

Intelligence Report

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

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Milosevic, Karadzic, Mladic: Serbs More United

Serbian President Milosevic, Bosnian Serb "President" Karadzic, and Bosnian Serb Army Commander Mladic's views on the terms of a possible peace settlement vary--sometimes widely--despite their agreement to pull together a joint Serb delegation under Milosevic to attend peace negotiations.

- Milosevic accepted the Vance-Owen plan in 1993 and the Contact Group plan a year later, which entailed awarding the Bosnian Serbs 49 percent of Bosnia. [] he is favorably disposed to the current US initiative, except for proposals for three-way recognition.
- Karadzic accepted the Vance-Owen plan in 1993 which partitioned Bosnia into ten ethnic-based provinces. After establishing an independent power base in Bosnia, however, he wants Bosnian Serb sovereignty and a territorial division closer to current Serb holdings--approximately 65 percent.
- Mladic torpedoed the Vance-Owen plan, but his views on current peace initiatives appear unformed and range from a settlement along current lines of control to an all-out war to eliminate the Bosnian Government ability to resist. [] he is willing to be an interlocutor for the Serb cause with the international community. []

While all three are Serb nationalists to a varying degree, [] they are most attuned to risks that threaten their professional and personal positions.

- Milosevic dropped the mantle of Serb protector in 1994 when he perceived that internationally imposed sanctions were undermining his position in Belgrade.
- Likewise, Mladic has altered his military tactics when a credible military threat was posited by UN or NATO forces, []

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Far from being the ultra-Serb nationalist observers believed him to be in the early 1990s, Milosevic has adopted a tactical approach wholly dedicated to maintaining and insuring his power base in Belgrade, whatever the costs to his fellow Serbs.

- Milosevic captured control of the Serbian Communist Party in 1986 after overthrowing his mentor, then Communist party chief Ivan Stombolic.
- In 1987, Milosevic shrewdly realized the power of nationalist agitation after stirring up ethnic Serbs in Serbia's ethnic Albanian-dominated Kosovo province.
- He was elected Serbian president in 1989 promising to protect Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia as well. As Yugoslavia imploded in 1990-1991, Milosevic's security service--with the assistance of the Yugoslav Army--reportedly armed and organized ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia.

As sanctions began to bite in late 1993 and early 1994, Milosevic moved to jettison his nationalist agenda in order to gain sanctions relief and to lock in Serb territorial holdings in Croatia and Bosnia.

- [redacted] Milosevic's wife, Mirjana Markovic--still a dedicated Communist and "Yugoslav"--may be behind some of Milosevic's policy alternations. [redacted]

In any case, Milosevic has decided, apparently correctly, that his sanctions and war-weary constituency have tired of the sacrifice required to unite all Serbs in one state.

- Defying Serb ultranationalists, Milosevic slapped an embargo on fellow Serbs in Bosnia in August 1994 in order to gain their compliance with the Contact Group plan.
- Milosevic's abandonment of the Krajina Serbs in Sectors North and South earlier this month to Croatian forces is even more astounding given Milosevic's earlier nationalist standing. Belgrade's policy has produced minimal protest from the Serbian population despite the influx of almost 200,000 Krajina Serb refugees and the most significant Serb defeat since the German Wehrmacht overran Yugoslavia in seven days in April 1941.

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]

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Milosevic appears willing to negotiate a settlement to the conflict as long as it preserves his grip on power in Belgrade. As usual with Milosevic, the devil will be in the details.

- Milosevic's bottom line on territorial demands is not clear, but his acceptance of the Contact Group plan for Bosnia, surrender of Sectors North and South, and reported willingness to discuss the status of Sector East suggest that he is prepared to accept a much-reduced--and easier to control--"greater Serbia."
- [redacted] he will continue to demand immediate sanctions relief be included in any overall settlement. Milosevic will use his restrained reaction to the Croatian attack on the Krajina and the influx of refugees as additional justification for sanctions relief.
- However, [redacted] Milosevic probably will not be willing to recognize Croatia in light of Zagreb's military assault on the Krajina and its menacing build-up near Serb-controlled Sector East.
- [redacted] Milosevic might be satisfied with securing the Drina River valley in eastern Bosnia and the Posavina corridor in northern Bosnia. [redacted]

Milosevic could again alter tactics if his position is challenged by ultranationalists bolstered by the displaced Krajina Serbs or nationalists in the military. There is no sign, however, of any serious opposition. [redacted]

Karadzic: The Role of His Life

Karadzic, like many Serbs, is infused with a strong sense of victimhood. Founder of the Serbian Democratic Party in 1990, he probably was initially motivated by the perceived need to protect Serbs within Bosnia as federal Yugoslavia eroded. As his power base grew with the assistance of the Bosnian Serb Army (BSA)--and reported war profiteering and corruption--his sense of self-importance and grandeur almost certainly expanded also.

- There is no doubt that Karadzic enjoys the limelight as Bosnian Serb leader and past interlocutor in international negotiations.
- Indeed [redacted] he would be reluctant to see Bosnian Serb territorial annexation to Serbia because a greater Serbia would diminish his role. [redacted]

Like Milosevic, Karadzic is likely to react to forces that threaten his position as Bosnian Serb leader. Despite his identification with Serb martyrdom, there is no reporting to indicate that Karadzic is prepared to go down for the cause. Military setbacks by Bosnian

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Serb forces, either by NATO forces or Bosnian and Croat forces, are likely to sober Karadzic's evaluation of what the Serbs can hope to retain.

