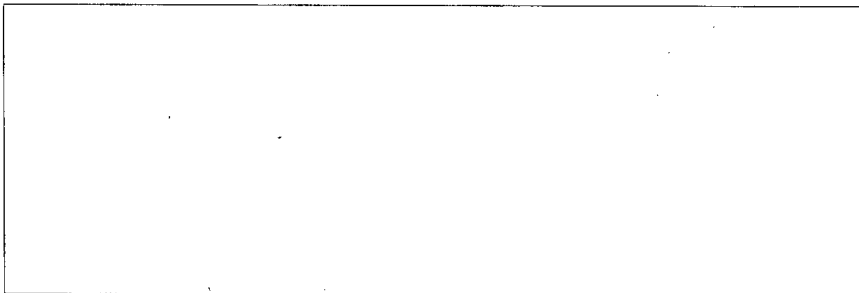
## Bosnia: Serb Ethnic Cleansing



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*A Research Paper*

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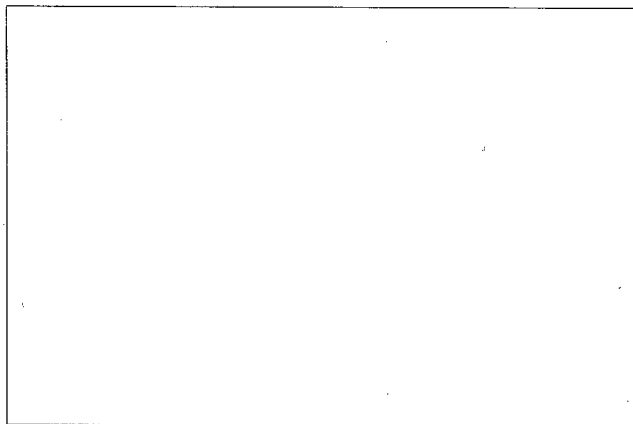


# Intelligence Report

*DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force*

## Bosnia: Serb Ethnic Cleansing

*A Research Paper*



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Bosnia: Serb Ethnic  
Cleansing

A Definition of  
Ethnic Cleansing

The US Department of State, in its 1993 Country Report on Human Rights Practices in Bosnia-Herzegovina, stated that *"techniques that the [Bosnian Serb Army itself] referred to as ethnic cleansing included: laying siege to cities and indiscriminately shelling civilian inhabitants; "strangling" cities (i.e., withholding food deliveries and utilities so as to starve and freeze residents); executing non-combatants; establishing concentration camps where thousands of prisoners were summarily executed and tens of thousands were subjected to torture and inhumane treatment; using prisoners as human shields; employing rape as a tool of war to terrorize and uproot populations; forcing large numbers of civilians to flee to other regions; razing villages to prevent the return of displaced persons; and interfering with international relief efforts, including attacks on relief personnel."*

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### Areas of Control in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mid-December 1994



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Bosnia: Serb Ethnic  
Cleansing [REDACTED]

## Summary

Evidence [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] indicates

that ethnic Serb forces have carried out at least 90 percent of the destruction, displacement, and loss of life associated with ethnic cleansing.

- *Croats and Muslims in Bosnia have also committed atrocities and forced other ethnic groups to flee—the Croat destruction of Mostar is one example—but the ethnic cleansing actions of the Bosnian Serbs are unrivaled in scale, intensity, and ferocity. We have no evidence that Croats or Muslims have planned or carried out calculated, large-scale ethnic cleansing.* [REDACTED]

*Sustained campaigns of ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Serbs since 1992 have resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands of non-Serbs, the displacement of hundreds of thousands more, and the radical recasting of Bosnia's demographic makeup.*

- Ninety percent of non-Serbs who lived in the 70 percent of Bosnia now under Serb control have been forced to flee or have been killed. A majority of the 1,300,000 displaced persons within Bosnia are Muslims, most of them expelled from their homes as a result of ethnic cleansing. [REDACTED]

*The Bosnian Serb Army, paramilitary groups, Bosnian Serb political leaders, and police have played pivotal coordinating roles in ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.*

- *Consistent patterns of political-military collusion and coordination are apparent in Serb seizures of Bosnian towns; many non-Serb refugees from throughout Bosnia have described such takeovers in strikingly similar terms.*
- The bloodiest rounds of ethnic cleansing took place earlier in the Bosnian conflict in 1992 and 1993, but Serb efforts to expel non-Serbs are continuing, with more than 12,000 evicted since last summer. [REDACTED]

*We lack conclusive evidence that the most senior Bosnian Serb or Serbian leaders directed or planned large-scale ethnic cleansing; but the systematic, widespread nature of Serb actions strongly suggests that Pale—and perhaps Belgrade—have exercised a carefully veiled role in the purposeful destruction and dispersal of Bosnia's non-Serb population.* [REDACTED]

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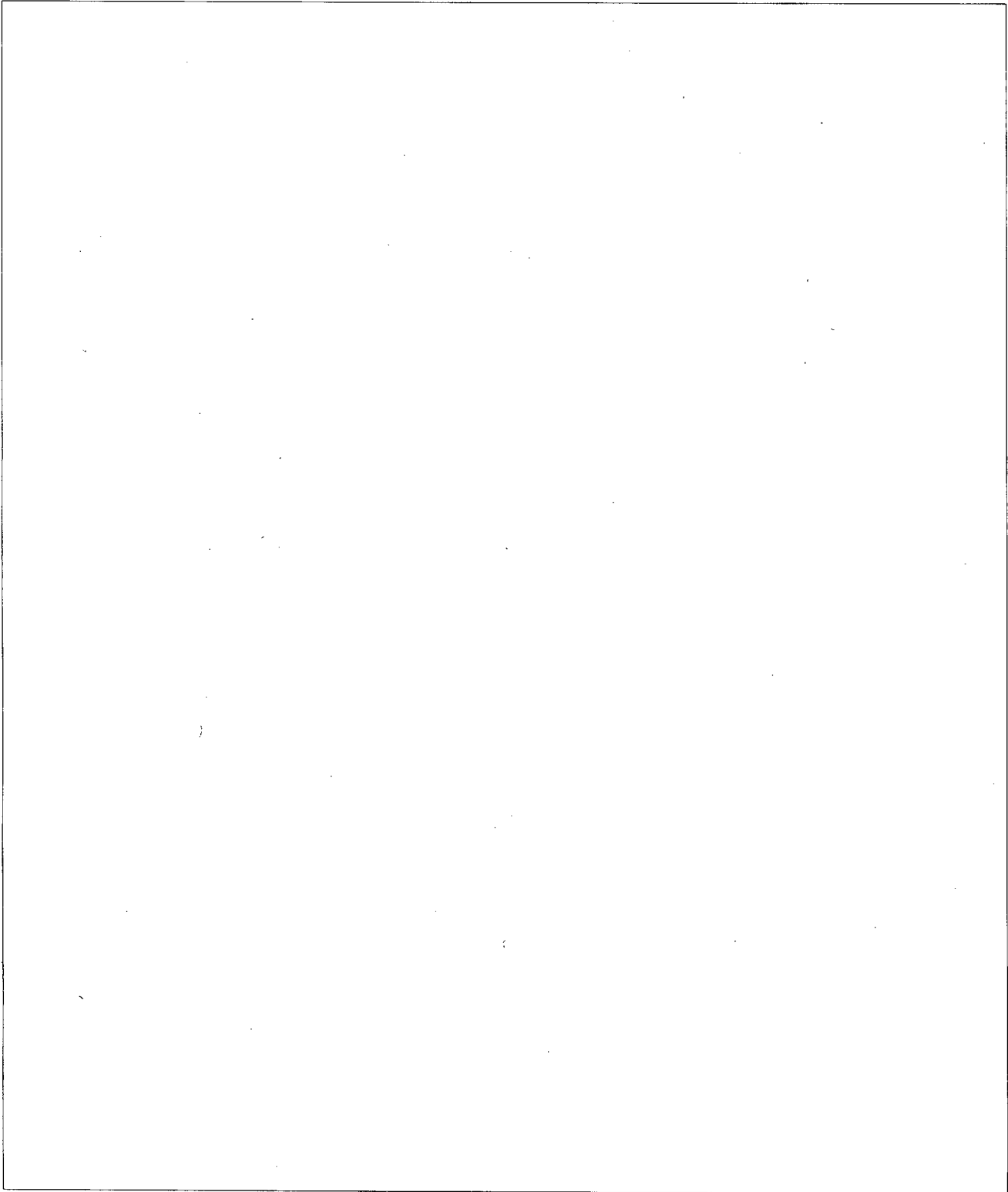
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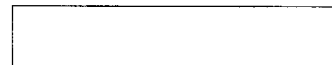
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## Bosnia: Serb Ethnic Cleansing [redacted]

### Introduction

Ethnic cleansing has been carried out in Bosnia since at least early 1992, primarily by Bosnian Serb political and military forces opposed to the Bosnian Government's declaration of independence following a republicwide referendum in early March 1992. The Bosnian Serbs boycotted the vote.

[redacted] Bosnian Serbs were planning takeovers of some towns, such as Brcko, before the referendum and were seeking assistance from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) and paramilitary units formed in Serbia [redacted]

In many cases, ethnic Serbs did not constitute majorities or significant pluralities in key multiethnic towns they subjected to ethnic cleansing.

- Official census data show, for example, that—in early 1992—Muslims constituted a majority of 56 percent in the northeastern city of Brcko. They also comprised a plurality (38 percent) of the population in the northwestern town of Prijedor that nearly equaled the size of the Serb community (40 percent). Both areas have since been virtually depopulated of non-Serb residents. [redacted]

Well over a million of those displaced mainly by Serb ethnic cleansing since early 1992 remain in Bosnia. A majority are Muslims forced into overcrowded enclaves and towns in Bosnian Government-held areas.

- Ethnic cleansing by Bosnian Serbs continues today, although the most brutal and widespread incidents took place in 1992 and 1993, when some of the most notorious detention camps were forced to close following extensive international publicity. More than 12,000 non-Serbs have been expelled from Serb-controlled areas since July 1994, according to press and UN reports, with 4,500 forced out in one week last September alone. [redacted]

[redacted]

### *The Demographic Impact of Bosnian Serb Ethnic Cleansing*

*The number of non-Serbs living in territory now held by the Bosnian Serbs:*

*Before the war (early 1992): 1,730,000*  
*November 1994: Approximately 165,700*

*Source: United Nations High Commission for Refugees*

[redacted]

Croats and Muslims have also committed atrocities during the Bosnian conflict, but their actions have consisted overwhelmingly of random, discrete—though sometimes ferocious—episodes that lack the sustained intensity, orchestration, and scale of the Bosnian Serbs' efforts (see inset).

