

# Srebrenica: a 'safe' area

## Appendix II

Intelligence and the war in Bosnia 1992-1995:  
The role of the intelligence and security  
services

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## 2. List of Acronyms and Terms

AbiH - Armija Bosna i Hercegovina  
 APC - Armoured Personnel Carrier  
 ATM - Air Task Message  
 AWACS - Airborne Warning and Control System  
 BfV - Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz  
 BHC - Bosnia-Hercegovina Command  
 BID - Buitenlandse Inlichtingendienst  
 BND - Bundesnachrichtendienst  
 BSA - Bosnian Serb Army  
 BSS - British Security Services Organization  
 BTF - Balkan Task Force  
 BVD - Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst  
 CAOC - Combined Air Operations Centre  
 CDS - Chief of the Defence Staff  
 CEE - Central and Eastern Europe  
 CENTCOM - Central Command (US)  
 CFIOG - Canadian Forces Information Operations Group  
 CI - Counter Intelligence  
 CIA - Central Intelligence Agency

CIC - Current Intelligence Centre  
 CINCSOUTH - Commander in Chief Southern Europe (NATO)  
 CIR - Comité Interministériel du Renseignement  
 COMINT - Communications Intelligence  
 COS - Chief of Staff  
 COS - Chief of Station (CIA)  
 CSE - Communications Security Establishment  
 CVIN - Committee on the United Intelligence Services in the Netherlands  
 DARO - Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Office  
 DCBC - Defence Crisis Management Centre  
 DDIS - Danish Defence Intelligence Service  
 DFC - Deputy Force Commander  
 DGSE - Direction Generale de la Sécurité Exterieur  
 DIA - Defense Intelligence Agency  
 DIS - Defence Information Summary  
 DIS - Defence Intelligence Staff  
 DMZ - Demilitarized Zone  
 DND - Department of National Defense  
 DPA - Department of Political Affairs  
 DPKO - Department of Peace Keeping Operations  
 DRM - Direction de Renseignement Militaire  
 DSF - Deployed Shed Facility  
 DSD - Defence Signals Directorate  
 DST - Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire  
 ECMM - European Commission Monitoring Mission  
 ELINT - Electronic Intelligence  
 ERRF - European Rapid Reaction Force  
 ESDI - European Security and Defence Identity  
 ESDP - European Security and Defence Policy  
 EU - European Union  
 EUCOM - European Command (US)  
 FBI - Federal Bureau of Investigation  
 FC - Force Commander  
 FISINT - Foreign Instrumentation Intelligence  
 FRY - Former Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)  
 GCHQ - Government Communications Headquarters  
 GPS - Global Positioning System  
 GMO - Gratis Military Officers  
 HF - High Frequency  
 HIC - High Intensity Conflict  
 HUMINT - Human Intelligence  
 HV - Hrvatska Vojska  
 HVO - Hrvatsko Vijece Odbrane  
 IAEA - International Atomic Energy Authority  
 ICFY - International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia  
 ICRC - International Commission of the Red Cross  
 IDB - Inlichtingendienst Buitenland  
 IFOR - Implementation Force (NATO – Bosnia)  
 IMINT - Imagery Intelligence  
 INTERFET - International Force East Timor  
 IOB - Intelligence Oversight Board

JAC - Joint Analysis Center  
 JARIC - Joint Aerial Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre  
 JCO - Joint Commission Observer  
 JCS - Joint Chiefs of Staff  
 JIC - Joint Intelligence Committee  
 JNA - Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija  
 KFOR - Kosovo Force  
 KLA - Kosovo Liberation Army  
 LIC - Low Intensity Conflict  
 LOCE - Linked Operational Intelligence Centre Europe  
 MIC - Mid Intensity Conflict  
 MICIV - Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services  
 MID - Militaire Inlichtingendienst  
 MIO - Military Information Office  
 MIS - Netherlands Military Intelligence Service  
 MPRI - Military Professional Resources Incorporated  
 MSC - Military Staff Committee of the United Nations  
 MSF - Médecins sans Frontières  
 NAC - North Atlantic Council  
 NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation  
 NETHNIC - Netherlands National Intelligence Cell  
 NFZ - No Fly Zone  
 NGO - Non-Governmental Organisation  
 NIE - National Intelligence Estimate  
 NIMA - National Imagery and Mapping Agency  
 NORAD - North American Air Defense Agreement  
 NPIC - National Photographic Interpretation Center  
 NSA - National Security Agency  
 NRO - National Reconnaissance Office  
 NSC - National Security Council  
 OP - Observation Post  
 OPSTINA - District of local government in Bosnia Herzegovina  
 ORCI - Office for Research and the Collection of Information  
 OSCE - Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe  
 OSINT - Open Source Intelligence  
 OVIC - Operational Sigint Centre in the Netherlands  
 PDD - Presidential Decision Directive  
 PGP - Pretty Good Privacy  
 PHOTINT - Photo Intelligence  
 PJHQ - Permanent Joint Headquarters  
 PRD - Presidential Review Directive  
 RADINT - Radar Intelligence  
 RM - Royal Marines  
 RS - Republika Serpska  
 SACEUR - Supreme Allied Commander Europe (NATO)  
 SAM - Surface to Air Missile  
 SAS - Special Air Services  
 SAT - Southern Air Transport  
 SATINT - Satellite Intelligence  
 SBP - Staff Bureau Foreign Political Developments  
 SBS - Special Boat Services

SCS - Special Collection Service  
 SEAD - Suppression of Enemy Air Defence  
 SFOR - Stabilisation Force (NATO - Bosnia)  
 SGR - Service Generale de Reinseignement  
 SHAPE - Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (NATO)  
 SHED - Special Handling and Evaluation Detachment  
 SIE - Special Intelligence Estimate  
 SIGINT - Signals Intelligence  
 SIS - Secret Intelligence Service  
 SISMI - Servizio Informazioni e Sicurezza Militare  
 SNE - Sector North East  
 SPOT - Système Pour l'Observation de la Terre  
 SVIC - Strategic Sigint Centre in the Netherlands  
 SWENIC - Swedish National Intelligence Cell  
 TAB - Tuzla Air Base  
 TACRECCE - Tactical Air Reconnaissance  
 TACSAT - Tactical Satellite Radio  
 TIVC - Royal Netherlands Navy Technical Information Processing Centre  
 TWRA - Third World Relief Agency  
 UAV - Unmanned Aerial Vehicle  
 UN - United Nations  
 UNDOF - United Nations Disengagement Observer Force  
 UNDP - United Nations Development Programme  
 UNHCR - United Nations High Commission for Refugees  
 UNMIK - United Nations Mission in Kosovo  
 UNMO - United Nation Military Observer  
 UNOSOM - United Nations Operation in Somalia  
 UNPROFOR - United Nations Protection Force  
 UNPF - United Nations Protection Force  
 UNSCOM - United Nations Special Commission in Iraq  
 USMC - United States Marine Corps  
 VHF - Very High Frequency  
 VJ - Vojska Jugoslavija  
 VOPP - Vance Owen Peace Plan  
 VRS - Vojska Republika Srpska  
 WEU - Western European Union

### 3. Introduction

Sarajevo was a nest of spies at the time of the war in Bosnia. Everyone spied on everyone: the warring parties as well as the countries of the UN peacekeeping force.<sup>1</sup>

On 3 March 1994, 570 Dutch peacekeepers formally relieved the Canadian soldiers who had been stationed in Srebrenica since 1993. Within the framework of the United Nations peace mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Dutch unit arrived there as part of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The Dutch battalion (Dutchbat) was placed in a small town located in East Bosnia in a deep valley with steep mountainsides, close to the river Drina. Except for a couple of days in April

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<sup>1</sup> 'sarajevo zat vol spionnen in oorlog' ('sarajevo was full of spies during war'), *Het Parool*, 24/04/98.

1992, the Bosnian Muslim Army, the *Armija Bosne i Hercegovine* (ABiH), had control of the town – which was declared a Safe Area by the UN Security Council on 6 May 1993 – for three years of the war. However, Srebrenica was never completely demilitarized and small-scale confrontations around the enclave would continue to take place for more than two years. A Bosnian-Serb attack on Srebrenica started on 6 July 1995. The ABiH was not in a position to defend the enclave, and the Dutch soldiers had neither the resources nor the mandate for the purpose.

When on 11 July the Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica was captured by the Bosnian Serb Army, the *Vojaska Republika Srpska* (VRS), under the leadership of General Ratko Mladic, an ethnic cleansing operation began in which a large proportion of the Muslim men would be executed. Between 6 and 20 July, the Bosnian Serbs gained control of ‘the safe areas’ Srebrenica and Zepa, and drove out tens of thousands of Bosnian Muslims. Under the eyes of Dutchbat, the women, children and elderly were deported to Bosnian territory. Out of view of the Dutch peacekeepers, more than 10,000 men and boys, walking in a long line, tried to get from Srebrenica to the area around Tuzla, which was under the control of the Bosnian government. Several thousands became the victim of encounters with the Bosnian Serbs or fell into the hands of the VRS during that journey. They were killed in a horrifying way.

This study is an appendix to the Srebrenica report by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD). A central position in the study is occupied by the role of national and international intelligence and security services in the war in Bosnia in general and Srebrenica in particular.

From the outset, much remained unclear regarding the fall of the enclave, something, which was also considered on 18 August 1995 in the Dutch Ministerial Council. A minister was of the opinion that more information should be made available about the events before and after the fall of Srebrenica. According to this minister, this also applied to the role of the Western intelligence services prior to the attack on Srebrenica.<sup>2</sup>

This investigation sets out to satisfy this wish. The study has three objectives. Firstly, it is the intention to present in as much detail as possible the information position of the most important Western intelligence and security services during the war in Bosnia. The relevant question is what opportunities these services had for following the developments in East Bosnia. Secondly, this study sets out to examine whether these services were used in the armed conflict around Srebrenica. Finally, an objective of this investigation is to establish the information position of the Dutch intelligence and security services: were these services in a position to support the Dutch peacekeepers in Bosnia satisfactorily?

These three objectives lead to the question: did the Western intelligence services have prior knowledge of the Bosnian Serb attack on Srebrenica? If the answer is no, the next question is why not? Was it an intelligence failure? However, if there was prior knowledge, the question then is what was done with this information, and whether that intelligence could not have prevented the attack on Srebrenica and the subsequent executions.

It was no simple matter to try to obtain answers to the above questions and to satisfy the above objectives. Foreign intelligence and security services were not prepared to provide the NIOD investigators with direct access to the intelligence they had gathered. Fortunately, some services were prepared to provide some degree of insight into their information position through confidential briefings or background discussions. For the Srebrenica report by the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) more than 900 persons were interviewed. Ultimately, as regards this study off-the-record discussions were held with one hundred people in the Netherlands and other countries: many were officers who were involved in intelligence work in Bosnia. This involved not only many former or

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<sup>2</sup> Objectivized summary of the minutes of the Ministerial Council meeting of 18/08/95, prepared for the purposes of the present NIOD study.



still active staff of intelligence and security services, but also responsible ministers, politicians, diplomats and officials that acted as recipients of intelligence products concerning Bosnia.

Inevitably, these one hundred off-the-record interviews did have consequences for the references of this study. This is why in the acknowledgement of sources, this study regularly has to resort to references such as ‘Confidential interview’.<sup>3</sup> Staff of foreign intelligence and security services were prepared to speak to the NIOD on condition that their identities were protected in view of privacy considerations, because disclosure of their names and identities could considerably impede their work as analysts or operators in the future, or make it completely impossible, or because the prevailing legislation in their country did not permit it. Anonymity was promised by the NIOD to a large number of current and former staff of services in the Netherlands and other countries for reasons of their own. It was therefore necessary to opt for the footnote form that has been used. The most important consideration in making this choice was that the main issue was to reconstruct a general picture and not to establish the specific influence of individual people on the course of events.

Moreover, there will be regular references to ‘Confidential information’. In general, these are written sources that the archive controller still considers to be confidential, or documents that have been passed to the NIOD privately, but which are still classified as ‘secret’ in the country concerned. It goes without saying that every effort has been made to verify the statements by means of supplementary interviews, background briefings or archival research whenever this was permissible.

History is a discussion without end. This is all the more true for the history of intelligence and security services, the archive material of which is subject to far longer terms than other government archive material before disclosure is permitted. Researchers are generally not given access to catalogues, but have to ask for relevant documents more or less in the dark. Also because of confidentiality agreements imposed on staff does information on intelligence and security services reach researchers, and consequently the public, and then after a much longer period than in other cases. Whereas, with history of other kinds, the picture of the subject generally changes in the course of time only as a result of new points of view. In the case of the history of intelligence and security services, new information can continue to lead to an adjustment of the picture for far longer.

Fortunately this was not the case in the research for this study where Dutch archives were concerned.<sup>4</sup> Generous access was given to the archives by the Netherlands intelligence and security services, especially the Military Intelligence Service (MIS), where the author was able to make independent selections. In a number of cases, more detailed agreements had to be made for specific sources. These cases were concerned with the unity of the Crown, the private lives of those involved and the Netherlands national security and security of the state. The latter point was especially relevant to sources for the activities of Dutch and other intelligence and security services. In particular, the identity of informants, the origin of information that was gathered by these services and the relationship of trust with foreign counterpart services had to be protected. An additional study of related archives was also carried out in the Netherlands, for example at the Cabinet Office, Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Justice. Comprehensive research in the archives of the United Nations in Geneva and New York sometimes yielded additional background material.

It was also possible to speak freely with a large number of staff of the MIS and the Netherlands National Security Service (BVD). In addition to the usual privacy considerations, the fact that disclosure of their names and identities would impede or make impossible their future work as analysts or operators with intelligence and security services it was necessary to opt for referring to these more than thirty interviews as ‘confidential interviews’.

Finally, we must not omit to mention that much information for this study was obtained from open sources. Historical research is usually based on all available literature on the events to be studied. At the start of this investigation, it was expected that a large number of publications would not be

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<sup>3</sup> The number in brackets after the Confidential interview note refers to the interviewee concerned.

<sup>4</sup> De Graaff & Wiebes, *Villa Maarbeezje*, pp. 9 - 25.

relevant. However, it turned out that articles in daily and weekly newspapers and some books actually contained more information than originally thought. This concerned the history of the Balkans in general and how this was represented, as well as the history of the conflict in Yugoslavia. Some of those involved wrote memoirs. In addition, private and government archive collections in Canada, the United States and several Western European countries were studied. Against this background it is only possible to state that the author has attempted in all good faith to verify the data issued to the institute. The possibility of errors cannot be ruled out. But this should not discourage anyone from writing about the role of intelligence and security services.

# Chapter 1

## The United Nations and Intelligence

‘If you understand the situation in the former Yugoslavia, you must have been poorly briefed’.<sup>5</sup>

### 1. Introduction

The final assessment of the UNPROFOR Deputy Force Commander (DFC), the Canadian Major General Barry Ashton, as formulated in his End of Tour Report, did not beat about the bush:

‘Operations were frequently impaired by a lack of credible and dedicated intelligence means. This was the case, in particular, for information concerning Serb offensives against Srebrenica and Zepa and for Croat, Bosnian-Croat, and Bosnian government offensive actions against the Bosnian Serbs in western Bosnia in September. While NATO information was often made available, the caveats placed on it made it awkward to use in a transparent international organization’.

Ashton also pointed to a recent UN operation that had had the same problems.

‘As has been pointed out for other UN missions, for example by Major-General Dallaire in Rwanda, operating in a complex and higher risk peacekeeping environment without adequate means of information limits the ability of UN forces to carry out their mandated tasks, impairs operational capabilities, and places UN personnel at greater risk’.<sup>6</sup>

The Swedish Force Commander, Lieutenant General Lars Eric Wahlgren, had gone before him in 1993, arguing that the UN in New York ‘must rethink the entire approach to information versus intelligence gathering’.<sup>7</sup> The UNPROFOR Generals Francis Briquemont and Lewis MacKenzie also complained about the problems surrounding the availability of intelligence during their UNPROFOR period.<sup>8</sup> MacKenzie, for example, had urged the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of the UN in New York to use Imagery Intelligence (‘Imint’: see below for an explanation of the different types of intelligence) in order to establish who was the greatest culprit of ceasefire violations around Sarajevo. His request was rejected or ignored. He complained that the DPKO in New York just did not understand that the military and police situation in Bosnia was different from that of a normal peacekeeping operation, such as the one in, for example, Cyprus. The rules of the UN had nonetheless not been adapted to the new circumstances. MacKenzie was left empty-handed because ‘an outdated attitude regarding intelligence kept us from gaining the information we needed’. Help was sometimes offered by foreign intelligence services, but, because of the insecure connections, this intelligence often reached MacKenzie too late or not at all.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Smith, *New Cloak. Old Dagger*, p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> Confidential collection (6), End of Tour Report by Major General Barry W. Ashton, Deputy Force Commander United Nations Peace Forces (UNPF) in the Former Yugoslavia, ca. March 1996.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Johnston. ‘No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 12 (1997) 4, p. 104.

<sup>8</sup> John M. Nomikos, ‘Intelligence Requirements for Peacekeeping Operations’, *RIEAS Papers and Reports*, 07/02/01.

<sup>9</sup> MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 281-282.

Lieutenant General Bertrand De Lapresle did not touch upon this sensitive subject at all on his departure. He had been the UNPROFOR Force Commander between March 1994 and February 1995, but opted 'not to raise that substantive subject at this moment'. However, the French general omitted to explain when the right moment was supposed to be.<sup>10</sup> The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Yasushi Akashi, stated likewise that he had no intelligence at his disposal. He had never received anything in the way of intelligence regarding the attack on Srebrenica.<sup>11</sup>

This might suggest the immediate conclusion that the UN had little affinity with intelligence gathering during peacekeeping operations, and apparently had refused to learn any lessons from earlier operations. There appeared to be no reliable intelligence available in Bosnia, and what was to hand presented great difficulties in terms of dissemination. Consequently, at a lower level the provision of intelligence to the troops on the ground during the UNPROFOR mission in Bosnia would also be woefully inadequate (as had been the case in Rwanda). Intelligence and UN peacekeeping operations would seem to be ill-matched from the outset.<sup>12</sup>

Peacekeeping has been described as 'the prevention, containment, moderation and termination of hostilities between or within states, through the medium of a peaceful third party intervention organized and directed internationally, using multinational forces or soldiers, police and civilians to restore and maintain peace'.<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, the breaking of sanctions, clandestine weapon deliveries to the warring parties, secret plans for aggression, ethnic cleansing or genocide (Bosnia and Rwanda), and threats on the lives of the peacekeepers need to be discovered as rapidly as possible. Everyone involved will therefore have to recognize sooner or later that the success of a peacekeeping operation demands reliable intelligence.

Another important factor in peace operations in general is that the superpowers sometimes lose their influence over the warring parties and that they 'do not control the clashing parties as much as they used to do'. Because it is becoming more common for peacekeepers to be deployed while an armed conflict is still in progress, the risk to the soldiers on the ground is also increasing. The more complex tasks, which may involve significant ethnic, social and nationalist factors, and ever greater difficulties in properly distinguishing the warring parties in an intrastate conflict, demand an accurate understanding of their strategies, interests and activities. In addition, the UN and other peacekeeping organizations cannot afford 'to have less knowledge of the parties' intentions and activities than the parties themselves if the organizations desire to achieve any political tasks at the negotiating table'.<sup>14</sup> Pär Eriksson even takes the view that a peacekeeping operation cannot be considered impartial because 'it is unable to see to it that all parties follow an agreement on disarmament'.<sup>15</sup>

During a peacekeeping operation there is also a need for strategic intelligence to assist in understanding the political and military situation between the warring parties. Strategic intelligence can be defined as an activity undertaken by a state or community with the aim of 'gathering, analysing, distributing and utilizing information and know-how to further its own ends relative to other states, political groups, military powers, movements or individuals'.<sup>16</sup> This is especially relevant in the phase *before* the direct involvement of the UN. In concrete terms, examples would be asking questions about the origin of the conflict, what is at stake and the strategic political objectives and interests of the international community. Strategic intelligence is often read by the senior-most policy makers charged

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<sup>10</sup> Confidential collection (7), Lieutenant General De Lapresle's statement to the troop-contributing nations, 06/03/95.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Y. Akashi, 29/11/99.

<sup>12</sup> See for an overview of the problems of modern peacekeeping missions: Mats Berdal, 'Whither UN Peacekeeping?', *Adelphi Paper*, no. 281, October 1993, passim.

<sup>13</sup> David M. Last, 'Peacekeeping Doctrine and Conflict Resolution Techniques', *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 22 (1995) 2, p. 188.

<sup>14</sup> Pär Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 27.

with setting the objectives of grand strategy and ensuring that military force is exercised for purposes of achieving national interests.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, a peacekeeping operation needs operational intelligence, which has to guide the most effective use of resources and manpower for the execution of the mandate. This is especially important in a fairly fluid political and military setting, where it would be concerned with the intentions, plans and capabilities of the warring parties, the nature of the military activities (conventional military actions, guerrilla warfare, ethnic cleansing), the military objectives of the parties, and how their propaganda is organized.

At the same time, tactical intelligence is necessary in support of the troops on the ground, so that they are able to carry out peacekeeping activities, such as monitoring a ceasefire or a suspension of hostilities. Examples might include the locations of ceasefire lines, trenches, minefields and checkpoints. After all, the intentions and capabilities of all warring parties, especially in a local area, must be mapped out if the UN mission is to have any chance of success.<sup>18</sup> Finally, reliable intelligence is a prerequisite for minimizing the risk to troops on the ground and aircraft in the air.<sup>19</sup> In brief, credible and sound intelligence is of great importance, and perhaps crucial, to the success of a peacekeeping operation.

The above arguments would appear to be ample justification for devoting considerable attention to the intelligence component of peacekeeping operations. However, it can be deduced from the quoted statements made by Force Commanders and Deputy Force Commanders that this was not the case. This chapter therefore discusses the difficult relationship between the UN and intelligence, which the peoples' organization has actually wrestled with since its foundation.

Before paying further attention to this issue, Section 2 first defines intelligence, and explains the various categories of intelligence.

Section 3 examines the history of the UN's difficult relationship with intelligence gathering during peacekeeping operations. This is illustrated by the words 'In 1960 it was suggested that the word "intelligence" should be banned from the lexicon of the United Nations', which have been attributed to the commander of the UN operations in Congo at the time.<sup>20</sup> Intelligence has apparently been regarded as a 'dirty word' in UN parlance.<sup>21</sup> Section 4 dwells on the UN culture regarding the use and deployment of intelligence in UN operations. It raises the question of whether there has been any change in the past fifty years.

Section 5 covers the (mainly American) intelligence support of the UN in general and of UN peacekeeping operations in particular. The fact is that some intelligence input was forthcoming, especially when American ground forces were involved. Section 6 presents a view of the war in Bosnia and the UNPROFOR intelligence structure, and discusses the capabilities that the UN forces had available for gathering and disseminating intelligence. Resistance from the UN notwithstanding, the fact that some efforts were made to gather intelligence was not actually so remarkable. As one author remarked:

'The need for intelligence is being increasingly felt by both the UN and by states contributing to peacekeeping operations. Particularly in more complex and fluid situations, intelligence will be crucial in achieving the goals of the mission as laid down by the UN Security Council'.

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<sup>17</sup> Richard L. Russell, 'CIA's Strategic Intelligence in Iraq', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 117 (Summer 2002) 2, p. 193.

<sup>18</sup> David A. Charters, 'Out of the Closet: Intelligence Support for Post-Modernist Peacekeeping', *The Pearson Papers*, No. 4, *Intelligence and Peacekeeping*, Halifax, 1999, pp. 42-44.

<sup>19</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 176.

<sup>20</sup> A. Walter Dorn, 'The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, p. 414.

<sup>21</sup> Sir David Ramsbotham, 'Analysis and Assessment for Peacekeeping Operations', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 10 (October 1995) 4, p. 162.

This need is still growing, because

‘...peacekeepers are liable to find themselves in countries in which no government is in undisputed control, social order has broken down or is on the point of collapse. Sometimes hostilities are under way or imminent, and the use of force against peacekeepers is a manifest possibility’.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, a number of conclusions are drawn in Section 7 .

## 2. A definition of ‘intelligence’

There is no Dutch equivalent of the word ‘intelligence’.<sup>23</sup> But also in the English language, according to CIA historian Michael Warner, there is, even today, no accepted definition of intelligence.<sup>24</sup> This therefore raises the question of how best to define intelligence. The overall description ‘gathering information’ is inadequate: intelligence is more than that. There is no lack of English definitions. Webster’s dictionary defines the term as ‘the gathering of secret information, especially for military purposes’. Winn Taplin, an ex-employee of the CIA, agrees and adds that strict confidentiality characterizes intelligence. However, this definition is too limited: it is not only secret information that is gathered, but also data from open sources. According to Taplin, gathering information from open sources cannot be called intelligence, but arguably this is incorrect.<sup>25</sup> The same difficulty in this regard I have with the definition of Warner that ‘intelligence is secret, state activity to understand or influence foreign entities’. So, information gathered about terrorists who are US nationals is not intelligence? Furthermore, Taplin’s definition is unusable because intelligence is not gathered for use on a military level alone. However, it is significant that intelligence in this definition is clearly described as a process.

Neither can we be satisfied with the common definition that ‘intelligence is information designed for action’. After all, not all information is destined by definition for taking action. The definition given by a CIA employee, the late John Macartney, as ‘supporting information for government policymakers’, is equally unsuitable.<sup>26</sup> This definition leans too heavily towards national decision-makers, and this is not necessarily the case: multinationals or foreign services may likewise be consumers of intelligence. Richelson has another definition, in which intelligence is ‘the product of gathering, processing, integrating, analysing, evaluating and interpreting available information concerning countries and foreign areas’.<sup>27</sup> One problem with this definition is that it overlooks the fact that people may also be the subject of intelligence. Furthermore, the focus of attention could well be within a country, and raw information can also be considered to be intelligence. In brief, it is not easy to provide a good definition. It is, as one author once wrote, like ‘making a microscopic portrait of an entire continent’.<sup>28</sup>

It is important in any case - and this aspect is emphasized by many experts - that a definition should always contain more than one attribute. Intelligence is actually a product that is created in a complex process, and is delivered to one or more consumers. If the consumers are national players or decision-makers, then it is sometimes referred to as ‘national intelligence’. Considering these criteria, Jennifer Sims’s definition is probably the most appropriate. She defines intelligence as information that is

<sup>22</sup> Hugh Smith, ‘Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping’, *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, pp. 174-175.

<sup>23</sup> Cees Wiebes, ‘Hookers and sportscars? De theorie van het inlichtingenwerk’ (The theory of Intelligence), in: Koedijk, Linsen & D. Engelen (eds.), *Verspieters*, pp. 11-35.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Warner, ‘Wanted: A Definition of Intelligence’, *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 46 (2002), 3, passim.

<sup>25</sup> Winn L. Taplin, ‘six General Principles of Intelligence’, *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 3 (1989) 4, p. 477.

<sup>26</sup> John Macartney, ‘Intelligence: A Consumer’s Guide’, *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, 2 (1988) 4, p. 458.

<sup>27</sup> Jeffrey T. Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, Boulder, 1995, p. 2.

<sup>28</sup> National Archives (referred to below as NA), RG 263, *CLA records*, Entry 27, Box 12, Martin T. Bimfort, ‘A definition of Intelligence’, *Studies in Intelligence*, Fall 1958, no. 8, pp. 75-78.

gathered, organized and analysed for players or decision-makers.<sup>29</sup> The consumers of the product in her definition are therefore not necessarily national decision-makers. Intelligence is a complete product that can be divided into various categories: political, military, economic, scientific, medical, technical and sociological.

Some examples will help clarify this point. Political intelligence is concerned with both the domestic and the foreign politics of a state, because developments not only on the domestic front (for example the civil war in the former Yugoslavia), but also in the foreign sphere (political policy changes) can influence international relations between countries. Military intelligence is important to a state in helping it determine its military needs. It can also be useful in better assessing the current or future bilateral relations between two or more states (for example between Serbia and Albania). Economic intelligence refers to information on, for example, the expansion of a country's Gross National Product, the state of affairs surrounding the production and the prices of strategic and energy resources, or possible problems with the balance of payments. Sociological intelligence relates mainly to relations between various communities within a country, for example, the situation in Kosovo.<sup>30</sup>

Regarding the forms of intelligence, there are two elements that, strictly speaking, have nothing to do with the activities surrounding the gathering of intelligence, but are closely associated with them nonetheless: counterintelligence and covert action. Counterintelligence (CI) can best be defined as the identification and neutralization of the threat emanating from foreign services, as well as the attempts made to manipulate these foreign services and to use them to one's own advantage.<sup>31</sup> It is a more specific form of intelligence, which also involves the gathering of information on hostile and friendly foreign services. Counterintelligence also involves the use of open and secret sources to acquire more knowledge of the structure, working methods and operations of these services. As stated, counterintelligence can also involve the penetration and destabilization of such foreign services. Finally, economic counterintelligence has emerged in recent years and is attracting increasing interest. It is used to combat the theft of information and technology by both hostile and friendly foreign powers.<sup>32</sup>

In general, covert action is concerned with secret activities intended to influence foreign governments, persons and organizations, or political, economic and military developments, as part of a national security policy. An important point is that a nation's own involvement is kept strictly secret. There are various forms of covert action, ranging from propaganda, paramilitary or political activities that are intended to overthrow or support a given regime, to the secret support of individuals or organizations (trade unions, newspapers and political parties), secret arms supplies, economic destabilization operations, or even lethal attacks.<sup>33</sup> Covert action therefore mainly involves influencing and manipulating an opponent's political policy. Strictly speaking, it is therefore not an activity that falls within the concept of intelligence, although it can contribute to gathering intelligence and always requires substantial intelligence support.<sup>34</sup> An example of a planned covert action in the Balkans involving foreign services was the secret arms supplies to the Bosnian Muslim army, which we will return to in Chapter 4.

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<sup>29</sup> Jennifer Sims, 'What is Intelligence? Information for decision makers', in: Godson, May & Schmitt, *U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads*, p. 4.

<sup>30</sup> NA, RG 263, *CLA records, Entry 27, Box 12*, Max F. Millikan, 'The Nature and Methods of Economic Intelligence', in: *Studies in Intelligence* (Spring 1956), 3, pp. 3-4. Economic intelligence, incidentally, is not the same as industrial espionage!

<sup>31</sup> Roy Godson, 'Counterintelligence: An Introduction', in: Godson, *Intelligence*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>32</sup> Randall M. Fort, 'Economic Espionage', in: Godson, May & Schmitt, *U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads*, p. 182. See also: *Annual Report of the Dutch National Security Service 1995*, The Hague 1996, pp. 29-30. As it happens, CI is also one of the tasks of the Dutch Military Intelligence Service, but only within the confines of military establishments.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Roy Godson, 'Covert action: neither exceptional tool nor magic bullet', in: Godson, May and Schmitt, *U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads*, p. 155.

<sup>34</sup> William J. Brands, 'Intelligence and Foreign Policy: Dilemmas of a Democracy', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 47 (1969) 2, p. 288.

### 3. The intelligence cycle

As described above, intelligence is actually a product that is manufactured in a (sometimes complicated) production process. This process is known as the intelligence cycle. The production of reliable and accurate intelligence in such a cycle does not have a precise starting point. It is a continuous process, but, broadly speaking, five phases or activities can be distinguished.<sup>35</sup>

The first phase consists of surveying the needs of the consumers and planning the entire intelligence operation. In this phase, the 'intelligence needs plan' is drawn up, identifying the special subjects or areas that are of particular interest to the policy makers or military commanders. An example of such tasking could be to discover what military capabilities the supreme command of the *Vojaska Republika Srpska* (VRS, the Bosnian Serb Army) has at its disposal in respect of the eastern enclaves (including Srebrenica) and what its intentions are.

However, the military intelligence requirements during a peacekeeping operation will have more to do with the circumstances surrounding a low intensity conflict than a conventional war. The threat during a peace-supporting operation (or in asymmetric warfare) is generally more diffuse and more difficult to identify than in a conventional war. Regular armed forces play a subordinate role, while controlled or uncontrolled paramilitary 'volunteers' and other obscure conflicting elements - such as criminal factions - have the initiative.<sup>36</sup> During a low intensity conflict, intelligence on matters like the overall state of the local population is at least as important as information on the number of tanks in a region.

Furthermore, intelligence will have to be gathered on the ethnic, linguistic, social and religious situation (to avoid cultural blunders, such as offering a lavish lunch to local Muslim leaders during Ramadan) and on the socioeconomic conditions in a given region (for example, by investigating whether a black market exists, and who is in charge). Again, in a low intensity conflict it is important for peacekeepers to take into account the possibility of a confrontation with 'barely controllable ethnic and criminal groups warring over a large area', as was the case in Bosnia. Such a situation has consequences for gathering intelligence.<sup>37</sup> Another significant factor in Bosnia was the constant asymmetrical warfare, in which a warring faction attempted to focus on its own 'comparative advantages against its enemy's relative weaknesses'. UNPROFOR was frequently confronted with asymmetric threats, which meant that a warring faction was not in a position 'either due to his own inabilities or the strength of the force opposed to him, of confronting an opponent in a conventional manner', and would consequently resort to 'using similar means or weapons to his opponent'.<sup>38</sup> For instance, the obstruction of convoys by the warring factions was an effective weapon for reducing the fighting power of UNPROFOR units.

In a 'traditional' collective defence operation, the emphasis is on studying the (measurable) military capabilities of the opponent (aimed at answering the questions of what the opponent is capable of and where this is possible). In peacekeeping operations and asymmetric warfare, knowledge of the capabilities of the parties is subordinate to a deep understanding of their intentions and motives, without losing sight of the capabilities. The intentions and motives of a warring faction can in some cases appear to be irrational when viewed from the outside.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> CIA, *The Acme of Skill*, Washington, undated, pp. 6-7.

<sup>36</sup> R. Theunens, 'Intelligence en vredesoperaties' ('Intelligence and peace operations'), *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 599.

<sup>37</sup> Pär Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> Kevin O'Brien & Joseph Nusbaum, 'Intelligence gathering for asymmetric threats, Parts I and II', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, October/November 2000.

<sup>39</sup> R. Theunens, 'Intelligence and peace operations', *Militaire Spectator* Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 601.



The second phase in the intelligence cycle is the gathering of raw data.<sup>40</sup> This can happen in a number of ways: firstly via open sources, such as newspapers, magazines, books, government studies and radio and television broadcasts. This has also been referred to for a number of years as Open Source Intelligence ('Osint'). It is concerned with everything that appears in printed form or is broadcast on radio or television. Thanks in part to the Internet, most services currently draw a large amount of their information from open sources. It is estimated that (and it is only a guess) that under ideal circumstances, open source information will comprise somewhere around 10%-15% of the intelligence input into an all-source analysis. It is therefore incorrect to equate intelligence with 'espionage', although this mistake is commonly made. Espionage actually refers exclusively to various clandestine ways of gathering information. An example of such a furtive method would be the use of technical resources like film, photography or electronic intercept traffic, typically carried out from stations on land, special ships, aircraft or satellites. We will later deal more extensively with these special forms of intelligence, which include Signals Intelligence ('sigint'), Communications Intelligence ('Comint'), Radar Intelligence ('Radint') and Imagery Intelligence ('Imint').

A second method of gathering intelligence is from human sources, which is known as Human Intelligence ('Humint'). Humint involves intelligence gathering through person-to-person contacts, including through a party's own agents, reports from attachés, other diplomatic reporting and the systematic debriefing of Displaced Persons, emigrants, deserters, captured soldiers, released hostages, and so on. The clandestine part of Humint is concerned in general with the use of case officers or agents, who furnish information that is unobtainable in any other way from open sources. Here, case officers are employees of national intelligence services, and agents are mostly of foreign origin.<sup>41</sup> Humint is particularly important in peacekeeping operations. Both the local population and senior soldiers or politicians may deliver valuable intelligence. Displaced Persons from a Safe Area can often also come up with important information in systematic debriefings, as can the non-governmental organizations that operate in certain areas.

The third and most important step in the cycle is the processing of all received data, from both open and secret sources. The large intelligence services, for example, deal with enormous quantities of intercepted message traffic that has to be decoded or translated. It is also necessary to process data in the first instance using advanced computers. Moreover, photographs, films and other recordings have to be developed before they can be studied and investigated further. Furthermore, Humint reports have to be analysed in more detail and verified against intelligence obtained from Sigint and Imint. In a battalion, this is mainly done by a section known as S-2 and, at UNPROFOR level, G-2. The other sections are dealt with more comprehensively in the main report, whereas this study focuses on the intelligence activities usually designated as such in military organizations.

A low intensity conflict demands that intelligence is appraised differently from intelligence gathered in a war situation, which is what army training focuses on. In a normal war, for example, four tanks on a road would be assessed in the traditional way as 'reinforcement or reconnaissance', whereas in Bosnia it often heralded a large-scale offensive.

On receipt of data, the intelligence would without doubt have been analysed in further detail at sector level (such as Sector North East of UNPROFOR, which included Srebrenica). In this connection, the information provided by the United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs) would have played an important role. This was a two-way process: intelligence would have flowed from the higher echelons of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in Sarajevo (later known as UNPROFOR) and the UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb (later known as UNPF) to Sector North East and to Dutchbat, and vice versa.

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<sup>40</sup> De Valk points out that the Netherlands National Security Service (BVD) used the word 'gathering' and not collecting. De Valk, *De BVD en Inlichtingenrapportages*, p. 25.

<sup>41</sup> Godson, May & Schmitt, *U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads*, p. 4. There is also the third, somewhat vaguer, category known as 'grey sources'. These are people or companies who, intentionally or unintentionally, disclose sensitive information in the course of conversations.

The fourth step is the analysis, integration, evaluation and production of the gathered material, which ultimately appears as a finished intelligence product. Analysts play a key role in this process, because they have to assess the information and the source for reliability, substance and relevance, and to compare it with data that became available earlier. They process the information. The resulting product can be relevant to the short, medium or (very) long term. Therefore, in this respect too, there is a variety of types of intelligence.

For the short term, Current Intelligence is important. This consists of reports on current developments, such as the changes in a given situation in the last 24 hours. In addition, intelligence as it is produced by the analyst can have a warning function (Warning Intelligence) and can send the consumer a clear signal of imminent crises. Operational Intelligence can also be important in the short term because it is especially relevant in situations involving military tensions or war. Intelligence can therefore also play a supporting role during crises. This short-term importance also applies to raw, unevaluated intelligence (Raw Intelligence). For the medium term, Basic Intelligence, which is also referred to as the 'heart and soul' of the product, is important. This involves more in-depth studies. Other categories can be identified below this, such as Targeting (the identification of military targets), and intelligence that serves to support the observance of accords on arms control (Arms Control Support).<sup>42</sup>

Products that are generated for the very long term are known as Estimates, in which an analyst - on the basis of a thorough analysis of all available intelligence - expresses an expectation of future developments. An example is the American National Intelligence Estimates (NIEs), which during the Cold War were mainly analyses of the military power and political intentions of the Soviet Union.<sup>43</sup>

The fifth and last step in the intelligence cycle is the dissemination of the product among the national and international consumers. For instance, every morning in Washington, a daily briefing book containing finished intelligence is sent to the President. Other consumers include the State Department, the Pentagon and the other government departments. An almost identical process takes place every morning in most European and Asian capitals. This results in new questions which in turn cause new needs to be formulated, and so the cycle starts all over again.<sup>44</sup>

#### 4. The intelligence cycle in practice

It is evident that, if the dissemination works properly, the cycle never ends, because a good use of the delivered product is as important as the continuation of the cycle. A significant example is the Suez Crisis of 1956, when, thanks to their having cracked the British, French and Israeli diplomatic and military code traffic, the American National Security Agency (NSA) was fully informed of the attack on Egypt. However, the delivered information, 'the NSA product', was left accumulating dust on a desk in the State Department for too long.<sup>45</sup> There are clearly pot-holes on the road to a finished product in the intelligence cycle. However, the process described is an academic ideal, not a practical reality. Generally it is too rigid to work very well and requires last-minute adaptation to match fluid situations. As Loch Johnson says: 'so the cycle is anything but smooth; it is bumpy and disjointed and sometimes collapses altogether'.<sup>46</sup>

Some examples will make this clear. Firstly, collected information can be referred to as intelligence even if no finished product is created. Information that has not been processed by analysts

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<sup>42</sup> John Macartney, 'Intelligence: A Consumer's Guide', *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 2 (1988) 4, pp. 464-472.

<sup>43</sup> Currently, many NIEs have been released by the CIA for the period 1951-1993. An example of this is as follows: cf. NA, RG 263, NIEs 1951-1993, Box 6, Folder 47, NIE 11/4-82: The Soviet Challenge to US Security Interests, 10/08/82.

<sup>44</sup> CIA, *Factbook on Intelligence*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Matthew Aid, 29/09/01.

<sup>46</sup> Loch K. Johnson, 'Making the Intelligence "Cycle" work', *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 1 (1986) 1, p. 3.

can also be or become intelligence. For instance, the predecessor of the National Security Agency (NSA) intercepted more than 17,500 coded diplomatic and military telegrams from the Netherlands between 1 July 1944 and 31 June 1945. The code breakers issued a daily bulletin. Of the almost four thousand messages that were decrypted in 1945, 1857 were included in the bulletin. The messages that were not included can definitely also be considered intelligence because they were immediately available for translation and perusal at the request of the consumers.<sup>47</sup>

In the second place, there are always permanent needs for intelligence (known as standing requirements), which do not have to be constantly re-established in consultation. In conflict situations or wars, as in Bosnia or Croatia, this involves the military state of affairs of the opponent, or the developments at the front. In many Western capitals before the fall of the Berlin Wall it also involved, for example, the political, military and economic developments in the Soviet Union and in Eastern Europe. Other examples would be relevant political and economic developments in certain regions that are deemed to be of unchanging importance to a state's national security policy.

Again, the intelligence cycle outlined above is a simplification of the reality. Situations will always arise in which this cycle is quickly abandoned. During a political or military crisis, within the framework of crisis management, policy makers will have a greater interest in raw intelligence. There is no time to wait for a fully digested intelligence product at such moments. An example is the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1961, during which information on the positions of the Soviet nuclear missiles and the movements of Russian vessels were crucial to rapid decision-making on the US side.<sup>48</sup>

A final example, which further clarifies the difference between the theory and practice of the cycle, concerns a general problem for secret services, which in a certain sense disrupts the intelligence cycle. This problem is known as the compartmentalization principle. Even in 'ordinary' organizations, problems arise because different departments have interests that do not run in parallel, or staff who pursue their own objectives, which are not immediately beneficial to the objectives of the organization. This is all the more true of secret services, where departments, bureaux and individual staff build walls around their areas of work, and lose sight of the overall organization or policy objectives. This is justified by the need-to-know principle (only someone who needs the information gets it; whoever does not need it, does not get it). This background sometimes creates conflict between the various departments within a service, which can have an impact on the cycle. Not all information then reaches the cycle.

For example, if an intelligence service fails to predict a crisis, invasion, nuclear test, or missile launch, then the service will often claim that it did not have the correct intelligence at its disposal in good time. It is often described as an intelligence failure. However, like the author Russ Travers already said, the system is sufficiently dysfunctional (despite the best intentions) that intelligence failure is guaranteed. Though the form is less important than the fact, the variations of an intelligence failure are endless. Failure may be of the traditional variety: the intelligence community fails to predict the fall of a friendly government or does not provide sufficient warning of a surprise attack against one of the allies or interests. The intelligence community is completely surprised by a state-sponsored terrorist attack or fail to detect an unexpected country acquiring a weapon of mass destruction. Or, as Travers observes, it may take a more non-traditional form: the intelligence community overstates numerous threats leading to tens of billions of dollars of unnecessary expenditures. Database errors can for example lead to a politically unacceptable number of casualties in a peace-enforcement operation or an operation does not go well because the intelligence community was not able to provide the incredibly specific data necessary to support a new generation of weapons.<sup>49</sup>

Others define an intelligence failure as the failure to provide warning to commanders and policymakers where a duty to provide such warning exists. As an example, the Japanese certainly knew

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<sup>47</sup> NA, RG 457, *NSA Records, Box 1028, Folder Monthly Production Trends Report*, Tab E: Annual Production 1944-1945, June 1945.

<sup>48</sup> CIA, *CLA Documents on the Cuban Missile Crisis 1962*, passim.

<sup>49</sup> Russ Travers, 'The Coming Intelligence Failure', *Studies in Intelligence*, Vol. 1 (1997), passim.

of their own plans to attack Pearl Harbor, but for the Japanese, it was not an intelligence failure because they had no duty to warn American commanders. For the Americans, on the other hand, there was such a duty to provide warning of an attack, and none was forthcoming. In this sense, it was an intelligence failure. So, there are three elements of an intelligence failure: failure to provide warning, to commanders and policymakers and where a duty to provide such warning exists.<sup>50</sup>

It must be made absolutely clear that intelligence failures are seldom caused by a lack of information. The cause more often lies in its processing and interpretation. For instance, it emerged after the event that the Israeli intelligence community had a great deal of information on imminent Arab military action prior to the outbreak of the October War in 1973.<sup>51</sup> The same was true of the American intelligence services, which had also received signals that an Arab offensive was imminent. The NSA especially had many intercepts (intercepted message traffic) that pointed to a military offensive. However, the enormous volume of intercepts (several hundreds of reports each week) overwhelmed the service. The analysts simply could not process the growing flood of messages in good time.<sup>52</sup>

Many authors think, however, that the weakest link is actually the last phase of the cycle: the dissemination and the correct use of the intelligence product. John Macartney points to the Grenada operation in 1983 and the Iran Contra affair as examples in which intelligence was not involved in the operational plan.<sup>53</sup> Copley argues that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait too was certainly not an intelligence failure: intelligence was available, but it was not analysed in good time and reached the consumers too late. His assertion was therefore: 'intelligence is only intelligence when it is in the hands of the consumer'.<sup>54</sup>

In the case of the fall of Srebrenica, it is essential to ascertain whether there was an element of intelligence failure that was caused by a lack of information. According to a former employee of Yasushi Akashi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in the case of Srebrenica there definitely was an intelligence failure. He assumed that if the UN had known what was about to happen, it would have reacted differently. The employee also thought that Akashi's political ambitions would have led him to respond in a different way.

During the war in Bosnia, Akashi had fallen out of favour with the prominent members of the Security Council. According to this source, the fall of Srebrenica was only one more reason to have him ushered off the stage by a side door. It was said to be a form of standard thinking in the UN (and therefore an intelligence failure) that the Bosnian Serbs would have no idea what to do with the tens of thousands of Displaced Persons from the enclave. The greatest intelligence failure, however, was not so much that no one knew whether half or all the enclave would be captured, but that no view had been formed in advance that the VRS would massacre all the men. After all, military logic demands that the worst case is assumed, which in this case was still that the VRS wanted to capture the enclave.<sup>55</sup> Chapter 8 deals with this subject in more detail.

It can be said in conclusion that intelligence is a product resulting from a complicated and sometimes long-term process and subsequently distributed among its consumers. Typically, this 'production process', which involves many 'employees', takes place in a 'large factory'. The production demands considerable financial investment, which must be used for the purchase of technical resources to acquire the intelligence, to keep the production process running, and to improve it through

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<sup>50</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>51</sup> Ytzhak Katz & Ygal Vardi, 'strategies for Data Gathering and Evaluation in the Intelligence Community', *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 5 (1991) 3, p. 313.

<sup>52</sup> Andrew, *For the President's Eyes Only*, p. 391.

<sup>53</sup> John Macartney, 'Intelligence: A Consumer's Guide', *The International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 2 (1988) 4, p. 474.

<sup>54</sup> Gregory Copley, 'Intelligence and the Iraqi Invasion: Why Did So Many Services Fail?', *Strategic Policy*, September 1990, pp. 38-39.

<sup>55</sup> Confidential interview (46).

additional financial and other investments, as well as to pay the hundreds if not thousands of employees for their work. It is obvious that national governments will have such intelligence ‘factories’ at their disposal. Even small states generally have a national intelligence capacity in the form of civil and military intelligence services. However, this was not the case at the UN.

## 5. Intelligence and UN peacekeeping operations

The author Walter Dorn passes harsh judgement on the relationship between intelligence and peacekeeping operations in a UN context: ‘Many failures in the history of UN field operations might have been avoided had the UN taken a more forthright approach to intelligence and possessed a stronger mandate to gather information and improve its information-gathering system.’<sup>56</sup>

Since 1945, the use of intelligence in peacekeeping operations has always been difficult. All those involved understood well enough that some intelligence input had to exist, but the UN in New York never took any substantial action to improve the existing situation, even though intelligence should be an integrated part of planning and policy. After all, intelligence is essential for the assessment of a political or military situation, and for taking the correct decisions. It can have far-reaching consequences, so that demanding requirements have to be set on its quality.<sup>57</sup>

The only direct experience of the UN with its own intelligence collection capability took place in the 1960 Congo Crisis. In spite of the aversion that existed in New York, UN armed forces (especially at the initiative of Sweden) did set up a rudimentary intelligence cell: the Military Information Branch, which was operational between 1960 and 1964. The negative undertone of the term ‘intelligence’, which inferred all sorts of illegal and shady operations, meant that it was avoided, with preference given to ‘information’, hence the unit’s title ‘Military Information Branch’. During the peacekeeping operation in Congo, use was made of Sigint by intercepting communications traffic, Imint by deploying reconnaissance aircraft and Humint by systematically debriefing and interrogating prisoners via informants and agents. Comint was a source of much valuable information during the Katanga campaign (*Operation Grand Slam*) in December 1962 and January 1963, the objective of which was to remove foreign mercenaries, to restore freedom of movement, and to bring an end to the secession of Katanga. The Swedish battalion in Congo used Sigint with great success in the period 1961-1962. The communications of the other party, the Katangese units, were always ‘open’, because they assumed, incorrectly, that the Swedish soldiers could not understand Swahili, and therefore they revealed extremely valuable intelligence.<sup>58</sup> In addition, in November 1962 the Swedish government also made special photographic reconnaissance aircraft and photographic analysts available.

During this operation, the UN had little contact with national intelligence services. There is nothing remarkable about this, because the CIA was operating in Congo with a goal entirely of its own, which did not correspond with that of the UN. According to Dorn, the American, British and French intelligence services supplied little or no intelligence to the UN mission in Congo. This should have helped convince New York of the usefulness of having its own independent intelligence capability, by illustrating that the agenda of foreign intelligence services may well differ from the UN agenda, even if the governments in the Security Council sanction the operation.

In other peacekeeping operations, the UN had more intelligence available, especially because American Imint was shared with the UN. This was shown (not handed over!) to the commander of the UN Emergency Force in the Middle East in the mid-1960s. For instance, a military consultant of the Secretary-General of the UN was shown Imint from the American U-2 espionage aircraft during the Cuba Crisis in October 1962. Similarly, the military command of the UN Disengagement Observer Force

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<sup>56</sup> A. Walter Dorn, ‘The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, p. 414.

<sup>57</sup> De Valk, *De BVD*, p. 10.

<sup>58</sup> Pär Eriksson, ‘Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 11.

(UNDOF) on the Golan Heights in the Middle East in 1993 was sometimes allowed to study American U-2 photographs.<sup>59</sup> And in January 2003 two American U-2s were loaned to the UN for gathering intelligence about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. However, former US officials expressed immediately fear that intelligence given to the UN could leak.<sup>60</sup> During the operation in Somalia in 1993-1994, American services supplied much intelligence through their Intelligence Support Element, but then American ground forces were also participating. Whether this intelligence was shared with Pakistani UN troops is open to question, because on 5 June 1993, 24 Pakistanis were killed in an operation in Mogadishu. Mohammed Sahnoun, an Algerian diplomat and former special envoy to the UN for Somalia, felt that this indicated 'a complete lack of political and military intelligence capabilities'.<sup>61</sup>

In several other recent operations, the headquarters of the peacekeeping mission had an intelligence staff (referred to in military terms as 'the G-2', or 'J-2' in joint operations), as is usual in military operations. In Rwanda (UNAMIR) in 1995 (after the genocide) the G-2 cell comprised six intelligence officers. Of all the peacekeeping operations, various authors have stated that the operation in Haiti was the best organized with respect to intelligence gathering and processing, with a total of 29 Canadian officers. There was also an important intelligence component in the UN Special Commission in Iraq (UNSCOM). This monitoring mission was established as an independent agency with the responsibility to inspect and verify the destruction of Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear, and missile programs. Although it was wearing a UN hat, it was in reality a Western operation. In early August 1991 UNSCOM began to create an in-house Information Assessment Unit. As Tim Crawford points out in his excellent paper, its primary purposes were to receive, analyze, and store overhead imagery, liaison with providing nations, the analysis and archiving of inspection reports, and the maintenance of data bases on Iraqi sites and equipment. The first four staff members of the IAU came from Canada, Australia, France, and the US. The nationalities of these expert analysts were no accident.<sup>62</sup> The mission even had British eavesdropping equipment at its disposal to intercept Iraqi military communication traffic.<sup>63</sup> This did not mean, incidentally, that the staff of the UN verification mission in Iraq were provided with a better insight into the Iraqi military program. They constantly complained that they provided all their Sigint to the American and British intelligence services, but seldom saw the results.<sup>64</sup>

The UNSCOM mission realized all too well that the Iraqi intelligence services would try to monitor their communication traffic. UNSCOM therefore made serious attempts to effectively secure the links with New York. Their efforts were in vain: the Iraqi intelligence service was in a position to decipher and read the coded traffic with the UN headquarters in New York. It turned out that the UNSCOM encryption program that was used to code the messages was very weak and easy to break. At that time it was impossible to buy American strong encryption software, because of the stringent export controls imposed by the American government. This also gave the American intelligence services a chance to read the weakly-encrypted messages. After the discovery that Iraq had broken the code, UNSCOM switched to the encryption program Pretty Good Privacy (PGP).<sup>65</sup>

In parenthesis, we might observe that there were other reasons for not setting too much store by the impartiality of UNSCOM as a UN mission. From time to time, the mission included a large number of CIA staff, and furthermore the UN supplied intelligence to Israel, which further

<sup>59</sup> Robert J. Allen, 'Intelligence Support for Peace Operations', in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, p. 116.

