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Bosnia - Sept. 1995 Early;

Early and Mid Sept Fr Talks

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**DCI Interagency
Balkan Task Force**

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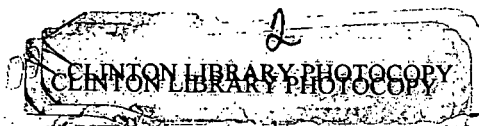
11 September 1995

NOTE FOR: The Principals and Deputies

SUBJECT: Croatia's Vision of Bosnia

Please find attached for your information an assessment of Croatia's current objectives vis-a-vis Bosnia. John Deutch thought you might find it useful in connection with Croatian Foreign Minister Granic's visit.

A. Norman Schindler
Chief, DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force



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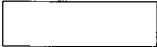
Intelligence Report

DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

11 September 1995





Croatia's Vision of Bosnia

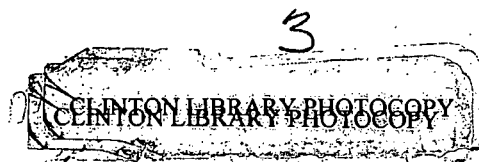
Since Croatia's overwhelming success in retaking the Krajina in August, Croatian leaders believe Zagreb has become the linchpin to achieving peace in the region. In the short term, Zagreb's engagement has improved cooperation with Bosnia. But Croatia's inflated sense of importance bodes ill for long-term cooperation and throws into question the ultimate survivability of the Federation. 



Some New Progress in Bosnian-Croat Cooperation...

Zagreb has accelerated its cooperation with Sarajevo in recent weeks.

- The 22 July 1995 Split Declaration established a basis for Croatian military intervention in Bosnia, according to diplomatic reports. 
- Foreign Minister Granic told US diplomats that joint military operations in Bosnia would expand the territory under Federation control to about 60 percent, which would form the basis for Federation demands at the negotiating table. Such operations are temporarily on hold as a result of recent battlefield setbacks for both sides and the peace talks.
- On the political front, press reports indicate the number of high-level meetings has risen considerably since the Split Declaration. The two presidents and foreign ministers met to coordinate their positions for the 8 September Geneva peace talks, for example.
- During the Split talks, the two sides agreed to accelerate implementation of the Federation agreements by merging Bosnian Republic and Herceg-Bosna structures into the Federation, according to diplomatic reporting, although concrete results are not likely soon. 

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...But Limits to Cooperation

Despite improved contacts and coordination, a pervasive distrust of the other side's motivations and intentions continues to underlie, and potentially undermine, the relationship. Most progress in Bosnian-Croatian cooperation thus far has been largely superficial and focused on achieving specific goals, such as breaking the siege of Bihac.

- Even after the Split agreement, Izetbegovic said the Bosnian Army can expect only a limited flow of arms via Croatia and tactical support
[redacted]
- Bosnian President Izetbegovic fears--probably rightly--that Croatia will try to keep control of land it seizes in Bosnia [redacted]
- In the long-run, Izetbegovic thinks Zagreb views the Federation as an opportunity to divide Bosnia and create a separate Bosnian Croat political entity [redacted] Even Federation President Zubak, a Bosnian Croat, has told US diplomats that Zagreb views it as a "means of partitioning Bosnia." [redacted]

The False Specter of Partition--For Now

In the near term, Croatia is focused on extending Bosnian Croat territory and its control in Bosnia, preventing the establishment of a strong Muslim-dominated Bosnian state, balancing and normalizing ties with Serbia, and achieving a peace agreement conducive to long-term stability. But, heady over Croatia's victory in the Krajina, Tudjman unabashedly has presented his vision for the future of the region to US diplomats, which amounts to a north-south division of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia. Tudjman probably views partition as a long-term process that will inevitably lead to the inclusion of Bosnian Croat territory in a "Greater Croatia"--perhaps substantially expanded at the expense of both the Bosnians and the Bosnian Serbs--and leaving a "rump" Bosnian Muslim state at best as a protectorate of Croatia. There is very little likelihood that Tudjman's "vision" could be achieved any time soon, however, given the certain resistance of the Bosnian Muslims and the international community.

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• A variety of reporting indicates that the Croats do not favor inclusion of a Muslim entity in the Croatian state, preferring relative ethnic homogeneity, and may even oppose the annexation of Bosnian Croat territory given the widespread Croatian view that it is an economic and cultural backwater, according to US diplomats.

• [redacted] the Croatian MFA [redacted] argued that while a Bosnian Muslim state is not possible within its existing borders, Croatia should help preserve a Bosnian Republic as a buffer against Serbia. [redacted]

Impact on the Peace Talks

As peace negotiations move forward, Croatia is likely to take positions-- particularly on constitutional issues-- [redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

• [redacted]

• Peace talks could falter temporarily if Croatia proceeds with plans for extensive military operations in Bosnia. Nonetheless, the threat of decisive Croatian military action against the Bosnian Serbs could increase Pale's interest in a peace settlement. [redacted]

Implications for the Federation

As long as the international community stands firm against the secession of Bosnian Croat and Bosnian Serb territory, however, Zagreb probably can be convinced that serving as Bosnia's protector and maintaining at least the trappings of the Federation is in Croatia's best interest. Strong pressure from the West-- particularly if specifically linked to Croatia's ties to the EU or membership in the Partnership for Peace--could provide substantial leverage to keep Croatia on board.

• Croatia will want to maintain a modicum of goodwill with Sarajevo to ensure fair political and economic treatment of Bosnian Croats living within Bosnian Government-controlled territory.

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- Croatian leaders may want to maintain the Federation as a means of limiting Islamic influence. Tudjman recently told EU officials that "we're in the Federation to keep the Bosnian Muslims under control."
- Without de jure control over Bosnian Croat territory, the Federation will remain the best way for Croatia to exert influence over Bosnia. Indeed, Tudjman may plan to use the Federation as a Trojan horse to gain eventual control over the Bosnian state—although any attempts by Zagreb in this regard will be resisted strongly by Sarajevo.

If the West's active engagement in the region recedes over time, however, the survivability of the Federation and a "rump" Bosnian Muslim state may be in danger.

- Zagreb is likely to further strengthen an independent Bosnian Croat identity and codify as much as possible its already extensive de facto control. Without pressure from Zagreb to cooperate with Bosnian officials, Bosnian Croat leaders probably will throw up further barriers to deepening cooperation and could provoke renewed Muslim-Croat fighting.
- Croatia's policy of ensuring that a Bosnian state remains weak and dependent will make it perpetually vulnerable to outside aggression. Such a state would invite Serb expansionism, particularly to retake areas lost in a settlement. While Croatia would prefer a Bosnian buffer state, it would not be willing to renew war with Serbia to ensure Bosnia's survival and might be tempted to try to carve up the rump Bosnian state with Serbia.

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

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