- The vast majority of refugee accounts—corroborated by information from the UN, international relief organizations, [redacted] indicate that ethnic Serbs are probably responsible for at least 90 percent of the destruction, displacement, and loss of life associated with ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. [redacted]

### The Key Players in Ethnic Cleansing

A substantial body of evidence— [redacted]

[redacted] indicates that political, security, military, and paramilitary elements all played central, coordinated roles in carrying out ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

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**Croat and Muslim Atrocities in Bosnia**

The vast majority of deaths and expulsions because of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia have been the work of ethnic Serbs, [redacted]

[redacted] but Bosnian Muslims and Croats have also been responsible for atrocities against each other and ethnic Serbs. Both groups have detained, abused, expelled, and been responsible for the deaths of civilians—particularly in central Bosnia.

- Some notorious detention sites, such as the Tarcin Silos run by the Bosnian Government Army, are still operating, [redacted] and may hold some civilians along with Bosnian Serb Army POWs.

Reports also persist of localized brutality and harassment of minorities.

- Many detention sites, such as those run by Muslim forces in Bugojno in central Bosnia, reportedly have been closed. Refugee reports, however, indicate that harassment and expulsions of Serb civilians continued as late as last spring.

[redacted]

- The statements of refugees from ethnically cleansed towns as distant from each other as Prijedor, Brcko, and Foca recount a strikingly similar pattern. They describe how non-Serbs were disarmed and Serb political, security, and military forces took control of their towns, setting up new civic structures with identical names or functions, and systematically rounding up, interrogating, torturing, and imprisoning or expelling members of non-Serb elites—usually Muslims. The almost simultaneous timing of the takeovers of many towns in the spring of 1992 also suggests collusion among Bosnian Serb authorities.

The balance among these political and military elements appears to have shifted over the past two years—the military, for example, has expanded its

- Press reports note that Bosnian Croats have been trying since last spring to evict Muslims from western Mostar, which the Croats control.

Despite this record of offenses, there is no information—nor is there a pattern of events—suggesting that either Bosnian Muslim or Bosnian Croat leaders have encouraged large-scale ethnic cleansing efforts in conjunction with their military forces to gain and hold territory. Non-Serb forces in Bosnia have not pursued sustained campaigns of ethnic cleansing as have the Bosnian Serbs, but most often have committed atrocities or forced expulsions in response to such acts perpetrated against their own ethnic group [redacted]

- Estimates by the UNHCR and ICRC of the number of deaths and displaced persons in Bosnia suggest, when compared with 1991 census data for Bosnia, that far fewer ethnic Serbs than Muslims and Croats have been killed or expelled from their homes.

role in ethnic cleansing—but all remain involved, according to recent information from a range of sources. [redacted]

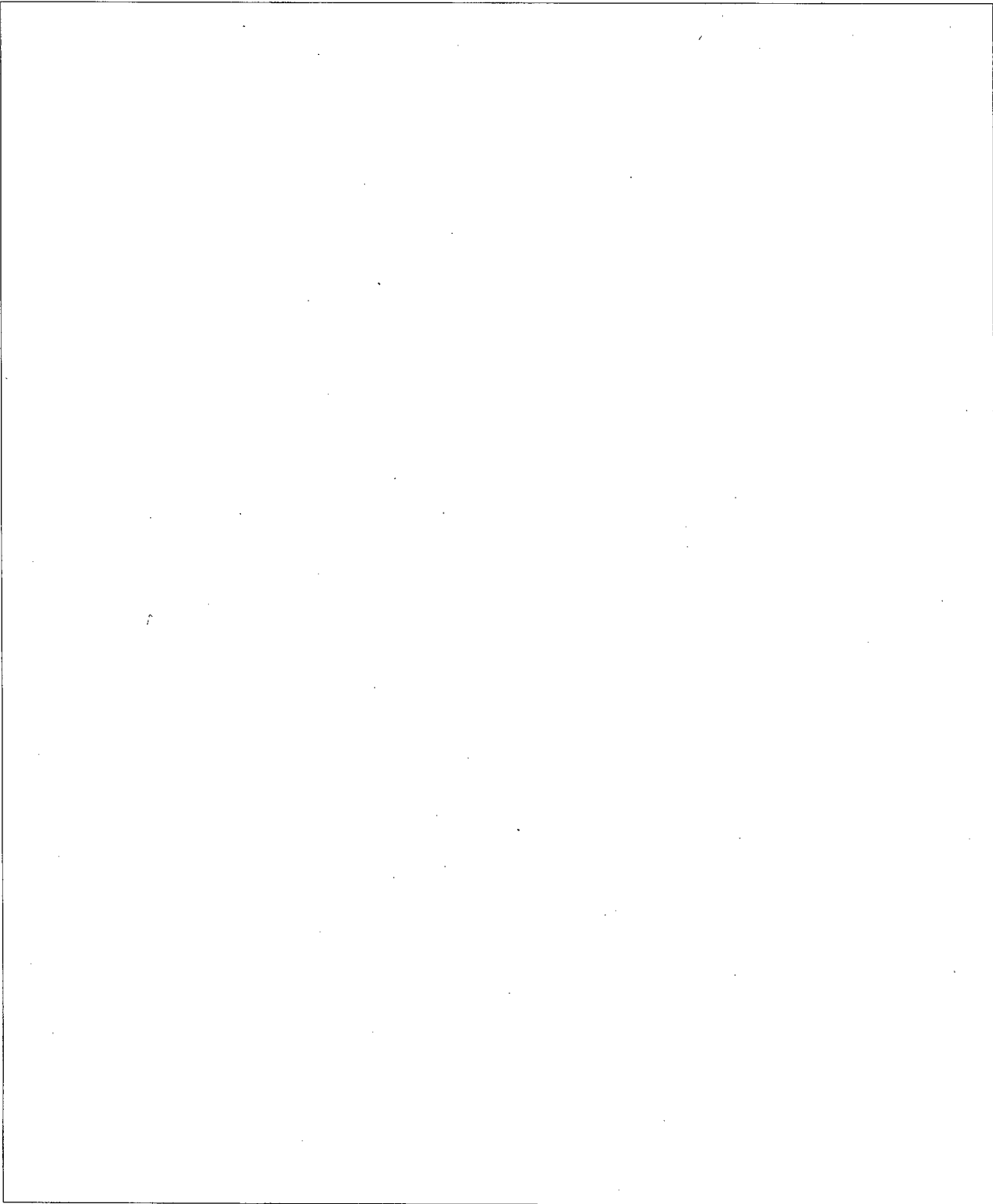
**The Serbian Democratic Party and Internal Security**

Local and regional members of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic's Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) appear to have been responsible for many tactical decisions involving the ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs.

- Numerous refugee accounts name the SDS as having orchestrated Serb takeovers of previously multi-ethnic towns, where they put in place new regimes, set up interrogation centers, established mock "courts," and moved thousands of non-Serb civilian prisoners to detention camps [redacted]

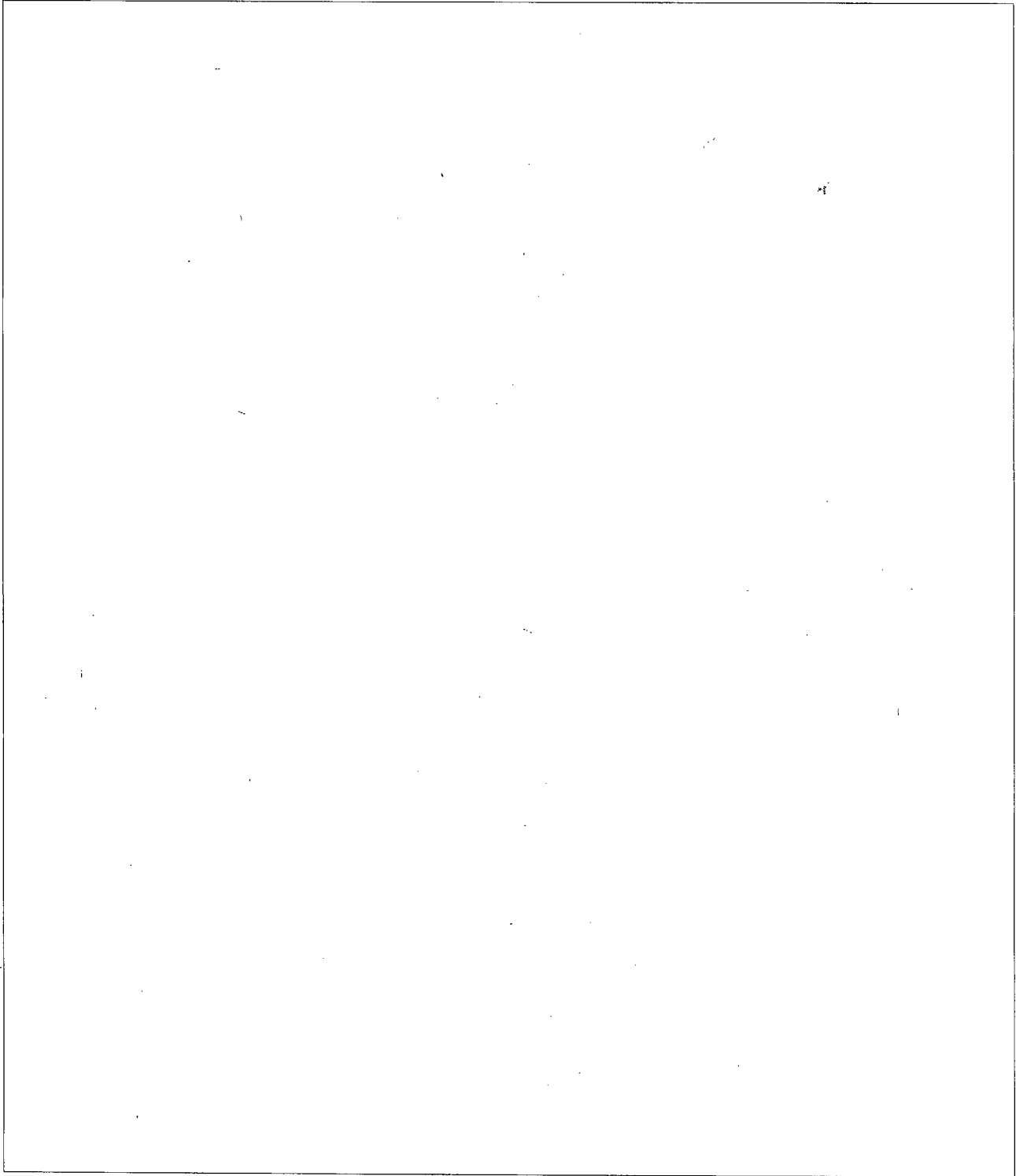
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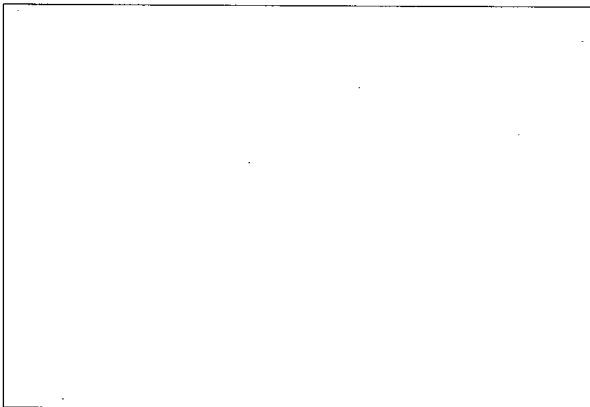
- The SDS mayor of Prijedor, who took office following the takeover of the town in April 1992, stated to a US news organization in a fall 1992 interview that the three principal detention sites in the area—Keraterm, Trnopolje, and Omarska, where thousands reportedly were tortured and died—were “formed on decisions of the Prijedor civil authorities” [redacted]

