



Intelligence Report

DCI Counterterrorist Center

22 November 1995

Possible Terrorist Threats to US Forces in the Balkans

US forces deployed to Bosnia as part of a Peace Implementation Force (IFOR) following a settlement of the conflict would face threats from various local and foreign actors in the Balkan region. Although the risk of large-scale military operations against IFOR by major units of the contending parties is low, IFOR faces at least a minimal threat from wayward members of local forces. Several radical Islamic terrorist groups have a presence in the region and the capability to mount operations there. In addition to its official military and intelligence presence, Iran has established small groups throughout Bosnia that are capable of carrying out subversive activities on Tehran's behalf. Recent confrontations between mujahedin--an umbrella term often used to describe a variety of foreign Islamic actors in Bosnia--and UN peacekeepers suggest that some mujahedin fighters are becoming more aggressive in their dealings with UNPROFOR personnel.

A Bosnian Government directive to foreign Islamic extremists to leave the country prior to the deployment of IFOR probably would be ineffective over the long term. Many extremists probably would relocate elsewhere in the Balkans with the assistance of Islamic NGOs and terrorist cells in neighboring states until they could find a means to return. Moreover, the close, formal security cooperation between Sarajevo and Tehran is a barrier to the departure of the Iranians.

The Threat from the Warring Parties [redacted]

The risk of large-scale military operations against IFOR by major units of the contending parties is low. Depending on their perception of the role that US troops were playing, however, members of any of the three warring parties in Bosnia could have an incentive--as well as the military capability--to harass or mount terrorist attacks against IFOR:

- The three major armies in Bosnia include some 300,000 to 350,000 men equipped with small arms, mortars, and in some cases heavy artillery. Mediocre discipline at the individual and small unit level--often fueled by alcohol abuse--is likely to trigger at least occasional random violence.
- Although Serb leaders have publicly threatened throughout the war to conduct terrorism against Western interests, actual Serb terrorist activity has been minimal. In March 1993, a grenade was thrown at the US Embassy in Belgrade; no one claimed responsibility for the attack. Nonetheless, some members of paramilitaries such as the one led by the notorious Commander Arkan--which is currently under tight military control--may independently seek revenge if they oppose a peace settlement.
- [redacted] some former Yugoslavs--largely Serbs, including Arkan--have organized criminal networks in Western Europe. Their members have access to arms and explosives, and are skilled at eluding police detection and traveling under false documents. [redacted]

Croat groups have been less vocal than their Serb counterparts in threatening the West. The armed wing of the extreme-right Croatian Party of Rights, however, wants UN forces to leave Croatia and supports action against the Serbs occupying UN Sector East, according to military reporting. Although Croatian terrorist groups advocating an independent Croatia did attack US and other Western interests--in addition to their main target, the Yugoslav Government--in the 1970s and early 1980s, we have no information regarding the existence and intentions of any such groups today. [redacted]


Some Bosnian Muslims may be dissatisfied with the peace agreement and decide to conduct terrorist activities against Western interests. Using their access to training and materiel provided by foreign Islamic radicals, they could conduct terrorist attacks on their own or in conjunction with any of the Islamic extremist groups in the region:

This report was prepared by analysts in the DCI Counterterrorist Center, the Inter-Agency Balkan Task Force, and the Office of Near Eastern and South Asian Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome.


[redacted]


[redacted]



-  a Bosnian refugee said in August 1994 that an Iranian diplomat who is also a cleric was giving religious training to a group of about 30 Bosnians in Vienna. The refugee said that the diplomat promised the Bosnians political, paramilitary, and "terrorist" training.

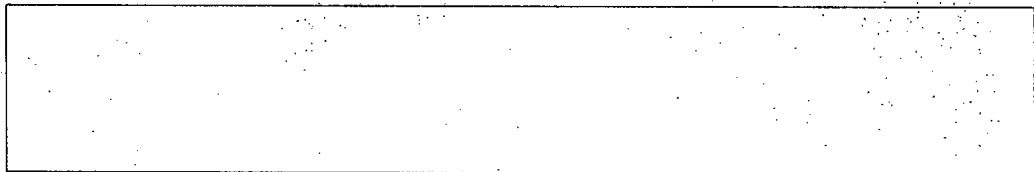


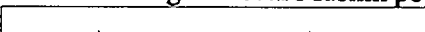
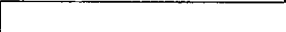
The Risk of Crime 

The US Embassy reports various police forces are functioning throughout Bosnia and the overall crime level appears to have dropped since the early days of the war. Nevertheless, numerous sources report that kidnappings, hijackings, and armed robberies—often associated with the rapid growth of organized crime during the conflict—remain commonplace. IFOR personnel—particularly those associated with criminal activity or its suppression—are obvious targets. 