<sup>60</sup> David Ensor, 'US spy planes to aid UN inspectors', *CNN.com*, 14/01/03.

<sup>61</sup> Connaughton, *Military*, p. 116.

<sup>62</sup> Timothy W. Crawford, 'Why Ever Not Never? Intelligence Cooperation in United Nations Security Affairs', *Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies*, Ottawa, 28/09/02, p. 20.

<sup>63</sup> A. Walter Dorn, 'The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, p. 438.

<sup>64</sup> Marian Wilkinson, 'Revealed: Our Spies in Iraq', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28/01/99, p. 1.

<sup>65</sup> 'UNSCOM Hurt by Weak Encryption', *Intelligence Newsletter*, no. 403, 05/04/01 as published on 18/04/01 on: <http://216.167.120.50/>.

undermined the idea that the intelligence was first and foremost for the UN.<sup>66</sup> The American government also supplied and continues to supply satellite photographs to the International Atomic Energy Authority (IAEA) in Vienna, which ‘monitors’ the nuclear programs of Iraq and North Korea.<sup>67</sup>

However, as Tim Crawford points out, there were various things counting against the IAEA as regards sharing intelligence with this body. One of them was that IAEA officials, steeped in the UN culture of transparency, simply did not have the “mindset” to properly handle and use sensitive information. For example, on one occasion, a senior IAEA inspector was reported to have casually showed sensitive over-head imagery to an official not involved in inspections. On another occasion, that same inspector left overhead imagery out on his desk during a meeting with Iraqi officials.<sup>68</sup>

To summarize, it can be stated that, during peacekeeping operations in a UN context, independent intelligence gathering was sometimes carried out, with the 1960 Congo experience being a highlight, but in general the UN remained completely dependent on what a member state (mostly the United States) was prepared to supply. The exception was UNSCOM, which received intelligence support from a wide array of governments. But this tells us more about the real character of UNSCOM than about intelligence sharing with the UN in general.<sup>69</sup>

## 6. Intelligence within the existing UN culture

Since the extensive military enterprise in Congo, much has changed concerning peacekeeping operations in a UN context. Until 1992, the mission in Congo with 20,000 peacekeepers was the largest military operation so far, but that record was broken in the same year: UNPROFOR had more than 40,000 personnel, plus the support of a substantial air force from NATO and a fleet from the WEU. It is also significant that the mandate of most peacekeeping operations nowadays is much broader than used to be the case. For instance, missions are now charged with supervising compliance with sanctions, protecting Safe Areas, providing humanitarian relief, supporting Displaced Persons, monitoring local elections, or assisting in the development of the infrastructure.<sup>70</sup> However, this expansion of tasks triggered neither a new attitude to intelligence within the UN, nor any significant change of organizational culture.

The then Secretary-General of the UN, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, had tried in the late 1980s to improve the flow of intelligence to UN Headquarters but this ran into immediate trouble. He then created an Office for Research and the Collection of Information (ORCI) in the Secretariat. He tasked ORCI with collecting, organizing, and analyzing political information received from all available sources to support his activities and to advise him of threatening developments. ORCI also did not last. According to a UN veteran who served on Cuéllar’s executive staff, ORCI was stymied, not only by ‘insufficient managerial skill’ but also by ‘bureaucratic resistance from other Secretariat departments that were fearful of encroachment on their territory’. ORCI was disbanded in March 1992 by the new Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Gali and its functions were parceled out to other parts of the UN. Like Crawford correctly observed: a central organ for handling and analyzing sensitive information,

<sup>66</sup> A. Walter Dorn, ‘The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, pp. 439-440.

<sup>67</sup> Robert J. Allen, ‘Intelligence Support for Peace Operations’, Pickert, *Intelligence*, p. 117 and Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, pp. 293-294.

<sup>68</sup> Timothy W. Crawford, ‘Why Ever Not Never? Intelligence Cooperation in United Nations Security Affairs’, *Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies*, Ottawa, 28/09/02, p. 19.

<sup>69</sup> See for the recurrent problems as regards US intelligence support for the UN weapon inspections in Iraq: Colum Lynch, ‘U.N. Arms Inspector Seeks U.S. Intelligence’, *The Washington Post*, 10/10/02; Julia Preston, ‘Weapons Inspector Ask U.S. to Share Secret Iraq Data’, *The New York Times*, 07/12/02; David E. Sanger and Julia Preston, ‘U.S. is to release spy data on Iraq to aid inspectors’, *The New York Times*, 20/12/02 Pieter Spiegel, ‘Pentagon offers drone in hunt for weapons’, *Financial Times*, 16/01/03.

<sup>70</sup> A. Walter Dorn, ‘The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping’, *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, pp. 414-427.

with direct reporting to the Secretary General, was killed off and was replaced by a fragmented and balkanized system, in a department further removed from the Secretary General's control. This pattern would become a familiar one in the years to come.<sup>71</sup>

Working with a Military Information Branch and the large-scale application of intelligence during the 1960 operations in Congo was thus a one-off event. Since Congo, every attempt within the UN to create its own permanent intelligence section has met with resistance. Both individual countries and the various UN departments have great qualms about the idea. Therefore, in no way did the UN prepare effectively for dealing in a systematic and well thought-out way with secret intelligence: neither in the area of gathering, nor of its dissemination within the UN bureaucracy. There are no guidelines regarding the question of how information is to be gathered, what material must remain secret, which classification levels should be attached, and when documents can and should be released. This raises the question of the nature of the background to the resistance.

An important legal and political reason for the UN not to indulge in gathering intelligence is the mandate of the mission and the associated agreement with the local government. This obliges the UN peace mission to respect all local laws and rules. A peacekeeping mission must therefore be executed with great care, with no diversion from the mandate or the original agreement.

A 'splendid' but at the same time tragic example of such sovereignty constraints in the matter of the gathering and disseminating of information is the experience of the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group shortly before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The mission had the mandate to supervise the suspension of hostilities between Iran and Iraq. Since July 1990 the observers had observed the movement of large numbers of Iraqi units to the south, towards the border with Kuwait. However, because the troops concerned did not move to the east (in the direction of Iran) the observers were officially unable to report anything. It was not even permitted by the headquarters of the UN mission in Baghdad. In addition, the Iraqi government threatened to expel the mission if the troop movement was reported through UN channels. This was a real threat, because Iraq monitored UN communication traffic.

Nor apparently, were there any reports to New York through informal channels. The then Secretary-General of the UN, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, wrote on this matter in his memoirs: 'The major powers knew in advance that a very large Iraqi force was moving towards the Kuwaiti border. I did not have such knowledge (...). I failed to anticipate [Saddam Hussein's] aggressive intent'. However, he fails to mention the knowledge that his own observers had in their possession, but did not pass on. Nonetheless, he draws another important conclusion:

'The United Nations, and the Secretary-General in particular, should have better sources of information on developments such as large troop movements that pose a threat to the peace. And the United Nations, as much or more than national governments, should have the skill and insight to understand the import of such information and take appropriate preventive action'.<sup>72</sup>

However, virtually nothing would come of this. The most important explanation, which is often given, is the political climate within the UN, where doctrines of impartiality, transparency and international law are held in high esteem. The gathering of intelligence during peacekeeping operations does not fit in with UN culture, which must be seen as open and transparent. It would mean that the UN would be gathering intelligence about its own members, which is regarded as completely undesirable.<sup>73</sup>

This attitude could be detected most clearly within the humanitarian part of the UN system, such as in UNHCR, UNDP and UNICEF. The reason is that the humanitarian community is worried

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<sup>71</sup> Timothy W. Crawford, 'Why Ever Not Never? Intelligence Cooperation in United Nations Security Affairs', *Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies*, Ottawa, 28/09/02, p. 24.

<sup>72</sup> Pérez de Cuéllar, *Pilgrimage for Peace*, pp. 237-238.

<sup>73</sup> Mats Berdal, 'Whither UN Peacekeeping?', *Adelphi Paper*, no. 281, October 1993, pp. 43-44.



that the safety of their personnel is endangered if they are associated with intelligence gathering. Another reason is that the humanitarian agencies are not accountable to the Security Council for their operations.<sup>74</sup> According to the military advisor to the UN Secretary-General, Major General F.H. van Kappen, who held this position from 1 July 1995, this did not apply to the UN Secretariat, in particular for the two most important departments within the Secretariat, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the Department of Political Affairs (DPA). Although these two departments also traditionally uphold the principle that gathering intelligence is undesirable, the thinking there is starting to shift.<sup>75</sup>

Matters are complicated by the fact that the UN member states have no consistent view on intelligence. Furthermore, the discussion is clouded by problems of definition. What one member state sees as gathering intelligence, another describes as collecting information. As became clear, this was to have serious consequences in Yugoslavia. By way of illustration, the Canadian battalion and the French company who were responsible for reopening the Sarajevo airfield in June 1992 were given no insight by the UN into the positions and activities of the warring factions around that airfield. The UN expected the troops to go in 'blind'. Because of the excellent relationship with its neighbour to the south, Ottawa could gather the intelligence it needed by a roundabout route, which was not only necessary for protecting the units, but also to cover an emergency withdrawal strategy.<sup>76</sup>

It can be deduced from this that, at the commencement of the conflict in Yugoslavia, the problems with passing on intelligence to the United Nations had yet to be solved. Indeed, there is still no intelligence culture at the UN. Within UNPROFOR, there was even an emphatic anti-intelligence culture. 'Intelligence, even if it was to be used only for force protection, was still being resisted by some senior military officers in command positions at UNPROFOR in Zagreb', according to an intelligence officer who worked at the headquarters there.<sup>77</sup>

In the summer of 1992, at the start of the UNPROFOR mission in Bosnia, the UN Secretariat rejected the American offer of (military and other) intelligence.<sup>78</sup> At that time the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in The Hague had already concluded that without good intelligence 'the UN operation was doomed to be rudderless'.<sup>79</sup> The American offer was later repeated under the Clinton administration, but again rejected.<sup>80</sup> An anti-intelligence culture was also dominant at the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) of the UN headquarters. For example, the head of this department, Kofi Annan, stated suspiciously: 'We have to be careful because the big powers only give us what they want us to know.' There was still a deep aversion to the UN gathering its own intelligence. They preferred to use the term 'military information', and the gathering had to be done by military observers, who were only allowed to report visual observations. When some (mainly American) intelligence was passed on to the DPKO, past experience showed that no feedback was to be expected from New York to the local UNPROFOR commanders.

Another reason for the UN's objections to intelligence is that there is an element of restraint in most countries when it comes to passing on information to the UN. This applies not only to smaller states, but also to the United States, which until now has had the closest intelligence liaison with the UN. This restraint was mainly caused by the 'leaks' within the organization itself, and also because UN personnel were unaccustomed to dealing routinely with classified material. This was an issue not only in New York but also locally in Bosnia, where insecure communication equipment was often used, so that

<sup>74</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'Strategic Intelligence and the United Nations', Paper presented at the NISA/IDL Conference 'Peacekeeping and Intelligence', Delft, 15/11/02.

<sup>75</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'strategische inlichtingen en de Verenigde Naties' ('strategic intelligence and the United Nations'), *Militaire Spectator* Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 593.

<sup>76</sup> Confidential interview (3).

<sup>77</sup> Confidential interviews (9) and (47).

<sup>78</sup> NMFA, PVNY. Van Schaik, PVNY to Foreign Affairs, no. 594, 23/06/92.

<sup>79</sup> NMFA, DEU/ARA/00085. Memorandum of the Directorate for Atlantic Cooperation and Security Affairs (DAV) on the Gymnich meeting held on 12-13/09/92.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with M. Albright, 28/09/01.

the *Armija Bosna i Hercegovina* (ABiH, the military forces of the Bosnian Muslims), the VRS and the *Vojska Jugoslavija* (VJ, the army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) could listen in on UNPROFOR message traffic without much difficulty.<sup>81</sup> A similar pattern had emerged during the UN operations in Lebanon.<sup>82</sup>

The Secretariat in New York is notorious for its many leaks ('a leaky organization'), which has thoroughly dampened the enthusiasm among the member states for sharing intelligence with the UN.<sup>83</sup> The military advisor to the UN Secretary-General, Van Kappen, was once told by a foreign intelligence officer: 'If you enter this building and even think about something, it is known in 185 different capitals in the world within one hour.'<sup>84</sup> This is one of the reasons why the Security Council commonly met in 'closed session' to discuss UNPROFOR, with the consequence that some troop-contributing nations, such as Canada and the Netherlands, were kept outside the decision-making process surrounding UNPROFOR.

What is more, smaller countries are fearful that a smoothly running intelligence organization at the UN would damage their national interests and integrity. This risk would arise in particular if such a department were to become dominated (which is not unlikely) by Western intelligence officers.<sup>85</sup>

It is also significant that many UN officials are simultaneously (and primarily) on the staff of foreign intelligence services, and consequently intelligence shared often lands on the desks of a foreign intelligence service. Van Kappen was also occasionally told that certain officials within the DPKO were active in gathering intelligence for various intelligence services.<sup>86</sup> For instance, many Russians and Chinese at the UN were in fact officials of their country's intelligence services. The Soviet intelligence service, the KGB, had even penetrated to the level of the Undersecretary-General for Political and Security Council Affairs. In the 1970s this was Arkady Shevchenko.<sup>87</sup>

It is true that for intelligence sharing with the UN, a special intelligence liaison official was attached to the American Permanent Representative, but the former Director of the CIA James Woolsey admitted that this arrangement was awkward. The actual sharing of sensitive intelligence only happened there on a bilateral basis, according to the 'quid pro quo' principle. At the lower levels of classification there was broader sharing.<sup>88</sup> However, another American intelligence official was a bit offended but the complaints from UN officials. The UN was indeed incapable of dealing with the most rudimentary classification controls. However, the American response was to drive the classification to the unclassified level, and send it to the UN. Based on a concerted analytical effort, it was possible to attribute nearly every report to some unclassified newspaper report or openly available information. As long as the US intelligence community was not asked to provide information on sources and methods, the downgrading of extremely sensitive information could be accomplished, usually without threatening the far more frangible sources and methods. Teams of intelligence analysts at various US locations, including Naples, Molesworth, Stuttgart and Washington DC pushed the downgrading limits of published guidelines in an effort to release vitally needed information to the UN at the unclassified level. Usually the intelligence sources themselves were quite sensitive, but a report stripped of the source material, perhaps attributed to press or other open sources, the vital report could reach those who needed it without jeopardizing intelligence sources.

According to this official, the challenge of getting vital information to the UN became a two-step process. First, a truly all-source analytical effort was undertaken in at least four separate locations

<sup>81</sup> For this, see Chapters 5 and 6 in particular.

<sup>82</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 180.

<sup>83</sup> Robert J. Allen, 'Intelligence Support for Peace Operations', in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, pp. 124-125.

<sup>84</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'strategic intelligence and the United Nations', *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 596.

<sup>85</sup> Pär Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 5.

<sup>86</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'strategic intelligence and the United Nations', *Militaire Spectator* Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 596.

<sup>87</sup> Shevchenko, *Breaking*, passim and Polmar & Allen, *Spy Book*, pp. 564-565.

<sup>88</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

to generate an all-source perspective. Second, that all-source product was gone through with a fine lens to provide for the fullest possible disclosure to the UN. This resulted in two sets of products, or sometimes even more, for every product produced by these four specialized all-source analytical centers producing daily or twice-daily intelligence reports on developments in the Balkans. The US official complained (perhaps rightly so) that there remain too many individuals who judge the value of a report based on the classification it bears. This was foolishness, and the official hoped that such a perspective will die out soon enough. The US official remarked adamantly that it was such an ignorant perspective by asserting that 'unclassified = worthless'.<sup>89</sup>

Nonetheless, within the UN in New York, there was constant resistance to the use of intelligence in peacekeeping operations. Van Kappen did personally have a strong suspicion that the permanent members of the Security Council do not consider this to be a problem and there is certainly no urge to change the situation.<sup>90</sup> The question arises, however, as to whether that position is now outdated, and whether the UN needs its own intelligence service and should engage in intelligence gathering. Smith points out that such signals have already been sent. For instance, the Australian Minister of Foreign Affairs has proposed that 'a group of professionals from various countries with expertise in intelligence (...) be recruited and approved by the Security Council'. This unit should have access to classified material, with a view to providing independent advice to the Security Council. However, this suggestion was given a sceptical reception, because it appeared unlikely that the officials of this unit would be able to completely divorce themselves from their national intelligence services. The question that then arises is whether the intelligence to be gathered by this unit would actually be reliable and free from value judgements.<sup>91</sup>

In 1992, the European Community, Russia, the Scandinavian countries, Australia, Canada and New Zealand made a proposal to establish an independent intelligence-gathering facility at the UN for early warning purposes, and to give the UN an effective instrument for preventive diplomacy. The proposal 'touched off a furious response from the United States, which appears to be resolutely opposed to any moves that would enhance the UN's ability to gather and analyse sensitive information in an independent fashion'.<sup>92</sup>

Another problem, of course, is that the UN, with more than 180 members, is unusual in the world of intelligence in that it has no 'national interest' on which to concentrate. The needs among the policy makers in the UN Secretariat are also highly diverse, making it difficult to give direction to such intelligence gathering.<sup>93</sup>

Provisionally, it would therefore appear that an effective intelligence organization under the DPKO is not to be expected in the very near future. The unwillingness among most countries is still too great, because intelligence would then have to be gathered about the member states. Eriksson therefore asserts: 'peacekeeping organizations (especially the UN) as they exist today cannot maintain an advanced, comprehensive and combined intelligence service of their own at a strategic level'.<sup>94</sup> The former British permanent representative at the UN, Sir David Hannay, expressed himself in similar terms. His first argument was that member states would not be prepared to pay. Secondly, he suggested that it would form too great a threat to their own national security. And thirdly, the DPKO in New York would not know what to do with all the information gathered, because it had insufficient personnel to process it.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>90</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'Strategic Intelligence and the United Nations', Paper presented at the NISA/IDL Conference 'Peacekeeping and Intelligence', Delft, 15/11/02. A senior German intelligence official expressed similar views to the author. Confidential interview (99) and confidential information (88).

<sup>91</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 188.

<sup>92</sup> Curtis, *Deception*, pp. 200-201.

<sup>93</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, pp. 34-38.

<sup>94</sup> Pär Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 1.

<sup>95</sup> Sir David Hannay, 'Intelligence and international agencies', in: Shukman (ed.), *Agents*, p. 179.

In April 1993, the Situation Centre was established in DPKO, as a 24 hour hub for communications between peace operations in the field and HQ. By the end of the year, the center was staffed by 24 gratis military officers (GMOs) on loan from 16 different member states from Australia to Zimbabwe, Norway to Pakistan, Jordan to Russia. This UN Situation Centre (SitCen) in New York carried out some intelligence-related work, but in practice this centre mainly sucked in all information while releasing little.<sup>96</sup> The SitCen has also a small analysis section, the Information and Research Cell (I&RC), which employed five officials. This organ was founded in 1994 originally with one American intelligence official, who was rapidly joined by three more staff from Russia, France and the United Kingdom. This organ is completely dependent on input from the national intelligence services, which leaves open the possibility of the manipulation of intelligence.<sup>97</sup>

However, as Crawford observed, this benign view of DPKO's increasing intelligence capacity and the role of intelligence Western officials was not shared by many developing countries, or by most parts of the UN bureaucracy, where both the influence and the concerns of those countries predominate. Indeed, DPKO was increasingly seen by them as a 'beach-head' in the Secretariat for the US, its Western allies, and Russia. This could only mean the intrusion of great power priorities in the Secretariat, priorities, which often conflicted with those of developing nations. The developing nations, under the aegis of the Non-Aligned Movement, voiced major concerns and in the end also this organ was doomed to disappear. Various other attempts were made but, despite various recommendations, there is in 2002 still no coherent and autonomous organ within the Secretariat capable of serious intelligence handling and analysis.<sup>98</sup>

Another major problem appeared to be the rapid turnover of personnel.<sup>99</sup> The Military Advisor to the Secretary-General of the UN, Van Kappen, confirmed this. In addition he said that he received hardly any reliable intelligence. The quality of the intelligence obtained was variable. Whatever he asked the American representative, he would receive 'no answer, or answers that made no sense.' Van Kappen himself said that his most useful contact was the Russian representative, Sergei Lakonovski, a former KGB officer. The problem with this was that his information could also be used to manipulate Van Kappen, who therefore had to treat it with extreme caution. He also received much information from the French, which, however, he often judged to be unreliable because assumptions were frequently elevated to the status of facts. Van Kappen received rather less information from the British, but what he received was mostly reasonably reliable.<sup>100</sup>

Another problem that Van Kappen identified was the large proportion of intelligence that was supplied to him verbally, often with the instruction to share it with only a limited number of officials. Occasionally he was not permitted to inform the official in the DPKO who was responsible for the political aspects of a peacekeeping mission. According to Van Kappen, the management of this department was completely unclear, which resulted in constant friction and discord, both within the DPKO and elsewhere within the Secretariat. Van Kappen also had frequent suspicions that products that were passed to him were intended to manipulate the UN, or at least the DPKO. As an example he mentioned the humanitarian crisis in East Zaire. If a permanent member of the Security Council was in favour of intervention, intelligence would be supplied showing that there were too many Displaced Persons and that they were in a wretched state. If a permanent member was against intervention, then the number of Displaced Persons would be less alarming and their condition would be reasonable. All

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<sup>96</sup> Confidential interview (3) and Robert J. Allen, 'Intelligence Support for Peace Operations', in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, pp. 111-129.

<sup>97</sup> A. Walter Dorn, 'The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, p. 433. See also: David A. Charters, 'Out of the Closet: Intelligence Support for Post-Modernist Peacekeeping', *The Pearson Papers, No. 4, Intelligence and Peacekeeping*, Halifax, 1999, pp. 51-52.

<sup>98</sup> Timothy W. Crawford, 'Why Ever Not Never? Intelligence Cooperation in United Nations Security Affairs', *Paper prepared for the Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Security and Intelligence Studies*, Ottawa, 28/09/02, pp. 24-27.

<sup>99</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with F.H. van Kappen, 21/06/00.

in all, Van Kappen found it a 'shameful exhibition'.<sup>101</sup> A senior German intelligence official confirmed this description. A specific person was pinpointed and this particular person was the only one to receive intelligence from the BND. The official also confirmed that files with national intelligence were designed in order to influence certain UN officials.<sup>102</sup>

American intelligence support to the UN was limited, partly because of the 'varied' composition of this unit. The documents that were handed over were often unclassified. However, the disadvantage of this, as a UN employee explained, was that it was 'dated' and often consisted of a summary of earlier UN reports.<sup>103</sup> However, as an US official adamantly remarked: it is such an ignorant perspective by asserting that 'unclassified = worthless'.<sup>104</sup>

Actually, the UN was constantly confronted with an internal dilemma: they did not want to carry out intelligence gathering themselves, but it was also clear to the organization that intelligence is necessary in peacekeeping operations. For instance, the Military Advisor to the Secretary-General, Major General Maurice Baril, admitted in January 1995 at a meeting of troop-contributing nations, that access to intelligence was important, but that such help would have to be arranged bilaterally, for access to intelligence was, as Lord Owen was able to recall, 'a potentially difficult one'.<sup>105</sup>

The reluctant attitude to active and independent intelligence gathering was therefore not a sign that the UN believed that it had absolutely no need of intelligence in its peacekeeping operations. According to Johnston, there were in fact no compelling reasons for the UN not to provide effective intelligence support to its own peacekeeping missions.<sup>106</sup> However, the resistance to intelligence remained a part of the UN culture, and that would also initially be the case with UNPROFOR. In traditional peacekeeping operations, the policy of the troop-contributing nations was to minimize and disregard the military-intelligence component, because they assumed that intelligence gathering could undermine the principle of impartiality.

In addition, New York wanted to avoid awkward questions, such as whether the intelligence that the UN would gather had to be shared with all the warring parties. With respect to 'openness' versus 'confidentiality', the UN was confronted with a dilemma, because there are advantages and disadvantages to both. A potential advantage of openness is that it makes the operation more acceptable and less threatening to all warring parties. It would also reduce the fear of all manner of covert operations, and build trust. A disadvantage of too much openness is the danger of leaks, for which the UN was renowned and which would lead to a sustained refusal among the troop-contributing nations to share more and better intelligence with the UN.<sup>107</sup>

An added factor is that states can have different political interests in a peacekeeping operation, which are not necessarily in line with the mandate of the Security Council. This can be a reason for a troop-contributing nation to share gathered intelligence only selectively, or not at all.

Another problem is the diversity of nationalities within a UN operation. The kind of intelligence that can be shared between a Dutch and a British official, for example, cannot be shared with an official from Ukraine. As an example from the practical situation in Bosnia, the first Force Commander of UNPROFOR, Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, had no NATO intelligence at his disposal because he came from India.<sup>108</sup>

The official NATO guidelines on sharing intelligence with non-NATO member states are extremely stringent: intelligence is only intended for the member states, and therefore cannot be

<sup>101</sup> F.H. van Kappen, 'strategic intelligence and the United Nations', *Militaire Spectator* 170 (2001) 11, p. 595. Also: Bert Bommels, 'Marinier in New York' (*Being a Marine in New York*), *Elsevier*, 30/05/98.

<sup>102</sup> Confidential interview (99).

<sup>103</sup> Robert J. Allen, 'Intelligence Support for Peace Operations', in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, p. 122.

<sup>104</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Lord Owen, 27/01/01.

<sup>106</sup> Paul Johnston, 'No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 12 (1997) 4, p. 111.

<sup>107</sup> Sir David Hannay, 'Intelligence and international agencies', in: Shukman (ed.), *Agents*, pp. 179-180.

<sup>108</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 177.

disclosed to ‘a non-member nation or any international organization containing non-member nations. Whatever different requirements emerge for peacekeeping operations this fundamental principle must be upheld.’<sup>109</sup> In this connection, in a ‘lessons learned’ article, an Irish peacekeeper outlined a fairly idealistic picture of the relationship between peacekeeping and intelligence. In his opinion, intelligence gathering is essential for all peacekeeping operations, but intelligence operations in a UN context must be carried out by teams of various nationalities. He feels, moreover, that gathering intelligence ‘should be controlled and conducted solely at the discretion of the Force Commander’. Consequently, the intelligence must not be gathered for or by the various national intelligence services or the interests of troop-contributing countries. How intelligence would have to be gathered in that case, and what structure is available for the task, this military official at the UN Training School in Ireland does not say.<sup>110</sup>

Another obstacle within the UN is the divergent general attitude to intelligence from one country to another. Some countries reject intelligence activity by the UN or underestimate the importance of intelligence.<sup>111</sup> The dissemination of intelligence between parties is sometimes also hindered for political reasons, which, for instance, accounted for the suppression of intelligence on attacks by ABiH snipers in Sarajevo on their own population.<sup>112</sup>

In spite of the dismissive attitude and culture within the UN towards intelligence, some reasonably serious attempts have nonetheless been made to provide the UN, and especially the DPKO, with better intelligence in peacekeeping operations.

## 7. Intelligence support for UN peacekeeping operations

In the summer of 1992, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali launched his Agenda for Peace, which announced a considerable expansion of the number of UN peace operations. Between 1945 and 1988 there were a total of fourteen such operations, but between May 1988 and October 1993 the number had already risen to twenty. The nature of these UN operations changed significantly over the years, with the environment for soldiers shifting from non-hostile to hostile. This also meant an increasing need for intelligence, the importance of which was recognized by the American government.

In November 1992, President George Bush Sr. announced<sup>113</sup> in an address to the UN General Assembly that his government would start intelligence sharing with the UN with immediate effect. He also said that the Security Council would have to play a more central role in such operations. This shift in policy was a recognition that the UN operations needed considerable intelligence support if they were to have even a reasonable chance of success.

‘such peace enforcement operations would require strategic military and political intelligence for pre-deployment planning; operational intelligence support to deployed UN forces regarding the disposition, capabilities, and intentions of potentially hostile forces; and tactical intelligence to support UN forces that might themselves be engaged in sustained combat’.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> John M. Nomikos, ‘Intelligence Requirements for Peacekeeping Operations’, *RIEAS Papers and Reports*, 03/10/00.

<sup>110</sup> Lt. Colonel Oliver A.K. Macdonald, ‘Peacekeeping Lessons Learned: An Irish Perspective’, *International Peacekeeping*, Vol. 4 (1997) 4, pp. 100-101.

<sup>111</sup> Hugh Smith, ‘Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping’, *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 177.

<sup>112</sup> John Sray, ‘selling the Bosnian Myth’, in: *Foreign Military Studies*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1995 and confidential interviews (9) and (47).

<sup>113</sup> He was Director of Central Intelligence (DCI) from January 1976 to January 1977. See: CIA History Staff, *Directors*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>114</sup> Joseph G. Hays III, ‘Oversight of U.S. Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping Operations’, in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, pp. 435-439. Quote on p. 439.

The first step taken by the Bush administration to put this new policy into effect was the 'launch' of National Security Directive 74, which set down guidelines for more generous intelligence sharing during peacekeeping operations.<sup>115</sup> The Americans established a separate structure for the necessary liaison, and also built in levels for the classification of documents that could be handed over to the UN. The Director of the CIA, Robert Gates, designated the Defense Intelligence Agency as the most important channel for the intelligence support to the UN by the United States in peacekeeping operations. This support was not to be permanent but subject to review on a case-by-case basis. The first UN mission to benefit was the UNTAC operation in Cambodia.<sup>116</sup>

President Clinton inherited this policy from his predecessor, and produced Presidential Review Directive (PRD) 13, in which he expressed support for the more extensive participation of American armed forces in peace operations. Domestic political considerations tripped up this apparent success, however, because the directive met with resistance in Congress and was then withdrawn.<sup>117</sup> This again showed the popularity of UN-bashing in Congress.

Congress felt vindicated by the dramatic events of October 1993, when 18 US Rangers were killed and 78 wounded at Mogadishu in Somalia. This even led to a small rebellion in Congress.<sup>118</sup> James Woolsey, former Director of the CIA, confirmed that matters had indeed gone wrong in Somalia and there were suspicions that American intelligence had been leaked via the UN, enabling the warlord Mohammed Farah Aideed to strike. The sharing of intelligence between the Americans and the Italians had also been known to go wrong. In the absence of a clear policy underlying the sharing of intelligence, decisions were made on the spot. 'It was a verbal decision with no paper moving around', according to Woolsey. In his opinion, a local Chief of Station (COS) could only share intelligence if he or she was duly authorized.

However, there was no clear policy on this point.<sup>119</sup> It would appear that policy was mostly decided in the field, certainly where tactical intelligence was involved. Woolsey suspected that sharing with UNPROFOR was at a low level, going no further than confidential status. He commented that, in the case of a normal peacekeeping operation, there would not actually be very much need for intelligence, but in the case of a war there obviously would. Therefore, according to him, a CIA liaison officer was posted to Zagreb and Sarajevo at UNPROFOR headquarters.<sup>120</sup> However, a senior US intelligence official remarked that the situation described by Woolsey was Somalia in the early 1990's, not the Balkans in mid-1995. By 1995, there was a clear written US policy, thoroughly understood at multiple levels, on the thresholds of information release from US channels into the UN. According to this official, this new policy was aggressively pursued by the most senior leadership.<sup>121</sup>

In any case, the intelligence leaks in Somalia led American Congress one month later to draw up the International Peacekeeping Policy Act of 1993, which among other things proposed curtailing intelligence sharing with the UN. An amendment to the Peace Powers Act of 1994 was also submitted with the same objective in January 1994. It is true that both proposals were never raised for discussion, but the tone in Congress had been set. President Clinton took no notice of this, and in May 1994 he issued Presidential Decision Directive (PDD) 25, which was a revision of his earlier PRD 13. PDD 25 also went against the wishes of Congress by providing for an expansion of intelligence support to the UN.<sup>122</sup>

<sup>115</sup> George Bush Library, FOIA, *National Security Directive 74, Peacekeeping and Emergency Humanitarian Relief Policy*, 24/11/92.

<sup>116</sup> Robert J. Allen, 'Intelligence Support for Peace Operations', in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, p. 117.

<sup>117</sup> See for the text of PRD-13: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pddd13.htm>.

<sup>118</sup> For this, see also: John Gerard Ruggie, 'Peacekeeping and U.S. interests', *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 17 (1994) 4, p. 175.

<sup>119</sup> See for the personal recollections of the COS in Mogadishu: Garrett Jones, 'Working with the CIA', *Parameters*, Winter 2001/2002, pp. 28-39.

<sup>120</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00. For this, see also Chapter 3.

<sup>121</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>122</sup> For a description of the content of PDD-25: <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/pddd13.htm>.

After the Republicans gained a majority in Congress in November 1994, they announced in their Contract with America that they would overrule PDD 25. In its place they wanted to tighten the rules of the game for exchanging intelligence, and felt that this should require at least an official agreement between the President and the UN Secretary-General. It goes without saying that the Republicans knew that the UN would never consent to such an agreement.

A considerable curtailment was also provided for in the Peacekeeping Policy Act of 1995, which the Republicans submitted. However, this bill was provisionally rejected by Congress.<sup>123</sup> A huge commotion broke out in February 1995 about the sharing of US intelligence with the UN. American personnel discovered large quantities of US intelligence documents and classified Imint in open cabinets at a deserted UN office in Mogadishu. This was top-secret material that had been shared by the United States with the UN, but had been left behind unguarded by local UN personnel. This was grist to the Republicans' mill, and resulted in amendment after amendment to associated legislation. In May and June 1995, entire bills were submitted that would go as far as to make handing over US intelligence to the UN almost impossible. The bills were not raised for discussion, partly because Clinton threatened to use a presidential veto, but it was clear that the tide could not be turned if the UN were to become involved in a new scandal about leaking US intelligence. In that case the Democrats would probably also endorse the curtailment of the intelligence support, and public opinion, which until then had not stirred, would likewise start to move.

It was also clear that the American intelligence community could not be 'involved' simultaneously with every crisis in the world. On 2 March 1995 the Clinton administration therefore issued PDD 35, which was an attempt to set priorities in the matter of the intelligence needs of all American services. It identified four priority levels, the highest of which was the gathering of intelligence on indications or warnings of approaching hostilities, crisis management information and support for military operations. The following priorities related to gathering political, military and economic intelligence about countries that were hostile to the United States. The lowest priority was given to intelligence on countries that were unimportant to the United States. The consequences of PDD 35 are discussed below.

The solution opted for seemed at first glance to be ideal, because giving priority to intelligence needs was in itself an excellent starting point. It gave the intelligence community a handle on what information the political leaders wanted to see and it gave the highest priority to supporting crisis operations. It rapidly became apparent, however, that PDD 35 also had significant disadvantages. The intelligence community turned out to be incapable of predicting serious crises. An American Congress study on the subject stated that the intelligence community had responded to PDD 35 by focusing 'resources on the highest priority issues at the expense of maintaining basic coverage on "lower" tier issues'.

The lowest intelligence levels were therefore more or less ignored, because the entire intelligence community concentrated on the most important priorities. Less important intelligence needs were therefore pushed to the background. Even before PDD 35 was issued, the great emphasis of intelligence on acute security issues had proved to be a problem. PDD 35 served only to confirm this situation. It had become apparent at a much earlier stage that this could create problems, for instance in Rwanda and Somalia. These countries were probably on priority level 4, but when both states suddenly shifted to level 1 because of a crisis, the American intelligence community turned out to be poorly prepared.<sup>124</sup> For example, after US troops left for Somalia in 1992, the country continued to be the 18th intelligence priority of the nineteen countries in the area under the responsibility of US Central Command. American ground forces there had virtually no intelligence, and the local CIA refused to provide it. CIA staff sent the intelligence required first to their headquarters in Langley,

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<sup>123</sup> Joseph G. Hays III, 'Oversight of U.S. Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping Operations', in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, pp. 445-449.

<sup>124</sup> Becker, *Coming*, pp. 21-23.



Virginia, where it was decided which intelligence could be sent to the ground forces in Somalia. This process would often take between 12 and 72 hours.<sup>125</sup> A later study of the operations in Somalia indicated that there had been insufficient Humint, and that important ‘intelligence indicators were not assessed and analysed from first principles but were rather conveniently tailored to fit around what was wanted to be believed’.<sup>126</sup>

The question now was whether this problem of being unable to handle an unexpected high priority also occurred in Yugoslavia, and in particular with respect to the political and military situation in Eastern Bosnia. Only after Clinton was elected at the end of 1992 was a more aggressive Bosnia policy introduced, moving the region to the top priority level.<sup>127</sup> The question is whether this happened in time to gather sufficient intelligence. Some experts believe that this was not the case, and that Humint efforts in particular were undertaken far too late. Because building up a properly functioning network often takes months or years, it is likely that this failed to happen in time in Bosnia, and especially in the Republika Srpska. The Humint efforts in Bosnia were only stepped up with the arrival of the first US ground forces.<sup>128</sup>

However, what would appear to have been more crucial were the negative signals from the American Congress, which the American intelligence community would hardly have ignored. In spite of all the measures and President Clinton’s attitude, this is bound to have led to a more restrained policy on sharing intelligence with the UN in peacekeeping operations such as the one in Bosnia. As a result, most countries that were involved could not rely on UN intelligence and were obliged instead to arrange their own, which had to be acquired either by their own activities or via liaison with another country. UNPROFOR therefore had an ill-starred beginning to the war in Bosnia: no intelligence culture within the UN; no organizational structure in the UN itself devoted to active and timely intelligence gathering and the analysis of the intelligence gathered; little intelligence contribution from outside; and finally little willingness to cooperate among foreign intelligence services.

## 8. The Military Information Office (MIO) in Zagreb

Since the UNPROFOR mission, with its peacekeeping character, was essentially a military operation, what is known as a G-2 intelligence staff was set up to provide the Force Commander with intelligence. Zagreb, Sarajevo and Sector North East in Tuzla had similar sections. Because intelligence could not be referred to by name, here too the term ‘military information’ was introduced. The staff of the Military Information Office (MIO) in Zagreb was a multicultural affair and consisted of a large number of different nationalities, but it had no network of sources or agents of its own, and no autonomous resources for gathering intelligence. They were completely dependent on what the UNMO’s and the staff on the various echelons within UNPROFOR reported and on the voluntary intelligence contribution of other states. Initially, this led to intelligence often being gathered along national or allied lines. Informal communication channels were exploited and informal agreements were entered into to gain access to the intelligence obtained.

Even after its wavering start, the MIO never managed to build its own collection capacity: the financial resources, the manpower and the political will were all lacking. In this respect, the MIO could not be considered to be a real intelligence service: the staff were unable to direct the gathering of information. Nonetheless, some collection management was possible, but generally through national or NATO centers and auspices alone, with the exceptions of the unofficial relationship to the UNMO’s and the NGO’s. But there was no direct tasking authority from the MIO in Zagreb to any collection

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<sup>125</sup> Becker, *Coming*, pp. 35-39.

<sup>126</sup> Connaughton, *Intervention*, p. 116.

<sup>127</sup> For this see also Chapters 2 and 4.

<sup>128</sup> Becker, *Coming*, passim.

capacity in the theatre. But nevertheless, some collection did take place under the direction and control of the MIO office in Zagreb, especially through NATO and national resources.<sup>129</sup>

Originally, the UNPROFOR mission was intended for Croatia, and the headquarters were established in Sarajevo. There too, there was absolutely no real intelligence capacity. A staff was hired locally to watch TV and to listen to the news on the radio in order to inform the UNPROFOR command of the latest developments.<sup>130</sup> Little changed when this mission moved to Belgrade on 17 May 1992. Only after the move to Zagreb and the escalation of the war in the summer of 1993 was there any serious attempt to tackle this deficiency, but even then it remained tough going.

The MIO only really got down to work when the first American Deputy G-2 Officer arrived in Zagreb in March 1994. There were between ten and fourteen members of staff under the Spanish G-2 Officer, Colonel Juan Palomar. As well as the American officer, there were representatives of the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Kenya, Denmark, Nepal, Belgium and Sweden. Various other countries, such as Jordan and Poland, were also represented from time to time. The Spanish G-2 Officer was succeeded first by another Spanish soldier Colonel Fidel Ramos and then on 9 January 1995 by the Swedish Colonel Jan-Inge Svensson.

According to a former head of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) of the Royal Netherlands Army who served in UNPROFOR under Force Commander Jean Cot, it was difficult to obtain reliable intelligence in Zagreb. The American Deputy G-2 Officer in Zagreb had his own office where in the beginning no one was admitted. From the American side, little sharing of intelligence took place, but neither did much intelligence arrive, according to this source. The fact that everyone had a so-called blue-beret mentality (a reference to the blue colour of the UN) reinforced the situation, because intelligence was considered 'dirty'.<sup>131</sup>

However, the description of the situation by this Dutch officer pertained to 1994 and this was certainly not the case in 1995. In that period the office of the American Deputy G-2 was always open for other members of the MIO staff. Throughout this period, the Deputy G-2 Officer position was held by Americans. From September 1994 this was LCO Gary Bauleke and from March 1995 onwards (also during the fall of Srebrenica) the officer concerned was Commander Ric Morgan, who had a secure E-mail and secure data net access with the US intelligence community, which kept him thoroughly up-to-date on intelligence. Morgan shared as much as possible of the intelligence acquired in this way with some other staff at the headquarters in Zagreb.<sup>132</sup> However, this was sharing within limits. According to some Unprofor staff he only shared with fellow Americans or some privileged partners, such as the British and Canadians. This caused resentment, not least among personnel of the non-privileged NATO countries, who sometimes felt they were being sidelined.

However, according to an US intelligence source a distorted picture is painted here. The American Deputy G-2 acted under the specific and detailed instructions of his US superiors, based on broad policy guidance from Stuttgart and Washington. Morgan did share to the very limits of his authority. The US intelligence support flowing to the UN in Zagreb and Sarajevo was far, far better in volume, quality and responsiveness than ever before in any other UN undertaking, anywhere in the world. His orders were to share information on sources and methods only with specific parties, including NATO parties, individuals in leadership positions (including the Dutch Chief of Staff, Canadian Deputy Force Commander, the French Force Commander (and French members of his staff), Mr. Akashi (Japan) and Mr. Annan (Ghana) and select members of their staff.

In many cases, the details regarding sources and methods to those specific individuals, exceeded those which could normally be provided to regular NATO channels under then-existing guidelines. The specific instruction from his superiors was that those key decision-makers were to be provided access to information, exactly as though they were American commanders controlling US troops. Morgan had

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<sup>129</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>130</sup> MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>131</sup> Confidential interview (36).

<sup>132</sup> Confidential interview (54).

a dual responsibility to support the leadership as well as the troop contingents. With that in mind, the substantive content of the intelligence was disseminated broadly to other UN parties without any similar restriction. This was done by helping to shape the NATO intelligence flow disseminated via Linked Operational Intelligence Centre Europe (LOCE) network<sup>133</sup> (an intelligence system set up by the NATO countries based on a specially constructed highly-secured communication network), as well as the US products flowing directly to the UN. British and Canadian contributions were similarly most substantial. Also the French contributed. As an aside, MIO staff interviewed could not ever remember a single intelligence report from the Dutch. Even the reports from the released Dutchbat soldiers were extensively edited by Dutch debriefers and staff and relinquished only under protest.<sup>134</sup>

Especially during Operation Storm in August 1995 (the Croatian offensive in the Krajina) members of the MIO felt being sidelined. According to one former MIO staff, clear that the Deputy G-2 Officer had special relations with Croatia, and the American officer was said to have known of the attack well in advance.<sup>135</sup> However, an American intelligence official denied this strongly and some US officials in Zagreb even felt ‘betrayed’ by the US Military Attaché, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Herrick, who seemed to know in advance about the Croatian offensive but apparently did not share this intelligence with his US colleagues.<sup>136</sup> The American opinions and intelligence regarding the launch of the Croatian offensive against the Krajina was shared with Unprofor. Zagreb knew on the basis of this that something was about to happen. He pointed for example to the message of July 7<sup>th</sup> which Akashi forwarded the message to New York. Akashi reported that he was gravely concerned about the dangerous situation in Croatia. The developments could quickly deteriorate in a full scale war. There was an expectation of a renewed Croatian military offensive at ‘practically anytime’. And indeed: US intelligence assessments on July 10<sup>th</sup> indicated that Croatian forces were poised to attack with virtually no advance warning. However, the attack did not actually begin until August 4<sup>th</sup>. The reason for the delay has never been adequately explained.<sup>137</sup>

According to former staff of the MIO in Zagreb, the quality of the local staff was varied. Some were professional intelligence officers, but others often had no operational or intelligence background at all. Their performance was therefore mediocre. What is more, in common with many other missions, some officers were only interested in the financial rewards, and did little work.

Neither was there a culture of debating opposing perceptions or unusual opinions, which would have been beneficial to forming balanced views. This applied not so much to the MIO but in particular to the debates in the UN staff in general. Furthermore, the intelligence officers would often take heed of the prevailing political and military views in their country of origin, which sometimes led to the production of politicized intelligence, or the deliberate disregarding of certain unwelcome issues.

Originally, no input at all came from the UN DPKO and UNPROFOR itself with respect to building up the necessary facilities. The office of the new MIO received only office furniture, telephone connections and a few old PCs. Standard office items were also issued rather frugally, which led to newcomers being advised to bring their own items with them. Moreover, the MIO originally had no connection with the outside world by modem, so that e-mail traffic and Internet access were impossible. Neither did the MIO have any strongboxes or secure rooms, so it was not safe to leave documents there. The office was accessible to everyone throughout the day. Locally hired cleaning personnel could walk in and out unobstructed. Some of the staff assumed that all rooms were bugged and that most discussions were monitored. Only later this situation at UN HQ in Zagreb improved considerably. In 1995, for example, the personal office of the Force Commander, the personal office of the Deputy Force Commander and the office of American Deputy G-2 were regularly checked and confirmed by competent authority to be free of bugs on a recurring basis.

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<sup>133</sup> Another network was BICES: Battlefield Information Collection and Exploitation System.

<sup>134</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>135</sup> R. Theunens, ‘Intelligence en vredesoperaties’ (‘Intelligence and peace operations’), *Militaire Spectator*, 170 (2001) 11, p. 603.

<sup>136</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>137</sup> Confidential information (80).

Moreover, the MIO had no resources of its own to gather intelligence nor the authority to order certain units on the ground, in the air, or at sea to gather intelligence. Most attempts to do so got no further than lower-level UN commanders, who refused on the grounds that the UN does not indulge in intelligence. Some collection management was possible, but generally through national or NATO centers and auspices alone, with the exceptions of the unofficial relationship to the UNMO's and the NGO's. But there was no direct tasking authority from the MIO in Zagreb to any collection capacity in the theatre. The staff also had no secure connections or computer networks for communications traffic, and not even an encrypted telephone for holding secure conversations. The only system was the 'open' UN telephone network, plus a few telephones, which again were connected to the Croatian telephone network. Furthermore, the MIO had no access to external databases. Some members of staff therefore remarked mockingly that they had better access to information at home than in the Military Information Office.<sup>138</sup>

Initially, the MIO had no source of intelligence from outside the region specifically providing a daily or weekly intelligence input. It would even have been impractical to receive daily messages, faxes or telexes from outside the region because the staff had no secure connections at their disposal. For this reason, the field of vision at the MIO remained limited to what arrived from UN sources, and sometimes via national lines. The MIO functioned mainly on the basis of the daily and weekly reporting of the units in the field and from the United Nations Military Observers (UNMOs) who were military observers under direct orders from the UN headquarters in New York.<sup>139</sup> The quality and quantity of the information varied considerably, and depended greatly on the capacities and expertise of the person providing it.

Experience taught the MIO that it took two to three months before a 'fresh' battalion would start to deliver high quality intelligence. In view of the fact that most units were relieved after six months, quality was under pressure. There was also a language problem: the official language was English, but this created difficulties for some units.

The best source of information for the MIO turned out to be the UNMOs, whose headquarters in Zagreb had its own G-2 section. A former prominent UNMO officer went so far as to assert that these UNMO headquarters generally had better intelligence than the UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb: 'We were living among the population.' However, this was not the only reason. This UNMO had once compared the information positions with a member of the UNPROFOR G-2 staff in Zagreb and concluded that the UNMOs' information was much more usable than that of UNPROFOR. Filtering took place at many more levels within UNPROFOR: 'I saw documents that had only been through a selection once. At UNPROFOR there were many more layers of selection for information', this UNMO officer said.

Furthermore, the UNPROFOR G-2 staff in Zagreb dealt with the different national capitals, which (whether or not via the UN Security Council) requested a wide variety of information. Answering these requests formed an additional burden. According to a senior UNMO official, this is a permanent problem where intelligence is concerned, and it is exacerbated because political desires may influence the flow of information: 'Information only has an effect if people are open to it.'

At UNPROFOR, according to this UNMO officer, this was definitely the case: 'At UNPROFOR the political reality mainly dictated which information was reported upwards.' As an example he mentioned the observance and reporting of shelling incidents, which was a regular UNMO task. 'If we said that Muslims were shelling themselves, this was not accepted by UNPROFOR, for political reasons.'

As a specific example he mentioned the mortar attack on the water distribution point in Sarajevo on 28 August 1995, which had been the trigger for the later NATO air strikes. The UNMOs

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<sup>138</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (45), (44) and (47).

<sup>139</sup> For this, see also: Paul Johnston. 'No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 12 (1997) 4, p. 109.

had indications that this attack had indeed been carried out by Bosnian Muslims themselves. However, all associated evidence was brushed aside by American officers in Sarajevo. A British colonel of the Special Air Services (SAS), who investigated the matter together with a senior UNMO official, then passed on the contrary findings to a British daily newspaper.<sup>140</sup>

At a later stage, the MIO was reorganized in April 1995 by Svensson who also asked New York for more manpower. The UN then approved to strengthen the analyst capacity and the organization in Zagreb was tightened up. Svensson then had a staff of 13 nationalities, which spoke 11 different languages.<sup>141</sup> After that the MIO not only observed the military situation, but also assembled information on political, economic and humanitarian matters. According to Smith, a standing joke in the MIO until then had been that: 'If you understand the situation in the former Yugoslavia, you must have been poorly briefed.'<sup>142</sup>

In April 1995, some members of the staff of the MIO were finally given access to the intelligence stored in the Linked Operational Intelligence Centre Europe (LOCE) network. LOCE was used to obtain American Imint and to exchange the results of electronic and other intelligence. The situation in other military information offices was sometimes similarly poor. The G-2 officer at the headquarters of Sector North East in Tuzla, Major Knut Eilertsen of Norway, had absolutely no access to LOCE, and he was the only intelligence officer there. Visits to units or areas were impossible because of the shortage of staff. Eilertsen therefore hoped for a speedy expansion of his G-2 section, as he expressed during a visit by Dutch soldiers. The Dutch Chief of Staff of Sector North East, Colonel J. Engelen, had to admit frankly after this visit that the provision of information in the UN was minimal.<sup>143</sup>

In 1994 and 1995, the access to 'the rest of the world' at the Zagreb office of the G-2 staff consisted of a few daily newspapers and a TV that could pick up the European broadcasts of the news station CNN and the music station MTV. The latest news 'as seen by CNN' and the latest video clips were therefore the only contact with the region outside the Balkans. This is how the MIO discovered that the CNN news was not free of an anti-Serb bias. During the Gorazde crisis in April/May 1994, CNN showed pictures of the VRS attack on the enclave, which surprised the staff, who wondered how CNN could have acquired the pictures. What they found even stranger was that a French APC was visible in the film pictures in Gorazde, because they knew that no French units were stationed there. It transpired later that the pictures concerned had been recorded several years earlier, when the ABiH were engaged in driving out the Bosnian Serbs from the region.<sup>144</sup>

Despite the fact that the MIO was inadequately equipped, the staff attempted to make the best of things. The MIO had three departments in Zagreb. One was responsible for keeping an eye on the Orders of Battles of the different warring factions and updating a complete map overview. The second department was responsible for analysing the situation on the ground. This covered a wide spectrum of subjects, such as weapons imports, local skirmishes, food shortages, thefts and attacks on convoys. The third department fulfilled all the administrative functions and was responsible for some degree of management as regards the intelligence efforts. Moreover, there turned out to be no archives from the periods 1991, 1992 and 1993, so that all the experience gained and earlier 'lessons learned' were unavailable to the new MIO team (since 1994).<sup>145</sup>

Again the work of the MIO staff only really got under way when the first American Deputy G-2 Officer arrived in Zagreb. The staff then held a briefing every morning between 7.30 and 8.00 for the officer responsible for operations (in military terms known as the G-3). The briefing was open to UNMOs, NGO's and various aid organizations, such as the International Red Cross (ICRC) and the

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<sup>140</sup> Confidential interview (44).

<sup>141</sup> Interview with Jan-Inge Svensson, 15/11/02 and E-mail Jan-Inge Svensson to the author, 26/11/02.