- Many ethnic Serbs identified as local SDS activists have also been affiliated with local paramilitary or irregular units reported to have terrorized the non-Serb populace. [redacted]

Local SDS officials also work closely with internal security elements.

- Interior Ministry officials traditionally control the local police, and their authority for dealing with civil disorder gives them access to municipal records. Many refugees have reported that, in town takeovers, prominent local non-Serbs have been quickly rounded up by police using organized lists.
- Bosnian Serb internal affairs officials also have commanded interrogation sites and detention camps for civilians, such as Omarska, according to several refugees. [redacted]

Karadzic has consistently denied that Serbs have engaged in ethnic cleansing or that his self-appointed regime is responsible for any atrocities, but he and his associates have operated some of the most notorious Bosnian Serb detention camps.



- Journalists told [redacted] of having to arrange visits to detention camps in 1992 through Karadzic's office, and a US official toured one camp accompanied by SDS “escorts,” [redacted]

This information and the consistent patterns evident in the takeovers of towns throughout Bosnia strongly suggest that top SDS leaders, including Karadzic, knew about ethnic cleansing plans from the outset—and that they probably initiated them in coordination with internal security organs and the military. [redacted]

#### The Bosnian Serb Military

The Bosnian Serb Army (BSA), which was formed from the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) in mid-May 1992, has been a central participant in ethnic cleansing campaigns against Muslims and Croats.

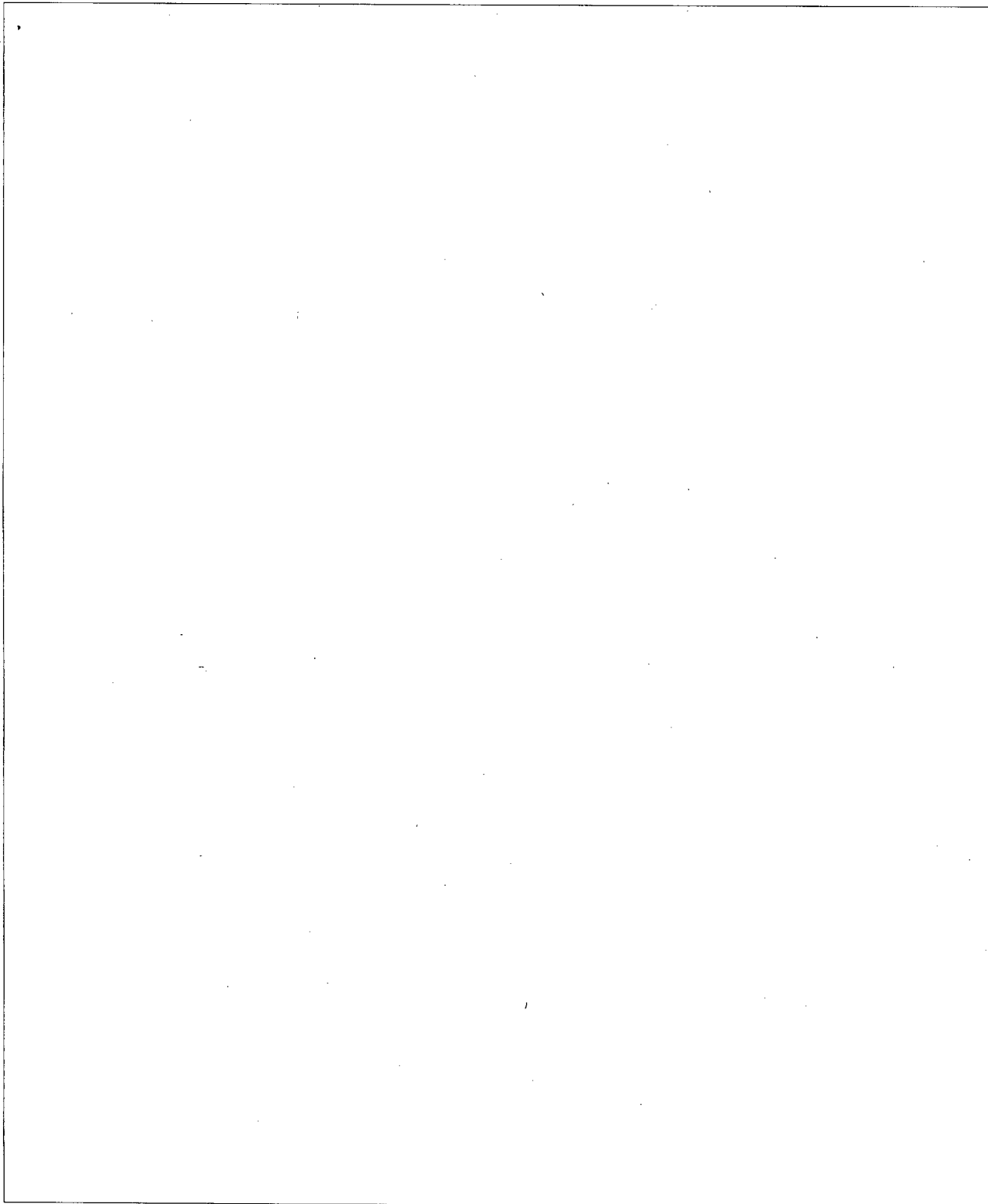
- BSA units have conducted systematic ethnic cleansing operations, controlled detention camps, and methodically destroyed Muslim villages, in particular. BSA forces have often operated in conjunction with Serb paramilitary units identified (by many refugees who claim eyewitness status) as the perpetrators of some of the worst atrocities of the Balkan conflict. [redacted]

From April through September 1992, the BSA and the JNA before it, carried out operations aimed at removing by force much of the substantial Muslim and smaller Croat populations from the northwestern Bosnian towns of Prijedor and Sanski Most and their surrounding areas.

- A broad range of sources reveals that this was probably the most well-organized and comprehensive ethnic cleansing effort conducted in Bosnia since the onset of hostilities. Information from refugee debriefings indicates that these actions were carried out jointly by the Bosnian Serb internal affairs “ministry” under the direction of the Serbian Democratic Party (see figure 5).

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Figure 5  
Ethnic Cleansing by the 5th Kozarska and 6th Krajiska  
Brigades in Bosnia, April - September 1992



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- Extensive [redacted] reporting has identified two Bosnian Serb military brigades that were formerly part of the Territorial Defense Force, the 5th Kozarska and 6th Krajiska, as having had major roles in rounding up Muslim citizens in these areas for transport to detention camps or killing Muslims and destroying their towns.

- These two units operated initially under the control of the JNA and then the BSA [redacted]

[redacted]

The BSA has operated many of the detention camps that have held primarily Muslim and Croat civilians—rather than POWs [redacted]

[redacted] BSA-run camps, notorious for their reported brutality and high death tolls, include facilities at Maniaca and Barkovic [redacted]

[redacted]

- A significant part of the Serb detention camp and prison system in Bosnia was an integrated entity organized within the corps structure of the BSA [redacted]

[redacted]

- The BSA's security service reportedly exercised command and control of the camp system using military police as guards [redacted]

[redacted]

As the BSA, under the command of General Ratko Mladic, has intensified its military operations, its role in ethnic cleansing has grown. The BSA has incorporated

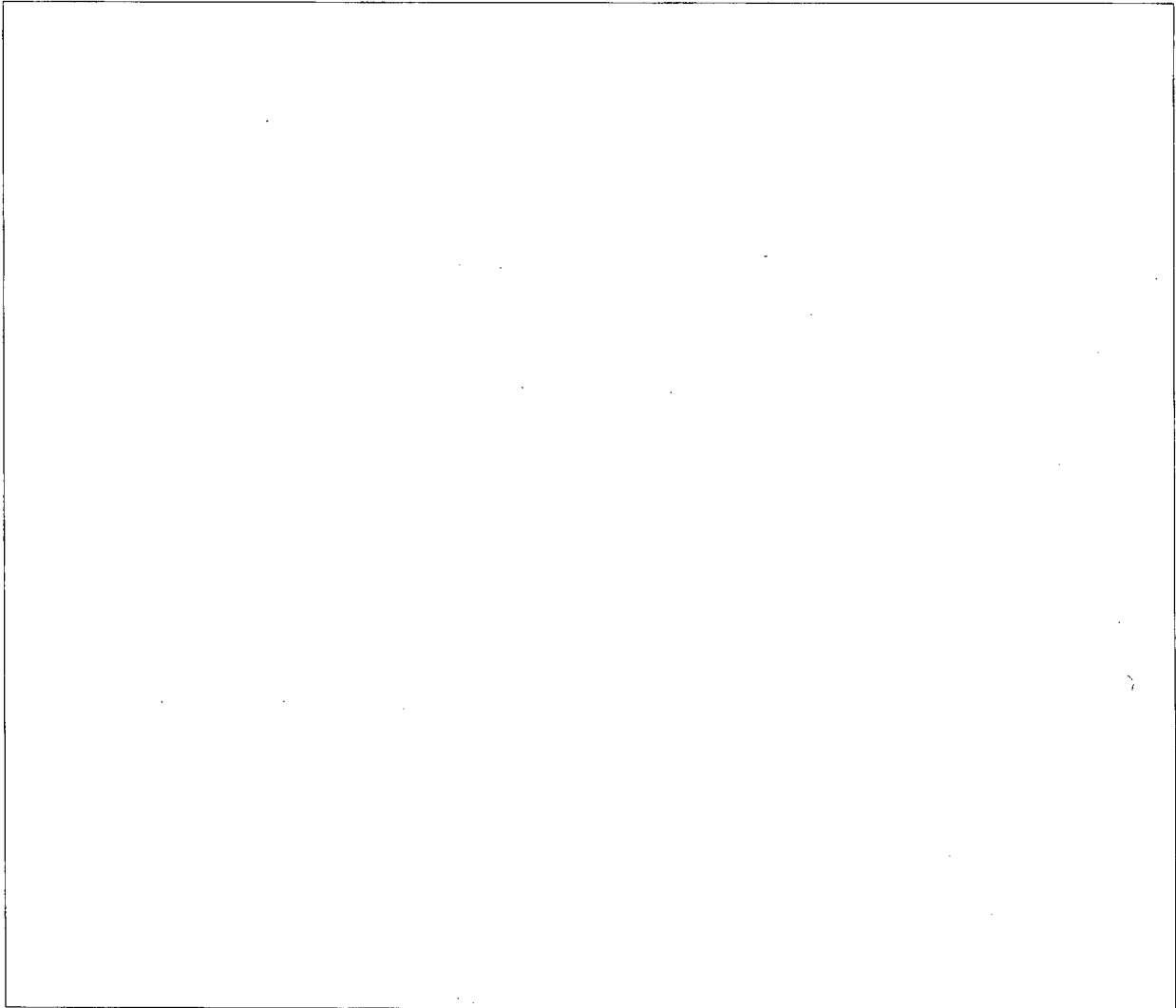
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into its campaigns the systematic destruction of villages—primarily Muslim—to ensure that the inhabitants will not return to the area [redacted]