The Foreign Islamic Threat 

The war in Bosnia and instability elsewhere in the Balkans have fostered an environment attractive to Islamic extremists eager to gain a foothold in the West. They range from armed and undisciplined individuals to the official presence of Iran's seasoned and dangerous Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) personnel. Zagreb has proven particularly appealing to Islamic terrorists because of its proximity to the battlefield, where some are funneling arms and manpower:

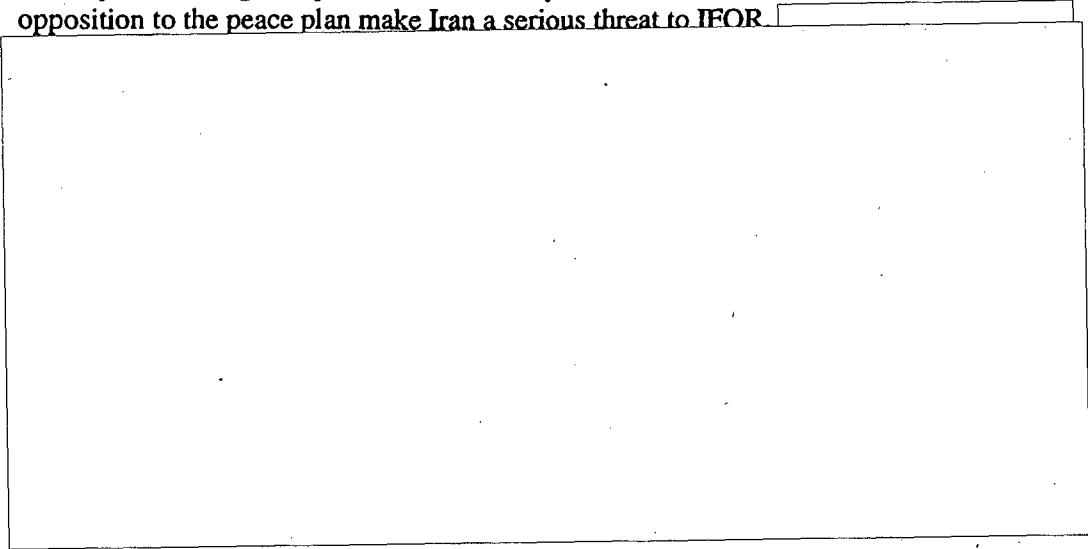


Some Islamic radicals appear to view Bosnia as a potential Islamic state within Europe, although the Muslim population there is largely secular and has proven relatively resistant to the extremists' attempts at fundamentalist indoctrination. Nonetheless, the instability in the region allows Islamic terrorists to build support networks relatively unimpeded and penetrate Western Europe. Members of these groups are engaged in such activities as facilitating the transit of colleagues, attempting to recruit new members from among the local Muslim population, arms trafficking, and military training  Meager resources and limited training hinder the local governments' counterterrorist and security capabilities. 

