

Approved for Release CIA Historical
Collections Division AR 70-14
1OCT2013

Srebrenica [3]
[09130 2144]

~~Secret~~

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

18 July 1995

The Bosnian Army in Srebrenica: What Happened?

The Bosnian Army defense of Srebrenica collapsed because of a combination of material shortcomings, the light infantry composition of the defenders, a lack of effective command and control, and an underlying reliance on UNPROFOR and NATO to deter Bosnian Serb attacks against the enclave. The Bosnian Army (ABiH) forces in the eastern enclaves have not benefited from the influx of weapons into central Bosnia since the Croat-Muslim Federation was established last year, nor have these units seen the improvements in organization, training, and discipline which Bosnian Army Commander Delic has been able to impose on the rest of the Bosnian military.

The Bosnian Army forces in the enclave had very few heavy weapons of any type--field artillery or heavy mortars--and little or no ammunition for those they had. A lack of antitank weapons to counter BSA armor was an especially serious shortcoming, leaving the defenders unable to confront even a very small armored column.

- The Bosnian army apparently did not remove whatever heavy weapons were in UN weapons collections area in town, suggesting that the weapons were non-operational or that the Bosnian forces lacked ammunition, gasoline, or other key components for them.

The Bosnian forces in the Srebrenica enclave started off as mostly poorly organized bands formed in late 1992, and probably were not mentally or organizationally prepared to conduct a positional defense of the enclave. Government troops elsewhere have become much more "regularized" since Srebrenica was cut off in early 1993, but the forces in Srebrenica retained their guerrilla-type composition and primarily conducted raids against nearby Serb-held towns and BSA rear areas. When confronted by a BSA force with superior organization and firepower, many Bosnian defenders probably opted to fade into the hills and try to get to friendly lines.

- The Bosnian Army around Srebrenica also lacked strong fortifications and/or secondary positions, especially when compared with the extensive defensive preparations seen elsewhere in Bosnia. This further undermined the defenders' ability to counter BSA armor or artillery.

The defenders' fundamentally weak defensive position was aggravated by a lack of effective command and control from the Bosnian Army's 28th Division. The entire divisional staff had been killed in a helicopter shootdown early May--including possibly Naser Oric, the 28th Division commander and military leader in Srebrenica since 1992. The ABiH's evident lack of multi-brigade direction and Naser Oric's apparent absence hindered government attempts to mount a coordinated defense.

Perhaps most importantly, the government leaders in the enclave probably were counting on the UN or NATO to do something to stop the BSA before it actually overran the entire UN-declared "safe area." When it became obvious that outside intervention was not going to save Srebrenica, there was

no last-ditch fallback plan and it was too late for the defenders to do anything but try to escape.

~~Secret~~

[Return to Table of Contents](#)