<sup>142</sup> Smith, *New Cloak. Old Dagger*, p. 210.

<sup>143</sup> MoD, *CRST, Morning Briefing, No. 378*, G-2 Cap. Hagenars to HINL, no. CBST/941, 15/09/94.

<sup>144</sup> Collection NIOD (3).

<sup>145</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (45) and (47).

UNHCR, the UN's organization for refugees. They discussed the current intelligence situation and provided an overview of the acts of war. The inclusion of aid organizations was a conscious choice, because they were often an important source of intelligence for the MIO, both through official reports, and unofficially through personal contacts. For instance, in the spring of 1994, the UNHCR representative in Gorazde was the first to report VRS troop movements around the enclave. NGO staffs were therefore briefed on a near-weekly basis and they provided extremely valuable information, both in-theatre and also on strategic issues of importance in areas such as Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>146</sup>

In addition, the MIO provided a regular briefing for the Force Commander, which was attended by the Deputy Force Commander, the Chief of Staff, the Head of Civil Affairs and other UNPROFOR staff members. Both a daily and a weekly information report were produced by a British military official. Information from the reports was used in turn by the Force Commander and Akashi in their reporting to the DPKO in New York.

The MIO produced Daily Defense Information Summaries, Information Reports and Information Summaries. The former mostly contained operational information, while the latter were often more analytic in nature. Analyses for internal use could be found in the Inter Office Memoranda. The intelligence input improved considerably as a result of the arrival and working methods of the American Deputy G-2 Officer. Via highly secured communication links and via his embassy in Zagreb, a steadily increasing supply of American intelligence then got under way. The other MIO staff members, in so far as they came from NATO member states, likewise received the American intelligence via the NATO LOCE network and from him, and this intelligence was also handed over to NATO.

Set against this background, the statement made by General Bertrand Janvier is quite remarkable. The French Force Commander claimed during his first hearing before the French parliamentary investigation committee that he received *no* NATO intelligence, because he was not in Bosnia on behalf of NATO. The question was why he would not have received intelligence from NATO, while the British General Rupert Smith and the Canadian Deputy Force Commander Barry Ashton clearly did. Janvier explained that he was not in the line of command and that he therefore had no access to NATO intelligence. 'That is the sad truth', according to the French general, who did admit to having received intelligence from the French military intelligence service, the *Direction de Renseignement Militaire* (DRM). This service also made use of French officers in Zagreb who reported to it.<sup>147</sup>

Janvier's statement is surprising indeed. We must assume that Janvier, like Akashi's statement above about Srebrenica, was not speaking literally. In fact, the French general definitely received NATO intelligence via the US Deputy G-2 Officer in Zagreb. Actually, what this officer delivered on a daily basis to Janvier was US intelligence, not NATO intelligence. Some of what the Deputy G-2 provided to Janvier may have also been released to NATO channels, but generally he did not spend time telling Janvier things that he would hear from the NATO liaison officer, or his own staff. Janvier's time was always at a premium, and the Deputy G-2 avoided redundancy.<sup>148</sup> Of course, France did not form part of the military structure of NATO, but Paris did participate in the NATO operation over Bosnian air space (Operation Deny Flight) and in so doing gained access to intelligence. At the same time, the French general had permanent and direct access via the national intelligence cell in Zagreb to intelligence produced by the NATO member states.<sup>149</sup> So, Janvier was very economical with the truth when he claimed that he did not receive NATO intelligence.

Alongside the dissemination and analysis of intelligence, the MIO also made recommendations on the securing of links (Communications Security, 'ComSec'), but these were generally ignored. For

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<sup>146</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>147</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: report sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, no. 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de M. Bernard Janvier, 25/01/01, pp. 106-139.

<sup>148</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>149</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (12), (44), (45) and (47).

example, the following is contained in the UNMOs' Post Mission Report on the period 1992-1996 regarding secure links: 'that was a real disaster for UNPROFOR/UNPF' [UNPF was the new name of UNPROFOR after 31 March 1995]. Both the UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb and that of the UNMOs used insecure land lines for their daily reporting, and 'for that period UNMO (and UNPF in general) has become unwillingly (let's hope) "the second intelligence agency" for the Croatian Army.'

The satellite links that were used by UNPROFOR were also an easy target for the warring factions' monitoring services. Openness of communication traffic had until that time always been considered one of the essential principles of a peacekeeping operation. One participant remarked: 'It is right for an academic peacekeeping operation, but for such an active operation like UNPROFOR it is not. There is a strong belief that it should be reconsidered on the basis of sad experience of this Mission.' The report again indicated that all the warring factions had captured or confiscated much UNPROFOR communication equipment. The VRS, ABiH and the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Sigint units were therefore in a position to intercept UNMO communication traffic 24 hours a day, and they regarded it 'as the most reliable source of information'.<sup>150</sup>

The attitude of high-ranking UNPROFOR officials towards the MIO was unclear, and differed greatly from one individual to another. Another problem was that some countries wished to maintain command over their own UNPROFOR units through national lines. The result was that 'the overall UNPROFOR command process was deemed disorganized and unable to make use of the information supplied to it by the intelligence process'.<sup>151</sup> An MIO intelligence officer agreed with this observation in some areas, but felt that the Dutch G-3, Colonel H. De Jonge, as well as his cadre of Canadian officers understood the importance of intelligence very well, and were able to absorb it effectively for planning and operations purposes. But other elements of the staff did indeed not do nearly as well. The political office, headed by a Russian, Colonel V. Ratso also dealt with the intelligence provided to him very well. Furthermore, the UNMO's, regardless of nationality, always absorbed and utilized the intelligence provided to them exceptionally well.<sup>152</sup> And according to a former MIO staff member, Akashi was an eager consumer of intelligence, and had a preference for consulting personally with the briefer while referring to detailed charts.

There was also useful contact between the MIO and Akashi's Analysis and Assessment Unit, and information was regularly exchanged. The Force Commander in 1994 and 1995, and later advisor to negotiator Carl Bildt, the French General De Lapresle, was also a fervent intelligence consumer, as was the head of the Civil Affairs Department in Zagreb, Sergio Vieira de Mello, and General Rose, the Bosnia-Herzegovina Commander in Sarajevo.

Others were apparently less interested in intelligence, and some senior officers even openly expressed their opposition to the use of intelligence from outside the mission area. According to a former MIO official, in early 1994 the Canadian Deputy Force Commander General John MacInnes objected to the use of any intelligence from outside. He even told some members of the MIO team that they were only allowed to use information produced by UNPROFOR or UNMOs themselves because he did not permit the use of intelligence from national sources.<sup>153</sup>

#### *The intelligence organization of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) in Sarajevo*

The Chief of Staff under General Rose, General A.P.P.M. van Baal, confirmed that the UN did not indulge in intelligence. Rose did have his own intelligence channels through the British SAS. Van Baal served from 24 February to 1 September 1994 in Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) in Sarajevo, and formally had 27 positions on his staff for intelligence officers. These were only partially filled, however. When he arrived in Sarajevo, there were still five officers who had little to do. This was

<sup>150</sup> Confidential collection (5), *UNMO in UNPROFOR/UNPF, Post Mission Report 1992-1996*, Zagreb 1996, p. 29.

<sup>151</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 87.

<sup>152</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>153</sup> Confidential collection (3).

evident, for example, from the fact that little had changed in the Order of Battle Book since 1992.<sup>154</sup> Van Baal was directly concerned with the US involvement in Sarajevo and the associated tensions between the British and Americans. He saw many examples of this, sometimes with his own eyes, because the US embassy was based next to his BHC office.

‘suddenly we saw many Americans appear, including the former SACEUR Galvin, who had been engaged to build up the army of the Muslim-Croat Federation. My British intelligence contacts said that the other Americans were CIA. Some of them were in civilian clothes and others in uniform’.

Van Baal also had Americans on his staff, including one who was responsible for the helicopter operations, but also an American who officially worked as a liaison officer for humanitarian operations (food drops), ‘but actually he only watched what we did to pass it on to his counterparts’. There were also CIA officers who had tried to get into Van Baal’s staff, but he had managed to keep them out. American generals were also constantly arriving on visits, which, according to Van Baal, had no other objective than to urge a harder approach. On this point there was a great difference between these generals stationed in Europe and their more cautious colleagues in the Pentagon. According to Van Baal, there was also a difference of opinion with the Americans over the dual key procedure for Close Air Support (for this, see Chapter 2 of Part III of the Srebrenica report): ‘They had absolutely no grasp of the fact that in the event of a wholesale air strike the revenge would be directed at the UN’. According to Van Baal, General Rose once commented: ‘we will bomb as soon as American troops are here on the ground. Then I will skip the dual key.’<sup>155</sup>

J.W. Brinkman succeeded Van Baal in Sarajevo and was Chief of Staff of BHC from September 1994 to March 1995. He confirmed the US influence. According to Brinkman, the head of the G-2 section in Sarajevo was an American. ‘It was obvious what his role was’. BHC gathered no intelligence itself but received intelligence from the participating countries. According to Brinkman, some countries, such as the United Kingdom and France, had their own Comint in the region, but they rarely gave away the information obtained.<sup>156</sup>

From February 1995, Colonel A. de Ruiter became the new Chief of Staff under General Rupert Smith. He was also able to confirm the heavy US involvement because BHC was still physically located next to the embassy. The ambassador and his staff paid regular visits, during which the staff would almost immediately go through to the G-2 section. De Ruiter actually had a quarrel with an American major, because De Ruiter felt that only blue berets (UN personnel) should be allowed to walk around. According to De Ruiter, all other people were welcome, provided they reported to him. This helped somewhat, but the American officers and diplomats continued to visit the G-2 section all the time.

The head of the G-2 section was also an American, Brian Powers. An interesting development came when Powers had to be replaced, and numerically it was the turn of the French to supply a head of the G-2 section. However, in the end it was another American who took over - the Frenchman was sidelined and appointed second-in-command. This involved considerable discussion between the two countries. De Ruiter felt that the choice had been deliberate.

Since the UN had no intelligence network of its own, the neighbours (the US embassy) were to become one of the key sources of the information that UNPROFOR received. However, that reporting was provided to the UN at large, but rather to specific individuals in positions of leadership in the UN in Sarajevo. Meanwhile, the embassy received information from UNPROFOR on the state of affairs in the operational area. The fact is that, in the intelligence world, the *quid pro quo* principle (‘this for that’)

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<sup>154</sup> Interview with A.P.P.M. van Baal, 27/05/98.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> Interview with J.W. Brinkman, 11/10/99.



played an important role. For this reason, the head of the G-2 section in Sarajevo had to continue to be an American.<sup>157</sup>

*The levels of intelligence at the Military Information Office in Zagreb*

The absence of its own intelligence network and the lack of capabilities meant it was possible to distinguish various intelligence levels at the MIO in Zagreb.<sup>158</sup> First there was 'the UN MIO', as envisaged by New York. As stated above, its facilities and resources were limited, which resulted in a second level of activities, based on the links with the nations' own intelligence services and the input from them. Some staff members had direct connections with their home country, usually via the secure links at their own embassies, or their home country had its own intelligence headquarters in the region itself. The United States, France, Canada and the United Kingdom opted for their own National Intelligence Cell in Pleso, close to Zagreb. The staff of the MIO regularly exchanged intelligence with that organization.

A third level of activities was based on allied intelligence liaison relationships. This mainly meant input from the long-established CANUKUS network, whose name is derived from the first letters of the participating countries: Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States. If an MIO briefer (who would usually be American, British or Canadian) could not answer specific questions from Janvier or Akashi, there were always resources, which could be queried for a response. This happened (certainly in 1995) when Imint was made available to the highest policy makers in Zagreb, although this was not a regular occurrence.

If the national authorities deemed it necessary, important intelligence was sometimes also passed on without a specific underlying request. According to an insider, some representatives of Western services took this to great lengths, and sometimes exceeded their mandates. However, they did put the importance of a properly functioning MIO first. The MIO also received much intelligence through the Monitoring Close Air Support Centre in Zagreb, the liaison cell for contacts between Zagreb and the Fifth Allied Air Force of NATO in Vicenza. Only MIO staff from NATO member states had access to this operations centre.<sup>159</sup>

It is a stubborn myth that NATO has an independent intelligence capacity. NATO's intelligence section is a department that is completely dependent on the intelligence input of the member states. This was evident, for example, from the informal and indirect contacts through a national intelligence line of the MIO with the intelligence staff in the NATO armed forces headquarters (in military terms, SHAPE) in Bergen/Mons. It had already come to the attention of MIO staff that many NATO reports were identical to their own, even down to the choice of words. On a visit to Zagreb, NATO staff officers praised the work of the MIO to the American Deputy G-2 Officer. They were extremely surprised to learn that the daily reporting that they read was produced by a Non-Commissioned Officer with the rank of sergeant, whose spelling was later checked by a captain in Zagreb.

Some troop-contributing nations realized that intelligence officers were badly needed Bosnia and so they sent intelligence personnel to Bosnia themselves. UN headquarters in New York never requested these personnel, but once they were in the area the officers concerned were used intensively. Someone with the appropriate security clearances could gain access to intelligence material that could not have been used otherwise. This did occasionally give rise to bizarre situations within UNPROFOR. For instance, a Canadian peacekeeper with a NATO security clearance received American satellite photos, but he was not allowed to show them to his UN commander, because he was French. However, some are convinced that this must have happened before 1995.

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<sup>157</sup> Interview with J.A.C. De Ruiter, 29/06/00.

<sup>158</sup> Interview with Barry Ashton, 30/05/00.

<sup>159</sup> Confidential interview (16).

In Sector North East (SNE) of UNPROFOR in Tuzla, this led to the Danish deputy commander being forbidden to share the intelligence that he received through NATO with his Swedish commander,<sup>160</sup> because Sweden was not a member of NATO. The rule within NATO is that some sorts of intelligence are specifically released to NATO channels under the treaty agreement but they will not be disseminated by any NATO member to any non-NATO member. The idea is that if the Danes want to release their intelligence to a non-NATO member, they have to make that decision for themselves, and not have for example the Greeks decide for them. That's exactly the way the treaty reads, and most NATO countries adhere to it. The Swedish colonel G. Arlefalk, who was commander of the Swedish battalion with a Danish tank company in Tuzla from 30 March to 14 October 1995, was later confronted with exactly the same problem. He was extremely dissatisfied with the information that reached him through UN channels, because it was not accurate enough. The news station CNN was the source of information that he used most. Later he could sometimes access additional information that came through NATO channels to his Norwegian deputy, but formally and officially he should not have been allowed to see this intelligence. As a commander he was also not allowed to enter the room where the intelligence it arrived.<sup>161</sup> On the other hand: one might wonder why would he need to enter the room where NATO cryptographic equipment was kept? Was this somehow crucial to his performance as a commander? After all, he received the NATO intelligence.

## 9. Conclusions

The final assessment of the difficult relationship between intelligence and the UN is actually fairly simple to formulate. The UN 'does not collect, process and disseminate intelligence in the directed and comprehensive way that major powers do as a matter of course'.<sup>162</sup> According to the military advisor of the Secretary-General of the UN, Van Kappen, the UN is neither willing nor able to properly produce a sound, reliable and independent intelligence product. This limitation is rooted in the structure of the organization.<sup>163</sup> Apart from the fact that the UN does not wish to take responsibility for active intelligence gathering in peacekeeping operations, and is therefore completely dependent on what member states are prepared to supply (which by the way also applies to NATO), the aversion to intelligence at the UN sometimes takes on ill-advised forms.

For instance, the events in Rwanda demonstrated that a local commander was not allowed to make use of highly sensitive intelligence.<sup>164</sup> In December 1993, the Canadian Force Commander, General Romeo Dallaire, managed, through Humint, to gain access to highly explosive intelligence on a genocide plan, including information on secret weapons stores. General Dallaire had a Kigali sector commander, Colonel Luc Marchal of the Belgian Army, someone who had served for five years in Zaire. On 10 January 1994, a senior figure made contact with Marchal. He sought political asylum because he had received orders from the Hutu leadership to draw up plans for the extermination of the Tutsis. The source said that although he was a Hutu, he could not carry out his orders because it was against his principles. The informant told Marchal of the location of a major weapons cache containing at least 135 weapons. The man was prepared to go to the arms cache himself that night if he and his family were placed under UN protection. Marchal told Dallaire of his meeting.

Although Dallaire held certain reservations, he informed Major-General Maurice Baril, Military Adviser to the Secretary-General in New York: 'It is our intention to take action (by means of a cordon and search) within the next 36 hours with a possible H Hour of Wednesday (12 January) at dawn (local)'.<sup>165</sup> Dallaire's signal to Baril should have received rigorous attention but it was signed off without

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<sup>160</sup> Confidential collection (3).

<sup>161</sup> Interview with G. Arlefalk, 18/05/00.

<sup>162</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 174.

<sup>163</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'strategic intelligence and the United Nations', *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 597.

<sup>164</sup> For a description of the events: Connaughton, *Military Intervention and Peacekeeping*, pp. 153-158.

<sup>165</sup> FOIA, State Department, Code Cable Dallaire to Baril/DPKO, No. 2052, 11/01/94. See also: Off *The Lion*, pp. 69 - 70.

any indication of action taken. The immediate effect had been to deny Dallaire permission to conduct the proposed cordon and search. 'They refused', said Marchal, 'because UNAMIR was deployed under a Chapter VI mandate, traditional peacekeeping. New York argued that a cordon and search was an offensive operation for which permission would not be granted'. The Secretary-General was out of UN Headquarters for much of January and was not to learn of the signal and recognise its significance until three years later. New York withheld permission for a military operation to capture the weapons. Once the massacres had started, General Dallaire had neither the resources nor the mandate to prevent the planned genocide.<sup>166</sup> The advisor to the Secretary-General, Iqbal Riza, later explained that this was due to a feeling of 'not Somalia again' in New York, with which he referred to the fear in New York that peacekeepers would be killed.<sup>167</sup>

The UN attitude towards active intelligence gathering in peacekeeping operations can be understood in the light of a long-standing anti-intelligence culture, but nonetheless it can hardly be considered responsible. The increasingly complexity of the situations in which peacekeepers have to operate, such as internal conflicts in UN member states, means that there is actually a growing need for intelligence. The author David Charters states in no uncertain terms that 'intelligence is central to the effectiveness of peacekeeping in the new conflict environment'.<sup>168</sup> Van Kappen is convinced that the lack of strategic intelligence was an important cause of the failure of a number of UN operations.<sup>169</sup> In doing so, he raises a problem that the UN, as an international organization, has so far been unable to solve in a structured way.

The anarchic or almost anarchic situations which have created this increasing demand for more and better intelligence are at the same time making it more difficult to acquire and disseminate intelligence. The rapidly changing situations and alliances on the ground are also ensuring that intelligence gathered by observers on the spot is rapidly out-of-date. Even the 'old' established intelligence services have the greatest difficulty in keeping up with these developments. The UN must therefore, according to the author Hugh Smith, formulate a clear answer in the short term to the question of which role intelligence should play in future peacekeeping operations, and perhaps also in preventive diplomacy. After all, he argues, there happens to be a great need for strategic intelligence in order to understand the political and military situation between the warring parties before the UN becomes directly involved. There is also a great demand for operational intelligence, which is needed to ensure the most effective deployment of resources and manpower for the execution of the mandate. This is especially important with regard to issues that have a fairly fluid political or military context. Finally, tactical intelligence is necessary for the support of ground forces in performing their peacekeeping tasks, such as monitoring a ceasefire or a suspension of hostilities.<sup>170</sup> The American Kenneth Allard, who carried out a study of the peacekeeping operation in Somalia, also arrives at the conclusion that 'intelligence is as vital to the success of a peace operation as it is to any other military activity'.<sup>171</sup>

The brief history of the relationship between intelligence and the UN outlined above shows it to be a relationship fraught with difficulties. In any case, it rapidly became clear to the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Army (MIS/Army) that they should expect nothing of the UN. In 1995, the memorandum 'Intelligence Needs of the Ministry of Defence' rightly observed that the lack of sufficient security guarantees caused great reluctance among the countries that

<sup>166</sup> David A. Charters, 'Out of the Closet: Intelligence Support for Post-Modernist Peacekeeping', in: *The Pearson Papers*, no. 4, *Intelligence and Peacekeeping*, Halifax, 1999, p. 52. See also the documents that were declassified on 20/08/01 on: <http://www.gwu.edu>.

<sup>167</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 275.

<sup>168</sup> David A. Charters, 'Out of the Closet: Intelligence Support for Post-Modernist Peacekeeping', *The Pearson Papers*, No. 4, *Intelligence and Peacekeeping*, Halifax, 1999, p. 61.

<sup>169</sup> F.E. van Kappen, 'strategic intelligence and the United Nations', *Militaire Spectator* Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 594.

<sup>170</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 175.

<sup>171</sup> Hartcock, *The Peace Operations*, p. 41.

participated in UN operations to issue intelligence to the UN or the nations participating in UN operations.<sup>172</sup>

According to the author Paul Johnston, UNPROFOR ultimately enjoyed a ‘fairly comprehensive and smoothly working intelligence organization’.<sup>173</sup> This assessment is debatable, and was not shared by former staff of the MIO in Zagreb.<sup>174</sup> It must be concluded from the analysis presented of the set-up, structure, working method, intelligence input and output, as well as capabilities, resources and infrastructure, that the MIO was never able to function as effectively as a professional G-2 staff would have been able to during an extensive and complex military operation. ‘The key to good intelligence output is all source assessment’, according to the British author Andrew Rathmell.<sup>175</sup> However, there was no sign of this at the MIO in Zagreb or the other G-2 staffs of the UN organizations in BHC in Sarajevo or SNE in Tuzla. Other former staff of the MIO confirmed this picture in interviews: the MIO never held any all-source intelligence capability at any level during the crisis in Bosnia.<sup>176</sup> This can be explained as follows. All source analysts first require all-source intelligence. This was never available to the analysts at the Zagreb MIO: far from it. Second, all-source intelligence analysts take years to groom and train. This was never envisioned for the MIO at Zagreb. Third, the communications infrastructure must be in place to put such intelligence into the hands of battalion commanders and their subordinates in near real time. No such infrastructure existed. Finally, the consumer must understand the value, and be able to utilize the product effectively. No such awareness existed or was likely to come into being. The UN architecture lacked the communications resources, personnel, training, intelligence sources, development time and awareness to grow anything remotely resembling all-source intelligence. In fact, as has been pointed out, the senior UN leadership had no interest in intelligence at all, much less developing an advanced capability like all source intelligence center.

Johnston neglects to mention many problems and obstacles, such as insufficient financial resources, the unwillingness of most troop-contributing nations to exchange intelligence with non-NATO allies, the question of who determines the tasking, and which official draws up the requirements to be set on the intelligence. A subsequent foreign internal investigation revealed that intelligence efforts for the benefit of the UNPROFOR commanders had been insufficient. As a consequence, the UN was ‘rarely able to predict intentions of the warring factions’. Although there is no doubt that much intelligence was available, the intelligence operation of UNPROFOR lacked a communal point of coordination. Much intelligence, especially human intelligence, was therefore lost.<sup>177</sup>

The absence of a good intelligence structure within UNPROFOR also deprived the leading political and military policymakers and UN headquarters in New York of a good view of the developments in Bosnia. According to the Military Advisor to Boutros-Ghali, Van Kappen, there were no agreements on exchange with the UN of intelligence gathered by Western countries on Bosnia. In other words, the normal intelligence process was missing. It was hardly surprising, therefore, that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Akashi, later made suggestions to improve this situation in the future.<sup>178</sup>

Ultimately the question is whether the use of intelligence and active intelligence gathering in UN peacekeeping missions actually are such formidable hurdles. It is obvious that warring factions will not agree to special operations by UN commandos behind the lines. But there will be less resistance to

<sup>172</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army. CASS no. 49*, Dossier DB reports, Letter + Appendix I, no. DIS/95/24.1/1486, 22/06/95.

<sup>173</sup> Paul Johnston. ‘No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 12 (1997) 4, p. 110.

<sup>174</sup> Thomas Quiggin, Response to ‘No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 13 (1998) 4, pp. 203-207.

<sup>175</sup> Andrew Rathmell. ‘Privatising intelligence’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XI (1998) 2, p. 203.

<sup>176</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (44), (45), (47) and (54).

<sup>177</sup> Confidential collection (6).

<sup>178</sup> Interview with Y. Akashi, 29/11/99.

verification flights by unmanned espionage aircraft, such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), provided the UN monitors *all* warring factions. The combatants will also find supervision through intelligence easier to accept if they know that all parties are subject to the same strict supervision regime. This can have a stabilizing effect. The situation was more difficult in Bosnia, where UNPROFOR was often seen as an organization that took sides with the Bosnian Muslims. Eriksson points out that the UN's response to ABiH operations from the eastern enclaves was less 'hard' than its response to operations carried out by the VRS.<sup>179</sup>

Hugh Smith feels that 'the need for intelligence is being increasingly felt by both the UN and by states contributing to peacekeeping operations. Particularly in more complex and fluid situations, intelligence will be crucial in achieving the goals of the mission as laid down by the UN Security Council.' This need has grown steadily, and Smith believes that it will continue to do so in the future, because 'peacekeepers are liable to find themselves in countries in which no government is in undisputed control, social order has broken down or is on the point of collapse. Sometimes hostilities are under way or imminent, and the use of force against peacekeepers is a manifest possibility'.<sup>180</sup>

Several Force Commanders and Deputy Force Commanders who were quoted in this introductory chapter concluded that during their UNPROFOR period they had no usable and timely intelligence at their disposal. They were therefore of the opinion that the UN Secretariat in New York needs an independent intelligence analysis unit, because otherwise the organization will not be able to fulfil its tasks within the framework of preventive diplomacy or peacekeeping. An US intelligence official agreed that the infrastructure in Zagreb was far from ideal in providing timely, useable intelligence. Security was always a pain, and finding some quiet corner to speak to the decision-maker was often very difficult. Apart from that, none of the crucial intelligence came from UN sources, and most of it could not be conveyed within the UN communications architecture. Commanders in Zagreb (and Sarajevo) were unable to convey key pieces of intelligence or even operational information securely to their field commanders who had an immediate need to know it.<sup>181</sup>

The UN is now sometimes forced to intervene as a result of provocation or manipulation by one of the warring parties (sometimes supported by the press). For instance, an effective disinformation campaign by the Bosnian Muslims in April 1994 during the siege of Gorazde provoked NATO air strikes - an excellent example of manipulation of the UN by one of the warring factions, and one which could possibly have been prevented by independent analysis.<sup>182</sup> The lack of regular intelligence gathering by UNPROFOR in Bosnia led to a situation in which various international and national intelligence and security services took matters into their own hands. The undesirable consequences for the peacekeeping operation briefly outlined above were innumerable.

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<sup>179</sup> Pär Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 17.

<sup>180</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, pp. 174-175.

<sup>181</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>182</sup> Robert J. Allen, 'Intelligence Support for Peace Operations', Pickert, *Intelligence*, pp. 114-115.

## Chapter 2

# The Western intelligence community and the war in Bosnia

‘America’s allies have long complained that it is particularly mean with its intelligence.’<sup>183</sup>

Bosnia was an intelligence theme park’.<sup>184</sup>

### 1. Introduction

The previous chapter contended that the United Nations has always had a wait-and-see or even a dismissive attitude to active intelligence gathering in peacekeeping operations. This was also the case during the war in the former Yugoslavia. It is therefore little surprise that on his departure from Bosnia, the UN commander General Lewis MacKenzie’s experiences with UNPROFOR concerning the application and use of intelligence were, to put it mildly, not particularly good:

‘I was also upset that I had to get my intelligence from the BBC. The UN was still following its outdated rules that precluded our even saying the word ‘intelligence’, let alone producing it. Here we were, almost 300 kilometers from the nearest semi-secure border, and we scarcely had the foggiest notion what was going on around us’.<sup>185</sup>

This quotation illustrates again that the UN had not prepared sufficiently in terms of active intelligence gathering for the war in the former Yugoslavia, and in particular, for the war in Bosnia. This chapter raises the question of whether the same was true of the Western intelligence community (the assembled Western intelligence and security services). We will consider whether, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, these services were sufficiently prepared for that war, both mentally and in terms of resources. According to some authors, this was not the case. Andrew Rathmell had the following comment: ‘Western intelligence bureaucracies built up during the Cold War have changed remarkably little since the disappearance of their main enemy, the Soviet Union.’<sup>186</sup> We will discuss whether the picture he outlines is a fair reflection of the reality. Section 2 will deal comprehensively with the position of these services after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Attention was paid for many years to the perceived threat from the East and that was where all technical and other resources were focused. Now, suddenly, a different type of conflict demanded attention, and the question was whether these intelligence services were capable of providing it.

If intelligence services have little or no intelligence on certain political and military developments or on people in a certain region, an appeal is usually made to their fellow services. An exchange of intelligence then takes place: mostly on quid pro quo basis (‘this for that’). Section 3 discusses this international intelligence liaison or exchange. We will discuss what precisely this exchange involves, why states exchange intelligence with each other, what forms of liaison exist and whether such an exchange automatically arises from alliances of many years’ standing, such as between NATO allies. Section 4 will answer the question of whether the intelligence machines of UNPROFOR’s and

<sup>183</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>184</sup> Richard Aldrich quoted in: Alexandra Poolos, ‘Yugoslavia: Dutch Srebrenica Report Reveals Role of Western Intelligence Services in Bosnian War, *RFE/RL*, 26/04/02.

<sup>185</sup> MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>186</sup> Andrew Rathmell. ‘Privatising intelligence’, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XI (1998) 2, p. 199.

NATO's most important troop-contributing nations were prepared for the war in Bosnia, and whether UNPROFOR was able to rely on intelligence support from NATO or from individual troop-contributing nations. Consideration will be given to the associated problems and the attempts made to overcome them. Section 5 presents the conclusions to this chapter.

## 2. The Western intelligence mindset

Publications and interviews indicate that officials of Western intelligence services were confronted with a problem that was recurring and difficult to solve: the general attitude and state of mind with respect to intelligence after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The international intelligence community traditionally had an East-West mentality. The technical infrastructure was also mainly East-West oriented. The intelligence image of the former enemy built up by NATO over these years was 'relatively' simple: the political and military policy of the Soviet Union and its allies was reasonably stable, as was the military doctrine of the Red Army and the Warsaw Pact. For example, if Western intelligence services had located a regiment of soldiers, it was generally not particularly difficult to trace the other regiments that together formed a larger unit. This was also true of the location of the Soviet missile forces and the Soviet air force and navy. This intelligence image had been built up since 1950 mainly by means of technical gathering methods, which led to the Human Intelligence (Humint) activities being neglected: after all, it was no easy matter to set up good penetration operations behind the 'Iron Curtain'. The resultant neglect of Humint in the Western intelligence services may have played an important role in Yugoslavia.

This tendency had been prevalent in the United States since the 1970s. This was to plague the American intelligence services in Bosnia, because it proved to be a Low Intensity Conflict (LIC), in which technical resources often performed inadequately. In a low intensity conflict, Humint is one of the most important sources of intelligence. In 1976, only thirteen per cent of all American intelligence was gathered from Humint, and only one seventh of the total Intelligence budget was devoted to it. During the period of Stansfield Turner (the director of the CIA between 1977 and 1981), even less was invested. In the 1980s, the US intelligence community realized that, in spite of their impressive technical capabilities, Humint could still play an important role in some areas. One such issue was the political intentions and the attitudes of politicians and soldiers.<sup>187</sup>

William Casey (the director of the CIA under President Reagan) was a particularly great supporter of the expansion of Humint. This form of intelligence was relatively inexpensive, and more suitable for gathering difficult-to-obtain political intelligence on the intentions and the attitude of leading foreign officials. Furthermore, Humint operations made it possible to gather documents or install sensors. These factors among others led the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the CIA to devote more attention in the 1980s to Humint, which had until then been neglected.

It would take until 1993 before the United States Assistant Secretary of Defense would resort to founding the Defense Human Intelligence Service, which came to reside under the DIA. It was only on 1 October 1995 that this Service was officially activated by the DIA and it was even later, on 12 September 1996, that the Service was declared fully operational.<sup>188</sup> The Defense Human Intelligence Service would therefore play no significant role during Dutchbat's stay in Srebrenica.

The lack of effective Humint was not the only factor that hindered the services. The complete mindset of Western military and intelligence personnel had often been influenced strongly by the years of threat from the East. The fact that the conflict in Yugoslavia was of a different nature did not stop these officials from viewing the conflict in the 'old' way.<sup>189</sup> Furthermore, certain developments were too complicated for them to understand. That was particularly true of the ever-changing alliances in

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<sup>187</sup> Bobby R. Inman, 'spying for a Long, Hot War', *The New York Times*, 09/10/01.

<sup>188</sup> Becker, *Cold war*, pp. 12-19.

<sup>189</sup> For this topic see also: Roger Hilsman, 'After the Cold War. The Need for Intelligence', in: Eisendrath, *National Insecurity*, pp. 8-22.

Yugoslavia. A good example was the Bihac region in the north west of Bosnia. Muslim armed forces there who rejected the regime in Sarajevo and who were led by Abdic, hired tanks from the Krajina Serbs. Abdic's opponent was General Dudakovic of the *Armija Bosna i Hercegovina* (ABiH). He, in turn, hired tanks from the Bosnian Serbs. Another example was that it was hard for many Western military and intelligence officials to comprehend that the Bosnian Serbs were fighting the Croats in some areas, but at the same time they could be the greatest allies of the same Croats in other areas.<sup>190</sup>

In the general Western intelligence perception, alliances and enemies were 'fixed concepts'. However, for the warring factions in Yugoslavia, such concepts were reviewed from day to day, with due regard to potential local advantages that could come from an alliance. This, of course, had consequences for UNPROFOR, because the cooperation of the local warring factions is a condition for the success of a peacekeeping mission. This was hardly possible in an environment of constantly variable alliances.

Obviously, much also depends on the nature of the conflict. If the warring factions are two regular armies, certain patterns may be expected. It is then also relatively simple to gather intelligence. But the less central control and state authority there are, the more unpredictable the developments become, and the greater the risk that the conflict will become uncontrollable and that there will be, for example, outbursts of violence against innocent civilians.

This does not detract from the fact that regular and well-controlled army units are also capable of carrying out operations against civilians, as the Croats did in May 1995 in West Slavonia and in the Krajina in August 1995, and the *Vojska Republika Srpska* (VRS) in general did in Srebrenica. In general, however, attacks on civilians were usually carried out by irregular units.

Nonetheless, the willingness to collaborate with each other and the assent of all warring factions to the presence of a peacekeeping force are important factors for determining the legitimacy of a peacekeeping mission, together with the question of when force will be used. If there is no such general willingness and there is a vacuum of power, the warring factions - who are mostly more numerous and better armed than the UN troops - will challenge each display of force by the peacekeepers. In such a context, the role of reliable intelligence becomes all the more important. The larger the external influence as a deterrent to the warring factions, the less force will have to be used to protect the civilians. During the conflict in Bosnia, neither these conditions for enforcing the peace, nor the conditions for a deterrent, were present. Therefore, intelligence was badly needed.<sup>191</sup>

All this led in 1992 to a situation in which Western intelligence services were confronted with an intelligence structure that was generally geared towards the 'old' threat from the East, and not suited to the Balkans. The Western intelligence services had built up a complex set of warning indicators that enabled them to detect this threat from the East in good time.<sup>192</sup> The complete capacity for gathering intelligence was therefore concentrated on analysing a large-scale conflict, which had little to do with the crisis in Yugoslavia. In general, the warring factions did not operate in large units, but mainly in small and decentralized units that undertook no large-scale operations. This war was what is referred to as a low intensity conflict of which NATO (with the exception of a few member states) generally had no experience. However, according to one source the principle US organizational and military policy shifts marking the departure from the 'cold-war mentality' were already completed by February 1993. According to this intelligence official they were certainly in place in Europe by that time. In particular,

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<sup>190</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>191</sup> David M. Last, 'Peacekeeping Doctrine and Conflict Resolution Techniques', *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 22 (1995)2, p. 188.

<sup>192</sup> According to an US intelligence official was the US indicator system being alluded to here totally worthless, and an unsuccessful effort to adapt a cold war bean-counting mentality (where it never worked either) to an even more intractable scenario in the Balkans, and elsewhere around the world. It was broadly ignored, and only fed information because somewhere in Washington DC there was an avid audience for its absurd color-coded indicators. It was an enormous waste of US time, money and manpower and was never regarded as being even remotely useful outside of Washington. Confidential information (80).



strategic systems were revamped to ensure operational utilization by theatre users, in Europe and elsewhere around the world. For instance, an American National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) official, who was responsible for Imagery Intelligence (Imint) from satellites, espionage aircraft and unmanned aircraft, confirmed this. He complained that the fall of the Wall had not made the work any simpler: 'There are probably more areas today, in a broader sense, than we had to worry about during the Cold War. There are a lot more places that are volatile...'<sup>193</sup>

Furthermore, the terrain in which the conflict was being fought was completely different from that of the 'old' threat: woods and mountains severely limited the field of vision of the international intelligence community. This was less true of the Austrian, Italian and Swiss services, which, because of the high altitude of their mountain-top monitoring stations, sometimes did succeed in intercepting message traffic. Many a Western intelligence service was completely unprepared for the outbreak of fighting in the former Yugoslavia. General Michael Hayden, in 1995 EUCOM and later commander of the Air Intelligence Agency at Kelly Air Force Base, Texas, admitted that prior to the war in Yugoslavia there was not a real need for as much experience in that area. His organization was not manned in some of those fields as he would like to be.<sup>194</sup> The intelligence resources and methodology were, as stated, still focused on the enemy in the East, and especially on the timely detection and analysis of large military units operating in a mainly open and flat area. The services were prepared for symmetrical warfare (two equally large armed forces against each other) and the military and economic objectives were reasonably familiar. The armed forces of the Red Army and the Warsaw Pact no longer existed in the same form after the fall of the Berlin Wall, however.

Some intelligence services had paid relatively little attention to Yugoslavia until the outbreak of the war in Bosnia. For instance, only one analyst of the Royal Netherlands Army worked on Yugoslavia at the Intelligence Department of the Military Intelligence Service. He was concerned with the military order of battle, which could also be considered to be something of a subsidiary activity, because his primary focus was on a different subject. His service concentrated especially on Poland and the GDR, and this analyst confirmed that other Western intelligence services in general paid little attention to Yugoslavia, which in a certain sense put him in a unique bartering position.<sup>195</sup> The same perceptions existed in the British counterpart. They had 'a bit of trouble getting up to speed. It wasn't a priority they could quickly get good at. SIS [Secret Intelligence Service or MI-6] and GCHQ [Government Communications Headquarters] needed to improve their expertise in the language.'<sup>196</sup>

Within intelligence services there were sometimes only a handful of political analysts who were occupied with Yugoslavia. After all, the country was counted among the 'friendly' communist powers; the expectation was that in the event of an outbreak of an international crisis, the country would take the side of the West. In this respect, Yugoslavia had long been considered to be within the Western sphere of influence, as was demonstrated in the attack on Czechoslovakia in 1968, when Yugoslavia was given backdoor guarantees by NATO.<sup>197</sup>

When the conflict in Bosnia finally broke out, the shortage of 'trained personnel' often meant that people would be plucked from anywhere. Analysts who until then had worked mainly on the Soviet Union or Eastern Europe and were therefore new to the job, now had to deal with Bosnia. There was also a lack of staff who spoke Serbo-Croat and who were able to translate large quantities of information. In 1993, the American electronic eavesdropping service, the National Security Agency (NSA), appeared to have a lack of translators and analysts with a command of Serbo-Croat. This originally affected the capacity to read intercepted Yugoslav message traffic. The service thought that

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<sup>193</sup> Confidential information (80) and Robert Dreyfuss, 'TECHINT: The NSA, the NRO, and NIMA', Graig Eisendrath, *National Insecurity*, p. 156.

<sup>194</sup> Deedee Doke, 'U.S. to beef up long-term air intelligence in Balkans', *European Stars & Stripes*, 18/07/96.

<sup>195</sup> Confidential interview (37).

<sup>196</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 215.

<sup>197</sup> Cees Wiebes & Bert Zeeman, "'I don't need your handkerchiefs': Holland's experience of crisis consultation in NATO", *International Affairs*, Vol. 66 (1990) 1, pp. 91-113.

this would create problems for them in the event of President Clinton deciding to make a military contribution to UNPROFOR. The NSA consequently decided to place an advertisement in several newspapers to recruit translators.<sup>198</sup>

The most important man with responsibility for Bosnia at the British military intelligence service - the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS)- Captain Jonathan Cooke of the Royal Navy, confirmed this picture. According to him, at the start of the war the services had teething troubles, and the pace at which intelligence gathering got up to speed was slow. 'On the frequencies [to be intercepted], GCHQ had to start almost from scratch' in Bosnia. For instance, at the outbreak of the war in the Balkans, the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), had only a few Serbo-Croat specialists who were actually fluent in the language. The British had to build absolutely everything from the ground up; the area was really *terra incognita* for GCHQ.<sup>199</sup> The journalist Michael Smith likewise contended that there were difficulties in the beginning.<sup>200</sup> Moreover, the interpreter of the British General Rose and General Smith, Milos Stankovic, argued in his book that in the British Army there were only two people who spoke Serbo-Croat.<sup>201</sup>

The Netherlands also lagged behind in this area. The training for interpreters in Serbo-Croat at the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) did not get under way until early 1994.<sup>202</sup> Ultimately, five translators would be appointed, who started a six month training course from May 1994 at the 'MID School'.<sup>203</sup> This slow start naturally had consequences not only for the exploitation of the existing Signals Intelligence (Sigint) in the former Yugoslavia, but also for the opportunities to utilize Open Source Intelligence (Osint) effectively. For this reason it was impossible to adequately exploit daily and weekly newspapers, other periodicals, or radio and television at the start of the armed conflict. UNPROFOR could not handle that information.<sup>204</sup>

The mental attitude of many Western intelligence service staff was also completely different. A prospective conflict with the Soviet Union and its allies was entirely different in nature from a variety of warring factions in a hilly and wooded area, who would collaborate closely with each other in one area but in another area, sometimes only a few kilometres away, would engage in battle. It was also difficult to become accustomed to the fact that once alliances were made they were often soon broken again. This image was at odds with the static situation (NATO versus the Warsaw Pact) that the Western services had been dealing with for almost fifty years. This also caused a new phenomenon. In the past, military intelligence could often be separated from other forms of intelligence, but in Yugoslavia no such clear distinction could be made. The political forces within the warring factions, the political, financial and economic relationships between the leaders of the warring factions and the black market at the front lines actually necessitated an integrated intelligence picture. And this is precisely what tended to be missing.<sup>205</sup>

It was for example estimated in a report drawn up by the British intelligence community that about 30 per cent of convoy-borne aid was being diverted to the armies of the warring factions and the black market. UNHCR was particularly worried about this, but was reluctant to quantify the amount. The British estimated that in Sarajevo, where the Muslim military was reported to be moving aid parcels out of the city, the government continued to inflate refugees figures by perhaps as much as a third. However, the Bosnian Muslims of all warring factions would be worst affected if aid was reduced.<sup>206</sup>

<sup>198</sup> Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, p. 554.

<sup>199</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha*, pp. 215-216 and confidential interview (79).

<sup>200</sup> Smith, *New Cloak. Old Dagger*, p. 210.

<sup>201</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, pp. 34-35.

<sup>202</sup> MoD, *MIS. No. 443,0801*, Col. Bosch, HAI&V MIS/Army to Commando Training Netherlands Army, no. 21892/1/270593, 18/05/93.

<sup>203</sup> For this, see also Chapters 3 and 5 of this study.

<sup>204</sup> Donna Winslow and Peer Everts, 'Cultural Interoperability, Schmidt, *A History of NATO*, p. 101.

<sup>205</sup> Confidential collection (3).

<sup>206</sup> Confidential information (83).

Another problem was that good (not to mention military) maps were hard to come by. It was sometimes necessary to work with Michelin, ADAC or Hallwag maps, which were available from travel agents or motoring organizations. Standard maps with a scale of 1:50,000 were not available in the short term. What is more, the maps produced by the *Vojska Jugoslavija* (VJ, the Army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) sometimes led to great confusion. The VJ had actually used a 'different datum point than any other military in Europe'. As a result, grid references used by military and intelligence units on a Yugoslav map were different from those on a comparable European map. 'An eight figure grid reference, plotted on a Yugoslav map would be about 600 to 700 metres away from the exact grid reference plotted on a European or American produced map of the same area', according to a Western intelligence official who worked at UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb and elsewhere in the region.<sup>207</sup>

The Western intelligence community therefore came up-to-speed 'slowly' and had various teething problems in the area of Sigint, Humint and Imint. One might have expected that collaboration within NATO, as well as bilateral agreements, would have been able to compensate for this shortcoming in the first instance. It would also have been a reasonable assumption that the exchange of intelligence would have been intensified. The reality, however, was different.

### 3. The problems surrounding intelligence liaison in Western intelligence services

As Michael Herman states in his study: the international intelligence liaison is often 'a patchwork of bilateral and multilateral arrangements of all kinds and all degrees of intimacy'.<sup>208</sup> One might add that it may also even hinge on the personalities involved. The responsibility for the coordination of the gathering and exchange of intelligence in the matter of Yugoslavia was not precisely defined in the Western intelligence and security services. Something was done in a NATO context, but, as mentioned in the previous chapter, contrary to what is commonly believed, NATO has no independent intelligence capacity. The treaty organization does not itself indulge in 'intelligence tasking and collection'.<sup>209</sup> The only system for this purpose belonging to NATO is the AWACS reconnaissance aircraft. The NATO intelligence section is completely dependent on the input from the member states, and more closely resembles a unit for intelligence sharing. Internally it consisted of various smaller areas, such as the sharing in the areas of anti-submarine warfare, Sigint, Imint and Elint. A further comment in this context is that the main focus of attention was the Eastern bloc: almost everything was taken as read about the Orders of Battle and the military doctrines. In this respect it was difficult to spring any surprises on NATO.<sup>210</sup>

Intelligence liaison between friendly states, even within a treaty organization that has existed for fifty years, cannot therefore be taken for granted. The extent to which services recognize shared risk apparently influences intelligence liaison. Liaison is not something that automatically arises from alliances of many years' standing. Even in an ideal coalition, during the Gulf War, there was a deluge of complaints in this respect. It was not just the European allies of the United States that complained about the uncooperative American attitude to sharing intelligence. Even American and British troops frequently complained about the slow dissemination and poor quality of the intelligence that actually came from their own national intelligence services and was intended for them.<sup>211</sup> One should add that this was frequently a technical issue, hinging on available systems for dissemination. The systems for rapid dissemination was usually very complex, very expensive, and prone to difficulties of various sorts, especially in a deployed field environment. These systems included effective inputs, fluid analysis and dissemination and maintenance of a robust, reliable communications system. Not just a collection of radios: such systems hinged on people, satellites, ground systems and national policies. Many national

<sup>207</sup> Confidential collection (3).

<sup>208</sup> Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 203.

<sup>209</sup> See also: NMFA, *PVNAVVO*, Deputy HPMV to A, 21/10/96.

<sup>210</sup> J.R. Kassing, 'De NAVO en inlichtingen' ('NATO and intelligence'), *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, pp. 604-612.

<sup>211</sup> Andrew Rathmell. 'Privatising intelligence', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XI (1998) 2, p. 208.

infrastructures, including the Dutch, could neither afford, maintain, effectively field, nor politically support these systems. It is also interesting to note that the Western intelligence climate in the years surrounding the fall of the Berlin Wall was somewhat subdued, because Western intelligence services increasingly started to spy on each other. The conflict in Bosnia aggravated the animosity between Europe and the United States even further.<sup>212</sup>

Intelligence liaison covers a wide variety of forms and intensity of collaboration between mostly national intelligence and security services. These services can trade information on operations, provide intelligence support in the form of training, advice and equipment or access to installations. Liaison is not only important for the large services but also for the small ones. International liaison is always cloaked in the greatest secrecy. An ex CIA official once said: 'Liaison secrecy has the sanctity of the Bible.'<sup>213</sup> Even more hesitance exists regarding the sharing of intelligence gathered by NATO member states with non-member states. The official NATO guidelines on this point are extremely stringent: the intelligence is only destined for the member states and must therefore not be disclosed to 'a non-member nation or any international organization containing non-member nations. Whatever different requirements emerge for peacekeeping operations this fundamental principle must be upheld.'<sup>214</sup>

Despite all the problems, states do cooperate in the area of intelligence, however.<sup>215</sup> One of the main reasons for this is that more information is always available than any separate intelligence service (even the largest) can gather independently. The disappearance of the former Eastern European services meant, for example, that the Humint input to Moscow declined by thirty per cent, partly because some services were abandoned and partly because they stopped their input. Another reason is that some states have unique resources at their disposal for gathering unprecedented intelligence; this involves resources and information to which other states have never had and never will have access. The geographical position of a state can likewise be an important reason to resort to liaison. For instance, Norway played a crucial role in following developments in the Russian Kola Peninsula, the most important port of which is Murmansk. Financial aspects also play a role: more can be achieved jointly through the distribution of tasks<sup>216</sup>

Intelligence liaison also has disadvantages, such as the reliability of the information from the partner. It is a fact that there is often an institutional conviction that a service's own analysis or intelligence is better and more reliable than that of another service. There is always a risk associated with sources. Material obtained via liaison can enable one service to discover the other service's sources. Other restraints and dangers are that too close a liaison between two countries can sometimes lead to manipulation of the intelligence that is passed on. Furthermore, a service loses control over the intelligence that is passed on via liaison. For example, it happened within NATO that Dutch intelligence that had been passed on exclusively to a foreign ally suddenly emerged in the NATO circuit a number of weeks later as intelligence from a completely different ally. The greatest danger for a service lurks in the intrinsic possibility of being penetrated by a foreign service. Too close contacts can lead to attempts to recruit the liaison officer.<sup>217</sup>

The *special relationship* between the United States and the United Kingdom is, with respect to intelligence, unique: there is much collaboration in the area of Humint between the CIA and the Secret Intelligence Service (formerly MI-6). In the military area there is a close relationship between the American DIA and the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). London and Washington also collaborate in the area of Imint. Satellite photos, espionage aircraft and unmanned aircraft are shared by the

<sup>212</sup> Loch K. Johnson, 'spies', *Foreign Policy* (September 2000), p. 35.

<sup>213</sup> Bradford Westerfield, 'America and the World of Intelligence Liaison', *Intelligence and National Security* 11 (1996) 3, pp. 523-60.

<sup>214</sup> John M. Nomikos, 'Intelligence Requirements for Peacekeeping Operations', *RIEAS Papers and Reports*, 03/10/00.

<sup>215</sup> See for an effect of the 'liaison' topic also: Cees Wiebes, 'The Netherlands Intelligence Community: Past, Present and Future', in: Jennsen & Riste (eds.), *Intelligence in the Cold War*, pp. 149-165.

<sup>216</sup> Herman, *Intelligence*, pp. 204-208.

<sup>217</sup> De Graaff & Wiebes, *Villa Maarbeeze*, pp. 343-354.

American National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) with its British counterpart, the Joint Aerial Reconnaissance Intelligence Centre (JARIC), which is part of the DIS. In the area of Sigint, the American and the British Sigint services, the NSA and GCHQ, have been cooperating closely since World War II. Every British service has a liaison office in the United States that handles the exchange of intelligence. In certain areas, British officers are also attached to American services, and vice versa. No such close collaboration exists between any other European or Asian intelligence or security services. The collaboration in the area of Humint is mainly geared towards the exchange of intelligence assessments and not principally to joint operations.

There are also differences in working methods between the Americans and the British. The British intelligence services are more oriented to working with agents and informants, while the American services devote more energy to the use of advanced technology and the processing and analysis of large quantities of information. This means in practice that collaboration in joint operations is difficult.

The links between the American and British services are maintained not only through practical collaboration, but also through a joint approach to the use of intelligence. For instance, in the United States and the United Kingdom intelligence is said to have more influence on foreign policy than is the case in continental European countries. The explanation for this could be as follows:

‘The Anglo-Saxons use intelligence in an empirical way: it is about gathering facts, and if the facts are significant, the policies may get changed. The view in London and Washington is that the French and other continentals, being essentially deductive in their thinking, develop sophisticated analyses and policies and then draw on intelligence to support them; but that they seldom allow intelligence to shift policy’.<sup>218</sup>

According to a French intelligence officer, this analysis is incorrect, however; in his opinion it is true that in Paris it plays a less influential role in the formulation and execution of the French national security policy, but not because the French political and military leadership ignore the intelligence. Bureaucratic and historical factors offer more likely explanations, such as on the one hand smaller investments in acquiring intelligence, and on the other hand recruitment problems. Furthermore, there is no good intelligence structure that ensures a rapid and efficient dissemination of intelligence among the political and military policymakers.<sup>219</sup>

In today’s world, intelligence liaison still causes many problems. A British analyst recently wrote: ‘America’s allies have long complained that it is particularly mean with its intelligence.’<sup>220</sup> They have often succeeded in gathering intelligence thanks to large financial investments, and generally it is ‘heavily guarded’ within the framework of their own national security. An important White House advisor during the Clinton administration made the following comment on international intelligence liaison: ‘The U.S. intelligence community will never release its intelligence because of methods and sources.’<sup>221</sup> A remarkable statement because there is rarely a genuine need to release methods and sources. What is usually needed in time-sensitive scenarios is the intelligence itself, not how the intelligence was acquired.