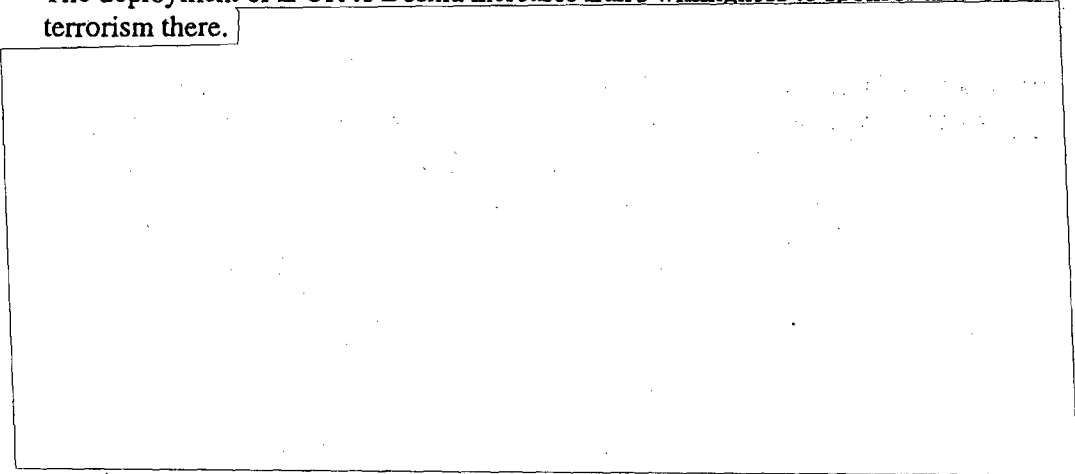




Iranian Interests. Tehran's close state-to-state relationship with Sarajevo, its official military and intelligence presence, its hostility toward the United States, and its opposition to the peace plan make Iran a serious threat to IFOR.

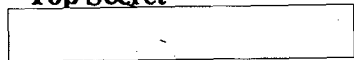
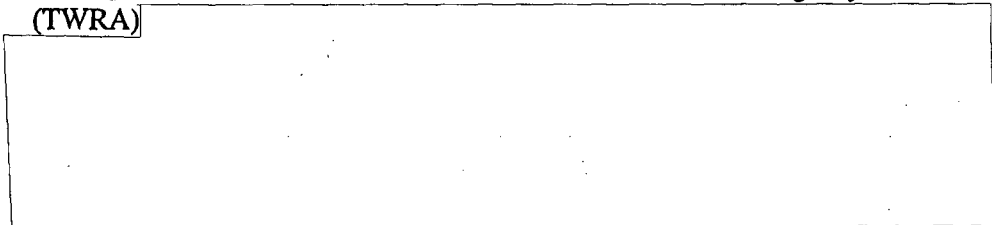



The deployment of IFOR to Bosnia increases Iran's willingness to sponsor anti-US terrorism there.




Terrorists and Humanitarian Organizations. There is evidence indicating that some Islamic radicals tied to terrorist groups are using nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)--most of which are also engaged in legitimate humanitarian assistance--as cover for their activities:

- Among the most active of the NGOs is the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA)



- Another nominally humanitarian NGO operating in Croatia is the Human Services Organization (HSO)--a branch of the Pakistan-based Maktab al-Khidamat (MAK)--which is run by Algerian extremists. (The MAK's offices also include the al-Kifah Center in New York--some of whose members were convicted of bombing the World Trade Center.) HSO has ties to al-Gama'at, the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front, and probably the Algerian Armed Islamic Group. 

Officials at the Sudanese Embassy in Zagreb also appear to have connections with NGOs there. A Sudanese diplomat who belongs to the National Islamic Front took control of the Islamic Relief Agency's (ISRA) office in Zagreb in March 1994. In addition to its humanitarian relief activities, ISRA reportedly provides weapons and logistical support to the Bosnian military. 

Foreign Mujahedin. The attitude that the foreign *mujahedin* volunteers take toward IFOR will depend largely on the circumstances and perceptions of its deployment. If the Islamic elements in Bosnia believe IFOR is deploying to assist the Bosnian Government and people, they are less likely to react violently. Conversely, if they regard IFOR as an outside force attempting to impose an unfavorable settlement on the Bosnian population in a particular area, relations probably will be much more confrontational.

Top Secret

The *mujahedin*--variously estimated at between 500 and 3000 fighters--are not a cohesive group directed by a particular Islamic state and thus are unlikely to present an organized, country-wide threat or attempt to directly engage sizeable peacekeeping units militarily. Some individual units, however, have ties to terrorist groups such as al-Gama'at [redacted]. If relations between the religiously-motivated elements within Bosnia and IFOR were to become hostile, some small groups of *mujahedin* could confront individual IFOR elements in local areas.

Confrontations with *Mujahedin* [redacted]

A series of incidents between *mujahedin* and UN forces have occurred in central Bosnia since 5 October, when a peacekeeper from British Battalion 2 killed a Bosnian Army soldier during a confrontation near Donji Vakuf. During the incident, the Bosnian soldier reportedly threatened a British trooper at gunpoint during a regular UN patrol, according to press. The Bosnian soldier appears to have been a foreign volunteer, although this is not certain.