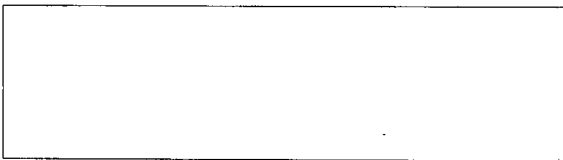
- BSA forces in both the January-April 1993 Srebrenica offensive and the April 1994 Gorazde attack razed Muslim villages well after Bosnian Serb troops had seized control of the areas surrounding the villages [redacted]

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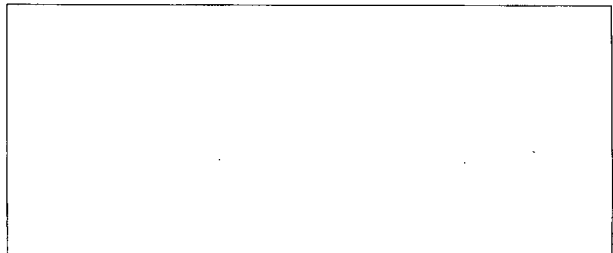
*During its 1994 offensive to capture the Bosnian-Muslim-controlled town of Gorazde, the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) destroyed the only remaining Muslim villages in the area—driving out the population to claim the land for ethnic Serbs [redacted]*



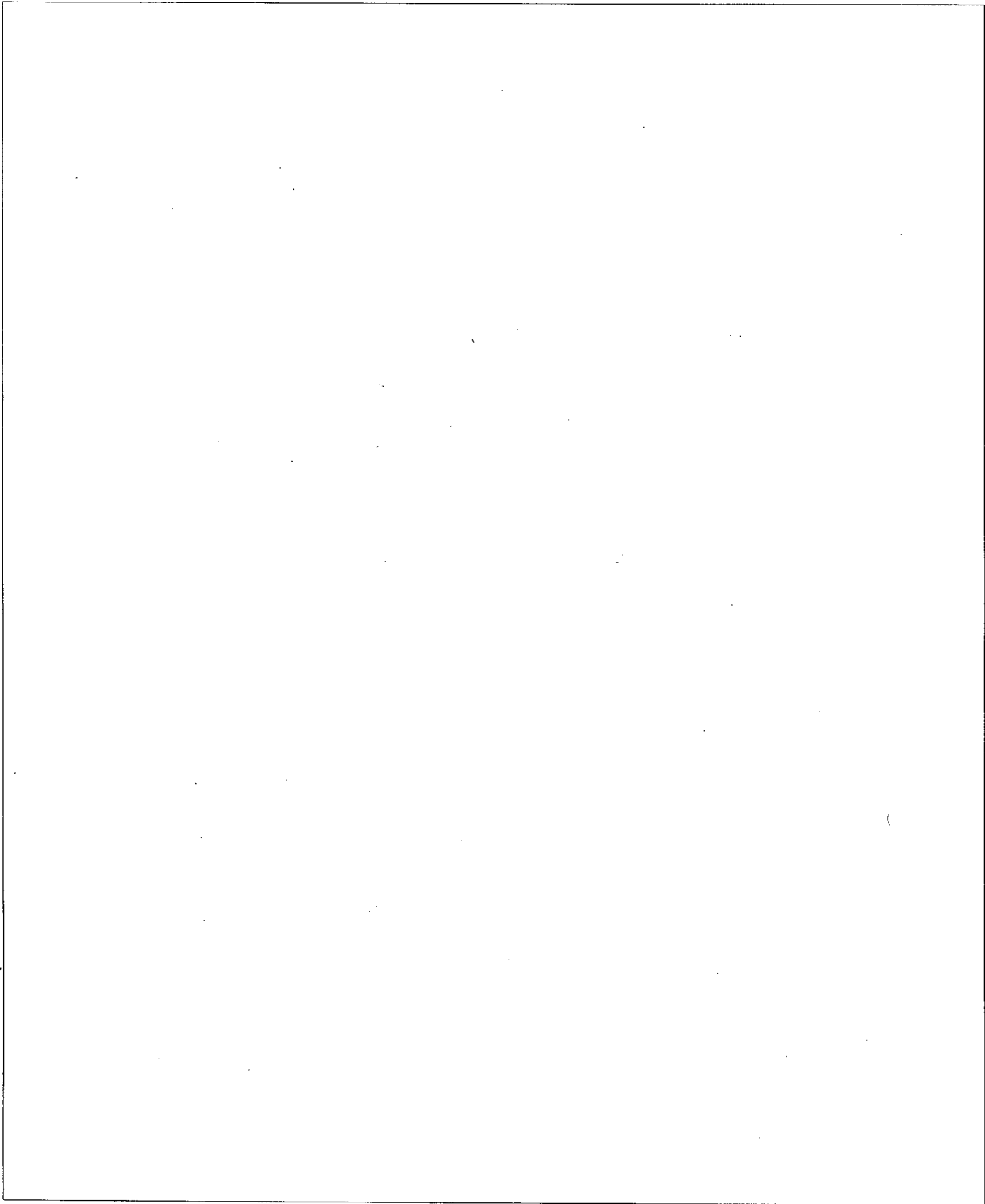
*The small size of the villages, the absence of significant local Muslim resistance, and the flight of most residents in the face of the BSA's advance suggest that the destruction of the towns was not a military*

*necessity but was aimed at preventing a return of their Muslim inhabitants.*

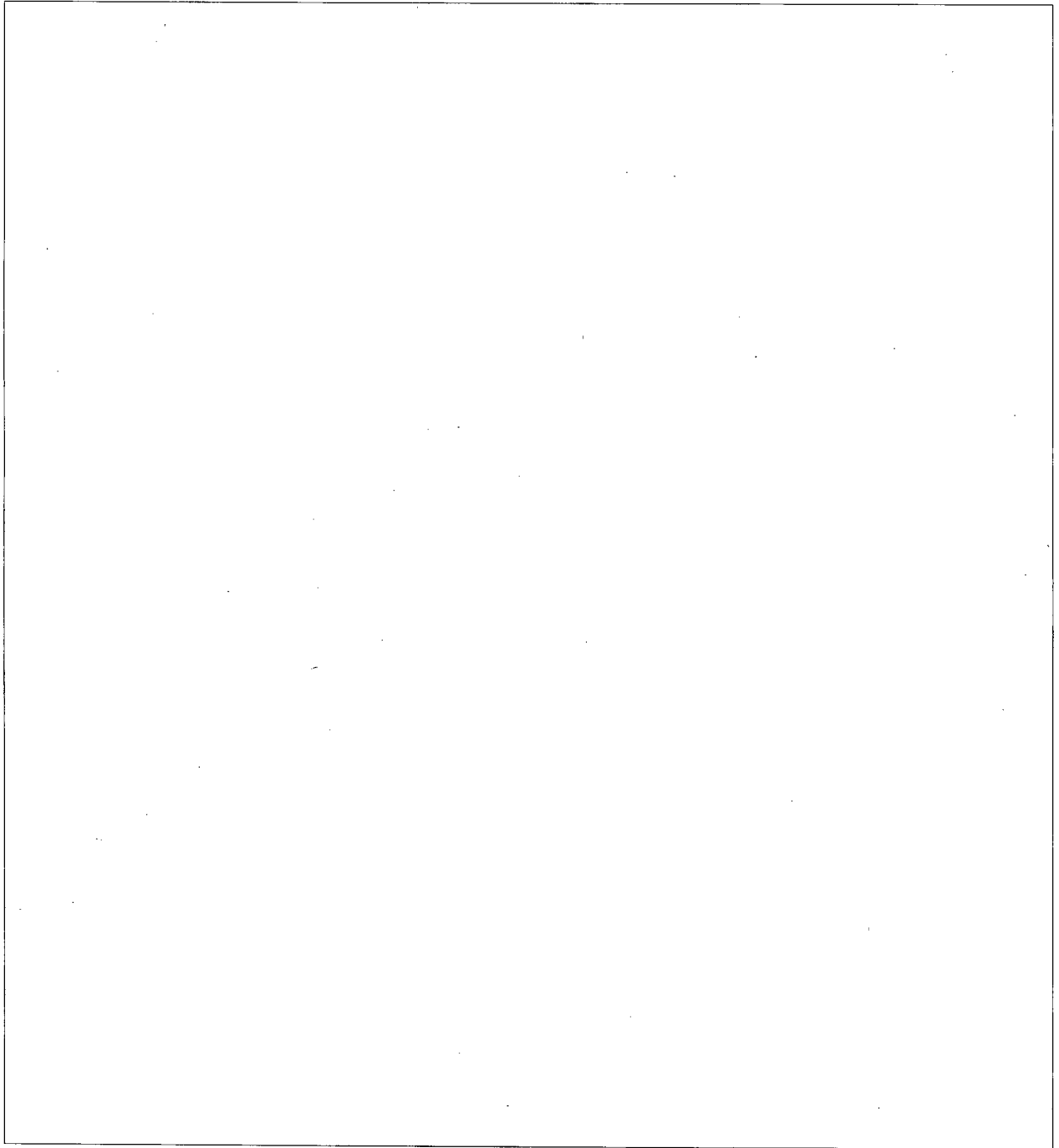
- There are no reports that paramilitary groups of the type associated with destruction, looting, and atrocities elsewhere in Bosnia in the wake of BSA assaults were present during the offensive, suggesting that BSA troops burned the villages.*



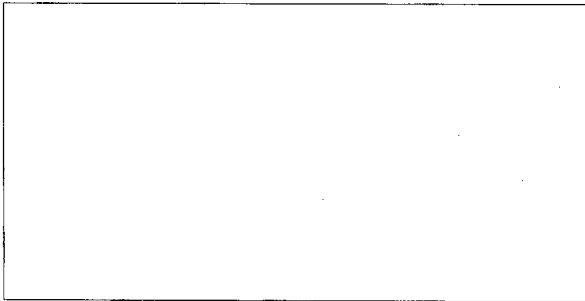
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**Paramilitary Forces**

Numerous Bosnian refugees have provided information to US Government debriefers indicating that both Bosnian Serb and Serbian paramilitary units initially operated in conjunction with the JNA and later the BSA, as well as local police forces, to seize control of territory and ethnically cleanse these areas in 1992.