Nonetheless, even within certain long standing intelligence alliances, such as the so-called UKUSA agreement between the United States, Canada, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, not all intelligence is automatically shared. The British intelligence services, for example, were confronted in 1992 with the aftermath of the open British support of George Bush’s election campaign. The later President Clinton held this against London. Initially this also translated into the intelligence (albeit not

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<sup>218</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, p. 6.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-8.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>221</sup> Confidential interview (14).

Sigint) area, so that some British services more or less ‘ran dry’.<sup>222</sup> There was in particular American concern about General Rose’s alleged sympathy for the Serb cause and there were manifest political differences between the Clinton government and Whitehall about policy regards Bosnia. The animosity mentioned between the US and the British was probably also partly caused by the secret training programmes that the Americans had given to the Muslims in the past, and later to the Croats. Furthermore the Americans did not wish to disclose much to their NATO partners about the clandestine operations that the CIA and DIA carried out behind enemy lines in Serbia.

During the US election campaign Bob Dole lashed out at the British, who were said to be frustrating many American operations, but this was denied on the British side. When Dole paid a visit to London, he was said to have been taken aside and shown a long list of covert operations that the CIA was involved in at that moment in Yugoslavia. The British told Dole that if he were to carry out one more political attack on London, the list would be made public. After that, Dole backed down.<sup>223</sup>

The British intelligence services became increasingly dependent on the United States. For instance, in 1993 approximately 95 per cent of the Sigint dealt with by the GCHQ was, according to Urban, of American origin. Also with respect to financing, monitoring posts and secure transatlantic communication links, the British were completely dependent on the NSA.<sup>224</sup> It should be noted, however, that a senior US intelligence official interviewed by the author rejected this 95 per cent and came to a much lower figure.<sup>225</sup> The American-British intelligence relationship in later years improved again, especially after Tony Blair came to office.

The above example shows that fundamental political and military differences of opinion can influence intelligence liaison. There was a disagreement between America and Britain on Bosnia. The constant US pressure to deploy air power, and Washington’s refusal to deploy ground forces particularly galled London. This ultimately resulted in the partial reduction of American intelligence input to the British. Captain Cooke of the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) had the following to say on the subject:

‘They more or less admitted they were holding stuff back from us, not everything but really the bits relating to most pronounced political divide. They didn’t feel we took their information about Serb atrocities seriously enough (...) They pushed the stuff which favoured more punitive action against the Bosnian Serbs’.<sup>226</sup>

Mistrust of an ally’s political intentions can strongly influence a liaison. An example of American mistrust was the fact that the CIA’s Directorate of Operations had a special cell of approximately twenty staff whose most important task was to analyse the British reports, in order to establish the identities of agents that SIS (the British foreign intelligence service) had recruited in the former Yugoslavia, and what other sources the British services in Bosnia had at their disposal. From the CIA side, incidentally, this statement was described as complete nonsense.<sup>227</sup> Only in the summer of 1995 were transatlantic relations to improve somewhat, although the Americans persevered in not passing on all intelligence about Bosnia to the British.

The American-Canadian intelligence alliance may probably be described as the most harmonious, in the sense that in this context probably information is shared completely. This close link came about through the very prominent Canadian role in the North American Air Defense Agreement (NORAD), which necessitated the most effective possible intelligence liaison. It so happens that the

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<sup>222</sup> Interview with Pauline Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>223</sup> Confidential interview (47).

<sup>224</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 238-241.

<sup>225</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>226</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 241.

<sup>227</sup> Confidential interview (79).

Soviet Union's intercontinental ballistic missiles and long-distance bombers were, and still are, most easily detected from Canadian territory.<sup>228</sup>

This is further reinforced by the unique Canadian geography, the common Anglo-Saxon background, the similar systems of government, an almost identical military culture and the strongly integrated economies. This does not detract from the fact that the Canadian intelligence service was sometimes also cut off from important American intelligence, especially if Ottawa was pursuing a different policy from America. This happened on some occasions during the Vietnam War, the Falklands Crisis and the Gulf War (but not during the war in Bosnia).<sup>229</sup>

There is also a large amount of intelligence sharing in Western Europe between European services. This sometimes happens multilaterally within NATO or the Western European Union (WEU). It must be pointed out here that many services are reluctant to share their highest grade intelligence within multinational organizations, because its dissemination then threatens to become excessive. There is a preference for sharing intelligence bilaterally. When intelligence is shared, it usually does not involve agents' reports, intercepts, or satellite photos, but rather analyses derived from them.

The joint approach in the EU on terrorism, the drugs trade and organized crime is also leading to increased collaboration in the area of intelligence. The fact is that effective control demands the exchange of intelligence. The domestic security services, such as the British MI-5, the French *Direction de la Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), the German *Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz* (BfV) and the Dutch BVD, exchange intelligence within the so-called Club of Bern. Most European Union countries have bilateral agreements with each other<sup>230</sup> for intelligence liaison and bilateral agreements with the United States. However, these do not go as far as the American-British-Canadian collaboration.

France is a difficult country with respect to intelligence liaison, because the many French intelligence services seldom keep each other informed of what they are doing. While France has a *Comité Interministériel du Renseignement* (CIR), which establishes priorities for the various services, there is no central system for the consolidation and analysis of all intelligence gathered. A centrally organized mechanism would also be difficult to achieve, for both the president and the prime minister would want to be at its head. The British and French intelligence services have often worked closely together, which is a tradition that goes back to the beginning of World War II. The French for example assisted in intercepting Libyan arms shipments to the Irish Republican Army (IRA). On the British side, it is admitted that the quality of Humint that is shared with the US services is better than that shared with France, but 'it is the quantity, rather than the quality of the UK-US "human intelligence" trade that is unique'.<sup>231</sup>

Personal links between the SIS and the French foreign intelligence service, the *Direction Generale de la Sécurité Exterieur* (DGSE) and the French domestic security service (DST) are supposedly sometimes better than those with the CIA. However, some claim that the relation with the DGSE is not good because the DGSE is 'simply' not good.<sup>232</sup> The collaboration between the GCHQ and the French Sigint organization is less warm. The main reason for this is that close links exist between the NSA and GCHQ, and the fact that the French Sigint priorities lie mainly in France itself and the French-speaking world. However, French Sigint efforts from Guyana were extremely useful to the GCHQ during the Falklands War.

By contrast the allies of Germany remain fearful that the German services (and especially the foreign intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*) are still infiltrated by Russian and Eastern European agents. There is therefore still a degree of hesitation on the part of some services regarding sharing intelligence with Germany. However, this fear is steadily decreasing. Furthermore, there are different ideas about the quality of German intelligence, but it is generally considered to be mediocre.

<sup>228</sup> Richelson & Ball, *The Ties That Bind*, pp. 157-159 and 236-237.

<sup>229</sup> Confidential interviews (9) and (62).

<sup>230</sup> For this, see the various annual reports of the MIS and BVD.

<sup>231</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>232</sup> Confidential information (87).

Sources in SIS nonetheless asserted that, after the US services, the largest volume of British intelligence sharing takes place with the German services but also the Scandinavian services. The prevailing political climate in Europe also plays an important role. If the German-French political axis is functioning well, the collaboration in the area of intelligence is usually excellent, and joint operations are sometimes executed. If a change takes place in the political climate, this immediately influences the intelligence liaison.<sup>233</sup>

Within NATO, the entire subject of intelligence liaison is much more sensitive than is usually made known to the outside world. It seems in general that member states are prepared to share only the intelligence that they wish to share, and which does not endanger national security in the widest sense. Furthermore, certain member states have already been on a 'war footing' with each other for a considerable time, such as Greece and Turkey. This plays a role not only in the conflict in Cyprus and in certain territorial disputes, but also in the conflict in the Balkans: Athens took the side of Serbia and Srpska, and Turkey the side of Bosnia. This strongly reduced the willingness of other NATO member states to share intelligence on Yugoslavia within the alliance, because Greece and Turkey could 'misuse' it in some way.

There was also a great fear of leaks within NATO. While the war surrounding Kosovo was still in progress, for example, more than six hundred officials at NATO headquarters knew the next NATO bombing targets approximately 24 hours in advance. It was no surprise that the Serbian intelligence services were able to gather intelligence in Brussels and Bergen/Mons. The long-term absence of France in the NATO military committee also did nothing to improve intelligence liaison. In addition, member states will have been more careful with their intelligence because of the Partners for Peace programme (the collaboration between NATO and Russia) and a fear that information would be leaked to some former Warsaw pact countries. The sharing of intelligence in peacekeeping operations is further impeded because permission is always necessary from national headquarters. The bureaucracy means that this can take some considerable time, as a result of which the intelligence to be shared may already be out of date.<sup>234</sup> An US intelligence official who worked in Bosnia dismissed this representation. According to him, US policies were well-defined, and release authority was delegated appropriately to the lowest possible level, to ensure fluid sharing of defined products within acceptable guidelines.<sup>235</sup>

Apart from NATO, European organizations played no role whatsoever in the field of intelligence. Although the WEU took part in the sea blockade within the framework of the sanctions, this treaty organization had no intelligence capacity of its own. Neither did the EU. Originally, the conflict was not immediately a NATO problem. A factor for the UN (like the WEU and EU) was that it did not undertake its own intelligence gathering, in the sense that the headquarters in New York and the commanders in the region formulated their own objectives, and were themselves able to deploy the necessary resources.

A well-structured exchange of intelligence within NATO would, in spite of all these problems, nevertheless have been desirable, because a large number of NATO member states also took part in UNPROFOR. In addition, the nature of the crisis in Yugoslavia was of a completely different order from that which NATO was accustomed to. The intelligence liaison regarding Bosnia stands or falls, however, on two things. On the policy decision to share at all. Once that decision is made, the scope of the obligations under the agreement defines the technical, political, financial and intelligence geography of the exchange. Secondly, whether the Western intelligence services were sufficiently prepared for the crisis in Bosnia, and whether there was sufficient intelligence to share.

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<sup>233</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>234</sup> Hugh Smith, 'Intelligence and UN Peacekeeping', *Survival*, Vol. 36 (1994) 3, p. 177.

<sup>235</sup> Confidential information (80).



#### 4. The perception and information position of the Western intelligence services

The extremely complex and chaotic conflict in Bosnia, with its various warring factions and constantly changing alliances, sometimes caused not only confusion within the Western intelligence community, but also internal division. The question arose as to which warring faction to attach credence to, and whether the 'good guys, bad guys' view, which was so often expressed by politicians and in the press, was appropriate. It was not always clear how authentic all the assertions of the warring factions were, and neither were the actual power relationships, nor whether each faction observed the recently agreed ceasefire. A clear, ready and reliable answer to these questions could not always be given by the intelligence sources.

In the United States there were significant political differences of opinion between the American intelligence community, the White House and the State Department.<sup>236</sup> This was evident from various interviews, but also from a top secret Canadian document, which contained a comprehensive analysis of the thinking in the intelligence community in Washington, which reflected the Canadian intelligence view on the conflict. The document, from the late autumn of 1994, offers a revealing glimpse into American foreign policy.<sup>237</sup>

The American intelligence and security services adopted the position that all warring factions were guilty of atrocities, and that there were no 'good guys'. All the parties did unspeakably brutal things to all the other parties and this was the collective view of US military analysts throughout Europe.<sup>238</sup> Furthermore, the services felt that the Bosnian Serbs until then were the best at observing the agreement on ceasefires and humanitarian relief. The fighting between the Muslims and Croats in central Bosnia formed the greatest obstacle for the relief. The American services felt that they set down a more balanced view in their reports, but that 'US policy statements do not portray a balanced view of events in Bosnia'. The State Department and President Clinton, according to these services, were consistently pro-Muslim and anti-Serb, and the political statements on the situation in Bosnia were 'generally distortions of the truth which portray the Serbs in a very negative way compared to the other factions. This was generally accomplished by failing to note undesirable activities on the parts of the Croats and Muslims.' Both American and Canadian services knew, for example, that the ABiH harassed VRS positions around Sarajevo almost daily, but this was never reported or confirmed by American policymakers. Furthermore, many of the humanitarian problems in Sarajevo were said to be caused by the Muslims, and a great deal of money was apparently made on the black market. In spite of this 'hard' intelligence, the State Department continued to pin the blame for the conflict on the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>239</sup>

This was also true for the negotiations in Geneva. The Croats and Bosnian Serbs had adopted a cooperative attitude, in contrast to the Muslims, who, in the view of the American and Canadian services, caused the majority of the problems in the negotiations. This was partly due to the American political and diplomatic support of the Muslims. Many representatives of the State Department were of the opinion that the Bosnian Serbs must not retain territory that had been gained through 'aggression' against the Muslims. In this, they overlooked that this was a civil war, 'fought by unequal "partners", not an invasion of a sovereign state by a foreign aggressor', according to their Canadian counterparts.

In 1994 the Canadian intelligence community arrived at the conclusion that a disjoint existed between the American intelligence services and the State Department. The latter body conducted a policy of confrontation against the Bosnian Serbs ('bad guys'), and from a Canadian point of view this was an undesirable policy. It appeared as if the Clinton administration was following a strategy oriented towards failure of the negotiations; this policy actually conflicted with the general view within the American intelligence community. Canadian officials who drafted this report were pessimistic about the future. If a peace accord were to be achieved and a peacekeeping mission were to fall under American

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<sup>236</sup> For example: Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 282-331.

<sup>237</sup> Confidential information (7).

<sup>238</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>239</sup> Confidential information (7).

overall command, then this would prove awkward because of the bias in the American view. 'It is likely that any such mission will be interventionist rather than neutral in nature (anti-Serb sentiments on the US part will continue even after a peace accord).'<sup>240</sup>

One Canadian intelligence official with considerable experience in Serbia confirmed this picture. Neutral reports came from the Western services in Belgrade, which was theoretically the primary purpose of intelligence. This balanced view was also supplied to the headquarters of NATO. But subtle distinctions should have been picked up by policymakers in Washington and elsewhere, which did not happen, according to this official. The US policy was partisan, and the intelligence community was insufficiently involved. American politicians were stuck in a 'good guy, bad guy' mindset. The Canadian view was that the involvement of the international community made the conflict worse, and that they would have done better to keep out.<sup>241</sup>

Confronted with this view, the then CIA director, James Woolsey,<sup>242</sup> agreed that his analysts generally had no black-and-white typology of the warring factions. According to Woolsey it was not the case that the CIA during his tenure was stressing Bosnian atrocities or giving any policy advice against intervention. 'Indeed we were giving no policy advice at all'. What the CIA was consistently saying was that the Bosnians committed a small number of atrocities, the Croats more, and the Serbs a great many. As regards conveying this message to the Clinton administration, he stated: 'it was swimming against the stream.' The CIA also suggested that the killing would not stop without someone's intervening.<sup>243</sup>

The Deputy Commander US European Command (EUCOM), US General Chuck Boyd, claimed that EUCOM was the best source of intelligence concerning the Balkans. However, EUCOM officials claimed that when US assessments got to Washington DC the intelligence seemed to go through a metamorphosis into pro-Bosnian statements. Even when US military intelligence exposed many media reports from Sarajevo as little more than Bosnian propaganda, Clinton Administration officials were more likely to believe press reports than EUCOM or the UN. The willingness of Washington's policy elite to base its rhetorical responses on one-sided media reports, dismayed senior US military officials. Boyd also found out how badly informed US Secretary of Defence, William Perry, was.<sup>244</sup>

That the CIA had a different view was also evident from remarks Woolsey made during his visit to Minister Ter Beek in The Hague on 10 December 1993. The situation in Bosnia was described by Woolsey's staff as a 'postponement of the surrender of the Muslims, so that the conflict was kept going'.<sup>245</sup> Woolsey in an interview with the author gave Haiti as an example of a similar situation, where the American government wished to provide full support to opposition leader J.B. Aristide. However, the intelligence community immediately said: 'Hey, wait a minute. He is a problem.' But the politicians did not wish to listen. Woolsey gave another example: according to the political leaders in Washington, a coalition government would be formed in Somalia. The US intelligence community pointed out that this would never happen,<sup>246</sup> but again the politicians did not wish to hear the message.<sup>247</sup>

The American services opposed this political wishful thinking and repeatedly pointed out that the Muslims had close links with various fundamentalist Islamic governments and terrorist movements and were also supplied with arms from Iran. The intelligence services also argued that the Bosnian Muslims had also committed massacres, although there was a difference in scale: the Bosnian Muslims had perhaps murdered hundreds, the Croats thousands and the Serbs tens of thousands, but that did

<sup>240</sup> Confidential information (7).

<sup>241</sup> Confidential interview (2).

<sup>242</sup> See for his appointment: Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 190.

<sup>243</sup> Interviews with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00 and 01/10/02.

<sup>244</sup> Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, p. 92.

<sup>245</sup> MoD, *DJZ*, Memorandum for the minister, D93/514, 13/12/93. Further: Interview with A.L. ter Beek, 13/01/00.

<sup>246</sup> See also: Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 253.

<sup>247</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

not detract from the fact that ‘there were Bosnian atrocities’. The Clinton administration wanted to hear nothing of this, however. It asserted that it was possible to establish a multi-ethnic society in Bosnia. Again the American intelligence community clearly had a different view: ‘no way and forget about that.’ They expressed great scepticism, but this was a view that was not supported in the White House and at the State Department. Woolsey’s assessment was that some members of the Clinton administration had too easy views about how a century old conflict could be overcome. The CIA’s view was more or like similar to that of General Colin Powell, the chairman of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), who resisted American military involvement in Bosnia.<sup>248</sup> The interest in the deployment of small military units, after the tragedy in Somalia, had definitely disappeared. The later chairman of the JCS, General John Shaliskashvili, had identical ideas.

The question arises as to whether the then director of the CIA, Woolsey, had sufficient opportunities to change this view: after all, he was a member of the National Security Council (NSC). Woolsey stated in a response that he was a different CIA director than Bill Casey had been under President Reagan. Casey proposed policy directives to Reagan, but according to Woolsey the situation had changed over the years. The director of the CIA may well have still been a member of the NSC, and in that capacity also attended meetings of the NSC, but he no longer came to the fore as a political advisor. The traditional role that he played had always been to provide the president with intelligence, with politics being kept at arm’s length. This of course did not mean that no recommendations were made to the president, but they were not made independently, only on request.<sup>249</sup> As it happens, most recommendations pertaining to Bosnia appeared to fall on deaf ears and the White House and the State Department persisted in their original course.<sup>250</sup>

As the conflict in Bosnia progressed in 1995, the internal differences of opinion within the American intelligence community increased. Woolsey admitted that there was no such thing as ‘a single intelligence community view’ on the war in Yugoslavia. There were different ideas in the services about the origin and the further progress of the conflict in the Balkans.<sup>251</sup> Nonetheless, the predominant view within the US intelligence community was that the VJ = VRS. Individual VJ officers and troops were offered VJ benefits and sometimes cash bonuses to return to Bosnia and serve designated stints with the VRS. Sometimes those individuals were from Bosnia, sometimes not. After their stint with the VRS, they would return to the VJ, with seniority, benefits and rank intact. Some officers and troops remained in the VRS out of either personal commitment to the conflict, desire to get combat experience, nationalistic fervour, or various other reasons. In the final analysis, the VJ and the VRS were indistinguishable, except by where they were to be found. If found in Bosnia, they were called VRS, and in Serbia, they were VJ. Other intelligence services did agree that the Yugoslav army (the VJ) provided full support to the VRS, but they also had to acknowledge that this collaboration decreased in the course of time. In confidential interviews it was confirmed time and again that there were no consistent ideas on Yugoslavia within the American intelligence community among intelligence officials.<sup>252</sup>

The DIA and the State Department in particular appeared to adopt a less balanced position. A possible role was also played by the fact that Woolsey’s predecessor, Robert Gates, had designated the American military intelligence service (the DIA) as the most important channel for intelligence support to the UN during peacekeeping operations. This support would not be permanent, but would be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.<sup>253</sup> In view of the dismissive attitude of the CIA to becoming involved in the conflict in Bosnia, it is not surprising that the State Department resorted to hiring in a company

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<sup>248</sup> For Powell’s resistance to American military involvement in Bosnia: Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 34-42.

<sup>249</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

<sup>250</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace* p. 299.

<sup>251</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

<sup>252</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>253</sup> Robert J. Allen, ‘Intelligence Support for Peace Operations’, in: Pickert, *Intelligence*, p. 117.

like Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI).<sup>254</sup> This company employed various retired American generals and intelligence officers and had trained the *Hrvatska Vojaska* (HV, Croatian Army) and later also the ABiH.<sup>255</sup>

The American services originally adopted a wait-and-see attitude to the conflict in Bosnia. They did not work with black-and-white views on the roles and operating methods of the warring factions; according to the services, the Muslims were also guilty of misdeeds. It was concluded that the Bosnian Muslims were often guilty of frustrating agreements and peace arrangements in the political and military spheres, and that they bore a large responsibility for the poor humanitarian situation in Sarajevo and other areas. At the end of 1994, the CIA in particular performed an about-turn, and the service started to adhere to the Clinton administration's course more closely. According to a senior US intelligence official, Woolsey resigned from the CIA because he had no working relationship with the President. He had only two semi-private meetings with the President in two years and thus no real direct access to Clinton who was more involved with domestic priorities. Apart from that, Woolsey was not an intimate of the Clinton team. Despite the fact that vice-president Al Gore in November 1994 asked him to stay, Woolsey decided to resign.<sup>256</sup> There is no doubt that the departure of Woolsey, in early 1995 somewhat contributed to the fact of the CIA becoming more political and more hawkish. Later, the CIA was even accused of releasing 'blatantly distorting' intelligence products to support the Muslims' case.<sup>257</sup> However, Woolsey doubts that the CIA was distorting intelligence on this subject but admitted that he had no first-hand knowledge either way.<sup>258</sup>

Not only the American, but also the Canadian services were originally not alone in having such a nuanced attitude to the Bosnian conflict. The British services had a relatively balanced view of the matter, which in the case of the United Kingdom was supported and adopted by the policymakers. SIS clearly had a non-interventionist attitude, and the general motto was: 'stay out as long as possible.'<sup>259</sup> The view of the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) was also balanced.<sup>260</sup> This was evident, among other things, from a secret operation. At the beginning of 1994 two articles appeared in the conservative magazine *The Spectator* which railed against the Western policy in Bosnia. This magazine was often used as a front by SIS staff. 'Journalists' worked for *The Spectator* in Bosnia, Serbia and Moldova. The articles were written in Sarajevo by a certain 'Kenneth Roberts', who had apparently worked for more than a year as a UN advisor in Bosnia. In reality this was SIS worker Keith Robert Craig, who worked for the Balkans Secretariat of the UK Ministry of Defence.

The first article was published on 5 February 1994 and advocated an UNPROFOR withdrawal from Bosnia, because all factions had committed war crimes. The second article, of 5 March, attacked the entire reporting in the British media. According to the unofficial historian of SIS, Stephen Dorril, this was a pro-Serbian approach. 'Without the slightest evidence, the carnage that took place in Sarajevo's marketplace was described as the work of the Muslim-led government, which was alleged to be massacring its own people to win sympathy and ultimately help from outside.' According to Dorril, the SIS operation worked perfectly and the article was carried by the world press. He also suspected that a large part of SIS was pro-Serb. This is probably incorrect: in reality it was an expression of a wider disenchantment. This British view was consistent with the Canadian analysis that there were no good guys and no bad guys in this war. Western services had more balanced ideas than the Western media, who were more emphatically pro-Muslim. SIS presumably used the conservative magazine here

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<sup>254</sup> For this, see Chapter 4 of this study.

<sup>255</sup> Daniel Burton-Rose & Wayne Madsen, 'Corporate Soldiers. The U.S. Government Privatizes the Use of Force', in: *Multinational Monitor* (March 1999), pp. 17-19, Ripley, *Mercenaries*, p. 59 and Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, p. 90.

<sup>256</sup> Confidential interview (97). According to Polmar & Allen, *Spy Book*, p. 601 Woolsey resigned mainly by the exposure of a Russian mole within the CIA (Aldrich H. Ames).

<sup>257</sup> George Jones, 'Evidence builds up of Muslim bias by CIA', *The Daily Telegraph*, 03/06/95.

<sup>258</sup> Interview with James R. Woolsey, 01/10/02.

<sup>259</sup> Confidential interview (79).

<sup>260</sup> Confidential interview (8).

as a counterweight to sound a balanced note. For the press this confirmed the image of SIS as pro-Serbian, and from that moment on this service was unreservedly branded as 'pro-Serbian', while many British journalists followed the CNN view ('good guys, bad guys') of the war.<sup>261</sup>

For instance, anti-Serbian reports were shown on television of the battle around Gorazde in April-May 1994, according to the former American head of the intelligence section (in military terms: the G-2 section) in Sarajevo, Lieutenant Colonel J. E. Sray. A British SAS soldier was killed by the VRS and a British aircraft (a Sea Harrier) was shot down. US networks accused General Rose of cowardice and reluctance to deploy NATO air power against the Bosnian Serbs. What was not mentioned on television, however, was that ABiH soldiers had left their positions during the VRS attack and taken up new positions behind the SAS unit, which caught the British in the middle. No one took the trouble to make enquiries of the Public Affairs Officer of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC), or to request an interview with UNPROFOR staff in Sarajevo. In later documentaries this story would indiscriminately be repeated on American television.<sup>262</sup> More generally, the press in the crisis around Bosnia was transformed from mere opinion shapers into prominent policy drivers who, depending on the situation, had an influence on the political decision-making that should not be underestimated.<sup>263</sup> This is not the appropriate place to give a comprehensive analysis of the role of and reporting by the press on the war in Bosnia, but it is clear that this helped to shape a manifestly pro-Muslim view.<sup>264</sup>

Another example of misleading information was probably the mortar attack on the Markale market in Sarajevo, which killed 68 civilians in February 1994. Eleven artillery specialists subsequently spent nine days studying the shell attack.<sup>265</sup> The official final assessment was that the attacks were executed by the VRS, but there were serious doubts about this within the Western intelligence community. Various staff of intelligence and security services from Canada, the UK, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Belgium and the Netherlands established independently of each other that this was an act by the ABiH to show the Bosnian Serbs in a bad light.<sup>266</sup>

A similar suspicion arose when on 28 August 1995 a shell landed on a busy square in Sarajevo. As early as October 1995 journalist David Binder reported in the weekly *The Nation* that four UNPROFOR specialists (a Russian, a Canadian and two Americans) had arrived at the incontrovertible conclusion that it was an ABiH shell. American intelligence officers admitted that the ABiH had taken responsibility for this incident.<sup>267</sup> Sray, head of the intelligence section in Sarajevo, subsequently signalled in a publication that the ABiH was responsible for both shellings.<sup>268</sup> Even the most important British policy body in the field of intelligence, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), came to the conclusion that the shelling of Sarajevo market was probably not the work of the VRS, but of the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>269</sup>

In a third incident that followed this pattern, the head of the UNMOs (UN Military Observers) in Sarajevo investigated the mortar attack on the water distribution point in Sarajevo, which was the trigger for the later air strikes by NATO, and in doing so demonstrated that the attack was executed by the ABiH itself. However, all the associated evidence was pushed aside by American officers.<sup>270</sup> Russian

<sup>261</sup> Dorril, *MI 6*, 2000, p. 791.

<sup>262</sup> John Sray, 'selling the Bosnian Myth', in: *Foreign Military Studies*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1995. Other American, Canadian and European intelligence officials repeatedly expressed their dislike of CNN reports. Confidential interviews (9), (12), (47) and (54).

<sup>263</sup> Drs. R. Theunens, 'Intelligence en vredesoperaties' ('Intelligence and peace operations'), *Militaire Spectator*, 170 (2001) 11, p. 599.

<sup>264</sup> See also the Scholten appendix to the main report.

<sup>265</sup> David Binder, 'Bosnia's bombers', *The Nation*, Vol. 261, No. 10, 02/10/95.

<sup>266</sup> Confidential interviews (8), (9), (12), (21), (37), (44), (45), (47), (68) and (69).

<sup>267</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>268</sup> John Sray, 'selling the Bosnian Myth', in: *Foreign Military Studies*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1995.

<sup>269</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>270</sup> Confidential interview (44).

intelligence officers even told the author Ljiljana Bulatovic that the Bosnian General Rasim Delic had organized the attack.<sup>271</sup>

Various interviews reveal that the French intelligence services generally leaned towards to the British position on the war in Bosnia. However, a conflict of competence arose in response to the far-reaching French involvement in UNPROFOR and the conflict in Bosnia between the foreign intelligence service (DGSE) and military intelligence service (DRM). Indeed in October 1994, an official agreement had to be made between these two services to delineate their tasks. This was also necessary because the two directors, Jacques Dewatre and General Jean Heinrich, were constantly at odds with each other. Furthermore, General Jean Heinrich frequently quarrelled with General Raymond Germanos, the Chief of Operations of the French Army, and this would give rise to many problems in Bosnia.<sup>272</sup>

The quarrel was ultimately settled to the advantage of the French DGSE, which was given exclusive authority to conduct clandestine operations in other countries and to run agents and sources. From now on the French military intelligence service would have to rely for the gathering of intelligence on the military attachés in the French embassies and uniformed officers, such as those serving with UNPROFOR. Senior officials of the French DGSE confirmed that their service had received an unprecedented flow of foreign requests for intelligence since the outbreak of the crisis in the Balkans. The DGSE was extremely active in Bosnia, and the sharply increased pressure of work had led to the recruitment of five hundred civilians in the five years since the start of the war.<sup>273</sup> Incidentally, the director of the French foreign intelligence service, Dewatre, later had to resign because the service's operations in Serbia had misfired.<sup>274</sup>

German intelligence services also had a biased assessment: they were pro-Croatian, but leant towards the American anti-Serb position. The foreign intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND), was always very concerned (like the Italian and Austrian services) about the situation in Yugoslavia. These services expected major disturbances already after Tito's death and, according to a former BND official, had a better understanding of the ethnic and cultural problems there, compared to other services. The German service collected much intelligence by operating with special teams who debriefed refugees in Germany or Bosnia itself. There was a serious fear for the German national security in view of the enormous influx of refugees from the Balkan. In particular because there worked in Germany already more than 1 million Yugoslav immigrant workers.<sup>275</sup>

The BND is said to have also cooperated closely with Croatian intelligence services, such as the Bureau for National Security (*Ured za Nacionalnu Sigurnost*), the intelligence service of the Croatian Army (OSHV), the intelligence service of the General Staff of the Croatian Army and the Security Information Service. It is noteworthy, incidentally, that these Croatian services operated actively and specifically against UNPROFOR. For instance, Bureau IV of the intelligence service of the Croatian Army was responsible for military Communications Intelligence (Comint) operations against the headquarters of UNPROFOR in Zagreb, which were carried out from the air force base Lucko in Zagreb. This section was said to have maintained close links with the BND and CIA. The Germans made equipment available to both and arranged training and education. In addition, NATO intelligence, including Sigint, is said to have flowed via the BND to the Croatian services, to the great dissatisfaction of the NATO member states, especially because the Serbian intelligence and security services (such as SDB and KOS) had heavily infiltrated the Croatian services. Intelligence supplied by

<sup>271</sup> Bulatovic, *General Mladic*, pp. 125-126, 129 and 131.

<sup>272</sup> 'Changes at the Top in French Intelligence', *Intelligence Newsletter*, No. 266, 15/06/95.

<sup>273</sup> Protocole d'accord DGSE-DRM', *Le Monde Du Renseignement*, No. 249, 06/10/94.

<sup>274</sup> Chuck Sudetic, 'The Reluctant Gendarme', *The Atlantic Monthly*, April 2000.

<sup>275</sup> Confidential information (86) and confidential interview (98).

American and German services ended up via this German-Croatian route in Belgrade.<sup>276</sup> However, former BND officials strongly denied that this ever took place.<sup>277</sup>

This close American-German collaboration did *not* exist in the American relationship with other Western services, including between the British and the Americans, in spite of their special relationship. There was no question of an optimum sharing with the British by the Americans, according to an employee of the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). In early 1995 the Americans had become 'pretty anti-Serb', and had abandoned their balanced view. This brought them into conflict with the British services, which still had a balanced view of the conflict. This led to the American services adopting an increasingly unfriendly attitude towards the British. The difference of opinion led to a curtailment of American intelligence input to the Defence Intelligence Staff.<sup>278</sup> As the then CIA director Woolsey remarked, such a balanced view amounted to 'swimming against the stream' in the American political context. According to a senior US intelligence official there were actually two streams. Those who idealized the Bosnian Muslims and those who blamed them equally with the Serbs. The CIA swam against both.<sup>279</sup>

American domestic politics were furthermore strongly influenced by the excellent media campaign in the United States by the Bosnian Muslims, who had hired the prominent New York PR firms Hill & Knowlton and Rudner Finn. Sray, who in 1994 was head of the intelligence section in Sarajevo, even stated that this was a pure disinformation campaign. He pointed out that the first firm was responsible for the Kuwaiti government's public relations campaign during the Gulf War, and had successfully spread the outrageous lie that Iraqi troops had thrown Kuwaiti babies out of their incubators. The management of Rudner Finn would later boast that it had succeeded in marshalling a significant part of the American Jewish community behind the Bosnian Muslims, in spite of the fact that the Bosnian Muslims had brought many Islamic fundamentalists into Bosnia who were vehemently anti-Israel.<sup>280</sup>

#### *The approach of the intelligence services to the crisis in Bosnia*

There were different levels of activities within the Military Information Office (MIO) at UNPROFOR in Zagreb. Firstly there was the MIO, as intended by the UN in New York, whose opportunities and resources were limited. This resulted in a second level of activities: the links with the national intelligence services and their contributions. A third level was based on liaison relationships within NATO, which mainly meant contributions from networks that had long been in existence. The most important levels were the second and third.<sup>281</sup> In Chapter 1 extensive attention was paid to the MIO in Zagreb. Below we will focus attention on the second level: the role of the various national services, and on the third level, the relationships within NATO.

Various troop-contributing nations soon realized that for gathering intelligence in the former Yugoslavia they should not count on intelligence contributions from the UN or the MIO. Because these countries considered it to be absurd 'to send troops to a sensitive area without the capability to analyse the situation properly' this quickly led to the establishment of well-organized national intelligence structures. Although these units were formally under UN command, in reality they were controlled by their national governments. There was a danger attached to this: this national control greatly influenced the policy conducted with respect to the conflict, which officially remained UN policy. UN intelligence needs were not always in agreement with those of the individual troop-contributing nations, which could also interpret

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<sup>276</sup> Marko Milivojevic, 'Croatia's Intelligence Services', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 9, pp. 404-410. See also: Hagman, *UN-NATO*, p. 63.

<sup>277</sup> Confidential interviews (98) and (99).

<sup>278</sup> Confidential interview (8). For this, see also Chapter 5 on 'sigint'.

<sup>279</sup> Confidential interview (97).

<sup>280</sup> John Sray, 'selling the Bosnian Myth', *Foreign Military Studies*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1995.

<sup>281</sup> See Chapter 1 of this study.

the mandate differently or which possibly wanted to avoid conflicts with the warring factions.<sup>282</sup> Potentially, the 'grip' of national governments on the UN peacekeeping mission in Bosnia would therefore tighten.

Troop-contributing nations took the gathering of intelligence into their own hands. France, Denmark and the UK, for example, deployed special commando units, which operated behind enemy lines to gather intelligence. In March 1994 a joint covert operation was executed in Bosnia in which various troop-contributing nations participated, such as Canada, the United Kingdom and France. This was because at this point large parts of Bosnia had still not been explored and mapped out.

Another example: one day a group of European intelligence officers reported to the Bosnian government. As a cover they claimed to be members of a European tourist organization, and told the government in Sarajevo that once the war was over, Bosnia was certain to become a major tourist attraction. Therefore the group were keen to explore in particular those areas where UNPROFOR was not yet active. They especially wanted to survey the state of hotels and boarding houses, restaurants, public buildings, ski centres, the landscape, the state of the road network and so on, so as to be better prepared for 'the great tourist invasion'. The Bosnian government in Sarajevo fell for it and gave them permission. In this way, completely outside the knowledge of the UN, a great deal of intelligence was gathered on poorly accessible areas in Bosnia.<sup>283</sup> However, this must have been in a timeframe when UNPROFOR did not control yet almost all Bosnia. Various interviewed intelligence officials had doubts about this story.<sup>284</sup>

British and French national intelligence cells were created, which operated independently of each other and of the UN. London and Paris did not want to be dependent on the intelligence contribution from the UN, which was minimal. The director of the DIS, Air Marshal John Walker, had the following to say on this subject:

'Intelligence is a dirty word in the United Nations. The UN is not a thing in itself; it's an amalgam of 183 sovereign nations. If it does intelligence, it will be doing it against a sovereign UN member, so it's incompatible. But you need a military intelligence job to protect your troops. If you don't, you pay for it in body bags'.<sup>285</sup>

In brief, most Western intelligence services created new structures (usually ad hoc) in order to deal with the crisis in Bosnia.

The US intelligence community, because of the considerable political involvement of the Clinton administration in the conflict in Bosnia, had bundled its forces in the form of a 'Balkans Task Force' (BTF), in which the most important national services were represented. Its director was Gene Wickland. The BTF included representatives of the CIA and DIA, with intelligence supplied by the NRO and NSA. Military analysis was carried out mainly by the CIA. Each night a daily situation report was drawn up for the following morning, which was incorporated in the presidential morning briefing by the CIA. President Bush (Sr.) was always briefed personally, but President Clinton was apparently a speed reader: he read the material provided extremely rapidly and dispensed with the briefing. The material for the briefing also went to the special Balkans advisor of Vice-President Al Gore, Leon Fuerth, who was responsible for monitoring the sanctions against Serbia and did so 'very much in detail'.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> Pär Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, pp. 5-6.

<sup>283</sup> A. Walter Dorn, 'The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, p. 429.

<sup>284</sup> Confidential interviews (45) (54) and (98).

<sup>285</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 214.

<sup>286</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00 and Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 243-244.



A separate Balkans Task Force was also created in the Intelligence & Research section of the State Department, which received its information from the American intelligence community. A special Bosnia group also existed at the National Security Agency since 1994. Despite the initial shortage of translators American intelligence officials felt at the time that this team carried out one of the best operations in the intelligence service's existence. There was a 'four hour turnaround time' for Sigint from Bosnia and Serbia. This meant that after the interception of a message it would be translated, processed, analysed and delivered to the desk of the consumer of the intelligence, such as the CIA or the State Department, within four hours.<sup>287</sup> In addition, in Vicenza, Italy, a special NSA unit was created for the rapid processing of intercepted message traffic: the Special Handling and Evaluation Detachment (SHED).<sup>288</sup>

In the United Kingdom too, all manner of new structures were created in all haste within the intelligence community to deal with the conflict in Bosnia. SIS had a number of official sources in the old Yugoslavia, but produced little valuable intelligence. The service also had too few experts who could speak Serbo-Croat, and it had to build everything from the ground up on the outbreak of the war, much like GCHQ. The coordinating body for intelligence, the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC), established the Current Intelligence Group for the Balkans. Within eighteen months, the Balkans department of SIS had recruited a number of sources among all warring factions and placed them effectively in Bosnia. Furthermore, SIS, reportedly carried out an operation in Macedonia in 1993, in which clandestine arms drops to the border were executed as part of an operation to set up a clandestine resistance network.<sup>289</sup>

Another secret operation in which SIS was said to have been involved was a detailed plan to eliminate President Milosevic. Former SIS worker Richard Tomlinson gained access to a secret two-page document, originating in SIS, with the title: 'The need to assassinate President Milosevic of Serbia'. It stated that Milosevic must be removed because he supported Karadzic. Meanwhile, American and French intelligence services made preparations to assassinate Karadzic; Milosevic apparently fell under the auspices of the United Kingdom. The plan was never executed, probably because the American government felt that Milosevic was a stabilizing factor.<sup>290</sup> One American intelligence official rejected this notion. According to him, there was, and is, an absolute ban on any 'wet' work for US clandestine operations. Since 1974, each US clandestine operation is reviewed and approved by Congressional oversight, which flatly prohibits any such assassinations.<sup>291</sup>

In 1994 Tomlinson worked under the cover of 'political advisor to General Rose' in Bosnia. He made trips to Belgrade, Skopje, Zagreb, Tuzla and Ljubljana, where he recruited new sources or spoke to senior Bosnian agents who already worked for the British service.<sup>292</sup> He successfully ran various high-level agents in Sarajevo.<sup>293</sup> An official once asserted that these agents 'produced a very detailed intelligence picture which included not just the military plans and capabilities of the different factions but also early warning of political intentions'. Another source asserted, however, that important agents were recruited, but that these produced no 'substantial intelligence of quality'.<sup>294</sup>

A nationally oriented Bosnia Cell was created in the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). This special unit mainly had access to intelligence that was gathered by British and US services. This cell provided strategic, but not tactical intelligence to the Ministry of Defence. As regards the sources of the

<sup>287</sup> Confidential interview (13) and Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 128.

<sup>288</sup> Tim Ripley, 'Operation Deny Flight', *World Air Power Journal*, Vol. 16 (Spring 1994) pp. 19-20; Dylan Eklund, 'The Reconnaissance Squadron', *Air World International* (November 1995), p. 36 and Chris Pocock, 'U-2: The Second Generation', *World Air Power Journal* (Spring 1997), p. 94.

<sup>289</sup> Dorril, *MI 6*, pp. 790-792.

<sup>290</sup> Dorril, *MI 6*, p. 791. The French would also later have plans to remove Milosevic. See: Chuck Sudetic, 'The Reluctant Gendarme', *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 2000).

<sup>291</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>292</sup> Tomlinson, *The Big Breach*, pp. 130-174.

<sup>293</sup> T. Kelsey & D. Leppard, 'MI6 gags spy who has vanished into the cold', *Sunday Times*, 22/09/96.

<sup>294</sup> Dorril, *MI 6*, p. 792.

DIS: firstly this was GCHQ, after which came SIS, followed by Imint. In fourth place came the Foreign Office political reports. In addition, intelligence arrived via liaison and originally much was shared with the Americans (especially with the DIA).<sup>295</sup> As the United Kingdom's political, military and humanitarian involvement in the events in Bosnia became more extensive, the British services started to become increasingly active in the Balkans. A national intelligence cell was established, as London no longer wanted to be dependent on the MIO in Zagreb. One such cell was set up in the Croatian port of Split and one in BHC in Kiseljak in central Bosnia, later in Sarajevo.

The sharing of intelligence with other UNPROFOR countries remained a problem throughout the UNPROFOR mission. The British also ran up against the difficulty that the UNPROFOR staff comprised many nationalities, including staff of former Russian and other Eastern European services. In Bosnia, the British Army Intelligence Corps originally worked closely with the French and Canadian military intelligence services.<sup>296</sup> These operations were especially intended for gathering data for briefings for the commanders. Nonetheless, the same problems that frequently affect the world of intelligence soon appeared, characterized by the BBC journalist Urban as follows: 'Any channelling of Signals Intelligence or agent reports from the Government Communications Headquarters and MI6 to troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina was constrained by the intelligence community's strict rules about dissemination.' The result of this limitation on the dissemination of intelligence was that important information often did not reach the troops on the ground, as had happened during the Gulf War, where the command structure was almost ideal. Because troops from Russia and the Ukraine also took part in UNPROFOR in Bosnia, the probability that London would be allowed or able to supply valuable intelligence was small. If any intelligence was passed on, it was 'sanitized to the point of near-uselessness'. However, one should always remember, as mentioned in Chapter 1 of this study, that unclassified is not the same as worthless. Nonetheless, reports of intercepted message traffic from GCHQ were only passed on to a special British Sigint cell in Sarajevo, which was equipped with special communication equipment. This select group of specially appointed officers briefed the British General Rose and his successor General Smith personally.<sup>297</sup> Furthermore, special Bosnia units were set up in the various headquarters of the Canadian, German and French (military) intelligence services. Until now, little has become known about the activities of these special units.

*The information position of the Western intelligence services: the United States, France and the United Kingdom*

The Western intelligence and security services appeared to be insufficiently prepared for the war in Bosnia. For instance, intelligence author Andrew Rathmell states that these services were still equipped for the situation as it had been before the fall of the Berlin Wall. 'Military forces embarking for remote trouble-spots overseas, for instance, find that they receive more timely and comprehensive background information from private sector information providers than through their own chain of command.'<sup>298</sup> The question arises as to what the most important causes for this were, and whether there was a lack of information in the first place.

The former director of the CIA, James Woolsey, contested Rathmell's view. Discussing the information position of the CIA in 1993, he stated that his service had a firm grip on events and developments. According to him, this was because the interest in Yugoslavia within the CIA had always been great. For many years, much good intelligence had been gathered about that country. Yugoslavia had been an important player in the Cold War and had close ties with China. In this respect too, the country had been of interest to the CIA. There were therefore sufficient analysts and language specialists available when the conflict acquired a military dimension. The CIA knew fairly well who was talking to whom about what. That is also why the CIA held a balanced view (i.e. all groups committing

<sup>295</sup> Confidential interviews (8) and (79).

<sup>296</sup> Interview with Pauline Neville-Jones, 15/11/91.

<sup>297</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 213-215.

<sup>298</sup> Andrew Rathmell. 'Privatising intelligence', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XI (1998) 2, p. 201.

atrocities but the Bosnian Serbs much more). They were also able to follow what weapons and other goods were being brought into the region. The CIA also knew that many ‘visitors’ from the Middle East were entering the region in an attempt to influence the conflict.<sup>299</sup>

The journalist Halberstam is of the same opinion. According to him there has been no lack of American political, military and intelligence talent in Yugoslavia for the last forty years. Belgrade was ‘a good listening post’ for developments in the Warsaw Pact. In the autumn of 1990, the CIA predicted in a thorough analysis that within one year Yugoslavia ‘would no longer function and in two years it would begin to dissolve’. The CIA pointed to the dangers of armed conflicts between the various ethnic factions in Yugoslavia. Neither the United States nor the European countries would be able to stop this process, according to the service.<sup>300</sup> It would nonetheless appear that the American information position in general was not actually that good. There were shortcomings, especially in the area of Humint, Imint and Sigint, as will be demonstrated in the following chapters.

Humint did play an important role for the Americans; not so much in the CIA, but in the DIA. One of the best sources of intelligence was formed by the flows of Displaced Persons that left Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia and the Republika Srpska to apply for asylum in European Union countries. Not only these refugees, but also deserters, were an extremely important Humint source. The US Army Intelligence and Security Command was running a sizeable programme in Germany and Italy that was aimed at debriefing refugees and deserters. They were interviewed in joint interrogation centres about their experiences in the former Yugoslavia. These special units were later incorporated into the Defense Humint Service. The CIA also had a separate unit in Croatia, the Refugee Debriefing Center, to interview and screen Displaced Persons from Bosnia.<sup>301</sup> The Austrian and Swiss intelligence services, incidentally, are also said to have gathered much intelligence thanks to the debriefing of refugees from the Balkans.<sup>302</sup>

The US community also acquired information from other similar projects. Via the 66th Intelligence Brigade in Munich, for example, which was also occupied with debriefing Displaced Persons. Furthermore, the American DIA had the ‘Formica’ project, in which all US military personnel that had been stationed with UNPROFOR or had travelled through the Balkans were comprehensively interrogated. Declassified American government documents reveal that in 1992 and 1993 this service already had a good insight into the atrocities committed in Bosnia in various camps where Muslims had been held prisoner, for example, Luka-Brcko and Omarska. It was also clear to the service that captured Muslims and Croats had been murdered on a large scale in Brcko. In order to mislead the International Red Cross, Bosnian Serbs were said to have inflicted minor wounds on themselves and pretended that they had been prisoners who had otherwise got off reasonably lightly.<sup>303</sup> According to a senior US intelligence official US awareness on this issue was broad and well-defined. Nevertheless, the reporting priority given to the atrocities was nil. Many felt that the issue was very important, and reported extensively on it, but the direct application of the reportage was nil. Reporting on atrocities was seen as being aimed at three to five years down the road, for some ill-defined effort to hold parties accountable. It was an expression of faith in the system. All reporting on atrocities was done “out of hide”, and in addition to the required reporting on tactical and operational requirements.<sup>304</sup>

Another US intelligence officer confirmed that the debriefings of refugees resulted in much useful intelligence. All raw intelligence from counterintelligence, Humint operations and Osint from the Balkans was entered into the so-called *Blackbird Database*. However, this officer also stated that the DIA

<sup>299</sup> Interviews with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00 and 01/10/02.

<sup>300</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 94. See also: Cohen, *Hearts grown brutal*, p. 173.

<sup>301</sup> H.K. Roy, ‘Betrayal in the Balkans: undercover Central Intelligence Agency officer introduced to Iranian Intelligence’, *World and I*, Vol. 16 (2001) 8, 01/08/01.

<sup>302</sup> Confidential interview (26).

<sup>303</sup> FOIA, *US Army Intelligence, Annual Historical Review, 1 October 1992 to 30 September 1993*, no date (approx. end 1993). With thanks to Jeffrey Richelson for making this document available. See further: Jeffrey Richelson, ‘As World Fiddled Army Intel gathered World Of Serb Butchery’, *Defense Week*, Vol. 17 (1996) 37, 16/09/96.

<sup>304</sup> Confidential information (80).

had botched the recording of a great deal regarding evidence of atrocities. For instance, the service interviewed hundreds of Displaced Persons in Germany without noting in the debriefing reports who said what. Therefore these witnesses could not be used as witnesses by the Tribunal in The Hague.<sup>305</sup>

The following can be said about the United Kingdom with respect to the information position of the DIS. In the first place the information of GCHQ was important. They supplied mainly military-tactical Sigint on troop movements and, for example, to calls for meetings. This intelligence went by satellite directly to the service in Cheltenham; the information comprised approximately seven thousand reports a week. In the second place the British foreign intelligence service, SIS, played its part. SIS also supplied tactical intelligence, but only small chunks. According to a British intelligence official, incidentally, this intelligence was not of the highest quality; on a score of 1 to 5 this official would value the material at 2 or 3, or in other words: 'Not really good stuff'. In the third place Imint was of interest. Photos were supplied by (Nimrod-type) aircraft that carried out photo reconnaissance flights in the region. AWACS aircraft were also used for espionage. They supplied Elint and Comint. Flights of the American U-2 espionage aircraft often also supplied good photos. Unmanned espionage aircraft (for example UAVs) mainly supplied Imint regarding Gorazde. The satellite photos were supplied directly to the Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth. This is a wholly American organization, which forwarded the intelligence to the British. Only in fourth place was the political reporting of the Foreign Office of interest to the DIS. In addition, intelligence arrived at this service via the intelligence liaison with other countries (the main source originally was the liaison with the DIA).

British intelligence officers were often unimpressed with the UK Eyes Only intelligence supplied by the Special Air Services (SAS) and Special Boat Service (SBS) as part of the British collection operations. For example, the SAS reported one day that two Serbian tanks had been spotted at a given location. The DIS certainly found this interesting, but, according to the earlier mentioned official, the service also wanted to know where the tanks were going. In this way, the SAS did deliver much tactical intelligence, but the Humint that accompanied it was often difficult to assess and its value was difficult to ascertain. Later in 1995 the SAS carried out laser designation of Bosnian Serb targets and called down artillery fire on VRS positions.

From the United Kingdom there was also some intelligence liaison with the ABiH, but the information that was supplied was always taken with a grain of salt by DIS workers. Usually the Bosnian Muslims supplied *all source intelligence* (all types together), but the ABiH never supplied intercepted message traffic. Very often, the ABiH information came down to urging the UN to become involved in the conflict.<sup>306</sup>

Regarding the Sigint cover of Bosnia, an DIS employee said that Sigint resulted in 'no good picture'. The VRS and the VJ (the army of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia) often used couriers or existing fixed land lines that could not be monitored, except in special operations where the lines were tapped directly. According to UK officials, this was in any case never done by the British services.<sup>307</sup>

An outline has now been given of how the intelligence and security services 'at home' acquired their information, and the question now remains as to what exactly the services themselves did in Bosnia in order to get the intelligence gathering off the ground. In addition to the outlined methods of Sigint<sup>308</sup> and Imint<sup>309</sup> there were also plenty of methods for gathering Humint, such as recruiting agents and informants or using existing structures, organizations and official bodies.

As far as Humint is concerned the impression is that the British information position was not so good. This was evident during the hostage crisis in the spring of 1995: regarding the hostages the British Chief of Defence Staff had to conclude in an internal intelligence memorandum that the greatest problem was that there was a lack of good intelligence. For this reason the British services simply did

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<sup>305</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>306</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>307</sup> Confidential interviews (8) and (79).

<sup>308</sup> See Chapter 5 and 6 of this study.

<sup>309</sup> See Chapter 7 of this study.

not know where the hostages were.<sup>310</sup> Until now very little has become known about the information position of other Western intelligence services, although all important services were active in Bosnia and they all had their 'own' official (diplomatic) and unofficial representatives in Bosnia.