10 October: In response to the shooting, *mujahedin* troops ambushed a UN vehicle filled with unarmed military observers, according to special intelligence. No one was harmed in the incident.

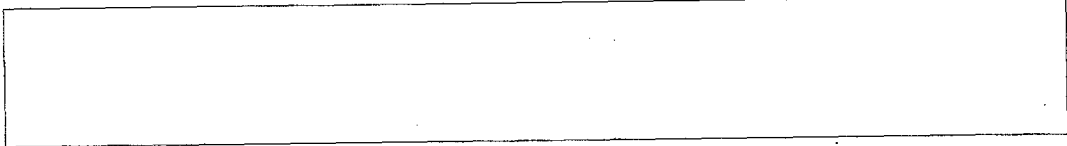
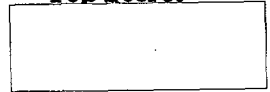
15 October: *Mujahedin* soldiers manning a checkpoint in Bosnian Government-held territory north of Bugojno fired over the heads of a New Zealand UNPROFOR patrol. There were no injuries.

28 October: About 30 Islamic fighters held up a convoy led by British peacekeepers near Vlizna, but the situation was defused by the Bosnian Army's 35th Division commander who was with the convoy, according to press. [redacted]

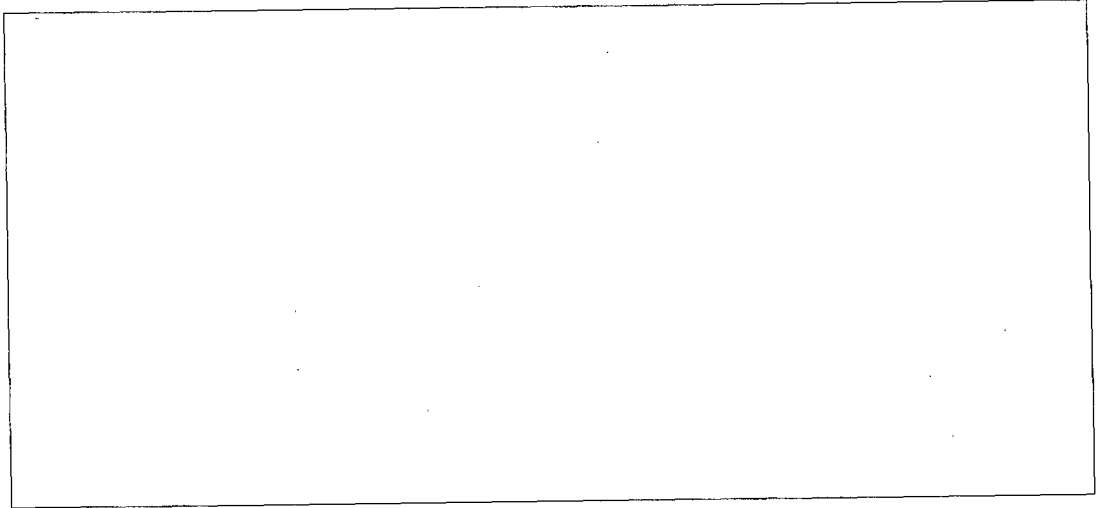
Islamic Reaction to Forced Departure [redacted]

A Bosnian Government directive to foreign Islamic extremists to leave the country prior to the deployment of IFOR--assuming the government could ensure their departure--is unlikely to lead to violence, but it probably would not be effective over the long term. If the Bosnian offices of Islamic NGOs were closed down, members of terrorist groups using the NGOs as cover would be likely to relocate to branch offices in Croatia and other Balkan states until they found ways to slip back into Bosnia. Moreover, Iran's bilateral relations with Bosnia, including formal security cooperation and other agreements with Sarajevo, are a barrier to Tehran's departure. [redacted]

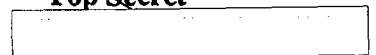
Top Secret



Even if the Bosnian Government expelled or reduced Iran's official presence in Sarajevo, Tehran could rely--as it has in the past--on its extensive intelligence infrastructure in neighboring states to operate in Bosnia:



[Faint, illegible text]



Areas of Control in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 20 October 1995