- A range of reporting provides at least circumstantial evidence that the JNA/BSA and the Serbian Interior Ministry armed Bosnian Serb and Serbian paramilitaries in 1992.
- In many cases, the JNA/BSA secured the area around a town and fired artillery or tank rounds into the area to terrorize the population, according to a variety of reports. Paramilitary units appeared to operate in close coordination with the Army, if not under its command, typically following up on the Army's encirclement of the town by entering it to ethnically cleanse it through murder, terror tactics, and expulsion.
- The BSA appears to have disbanded most paramilitary units or incorporated them into the Army in late 1992 largely because of concerns that paramilitary commanders were unreliable and could serve as a rival armed force. Volunteer paramilitary units that have operated since that time appear to have functioned under BSA command or as part of a BSA unit. [redacted]

**The Serbian Connection**

The most tangible link between Serb authorities in Belgrade and actions against non-Serbs in Bosnia has been through the presence in Bosnia of paramilitary units formed partly in Serbia. Serbian nationals have led these units, which are implicated in ethnic cleansing by numerous military, refugee, and press reports.

[redacted] reporting [redacted] indicates that, at least early on in the Bosnian conflict, Belgrade knew of ethnic cleansing activity, allowing Serbian forces to intervene on behalf of Bosnian Serbs. In one case, Serbian troops even restrained overzealous Serb paramilitary forces whose brutal actions in the northeastern Bosnian city of Brcko apparently risked attracting unwelcome attention [redacted]

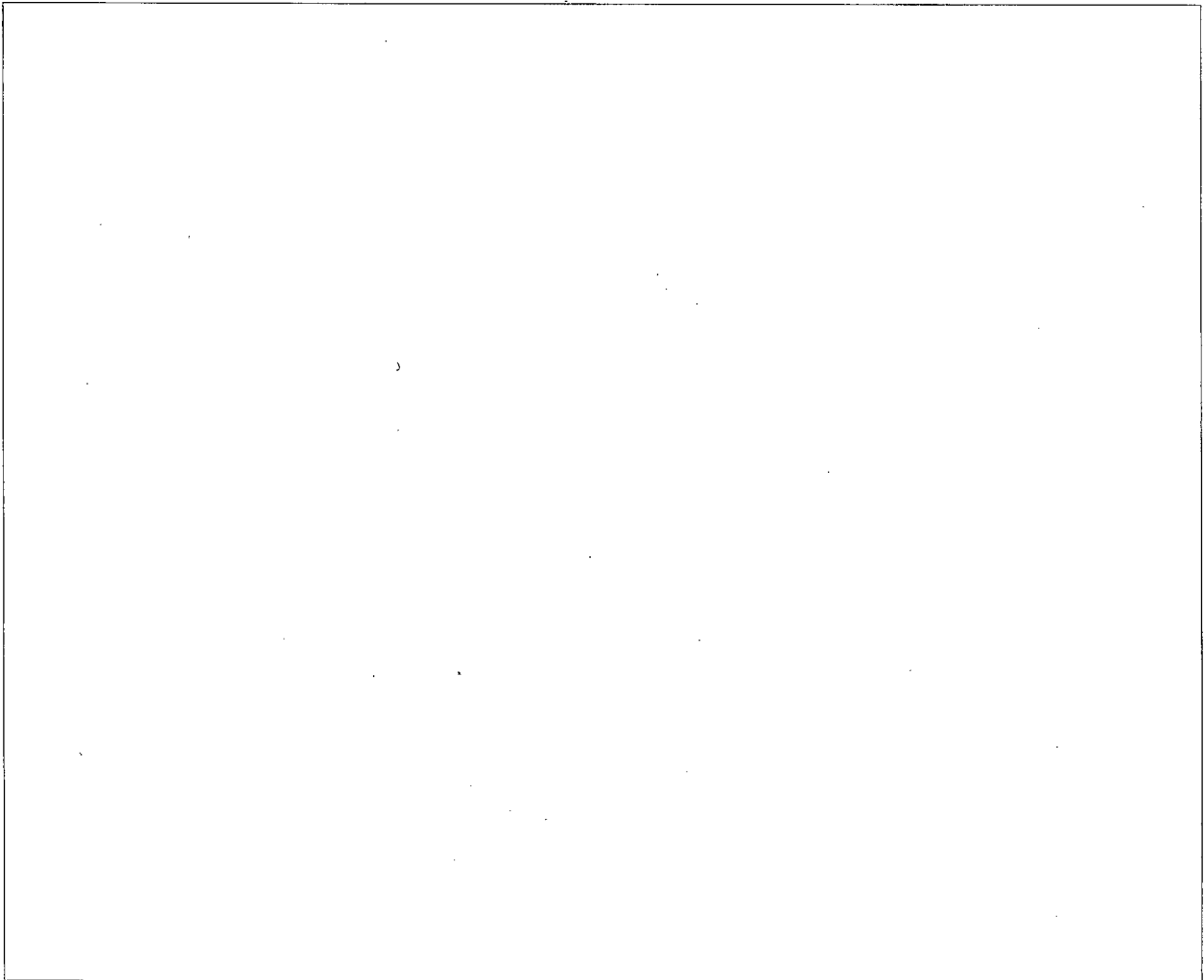
Mihajlo Kertes and Radmilo Bogdanovic, intimates of Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic who have helped him to establish control over Serbia's intelligence and security services, are likely central figures in any planning or directing role that Serbia may have played in ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

[redacted] press reporting indicates that both have been involved in the oversight of Serbian paramilitaries since early 1992. [redacted]

Such officials generally have been careful, however, to avoid overt signs that they have sanctioned or directed the ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs in Bosnia.

- The "irregular" status of Serb paramilitary units, for example, affords Serbian leaders plausible deniability when confronted with reports of especially brutal action by those forces. [redacted]

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Information has not emerged that conclusively links top Serbian officials to the planning or direction of ethnic cleansing.

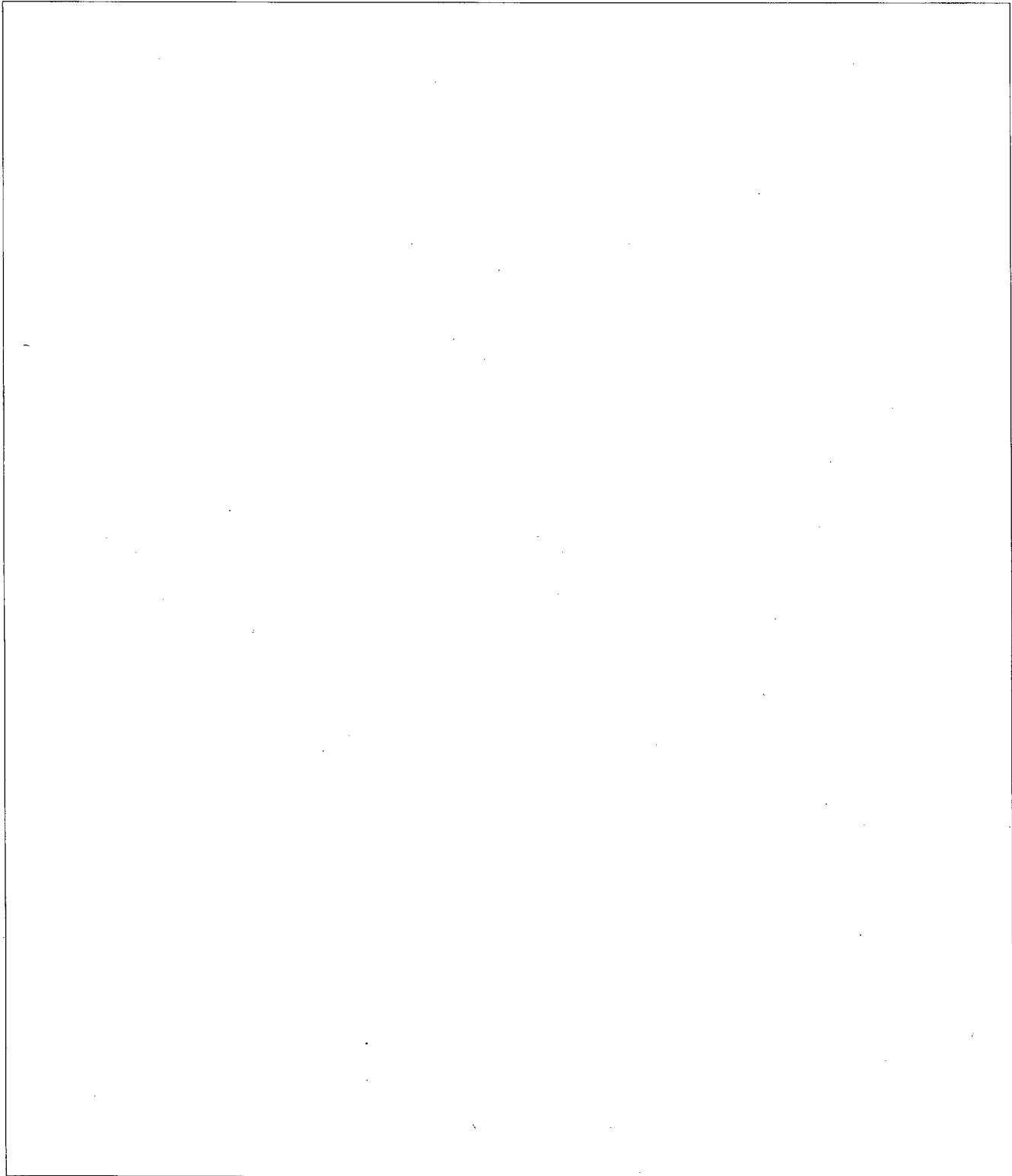
- Documents that have surfaced in the West purporting to be evidence of Belgrade's direction of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia have proved spurious and virtually impossible to authenticate. The individuals offering such "evidence" often appear to have dubious or self-serving motives and unsavory backgrounds. In addition, the possibility exists that Serbia's rivals in the region—or Serbs trying to spoil the chain of evidence for potential war crimes trials—have fabricated this "evidence."