*The work of the intelligence services in Sarajevo, Belgrade and Zagreb*

The most important Western intelligence services had a branch office in the region. This 'station' was usually connected with the embassies concerned; this was the case in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade. For instance, the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND) had a representative in the German embassies in Belgrade and Zagreb. According to CIA officers, the BND also had Humint sources close to Mladic and Izetbegovic.<sup>311</sup> In practice, the BND had a special interest in the violations of the embargo against Serbia and Montenegro by Romania and Greece.<sup>312</sup> The service occasionally came up with reports the reliability of which turned out to be highly dubious. For instance, on 16 March 1995 the German embassy, probably on the authority of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, reported that a temporary bridge had been built over the Drina at Jagustica between Serbia and the Republika Srpska, and that this bridge was being used to transport equipment to the Bosnian Serbs. It appeared later that the local landscape resembled a Norwegian fjord: a steep wall of rock more than 200 metres high. The German intelligence was incorrect.<sup>313</sup>

The American CIA was likewise represented by a station in Belgrade. The CIA and the monitoring service, the NSA, had already operated for some time from the embassy with a secret post that monitored the communication traffic in and around Belgrade. The CIA and NSA operated from a similar post in Zagreb to track the Croatian communication traffic.<sup>314</sup> Matters were arranged differently in Bosnia. The first CIA Chief of Station to arrive in Sarajevo, had formerly worked in Belgrade, Zagreb and Kosovo. Originally, the new Chief of Station was supposed to leave for Sarajevo with a small team in mid-1994. However, this was deemed to be too dangerous by CIA headquarters; eventually the team did not leave until June 1995, shortly before the fall of Srebrenica. During his stay in Sarajevo, the Chief of Station also reported on the fall of the enclaves Srebrenica and Zepa. Albright in particular was said to have asked the Chief of Station to provide the correct numbers of dead in Srebrenica. When he indicated that this number was between six thousand and eight thousand, Washington responded with great scepticism.

The work of the Chief of Station in Sarajevo proved to be not without risk. Later in 1995, the Bosnian security service revealed his identity to the Iranian secret service, so that he had to make a hasty retreat from Sarajevo.<sup>315</sup> Only in late 1995 was the American station in Sarajevo reopened, after obtaining some security guarantees from the Bosnian side. The new Chief of Station in Sarajevo had to work with a small staff of three, which meant in practice that he had an assistant, an administrative worker and a communications man at his disposal. Furthermore, there was a strict separation of tasks between the CIA stations in Zagreb and Sarajevo. The CIA station in Zagreb, where the Chief of Station had a larger staff at his disposal, was responsible for the Republika Srpska. The Chief of Station in Sarajevo would not dream of running sources or agents in the Republika Srpska or of carrying out clandestine operations there. The tasks were distributed as follows: the most important task of the CIA station in Zagreb was to follow the political, military and economic developments in Croatia and the

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<sup>310</sup> Confidential information (8).

<sup>311</sup> Confidential interview (61).

<sup>312</sup> 'Bundesnachrichtendienst: Handel mit Serbien geht weiter; Embargo wird umgangen', *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 21/07/92.

<sup>313</sup> Confidential information (10).

<sup>314</sup> Confidential interviews (6), (99) and (100).

<sup>315</sup> H.K. Roy, 'Betrayal in the Balkans: undercover Central Intelligence Agency officer introduced to Iranian Intelligence', *World and I*, Vol. 16 (2001) 8, 01/08/01.

Republika Srpska. The work was nonetheless focused on the gathering of intelligence regarding the Croatian armed forces.<sup>316</sup>

The CIA station in Sarajevo was mainly concerned with an operation to expel Mujahedeen fighters from the country, and (partly overlapping) with fighting 'terrorism and the removal of foreigners'. This mainly concerned fundamentalists from Tunisia, Algeria, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and Revolutionary Guards from Iran and Yemen. As it happens, they were stateless Muslim soldiers, who had been recruited from the slums of cities like Cairo and Algiers. At the time considerable sums of money flowed from Iran to the ABiH to pay these fighters. The ABiH, however, wanted nothing to do with fundamentalists within Bosnia in the beginning. The ABiH may not have seen them as a danger and was not anxious to observe the wishes of the Chief of Station, who had been ordered from Washington to expel those particular fighters from the country. According to CIA workers, the Bosnian Muslims constantly tried to mislead the CIA and to downplay the problem of the Mujahedeen fighters. By the spring of 1996 CIA field officer Robert Baer worked with a half-dozen people in Bosnia on counterterrorism.<sup>317</sup>

The CIA continued to actively pursue the order to expel these fighters from the country. For instance, they put pressure on Izetbegovic to force the Iranian Revolutionary Guards to leave. The president did not want to comply and in the first instance denied that such fighters were playing an important role. The CIA demonstrated that the Mujahedeen were closely involved with the Minister of the Interior of Bosnia, and also demonstrated that the Revolutionary Guards were occupied with training the ABiH to produce car bombs. However, a blind eye was turned to these Revolutionary Guards in the interest of what was considered to be the good cause of the struggle of the Bosnian Muslims. In these Iranian training centres in Bosnia, the CIA also encountered models of buildings that were evidence that the Iranians were planning to storm certain premises. In addition, the ABiH had engaged mercenaries from Albania and the Chechen Republic, which were needed because it had no other choice for training soldiers: most of its soldiers had no combat experience. Iran was permitted with American tacit agreement to supply weapons to the Bosnian Muslims,<sup>318</sup> but after the arrival of the first American troops the Revolutionary Guards had to leave Bosnia again. CIA workers, incidentally, admitted this 'tacit agreement' for arms trading; one of them remarked: 'That is politics.'<sup>319</sup>

The CIA in Sarajevo soon discovered that the Bosnian Muslims had a 'white hot hatred' on all political and military levels towards the French. The CIA station, for example, received lists from the ABiH of French equipment, which had ostensibly been confiscated by the VRS. According to CIA officials, however, this concerned 'normal' French supplies to the VRS, for example two field kitchens, where each kitchen could feed approximately six hundred soldiers. These kitchens were transported in enormous trucks with low loaders and 'you do not just lose one of these accidentally along the way', according to a CIA official. In addition, the lists included summaries with serial numbers of radios, firearms, uniforms, rifles, military systems and communication equipment which were supposed to have been confiscated by the VRS. According to CIA officials, this was evidence that the ABiH had highly placed agents within the VRS or were able to intercept their communication traffic.<sup>320</sup> The CIA itself also ran agents in Pale, who, according to a former official of the Dutch MIS, supplied excellent intelligence.<sup>321</sup>

German, Turkish, Italian, Russian, Iranian and French intelligence services were also active in Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Tuzla. CIA officials in Sarajevo and Zagreb had a golden rule: no contacts with the French foreign and/or military services; the CIA apparently did not trust the French services. There was no Chief of Station of the British foreign intelligence service SIS present in

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<sup>316</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>317</sup> Baer, *See No Evil*, pp. 236 - 237.

<sup>318</sup> For this, see Chapter 4 of this study.

<sup>319</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>320</sup> Confidential interviews (6) and (12). See also Chapter 6 of this study for the Bosnian Sigint capacities.

<sup>321</sup> Confidential interview (78).

Sarajevo, which was quite remarkable in view of the presence of the many British troops there, according to a CIA official.<sup>322</sup> And the BND also met with distrust. According to German intelligence sources the French themselves were also reluctant to share information with the BND. And later during the war in Kosovo the CIA was sometimes reluctant to share UAV Imagery with the BND.<sup>323</sup>

There was definitely a British representation of SIS, albeit not on the level of Chief of Station. This is apparent from the book written by Richard Tomlinson, who spent some time in Bosnia for SIS and carried out various clandestine operations in Sarajevo and Tuzla, under cover as a political advisor to General Rose.<sup>324</sup> The problem with his book, however, is that it probably does not describe the personal adventures of Tomlinson. Instead he presumably presents the experiences of his predecessor as his own. However, it is true that he ran agents in Sarajevo and Tuzla.<sup>325</sup> Interviews conducted for this report have revealed that the SIS recruited agents up to the highest regions of Izetbegovic's government and cabinet.<sup>326</sup>

The British SIS, like the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, also had excellent sources close to Mladic, according to the Canadian intelligence officers. The Canadians themselves recruited good sources within the Bosnian government. From the Canadian side it was emphasized that in Sarajevo too the French intelligence services had built up an excellent working intelligence system. According to Canadian intelligence officials, the French military intelligence service was the best organized in Sarajevo. The French had an excellent and centralized working system which operationally, tactically and strategically stood head and shoulders above everyone else's. It was an integrated all-source intelligence system.<sup>327</sup> The Canadian view was, not surprisingly, shared by the former head of the French military intelligence service (*Direction de Renseignement Militaire* or DRM), General Jean Heinrich. According to him, up to 1995 this service had an information level that was actually above that of the CIA. The American services had an extraordinarily weak intelligence image 'at home'; their point of view on the war in Bosnia was to change only in the practice of the conflict. According to Heinrich, the CIA knew what was happening on the ground in Iraq, because there they were dealing with a desert. It corresponded well with the CIA's method. But, as Heinrich observed, flying over an area that was wooded and hilly, with people who moved in small groups in a misleading manner, was different from what the US services were accustomed to from Iraq.

Heinrich pointed out that the CIA had other resources, but that all resources were deployed for technical investigation, electronic monitoring and Imint. According to him, the CIA had almost no Humint whatsoever. According to Heinrich, an intelligence service, especially in a conflict involving problems of this type, must have a large number of '*censeurs humains*' on the ground, as well as a very strong analytical capacity. Heinrich claimed that the director of the CIA, Woolsey, even visited him to discuss changes in his own intelligence system.<sup>328</sup>

This assertion was not based on French chauvinism, but was probably consistent with reality. Many interviews with (former) staff of the Dutch Military Intelligence service (MIS) and foreign services indicate that the American information position was indeed not highly regarded.<sup>329</sup> A DIS official recalled Heinrich as 'a dreadful chap', who was extremely anti-American. Neither did he speak a word of English, which did not make bilateral contacts and liaison any easier.<sup>330</sup> This did not detract

<sup>322</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>323</sup> Confidential interviews (98) and (99).

<sup>324</sup> Tomlinson, *The Big Breach*, pp. 130-174.

<sup>325</sup> Confidential interview (80).

<sup>326</sup> Confidential interviews (8), (79) and (80).

<sup>327</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (12) and (47).

<sup>328</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, no. 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de Jean Heinrich, 08/02/01, pp. 179-186.

<sup>329</sup> For this, see Chapter 3 of this study and confidential interviews (8) and (9).

<sup>330</sup> Confidential interview (8).

from the fact that the *Direction de Renseignement Militaire* (DRM) under General Heinrich, in terms of the gathering of intelligence about Bosnia, was generally judged positively in Paris too.<sup>331</sup>

The problem, however, was that the DRM absolutely refused to share its intelligence with NATO allies. The service was able to locate the positions of ABiH and VRS snipers and even employed Black Teams to take out snipers at night. The uncooperative attitude of the French caused great problems when a combined Danish-Swedish unit took over a part of the sector in Sarajevo that until then had been under French units. The DRM refused to disclose the positions of the ABiH snipers to this new unit, insofar as they were aware of these, which resulted in dead and wounded on the Scandinavian side. According to staff of the Canadian intelligence community, however, the DRM cooperated on special operations with the German BND.<sup>332</sup>

The need for intelligence steadily increased during the conflict. Therefore, in addition to the United Kingdom, other NATO member states also established their own national intelligence cells in order to safely provide the 'national' commanders within UNPROFOR with timely and accurate intelligence. The French intelligence services had their own intelligence cell, and turned out to be able to build up an excellent intelligence network in Sarajevo in a relatively short time.

The Canadians also had their own cell and a special unit in Pleso, near Zagreb, which was responsible for processing the daily flow of Comint from Ottawa. This was the **Canadian Forces Information Operations Group (CFIOG)**, which was stationed in Pleso during the war in Bosnia. There was also a special Sigint unit there, which reported directly to the Deputy Force Commander (DFC), the Canadian General Ray Crabbe and later General Ashton. This unit arrived in Pleso in March 1995, where it worked with all source intelligence. The DFC therefore had an analysis unit with all capabilities and resources at his disposal. There was a direct line with the Department of Defence in Ottawa. Sometimes the American services would pass on intelligence to General Ashton, to which he remarked that he had already received it from 'his boys' in Pleso.<sup>333</sup>

Only some considerable time after the fall of Srebrenica, in January 1996, did a Netherlands National Intelligence Cell (abbreviated to NETHNIC) become attached to NATO headquarters in Zagreb. This was in principle a 'one-way gateway', intended to pass on Dutch intelligence to the intelligence officer in Zagreb.<sup>334</sup> Other countries also had a national intelligence cell. For instance, the Swedish Vice-Admiral Magnus Haglund was head of the Swedish National Intelligence Cell (SWENIC) in Zagreb. Haglund collaborated closely with the German, British and Danish cells (GEMNIC, UKNIC and DANNIC) in particular to procure intelligence; he had fewer dealings with the Dutch cell. He did point out that the Dutch cell was usually avoided, because it was often affected by viruses in the computer systems.<sup>335</sup>

Besides technical resources, such as Imint and Sigint that were deployed for national intelligence gathering, various intelligence services often made use of Humint sources and the secondment of intelligence officers to a suitable location. The favourite secondment locations were in the various staffs and in Akashi's supporting unit in Zagreb. For instance, Akashi had a French advisor who worked for the French foreign intelligence service. The problem for this advisor, as he told another of Akashi's advisors, was that most other staff members knew what was going on, and at some meetings this Frenchman was consequently no longer welcome. This official's crowning glory was on his departure in August 1995, when he spent an entire afternoon loading a truck with boxes of documents. He later went to work for the European Commission Monitoring Mission (ECMM). According to this advisor to Akashi, this was also a favourite 'hangout' for intelligence personnel.<sup>336</sup> Indeed, it will become clear

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<sup>331</sup> 'Changes at the Top in French Intelligence', *Intelligence Newsletter*, no. 266, 15/06/95.

<sup>332</sup> Confidential interview (9). See also Chapter 4 of this study.

<sup>333</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>334</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army, No. 2636, DOKL/IV*, Kol. J. Mulder to Head AI MIS, Col. B. Werger, 23/02/96.

<sup>335</sup> Interview with Magnus Haglund, 04/11/99.

<sup>336</sup> Interview with Tone Bringa, 13/07/99.



below that Western intelligence services were already active in Bosnia in 1991, when the collapse of Yugoslavia started with the separation of Slovenia.

*Western intelligence services in Yugoslavia from 1991*

The ECMM mission operated in Slovenia from July 1991 and in Croatia from September. The mission originally comprised thirty to fifty observers with diplomatic status, whose safety was guaranteed by the parties involved. Thanks to the white suits that were intended to emphasize their civilian status, they were soon nicknamed the 'ice cream vendors'. The number of ECMM observers was to grow within two years to approximately four hundred. The ECMM later also operated in Bosnia and had a regional centre in Belgrade. From August 1991 the monitors also included observers from the CSCE member states: Canada, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Sweden. The mission received its instructions from the presidency of the European Community, to which it reported, as well as to the UN and the International Red Cross.

Immediately upon arrival in Zagreb, it was already clear that many observers had their own national agenda. A lack of consensus immediately came to light between the countries that contributed the observers. It had been agreed with the EC that the observers would not report independently to their own national capitals, but exclusively through the head of the mission to the presidency of the EC.<sup>337</sup> There was no question of this. Immediately on arrival in Zagreb some observers installed their own satellite dishes on the balconies of their hotel rooms, while others kept themselves completely out of sight and worked, apparently under cover of the ECMM, on their own national agenda.<sup>338</sup>

Although the mission's attempts at mediation met with little success and the mission was hardly able to play a significant role in supervising ceasefire agreements, they would acquire a certain value as the eyes and ears of the European Community in the field. From the autumn of 1991, the ECMM teams also started investigating human rights violations. In addition, the mission started to play a role in the exchange of prisoners of war, the execution of confidence-building measures decided on by the EC, and monitoring aid convoys.<sup>339</sup> It goes without saying that the mission was attractive to the intelligence services. The diplomatic status of the observers meant that they were exposed to little danger, and another major appeal was that the ECMM observers were able to travel through many areas and so, under cover of diplomacy, could gather intelligence at reasonably low risk.

Confirmation that the ECMM observers were a cherished cover of Western intelligence services was provided in various confidential interviews. Staff of the Dutch MIS were also active in the ECMM as observers. According to one MIS official, the organization was full of staff from European intelligence services. The French ECMM observers all had special aerials on their hotel room balconies or their rented accommodation in Zagreb. Their task was to monitor the communication traffic in and around Zagreb for their own military intelligence service. When this was no longer permitted by the heads of the ECMM, the French observers rapidly complied.<sup>340</sup>

Danish intelligence officers were also stationed as observers within ECMM by their military intelligence service.<sup>341</sup> The German current affairs programme *Monitor* revealed in September 1996 that *Bundesnachrichtendienst* staff were also active in the ECMM. An official of this service worked in the ECMM under the pseudonym 'Ebenberg'. He was allegedly involved in at least two cases of illegal arms supplies. Bonn admitted that an official was active within the ECMM, but he was said to be not

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<sup>337</sup> NMFA, *DAV (Directorate for Atlantic Cooperation and Security Affairs)*. ISN 4824115, COREU of the EC presidency, no. Cpe/pres/hag 381, 16/07/91.

<sup>338</sup> Interview with M. Hennis, 09/03/99.

<sup>339</sup> NMFA, *DEU/ARA/05267*, COREU of the EC presidency, CPE/Pres/Bru/928, 22/09/93.

<sup>340</sup> Confidential interview (81).

<sup>341</sup> Confidential interview (82).

involved in intelligence activities.<sup>342</sup> The ECMM, in other words, was used by a large number of intelligence services to station staff and so to gather intelligence in Yugoslavia.

Of course, Western intelligence services also placed staff within UNPROFOR and among the UNMOs, the UN military observers. Both these groups reported in the first instance mainly to the UN, but also to their own national governments. A former Chief of the UNMOs confirmed that his staff did hold various intelligence officials. These came mainly from France, Great Britain, Russia and the US. For example, his deputy came from the Russian Speznatz. A company in Texas 'delivered' the American UNMOs but this company was affiliated with the CIA. The British UNMOs came often from the SAS.<sup>343</sup> During nearly all UN operations in other countries it happened that staff of intelligence and security services worked in UN organizations. For instance, the UNSCOM mission in Iraq had a large number of CIA workers.<sup>344</sup> There was no great need for this during the war in Bosnia for the European intelligence services, because they happened to be 'in command' within UNPROFOR. Hence, it was mainly American services used UNPROFOR for intelligence gathering. After all, there were no American ground forces involved in the war, so their information position was therefore not always good.

The same was true for Eastern Bosnia. It was often suggested in publications and interviews that a certain Civil Affairs official of the UN in Tuzla worked for the CIA. For instance, a former ABiH general said about this official that the American services shared no intelligence with the ABiH, but that this person did occasionally pass on intelligence. According to this general, this official was a CIA representative. He sometimes went, according to the ABiH general, under the cover of Civil Affairs to Srebrenica and shared much information with the ABiH 2nd Corps headquarters in Tuzla.<sup>345</sup> A Bosnian military intelligence service official confirmed that he knew various CIA workers and identified several of them. He received no intelligence from these persons, but did provide them with information, with the permission of the 2nd Corps.<sup>346</sup> It was impossible to establish whether this official indeed worked for the CIA. Repeated requests for an interview were declined.

The position of Civil Affairs was often used as a cover for intelligence operations by American intelligence services (CIA or DIA). For example, an American captain in Lucavac worked for Sector North East, and he constantly interrogated Dutch UNPROFOR personnel about routes, convoys, and what they had encountered. If an incident had taken place, he asked about everything that had happened and how well the VRS was armed. This American captain frequently travelled throughout Bosnia. He suddenly disappeared after the attack of the 5th Corps in Bihac; he was picked up by an American colonel and never returned.<sup>347</sup>

Another UNPROFOR official in Tuzla was also said to have worked for the American intelligence community, in particular for the US Special Forces. He was first spotted in 1994 in Sarajevo at the headquarters of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command. He had an UNPROFOR identity card and told exciting stories about his ten-year stay in Vietnam. His credibility was soon brought into doubt, however, because he wore Airborne stripes on the wrong side of his uniform, and was therefore requested by General Rose's staff to leave the headquarters in Sarajevo.<sup>348</sup>

In 1995 the same official emerged in Tuzla, where he was working for UNPROFOR as head of the section for civil-military relations (in military terms: the G-5). In Tuzla, the US official made no secret of his Special Forces background.<sup>349</sup> According to an UNPROFOR official, the American

<sup>342</sup> Bundesregierung: Mitarbeiter des BND in Bosnien im Einsatz, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 21/09/96.

<sup>343</sup> Interview with Bo Pellnäss, 03/11/99.

<sup>344</sup> A. Walter Dorn, 'The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, pp. 439-440.

<sup>345</sup> Confidential interview (5).

<sup>346</sup> Confidential interview (83).

<sup>347</sup> MoD, MIS/Cie. Van Jawad to Hakort, debriefing report 101 MIS/Cie, 23/12/95.

<sup>348</sup> Confidential information (10).

<sup>349</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 159.

services always worked through this section.<sup>350</sup> The same official was probably involved in secret arms supplies to the ABiH in Tuzla, and was also the one who maintained the contacts with the staff of a firm that had warm relations with the American intelligence world, Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), whose staff were sometimes spotted in Tuzla. The Norwegian commander of Sector North East (SNE) described him in an interview with the BBC as ‘a pain in the ass’. After a number of warnings about his behaviour, he was finally again requested to leave the organization; he had been caught on the spot trying to break into the SNE intelligence cell. In 1996 he was back in Sarajevo again, where, this time in plain clothes, he worked for MPRI.<sup>351</sup>

General Rose himself also reported possible CIA staff. He had dealings with a ‘strange shadowy figure straight out of a Graham Greene novel’. This turned out to be an American marine, who ran a water project for Sarajevo for the International Rescue Committee. Rose assumed that he worked for the CIA.<sup>352</sup> The Chief of Staff under General Rose, the Dutch General A. van Baal, also suspected that in 1994 many American intelligence officers were operating in Sarajevo, where he stayed between 24 February and 1 September. He had seen many examples of this, because the American embassy was situated next to the residence of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command: ‘We suddenly saw a host of Americans appear, including the former SACEUR Galvin’. According to Van Baal, Galvin had apparently been hired in to provide military advice.<sup>353</sup> The interpreter of General Rose and General Smith, Milos Stankovic, refuted this. According to him, Galvin was in Bosnia on a reconnaissance mission at Clinton’s behest.<sup>354</sup> Also an US intelligence official vehemently disputed this claim by Van Baal: ‘This is paranoid to the point of being comical!’<sup>355</sup>

As for the other Americans, Van Baal’s British intelligence contacts said that they were CIA. Some were in plain clothes, others in uniform. Van Baal also had an American on his staff who officially worked as a liaison officer for humanitarian operations such as food drops, but who in fact only kept an eye on what UNPROFOR was doing and passed it on to his counterparts. There were also CIA employees who attempted to get onto Van Baal’s staff, but he managed to keep them out. Van Baal also found it highly significant that the Sarajevo airlift was almost exclusively maintained by American aircraft and was therefore largely under American control (also on the ground). Regarding espionage at Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in Sarajevo, Van Baal commented that on his arrival he found books in which all the positions of the warring parties, orders of battle, and so on were recorded: ‘The UN was transparent. I do not know who had seen this data.’<sup>356</sup>

The French military intelligence service also made use of French officers who were working undercover in UNPROFOR in Zagreb and Sarajevo, but who also reported directly to the DRM.<sup>357</sup> According to a senior UNMO official, the infiltration of intelligence organizations was ‘normal’ in relief organizations such as UNHCR, UNICEF, the International Red Cross and NGOs. He gave as an example the American official who was the head of UNICEF in Sarajevo; he later discovered that he was a captain in the DIA. French NGOs were also said to have been used for arms smuggling.<sup>358</sup>

One UNMO official expressed his suspicion that UNHCR in particular was probably infiltrated by some services,<sup>359</sup> which was not surprising, because this organization was responsible for the relief throughout Bosnia and took care of the supply by road of the eastern enclaves. American Special

<sup>350</sup> Interview with H. Holm, 13/03/99.

<sup>351</sup> Interviews with C.L. Brantz, 11/06/99 and H. Haukland, 03/05/99. See also UNGE, *UNPROFOR, Box 193*, SNE 23 May-15 October 1995. Haukland to Comd. Unprofor, 31/05/95 and Hagman, *UN-NATO*, p. 93.

<sup>352</sup> Michael Evans, ‘US bugged me in Bosnia, says General Rose’, *The Times*, 10/11/98.

<sup>353</sup> Interview with A.P.P.M. van Baal, 27/05/98.

<sup>354</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, pp. 239 and 244-248.

<sup>355</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>356</sup> Interview with A.P.P.M. van Baal, 27/05/98.

<sup>357</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, no. 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de M. Bernard Janvier, 25/01/01, pp. 106-139.

<sup>358</sup> ‘Freigelassene Franzosen zuruckgekehrt’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20/05/94.

<sup>359</sup> Confidential interview (44).

Forces were said to have received permission to use UNHCR jeeps with special number plates for their operations.<sup>360</sup> According to an internal investigation by UNHCR in May 1993, the Bosnian Muslims also repeatedly smuggled ammunition in aid convoys. For instance, 30,000 American camouflage uniforms were said to have been transported by the UNHCR to the ABiH 2nd Corps.<sup>361</sup> A load of weapons and ammunition was also discovered in an aid convoy of the Caritas organization on the way to Busovaca in March 1993. Whether this was a deliberate Bosnian-Serb attempt to discredit UNPROFOR, or a similar attempt by the Bosnian Croats, remained unclear.<sup>362</sup> The VRS was later to discover DM 30,000 in an NGO convoy bound for Gorazde.<sup>363</sup>

According to an UNMO official, from an intelligence point of view, 'the most interesting' organizations were the NGOs. Personnel of NGOs were therefore often recruited by intelligence services, because a variety of relief organizations were able to travel to provide humanitarian aid in areas that were closed to the outside world. Meanwhile, the ABiH also drove around in trucks marked with NGO stickers, and which proclaimed 'scottish European Aid', 'UNHCR', or 'European Aid'.<sup>364</sup> An American intelligence service even recruited agents in one of the NGOs that worked in Srebrenica.<sup>365</sup> It also became evident during the fall of Srebrenica that NGOs and a variety of other relief organizations supplied reliable intelligence. Officials from the American intelligence community declared at the time that 'their best information came from human rights groups, the United Nations and the press, not from spies, satellites or eavesdropping'.<sup>366</sup>

In other words, many intelligence services in particular were represented in UNPROFOR in various cities and areas in Bosnia. However, the above also reveals that the American services were not the only ones that were active. Other services likewise had sources and agents locally, and this was also true of intelligence services from countries like Russia, Turkey, Greece and Iran. The functions of these national elements were often unrelated to any support to an UN agenda. These nationalities worked to support their own agenda's, and some of those interests overlapped with on-going Western efforts. However, where it made good sense to do so, some cooperation with these services was permitted on a case-by-case basis. Whether this was also true of the Dutch intelligence community will be discussed in the next chapter. After all, it is relevant to know whether the Dutch intelligence and security services were also active in this grand intelligence 'theme park'. How well prepared was the Netherlands in the area of Humint, Sigint and Osint? Did it have sufficient technical, personnel and financial resources to 'tackle' the crisis in Bosnia and to provide Dutchbat with sufficient intelligence support?

## 5. Conclusions

The UN was extremely wary of active and focused gathering of intelligence, and UNPROFOR itself as an organization had no well-organized structure for gathering intelligence. This meant almost automatically that not only the United States, but also the countries that contributed troops to this peacekeeping operation, started to gather intelligence independently. This was carried out not only by the intelligence services from the different national capitals, but also in the region itself. By harnessing all possible resources and deploying more people, the services tried to gain a view of the political, economic and military developments in the region. As described above, there were initially a variety of teething troubles, which were psychological, political, structural and technical in nature.

<sup>360</sup> Harald Doornbos, 'Groene spionnen tussen blauwhelmen' ('Green spies among blue helmets'), *De Stem*, 10/05/95. See also: US Special Operations Command, *10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary History*, MacDill AFB, Florida, 1997, pp. 52-55.

<sup>361</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 32/93, 10/05/93 and 101. MISCie. Van Jawad to Hakort, debriefing report 101 MISCie, 23/12/95.

<sup>362</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 18/93, 25/03/93.

<sup>363</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 183.

<sup>364</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR*, No. 330-6, G-2 HQ SNE to BHC, Zagreb, no. 2725, 08/01/95.

<sup>365</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>366</sup> Stephen Engelberg & Tim Weiner, 'The Days of Slaughter', *The New York Times*, 29/10/95.

For instance, the general mental attitude in the area of intelligence was still too much oriented towards the old East-West way of thinking. Many analysts found it hard to abandon this habitual pattern. There was still too much thinking, reasoning and analysis in the context of the Cold War and the transition took place only with difficulty. Furthermore, the intelligence services were now confronted with a different sort of conflict, a low intensity conflict, which was new to them. Many services found this difficult to cope with, because there was often no well-defined concept that made clear who exactly the enemy was.

The operations of different paramilitary organizations increased this confusion further. Alliances of warring factions could shift within 24 hours, and allies in a given region or town could suddenly turn out to be enemies in a different district or town. After all, a conflict with ethnic and religious backgrounds is quite a different matter to a few Soviet tank divisions on the North German plains.

The Western intelligence community had sufficient resources to gather timely warnings about preparations for war. But, as the British author Rathmell put it so aptly: 'These warning systems are not appropriate for warning of threats such as ethnic conflicts. Such threats require more holistic assessment but defence intelligence agencies do not yet appear to have adapted their approaches.'<sup>367</sup>

As far as political problems were concerned, this chapter has argued that intelligence services often had a different view of the conflict in Bosnia from policymakers. In some Western intelligence and security services the thinking was not in terms of 'good guys, bad guys', and usually a more balanced view could be detected than that adhered to by the politicians. Former CIA director James Woolsey confirmed that the CIA was balanced compared both with those who said there were no Muslims atrocities and those who said the Bosnian Muslims killed as many as the Serbs. Both views were wrong. The same issue was also raised in the many confidential interviews and in the comprehensive analysis of the Canadian intelligence community that has been quoted extensively above.

However, as the conflict progressed, and the press, public opinion and the politicians increasingly took the side of the Bosnians, some intelligence services 'turned'. This was especially true of the Americans. The phenomenon of the politicization of intelligence emphatically raised its head.<sup>368</sup> Studies were sometimes written to please the most senior policymakers, as opposed to providing them with intelligence. This had already been the case during the Cold War, and it was sometimes no different in Bosnia. Unwelcome issues with respect to the activities of the Bosnian Muslims and Croats were only reported to a limited extent, if at all. Political correctness also crept into the analyses, which was evident from the fact that the deeds of the Bosnian Serbs came fully into the spotlight while the misdeeds of the Muslims and Croats were given hardly any attention.

As an example, there is the trouble that the spokesman of the State Department had in recognizing that the Bosnian Muslims had concentration camps. According to him, they were merely detention centres.<sup>369</sup> Furthermore, the reporting of the armed conflict between the different factions was not always uniformly 'policy neutral'. Cause and effect, as well as action and response, were often presented out of sequence, either by policymakers, or the press. In this respect, the political policymakers were often supported by a press which expressed very little criticism and which, with respect to television reporting, was mainly dependent on the large television networks.

The views of some Western services increasingly diverged and no longer corresponded with each other. This had the consequence that transatlantic collaboration in the area of intelligence liaison also started to suffer. As outlined comprehensively above, intelligence liaison was already a delicate subject. The exchange of intelligence is not automatic, as is sometimes assumed. It usually happens on the basis of bilateral agreements and according to the quid pro quo principle. If a service has nothing to

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<sup>367</sup> Andrew Rathmell, 'Privatising intelligence', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, Vol. XI (1998) 2, p. 203.

<sup>368</sup> This had also frequently taken place in earlier years. See: Bill Gertz, 'study reveals "politicization" of intelligence', *The Washington Times*, 09/10/00.

<sup>369</sup> Sremic, *War of Words*, p. 115.

exchange, then generally speaking it cannot expect to be provided with much in return by a friendly service.

Neither was the international exchange encouraged by the turnaround within the American services, such as the DIA and CIA. Especially after Woolsey's departure as CIA director, intelligence started to serve as support to the policy of the Clinton administration, which was largely pro-Bosnian. This meant that parts of the American intelligence community were brought into conflict with friendly Western services. The British military intelligence service in particular suffered: the British did not share the American views, and the Americans slowly shut down the flow of intelligence. In particular the flow to General Rose in Sarajevo seems to have been cut off. This apparently did happen in Zagreb. This would only be restored again after some considerable time.

It seemed as if only the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* could count on a continuation of the cordial collaboration, but this was because officials there shared a very pro-Croat *and* pro-Bosnian attitude with many people at the CIA. The interests of the American and German intelligence services ran in parallel in this respect, which was obviously to the great benefit of the mutual collaboration and exchange of intelligence.<sup>370</sup> This chapter has made clear that the extent to which services recognize a perceived shared risk (in this case Serbia), apparently influences intelligence liaison.

Different political views on the origin of and solution to the conflict had an impact on the international intelligence liaison about the war in Bosnia between the other Western services. This meant an additional impetus for European and Canadian intelligence services to become active themselves in the region. Although Ottawa was able to rely heavily on the American services, the specific acquisition of reliable intelligence within the framework of force protection of their own units remained central to Canadian thinking. After all, a reliable intelligence contribution was not to be expected from the UN.<sup>371</sup> This led to the undesirable situation that various services sought special intelligence that was primarily of potential interest to their own national units in Bosnia. For example, the British in 1995 concentrated heavily on Gorazde, the Canadians on Sarajevo and Visoko and the Scandinavians on Tuzla, with the serious consequence that the eastern enclaves were left to their own devices concerning the gathering of intelligence. In any case the areas did not enjoy the highest priority, as will be demonstrated later in this study.<sup>372</sup>

In various European capitals various special task forces were set up in great haste to regulate and coordinate the intake of the intelligence gathered, and to provide the policymakers with reliable intelligence. However, the gathering did not proceed smoothly and only after solving various teething troubles did the services get reasonably 'up-to-speed'. There were technical problems, ranging from a lack of good maps to not having enough Serbo-Croat interpreters and translators. The lack of translators was a particularly great problem on both sides of the Atlantic, which considerably limited the opportunities for an optimum use of Osint and Sigint at the start of the war. It was also impossible to arrange the recruitment of reliable sources and agents and to build up an extensive and reliable Humint network within 24 hours. It took intelligence services months if not years to obtain good Humint sources. Ultimately, most European services appear to have succeeded reasonably well in recruiting informants at the highest level of the political and military leadership in Bosnia and Croatia. They appear to have been less successful where the Bosnian Serbs and the Serbs were concerned, although it has been suggested in retrospect that American and British military and civil intelligence services eventually recruited informants and sources close to Mladic and Karadzic.<sup>373</sup>

It is also relevant that the overall Western intelligence climate in the years after the fall of the Berlin Wall had chilled somewhat, because Western services increasingly started to spy on each other. The conflict in Bosnia aggravated the animosity between Europe and the United States even further.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>371</sup> Confidential interview (9).

<sup>372</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>373</sup> Confidential interview (11).

<sup>374</sup> Loch K. Johnson, 'spies', *Foreign Policy* (September 2000), p. 35.

Most of the CIA officials interviewed stated, for example, that in Sarajevo they were not allowed to share intelligence with the French. The same was true in reverse: the French services in Sarajevo often exchanged no information with their NATO allies, which could well appear extremely illogical to an outsider in the light of a joint peacekeeping operation. This observation would appear to be justified considering that Scandinavian peacekeepers died for the French had not told them where snipers were located, though they did have this information. Established and habitual patterns apparently do not change in leaps and bounds. The extent to which services recognize shared risks apparently influence liaison. On the other hand, intelligence officials remarked to the author that the allegations about the French were not true as a categorical statement. Information was exchanged with the French in Zagreb and other capitals, by many different parties. The French exchanged with their German and Canadian counterparts. Also US and other officials of different nationalities exchanged a great deal of information with the French at a variety of levels.<sup>375</sup>

The unwillingness to share intelligence was boosted further because UNPROFOR's political and military course during the entire war in Bosnia was a thorn in the side of the US political policymakers, while senior military circles and the intelligence community in the United States actually had a more balanced view of the conflict.<sup>376</sup> These political differences resulted in American but also other Western services sending agents to try to infiltrate the most important staffs of UNPROFOR and the humanitarian relief organizations, a strategy, which in some cases proved successful. Furthermore, American services tried to monitor as much of the UNPROFOR communication traffic as possible.<sup>377</sup> Sometimes a variety of operations were executed against UNPROFOR and against the policy that UNPROFOR favoured on behalf of the UN. This repeatedly led to great tensions and conflicts. The conflict in the area of intelligence was therefore sometimes no longer directed against the jointly perceived enemy (Bosnian Serbs and Serbs): there was sometimes also a 'conflict' between Western services themselves.

Now, the reader may get a bit confused here at the end because the stage the author of this study set is that on the one hand, the cold-war mentality has the western intelligence architecture crippled and unable to respond to the crisis in the Balkans, and on the other hand, a scenario of the Balkans 'swarming with spies'. The correct answer is probably that both were partly true. While capabilities were building, they were not what they would eventually come to be. It was in this sombre constellation of a lack of preparation for the conflict in Yugoslavia, mutual animosity between Western services, little willingness for international intelligence liaison, various different political points of view on the origin and progress of the military conflict, and a different perception of who were the good guys and who were the bad guys in the conflict, that Dutchbat departed for Bosnia at the beginning of 1994. At that time various intelligence officers were already present there playing all kinds of roles in different organizations.

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<sup>375</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>376</sup> See Part II of the Srebrenica report.

<sup>377</sup> This is discussed further in Chapter 5 of this study.

## Chapter 3

# Dutch intelligence and security services and the war in Bosnia

Question to General Couzy: *What was your general view of the role that the Dutch intelligence community could play in the deployment and later stationing of Dutch troops in Bosnia?*

Answer by General Couzy: *What I actually thought was: zero. Yes!*<sup>378</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Western intelligence and security services encountered many problems when the war in the Balkans broke out. There were many teething troubles of a psychological, structural, technical and political nature. All the services sought mainly independently for solutions in order to cope with these problems, and attempted to build up a system as quickly as possible that would be able to supply the various national capitals with rapid and reliable intelligence. Various considerations and circumstances were involved. For example, the American intelligence community had no need to take into account the interests of American troops on the ground in Bosnia: only those of the US Air Force and the US Navy. The main function of intelligence in Washington DC appeared to be a source of information for the political and military policymakers. The priorities at first sight appeared to be different in The Hague, London, Paris, Ottawa, Oslo, Stockholm and Copenhagen. However, this was not the case. The priorities for the US intelligence community were very similar, but involved no ground forces. Force protection from surface-to-air assets extended beyond the coastal area, and served to support airlift efforts and enforcement of the No-Fly Zone deep inside the country. The dimension of the problem was different, but the function was fundamentally the same, and completely natural for any nation: to protect the military assets inserted into harm's way. As well as the function described above, intelligence in those capitals served mainly for the protection of the countries' own ground forces, air force and navy. The question that is now in the spotlight is how the gathering and dissemination of intelligence was organized in the Netherlands.

This chapter examines the Netherlands intelligence and security services in greater detail. The political willingness to send troops to Bosnia, both in Parliament and in the government, was greater after pictures had been shown on television of the camps in northwest Bosnia. In the debates on the deployment there was nonetheless a lack of clear statements on intelligence support for the deployed troops. Neither could anything be read on the subject in the parliamentary motions that were adopted.<sup>379</sup> It can be deduced from this that parliamentarians and the government had no interest in the relationship between peacekeeping and intelligence. The question arises as to whether this political interest in intelligence was indeed zero, especially on a ministerial and parliamentary level, and if so what the underlying reason was. One possibility is that the services failed to press their demands on the politicians sufficiently firmly; another is that they did not present themselves effectively enough.

Even if the interest had been stronger, the question remains as to whether the services were well enough prepared for Dutch participation in the Bosnia mission. The question arises as to what was the information position of the foreign intelligence service (*Inlichtingendienst Buitenland*, IDB), the national security service (*Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*, BVD) and the military intelligence service (*Militaire Inlichtingendienst*, MID, hereafter MIS). The IDB hardly played any role in the conflict in Bosnia; this

<sup>378</sup> Interview with H. Couzy, 04/10/01.

<sup>379</sup> See Chapter 13 of Part I of the Srebrenica report.



service was actually disbanded in January 1994. Section 2 discusses how the IDB was occupied with the Balkans nonetheless.

Section 3 covers the role and information position of the BVD, which was involved in the conflict because the stationing of soldiers in Bosnia could have consequences for the Netherlands national security and the democratic rule of law. From the Netherlands, the secret services of the warring factions might carry out operations, attempt to raise funds, or send weapons and ammunition to the region. Section 4 comprehensively considers the MIS, whose most important task was in distributing intelligence to the army leaders and the most senior politicians and officials of the Ministry of Defence on the dispatch and deployment of Dutchbat in Bosnia. The question arises as to what the MIS did in the way of Force Protection and whether any intelligence was supplied that was of benefit to Dutchbat.

A comment that immediately can be made on the role of the MIS is that small and medium-sized states that participated in peacekeeping operations, such as the Netherlands, often do not have the capacity to gather accurate and timely intelligence on each part of the world where troops are sent in a UN context. These countries are therefore completely dependent on what other intelligence services are prepared to exchange with them via liaison. But it should be said that this is not a natural fact, but often, as will be shown, the result of policy decisions hinged on funding, capability and political will.

Section 5 discusses the intelligence gathering in the enclave under Dutchbats I, II and III. Section 6 considers the collaboration between the MIS of the Central Organization (MIS/CO) and the Army's MIS (hereafter MIS/Army), which did not always appear to be particularly good in practice. Another MIS department that was responsible for gathering intelligence on Bosnia was the Royal Netherlands Air Force. Section 7 pays attention to the production of the Air Force section of the MIS (hereafter MIS/Air Force). Section 8 then considers the support the MIS received from UNPROFOR. The question remains as to what the MIS supplied in the way of intelligence to senior Ministry of Defence officials. This will be discussed in Section 9. Section 10 considers the role of the MIS in relationship to military security. Finally, Section 11 presents the conclusions.

### *The Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services*

When the war in the Balkans broke out, the Netherlands had a clear intelligence structure, with the three services mentioned above. All three were engaged in following the war in Bosnia. The three services were controlled by the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (MICIV), which was formally responsible for the general policy on intelligence and security and the coordination of these services. This Ministerial Committee consisted of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Justice, the Interior, Defence, Finance, and Economic Affairs, as well as the chairman of the Committee on the United Intelligence Services in the Netherlands (CVIN), the heads of the three intelligence and security services and a senior official from each of the ministries mentioned. The Ministerial Committee is chaired by the prime minister and is convened when ministerial level decision-making is desirable on intelligence and security issues. The decisions of the Ministerial Committee are subsequently always discussed in the next session of the Ministerial Council.<sup>380</sup>

The Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (MICIV) met five times between 1991 and 1995. The meetings in 1992-1995 were concerned mainly with winding up the IDB. It was decided in 1991 to slim down the IDB, and the consequences of the developments in Central and Eastern Europe for the work of the services were discussed.

In 1992, the agenda included updating the BVD's tasks in Central and Western Europe. The take-over of the activities of the IDB by the BVD and MIS received particular attention, as did the

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<sup>380</sup> W.J. Kuijken, 'De coördinatie van de Nederlandse inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten in verleden, heden en toekomst' ('The coordination of the Dutch intelligence and security services in the past, present and future'), in: *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, pp. 562-563.

reorganization of the MIS. In 1993, the most important item on the agenda was the change in the Intelligence and Security Services Act. Moreover, in handing over the IDB's tasks to the MIS and the BVD, the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services determined in 1993 that the MIS and the BVD could make use only of 'passive' human sources, such as Displaced Persons from the region who resided in the Netherlands. Only if necessitated by national interests could 'offensive' use be made of human sources.<sup>381</sup> In other words, restraints were hereby imposed on actively recruiting and working with agents in other countries. There was no session of the MICIV in 1994, but there were two sessions in 1995. The agenda included matters concerning cryptography, the stationing of BVD liaison officers in other countries, and a reinforcement of the controlling and monitoring function of the MICIV. It was therefore impossible to find anything in the agendas of the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services that was related to the former Yugoslavia.<sup>382</sup>

*The Committee on the United Intelligence Services in the Netherlands (CVIN)*

This committee (CVIN) is the official portal to the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (MICIV), and it coordinates the execution of the services' activities. The committee consists of the Coordinator of the Intelligence and Security Services (since 1991 the Secretary-General of the Ministry of General Affairs) and his adviser, the heads of the IDB (until 1994), the BVD and the MIS, and representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Justice. Meetings are sometimes convened in a form known as 'CVIN-Plus', in which the constitution is extended to include the secretaries-general of the ministries that participate in the MICIV.

Until 1991, the coordinator was a full-time official who was drawn from defence circles. With effect from 31 December 1990, Major General F.H. Alkemade (ret'd.) resigned as Coordinator of the Intelligence and Security Services. It was then decided not to appoint another full-time coordinator, but to incorporate this function in the portfolio of the Secretary-General of the Ministry of General Affairs, who at the time was R.J. Hoekstra. Immediately after his appointment as coordinator, he announced that he wished to restrict the dispatch of the MIS reporting to the committee's monthly contribution, reports on the Antilles, and otherwise only those reports that were of interest to the prime minister, at the discretion of the head of the MIS. Hoekstra also requested that a stop be put to the dispatch of the so-called Green Edition, which comprised intercepted message traffic.<sup>383</sup>

The CVIN met fifteen times in 1991. The agenda included subjects such as the consequences for the security of the Netherlands arising from the Gulf Crisis, developments in Central and Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia, the threat of terrorism and Chinese intelligence activities. The committee met ten times in both 1992 and 1993. Then too, the impact of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia was on the agenda. The Committee met eight times in 1994 and twelve times in 1995. Yugoslavia was on the agenda on various occasions.<sup>384</sup> For instance, the unanimous assessment in the committee meeting of 17 February 1994 was that, in view of the involvement in the conflict in Yugoslavia, sufficient national interest existed to require a more active deployment of human sources. This meant intensifying the interviewing in the Netherlands and abroad of Displaced Persons, soldiers and other Dutch citizens who were or had been present in the conflict region.<sup>385</sup>

The CVIN-Plus also met on several occasions between 1992 and 1995. We will return to the contributions the IDB, the BVD and the MIS made to this committee below. It must be concluded, however, that the top of the Netherlands intelligence pyramid hardly discussed the developments in

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381 MoD, *Archive CDS 1993*, Head of department P.C. Kok to Minister Voorhoeve, No. DIS/94/095/398, 18/02/94.

382 For this, *BVD Annual reports 1991 - 1995*; Letter from the Minister of General Affairs to NIOD, No. 99M001449, 25/03/99 and telephone communication from G. van de Hil (Cabinet Office), 26/10/99.

383 MoD, *MIS/CO, File 443-0393*, Memorandum from HMID Duijn, No. DIS/90/134/5879, 27/11/90.

384 For this: *BVD annual reports 1991-1995* and telephone communication by G. van de Hil (Cabinet Office) to the author, 26/10/99.

385 MoD, *Archive CDS 1993*, Head of Department P.C. Kok to Minister Voorhoeve, No. DIS/94/095/398, 18/02/94.

Bosnia. This raises the question of the extent to which this was also true in the various services that supplied the information concerned.

## 2. The Netherlands Foreign Intelligence Service

In its initial form, the Netherlands foreign intelligence service was founded in 1946 as the *Buitenlandse Inlichtingendienst* (BID) and, by Royal Decree, was replaced by the *Inlichtingendienst Buitenland* (IDB) on 5 August 1972. Significant information on the history, terms of reference and working method of the IDB only became available in 1998.<sup>386</sup> The most important task of the IDB was the gathering of information on foreign countries that was of potential interest to the government.

The IDB was disbanded in 1994 after an often turbulent existence. In this period, the service suffered from a number of recurring problems for which no solutions were found. For instance, it proved difficult to find a balance between gathering and processing intelligence. The distribution of 'raw' intelligence, without analysis, hindered the acceptance within the government departments of the intelligence gathered. The ministries were at a complete loss to know how to deal with unprocessed data from agents and informants. When the messages were processed, it often led to bureaucratic arguments and competence disputes, especially between the IDB and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which saw this information as a threat to its own diplomatic reporting.

The IDB was poorly informed of the needs of its users. Even when in 1982, after many years a National Intelligence Requirements Plan (*Nationaal Inlichtingen Behoefsten Plan*) was finally formulated, the document was so comprehensive and demanding that even an intelligence service of a major power would have had trouble satisfying the wishes it expressed, let alone the IDB, which had always been kept small.

The budget that was available for the service, approximately 4.8 million Dutch guilders, indeed only permitted a limited ambition. For example, there were insufficient resources for establishing pseudo-companies or to 'build up' agents over many successive years, so that they could operate at ever higher levels. It was repeatedly decided not to incorporate the IDB within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, because the leaders of this department did not want to burn their fingers on any incidents that might have arisen from secret operations. Therefore, for reasons of principle, the service was 'suspended' within the prime minister's department, the Ministry of General Affairs.

Between 1970 and 1972, by way of experiment, the service was brought under the Ministry of Defence, but this was not a success. Although one may perhaps expect otherwise of an elite department such as that of the prime minister, the political and civil service control of the IDB by senior Ministry of General Affairs officials left much to be desired. The IDB did not know what the government actually expected from it. Direct exchanges of views between the prime minister, who had political responsibility for the service, and IDB leading officials were at best 'only sporadic'.<sup>387</sup>

Of course, it would be doing the IDB an injustice to refer only to its failures. It must be stated that to the extent that the service succeeded, this was largely determined by external factors, such as the Sigint (intercepted message traffic) that was supplied by the MIS. The IDB analysts were able to use this information to produce reports that were rated relatively highly by their users. For instance, in 1973 the IDB was able to give the government a timely warning of the planned oil embargo by the Arab world. The IDB's performance was moreover favourably influenced by the reports of a limited number of friendly foreign services. Although different ideas existed within the service about the material supplied and the assessments of reports by the American CIA, the British SIS and the German BND (*Bundesnachrichtendienst*) were sometimes far from favourable, the information - obtained on the basis of exchange and liaison - certainly had a positive effect on the service's performance.

A study of the history of the IDB between 1946 and 1994 shows that there were major internal problems within the service from the outset. There was an element of a sort of 'crisis cycle', with a

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<sup>386</sup> De Graaff and Wiebes, *Villa Maarheeze*, passim.

<sup>387</sup> Engelen, *Inlichtingendienst Buitenland*, p. 51.

commotion flaring up within the service every couple of ten years, which could lead to an explosion that often found its way into the press and - to a lesser extent - Parliament. Ultimately, the government of Prime Minister Lubbers decided in 1992 to disband the IDB, and a start was made on scaling it down. At the end of 1994 the curtain finally fell for the IDB, and the service no longer played a significant role in the conflict in Bosnia. The final reports on Yugoslavia date from the early 1990s.<sup>388</sup> The disbanding of the IDB made the Dutch government completely dependent on the BVD and MIS for the provision of intelligence on developments in Yugoslavia and their possible impact on the Netherlands.

### 3. The National Security Service (BVD)

The National Security Service (*Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst*, BVD) was created in 1949 and falls under the responsibility of the Minister of the Interior. The BVD's tasks are, briefly, as follows: gathering data, carrying out security investigations, and promoting security measures. At the time of the Yugoslav conflict, the BVD was not yet involved in tracking flows of money (from Yugoslavia to the Netherlands and vice versa); the financial-economic investigation unit of the BVD is only 3 years old.<sup>389</sup>

It was mainly the first task that was relevant to the situation in Yugoslavia. The BVD's activities were geared towards limiting the risks for Dutch national security, democracy, economy and society. The service therefore followed the letter of the law by focusing on the gathering of data on organizations and persons that, because of their objectives or their activities, might give reason for serious suspicion that they formed a danger to the survival of the democratic rule of law, or to national security or other important interests of the state.<sup>390</sup>

#### *The Staff Bureau Foreign Political Developments (SBP)*

The gathering of data not only had a domestic component but also a foreign one. The analysis of foreign political developments actually took place not only at the IDB, but also at the *Staff Bureau Foreign Political Developments* (SBP) of the BVD. This department was founded on 3 October 1963, and its duty was to gather knowledge on political developments in the communist countries, and moreover on communist parties in non-communist countries at least to the extent that this was useful for the BVD's performance. When it was founded, it was determined that the SBP could gather as much or as little data as it saw fit with respect to foreign countries and other parties abroad. At the time it already appeared that the ground had been prepared for a competence conflict with the IDB's predecessor, but the authority of the SBP was mainly limited, as the official jargon put it, to warning of international phenomena and developments that could form a threat to the democratic rule of law, or the security or other important interests of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.<sup>391</sup> The IDB had a much wider remit, namely the gathering of intelligence in other countries for the Dutch government. The analyses of the SBP served operations that were aimed at giving BVD agents in communist organizations as much information as possible about developments or impending developments in the international communist movement, so that they could use this knowledge to penetrate the communist ranks in the Netherlands.

The existence of a department such as the SBP within a domestic security service was unique in the Western world. In the major powers, the foreign intelligence services managed to prevent the national security service from occupying this territory. In most small states, the security services were too small to fulfil such a role. In the Netherlands, however, the BVD was large enough to permit itself this luxury, and the foreign intelligence service was too weak to obstruct its creation. Due to the

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388 NMFA, 911.31 *Yugoslavia*, CVIN contribution: Centrifugale tendenzen in Joegoslavië versterken zich, No. 5125/RC/90, 30/07/90; CVIN contribution: Joegoslavië drijft verder uiteen, No. 8099/RC/90, 12/11/90 and CVIN contribution: Slovenië en Kroatië aan de vooravond van afscheiding, No. 4610/RC/91, 17/06/91.