- Therefore, a credible military threat and increased near-term diplomatic isolation followed by renewed dialogue with Pale may make the Bosnian Serb leader more pliable in future peace talks. []

Karadzic remains absolutely opposed to three-way recognition, but Bosnian Serb views probably are of minimal importance if Milosevic moves forward.

- [] Karadzic and other Bosnian Serb officials are insisting on political sovereignty for any Bosnian Serb entity that emerges out of negotiations and the right to eventually confederate with Serbia.
- While Karadzic is insisting that a settlement give the Serbs 64 percent of Bosnia, his aides and other reporting suggest the Serbs probably would accept less.
- Most Bosnian Serb interlocutors, at a minimum, are demanding Serb control of Gorazde, an enlarged northern corridor, and some part of Sarajevo. []

Mladic: Not a Napoleon

Bosnian Serb Commander Ratko Mladic probably qualifies as the "truest believer" of the three men. According to press reports, he views the Bosnian conflict as a Western conspiracy to eradicate Serbs and believes he is carrying out a "holy duty" to defend his people.

- Late last year, Mladic said in a press interview that borders are drawn in blood and that the Serbs' goal remains the unification of all Serb territories in Bosnia and Croatia. He reinforced this point with the Dutch UNPROFOR commander in Srebrenica after his forces overran the enclave in July.
- Mladic's presence on the battlefield, along with his reported military prowess, have made him a genuine hero among ordinary Serbs.
- While [] he does not want a political role in the conflict, his frequent meetings with Milosevic in Belgrade and sessions with UN Commander Rupert Smith and EU Envoy Bildt suggest he is prepared to serve as a leading interlocutor for the Serb cause.

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- Indeed, his rebuttal, at Milosevic's expense, of the Vance-Owen plan in May 1993, and his brazen refusal to obey Karadzic's orders have arguably made him the *de facto* Bosnian Serb leader. []

It is not clear if Mladic has considered in depth the parameters of a negotiated settlement. He often states that he will not surrender ground for which his forces "have shed blood."

- [] the Bosnian Serbs would reject recognition by Belgrade of Bosnia and that they could not accept future federation or union with Bosnia.
- Unlike the Bosnian Serb political leadership, Mladic is refusing to accept the demand by UN Commander Janvier, that heavy weapons be withdrawn from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. []

Various reporting and past experience make clear, however, that Mladic responds to changing circumstances, mostly credible military pressure. He backed down and withdrew some of his forces from the Sarajevo region in 1994 when it appeared NATO was prepared through airstrikes to enforce the UN-imposed heavy weapons exclusion zone. Moreover, the improvement in the Bosnian Government army and its rejuvenated alliance with the Croats, along with increased war weariness on the part of the Bosnian Serbs, may be moving Mladic to consider an end to the fighting--at least for the time being.

- [] Mladic believed that the Bosnian Serb Army could not sustain for long a low-intensity war because of the losses incurred from continuous Bosnian Government assaults. Officers close to Mladic reported that he wanted to renew negotiations with the Contact Group to reach a final settlement.
- [] in mid-August that there was growing concern within the Bosnian Serb general staff that military pressure from Croatian and Bosnian Government forces would be impossible to neutralize. []

In addition, Mladic's ties with Belgrade may deepen if Croat and Bosnian Government forces begin to seriously challenge BSA forces. Various reporting indicates the BSA depends on the VJ for fuel, spare parts and key supplies.

- Moreover, some reporting suggests that Mladic and Milosevic--and Milosevic's wife--share an ideological nostalgia for Communist Yugoslavia. []

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Mladic: Edging Ahead Against Karadzic?

The long-simmering Karadzic-Mladic feud came to a boil early this month when Mladic, publicly supported by 18 of his generals, openly rejected Karadzic's order removing him as commander of the BSA. By forcing Karadzic to issue a public retraction, Mladic appears to have gained the upper hand in a rift that has been widening since the two men first clashed publicly in 1993.

- Karadzic was subsequently advised by his inner circle to move decisively against Mladic before the general could stage a military coup [redacted]
[redacted] Karadzic and his allies reportedly believe that Mladic is siding with Belgrade in order to destroy the Bosnian Serb "government."
- Bosnian Serb and Belgrade press sources have reported that Mladic has twice attempted to arrest Karadzic since mid-August, although we have no intelligence to confirm these reports. [redacted]

Mladic's willingness to take his rival on publicly might stem from a growing concern within the BSA general staff that Karadzic will prove unable or unwilling to negotiate an end to hostilities in Bosnia [redacted]

- Mladic favors a negotiated settlement to the Bosnian conflict and a cessation of hostilities agreement that would freeze Bosnian Serb territorial gains and preclude further losses, although he acknowledges that this may be difficult under current circumstances [redacted]
- The unity of the joint Serbian-Bosnian Serb delegation to any future peace talks will be challenged by the differences that still separate these leaders from each other and from Milosevic. [redacted]

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