#### The Toll of Serb Ethnic Cleansing

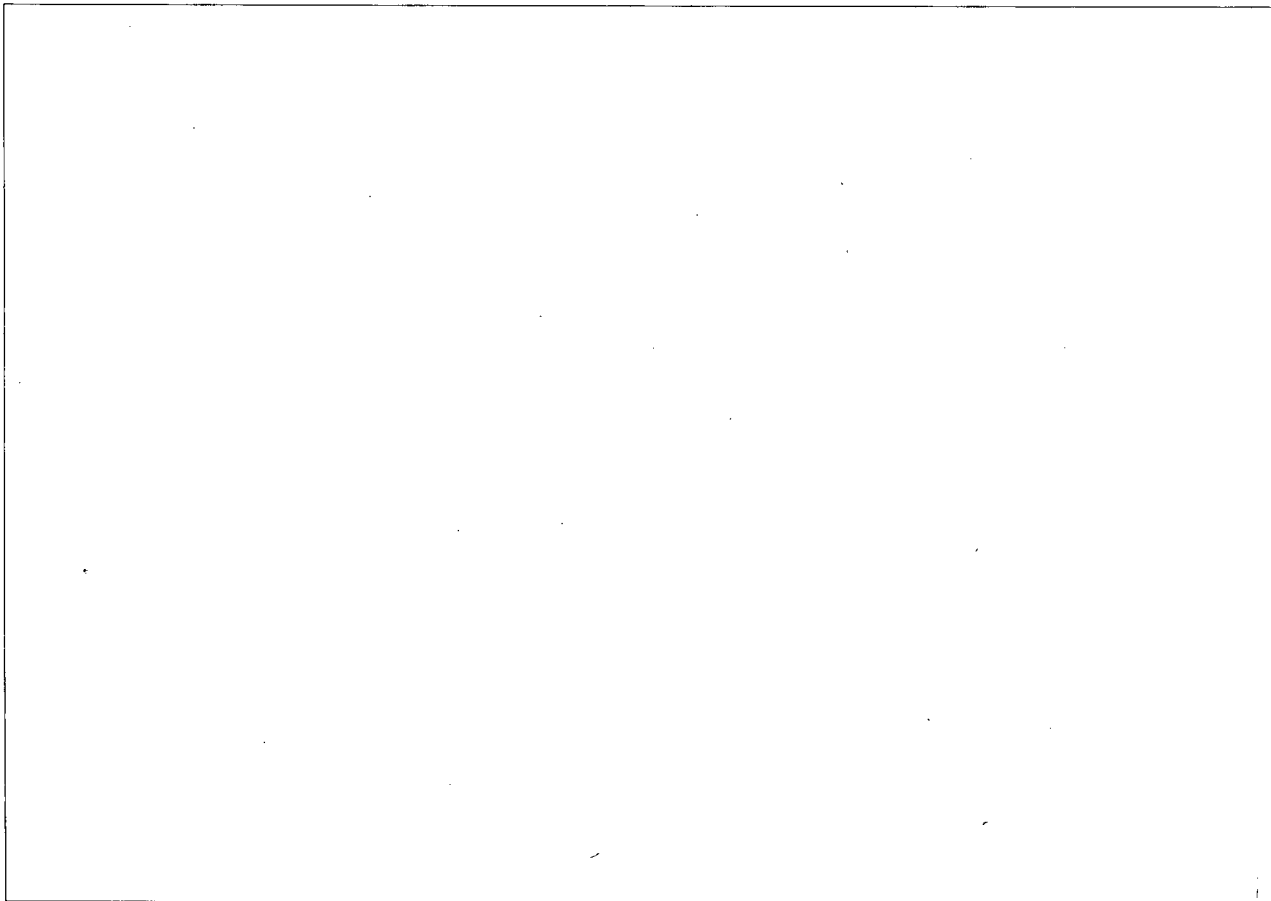
There is no reliable estimate of how many Bosnians have died as a result of Serb ethnic cleansing, but refugee debriefings and press  reports suggest that they number in the tens of thousands.

- Extensive US Government refugee debriefings alone have yielded information on more than 200 mass graves in Bosnia that are said to contain a total of more than 40,000 bodies. Although this information is mostly anecdotal and not the result of formal

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investigations or exhumation, the refugees reporting it claim in most cases to have witnessed the atrocities involved.

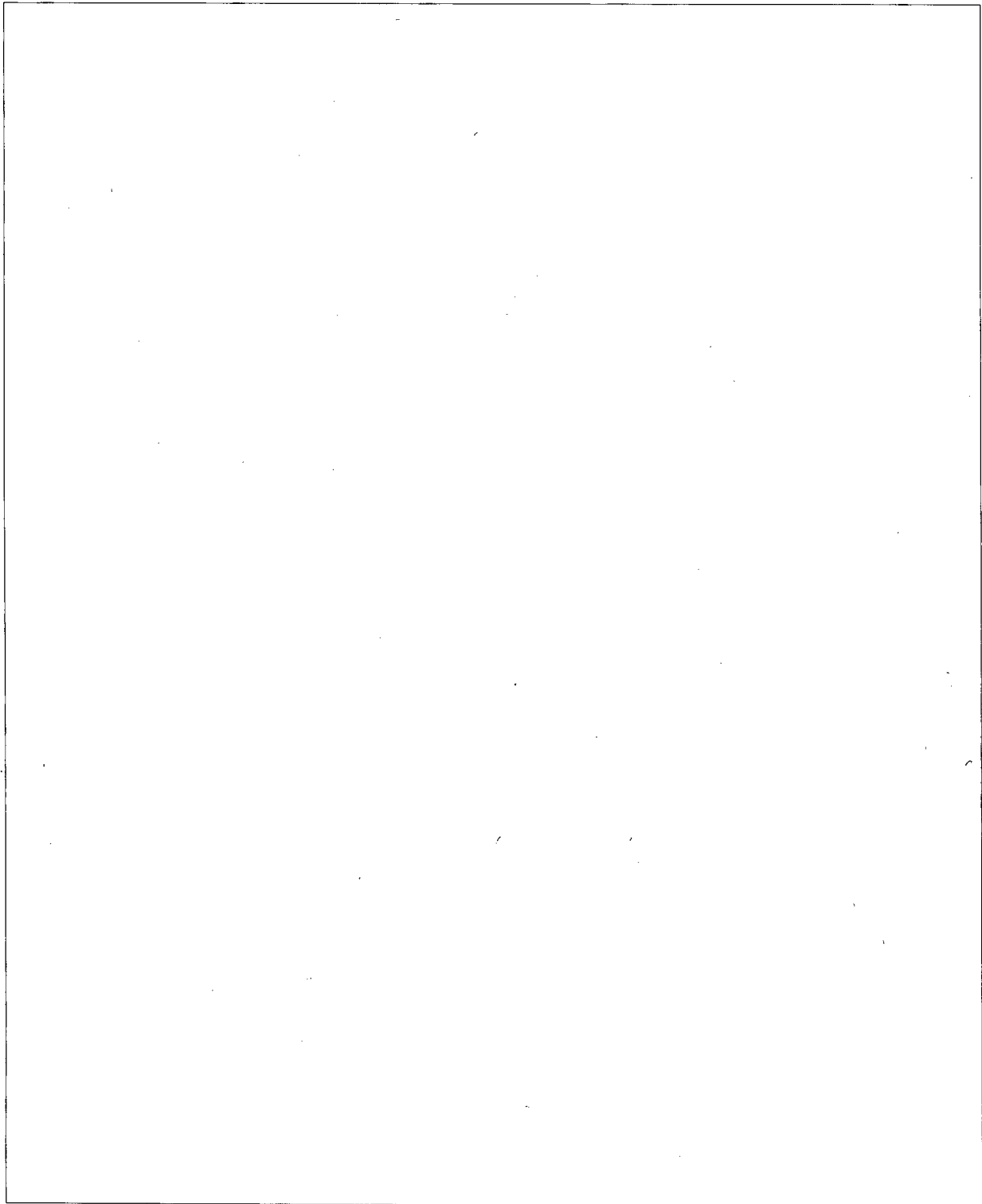
Approximately 2,000,000 people from states of the former Yugoslavia have been displaced but remain elsewhere in the former Balkan country.

- About 1,300,000 of those displaced persons are in Bosnia, a majority of them Muslims forced to leave Serb-controlled areas.

Nearly 1,000,000 refugees from the former Yugoslavia have fled abroad, according to UNHCR, most of them to Europe.

- Neither UNHCR nor host governments can provide firm estimates of the breakdown of Balkan refugee populations by ethnic group, either within the former Yugoslavia or abroad. Most agree, however, that a clear, though unspecified, majority are Bosnian Muslims (see figure 17).