389 Confidential interview (15).

390 Kluiters, *De Nederlandse Inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten*, pp. 31 - 32.

391 De Graaff and Wiebes, *Villa Maarheeze*, pp. 219 - 225 and Kluiters, *Inlichtingen- en veiligheidsdiensten*, p. 35.

specific nature of the work, there was hardly any contact between the SBP and the IDB. Nevertheless, overlaps in their activities did occur. For instance, the SBP occupied itself extensively with investigating the disputes between the Soviet Union and China in the 1960s, a field in which the IDB also attempted to gather intelligence.

On 1 November 1990, it was decided to disband the SBP, although analysts continued to be involved in compiling analyses of foreign political developments that were regularly contributed to the CVIN. The disbanding took place within the framework of the complete reorganization of the BVD by the then head of the service, A. Docters van Leeuwen. Its objective was to cure the BVD of its Cold War syndrome, and to create a different working culture. Vertical departments were abandoned in favour of small teams working on finite projects, to bring an end to internal divisions and forms of specialization. The staff of the SBP were subsequently distributed as analysts around the various directorates, to be used on a project basis.

Changes to the new organization soon followed. Some projects turned out to have no real end, such as the fight against terrorism or Yugoslavian organized crime. This meant that analysts remained continuously engaged in studying overall political and economic developments in the Balkans. This was primarily carried out in Team Radar within the State Security Directorate. The leader of Team Radar rapidly came to the conclusion that a separate team would have to be created for Yugoslavia. This was to be Team Adriaan, which also incorporated the BVD's counterintelligence section on Yugoslavia, which here refers to the gathering of intelligence on the activities in the Netherlands by Yugoslav intelligence services.<sup>392</sup>

#### *Team Adriaan*

Team Adriaan started with 7 staff but expanded, especially after the arrival in The Hague of the Yugoslavia Tribunal, to approximately 20 staff. This was excluding the capacity of the Regional Intelligence Services, because in each large Regional Intelligence Service, in which the BVD and the police closely cooperated, one person was responsible for Yugoslavia. When the threat as a consequence of the arrival of the Tribunal proved to be less severe than expected, the number of staff dropped again to between 12 and 15.

Team Adriaan's responsibilities included giving security advice and gathering intelligence among Yugoslav Displaced Persons, as well as tracking the activities of Bosnian Muslims, Bosnian Serbs, Serbs and Croats in the Netherlands. The team independently debriefed refugees from these areas. The team employed several translators, who in addition to translation work were also responsible for monitoring tapped telephone traffic. The BVD had many Russian-speaking staff; because the major threat from Russia had ebbed meanwhile, they were retrained to become proficient in Serbo-Croat. In the first instance, the BVD approached the translators training school of the Military Intelligence Service, the SMID, but they were turned down because of a lack of capacity. A BVD official was even requested by the SMID to lobby the leaders of the MIS/Army for the training of more Serbo-Croat translators at the MIS. Because of the time and the trouble that this would have involved, the BVD then approached a reputable language institute, which retrained the BVD staff in 3 months. After that, there were no more language capacity problems. It was then possible to obtain much intelligence from the Yugoslav community that had long resided in the Netherlands. This source supplied the BVD with more than the intercepted message traffic of the MIS.<sup>393</sup>

The collaboration of the BVD with its foreign counterparts was not excellent, but from 1993 it improved somewhat, thanks to the arrival of the Tribunal. One BVD official stated that this suddenly appeared to make the Yugoslavian conflict a concern of other countries. The associated conclusion is again that the extent to which services recognize shared risk apparently influences the sharing of

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<sup>392</sup> Confidential interviews (15), (16) and (17).

<sup>393</sup> Confidential interview (15).

intelligence.<sup>394</sup> Until that time, the BVD's experience had been that its foreign counterparts had little or no intelligence on Bosnia. Only the French national security service had an effective counterintelligence system. The German security service was poorly informed, and the Americans (the CIA) asked many questions but supplied little intelligence themselves. Dutch intelligence officers state that liaison with the US services has always been difficult. Intelligence liaison was seen especially by Americans as a means of reinforcing or maintaining their position in every respect - including economically. In this respect, the Dutch services can be reproached for a degree of naivety, because the Americans had always adopted that attitude. It was simply a fact of life that the Americans seldom gave away intelligence, and when they did it was often almost exclusively to serve their own interests. They did not have a strongly developed awareness of other people's interests. The BVD subsequently complained to the CIA that matters could not continue as they were, after which the CIA became somewhat more obliging. The first American Chief of Station in Sarajevo subsequently paid a visit to the BVD. The BVD could not expect much from the British services either. The security service, MI-5, gave absolute priority to its own military apparatus and UK national security. The BVD was able to obtain most from the Eastern European services.

Team Adriaan also pursued closer collaboration with the larger regional police forces, for various networks of Yugoslav criminals were active in the Netherlands. At the time, the National Police Services (*Korps Landelijke Politiediensten*, KLPD) had no coordinated approach to Yugoslav organized crime. Each regional force muddled through, and departments within a regional force would often know nothing of each other's operations. A joint operation in Amsterdam, for example, did not go ahead because the leaders of the police did not recognize its usefulness.<sup>395</sup>

The work on Yugoslavia therefore had a domestic and a foreign component. The former was mainly concerned with monitoring the events in Yugoslavia from the Netherlands and assessing the probability of negative consequences on the Yugoslav community in the Netherlands. Particular attention was paid to possible conflicts between different factions and to the physical threat to the consultation between the various Yugoslav leaders in The Hague at the time of the Dutch EC presidency. In addition, the service paid attention to activities related to the civil war, such as press-ganging, arms purchases and the raising of funds in Yugoslav circles in the Netherlands. What is more, the fact that soldiers were located in Bosnia could also have consequences for state security and the democratic rule of law. For example, secret services of the warring factions could attempt to carry out operations or to raise funds in the Netherlands, or send arms and ammunition to the region.<sup>396</sup>

In 1992, the BVD concluded that the warring factions in Yugoslavia were receiving increasing support from 'larger powers in the background'. For instance, the Islamic world had positioned itself behind the persecuted Muslims in what had developed into a conflict against 'a strange association of East European conservative (ex-communist) forces'. The BVD expected terrorist activities mainly from the Serbian side. In mid 1992, the First Secretary for Consular Affairs at the Yugoslav embassy in The Hague, Radoslav Jankovic, was asked to leave. According to the BVD, he had been identified as an officer of an intelligence service of his own country. He was said to be carrying out activities that were incompatible with his diplomatic status (including manipulative relations with Dutch government officials). The BVD wanted to declare him *persona non grata*, but this was opposed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which was always extremely reserved in such matters. Jankovic had to leave anyway on 17 June 1992, because of the UN resolution that prescribed the freezing of diplomatic relations with Serbia. The embassy counsellor Milorad Sredojevic suffered the same fate in September 1992 and also had to leave.<sup>397</sup> The two positions remained vacant and no attempt was ever subsequently made from

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394 Confidential interview (15).

395 Confidential interviews (15) and (16).

396 Minister of the Interior, *BVD annual report 1991*, p. 25. See also: 'Van den Broek zou doelwit zijn van Servische terreur' ('Van den Broek alleged to be target of Serbian terror'), in: *Trouw*, 12/12/91.

397 Minister of the Interior, *BVD annual report 1992*, p. 20 and confidential information (12). See also: Frank Vermeyden, 'Joegoslavische consul uitgewezen wegens spionage' ('Yugoslav consul expelled because of espionage'), in: *NRC Handelsblad*, 07/07/92 and 'Jankovic heeft niets illegaals gedaan' ('Jankovic has done nothing illegal'), in: *NRC Handelsblad*, 08/07/92.

Belgrade to place new officials from the Yugoslav security service SDB in The Hague. After this, contacts with Serbs in the Netherlands took place only from SDB headquarters in Belgrade.<sup>398</sup>

In two confidential reports - *Joegoslavië. Brandhaard in Europa* (Yugoslavia. Hotbed in Europe) from November 1991 and *Joegoslavië. Onverminderd brandhaard in Europa* (Yugoslavia. Undiminished hotbed in Europe) from September 1992 - the BVD again presented in a comprehensive analyses all the problems that were connected with the war in the Balkans and the possible impact of Yugoslavia's civil war on the Yugoslav community. The first 'Hotbed' report was an exploratory action by Team Adriaan. According to an official closely involved, obtaining approval was a struggle because the report actually contained too many hypotheses and assumptions.

With respect to what was known as the horizontal threat (within the Yugoslav community), and the vertical threat (to Dutch subjects and institutions), the service's outlook in 1992 was more sombre than it had been one year earlier. Both in 1991 and 1992, attention was paid to the recruitment of Dutch mercenaries for the conflict in Croatia. Finally, in both years, the BVD devoted approximately 20 pages to the general political, military and economic situation in Yugoslavia, even though this was actually a task for the IDB, which was then still functioning.<sup>399</sup>

An example of such IDB-like BVD reporting was sent to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in July 1992. The political and military developments were analysed in an interim report on Yugoslavia. In military terms, the BVD analyst was sombre about the attempts to control the conflict; perhaps it would still be possible to achieve something with economic sanctions. From a political point of view, according to the analyst, it was necessary to settle the minorities issue, because otherwise a sustainable peace could not be achieved. Support from the Netherlands for the opposition leader Vuk Draskovic appeared to be advisable, but the disadvantage of this was that the BVD had reason to believe that a Yugoslav criminal organization in the Netherlands was providing Draskovic with financial support, a fact of which the politician himself might not necessarily be aware. However, it did give food for thought as regards the people in his entourage.<sup>400</sup> In this period, the BVD also made overtures to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in order to arrive at joint analyses. Representatives of the Directorate-General of Political Affairs did once consult with the BVD management team, but after that nothing more was heard from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.<sup>401</sup>

Yugoslavia continued to attract the BVD's attention in 1993. The more the conflict intensified, the more the service shifted its interest to the activities of the warring factions inside the Netherlands. On 21 April 1993, the service organized a 'separatism Conference' at ministerial level, at which there was a comprehensive discussion of the activities of the organizations from ex-Yugoslavia, and of Yugoslav political crime. The recommendations that emerged from this conference extended to a tighter control on the flow of Displaced Persons from the former Yugoslavia, and registration of Displaced Persons according to ethnic origin, so as to facilitate separate relief and accommodation. Furthermore, the Displaced Persons were to be informed as clearly as possible about their rights and obligations. Finally, the collaboration between government bodies had to be intensified.<sup>402</sup>

The BVD also investigated the extent to which politically related crime among ex-Yugoslavs was geared towards supporting the war effort of states and paramilitary groups in the Balkans, such as the Arkan Tigers and the White Eagles. For the first time, it was also published in an annual report that the Bosnian Muslims too were the subject of the BVD's attention. The SDA, President Izetbegovic's ruling party in Bosnia, was active in the Netherlands in the *Merhamet* foundation, which was part of an international Muslim humanitarian aid organization. However, items were repeatedly found among

398 Confidential interview (15).

399 Archive BVD, No. 116679, Memo BVD: Yugoslavia. Brandhaard in Europa, 08/11/91, p. 56 and NMFA, 911.31 *Yugoslavia*, Memo BVD: 'Yugoslavia. Onverminderd brandhaard in Europa', 10/09/92, 96 p.

400 NMFA, *Archive BZ 345169*, Koerten to DEU/OE, No. 2165741, 17/07/92.

401 Confidential interview (15).

402 NMFA, 911.31 *Yugoslavia*, Memo BVD to CVIN+ participants, 24/09/93, p. 34. See also: Archive Ministry of General Affairs, *Archive KMP*, Minister of the Interior to the prime minister, No. 37.253 SG/KAB, 26/05/93 plus memo from the BVD (no. 21822138-08) regarding the current state of the Yugoslav communities in the Netherlands.

their relief goods for Bosnia that could be described as non-humanitarian, such as military uniforms hidden under a consignment of flour. Nonetheless, nothing could be done about this, because, according to the Militias Act, a green military camouflage suit was only a uniform if it bore military emblems, which was not the case.<sup>403</sup>

*Merhamet* in the Netherlands also maintained relations with the Turkish organization *Milli Gorus*, which sometimes collected money for the Bosnian Muslims. This relationship cooled, however, when the Turks discovered that much of the money collected was being skimmed off by the Bosnians. The activities of the Bosnian civil intelligence service (AID) were also monitored, mainly because representatives of different movements existed within the Bosnian delegation in The Hague. Finally, the BVD followed the activities of the Macedonians and Kosovo Albanians. Activities by the Yugoslav SDB were no longer observed in 1993.<sup>404</sup>

As well as the possible influence of the developments in Yugoslavia on the Netherlands, the political events in Yugoslavia itself were also the subject of investigation. In a contribution to the CVIN-Plus on 11 May 1993, the BVD produced an evaluation of the events. In a comprehensive survey, a summary was given of the ethnic distribution of the Yugoslavs in the Netherlands, the situation in Yugoslavia, geostrategic consequences, the threat of war and the position of Zeljko Raznjatovic, the leader of Arkan Tigers. At the time, there were approximately 80,000 Yugoslavs in the Netherlands, mostly Bosnian Muslims, followed by Bosnian Croats, Bosnian Serbs, Kosovars and a small number from other groups. The BVD established that until then there had been no question of the application of (interethnic) force on a large scale, but that it was becoming more probable.

The service expected that the active participation of the Netherlands in a UN intervention force would act as a catalyst. Serbia in particular had repeatedly announced that it would carry out reprisals if it was attacked. Terrorist attacks outside Yugoslavia were likewise to be expected. The BVD established that all parties were guilty of barbaric practices. The Bosnian Serbs and Serbs were especially guilty of systematic and large scale crimes. The BVD expected that if all parties were to agree to a peace plan, there was a possibility of a large scale military intervention in Yugoslavia, in which, according to the BVD, the lion's share of the troops would be contributed by the United States.<sup>405</sup>

Increasing attention was paid to the situation in the Balkans from 1993 on. This is also evident from the 1993 and 1994 BVD annual reports, in which an increasing number of pages were devoted to Yugoslavia. As mentioned earlier, an additional task was also introduced at that time: monitoring the internal and external security of the Yugoslavia Tribunal in The Hague, which was seen as a pre-eminent focal point for subversive and violent activities.

The BVD established that a Dutch citizen who had long been involved in Serbian networks, had been instructed by the Serbian secret service (SDB) to organize protest demonstrations at the Tribunal. This Dutch citizen rapidly departed to the United Kingdom, however. After this the BVD observed that, with the exception of a few incidents, there was hardly any question of a threat of violence against the Tribunal. Personal security was occasionally stepped up, such as during the Kosovo Crisis. The BVD otherwise took account not only of Serbian but also of Bosnian actions. For instance, in September 1996 in Sarajevo, Nedžad Ugljen, one of the deputy chiefs of the Bosnian civil intelligence service, was liquidated. He was the head of the department that was responsible for tracing war criminals and was one of the Tribunal's contacts in Sarajevo. Although various views existed on the background to this liquidation, it was assumed in the Western intelligence community that he was too unreliable in the opinion of some factions within Izetbegovic's government party and too inclined to cooperate with the Tribunal on tracing Bosnian war criminals.<sup>406</sup>

The service furthermore observed in 1994 that there were a number of war criminals from the former Yugoslavia among asylum seekers in the Netherlands. The investigation into this issue was

403 NMFA, *911.31 Yugoslavia*, Memo BVD to CVIN+ participants, 24/09/93, p. 11.

404 Minister of the Interior, *BVD annual report 1993*, pp. 33 - 36 and Confidential interview (33).

405 NMFA, *911.31 Yugoslavia*, Memo BVD to CVIN+ participants, 24/09/93, p. 17.

406 Confidential interview (15) and MoD, Archive MIS/CO, 438-0190, Box 307, Memorandum: The Bosnian civil intelligence service AID, 07/05/97.



started early in 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. At that time a start had yet to be made in the Netherlands on gathering information from ex-Yugoslav Displaced Persons, which could be used as evidence for a Tribunal. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs took the initiative of setting up a task force.<sup>407</sup> The BVD collaborated closely with the Yugoslav war criminals investigation team of the National Criminal Intelligence Agency (CRI) and with the Public Prosecutor (OM) in Arnhem, who was responsible for investigating whether these alleged war criminals could be prosecuted. The Chief Public Prosecutor, A.P. Besier, constantly hesitated about resorting to prosecution, however. 'The Public Prosecutor saw little reason to do so, and that is putting it mildly', according to a BVD official. The performance of the war criminals investigation team was consequently limited.<sup>408</sup>

Secret services of the various Yugoslav republics were meanwhile becoming increasingly active on Dutch territory. The BVD had serious indications that a network of Serbian criminals had branches in Holland and it had connections with the Serbian secret service and Serbian government. There was a fear of violent actions on the part of these criminals. The BVD also observed that the Bosnian government obliged Bosnian refugees in other countries by law to pay income tax to finance the conflict. Refusal could have serious consequences for family members remaining in Bosnia. The service had not yet found any firm evidence of this, however.<sup>409</sup>

In 1995, the BVD had to admit that the developments in the former Yugoslavia had only limited consequences for the national security. The changed situation in the Balkans prompted only a muted response among ex-Yugoslavs in the Netherlands. It had not led to any form of organized political activity in the Netherlands. With respect to the horizontal threat (within the Yugoslav community) and the vertical threat (oriented against Dutch subjects and institutions) the fear had receded significantly in 1995, and with it the attention of the BVD.<sup>410</sup> The BVD continued to keep a watchful eye on monitoring and influencing activities by the Yugoslav embassy. The remarks made in 1994 regarding the criminal network with political connections were more or less retracted. While organized crime was indeed a phenomenon to be taken seriously, there were hardly any indications of continuous control from political power centres in the former Yugoslavia. The BVD was therefore not prepared to start investigations of its own into this area.

A remarkable affair that the BVD (and later also the MIS) was involved with, was that of the Serb defector Cedomir Mihailovic, who was said to have fled Serbia in October 1994 with the help of the Dutch embassy, which had given him a temporary passport on 6 October. Mihailovic had important documents on Milosevic's involvement in war crimes in Bosnia. Furthermore, he put himself forward as an intermediary for Karadzic, who - he claimed - was prepared to exchange the three eastern enclaves of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde for other Bosnian-Serb areas in Bosnia. The BVD suspected that Mihailovic was working for the Serbian secret service, SDB, and was attempting in this way to map out how the Western intelligence and security services operated, and who the discussion partners were.

The Mihailovic case gave rise to friction between the BVD and the MIS, because the MIS was not immediately given access to him when he had arrived in the Netherlands. Both services arrived at the conclusion, however, that he was probably not to be trusted. The Tribunal judge, Richard Goldstone, would later also arrive at the conclusion that the documents he had handed over were falsifications. After that, Mihailovic was said to have left the Netherlands;<sup>411</sup> he sought publicity from abroad<sup>412</sup> and ultimately received a United States visa. How reliable he was remained unclear.<sup>413</sup>

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407 NMFA, DDI DIO, Memorandum: War crimes in former Yugoslavia, 06/01/93 and Coordination meeting on the former Yugoslavia, 10/02/93.

408 Confidential interview (15).

409 Minister of the Interior, *BVD annual report 1994*, pp. 32 - 35.

410 Confidential interview (15).

411 Roger Cohen, 'serb Says Files Link Milosevic To War Crimes', in: *The New York Times*, 13/04/95; Roger Cohen, 'serbian documents prove Milosevic is a War Criminal', in: *The New York Times*, 14/04/95 and Roger Cohen, 'Dutch Hold Serb War Crime Documents', in: *The New York Times*, 04/05/01.

412 Minister of the Interior, *BVD annual report 1995*, pp. 33 - 34.

413 Cohen, *Hearts grown brutal*, p. 410.

The BVD collaborated closely on Yugoslavia with the Economic Intelligence Unit (Economische Controledienst, ECD) of the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The ECD supervised compliance with the embargo against the warring factions, and also discovered a number of irregularities. For instance, in 1994 the ECD investigated a consignment of canned baby food, in which 7.62 mm ammunition was found that was probably destined for the Bosnian Army. On another occasion, the ECD investigated part of a consignment of 200 kg of vacuum-packed tins of milk powder destined for Bosnia, where 13 of the 24 tins turned out to contain rifle ammunition. Each tin contained two boxes of 24 cartridges each. This consignment was destined for a hospital in the Muslim enclave of Bihac; the tins were from a Dutch company. The ECD investigation revealed that the ammunition was not put into the tins during the production process. Neither was it plausible that a stopover had been made somewhere in the Netherlands during the transport to Bosnia to fill the tins with ammunition. The most plausible explanation was that the tins of baby food were filled with ammunition during a stopover in Croatia. It is possible that a great deal of ammunition and explosives were smuggled to the warring factions in this simple way. The ECD did not rule out that this was part of a well-prepared operation that had already been in existence for some considerable time. Perhaps this smuggling system was an important supplier of ammunition to the *Armija Bosna i Hercegovina* (ABiH).<sup>414</sup> The German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* was probably also involved,<sup>415</sup> and in this way more than 17,000 cartridges were said to have been smuggled to the ABiH in Bihac.<sup>416</sup>

The BVD collaborated with its foreign counterparts to acquire information on the role and activities of Yugoslav organized crime. In addition, the BVD had arrangements for sharing information with the Bosnian security service. This was used especially for sharing intelligence on war crimes. In the Netherlands, the BVD collaborated particularly closely with the MIS, the National Criminal Intelligence Agency (CRI), the Criminal Intelligence Service, the local police intelligence services, and the Ministry of Justice with respect to administering the Temporary Regulation for the Reception of Displaced Persons. There were also frequent contacts with the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND), whose responsibilities included monitoring the legal residence of foreigners.

For the BVD, the IND kept an eye on which Displaced Persons could supply interesting information, which made this body the first point of contact for the BVD. The IND worked with what were known as 'profile' data concerning those whom the BVD found interesting, for example whether the Displaced Person had belonged to a certain paramilitary group or had worked for an intelligence or security service. Sometimes this approach would be productive, but in the majority of cases it failed to deliver results. In this regard, much more information came from the local police and the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, to which the refugees always reported first.<sup>417</sup>

#### *The MIS's countermove: Team Olivier*

The tense situation in Yugoslavia and the increasing flow of Displaced Persons led, as mentioned, to the creation of Team Adriaan in the BVD. The MIS responded to this by setting up its own unit: Team Olivier, which included representatives of the MIS/Central Organization (part of the Counterintelligence and Military Security Bureau) and the MIS/Army (Operations Department). Different ideas existed on the collaboration between Team Adriaan and Team Olivier. The collaboration between the BVD and the Counterintelligence Bureau of the MIS/CO proceeded satisfactorily, according to some. There was a regular meeting once a month, and once every 6 months there was a major meeting.<sup>418</sup>

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414 Archive ECD, *International Economic Investigation Branch*, Statement no. 2005178, 27/04/94 plus appendices.

415 See Chapter 4 of this study.

416 Tim Judah, 'German spies accused of arming Bosnian Muslims', in: *The Sunday Telegraph*, 20/04/97.

417 Confidential interview (15).

418 Confidential interview (19) and interview with HMID, P.J. Duijn, 04/04/01.

The complete picture surrounding the assessment of the MIS regarding this collaboration is hazy. Various MIS workers have completely different assessments of the collaboration between the BVD and the MIS. Team Adriaan (BVD) and Team Olivier (MIS) allegedly had fierce conflicts with each other on occasion, especially when it came to recruiting informants.<sup>419</sup> This recruitment took place on the basis of the screening of refugees by the IND for the BVD, which subsequently debriefed them. Team Olivier then received all the intelligence that the BVD distilled from this process. The most serious complaint of the MIS was that it was not itself allowed to interrogate Displaced Persons on specific military aspects and perceptions, so that much intelligence was lost. MIS employees asserted that the BVD put its own interests first. Refugees who might be of interest to the MIS because of their level of military knowledge were only referred by the BVD in dribs and drabs. BVD officials claim they saw little sign of this. According to them, all information of relevance to the MIS was sent to that service.<sup>420</sup> The working method improved later, and in particular refugees with a military background were passed on to Team Olivier. The collaboration was complicated because of the anti-BVD attitude in some sections within the MIS, especially in the Navy and the Army sections of the MIS (MIS/Navy and MIS/Army). The MIS sections of the Air Force (MIS/Air Force) and Central Organization (MIS/CO) were said to have been on better terms with the BVD.<sup>421</sup>

Another factor was that the BVD and the MIS did not always share the same views on the conflict in Bosnia. The BVD's political-military analyses sometimes led to differences of opinion between these services. This was not particularly remarkable, since political or military analyses from the IDB, the BVD and the MIS on certain subjects had in the past frequently given rise to mutual differences of opinion. For instance, the distribution of the BVD's interim report on the situation in the former Yugoslavia of July 1992 led to criticism from the MIS. The superficial formulations in the BVD report were a particular target. For instance, the BVD analyst stated that the conflict in Croatia regarding the Serb-occupied Croatian areas had definitely not abated. The MIS stated on the contrary that in Croatia there were hardly any Serb-occupied areas, just as there were virtually no Croat-occupied areas in Serbia. The Bosnian Serbs had been present for centuries in the areas of Croatia in which they were dominant, according to the MIS, and the BVD formulation overlooked the fact that the Croatian Serbs had good reason to fear for their safety. In other words, the BVD presentation of matters, that Serbia dominated these areas, was too simple. The comprehensive commentary concluded with the MIS's wish to arrange coordination or cooperation meetings on a more or less regular basis, which could lead to the exchange of data and improve the information position of both service's intelligence products.<sup>422</sup>

This appeal apparently did not have the intended effect. At the CVIN meeting of 19 November 1992, there was debate if there had been contact between the BVD and the MIS regarding the BVD report that had been discussed at the meeting in question. The coordinator of the committee, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of General Affairs, Hoekstra, expressed the concern that ministers would be confronted with reports that presented divergent views or that even contradicted each other. The BVD announced at this meeting through deputy head A. Kievits that the head of the MIS had correctly observed that the report was dated: it described the situation of the previous summer. Kievits also observed that this was indicated in the text. According to him, there had been good contact between the BVD and MIS analysts who were concerned with Yugoslavia since that time. Kievits emphasized that there could be no question of completely harmonized documents or coproductions given the differences between the two services as regards powers and tasks. This did not detract from

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419 Confidential interview (20).

420 Confidential interview (15).

421 Confidential interview (29).

422 Archive BVD, *N<sup>o</sup> 116679*, Letter O. Koerten, Director of State Security BVD, to Head MIS, No. 215435, 07/07/92 plus Interim report on Yugoslavia, 06/07/92 and Letter from HMID Commodore P. Duin to the BVD, No. DIS/92/095/2852, 23/07/92.

the fact that collaboration and coordination were called for on the work floor but he did not have the impression that this was lacking at that time.<sup>423</sup>

The above showed yet again that the work of the BVD on Yugoslavia had both a domestic and a foreign component. Throughout the entire period, the activities of the BVD nonetheless provided no intelligence that could be of relevance to the position in which Dutchbat found itself in the enclave. Such intelligence would have to come from the MIS.

#### 4. The Military Intelligence Service (MIS)

After 1945, the three branches of the Dutch Armed Forces each had their own separate intelligence and security services: the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Army (MIS/Army), the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Air Force (MIS/Air Force) and the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Navy (MIS/Navy). They had duties in both the intelligence and security fields. The intelligence duties consisted of gathering the necessary data on the potential and the armed forces of other powers, with a view to achieving an appropriate structure and an effective deployment of the Dutch Armed Forces. Intelligence duties also involved gathering the information needed for the mobilization and concentration of the Armed Forces. The gathering of intelligence is a broad concept. It was taken to include the entire intelligence process from gathering (basic) data, evaluating, processing and documenting the data, to producing and distributing intelligence tailored to the users. Until approximately 1990, the activities of the military intelligence services focused on studying the capacities of the Warsaw Pact countries.<sup>424</sup> Security duties comprised countering espionage, sabotage, terrorism and propaganda, securing data and performing investigations of a confidential nature. At the end of 1985, in discussing the Intelligence and Security Services Act, Parliament passed an amendment that urged the integration of the three military intelligence services mentioned above. When the Intelligence and Security Services Act came into force on 1 February 1988, Article 9.1 stipulated: ‘There is one Military Intelligence Service.’

##### *Only one Military Intelligence Service?*

The new law may have been couched in absolute terms but the actual situation proved stubbornly resistant to change. The integration of the MIS, which went into operation on 1 January 1987 pursuant to a promise made by the Minister of Defence to Parliament, only represented the coming together of personnel from the Intelligence and Security departments of the Defence Staff (part of the Central Organization) and from the individual Armed Forces. The ‘integrated’ MIS did not therefore amount to much more than ‘a sum of the parts’<sup>425</sup> of the three former intelligence services and the Intelligence and Security Department of the Defence Staff.

For intelligence purposes, the heads of the Intelligence and Security Departments of the three Armed Forces remained hierarchically subordinate to their own Commanders-in-Chief. Each of these department heads was simultaneously Deputy Head of the MIS/CO, and were to be controlled by the new Head of the MIS. He alone was directly accountable to the Minister. In terms of organization, the Head of MIS was initially subordinate to the CDS and from the early 1990s to the Secretary-General. In rank, the Head of MIS (brigadier, commander or commodore) was always subordinate to the Commanders-in-Chief, so that, in the event of a conflict of interest, in all probability the heads of department would appeal to their respective Commanders. The command of the *security activities*, on the other hand, did fall completely under the Head of MIS, but the units responsible for executing security activities again continued to be organized per branch of the Armed Forces.

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423 Archive BVD, *No. 116679*, Letter A. Kievits to R.J. Hoekstra, 07/12/92.

424 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingen Dienst*, pp. 62 and 82.

425 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingen Dienst*, p. 95.

It was observed as late as March 1995 that the three Armed Forces had ‘not sufficiently’ subscribed to the political order of 1987 to arrive at one undivided and integrated MIS under a single commander, so that too little came of the execution. According to a final report by a reorganization commission led by the former Head of the Naval Intelligence Service, Rear Admiral S.W. van Idsinga (retd.), there was a ‘high resistance factor’ and ‘infighting (...) with all the mistrust which that entails’.<sup>426</sup>

For the Head of MIS, not much work appeared to remain in the first instance. His responsibilities included drawing up the Defence Intelligence and Security Requirements Report, but little would come of this in practice. It was still observed at the end of 1998 that this document was actually an extrapolation of work that was already being done. Moreover, the heads of the Air Force and Navy Intelligence and Security Departments backed out of participation in a central statement of requirements.<sup>427</sup> Another duty of the Head of MIS was to produce intelligence for policy making, with special reference to crisis management. The Head of MIS was also Deputy CDS for Intelligence and Security. Together with the heads of the other intelligence and security services, he was a member of the CVIN. He took part in the twice-yearly NATO meetings of the NATO Intelligence Board and in the SHAPE Intelligence Conference.<sup>428</sup>

In 1987, an Intelligence Staff and a Security Staff were attached to the Head of MIS. The first was to be mainly concerned with the production of intelligence in the military-political, strategic and economic fields, while the three Armed Forces intelligence organizations would concentrate mainly in the operational, tactical and technical fields. The Security Staff was to concern itself with counterintelligence, industrial security and, in due course, security investigations. Only gradually would personnel and resources become available at the level of the Central Organization that was based on the Kalvermarkt in The Hague. An MIS Management Meeting took place almost every week chaired by the Head of MIS, and attended by the heads of MIS of the three armed forces (MIS/Army, MIS/Navy and MIS/Air Force) and the two MIS/CO staff departments: the Intelligence Staff and the Security Staff.

Discussions on the international political and military changes after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Defence cutbacks, the takeover of the tasks of the disbanded Foreign Intelligence Service (IDB) and continuing discussion on the organization of Signals Intelligence, formed new reasons for the integration process. Ultimately it would be mid 1996 before the Intelligence and Security Services of the three Armed Forces would be brought under the single command of the Head of MIS. And only in 1997 were the various units of the Armed Forces that were active in Sigint incorporated in this one MIS. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the disintegration of the Warsaw Pact and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the MIS’s intelligence interest shifted from the Warsaw Pact to crisis management and peace operations in which the Netherlands Armed Forces took part. This tendency had already started earlier in the Army’s Military Intelligence Service at the time of Dutch participation in the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon (1979-1985).<sup>429</sup> The MIS still focused some attention on the Soviet Union’s successor, because of its large military potential combined with the political instability of the region. NATO commitments also played a role.

In addition to the defence task, the MIS also gathered intelligence with a view to the risks that soldiers could run in deployment in crisis management, peace and humanitarian operations. This was also true for assessing the risks of Dutch involvement in enforcing the flight restrictions over Bosnia. The MIS, in close consultation with the BVD, also assessed the risks to Defence personnel from criminal organizations of Serbian origin.<sup>430</sup> The intelligence capacity of the part of the MIS based in The Hague, the MIS/CO, constantly lagged behind due to understaffing. In March 1995, in spite of

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426 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Report Van Idsinga, DIS/95/21.11/809, 29/03/95.

427 MoD, *Archive MI S/CO*, Organization and Information Directorate, New balance. MIS Audit Report, Phase 2, p. 30, 04/11/98.

428 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingen Dienst*, p. 97.

429 Archive MIS, *Archive MIS/CO*, Report Van Idsinga, DIS/95/21.11/809, 29/03/95.

430 See for example: MoD, *Archive StasDef*, No. 2846, HMID Duijn to the Secretary-General, No. DIS/93/011/113, 12/01/93 and No. 2850, HMID Duijn to the Secretary-General, No. DIS/93/095/1094, 30/03/93.

cutbacks recommended by the Van Idsinga Commission, a strengthening of the MIS/CO analysis capacity from 28 to 42 staff was deemed necessary, whereas the same commission recommended that the number of Army intelligence positions could be reduced from 47 to 41. For the intelligence domain, the desirability of a decentralized approach was confirmed, however: in other words in the Armed Forces as opposed to the Central Organization.<sup>431</sup>

In the 1990s, crisis management and peace operations also made their mark on the counterintelligence and security domain. This mainly involved promoting the security of Dutch soldiers. The debriefing of military personnel that had participated in peace operations was becoming increasingly important with a view to security aspects. All in all, the crisis management operations led to new intelligence requirements, which would seriously aggravate the pressure of work on the MIS, especially after the summer of 1995.<sup>432</sup>

### *The MIS/CO's sources*

The Intelligence Staff of the MIS/CO was to make use of Open Source Intelligence (Osint), Human Intelligence (Humint) and Signals Intelligence (Sigint) for its intelligence production. The MIS has invested in the development of open sources, especially in recent years. This has meant more use of commercial data banks and Internet. It goes without saying that the service also had many national and international professional journals, weekly magazines and daily newspapers at its disposal. The MIS also exhibited the international tendency of making exhaustive use of open sources prior to resorting to more clandestine sources of information, such as human sources and Sigint. Another source of intelligence was the reports of the military attachés in other countries.<sup>433</sup>

With respect to information from human sources, there was an Operations Department within the MIS/CO that was responsible for recruiting and running informants and agents. This department was mainly created from the collaboration of the Counterintelligence (CI) departments of the 'old' military intelligence services of the Royal Netherlands Army and the Royal Netherlands Air Force. This department originally restricted itself to counterintelligence operations, but after the Foreign Intelligence Service (IDB) was disbanded on 1 January 1994, Operations started to make its own contribution to 'filling the hole' left by the IDB. A start was then made on building up Humint resources and closer collaboration with the BVD.<sup>434</sup> Since mid 1996, this Operations Department has made an actual start on operations in the intelligence and counterintelligence area. The written accounts of the operational work can be found in what are known as the 'O Files' that contain data on the source, the operation files with information on the development of the operation, and finally the information files containing the intelligence provided by the source. The information reports were sent to users, such as the Intelligence Department, also at the MIS/CO.<sup>435</sup>

The MIS/CO also engaged in procuring Sigint. In 1995 there were three military units involved in this, one for each branch of the Armed Forces: the First Air Force Signals Group, the 898<sup>th</sup> Royal Netherlands Army Signals Battalion, and the Royal Netherlands Navy Technical Information Processing Centre (TIVC). Until 1996, these three operated separately from each other, but in that year they were integrated to create one Sigint Department, which comprised two sections: the Operational Sigint Centre (OVIC) located at Eibergen (in the Dutch province of Gelderland) and the Strategic Sigint Centre (SVIC) in The Hague.

The Royal Netherlands Army's 898<sup>th</sup> Signals Battalion in Eibergen was engaged primarily in intercepting military tactical message traffic (in the HF band). The Royal Netherlands Navy's TIVC

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431 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Report Van Idsinga, DIS/95/21.11/809, 29/03/95.

432 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Organization and Information Directorate, New balance. MIS Audit Report. Phase 2, pp. 1 and 78, 04/11/98. See also: MoD, *Archive CSKL 1994*, DOKL/IV, Staff 1 Lk to Crisis staff, No. G2/5818, 11/07/94.

433 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingen Dienst*, p. 145.

434 Interview with HMID, P.J. Duijn, 04/04/01.

435 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingendienst*, pp. 143-144.

with its Granger antenna at Eemnes (Utrecht) then concentrated on international communication traffic (in the HF band), and via two satellite dishes in Zoutkamp (Groningen) on the message traffic sent via satellites. The military and political Sigint obtained in this way was primarily destined for the Intelligence Bureaus of the three branches of the Armed Forces.<sup>436</sup>

In addition, intelligence was obtained via (not from) NATO. The MIS had access to a few NATO databases containing intelligence summaries and specific studies contributed by the participating intelligence services of the member states. Furthermore, intelligence was supplied to the MIS by its foreign counterparts, since the MIS maintained bilateral contacts with the intelligence services, military and otherwise, of a large number (over 30) non-NATO countries.<sup>437</sup> This outline of the MIS's sources, which was taken from the historian Engelen, assumes the most ideal and desirable situation. The everyday reality was often different and more complicated, however: the MIS had to make do with what the its foreign counterparts were prepared to supply.

#### *What foreign services wanted the MIS to receive*

It was firmly stressed in various interviews that a NATO member state does not automatically have access to the intelligence of the other member states. There is a persistent misunderstanding that NATO member states can automatically receive intelligence data from NATO. This misunderstanding also extends to 'politicians'.<sup>438</sup> NATO has no capacity of its own for gathering intelligence. When NATO was founded in 1949, it was assumed that intelligence gathering always entailed a certain risk of being compromised. Therefore, the gathering of data had to be carried out by the member states exclusively. The member states did undertake to supply intelligence to NATO, but only those data that they wanted to make available: it was therefore a voluntary arrangement. The general picture is that in a qualitative and quantitative sense less intelligence could be obtained via NATO than via bilateral contacts. A revealing fact is that NATO's Intelligence Division appealed to the heads of the military intelligence services of the NATO member states in May 1994 to make more intelligence available to the Organization.<sup>439</sup> NATO was completely dependent on intelligence made available by its member states.

In June 1995, the MIS determined that the intelligence that was obtained via NATO was inadequate for taking responsible decisions concerning crisis management operations. What is more, NATO intelligence was based on a consensus of allies, and was therefore politically coloured to some extent. With respect to countries and developments outside the treaty area, it was also the case that issuing intelligence to NATO member states could be made subordinate to national (economic) interests of the member states.<sup>440</sup> According to a MIS memorandum from 1989, the international bilateral intelligence liaison between the Netherlands and other countries took place on the basis of agreements - reached formally or informally - for collaboration and liaison and based on common intelligence interest, according to subject and region. The extent to which, and the way in which, these bilateral collaborative contacts were maintained varied greatly, however. It depended, among other things, on the willingness of the partner to engage in de facto collaboration, the quality of the partner's information, the information that could be obtained from the partner in a quantitative and qualitative sense, the information that the partner wished to receive in exchange, and political considerations.

As far as NATO member states were concerned, bilateral exchange between the Netherlands and another NATO member state did not arise automatically out of NATO membership. It goes without saying that common interests are beneficial to the willingness to exchange. On NATO's foundation, the member states already emphasized that the Netherlands' lack of its own adequate

436 For this see in particular Chapter 5 in this study on Sigint.

437 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingendienst*, pp. 146-147.

438 Confidential interview (24).

439 MoD, *Archive CDS NATO, No. 375*, Request from NAMILCOM, No. 2902, 05/05/94.

440 MoD, *Archive MI S/Air Force* CASS No. 49, File Reports DB, Letter + Appendix I, No. DIS/95/24.1/1486, 22/06/95.

intelligence gathering capacity would mean that the majority of the partners had no need of the Netherlands. In the other direction, this was most definitely the case, and as a result, when it came to engaging and maintaining contacts, the MIS could never determine in advance how cost-effective those contacts would be. It could only be determined over the course of a considerable period which partners were valuable and which were less valuable. In 1989, the MIS used three categories of countries, which were not restricted to NATO member states. Intelligence from countries in Category A ‘cannot be missed’; information from countries in Category B was ‘extremely useful’ and intelligence from countries in Category C was ‘desirable’. Category A included the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. Category B included Israel, Italy and Switzerland, and Category C contained Belgium, Canada, Austria and Spain. In addition, the MIS maintained contacts with foreign intelligence services from considerations of efficiency.<sup>441</sup>

In theory, the situation appeared to be clear, but in practice liaison with these partners showed that the Netherlands had too little to offer. The strength of the MIS was in the analyses, but this generated a vicious circle. The MIS’s foreign counterparts could only benefit from sound analyses on the basis of a good foreign intelligence source, and in view of the fact that none existed where the Netherlands were concerned, the MIS’s analyses were therefore not interesting enough to the foreign intelligence services. The Netherlands had little intelligence to share with fellow services, which put the MIS in a weak intelligence position by definition. The result was that officials of another European service stated that they had occasionally seen foreign intelligence reports with the following inscription: ‘Not for Dutch eyes’.<sup>442</sup> For a clear understanding of the significance of the MIS for the Dutch troops in Bosnia, it is important to examine how the Heads of the MIS in the period 1992-1995 view their service with hindsight, and what problems they encountered in this period.

#### *The views of the heads of the MIS/Central Organization*

Commodore P.J. Duijn was Head of the MISD from July 1990 to December 1993. Before that, from 1986 to 1990, he had been Head of the Air Force Intelligence Service. He was therefore a man with broad intelligence experience. From interviews transpired that a general problem for Duijn was that he was confronted with a CDS, General A.K. van der Vlis, who had some trouble letting go of the old Warsaw Pact mentality. On Duijn’s appointment, the MIS/CO was oriented almost exclusively towards the East.

A fundamental problem that Duijn had to deal with was the question to whom he reported to as Head of MIS. At the time, he attended the generals’ meeting of the Defence Staff each week, and was regularly confronted with the recurring discussion of whether the Head of MIS reported to the CDS or the Minister. His own opinion was and remained that he reported to the Minister, sometimes to the irritation of the Deputy CDS, Lieutenant General of the Marines H.G.B. van den Breemen, who considered that the Head of the MIS reported to the CDS. Duijn refused to adopt this position, and his refusal generated constant conflict.

As Head of MIS/CO, Duijn was also directly confronted with the stand-offish attitude of the senior officers of the Royal Netherlands Army to the MIS/CO’s involvement in the events in Bosnia. There was no one from the MIS/CO among the first group of observers that departed for the Balkans. Senior Royal Netherlands Army officials would not allow it, because the general attitude in the Army at the time was that intelligence had no part to play in UN operations. Other European services made less of an issue of this, but in the area of intelligence, the Netherlands therefore did nothing towards the protection of its own troops.

In 1993, a senior British military officer had already publicly stated about Bosnia that ‘intelligence is a vital element of any operation and the UN needs to develop a system for obtaining

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<sup>441</sup> MoD, *Archive MIS/CO, Folder*<sup>443-0393</sup>, Memorandum Collaboration with foreign intelligence services, No. 4051/1/290889, 29/08/89.

<sup>442</sup> Confidential information (48).



information without compromising its neutrality'.<sup>443</sup> This recommendation was not followed up, however. One year later, a British brigadier came to the conclusion that UNPROFOR was still working with the traditional UN system of reporting events, without being actively engaged in intelligence gathering. Furthermore, rarely was anything done in the way of analysis.<sup>444</sup> A fact which was certainly true of the Netherlands.

The more the conflict in the Balkans intensified, the more the verbal advice of the Head of the MIS to senior Defence officials was not to burn their fingers on the Balkans, to keep well away, not to intervene or send troops, and simply to allow the conflict to burn itself out. In early 1993, when the first Dutch signals troops were already in Bosnia, this recommendation was issued via the Deputy CDS and the Secretary-General to the Minister. The British and Danish military intelligence services also gave identical recommendations to their ministers. The MIS/CO persisted in this position, and the MIS/CO therefore never made an analysis of the situation in Bosnia to consider where Dutch combat troops could operate if they did actually have to go there. Duijn did express negative advice on the light arms with which Dutchbat was sent to Bosnia.

On his appointment, Duijn was confronted with a MIS/CO that had at its disposal only one Balkans analyst, who initially had to work mainly with open sources. In this phase, the Netherlands still had a military attaché in Belgrade, who proved to be an extremely useful source of information.<sup>445</sup> However, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs wanted to freeze relations with Serbia, so that there was a threat that the attaché would have to leave, the consequence of which would be a further deterioration in the information position of the MIS/CO. At the time, the former Yugoslavia did not have a high priority in the MIS/CO. MIS staff were then also already heavily burdened with other tasks. Another factor was that MIS/CO staff themselves, like the CDS, continued to cling to the old East-West mentality, and had trouble making the shift to the new relationships in the Balkans.<sup>446</sup>

#### *Relationships between the MIS/CO and the other three MISs*

In the early 1990s, the MIS/CO was not able to get to grips with the intelligence units of the branches of the Armed Forces. The MIS of the Royal Netherlands Army (MIS/Army) was said to be relatively cooperative compared with the MIS of the Royal Netherlands Navy and the MIS of the Royal Netherlands Air Force. The last-mentioned was particularly reticent in sharing intelligence with the MISs of the other Armed Forces and the MIS/CO. This sometimes meant that intelligence would not be shared by the MIS/Army. In addition, the MISs of the Armed Forces sometimes wanted to win favour with their own Commander-in-Chief, and that led to situations in which intelligence was deliberately withheld.

The MISs of the Armed Forces were completely dependent on the Commanders-in-Chief. Another factor was that the CDS in that period did not yet wish to be a supreme commander, and as a consequence various crisis centres were created in the three branches of the Armed Forces. The Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC) supervised the whole, but that happened only when it was activated in a crisis situation. The MIS cell at the DCBC (Current Intelligence Centre, or CIC) was activated on 14 March 1994 in connection with Dutchbat's presence in Bosnia, but was poorly staffed at the time, with the exception of the one Balkans MIS/CO analyst mentioned above.

It can be considered remarkable that nothing was ever requested of the MIS/CO again by senior Ministry of Defence officials or at the instigation of the Ministerial Council within the framework of Yugoslavia. This was all the more remarkable because considerable doubts existed among senior Defence officials, on the part of CDS Van der Vlis and Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army Lieutenant General H.A. Couzy, regarding sending troops to Bosnia. Negative

443 Rear Admiral J.J.R. Todd, 'UK Perspectives of Current Security Arrangements', in: *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 139 (February 1994) 1, p. 35.

444 Michael Herman, *Intelligence after the Cold War: contributions to international security?*, unpublished paper, p. 3.

445 NMFA, *Archive D<sup>EU</sup>*, Coordination meeting on the former Yugoslavia, No. 32/93, 20/01/93.

446 Confidential interview (25).

advice on the subject from the MIS could possibly have strengthened their position, but they made no use of the services of the MIS/CO or the MIS/RLNA. In other words, the MIS was given no part to play. This was reinforced by the fact that the political decision to go to Bosnia had already been taken in the summer of 1993: the MIS had not been involved in that decision beforehand and afterwards the decision was irreversible.<sup>447</sup>

Another problem in this respect was that the Army's 898<sup>th</sup> Signals Battalion in Eibergen also assumed a Cold War mentality regarding the military communication traffic intercepted there. Furthermore, the Air Force and Army units operating there had capacity problems, and there was no Serbo-Croat language capacity in Eibergen whatsoever. One bright spot was that the Eibergen Air Force unit did have a good liaison with the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, and valuable military traffic was sometimes received via liaison. An issue in Eibergen at the time was whether the Sigint structure could continue to exist. The intelligence associated with it, Sigint, had an uncertain future in the Netherlands at the time because the Ministry of Defence was not then alert to Sigint. In Eibergen, there were three groups engaged in Sigint, one from each branch of the Armed Forces, without any coordination.

The capacity of the First Air Force Signals Group was cut back sharply, and Sigint in the Navy relied on the Technical Information Processing Centre (TIVC), while the Navy's commanders were interested in more strategic political and maritime information. It was because of this situation that the political need arose in the mid 1990s to integrate the operational Sigint of the three Armed Forces units in Eibergen. Another factor was the economic cutbacks, which meant that in September 1994 the senior officers of the Royal Netherlands Army came close to closing down the unit that was engaged in Sigint in Eibergen, the 898<sup>th</sup> Signals Battalion. The Head of the Cabinet Office of the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army managed in a memo to persuade his boss, Couzy, not to go ahead with this proposal.<sup>448</sup> It had already been indicated in Van Idsinga's report that the Navy wanted as rapidly as possible to hand over the TIVC in Amsterdam to the Strategic Sigint Centre in The Hague, because the upkeep of a separate centre for operational and strategic Sigint was a severe drain on the Navy's budget. However, at the time, the Army and the Air Force were opposed to any cofinancing of a new, yet to be established joint centre for strategic Sigint; the Commanders-in-Chief stated that they had no need for this type of intelligence.<sup>449</sup>

The Army and Air Force Sigint units were at the time still resources purely under the auspices of the Commanders-in-Chief. Almost no Sigint went to the MIS/CO, except for the Green Edition containing intercepted communications traffic. Neither was there any capacity for analysing Sigint, and there were problems with the MIS/Navy, which, in spite of all the financing problems surrounding the TIVC in Amsterdam, did not wish to hand over the raw Sigint to the MIS/CO.

In addition, the Head of MIS/Navy was not at all happy with the appointment of Duijn as the Head of the MIS, because this also made Duijn what was known as a Sigint Senior. This meant that Duijn would be the Netherlands' sole representative at the annual meeting of the nine most important Western Sigint countries instead of the Head of the TIVC, which was under the command of the Head of the MIS/Navy. The MIS/Navy would therefore find itself out of the loop, and for this reason it was fiercely opposed to transferring this task from MIS/Navy to MIS/CO.

However, because Duijn's appointment did go ahead, he went on to visit Norway, Denmark, Belgium and Hungary. As well as friction between MIS/CO and the Royal Netherlands Navy, problems also arose in relation to the Royal Netherlands Army. The senior Army officers did not want Duijn to discuss Sigint in Denmark. This was claimed by MIS/Army as an exclusive right. Duijn was, however, able to establish good contact with the Hungarian MIS regarding the sharing of Sigint.

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447 Interview with H.J. Vandewēijer, 19/01/98. See also: MoD, *Archive DEF/AT Ottawa 1994*, Map 14.8, Wergter to Defats, 23/03/94.

448 Interview with H. Bosch, 10/10/01.

449 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Report Van Idsinga, DIS/95/21.11/809, 29/03/95.

Yugoslavia did not prove to be a subject that attracted the attention of the highest political policymakers and intelligence officers in the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (MICIV) or its portal, the Netherlands Committee on United Intelligence Services. According to the Head of MIS/CO, Duijn, the conflict in Yugoslavia was not a subject of discussion in the Committee; in his view the Committee's members were far too occupied with disbanding the IDB. There was constant discussion on which IDB tasks should be taken over by which service. The picture was the same in the Ministerial Committee: under Prime Minister Lubbers, the meetings took only approximately 20 minutes each, and there too, according to Duijn, there was no interest in Yugoslavia.<sup>450</sup>

After Duijn's departure, Commodore P. Kok was appointed Head of MIS/CO. He held this position from 1 January 1994 to 25 June 1995, in other words until shortly before the fall of Srebrenica. Prior to that, from mid 1991 to the end of 1993, he was Head of the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Navy (in which position he was also Deputy Head of MIS/CO) and at the same time Head of the Intelligence and Security Department of the Navy Staff.

The new Head of MIS/CO was already confronted shortly after his appointment with a collaboration agreement that was intended to provide for 'a conflict reduction in the possible areas of tension' between MIS and BVD; Commodore Kok had not yet been involved in this process as Deputy Head of MIS. To this end, however, collaboration on the basis of equality would be necessary between the *de facto* still existing three MISs of the Armed Forces and, according to Kok, there was little evidence of such equanimity. According to this plan, the MIS as a whole would be dependent on the assent of the BVD as regards its actions in a number of areas. Kok proposed a new agreement as an alternative to this plan, which Docters van Leeuwen of the BVD agreed to, 'albeit grumpily'. Kok would later understand that not everyone in the BVD was happy with the new agreement as a replacement of the old plan.<sup>451</sup> Incidentally, this did not apply to various staff of his own MIS/CO, who considered the agreement to be excellent.<sup>452</sup>

The new Head of the MIS was left with a feeling of considerable frustration with regard to his period at MIS. He was obliged to occupy himself primarily with the task of reorganization, and had little time to focus on the military intelligence work. The parochialism, to which he himself had once actually diligently applied himself in his time at the Royal Netherlands Navy Military Intelligence Service, now turned against him at the MIS/CO. After a year in his position, he came to realize that things could not continue as they were, and he made serious attempts to integrate the three services in the MIS/CO. In his view, the MIS/CO was 'a jar of fleas all jumping in different directions'. Like his predecessor, he was also confronted with attempts to take the MIS away from the Minister and restore it to the CDS. Kok himself said that he attempted to obstruct this, but according to others he 'kept in with' the CDS, in contrast to Duijn who did business directly with the Minister.