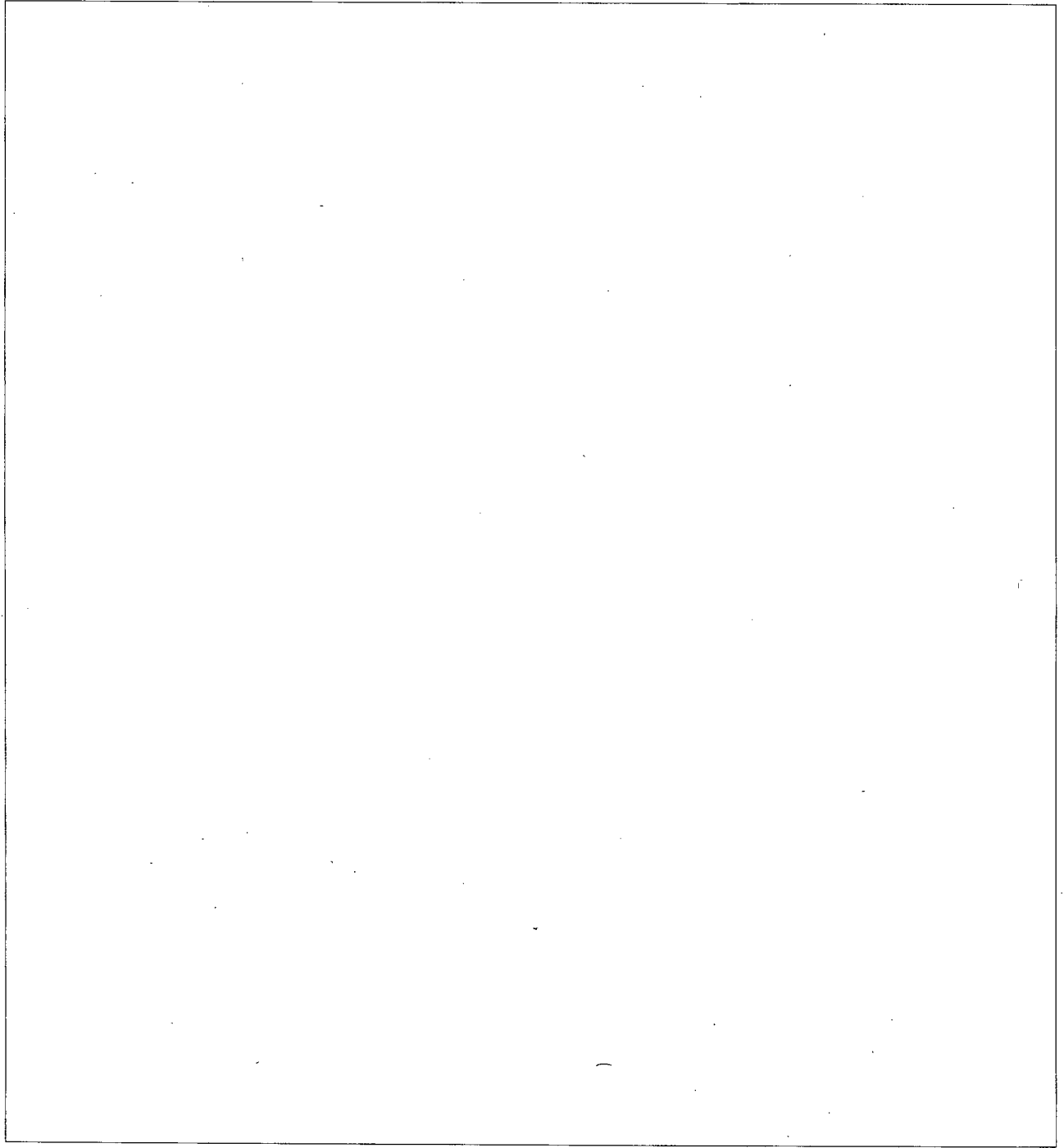
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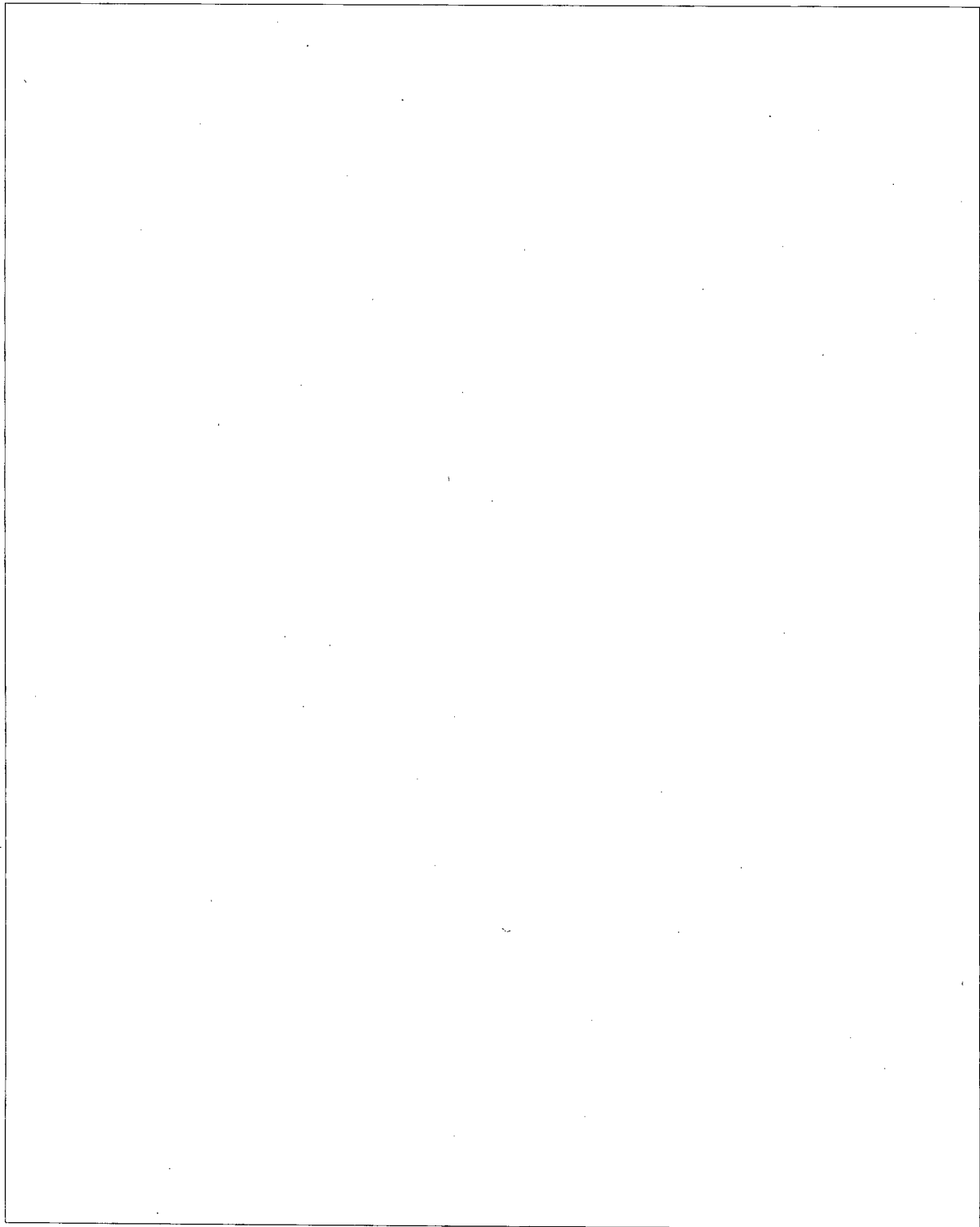


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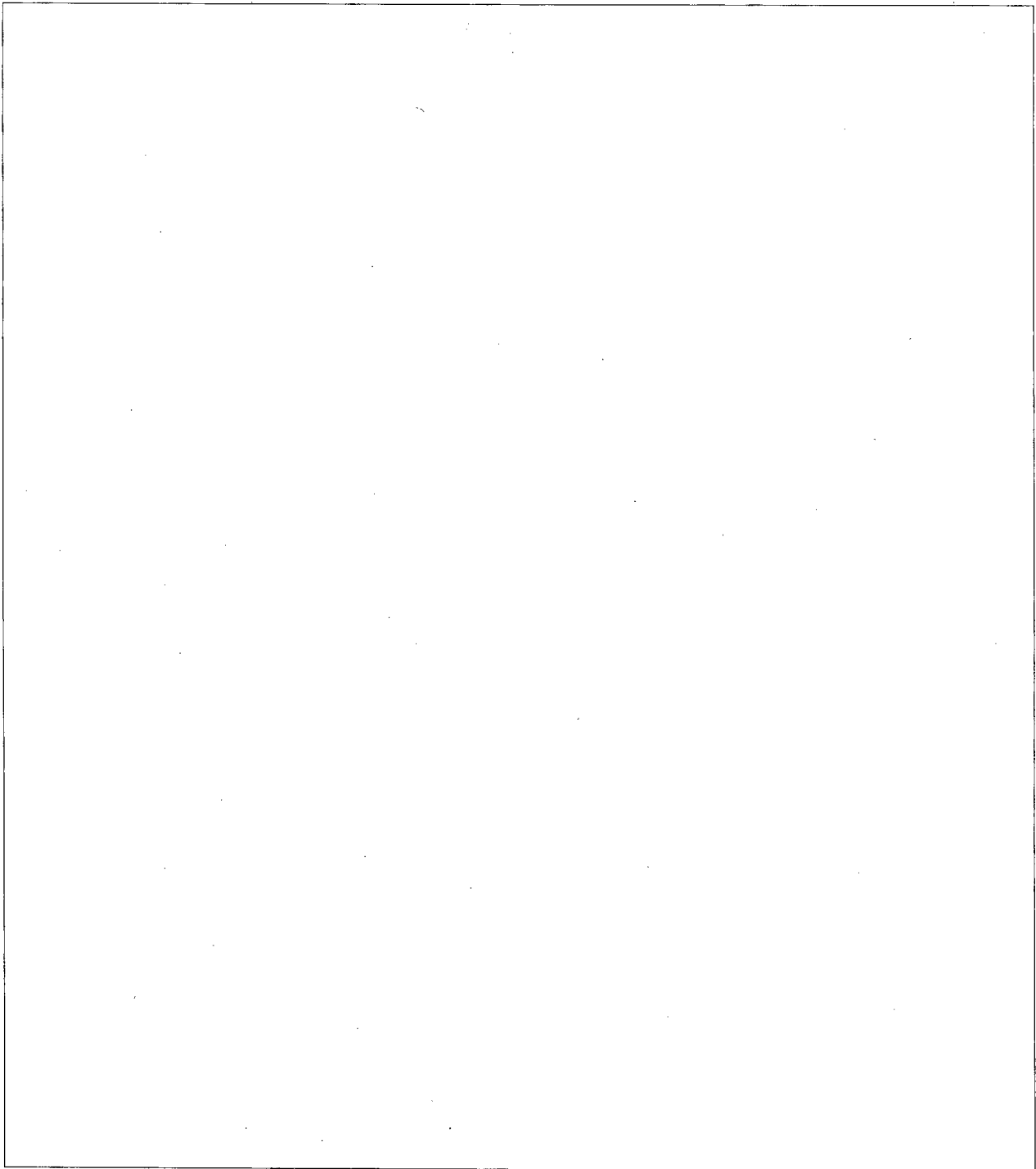