### *The MIS at the time of the fall of Srebrenica*

Kok confirmed that under him the MIS/CO was never consulted in decision-making on the deployment of Dutchbat to Srebrenica, as was also the case under his predecessor Duijn. Nor did the MIS/CO under Kok ever make a risk analysis of the enclave in East Bosnia. The MIS/CO, under Kok, and also under Duijn, did produce risk analyses on account of the Royal Netherlands Air Force's involvement in enforcing the no-fly zone over Bosnia. In this, the MIS/CO followed on from the MIS/Air Force in constantly examining the risks for defence personnel at Italian air bases, in connection with possible Serb terrorist and sabotage actions. The MIS/CO arrived at the proposal that

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<sup>450</sup> This reconstruction is based on an interview with HMID P.J. Duijn, 04/04/01 and various confidential interviews (18), (19), (23), (25), (27) and (87).

<sup>451</sup> Jensen and Platje, *De Manid*, pp. 369 - 394.

<sup>452</sup> Confidential interviews (24) and (25).

the authorities should be extremely cautious in giving information on combat actions, and on the nationalities of the attacking aircraft.<sup>453</sup>

As the Head of the MIS/CO, Kok is also said to have urgently advised Defence Minister Voorhoeve, shortly after his appointment, to pull out of Srebrenica. Like his predecessor, the Head of the MIS was also confronted with CDS Van der Vlis, who must have been in despair about the position in which Dutchbat had ended up in Srebrenica. On his appointment, Kok therefore wanted a discussion with the Minister as soon as possible, but according to Kok the Minister was shielded by the Secretary-General, a state of affairs which Kok found extremely frustrating.<sup>454</sup> Later, it did become possible for the Head of the MIS/CO to brief Voorhoeve on a regular basis. The Minister did have some interest in the work of the MIS, but this mainly involved the integration of the services and not the military information that the MIS had to offer. The problem for Kok was that he was given no political guidance by Voorhoeve, and had to write his own statement of requirements. Voorhoeve never informed the MIS or Kok what sort of information he actually required from the MIS.

For all these reasons, the MIS under Kok played hardly any role in the conflict in Bosnia. Neither was the MIS accepted as a serious discussion partner by the political policymakers, as was also confirmed by Voorhoeve.<sup>455</sup> The MIS did arrange daily briefings in the Defence Crisis Management Centre on the political and military intentions of the warring factions, but when the briefing was over, the MIS had to leave and the doors were closed.

The information position of the MIS in the period of the fall of the enclave was also not terribly impressive. There were no contacts at a strategic level with the Scandinavian countries or the United Kingdom, which had troops in the vicinity. Furthermore, Eibergen was still geared towards a Cold War mentality and absolutely not towards Yugoslavia, so that no Sigint on Yugoslavia was gathered there. What is more, at the time of the fall of the enclave Eibergen still reported to the Commander-in-Chief of the RNLA, who demanded that the unit continue to operate according to the old East-West mentality. That was the order on the table, and it was not to be deviated from. In Eibergen and within the RNLA it was seen as a 'mortal sin' to glance in the direction of conflicts that did not fit into that mould.

Organizational problems exacerbated the situation still further. The fact that Eibergen was not allowed to do anything on 'Bosnia', coincided with resistance to a further integration of the three MISs of the Armed Forces, a process which only started to gain momentum in 1994. Senior RNLA officers blocked this integration, because they wanted to preserve the MIS/Army.<sup>456</sup> Couzy confirmed that he had never ordered Eibergen to step up its activities regarding Bosnia. As Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army he did not have the impression that important information was being withheld from him in the sphere of Sigint.<sup>457</sup>

Otherwise, the image that the MIS/CO was entirely uninvolved in Bosnia deserves some correction. It was even clear to Kok as Head of the MIS that the enclave would disappear in due course. This was confirmed to him by a meeting in the first half of 1994 with his Hungarian counterpart in Budapest. He brought Kok into contact with the Head of the Serbian MIS, who confirmed the picture that the enclaves would disappear in the long term. Ideas were occasionally exchanged after that in the MIS management meetings, and consideration was given to using Dutch F-16s to take photos of Srebrenica. This did not happen because the Air Force thought that it was neither possible nor permissible. The MIS/Air Force was focused on protecting the security of Air Force personnel, and their assessment was that such an action could put them in danger.

In early 1995, it was more or less known that Kok had to leave. From that moment on, the MISs of the Armed Forces no longer wished to share any information with each other and with the

453 MoD, *Archive CDS 1994, No. 2854*, HMID Kok to the Secretary-General, No. DIS/94/095/856, 13/04/94.

454 Interview with P. Kok, 07/06/00.

455 Interview with J. Voorhoeve, 01/10/01.

456 Confidential interview (41) and interview with J. Vandewijer, 27/01/00.

457 Interview with H. Couzy, 04/10/01.

MIS/CO. Intelligence sharing with the foreign sister services was also proceeding poorly. There were complaints from abroad in the direction of the MIS; they kept asking when the Netherlands was going to start producing intelligence on Bosnia. However, the MIS was able to provide extremely little, and therefore also received little intelligence from abroad in return. There was actually some Sigint available, but the Technical Information Processing Centre (TIIVC) of the Royal Netherlands Navy had a tendency to keep it to its chest.

The foreign services knew perfectly well that the MIS was strongly divided internally. Partly for this reason, the balance in the relationship between the MIS and its foreign counterparts constantly worked to the detriment of the Netherlands. The foreign intelligence services also took advantage of this under the motto 'divide and conquer': they 'went shopping' for information at the MISs of the Armed Forces and invariably obtained something in this way; the one service often did not know what the other had given away.<sup>458</sup> Furthermore, the MISs of the Armed Forces were more concerned with getting credits from their respective Commanders-in-Chief than with informing the Minister. Former MIS/CO staff spoke of 'a sick atmosphere' within the service and its productivity at that time was completely undermined by mutual competence conflicts and the lack of actual operations. These were the circumstances under which Kok departed as Head of the MIS in June 1995.<sup>459</sup>

His successor was Brigadier General J.C.F. Knapp, who was appointed on 25 June 1995 as the new Head of MIS. It was apparent not long after his arrival that relations between the MISs of the Armed Forces in this period were still less than cordial, to put it mildly. Knapp too was confronted with the strong territorial boundaries that the three MISs had erected around their own areas. This was sometimes taken to extremes; the demarcation between the MISs was so emphatic that Knapp, as Head of the MIS, was not welcome at the TIIVC complex in Amsterdam or the MIS/Air Force building.

Van Idsinga's report on the integration of the MISs into a single MIS was Knapp's starting point upon taking office. The report stated that the Royal Netherlands Army, Navy and Air Force were reluctant to contemplate an expansion of the MIS/CO,<sup>460</sup> but Knapp had now been given a very clear political signal and instruction to realize the goal of one unified MIS.<sup>461</sup> Knapp's motto was always that the MIS was a support service, primarily to serve the Ministry of Defence and secondarily the interests of 'The Netherlands Incorporated'. In his 'will and testament' on his departure on 1 October 1997, he again indicated that an intelligence section and a section for military security would have to be formed.

As Head of the MIS, Knapp regularly visited the three MISs of the Armed Forces, and then reported directly to the Minister. To this end, Knapp did not first approach the CDS, and in so doing he reinstated Duijn's tradition. With strong backing from Voorhoeve, Knapp made a start on the onerous task of integrating the MISs. He initially received little cooperation from the individual MISs, but this later changed. On the one hand, this was because he appointed civilian personnel from the Ministry of Defence to various key posts in the MISs of the Armed Forces. From the point of view of integration, this was a smart move, because it diminished the pull that the Commanders-in-Chief of the various Armed Forces exerted on the Heads of their respective MISs. Financial aspects also lent a helping hand. The MIS/Navy in particular realized that collaboration was beneficial, because the MIS/CO was holding the purse strings. This attitude resulted in the MIS/CO taking over the TIIVC from the MIS/Navy. Knapp's main reason for leaving the job was that he was given no formal appreciation expressed in the form of rank.<sup>462</sup>

It can be deduced from the above that, in the first half of the 1990s, the heads of department of the MIS/CO had little room for manoeuvre in their task of advising the Minister and providing him directly with intelligence. What is more, the MIS/CO only had one analyst available with respect to

458 Confidential interview (25). See also: De Graaff and Wiebes, *Villa Maarheeze*, pp. 343 - 354.

459 This reconstruction is based on an interview with P. Kok, 07/06/00 and various confidential interviews (18), (34) and (86).

460 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Report Van Idsinga, DIS/95/21.11/809, 29/03/95.

461 For this see also: MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Letter from HMID Knapp + Memorandum Realization Memorandum Department MIS/Army, No. DIS/96001532, 19/07/96.

462 This reconstruction is based on an interview with J. Knapp, 21/03/01 and confidential interviews (29), (34) and (35).

Yugoslavia. This made the information position of the MIS/CO less than strong. A more precise reconstruction of the MIS/CO's capacities, resources and staffing regarding Yugoslavia is given below.

### *The MIS/Central Organization and Bosnia*

An analysis of the MIS reports in the period 1992-1995 reveals that intelligence on Bosnia was gathered on all sorts of levels. This happened firstly at the MIS/CO Intelligence Staff, where processing and reporting was carried out on the political, economic and strategic terrain. Strategic intelligence was primarily intended for the political, administrative and military leaders (Minister, Junior Minister, Secretary-General and CDS). The Head of Intelligence Staff was responsible for the coordination and fine-tuning of the reporting. The department was subdivided into a Military Analysis Bureau and a Political-Economic Analysis Bureau.<sup>463</sup> It employed 12 staff in total, who mainly studied strategic developments in the fields of politics, economics and the military in the CIS, the Middle East, Surinam and the Balkans. The MIS/CO personnel capacity was insufficient to allow the Balkans to be handled properly. From 1996, after the final reorganization, this support department was expanded from 12 to 45 FTEs.<sup>464</sup> Only one analyst worked almost full time on the Balkans, but he also had to cover developments in Surinam. This one-man outfit was also given little or no guidance: the analyst had to determine his own policy and occupied himself mainly with political-strategic developments. Yugoslavia was a target at the MIS/CO from 1988 onwards. This is when the first signals began to arrive that all was not well. According to insiders, the war in Yugoslavia (in spite of Dutchbat) was not given high priority. 'The Berlin Wall didn't fall at the MIS until years later', according to one analyst.<sup>465</sup>

Where sources were concerned, the MIS/CO Intelligence Staff had only rare access to Sigint. The relationship of the MIS/CO with special intelligence gathering bodies such as the TIVC in Amsterdam or the 898<sup>th</sup> Army Signals Battalion in Eibergen was in fact almost non-existent. The MIS/CO mainly had to make do with Open Source Intelligence (Osint) and sometimes with material supplied by UNPROFOR. Approximately 80% of all intelligence came from these sources. The MIS/CO also received information on Bosnia from Dutchbat, UNCivPol, UNMOs, ECMM (the European monitoring mission) observers and, initially, from the Military Attaché in Belgrade, who was later recalled. Further intelligence was obtained from the TIVC and NATO, and the political analyses that the BVD sent to the CVIN.

The MISs of the Armed Forces also supplied intelligence to the MIS/CO, but the MIS/Army only sent finished intelligence to the MIS/CO, and not the material on which it was based. It was therefore never possible for the MIS/CO's only available Balkan analyst to independently check the sources for reliability. A telling detail in this connection: the MIS/Army had English-Dutch translators at its disposal, but the MIS/CO did not. The Ministry of Defence made no additional effort to expand the capacity of the MIS/CO. One analyst continued to bear the complete responsibility for Yugoslavia, and received no support whatsoever. As a consequence, the MIS/CO was never actually able to make a thorough analyses of its own but had to rely completely on the finished intelligence product of the MIS/Army. The MIS/CO was never allowed to make direct contact with Dutch staff officers in Tuzla, Sarajevo or Zagreb. Everything ran via the MIS/Army. The three heads of the MIS at the time confirmed the picture outlined here regarding the information position of the MIS/CO.

Neither did the MIS/CO have imagery from satellites or U-2 spy planes at its disposal. It occasionally received material from the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND), the Italian MIS (the *Servizio Informazioni e Sicurezza Militare* or SISMI), the Danish MIS (DDIS), the CIA or DIA. There was a secure telex link with most services. The US intelligence on Yugoslavia tended to be in-depth in the military-tactical area, but it lacked breadth in the sense of offering a complete political and military picture.<sup>466</sup>

<sup>463</sup> Kluiters, *Supplement*, pp. 214 - 215.

<sup>464</sup> Confidential interview (27).

<sup>465</sup> Confidential interview (37).

<sup>466</sup> Interview with P.J. Duijn, 04/04/01.

German, Italian and Danish intelligence was generally rated as good. The intelligence of the British and French military intelligence services, the DIS and the *Service Generale de Reinseignement* (SGR) and later DRM, was rated as reasonable. The MIS/CO had good access to the DIS. Furthermore, the Swiss and Austrian services provided excellent reports based on the debriefings of refugees from the Balkans. It was often observed in interviews that the quality of the partner information depended heavily on the personal contacts of the analyst. Contacts with Spain, for example, were pro forma while those with the BND were good. Contacts with the DIA were sporadic: usually once a year.<sup>467</sup>

Prior to 1994, the MIS/CO had no contact whatsoever with the CIA or with SIS: this was carried out by the IDB. After the IDB was disbanded in 1994, the MIS/CO did establish some contacts in the direction of the British and the Americans. MIS/CO Head Kok therefore had regular contact with the CIA Chief of Station. The Head of the MIS/CO Intelligence Staff was also responsible for all other foreign contacts. Initially, the Chief of Station visited Kok, but, after Knapp's arrival, he approached the Head of the Intelligence Staff, whom he visited once every two weeks. The overall feeling at the MIS/CO was that the Chief of Station generally came more to request intelligence than to supply it on behalf of the CIA. The US official occasionally gave briefings at the Defence Crisis Management Centre, where use was sometimes made of Imagery Intelligence from satellites and U-2 spy planes.<sup>468</sup>

In short, the information position of the MIS/CO on strategic developments in the political, economic and military sphere could certainly not be called strong, due to a lack of sufficient personnel, unique sources and intelligence gathering facilities of its own. The sole analyst had to 'make do' with information from the UN, the final analyses (not the sources) from the MISs of the Armed Forces, foreign counterparts and open sources.

#### *The MISs of the branches of the Armed Forces and Bosnia*

Alongside the MIS/CO, the Intelligence and Security departments of the three branches of the Armed Forces (MIS/Army, MIS/Air Force and MIS/Navy) were responsible for gathering intelligence on Yugoslavia. This section is mainly devoted to the activities of the MIS/Army, which bore the primary responsibility for gathering military intelligence destined for the leaders of the Royal Netherlands Army and the Dutch units in Bosnia. There will also be a brief description of the work of the MIS/Air Force, which gathered intelligence within the framework of the Force Protection of the Dutch F-16s that operated from Italy over Bosnia. Although the Royal Netherlands Navy participated in operations in the Adriatic Sea, there will be no separate section on the MIS/Navy, because it played no role in the situation surrounding the eastern enclaves.

It might have been expected that the MIS/Army would become more actively involved in gathering intelligence as part of the process of decision-making on the deployment of Dutchbat, certainly after Dutch troops left for Bosnia. An interview with the Head of the Intelligence and Security Department, who was also Deputy Head of the MIS/Army, Colonel H. Bosch, revealed that this only took place to a very limited extent.<sup>469</sup> A related impetus could also have been the appointment of a new Head of the MIS/Army, Colonel H. Bokhoven, who held this position from 19 April 1994 to 15 December 1995.<sup>470</sup> He had built up considerable experience in Bosnia. In 1993 and 1994, he was Plan Officer with the French Force Commander, Jean Cot.

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<sup>467</sup> Confidential interview (28).

<sup>468</sup> The minutes of these confidential briefings were not found in the archives of the MoD.

<sup>469</sup> Interviews with H. Bosch, 10/05/99 and 10/10/01.

<sup>470</sup> Kluiters, *Supplement*, p. 133.

*The organization of the MIS/Army*

The Intelligence and Security Department of the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Army (MIS/Army) occupied itself with the question of what equipment was situated where, and which equipment the warring factions had at their disposal. There was no formal intelligence requirements plan.<sup>471</sup> In 1994 and 1995, the Intelligence and Security Department operated with the following structure.

Section A: intelligence;

Section B: Security, including Counterintelligence;

Section C: liaison with military attachés and foreign partners;

Section D: military geography.

Section A, Intelligence,<sup>472</sup> was further subdivided into:

A-1: Bureau Current Intelligence, Situation Centre (SitCen) and Daily Intelligence Summaries;

A-2: Europe Bureau (Orders of Battle and Land Forces);

A-3: Scientific and Technical Intelligence Bureau;

A-4: Signals Intelligence Bureau;

A-5: Literature Research and Translations Bureau (no Serbo-Croat translators);

A-6: Administration, Documentation and Archive Bureau;

A-7: Non-Eastern-European States Bureau (Middle East, North-Africa and the rest of the world).

The most important Bureau for gathering intelligence were A-2 and A-4, and for the production of finished intelligence, A-1. Some analysts at the European Bureau had experience in Bosnia because they had worked in the intelligence staff of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in Kiseljak. There they had access to the Linked Operational Intelligence Center Europe (LOCE) system. Intelligence in NATO was shared through this system, which was a heavily secured communication network, and the results of Imagery Intelligence, Electronic Intelligence and other intelligence were shared in this way.<sup>473</sup>

The Situation Centre of Bureau A-1 had three tasks: drafting the daily Intelligence Summary of 2 to 2 1/2 pages, which covered Yugoslavia in particular, but also the entire world; processing and disseminating daily intelligence; and supervising the streamlining operation that had been initiated in November 1994. The daily schedule was: from 8 am - 10 am processing and analysis; 10 am -12 noon writing; 12 noon - 1 pm reading and revising draft and 1 pm - 2 pm dissemination. The most important sources for the Situation Centre were the products of the Europe Bureau and the Signals Intelligence Bureau, the intelligence section of UNPROFOR and material from foreign intelligence services. It soon came to the notice of the SitCen staff that the sister services copied much of what the UNPROFOR intelligence section supplied, but they too had to accept that the MIS/Army had little good intelligence and certainly not a unique information position. The Intelligence Summary analysis and the European Bureau analyses sometimes contradicted one another.

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471 Confidential interview (22).

472 Kluiters, *Supplement*, p. 131.

473 Confidential interview (38).



Originally, the European Bureau's products relating to Yugoslavia resulted from barter with the foreign partners, which had been set up by one of the staff more than 20 years previously.<sup>474</sup> An US official who had served in the US Army for 20 years, confirmed while he still worked at the DIA that the MIS/Army had been the most prolific producer of intelligence on the former Yugoslavia within NATO during the Cold War. In his opinion, the MIS had excellent intelligence, but the analysis was of inferior quality. Conversely, some US intelligence occasionally came the way of the MIS/Army via NATO in Mons, but there was no real will to share it on the part of the Americans.<sup>475</sup>

The European Bureau's sources were mainly Osint, UNPROFOR, sister intelligence services and the military attaché in Belgrade. The European Bureau did not originally have Sigint at its disposal. There was rigorous compartmentalization within the MIS/Army. Separate reports with Sigint went to the Deputy Head of the Intelligence Department, and European Bureau staff originally did not get to see them. This improved later; the European Bureau staff then did receive Sigint (once a week). The quantity also grew, because the head of the MIS/Army Intelligence Department at the time wanted a weekly briefing.

The European Bureau also had access to foreign material through organizations such as the ECMM and UNMO. With respect to the foreign partners: good and direct contacts with the Americans, the Germans and the Italians had been built up over the years. At the MIS/Army too, the quality rating of intelligence from foreign intelligence services was variable. 'Not so good' and 'nothing unique' were common characterizations. The liaison with the French services did not function well: French intelligence that did find its way to the MIS/Army was generally considered to be unsound. Contact with the DIS was limited. The European Bureau did receive DIS reports for perusal. More generally, the DIS was said to have come up-to-speed slowly, but the reports were later rated as good quality. In addition, material was occasionally obtained from the Danish MIS and the DIA.<sup>476</sup> The products of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* were rated as good; this service had good Humint sources, especially in the vicinity of Banja Luka and on the border with Serbia. The BND was also said to have access to Comint from communications traffic by the *Vojaska Republika Srpska* (VRS) and the ABiH.<sup>477</sup>

#### *The MIS/Army made do with what it had*

A significant problem with which not only the European Bureau, but also other Bureaus initially had to contend, was a lack of good and reliable maps. The maps of Yugoslavia dated from the 1960s or sometimes even earlier, and it was even the case that the words '*Führer Stab des Heeres, Ausgabe 1943*' could be found printed at the bottom of some maps used by the MIS/Army.<sup>478</sup> The most reliable maps used were the Royal Dutch Touring Club (ANWB) map of Yugoslavia and the street map of Sarajevo produced for the 1986 Winter Olympics. The maps that subsequently became available were repeatedly updated on the basis of Imagery Intelligence supplied by the French SPOT satellite.<sup>479</sup> The MIS/Army made a three-dimensional sketch at the time of Dutchbat's deployment.

Dutchbat worked in the enclave with ten year old Yugoslavian maps, which was extremely inconvenient in discussions on establishing a demarcation line or in the event of incidents. After a visit to the enclave by the Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, the maps were translated to Dutch standards,<sup>480</sup> but this revision also failed to improve communication between Dutchbat and the higher levels of command within UNPROFOR. The higher command levels worked with maps made

474 Confidential interview (57).

475 Confidential interviews (38) and (75).

476 Confidential interview (22).

477 Confidential interview (38).

478 Confidential interview (34). See also: Paul Ruigrok, 'Den Haag wist van niets, maar de onderofficieren moesten terug' ('Den Haag knew nothing, but the NCOs had to go back'), in: *Vrij Nederland*, 30/10/93.

479 Interview with H. Bosch, 10/10/01.

480 MoD, *Archive CSKL, no. CRST/374*, Brantz to BLS et al, 06/06/94, appendix: Trip report to Bosnia-Hercegovina, p.3.

by UNPROFOR in Zagreb, and there was a slight discrepancy between Dutchbat's maps and UNPROFOR's maps. This discrepancy led, for example, to Force Commander De Lapresle's helicopter only being able to land in the Srebrenica compound at its third attempt on his visit to Srebrenica on 2 February 1995.<sup>481</sup> Maps with coordinates became available later, but in general it can be stated that there was initially no overabundance of geographical intelligence.<sup>482</sup>

Once the dispatch of soldiers to Bosnia had got under way, it would be logical to expect that members of Dutchbat would be used as sources of intelligence. The information position of the MIS/Army could have been improved considerably by using the ears and eyes on the ground, but this did not happen. For instance, the European Bureau was not allowed to pass on questions to the intelligence officers of Dutchbat and its 'predecessors', the Signals Battalion and later the Transport Battalion. Although this was proposed by MIS/Army, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Army refused permission. The Deputy Head of the MIS/Army was later rapped on the knuckles again for this by senior Army officers, whereupon the heads of the MIS/Army forbade MIS/Army analysts to re-establish direct contact with Dutchbat,<sup>483</sup> because intelligence activities were not permissible in a UN context. Via a detour, the questions were subsequently presented through the MIS/Army Security Section, so that some information did then dribble in.

Where Sigint at the MIS/Army was concerned (Bureau A-4), the MIS/Army had instructed the 898<sup>th</sup> Army Signals Battalion in Eibergen to take a 'look' at Yugoslavia in 1994 or thereabouts. The operational order from the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army indicated that day-to-day operational command in this regard lay with the MIS/Army. From 1993 to 1995, Bureau A-4 only had the unit in Eibergen at its disposal as far as Sigint was concerned, and it had no say over the Technical Information Processing Centre (TIVC) in Amsterdam, which was the province of the MIS/Navy. The TIVC's only customers were the Navy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the BVD. The MIS/Army and MIS/Air Force therefore had no direct access to the communications traffic that was mainly intercepted in Zoutkamp and Eemnes. At this time the first language course in Serbo-Croat was initiated at the MIS School by the Signals Intelligence Bureau of the MIS/Army. The problem was that the Eibergen antenna was oriented on the East-West axis, which made it difficult to intercept message traffic in the Balkans. The MIS/Army also had insufficient translation capacity and there were technical problems too. During the war in Bosnia, use was mainly made of walkie-talkies such as the Motorola. A separate analysis capacity is necessary for intercepting Motorola message traffic. This was not feasible in the Netherlands; it was only possible on the spot.

In 2001 some (former) employees of the MIS stated that, in 1995, their service was still mentally and technically oriented towards the East. There were two other reasons why the MIS had so much difficulty 'averting its gaze' from the East with regard to Sigint. In the first place, there was an investment freeze and departing from the East-West axis would have been an expensive business. A second reason had to do with the undertaking that had been made within NATO to this effect. If the MIS/Army were not to fulfil its existing obligation, then it would have nothing whatsoever to share with its partners.

Meanwhile, there were still no resources and military direction being given, not even from the leadership of the Ministry of Defence. Between 1993 and 1995, the Ministry simply took no interest in Sigint, the procurement of which was considered too expensive. The use of Sigint during the Dutchbat deployment was therefore tightly restricted by a dearth of resources, personnel and equipment. The Bureau A-4 (Signals Intelligence) was, as has already been stated, severely handicapped by the fact that no Sigint on Bosnia was being obtained from the Americans. According to some MIS workers, the Americans were also extremely frugal when it came to sharing such intelligence with the United Kingdom and Germany as well.<sup>484</sup> MIS/Army staff stated that it was only after the fall of Srebrenica

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481 MoD, *Archive, Box 1004*, TA9A to TX8, 21/02/95.

482 Confidential interview (34).

483 Confidential interview (38).

484 Confidential interview (21).

that an insight was obtained using Sigint into the VRS communication networks, which then succeeded through makeshift measures and personal contacts.<sup>485</sup>

The MIS/Army had no unique sources for Bosnia, and the political need in this respect did not appear to be great. In order to follow the war in Bosnia as well as possible, the analysts were dependent on fellow intelligence services, UNPROFOR, UNMOs, and the ECMM. At the request of the MIS/Army, the CDS, Van den Breemen made enquiries of General Shaliskashvili, the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), for more intelligence, but this revealed that the American intelligence services also had no clearer picture concerning the eastern enclaves. Attempts were also made to gather additional intelligence from the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, but they had little effect.<sup>486</sup>

*Should the MIS/Army or Dutchbat have done more themselves in the domain of intelligence?*

According to MIS employees, foreign intelligence on Yugoslavia yielded little or nothing on Srebrenica that proved valuable after analysis. This prompts the question of whether Dutchbat itself could or should have resorted to intelligence gathering, to support the work of the MIS/Army for the subsequent benefit of the battalion. Many studies have shown that in complex peacekeeping operations, Human Intelligence (Humint) is often the most important source of intelligence. An American military officer therefore argued for keeping the methods of intelligence gathering 'simple'.<sup>487</sup> In an area such as Bosnia, there was a shortage of all sorts of (especially American) advanced technical systems. Advanced espionage aircraft were not able to locate mines or snipers, or to determine the role of the local mafia.<sup>488</sup>

The author David Charters asserts that each peacekeeper is in fact a gatherer of intelligence. Each contact with the local population and authorities should provide added value. In his view, intelligence gathering and reporting should be second nature to each commander involved in a peacekeeping operation.<sup>489</sup>

Dutchbat's need for a good intelligence structure was already evident from the earlier experiences of the British Army in Bosnia. This was reported on in February 1994 by the military attaché in London. The experiences of the British battalion in Bosnia between May and November 1993 indicated that a successful task execution depended on the intelligence. For example, intelligence would provide more advance assurance of whether a convoy would reach the final destination. Without some assurance there was hardly any point in setting out. Dutchbat's intelligence information sources were local military commanders, the population, ex-soldiers from the region, UNMOs, International Red Cross workers, and their own officers.<sup>490</sup>

It became clear in June 1994 that the Dutchbat commander felt that he was not receiving enough intelligence. It is evident from the reports by the Dutch Deputy Commander of Sector North East in Tuzla, Colonel C.L. Brantz, of his visit to Srebrenica that since the deployment of Dutchbat I on 1 March 1994, the Dutchbat commander had repeatedly stressed that his 'world' was extremely limited by a lack of intelligence. Anticipating developments outside the enclave and verifying the information given by the warring factions was hardly possible, if at all, in the situation as it existed, argued Brantz. He pointed out that the intelligence picture was mainly based on irregular discussions with ABiH and VRS soldiers, UNMOs and observations from OPs. Support from the Netherlands could possibly alleviate part of this shortcoming. Whether this was feasible in practice remained to be seen, according to Brantz; the Royal Netherlands Army did not have much in the way of resources of its own in the mission area.

485 Confidential interviews (21), (33), (35), (37) and (39).

486 Confidential interview (36).

487 Cf. Colonel H. Allen Boyd, 'Joint Intelligence in Support of Peace Operations', in: *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, January-March 1999 and Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 56.

488 Cf. Lt. Colonel Collin A. Agee, 'Too Much Data -- Too Little Intel?', in: *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, January-March 1999, *passim*.

489 David A. Charters, 'Out of the Closet: Intelligence Support for Post-Modernist Peacekeeping', in: *The Pearson Papers, No. 4, Intelligence and Peacekeeping*, Halifax, 1999, p. 61.

490 M<sub>oD</sub>. *Archive CSKL* 1994, Bureau Army Attache to Head SitCen, No. 2602/1827, 26/02/94.

It is important to note that the British and the Danes each in their own way appeared to be able to partially alleviate these same shortcomings for their units. Brantz proposed the formulation of an action plan to minimize the perceived difficulties in the short term.<sup>491</sup> In a response, the Commander-in-Chief stated that all that needed to be established was why the promise of intelligence support to the Dutchbat commander made by the Head of the MIS could not be kept; this was information that the Dutchbat commander had to have. There was to be consultation on the action plan with the MIS/Army's Intelligence and Security Department.<sup>492</sup>

Dutchbat therefore provisionally received no optimum intelligence support from The Hague, but neither had it set up any intelligence-gathering structure of its own. The intelligence staff officer was not a key officer. In fact, Dutchbats I and II were not even allowed by its commander to take an intelligence staff officer with them. It is true that there was an intelligence officer with the transport battalion, but he was located in Simin Han with the Alpha Company, not in Srebrenica. In September 1994, no official intelligence officer was present in Simin Han either; only later was a soldier assigned to this specific work. At the Netherlands Support Command in Lukavac there was likewise no officer with the function of gathering intelligence.<sup>493</sup> However, one officer there was given responsibility for Military Security.

The debriefing reports of this Military Security section in Lukavac showed that in the period July-November 1994 there was no good collaboration with Dutchbat ('useless' was the pronouncement made by the section itself). There were numerous problems. The information on the order of battle of the warring factions and other intelligence went in the first instance to Dutchbat in Srebrenica, who were supposed to provide feedback to Support Command in Lukavac. The officer responsible for Military Security did report to Dutchbat in Srebrenica, but discovered that his reports were not being incorporated in Dutchbat's daily Situation Reports (Sitreps) further along the UN line. Instead of the information received, the Dutchbat Sitreps simply stated 'Nothing To Report'. The reports were apparently of no interest to Dutchbat. At a certain point, Commander P. Everts of Dutchbat II even wanted to abolish this post in Lukavac, but The Hague nipped this plan in the bud. The last straw for the officer in Lukavac was when he phoned the compound in Potocari and a soldier in the Operationsroom (the command post) asked him who he was. Subsequently, this military security man started up his own network.

In contrast, Lukavac's collaboration with the Dutch company in Sapna and with the Transport Battalion worked well. Everything the convoy commanders encountered that might be of interest from an intelligence point of view was passed on to the intelligence officer in Lukavac, who forwarded it to his opposite number in Sector North East (SNE). Incidentally, this Scandinavian officer regularly warned him that the VRS listened in on UNPROFOR's communication traffic, and for this reason advised him not to include everything in situation reports.<sup>494</sup> The warning was probably intended as a signal: not long afterwards the MIS/Army discovered that a Scandinavian intelligence service was monitoring the traffic between various units of the Dutch Signals battalion in Bosnia. Two Dutch soldiers were overheard making extremely denigrating remarks about their commander.<sup>495</sup>

## 5. Intelligence gathering in the enclave under Dutchbats I, II, III

In Dutchbat I, intelligence was gathered by the team for civil-military relations (in military terms: the S-5) under the leadership of Major A. Derksen. This team arranged the liaison with the ABiH and VRS, compiled a great deal of information, and made a 'mugshot album'. The team had no example to follow in terms of how it was supposed to operate and interpreted its task in its own commando-like way.

491 MoD, *Archive CSKL*, No. 379, Brantz to BLS, No. CRST/374, 06/06/94.

492 MoD, *Archive CSKL*, No. 380, the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff 'Morning Briefing', No. CRST/497, 22/06/94.

493 MoD, *Archive CSKL*, Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff 'Morning Briefing', No. 378, G-2 Cap. Hagenaars to HINL, No. CBST/941, 15/09/94.

494 MoD, *Archive 101 MIS/Cie*, Van Jawad to Hakort, Debriefing report 101 MIS/Cie, 23/12/95.

495 Interview with H. Bosch, 10/10/01.

They made civil and military risk analyses. Risk analysis was carried out in a strictly military fashion: Derksen was a Major in the commandos with his own platoon, and acted accordingly.

This team also established the basic structures for consultations with the NGOs, UnCivPol and UNMOs. They operated 'with a blue cap on, using green methods'. Dutchbat II also boasted a good liaison team. Contacts were initiated, developed and maintained. The objectives were as follows: escorting convoys, monitoring relief goods, fighting corruption, and maintaining contact with the population. This team also functioned well and was given a pivotal role in the battalion. Collaboration with the battalion commander was also good.<sup>496</sup>

The problems in this regard started with Dutchbat III. According to various MIS staff, the fact that Dutchbat III provided little tactical military intelligence was a problem. As they saw it, Karremans took the position that he was in charge of a UN unit, not a national one. The intelligence officer was considered to be one of us. There was no structural reporting;<sup>497</sup> in his period as Head of the UNMOs, General Gerard Bastiaans also turned against supplying intelligence. No intelligence was allowed to be supplied to the MIS/Army. Little or no response was made to specific or special questions from the MIS/Army.<sup>498</sup> It is strange in this regard that Karremans and Franken even refused to go into specific logistics questions. In May 1995 the logistics section (in military terms: the G-4) of the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff was even forbidden to gather logistics data.<sup>499</sup>

Dutchbat III did have its own intelligence officer, Captain E. Wieffer, but he reported exclusively to the Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, and not directly to the MIS/Army. This explains why Karremans' alarming letter (of 5 June) to the Army Crisis Staff did not become known to the MIS/Army until much later.<sup>500</sup> Wieffer sent daily Situation Reports to Sector North East (SNE) and Military Information Summaries to the Army Crisis Staff. He was only able to make extremely limited use of the experience of Dutchbat I and II during the additional training period in preparation for the deployment of Dutchbat III. Wieffer concluded that the Army was no good at passing on experiences. As he saw it, the Army carried out debriefings, identified problems and discussed opportunities for improvement, but often failed to carry things through. As a consequence, when evaluating a deployment, the same defects were observed as in the previous deployment, but no solutions were generated with a view to helping the following deployment.<sup>501</sup>

Dutchbat III therefore took its own initiatives. Dutchbat II soldiers on leave were invited to Assen for a day to inform their successors of the activities and working conditions. The initiative for this was taken by the battalion staff and from one company. In this respect, there was a significant difference with Dutchbat I, which had been unable to fall back on a predecessor. Dutchbat I was ordered to optimise the intelligence gathering process on the situation in and around the enclave. With regard to the military aspect, all the objectives and intentions of the warring factions at all levels had to be identified. In terms of the humanitarian situation, the borders of the areas containing ethnic minorities, refugees and the homeless had to be defined, with a view to supervising and protecting the occupants. Dutchbat I was also ordered to seek out accurate information on local needs with respect to food, heating, shelter and medical assistance. This had to be passed on to UNHCR and BHC.<sup>502</sup>

An important part of the transfer of knowledge was formed by analysis of the situation in and around Srebrenica drawn up by Dutchbat I, and developed further by Dutchbat II. This document was also used in the training.<sup>503</sup> This meant that Dutchbat III did have good basic information at its

496 MoD, *Archive 101 MIS/Cie*, Van Jawad to Hakort, Debriefing report 101 MIS/Cie, 23/12/95.

497 MoD, *Archive SMG, 1004*, report of a discussion with Col. Bokhoven, 20/07/95.

498 Confidential interviews (28) and (37).

499 MoD, *SMG, DocID 18428, File 530, Box 1004*, Interview with E. Otterloo on the logistics aspects of Dutchbat, 31/07/95.

500 See for this letter: Chapter 8 of this study. In June, the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff came to the following conclusion: "Karremans is reaching the end of his tether". This conclusion was drawn on the basis of his correspondence. Confidential interview (23).

501 Interview with E. Wieffer, 07/05/01.

502 MoD, *Archive MIS/Army 1994*, Memorandum S2 BVT from Lmbl, May 1994.

503 MoD, *Archive MIS/Army 1994*, File 1589, Zylab 13837 milinfo Srebrenica, October 1994.

disposal. Their intelligence officer, Wieffer, had two daily Situation Reports as input: one from SNE and one from BHC. On the basis of these, the intelligence officer held a briefing for the battalion staff and the commanders every day. Within a company, the commanders kept their staff and ranks informed via a weekly briefing on developments in Srebrenica.<sup>504</sup>

The flow of information that Wieffer received from below once he was in Srebrenica came from patrols and OPs. They were reported on paper, via communications equipment, or both. This data was then translated into a flow of information that was sent to the higher echelon. In his case, this was SNE in Tuzla. The problem with this flow of information was that on a number of occasions Wieffer found that when he wanted to have more information on a specific subject, this information was not forthcoming. Dutchbat knew, for example, that a reconnaissance flight had been carried out by NATO, because they saw the aircraft overhead. They then issued an 'overflight report'. However, Imint from reconnaissance flights was not handed over to Dutchbat by UNPROFOR or NATO.

### *What were Dutchbat's intelligence needs?*

The question then is what sort of information did Dutchbat want. There was a need for intelligence on overall developments in Bosnia in order to build up an accurate picture. If the fighting flared up elsewhere in Bosnia, this could have consequences for an intensification of the activities of the warring factions themselves. Of more direct interest was knowledge of the events in the immediate surroundings of the enclave, for example, within a radius of 5 to 10 kilometres.<sup>505</sup> Sector North East (SNE) and Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) did not supply this information, and the sporadic reconnaissance platoon patrols outside the enclave during Dutchbat I and II could only provide fragments of the information requirement. The UNMOs were also barely able to fill this gap. Their freedom of movement was limited and they had no access to Bosnian-Serb areas.<sup>506</sup> Dutchbat patrols sometimes supplied information on activities around the demarcation line, but it was not possible for them to patrol in secret. The departure of a patrol was often reported to the ABiH or VRS commanders by informants at the compound gate or in the vicinity of the OPs, so that measures could be taken to conceal military activities and weapons from the patrol.

### *Did Dutchbat receive no intelligence at all, then?*

All of the problems listed above could lead to the conclusion that Dutchbat was completely intelligence-blind, but that was most certainly not the case. As a result of its frequent contacts with the warring factions and with the refugees in the enclave, Dutchbat I had a large amount of information at its disposal, which was also analysed. The battalion commander usually added a Commander's Assessment to the Sitreps, in which he gave an evaluation of developments in the enclave, their possible relationship with external events and a short-term outlook. This happened to a lesser extent with Dutchbat II, partly due to the deteriorating relationship with the ABiH. Under Dutchbat III, this trend continued.<sup>507</sup> An important source of intelligence disappeared because of the sharp decline in contact with the ABiH and VRS.

All in all, the intelligence picture remained limited for Dutchbat III. Information on military developments in the area around the enclave was barely available, which fostered the feeling of isolation that visitors sometimes also noticed. General Smith spoke of a 'siege mentality' on the part of Dutchbat III, an assessment shared by the Operations Officer at SNE, the British Lieutenant Colonel Le Hardy.<sup>508</sup>

<sup>504</sup> Interview with E. Wieffer, 07/05/01.

<sup>505</sup> Interview with E. Wieffer, 18/06/99.

<sup>506</sup> Interview with E. Wieffer, 18/06/99.

<sup>507</sup> *Dutchbat in vredesnaam*, pp. 108 and 156.

<sup>508</sup> Interview with R. Smith, 12/01/00 and C.A. Le Hardy, 08/10/97.

In other words, the flow of information from the higher echelons to Dutchbat III in Srebrenica was zero. For instance, Wieffer tried regularly for six months and three weeks to reach the Ukrainian battalion in Zepa by telephone. He had reams of different telephone numbers, yet he never managed to reach a single Ukrainian on the line. This meant that he remained in the dark as to what exactly was happening in Zepa, even though it was only 8 kilometres to the south as the crow flies. The flow of information from another UN unit, stationed right alongside Dutchbat III, was therefore non-existent.

The only thing left for Wieffer to do was to analyse the daily Situation Reports from BHC, extract some general information from them and use it in briefings within the battalion. Wieffer was an intelligence officer, but, certainly in the final months, he worked 18 to 20 hours a day in the Operations room (the command post) because of the shortage of staff. He had only been on six patrols and had therefore been outside the compound six times. Therefore, according to Wieffer, a complaint in a debriefing statement to the effect that the intelligence section personnel had little freedom of movement was correct.<sup>509</sup> The importance of good contact with the local population from the point of view of intelligence gathering was also lost on Dutchbat III. Dutchbat I had frequent contact with the population but Dutchbat II adopted a more detached attitude. Dutchbat III copied this attitude and became even more detached. This was also caused by the fact that, for security reasons, Karremans banned contact between the locals and Dutchbat soldiers. This ban was not generally observed; at some OPs there was an element of regular contact with the local population.<sup>510</sup>

Intelligence gathering via Humint was severely restricted in this way. In addition, no structure was set up for intelligence gathering. The Military Security man, Sergeant Major E.A. Rave, occupied himself in Dutchbat III mainly with counterintelligence and security, and not so much with the gathering of military intelligence. That was supposed to be Wieffer's task, but he did not get the chance to carry it out.<sup>511</sup> The lack of diesel diminished contact even more. Reducing the number of patrols saved fuel, but it also meant even less contact with the local population and the ABiH, so that the supply of intelligence diminished. Because Dutchbat also operated no night-time patrols and the static OPs were fully illuminated at night, so that they were visible from a distance, 'our intelligence story was of course not really kosher. It just doesn't work like that. You have to be active at night, because that's when it's all happening in the enclave. Your OPs also have to have maximum observation. This means you have to switch the light off. But what can you do? Those were the rules and so that's what we did'.<sup>512</sup> Neither did Wieffer receive any additional intelligence from the British JCO unit in the enclave.

### *Intelligence from the JCOs?*

Since the end of 1994 there had been a JCO team in the enclave.<sup>513</sup> On 18 March 1995, a two-man JCO team arrived in Srebrenica. They relieved a team of four JCOs consisting of two British marines, another British soldier and a Swedish soldier. General Rose had sent the JCOs<sup>514</sup> to Srebrenica because he was receiving no intelligence whatsoever from the enclave. He wanted to have his 'own ears and eyes' in the eastern enclaves. According to a British UNPROFOR officer, there was a closed circle of Dutch officers who gave little away and also shared little information with UNPROFOR commander Rose (later Smith).<sup>515</sup>

On 17 May, a third British soldier joined this new team. The patrol was detached to the commandos in Potocari. The JCOs were mainly involved in the regular reconnaissance patrols. Shortly after his arrival in the enclave, the JCO commander had a meeting with Karremans and offered him

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<sup>509</sup> Interview with E. Wieffer, 18/06/99.

<sup>510</sup> See Chapter 8 of Part II of the Srebrenica report.

<sup>511</sup> Interviews with E.A. Rave, 13/12/00 and 14/12/00.

<sup>512</sup> Interview with E. Wieffer, 18/06/99.

<sup>513</sup> Interview with C.A. Le Hardy, 08/10/97.

<sup>514</sup> The JCOs in Srebrenica were British SAS soldiers.

<sup>515</sup> Confidential interview (43).

immediate support such as the use of secure satellite communication equipment. Karremans was not very forthcoming and insisted that the JCOs only cooperate with the commandos and not with the rest of the battalion. Karremans banned them from operating independently outside the enclave borders, a decision that did nothing to improve Dutchbat's intelligence picture. They were bound to the enclave for their operational action. Karremans stated that the JCOs would be forced to leave the enclave if his order was ignored.<sup>516</sup>

The JCOs encouraged the commandos to explore 'hot spots' and to talk with the warring factions, which until then they had not done for fear of compromising their neutrality. Patrolling was important because it 'allows the commander to gain an intelligence advantage over the parties to the dispute at the tactical level'.<sup>517</sup> Shortly after their arrival in the enclave, the JCOs soon met representatives of the ABiH. Subsequent meetings were forbidden by Karremans. He had also prevented the JCOs from attending the regular meetings between Dutchbat liaison officers and the warring factions. It has to be concluded that Karremans mainly considered the JCOs to be Forward Air Controllers (in which position they were also used) and not so much as handy instruments for gathering intelligence. According to a British UNPROFOR officer, the JCOs were not adequately used, partly because it was an option Karremans was not inclined to consider: he refused to grant the commander of the JCOs permission to operate outside the enclave.<sup>518</sup> Furthermore, there were a number of differences of opinion between the JCOs and Karremans, and the latter restricted the scope of their operational action considerably.<sup>519</sup>

Wieffer asserted that information was sometimes exchanged with the JCOs, but in spite of this he always had the feeling that the JCOs, notwithstanding the fact that they were physically based with Dutchbat in the enclave, were purely an intelligence organ for the British UNPROFOR commander. The JCOs were more likely to use Dutchbat as a source of information than the other way round. According to Wieffer, the JCOs sometimes set off separately, but not often. On these occasions they nipped across the enclave border to take a look somewhere, Wieffer heard later. But the JCOs did not leave the enclave often; they did not have the means to do so. Furthermore, there were mines here and there outside the enclave. Apart from these incidental forays, the JCOs only left the enclave together with the Dutchbat patrols.<sup>520</sup>

General Cees Nicolai (Chief of Staff BHC in Sarajevo) confirmed that the JCOs sometimes went outside the enclave. Smith did not keep it secret from him, although he did not state in detail where they had been or what order he had given them. It could be deduced from the nature of the intelligence that he occasionally received.<sup>521</sup> A British intelligence officer with access to the JCO reports confirmed that the JCOs occasionally operated outside the enclave.<sup>522</sup> The JCOs reported directly to BHC, as 'spies' of Rose and later Smith, and had access to the Dutchbat III reports. Wieffer assumed that there were no substantial differences between the two flows of reports.<sup>523</sup> In other words, Dutchbat III was 'poor' with respect to intelligence so that the situation differed little from that of Dutchbats I and II.

### *What did the other units do?*

Other UNPROFOR units had set up a better intelligence structure. For instance, Canbat II, the Canadian battalion stationed in the enclave before Dutchbat I, had a Military Information Cell with

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516 Interview with A.A.L. Caris, 03/03/00 and confidential information (13).

517 Pasi Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 79.

518 Confidential interview (43).

519 Confidential interview (49).

520 Interview with E. Wieffer, 18/06/99 and confidential information (1).

521 Interview with C.H. Nicolai, 11/06/99.

522 Confidential interview (8).

523 Interview with E. Wieffer, 07/05/01.



three tasks: looking for indications and warnings, following the tactical and strategic developments, and drawing up threat analyses. The greatest problem encountered by this military information cell was the lack of Order of Battle information and tactical information regarding the warring factions in the region. An additional problem was the limited opportunity for reconnaissance. With respect to their information sources, Humint proved to be the best (and almost exclusive) source of intelligence. Contacts with representatives of the warring factions, the population, their own liaison officers and a network of local informants delivered the best information, alongside humanitarian organizations and NGOs. In order to gather additional intelligence, Canbat (in Visoko) had a series of OPs on both sides of the confrontation line.<sup>524</sup>

The Scandinavian soldiers also engaged in intelligence gathering. Five people worked in the intelligence sector at the Nordic battalion (Nordbat) in Tuzla. Their performance is said to have been extremely professional. Moreover, the British also devoted much attention to intelligence work. They had six two-man teams that worked for the British sector commander of Sector South West. The Support Command intelligence officer stationed in Lukavac from July to November 1994, could therefore reach no other conclusion than that the Dutch operations, compared with those of other European countries, were relatively unprofessional and totally uncoordinated.<sup>525</sup>

To summarize the information position of the MIS and that of Dutchbat, it can be stated that the MIS/Army and the MIS/CO had no unique military-tactical intelligence as a result of a lack of their own sources and own intelligence gathering facilities. This position was not improved by the fact that Dutchbat hardly generated any intelligence. Sometimes Dutchbat intelligence got 'stuck' at the Netherlands Army Crisis Staff and did not even reach the MIS/Army. MIS/Army analysts had to 'make do' with intelligence from the UN line, from partners and from open sources.

Bringing about an improvement in this position through Sigint was not an option for the Netherlands because of a lack of language capacity, and technical and personnel problems. In this area, the MIS/Army was still completely caught up in Cold War thinking. It is also striking that, because of the uncooperative attitude of senior MIS/Army officials and senior Royal Netherlands Army officers, Dutchbat was not allowed to engage in improving its own information position.

It emerged from many interviews that there was a dominant attitude that UNPROFOR did not and ought not to gather intelligence. Given such a situation, it might be expected that, although the MIS/CO and MIS/Army each served a different master (Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army respectively), they would join forces in order to improve their own information position, but nothing was further from the truth.

## 6. The collaboration between MIS/CO and MIS/Army

The MIS/CO was quick to observe that, when it came to intelligence work, the Intelligence and Security Departments of the three Armed Forces remained hierarchically subordinate to their own Commanders-in-Chief. On the shop floor there was a healthy relationship between the staff of the MIS/CO and the staff of the MIS/Army and the MIS/Air Force, but it faltered at the higher levels. What collaboration there was (to put it mildly) was not very good. Senior officials of the MISs at the branches of the Armed Forces obstructed collaboration, and this was particularly true of the MIS/Army leadership. There was a predominantly parochial attitude among senior officials of the three MISs. As a result the MIS/CO always lagged behind the MIS/Army, where intelligence regularly 'stranded'. This sometimes led to totally different analyses of the same subject. The various opinions to be found in the MIS/Army camp can be broken down into three categories.<sup>526</sup>

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524 Captain Daniel Villeneuve, 'Intelligence and the UN: Lessons From Bosnia - A Canadian Experience', in: *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, No. 4 (October-December 1996). This publication can be found at: [www.fas.org/irp/agency/army](http://www.fas.org/irp/agency/army).

525 MoD. *Archive 101 MIS/Cie*, Van Jawad to Hakort, Debriefing report 101 MIS/Cie, 23/12/95.

526 Confidential interview (26).

A few MIS/Army workers admitted that there were great differences between the MIS/CO and parts of the MIS/Army. Sections of the MIS/Army leadership were actually in favour of more collaboration, but that was not true of everyone by a long way. Others continued to attend to the interests of the Army's Commander-in-Chief, and not the interest of a single MIS, as the law required. An example of the parochialism that prevailed: the European Bureau had no access of its own to LOCE, the system for intelligence liaison between the NATO countries. This was not permitted by the MIS/Army leadership. However, European Bureau staff were not allowed access to the MIS/CO via the LOCE system to check their own intelligence. There were constant competence disputes. The mutual divisions between the MISs meant that raw intelligence sometimes 'stranded'. These sources denied that this was also the case with Srebrenica. But in general there was a fierce level of competition between the individual MISs, with the MIS/CO, and even within the MIS/Army. For instance, the MIS/Air Force was not happy if the MIS/Army discussed helicopters in an analysis. The MIS/Air Force and the MIS/Navy also distanced themselves from each other.<sup>527</sup>

Other staff and former staff at the MIS/Army admitted frankly that in this period they attended first and foremost to the interests of their Commander-in-Chief, but at the same time they painted a milder picture of the poor relationships outlined above. While accepting that there were sometimes professional differences of opinion with the MIS/CO, these sources described the collaboration as otherwise going well. It was confirmed that raw intelligence was not always passed on and that the MIS/Army functioned as a filter, but, according to these MIS/Army employees, information never stranded if the impression existed that the MIS/CO did not have it. Partner information was always passed on.<sup>528</sup>

A third group challenged the idea that the collaboration around 1995 was not as good as it could have been. According to them, absolutely no intelligence was held back by MIS/Army; it was even the case that more had been reported than was strictly necessary.<sup>529</sup> Officers from this last group were prepared to admit that Bureau A-1 (including the Situation Centre) was in a better information position, because there was more material available to the MIS/Army than the MIS/CO. However, according to them, intelligence was definitely made available in the form of analysis: the MIS/Army never 'sat' on it. The MIS/CO's lone analyst did not entirely agree with this: because the raw intelligence was not supplied, the MIS/CO analyst could not form his own balanced view, and he was forced to trust blindly in the MIS/Army analyses. This made the MIS/CO (and in particular their one Balkans analyst) dependent on what the MIS/Army supplied.