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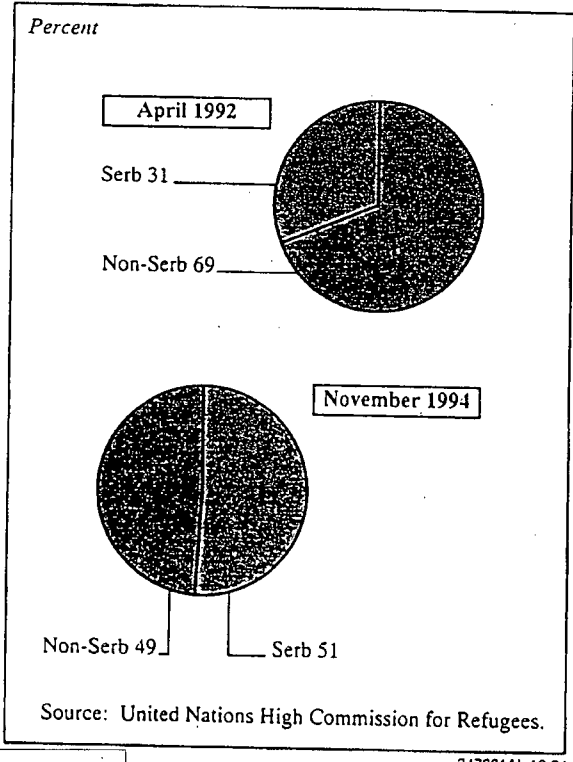


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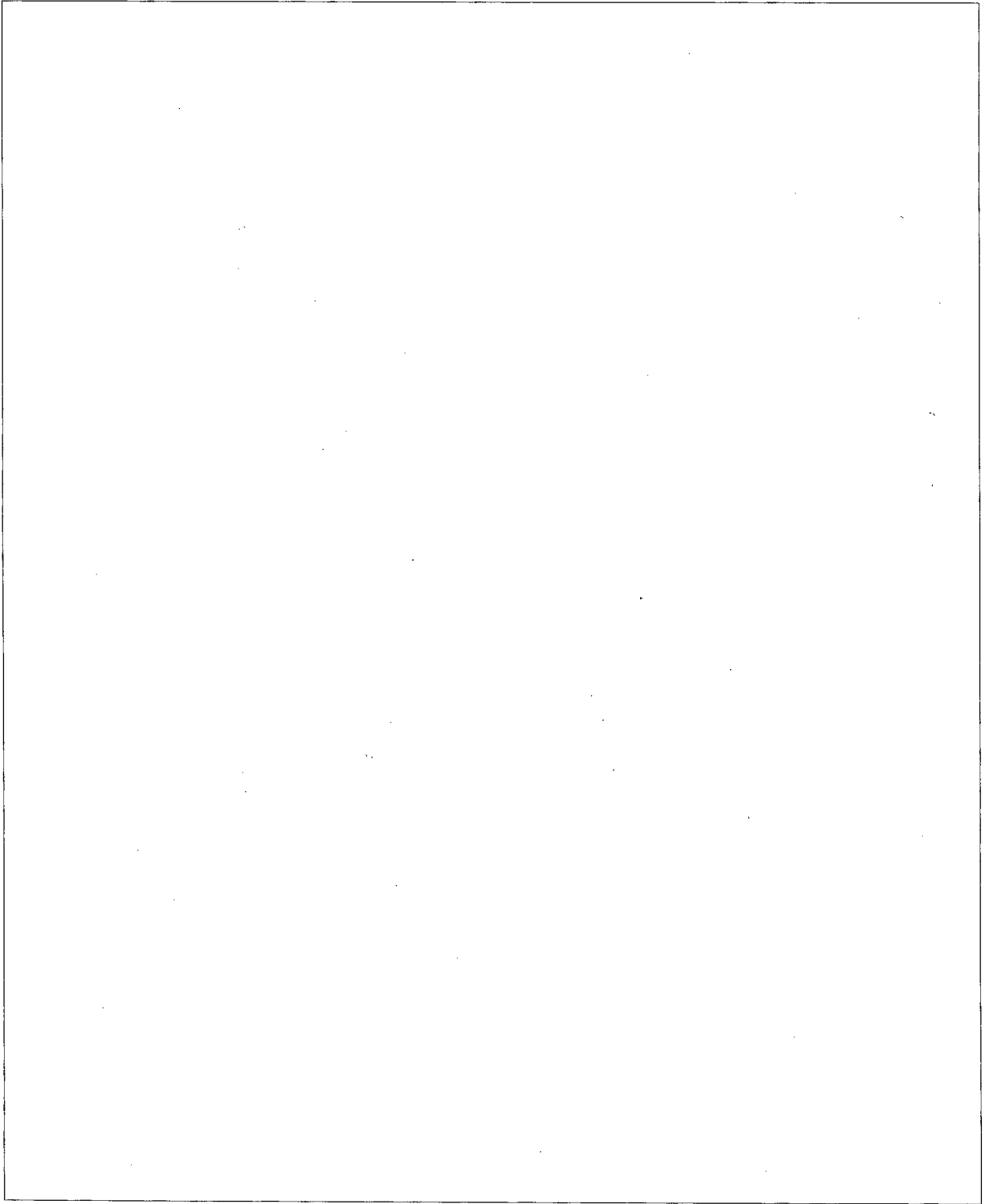
**Figure 15**  
**Decline in the Non-Serb Population**  
**of Bosnia, 1992-94**



**Conclusion**

Widespread, sustained Serb ethnic cleansing campaigns in Bosnia over three years have radically altered the formerly multiethnic state. Restoring its pre-war demographic balance and ethnic distribution now appears virtually impossible. The actions of ethnic Serb political and military forces have created a Bosnian—mainly Muslim—diaspora. At the same time, ethnic Serbs have succeeded in securing their hold over large parts of Bosnian territory and made significant strides toward their apparent objective of establishing, or expanding, an ethnically pure Serb state.

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**Figure 17**  
**People Displaced by the Yugoslav Conflict, 1 December 1994<sup>a</sup>**



## Appendix A

### Agreements and Treaties of International Law Applicable to the Conflict in the Former Yugoslavia

Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, August 12, 1949 (Geneva Convention Number III).

Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, August 12, 1949 (Geneva Convention Number IV, especially Article 47, "women shall be especially protected against rape.")

Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide, December 8, 1949.

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Armed Conflicts (Protocol I). Opened for signature December 12, 1977. (This may make blocking humanitarian aid convoys a war crime.)

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Convention of August 12, 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). Opened for signature December 12, 1977. (This may make blocking humanitarian aid convoys a war crime.)

Common Article 3 to the Geneva Conventions (December 12, 1949) bestows the protections of Geneva Convention Number IV to civilian persons in armed conflicts not of an international nature.

Grave breaches of one or more of the Geneva Conventions relevant to the situation in Bosnia include:

- Willful killing.
- Torture or inhuman treatment.
- Willfully causing great suffering or serious injury to body or health.
- Extensive destruction and appropriation of property, not justified by military necessity, and carried out unlawfully and wantonly.
- Compelling a prisoner of war or a civilian to serve in the armed forces of foreign power.
- Willfully depriving a prisoner of war of the rights of fair and regular trial.
- Unlawful deportation or transfer or unlawful confinement of a civilian.
- Taking civilians as hostages.

This appendix is

## Appendix B

Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia:  
An Abbreviated Chronology of  
Significant Events**1991***25 June*

War breaks out in the Balkans almost immediately after Slovenia and Croatia declare independence. Although Slovenia and Croatia conclude cease-fire agreements with Belgrade by fall 1991, the status of Bosnia-Herzegovina remains uncertain.

*3 October*

Serbia and Montenegro seize control of Yugoslavia's Federal Presidency.

*23 December*

Germany recognizes Slovenia and Croatia as independent states.

**1992***15 January*

EC member states and 14 other countries recognize Croatia and Slovenia as independent states.

*February*

Bosnian Serbs organize paramilitary units in northeastern city of Brcko.

*27 February-1 March*

Bosnia holds a referendum on independence from Yugoslavia. Bosnian Serbs react violently to the vote in favor of independence. President Izetbegovic tries to make concessions to the Serbs by including them in his government.

*7 March*

Advance team of UN peacekeepers arrives in Yugoslavia.

*Early April*

Bosnia-Herzegovina declares independence.

*6 April*

The EC recognizes Bosnia-Herzegovina.

*7 April*

The United States recognizes Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbs move almost immediately to partition the republic. The JNA stages assaults on Muslim towns, and ethnic cleansing campaigns begin throughout Bosnia.

*April-May*

Bosnian Serbs nationalists, working with JNA and Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) forces, stage civic takeovers of Prijedor, Sanski Most, and neighboring towns in northwestern Bosnia and begin ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population that continues into the fall.



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~~UMBRA~~**1992***1 May*

Fighting breaks out in Brcko, signaling the start of Serb ethnic cleansing there.

*19 May*

The JNA formally disassociates itself from ethnic Serb forces in Bosnia. The newly formed BSA under General Ratko Mladic continues the ethnic cleansing of non-Serbs.

**1993***January-April*

BSA conducts Srebrenica offensive, carrying out extensive ethnic cleansing of Muslim settlements in eastern Bosnia.

*22 February*

The UN Security Council authorizes establishment of an international tribunal to prosecute war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia since 1991.

**1994***1 March*

Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims sign agreement to establish a federation in Bosnia.

*30 March-April*

Bosnian Serbs launch offensive against Bosnian Government-held enclave of Gorazde, ethnically cleansing seized villages along the way.

*Mid-July*

Anticipating Bosnian Government approval of the Contact Group's "51-49" peace plan, Bosnian Serb forces show defiance by launching a new ethnic cleansing campaign in northern Bosnia to drive out remaining non-Serb residents.

*18 July*

The Bosnian Assembly approves the Contact Group peace plan.

*3 August*

The Bosnian Serb "parliament" votes unanimously to hold a referendum on the Contact Group plan.

*27-28 August*

Bosnian Serb referendum overwhelmingly rejects the Contact Group plan.

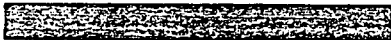
*September*

Concerned about the potential impact of the lifting of the UN arms embargo on Bosnia, Bosnian Serbs step up their ethnic cleansing campaign in northern Bosnia. Since the onset of fighting in Bosnia, some 90 percent of non-Serbs have been driven from the territory now controlled by Bosnian Serb forces.

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