### *Relationships at the top*

Collaboration at the very highest level between the heads of the MIS/CO and the three MISs of the individual branches of the Armed Forces did not proceed as well as it might have. The management meeting was held every two weeks. This was where the MIS/CO met the other MISs. The management meeting was actually a constant competence battle.<sup>530</sup> Those involved stated that it boiled down to the fact that the MIS/CO served a different interest: that of the Minister. The MIS/Army looked to its Commander-in-Chief, rather than the Minister.<sup>531</sup> This was not all that strange, because the heads of the MISs had to return to their respective Armed Forces units. According to one person involved 'you didn't even entertain the idea' of going against your own Commander-in-Chief because it could damage your career. The absolute priority within the MIS/Army was to inform the Army to the best of your ability. Only once this duty had been fulfilled did the Minister become part of the equation.<sup>532</sup>

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<sup>527</sup> Confidential interviews (21), (31) and (37).

<sup>528</sup> Confidential interview (23).

<sup>529</sup> Confidential interviews (22), (23), (24) and (28) and (36).

<sup>530</sup> Confidential interview (24).

<sup>531</sup> Confidential interview (36).

<sup>532</sup> Confidential interviews (27), (28), (35), (36) and (37).

In reality the MIS/Army functioned as an intelligence organization for the Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Tactical intelligence was gathered, geared towards the deployment of units. The MIS/Army constantly assessed the intelligence to see whether it was relevant for passing on to the MIS/CO. The CDS rather fell outside MIS lines: he may have been an adviser to the Minister, but so was each individual Commander-in-Chief and they saw themselves as occupying an independent position relative to the Minister. Every Commander-in-Chief wanted an autonomous and independent intelligence position, and felt no actual need for integration.<sup>533</sup>

Defence Minister Voorhoeve answered the question of whether he was aware of the conflicts and differences between the MIS/CO and the MIS/Army as follows: 'No. I did not know, and so it was covered up'. Voorhoeve went on to provide an explanation for this phenomenon: 'this is a normal response within an organization, I would say, because people never want to reveal to the upper echelons that differences of opinion exist. Generally speaking the information you are given is boringly uniform. People report what they have been able to agree on and leave out what they could not agree on.'<sup>534</sup>

Ultimately, a last-ditch attempt was made to improve the collaboration between the MIS/CO and the three MISs. This happened in early 1995 in the form of the Yugoslavia project organization.<sup>535</sup> The Deputy Head of MIS/Army functioned as chairman; the coordinator was the Head of the MIS/Army's Production Section, and the MIS/Army, MIS/Navy, MIS/Air Force and MIS/CO could each supply a representative. The aim of this was to ensure the compilation or formulation of the complete intelligence and/or counterintelligence requirements for the area of the former Yugoslavia; the gathering and, where necessary, sharing of all relevant information with respect to the area; dissemination of overviews with key questions and/or ad hoc questions; the periodic distribution of a list of the existing forms of reporting, and coordination of efforts related to the recruitment or liaison process.<sup>536</sup>

The purpose of this project team's meetings was to improve the structure of the intelligence on Yugoslavia and to prevent duplication.<sup>537</sup> This remained an aspiration, however, partly because of the attitude of various department heads. An example of this is the meeting of 30 June 1995, at which, according to the agenda and the minutes, the state of affairs in Srebrenica was not covered. The minutes did state that it had been agreed to carry out a survey within the Ministry of Defence into the Serbo-Croat capacity there. The next meeting would not take place until 4 August.<sup>538</sup>

Ultimately, in spite of the limited resources and all the mutual differences and conflicts, impressive quantities of reports were delivered by the MIS/CO and MIS/Army analysts; the contact on the shop floor was, as already mentioned, good. These reports mainly took the form of Intelligence Summaries, which could be divided into the categories daily and weekly. The daily messages attempted to provide an insight into the current developments and also presented forecasts. The weekly edition presented an outline of the events of the past week and the outlook for the coming week. Monthly summaries, annual summaries and Intelligence Reports (Intreps) were also produced, including the incidental sup(plementary) intreps.<sup>539</sup>

In addition, the MIS analysts produced threat analyses (assessments), order of battle basic documents, country studies, studies on tactics and the operations of the warring factions.<sup>540</sup> For instance, a comprehensive threat analysis of the situation in Mostar and a counterintelligence

533 Confidential interview (27).

534 Interview with J. Voorhoeve, 01/10/01.

535 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Letter Bokhoven to Management meeting, Desirability and possibility of instituting a project organization for Intelligence on the former Yugoslavia, No. 27265, 12/01/95.

536 MoD, *Archive MIS/Air Force*, CAS 49, Dutchbat reports, Draft decision on instituting a project organization for the former Yugoslavia, approx. March 1995.

537 Confidential interview (28).

538 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, DIS/9512134/1709, Minutes of meeting and agendas, No. 32764/140795, 14/07/95.

539 See for example: MoD, *Archive MIS/Army Management Operations*, Supintrep Zepa and Srebrenica, No. 28401/4/080394, 15/03/94 and Intrep Srebrenica No. 32729/4/060795, 10/07/95.

540 MoD, *Archive MIS/Army, Operations Directorate*, Memorandum on Intelligence products for Dutch deployment in the former Yugoslavia, No. 22279/1/061093, 04/10/93.

assessment of the local security situation was drawn up in July 1994 for the CDS and the senior Ministry of Defence officials. This was in support of the Dutch presidency of the WEU.<sup>541</sup> Information files on Yugoslavia were also drafted to provide general information on the conflict. These documents were destined for observers who were dispatched by the UN or within the framework of the ECMM, and for staff officers of the Dutch units, of BHC and UNPROFOR staff.<sup>542</sup>

The question of the extent to which the MIS/CO or MIS/Army were in a position to provide a timely and accurate prediction of the attack on Srebrenica, or received relevant timely warnings, will be covered comprehensively in Chapter 8, 'Was Srebrenica an intelligence failure?'

## 7. The output of the MIS/Air Force

Another important producer of intelligence was the MIS/Air Force's Intelligence Department. After all, the involvement of the Royal Netherlands Air Force in the war, within the framework of the Deny Flight operation, meant that the MIS/Air Force took an active part. Every day, the Air Force Operation Centre published the Deny Flight Intelligence Summary (DFIS). One of the analysts at the MIS/Air Force had considerable experience of the war in Bosnia. In 1993, he was present in Italy as an intelligence officer in Villafranca. There he discovered that there were many 'holes' in the intelligence on Yugoslavia. For instance, AFSOUTH, the southern NATO command, maintained that a certain anti-aircraft missile installation (a SAM site) was operational in Serbia, while AFCENT (the NATO command in Central Europe) asserted that it was not operational.

This sort of intelligence was 'nice' for the pilots, because it raised the question of what was actually right. Analysts were of the opinion that the DFIS could be better. The intelligence provision to the unit in Italy was not deemed to be optimal. In this respect, the MIS/Air Force did engage in force protection, in contrast to the MIS/Army. It was for this reason that the MIS/Air Force Balkans analysts started to give more intelligence to Villafranca, the Commander-in-Chief of the Netherlands Air Force and the Air Force Board. The DFIS filled approximately 4 pages each day and always started with a political section, followed by a military section, and ended by detailing the violations of the flight ban. The DFIS was issued every evening at 18.00 hours, and always went to SHAPE, the NATO organization in Mons. The analysts worked about 60 hours a week and taking leave was out of the question.<sup>543</sup>

The Balkans section of the MIS/Air Force received intelligence support from Villafranca, where an MIS/Air Force analyst operated. He had a direct line to The Hague. At Villafranca he received American Imint, but it could never be established whether this came from a U-2 or a satellite. In addition, the photos were, according to a Dutch intelligence official, made a little 'fuzzier' to hide the actual resolution. The latter remark is probably incorrect. The photos were U-2 imagery, and were very often better than available satellite imagery due to high resolution from the film-based technology, as well as the much lower altitude. According to a senior US intelligence analyst 'no one had time to "fuzzy" pictures for specific consumers'. The U2 imagery was, according to this official, ideal for dissemination to other agencies, for it was completely releasable, coverage was so broad and revisit times in most areas were nearly weekly; sometimes twice weekly.<sup>544</sup>

The MIS/Air Force analyst supplied as much material as possible for the Deny Flight Intelligence Summary. Among the resources at his disposal was the NATO Linked Operational Intelligence Center Europe (LOCE) system. He also received the reports of the UNMOs and the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) in Vicenza but also a daily NATO releasable air intelligence summary from the purely US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth, disseminated via LOCE for

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<sup>541</sup> MoD, *Archive CDS*, Head of Intelligence Department to CDS, No. DIS/94/095/1620, 22/07/94.

<sup>542</sup> The following serves as an example: MoD, *Archive MIS/Army*, Infomap Yugoslavia, 26/10/94.

<sup>543</sup> Confidential interview *g* (31) and (32).

<sup>544</sup> Confidential information (80).

his benefit, and many others. It was initially released through the NATO Intelligence Center at AFSOUTH and later directly from JAC, Molesworth.

The staff in Villafranca was constantly aware of possible espionage by the Bosnian Serbs. Highly secure links were used. The staff had crypto telephones and the crypto code on LOCE was changed every day. This meant that little information leaked out. What did leak out, to Belgrade to be precise, were the daily Air Task Messages (ATMs).<sup>545</sup> They were drawn up 12 hours in advance and they described the mission and the targets. Too many people within NATO knew of this. At the same time, the VRS is said to have had a good source in NATO circles.<sup>546</sup> These efforts were not always appreciated by senior MIS/Air Force officials. In spite of the enormous pressure of work, the Balkans unit received no additional personnel, for example, but were sometimes reproached for their analyses. However, analysts admitted that this never led to a direct intervention by the heads of the MIS/Air Force, nor to a demand that the text be amended.

At shop floor level, the relationship between the MIS/Air Force and the MISs at the other two branches of the Armed Forces was excellent, but personnel were reminded from above that distance should be maintained. This led to bizarre situations, such as an MIS/Army analyst furtively delivering an envelope containing raw intelligence to the home of an MIS/Air Force analyst under cover of darkness, and depositing it in the letterbox. According to MIS/Air Force personnel, senior officials at the other two MISs blocked more intensive collaboration, which was actually a bitter necessity. The fact was that in principle all of the MISs had largely the same intelligence on the table, but what really mattered was the analysis. This could vary somewhat, because each MIS looked at the data through different eyes. The attack on the Krajina was given as an example. MIS/Air Force and MIS/Navy determined: *'es geht los'*. The MIS/Army was of the opinion that nothing was going to happen. This was the position taken by their analyst at the daily briefing at the Defence Crisis Management Centre. Unfortunately for him, Operation Storm started the following day, in which the Croats attacked the Bosnian Serbs in the Krajina.<sup>547</sup>

Intelligence support for the air operations was deemed to be of eminent importance to the Netherlands Air Force detachment in Villafranca. The demands on this were that the information issued had to be of the highest possible quality, up-to-date and tailored to suit requirements. The intelligence section in Villafranca made use of NATO reports generated, for example, by the intelligence cell of the Fifth Allied Air Force in Vicenza and the US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth.

Secondly, consistent use was made of the messages from the Deny Flight Intelligence Summaries, compiled by the MIS/Air Force in The Hague. According to the detachment commander in Villafranca, Lieutenant Colonel J. Eikelboom the Deny Flight Intelligence Summary was of excellent quality. He spotted a problem with the intelligence generated by Vicenza and the Joint Analysis Center. They were completely dependent for their information on the American, British, German and French services, and what they were willing to release in the way of intelligence.

In the case of Deny Flight especially, political interests played a significant role. The idea existed that various intelligence services were only releasing those items that suited the political interests of their government. It often turned out to be the case that the intelligence passed on by them was incomplete or even incorrect. This was regularly demonstrated to the compilers of the DFIS. Through a better use of other sources, the Deny Flight Intelligence staff later arrived at a much better and realistic assessment, which resulted in an indispensable product. When the decision was taken to distribute the DFIS weekly instead of daily with effect from 15 September 1995 due to personnel problems, Eikelboom protested. This was because the intelligence from the Combined Air Operations Centre and JAC, Molesworth was of inferior quality.<sup>548</sup>

545 Confidential interview (32). The same probably happened during the Kosovo Crisis: Jon Henley, 'Former major denies treason', in *The Guardian*, 12/12/01.

546 Interview with Milovan Milutinovic, 20-22/03/00.

547 Confidential interview (31). For Operation Storm: Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, pp. 177 - 194.

548 MoD, *Archive DOPKlu*, J. Eikelboom to Operations Directorate Klu D. Berlin, No. VF/95/3066, 23/09/95 and attached memo from HAVI, 04/10/95.

An US intelligence official rejected vehemently the idea that intelligence was doctored for political reasons. According to this source, it may well be that the information was sometimes incomplete or incorrect, and for that one must make accounts for human error. But to attribute the errors to some vast political conspiracy is 'absurd'. The same official also remarked somewhat offended that the intelligence staff of the US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) at Molesworth would have welcomed any constructive criticism from a Dutch analytical cell. The staff did frequently get analytical assistance from other nationalities, which led to better, more useful products for all involved. To the best of his knowledge, any improvements made by any Dutch analysts were kept to themselves. And if it was no good according to this Dutch source, the US official asked, what did they do about it? Where did they go to get what they needed? Did they explore bilateral avenues? Did they advise higher authority of the shortfall? Did they do anything about it, or did 'they go back to their cup of coffee, and show up sour grapes after the fact?'<sup>549</sup>

But Dutch intelligence officials persisted that thanks to thorough analysis, the Balkans Section of the MIS/Air Force discovered matters that had escaped the notice of others. For instance, the analysts determined that in early 1995, French Mirage aircraft had flown a secret mission from France and bombed Pale. UNPROFOR was not informed of this.<sup>550</sup>

## 8. Support for the MIS from UNPROFOR

At the MIS/CO, MIS/Army and MIS/Air Force it was completely clear that nothing could be expected of the UN in the area of intelligence gathering. This had already been made clear to the Dutch in the peacekeeping operation in Cambodia in 1992-1993. Even simple aerial photographs were frowned upon by the UN. It was established that the Dutch battalion had too few intelligence officers to gather information systematically itself.

At the time, the battalion commander in Cambodia had already established that he might have been able to obtain more knowledge from Sigint, but that Humint was what was really needed in a peacekeeping operation: 'If you have dealings with four factions who are unreliable or are unable to describe the situation in the field, then you have to have an intelligence service of your own'.<sup>551</sup> The Netherlands Ministry of Defence apparently drew no conclusions from this. In mid 1995, it was again observed in a Defence Intelligence Requirements memorandum that the lack of adequate security guarantees meant that the countries participating in UN operations were extremely reluctant to issue intelligence to the UN or the nations participating in UN operations.<sup>552</sup> Couzy was often described as having little or no interest in intelligence on this aspect. He never asked for special intelligence briefings. The assessment of the then head of his private office was that 'Couzy easily distances himself from matters he thinks others ought to take care of'. He stated that Couzy attached great importance to military security, but that he did not associate this with an additional intelligence effort.<sup>553</sup>

Nonetheless, Couzy too knew that the UN had no intelligence service of its own, because 'they were not there to fight. They were there for a humanitarian operation, for which you do not need an intelligence service'. The question is whether such an assessment is correct. According to many, good intelligence is also absolutely necessary for the satisfactory execution of humanitarian operations. It is essential to gather intelligence on such important issues as the manning of roadblocks, the condition of roads, the attitude of the warring parties, the situation on the ground, whether the local mafia is playing a role in the distribution of aid, the involvement of paramilitary units, and the extent to which a ceasefire is being upheld. In a nutshell, intelligence is of great importance to peacekeeping operations

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<sup>549</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>550</sup> Confidential interview (31).

<sup>551</sup> Bais, *Het mijneveld van een vredesmacht*, pp. 83 - 85.

<sup>552</sup> MoD, *Archive MIS/Air Force*, CASS No. 49, File Reports DB, Letter + Appendix I, No. DIS/95/24.1/1486, 22/06/95.

<sup>553</sup> Interview with H. Bosch, 10/10/01. For example, there was also no exchange of information between Couzy and the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff. Couzy never asked to be briefed. Interview with M.C.J. Felix, 06/04/00.

too. This had already been established by Dutch officers who had taken part in the UNTAC peacekeeping operation in Cambodia in 1992-1993. 'Even disregarding the fact that it is hardly possible to verify agreements without intelligence work, it is also quite simply risky for UN soldiers not to have intelligence available. Until the last moment, UNTAC had no clear picture of the troop strength of the Khmer Rouge, nor of where Khmer Rouge units were located', one Dutch battalion commander explained.<sup>554</sup> The lack of military intelligence because of the UN's dismissive attitude was felt to be a great deficiency. This was an important lesson learned from Cambodia.

This raises the question of whether it ever made Couzy feel uncomfortable, knowing that the UN supplied no intelligence and that the Netherlands had too little intelligence. Some MIS officials stated that the Netherlands was more righteous than its masters on that point.<sup>555</sup> Couzy was matter-of-fact about it all: 'Look, the UN had no intelligence service, which was logical because they were not at war. The UN was there to perform humanitarian operations, with that strange appendage of those Safe Areas, for which you don't need an intelligence service. That was always the case. What's the point of gathering intelligence, assuming you can get it, when you can't do anything with it? The fact is you have to go to the UN: it has to do something. We didn't need intelligence to let the UN know that we had drifted into a hopeless position.' According to Couzy, it would have made no difference to the fall of Srebrenica if the knowledge that emerged by 2001 had been available at the time.<sup>556</sup>

It remains a matter for speculation, but good intelligence could have sharpened The Hague's international negotiating position and could have been a significant supplement to the level of knowledge of the political, civil service and military policymakers, who, as things were, often had to take important decisions while completely in the dark. In any case, senior officers of the Royal Netherlands Army could have learned a lesson from the Dutch exercise 'Intell-Torch 1993' in which a large number of problem areas were brought to light in the intelligence field and related points for action identified regarding crisis management operations. The items examined during this exercise included the risks of deploying army units in operations ranging from crisis management to peacekeeping in a UN context.<sup>557</sup>

Couzy's position has not changed in the intervening years. The former Commander-in-Chief is still of the opinion that there was no role for the Dutch intelligence community in Bosnia. It was, after all, a UN operation. Couzy realized well that the UN had no intelligence architecture of its own, but saw that as no reason to encourage his own MIS/Army to gather additional intelligence: 'What were we supposed to do with that information? It's no help at all'. The Commander-in-Chief also had no need for additional intelligence within the framework of Force Protection because, according to him, it was no help either and Dutchbat was trapped like rats anyway. Couzy therefore never considered having the MIS/Army put in additional effort. Couzy said such an effort was never requested, not by Ministers Ter Beek and Voorhoeve, not by the Ministerial Council and not by Parliament.

The result of all this was that Couzy gave no guidance to the MIS/Army concerning the production of intelligence. Nor did any signals reach Couzy from senior MIS/Army officials. Was the MIS/Army or MIS/CO then a serious discussion partner for the policymakers and the Defence leaders? In an interview, Couzy said this service was 'not always a serious discussion partner'.<sup>558</sup>

Furthermore, it was possible to establish that the many Dutch officers in the UNPROFOR chain of command also supplied no intelligence for national use. In 1992, The Hague did occasionally make inquiries of Dutch UNPROFOR staff officers. The poor information position of the Intelligence and Security Department of the MIS/Army at that time was also evident from a fax sent to two Dutch

554 Bais, *Het mijnenveld van een vredesmacht*, p. 83.

555 Confidential interviews (22), (24), (31) and (37).

556 Interview with H. Couzy, 04/10/01.

557 MoD, *Archive Lessons Learned, Box 55*, Lt. Letter Colonel R. Petri, No. G2/929/SIGConf, 08/04/93.

558 Interview with H. Couzy, 04/10/01.

UN observers in Sarajevo,<sup>559</sup> which stated frankly that the MIS/Army's information position was mediocre at best. There was no contact with UNPROFOR at that time.<sup>560</sup>

The Minister was said later to have issued an edict on reporting more often through the national line. Dutch representatives at UNPROFOR did not do so regularly, however. Data from a briefing for Voorhoeve in November 1994 revealed that 60 Dutch soldiers worked at UNPROFOR in Zagreb at the time and 51 at BHC in Sarajevo. The briefing covered the arguments 'for' and 'against' dispatching a third company to yet another enclave, Bihac.<sup>561</sup> The deployment of soldiers for a nation's own purposes was an established practice among other nationalities that were represented in UNPROFOR. The Dutch line, however, was that combat intelligence was important, but that other intelligence was 'dirty'.

#### *The Dutch also did not engage in intelligence for UNPROFOR*

A former head of the MIS/Army provided further confirmation of this. When he was still serving with UNPROFOR under General Cot, he occasionally reported via the national line to The Hague. This was discovered by Akashi, who immediately called him to account and warned that it must not happen again. Another factor was that everyone had a Blue Beret mentality; intelligence was not an acceptable activity at the UN.<sup>562</sup> The MIS/Army proposed supplying the representatives at UNPROFOR with their own secure crypto link with the minister and the CDS, but this idea was rejected.<sup>563</sup>

This meant that the MIS/CO and MIS/Army were already destined at the outset to lag further behind.<sup>564</sup> Neither did the MIS/Army look specifically for *intelligence* in UNPROFOR through former UNPROFOR staff. For example, after his departure from the service, the deputy head of the MIS/Army's Intelligence Department was Deputy Head of Operations in Zagreb from August 1994 to August 1995. He had no direct line or contacts with the MIS/Army and the personnel of this section never called on him.<sup>565</sup> In this way, important information sources were cut off, because the Netherlands was intent on being 'the best-behaved boy in the class'.<sup>566</sup> As said earlier, the Netherlands became therefore completely dependent on what other intelligence services are prepared to supply to them. This was not a natural fact, but the result of policy decisions hinged on funding, capability, military and political will.

## 9. Intelligence and senior Ministry of Defence officials

The next question is what the political and military leaders thought of the usefulness of the MIS, and whether a view existed in those circles on the role that an intelligence service could play. Was the MIS involved in the decision-making surrounding the deployment of Dutchbat, and was a risk analysis or advice ever requested on the deployment of Dutchbat? MIS/CO personnel assert that they were not actively and directly involved in the preparation of the deployment of Dutchbat. This was really the task of the MIS/Army. The Minister and (the office of) the Secretary-General never requested a risk analysis of the situation. From other interviews it also appears that Defence Minister Ter Beek was never provided with a thorough risk analysis.<sup>567</sup> Nonetheless, the MIS/CO independently produced a

<sup>559</sup> Paul Ruijgrok, 'Den Haag wist van niets, maar de onderofficieren moesten terug', in: *Vrij Nederland*, 30/10/93.

<sup>560</sup> Wondergem, *Je komt anders terug*, p. 114.

<sup>561</sup> MoD, *Archive DCBC*, Briefing ministers, 07/11/94.

<sup>562</sup> Interview with H. Bokhoven, 16/05/01.

<sup>563</sup> Interview with H. Bosch, 10/10/01.

<sup>564</sup> Confidential interview (24).

<sup>565</sup> Confidential interview (34).

<sup>566</sup> Confidential interviews (28) and (37).

<sup>567</sup> In answer to questions in Parliament, Ter Beek claimed that troops were always dispatched on the basis of a careful analysis of the risks. It is unclear whether the Minister had also involved the MIS in this. *Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, Session 1992-1993*, Parliamentary questions No. 462.



negative assessment: not to go to Bosnia.<sup>568</sup> Neither was there ever a request from senior Royal Netherlands Army officers or from the Commander-in-Chief for the MIS/Army to produce a threat analysis. The Commander-in-Chief at the time, General Couzy, confirmed this: 'I did not give such an order. Simply because I did not need it'.<sup>569</sup> The Intelligence Department then issued an assessment on the planned light arming, which was negative, but the recommendation was not followed.

Otherwise, the information on order of battle and arming of the warring factions was sent to the Army Staff.<sup>570</sup> Various interviews show that before the deployment, analysts also issued a negative opinion on the dispatch area;<sup>571</sup> Srebrenica was seen as a mousetrap. This recommendation was passed on to the head of the MIS/Army. Subsequently in the autumn of 1993, the MIS/Army sent a negative recommendation to the Ministry of Defence: do not deploy. This was before the final round of decision-making with regard to the deployment had taken place. These objections were said to have been raised in a verbal consultation with senior Royal Netherlands Army officers by the head of the MIS/Army. But the political decision-making was already at such an advanced stage that the objections were pushed to one side. The objections lodged against the light arming of the Dutch troops were also said to have been brushed aside.<sup>572</sup>

Netherlands Army officers had only two questions for the MIS/Army. The first concerned the extent of the risk. The answer was that the risk was limited but that something untoward could certainly happen. The second question was what could be done in Bosnia within the framework of a peacekeeping operation. Here the answer was that, from a military point of view, it would not be possible to ward off any attack, but it would be possible to 'show the flag'. Dutchbat could possibly play a stabilizing role, but not forever. Neither did any request come from senior Royal Netherlands Army officers for the MIS/Army to supply additional intelligence. The MIS/Army was not involved in the decision-making surrounding the deployment of Dutchbat and the road to Srebrenica, and it also took no part in the reconnaissance teams sent to the enclave. All that European Bureau personnel were allowed to do was to brief Dutchbats I and II, but this did not happen with the deployment of Dutchbat III.<sup>573</sup> The fact that there was no Force Protection meant at the same time a reduction in the opportunities for acquiring foreign intelligence on a *quid pro quo* basis. If the Netherlands Army had arranged for Force Protection for Dutchbat, and for a better intelligence structure, then the information position of the MIS/Army would have been improved considerably, and the liaison possibilities would have been better.

The question is how Minister Ter Beek viewed the information he received from MIS/CO. With respect to the relationship between the decision to deploy Dutchbat and whether the MIS was engaged regarding the definite location, he stated: 'No explicit role. There was no question of a specific role for the MIS in relation to the Minister or suchlike. I did receive some analyses from time to time, a few reports, which were more extensive than the daily situation reports, but they came from the Defence Staff.'

On the question of whether there was then absolutely no role for the MIS, Ter Beek answered: 'An independent, risk analysis or risk appraisal carried out by the MIS to be sent to the Minister: no. There was no independent advice; never any independent advice from the MIS. Again, there were those reports'. By which the Minister was referring to intelligence summaries? 'Yes. In extremely small print. I always had trouble keeping my attention focused on them. They weren't all that exciting. In other words, no specific role for the MIS'. How did Ter Beek rate these reports in terms of the level of information, and did documents that he received from the MIS have any specific added value? 'Then

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568 Confidential interviews (25) and (28).

569 Interview with H. Couzy (ret'd.), 04/10/01.

570 Confidential interview (22).

571 Confidential interview (36).

572 Confidential interview (37).

573 Confidential interview (30).

the answer is a flat “no”. If you just followed *The Herald Tribune*, CNN and *Le Monde* a little, you could find out quite a lot. They were often compilations of open sources. That sums it up neatly’.<sup>574</sup>

Under Ter Beek, the MIS/CO was sometimes involved in confidential briefings on the security situation in Bosnia at the request of the Parliamentary Permanent Committee for Defence. For example, such a briefing was requested on 22 February 1994, shortly before the deployment to Srebrenica. The Head of the MIS was to take account of the objectives and resources of the warring factions, the threat to the Dutch troops and the living conditions in Srebrenica and Zepa.<sup>575</sup>

The next question is whether Ter Beek’s successor, Voorhoeve, had a different view of the role that the MIS could play. According to the Minister, the task of the MIS/CO was to continue to give a current, accurate analysis of the state of affairs on the basis of what they heard, saw and especially picked up from allies. He had the impression that the Netherlands had ‘only very limited intelligence resources. Therefore we were very heavily dependent on what the larger allies told us’. His assessment was that the best intelligence on Bosnia resided with the British, the French and the Americans. The Minister therefore admitted that there were only limited opportunities to actively gather intelligence in other countries. An official from the MIS/CO once said to Voorhoeve: ‘It is really a pity that we have disbanded the foreign intelligence service’.<sup>576</sup>

The Hague therefore had only extremely limited intelligence resources. The question then is whether the ministry or the government made any additional effort in the area of intelligence, and if the MIS ever remarked that, should Dutch soldiers be sent to Bosnia, they might need more resources and manpower. Voorhoeve was unable to recall any instance when this had been raised for discussion. Neither did Parliament ever insist that additional efforts be made in the area of intelligence. This also applied to Sigint: there was no additional effort put into this. He confirmed that the conflict in the Ministry of Defence had more to do with protecting Sigint against excessive cutbacks: intelligence capacity was also expected to make a contribution to the almost one billion guilders worth of cuts. There were also Defence officials who thought that Sigint generally yielded little. There was a familiar expression: ‘We’d rather have a frigate than ...’, which could be completed with a term like ‘signals Intelligence’. ‘You then know exactly where the resistance lay’, said Voorhoeve. In brief, there were no additional enhancements in the area of intelligence; neither Parliament nor the Ministry of Defence nor the Cabinet insisted on it. Voorhoeve: ‘I think that conclusion is correct’. Otherwise, up until the fall of the enclave he had not noticed that the Dutch intelligence position was nothing special. The Minister assumed that what he received in MIS reports was mainly based on the resources of far larger foreign services, which also operated under fewer legal restrictions.

Voorhoeve stated later that he was not impressed by the information position of the MIS/CO. The analyses that he received every two weeks did not rise above the average *International Herald Tribune* level.<sup>577</sup> This was also clear from the report of a parliamentary hearing of Minister Voorhoeve. The Minister declared that for a number of reasons the possibility of gathering reliable intelligence did not exist. According to him, this was related to whether or not a country had a history as a great power. As an example, he referred to Britain, which had the possibility of dropping special forces behind enemy lines and thereby starting espionage activities. In a war situation, the Netherlands could do the same, but ‘within the framework of UNPROFOR we had no spies among the Serbs’, Voorhoeve said. ‘We therefore relied on the UN’s larger intelligence capacity. That makes you the requesting party, and then you simply have to take what you’re given. My assessment is that we did not receive any timely, adequate warnings from other intelligence services regarding what was about to happen. I say deliberately: no timely, adequate warnings. The Netherlands made maximum use of its own analysis capacity, and was therefore left with the “fog of war”’.<sup>578</sup> Voorhoeve therefore relied on the intelligence

<sup>574</sup> Interview with A.L. ter Beek, 13/01/00.

<sup>575</sup> MoD, *Archive Stasdef 1994*, Brigadier General A. Kolsteren to BLS and HMID, No. S94/061/589, 13/02/94.

<sup>576</sup> Interview with J. Voorhoeve, 01/10/01.

<sup>577</sup> Interview with J. Voorhoeve, 01/10/01.

<sup>578</sup> Vertrekpunt Den Haag, *Deel 1 Rapport*, p. 182.

capacity of the UN, but as described in Chapter 1 of this study, this was something that the UN did not possess. Voorhoeve had previously declared this to Parliament as well: the UN had no intelligence service of its own and was therefore unaware of the VRS strategy.<sup>579</sup>

This demonstrated that the Minister had not fully fathomed the process behind gathering intelligence. Dropping special units behind enemy lines is one method of gathering intelligence, but, of course, not the only one. Perhaps the Ministry of Defence and the Netherlands Army should have focused on utilizing the possibility of gathering Sigint from the enclave as effectively as possible. It would have been possible to operate an Electronic Warfare Unit from Tuzla in support of their own battalion. This unit could have concentrated on intercepting VHF communication traffic, and would have been effective within an area of over 50 kilometres around the deployment position. This option was even proposed by the MIS/Army, but Couzy rejected it. In a UN context, no intelligence tasks needed to be executed.<sup>580</sup>

Such an arrangement would have strongly improved the negotiating position of The Hague in the international intelligence community. Furthermore, the remark that within the framework of UNPROFOR the Netherlands had no spies among the Serbs was a strange starting point to adopt. For the sake of Force Protection, the Minister should perhaps have encouraged the MIS/CO or the Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army through his MIS/Army to take such a step. Force Protection in particular implies that special attention be paid to counterintelligence (subversion, espionage and terrorism).<sup>581</sup> If this had succeeded, then The Hague would no longer have been a requesting party on the national and international stage, and would also have received more intelligence in return on a *quid pro quo* basis.

The question then remains as to how the ministers and the senior Ministry of Defence officials actually did receive their intelligence. The MIS/CO reported directly and through special briefings to the Ministers Ter Beek and Voorhoeve, the senior ministry officials and military officers. These briefings, by the MIS/CO's only Balkans analyst, took place in the meetings of the Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC). They were carried out on behalf of the CDS responsible for policy guidance and evaluation of crisis management operations. The Centre was founded during the Gulf War. The branches of the Armed Forces contributed the necessary officers and NCOs, but until the autumn of 1994 they still did not have the requisite qualities.<sup>582</sup>

At the time there was an MIS cell at the Defence Crisis Management Centre, (DCBC) but the department's senior officials took hardly any interest in it. The Balkans analyst himself considered the information given in the briefings to be 'pearls cast before swine'. MIS/Air Force staff, who sometimes attended briefings at the Centre, confirmed this. The team at the MIS cell was not a strong one: only the MIS/CO analyst had sufficient calibre but he only carried out the political-strategic part. This influenced the Head of the MIS, Kok, in backing a proposal to disband the cell. It was later decided, under Knapp, to re-establish a similar MIS cell, but that was after the fall of Srebrenica. Better qualified people were then assigned.<sup>583</sup>

On weekdays, the MIS cell arranged briefings and intelligence summaries. According to some MIS officials, the briefings by the MIS/CO were occasionally too pro-Serbian in tone. However, they saw this mainly as an attempt to offer a counterweight to the pro-Bosnian attitude of the senior Ministry of Defence officials. According to many MIS personnel, there was a constant 'good guys, bad guys' mentality in the air, with no room for subtle distinctions. The MIS/CO analyst discovered this during briefings for the DCBC, where occasionally there was an element of a selective perception of the events in Bosnia. This analyst was to receive a 'reprimand' from Voorhoeve in June 1998. He was

579 'Voorhoeve wist van aanvoer Serviërs naar Srebrenica' ('Voorhoeve knew of supply of Serbs to Srebrenica'), *De Volkskrant*, 11/07/96.

580 Interview with H. Bosch, 10/10/01. See especially: Chapter 5 of this study.

581 Drs. R. Theunens, 'Intelligence en vredesoperaties' ('Intelligence and peace operations'), *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 600.

582 MoD. *Archive DCBC, Cabinet 15, File 1, 2212*, Notes 'Improving effectiveness and efficiency', 19/10/94.

583 Confidential interviews (25), (26) and (31).

told by the Head of the MIS that the Minister's eye had been drawn to a number of wordings that in his view showed too much sympathy for Serbian military action in Kosovo.<sup>584</sup>

MIS/Air Force analysts confirmed that there was indeed sometimes an element of politicized intelligence in the direction of the senior military officers and ministry officials. MIS/Army officials likewise stated that intelligence was sometimes used in support of the 'good guys' versus 'bad guys' scenario.<sup>585</sup> Certain politically sensitive issues were sometimes dropped from the weekly intelligence summaries. The overall climate dictated that the reporting to the leadership of the Ministry of Defence had to be 'politically correct'. Therefore what went to the senior officers and officials was 'polititized intelligence'. Examples included the mortar attack in Sarajevo or the secret flights to Tuzla. While there were no instructions that reports should be politically correct, the politicized aspects still crept in gradually and unconsciously.<sup>586</sup>

Almost all the MIS officials interviewed admitted that account was taken of pro-Bosnia attitudes at senior political and military level within the Ministry. The prevailing political preference definitely influenced perceptions. It was repeatedly pointed out that foreign intelligence sources, such as the NATO network LOCE, were also not entirely free of a political pro-Bosnia slant.<sup>587</sup> On the subject of political intelligence a former head of the MIS/Army stated that 'as far as I am concerned it should not' have existed. But he too had to admit that the political mood was indeed taken into account. For instance, he was able to recall that once after Srebrenica he had given Voorhoeve a Serbian book on the ABiH hit and run operations from Srebrenica to the surrounding villages with Bosnian Serb residents. The Minister did not appear particularly pleased.<sup>588</sup>

Voorhoeve obtained no intelligence via a direct connection with the Head of the MIS. There was no structural contact; the Head almost never met Voorhoeve. Neither was there a particularly regular pattern of reporting. The Head reported to the Minister via the CDS and the Secretary-General. The Head always sent memos destined for the Minister via the Secretary-General, as in December 1994, when it was reported to Voorhoeve that the VRS and Croatian Serbs had approximately 140 American Stinger anti-aircraft missiles at their disposal. The presence of these arms could represent an additional risk to Dutch air operations over Yugoslavia.<sup>589</sup>

The limited frequency of the contacts was partly due to the CDS's conviction that the Head of the MIS was under his authority. Voorhoeve changed this situation by summoning the Head directly on a couple of occasions. He had the impression that the CDS and the Secretary-General did not think this was normal. Voorhoeve requested the new Head, Knapp, to provide him with intelligence more regularly, and to draw up a periodic summary of all relevant international intelligence. This happened from mid 1995. Voorhoeve then received an Intelligence Summary (IntSum) two or three times a week.<sup>590</sup> To sum up briefly, the MIS/CO played no central role in the 'daily political life' of the Ministers Ter Beek and Voorhoeve.

## 10. The MIS and Military Security

In addition to an intelligence component, the MIS/CO also had a security component in the form of the Military Security Bureau. On the one hand, its task came down to carrying out security investigations as part of the defensive counterintelligence task. The aim was to ensure the integrity and reliability of defence personnel. On the other hand, this bureau concentrated on collecting data that were necessary to guarantee military security. This consisted of gathering data on people and

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584 MoD, *Archive Private Office of the Minister*, Voorhoeve to HMID, No. 1000, 26/06/98.

585 Confidential interview (34).

586 Confidential interview (37).

587 Confidential interview (26).

588 Confidential interview (36).

589 MoD, *Archive Memorandums Min Def 958 - 962*, HMID Kok to the Minister, No. DIS/94/095/2534, 01/12/94.

590 Interview with J. Voorhoeve, 01/10/01.

organizations that could possibly inflict damage on the security or readiness of the Armed Forces. A military security officer was therefore also responsible for activities that were geared towards protecting his own units (personnel and equipment) against sabotage, subversion, terrorism and espionage.<sup>591</sup> This was a combination of defensive and offensive counterintelligence work. Osint, Humint and Sigint were available for the execution of all these tasks.<sup>592</sup>

In order to carry out this task, the MIS/CO included a Counterintelligence and Security Department, and together with the Security Bureaus of the MISs of the three Armed Forces this formed the Security component. As with the intelligence component, the nature of the security task has changed drastically since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Although Russian services are still monitored, and account is still taken of antimilitarist actions, the attention has shifted somewhat. Foreign intelligence services were also active in areas where Dutch soldiers were deployed in peacekeeping operations and as such could constitute a threat.

The Counterintelligence Bureau within the Counterintelligence and Security Department had two components: a Counterintelligence Section with 3 analysts (from the Army, Navy and Air Force) and an Operations Section. In September 1992, the Head of the MIS, Duijn, made a start on setting up an Operations Department, under the control of the Counterintelligence Bureau. The formal objective of the Operations Department was the acquisition of high grade, not freely accessible information via Humint and technical resources. The operational activities consisted of planning, tracing, approaching, training, securing, running and controlling human sources, and using them with Humint-related technical resources.<sup>593</sup> This section started with 12 and gradually expanded to 50 people. Originally it was only concerned with counterintelligence, but later it also became involved in intelligence gathering operations at home and abroad.

From the outset, the collaboration between the Counterintelligence Bureau and the Operations Department was not as good as it could have been. There were different views on counterintelligence work. The Operations Department also did not want to share all its intelligence with the Bureau, and allowed no access to its sources; only finished intelligence was issued. In August 1993, the Operations Department started drawing up an outline for taking over the tasks of the Foreign Intelligence Service (IDB). The MIS/CO Operations Department had a close relationship with the National Security Service (BVD). Within the MIS/CO, various sections within the counterintelligence domain were then merged to form a department of 24 people.<sup>594</sup> Initially the Operations Department had nothing to offer in the way of intelligence. In connection with the rapidly escalating situation in Yugoslavia, the Head of the MIS therefore asked the Minister whether the MIS/CO could be permitted to take a more 'offensive' approach in other countries.

As outlined above, the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (MICIV) had determined in 1993 to hand over the tasks of the IDB to the MIS and BVD and that in principle the MIS and BVD would only be allowed to use 'passive' human sources in the Netherlands. Only if necessitated by the national interest could 'offensive' use be made of human sources. In brief, actively recruiting agents and operating with agents and sources in other countries was subject to restrictions. The Head of the MIS at the time, Kok, therefore advocated a more active use of Humint, partly because the information position of the MIS/CO was insufficient. He also referred to the meeting of the Committee on the United Intelligence Services in the Netherlands (CVIN) of 17 February 1994. There it was established unanimously that, in view of the involvement in the conflict in Yugoslavia, the national interest was then such that a more active use of human sources was required. This might involve stepping up the interrogation in Bosnia of Displaced Persons, soldiers and other Dutch citizens stationed in the conflict region.<sup>595</sup> However, Kok was not given the go-ahead to operate

591 MoD, *Archive MIS/Army*, DOKL./IV, Col. J. Mulder to Head AI MIS, Col. B. Wegerer, 23/02/96.

592 Engelen, *De Militaire Inlichtingendienst*, pp. 148 - 151 and Kluiters, *Supplement*, pp. 131 - 132.

593 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, *Folder 438-0420*, Head AO to HMID, Annual plan 1997 of the Operations Department, No. AO 960708, 06/1/97.

594 Confidential interviews (19), (29) and (25).

595 MoD, *Archive CDS*, Commodore P.C. Kok to Minister Voorhoeve, No. DIS/94/095/398, 18/02/94.

on a large scale in Bosnia. The memorandum to the Minister proposing an increase in foreign operations was a step in this direction, but Kok could have known in advance that permission would not be forthcoming.<sup>596</sup> He would have to make do with the resources available.

Kok, then attempted to more or less 'neutralize' the Operations Department. In March 1994 he sent a memorandum to the Deputy CDS and senior Ministry of Defence officials. He argued that the structure and organization of the MIS/CO needed to be changed. Kok proposed a reorganization that offered the prospect of a structural solution to major problems in the Intelligence domain. In the short term, a number of emergency measures needed to be taken to fulfil the most elementary requirements demanded by the MIS/CO. He wanted a reallocation of resources and personnel. It was possible for the Counterintelligence and Security and Operations Departments to be put on hold temporarily. This entailed undesirable risks, but Kok estimated that these were less hazardous than allowing the existing situation to continue. He especially wanted to strengthen the intelligence position of the MIS/CO, and was apparently content to leave aspects of Military Security entirely to the MIS/Army.<sup>597</sup>

Ultimately, the proposals were not implemented, but in 1994 the Operations Department was still not in a position to gather intelligence on Yugoslavia. There were no sources or trained people. Subsequently, the Operations Department made cautious attempts to set up operations in other countries, but everything needed to be built up from scratch. The Operations Department mainly gathered tactical military intelligence. Given this state of affairs, the CIA and the SIS, the British foreign intelligence service, were consulted as to whether they could train personnel for Yugoslavia, but that plan also faltered. The Operations Department also wanted to use Dutch troops or local interpreters for gathering intelligence, but this again was blocked by the MIS/CO leadership, for fear of conflict with the MIS/Army.<sup>598</sup> The Operations Department only got 'up to steam' after 1995. In 1996, the Operations Department had a total of 5 operational bureaux and an administrative department: three regional bureaux (Eurasia, the Middle East and Africa/the Far East/Western Hemisphere), a Maritime Information Bureau and a Special Assignments Bureau.<sup>599</sup>

### *The MIS/Army's Military Security Bureau*

The problems in the relationship with the MIS/Army were not confined to the Intelligence domain; the Military Security sector was also affected. The MIS/Army counterpart to the MIS/CO Counterintelligence Bureau was the Military Security Bureau (MV), which had three detachments at its disposal in the Netherlands. The Military Security Sector was extremely important to the Army, and was also a priority for the Air Force and Navy.<sup>600</sup> In 1992, the Counterintelligence and Military Security components of the MIS/Army were separated from each other, in what was experienced as a 'painful' process. Good Counterintelligence personnel suddenly found themselves confronted with Military Security work, and that was a whole different craft. In addition there was confusion about the division of tasks: what constituted Counterintelligence and what came under Military Security?

The following serves as an example. Some considered that issues such as drugs, prostitution and morale were a matter for the commander. Military Security disagreed: it saw such issues as part of its remit. In the process, people tended to forget that Military Security often paved the way for Counterintelligence. The two processes could not be cleanly separated and attempts to do so proved unworkable. The Military Security Section claimed much at that time, and although the relationship on the shop floor between the personnel of the Counterintelligence Bureau and Military Security was good, there was (as usual) a conflict at management level. As was the case in the Intelligence

<sup>596</sup> Confidential interviews (25) and (29).

<sup>597</sup> MoD, *Archive CDS*, HMID Commodore Kok to deputy CDS, No. DIS/94/001/484, 02/03/94.

<sup>598</sup> Confidential interview (18).

<sup>599</sup> MoD, *Archive MIS/CO, File 438-0420*, Head AO to HMID, Annual plan 1997 AO, No. AO 960708, 06/1/97.

<sup>600</sup> Confidential interview (20).

Department, the Counterintelligence Bureau and Military Security personnel communicated with each other through informal channels because nothing could be exchanged officially.<sup>601</sup>

One Military Security official was responsible for deployments to peacekeeping operations, a task which made up approximately 90% of his work. The Military Security Section took particular notice of conduct. The same was incidentally true of the Counterintelligence Bureau, but its approach was considerably influenced by its 'old' background. The Counterintelligence Bureau wanted to concern itself with deployments, and pay special attention to issues like threats, risks and preservation of integrity. This was not allowed and as a result, a considerable amount of security information remained within the confines of the Military Security Bureau, according to an official<sup>602</sup> of the Counterintelligence Bureau. There was a built-in mechanism for drawing a discrete veil over many issues.

The impression at the MIS/CO was that the main concern of the Military Security Section was to protect the image of the Army. All the MIS/CO was allowed to do was brief and debrief UNMOs, Royal Netherlands Marechaussee personnel that had worked for UNCivPol, and personnel from the European monitoring mission. The problem here was again that these were often Army people, who therefore had no wish to cooperate. The Marechaussee also resisted the involvement of the Counterintelligence Bureau. Dutchbat was claimed completely by the Military Security Bureau. The MIS/CO Counterintelligence Bureau was not allowed access. Its head was explicitly told so on two occasions: not a single Dutchbat soldier may be approached. Involvement with the big debriefing in Assen after the fall of Srebrenica was also forbidden. The Counterintelligence Bureau was allowed to pass on questions to MIS/Army's Military Security Bureau, who then reported back on the intelligence gathered, but no direct access to Dutchbat was given.<sup>603</sup>

This restricted access probably influenced the investigation into extreme right-wing statements or behaviour. From early 1993, a specific request was made to the Armed Forces and the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee to report such matters to the Counterintelligence Bureau. In the case of deployments within the framework of peacekeeping operations steps had to be taken to prevent the personal conduct of the personnel having repercussions on the duties of the deployed unit. It was necessary to identify defence personnel who were members of extreme right-wing organizations and factions, and record any incidents, which had taken place. In March 1993, the Head of the MIS, Duijn, gave his approval to the 'Extreme Right Project', and from that moment the Counterintelligence Bureau would specifically map this area out within the framework of the project.<sup>604</sup>

The MIS/CO was in no way involved in the deployment of Dutchbat. This was done by the Military Security Bureau. The Counterintelligence Bureau did not consider secretly building up its own information network. There was some internal discussion, but the fear of being compromised was too great. The Counterintelligence Bureau did occasionally have access to Dutch officers that had worked at BHC. The Counterintelligence Bureau, like the Operations Department, was also interested in interpreters and translators. An attempt was made to monitor them within UNPROFOR. These interpreters often worked for Balkans intelligence services, and they turned up in various places in Bosnia.

### *Involvement in controversial incidents*

The Counterintelligence Bureau was also involved in the tins of rice affair. The tins were used in an attempt by Bosnian Muslims living in Germany to smuggle money to Muslims in Srebrenica. This was discovered when a package was sent to a Dutchbat sergeant who had already left. The package was then opened, and it was decided to distribute the tins among the Displaced Persons. Several tins were very underweight, and once they were opened, it turned out that they contained documents and money.

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601 Confidential interviews (18), (19), (20) and (31).

602 Confidential interview (19).

603 Confidential interview (19).

604 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Memorandum for HMID, No. BCI/224/930558, 10/03/93.

There were several tins involved, and they had been sent from the Netherlands to the enclave. After the fall of Srebrenica, the deputy commander of Dutchbat brought and handed over that money to the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee, which collected the German Marks. The money was subsequently returned to the original source in Germany. This consignment was probably the tip of the iceberg.<sup>605</sup>

Furthermore, the Counterintelligence Bureau always requested that attention be paid to indications of services or favours being carried out in the Netherlands. In March 1995, there were a number of known incidents where amounts of money were brought into Yugoslavia from the Netherlands. These involved soldiers of the Army who were approached by Bosnian Muslims while on leave in the Netherlands and who were asked to take parcels back with them. In these cases amounts were known to vary from approximately DM 500 to DM 25,000. The soldiers involved were usually not told of the contents of the mail. The Dutch soldiers' home addresses were apparently obtained in the conflict region. In this area the MIS/Army and the BVD did cooperate.<sup>606</sup> Sometimes, the Bureau received reports of this sort through the Military Security Section from the Dutchbat security officer.

The Counterintelligence Bureau kept track of which services were attempting to recruit in Bosnia. An attempt was even made by the CIA to recruit a Dutch UNPROFOR soldier. This matter was discussed thoroughly by the Bureau with the CIA. The Bureau also observed that the ABiH and VRS recruited intelligence officers who had lived in the Netherlands. It collaborated closely on counterintelligence with its foreign counterparts, who, surprisingly enough, often appeared to have had equally little access to reliable intelligence. The US Army Intelligence and Security Command was always grateful to the Counterintelligence Bureau for supplying it with good intelligence on extremist factions that were active in Yugoslavia.

The US services had little data on this. In fact, the Americans appear to have been milking their partners dry. This meant that the US services had a hard time in the beginning; apparently they had trouble adjusting to the new international relationships in which there was no clear enemy anymore. The Counterintelligence Bureau's collaboration with the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* was solid, as it was with the British Security Services Organization (BSS), a British MI-5 security service unit in Germany. Generally, however, the MIS/CO did not have much use for British services. They attended mainly to British interests in Bosnia, such as Gorazde, and gathered no intelligence that might be useful to other countries. In contrast, this was something that the Netherlands often did.<sup>607</sup>

The Counterintelligence Bureau reported regularly on the activities of paramilitary groups in Yugoslavia.<sup>608</sup> It also examined the behaviour and the activities of Dutch mercenaries in the Balkans. They were mainly active in Croatia and involved in war crimes. For instance, the Dutch mercenary Johan Tilder was followed intensively, partly as a result of a failed attempt to gather intelligence from UNPROFOR. Tilder later died in Croatia. MIS personnel said he was '*auf der flucht erschossen*' by local soldiers. Incidentally, the Counterintelligence Bureau passed on the available intelligence on mercenaries to the Yugoslavia Tribunal.<sup>609</sup>

There was also a Military Security Section in the MIS/Air Force. Its head was at the same time the Deputy Head of MIS/Air Force. Security in Vicenza was especially important; compartmentalization was thoroughly implemented there because of possible penetration. Account was constantly taken of aeroplane spotters.<sup>610</sup> An excellent opportunity for the MIS/Air Force to greatly improve its information position with respect to Eastern Bosnia presented itself when the Deputy Head of the MIS/Air Force was appointed deputy commander of Tuzla Air Base, which would play an important role in clandestine arms supplies<sup>611</sup> to the ABiH in February 1995. In March 1995, the

605 For this see also Chapter 6 in Part III of the Srebrenica report.

606 For reports on this, see: MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Memorandum BCI, No. DIS/95/12.14/777, 27/03/95; No. DIS/95/12.14/1208, 22/05/95 and No. BCI/950869, 19/05/95.

607 Confidential interview (19).

608 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO*, Memorandum of Head of Analysis and Production Section of BCI L. Zentgraaff, to the Secretary-General, No. BCI/0143/931402, 14/06/93.

609 Confidential interview (19).

610 Confidential interview (39).

611 See Chapter 4 of this study.



MIS/Air Force officer went to Tuzla and would remain there until November 1995. He was responsible for the preparations for opening the airfield as a UN air base. Surprisingly enough, nothing in the way of an order to gather intelligence was forthcoming in the wake of this posting. Of course, the events around Tuzla were not of direct interest to the Netherlands Air Force, but they were to the MIS/Army. This officer was therefore dispatched to Tuzla by the Air Force without any national order. It soon became clear that other nationalities had a different approach to intelligence. A team of the British SAS had its own section in the control tower, which was responsible for monitoring the ABiH and VRS communications traffic, and probably that of UNPROFOR. This was a locked room full of special equipment. The British special forces maintained daily contact with their headquarters in Bosnia via secure signals equipment. The Dutch officer had to make do with an open satellite telephone link via the Netherlands Air Force Operations Centre. Other links were also open and were easy for the ABiH and VRS to monitor.<sup>612</sup>

Although the Military Security Bureau took the Dutchbat deployments entirely for its own account, the task proved more difficult in practice than had been outlined. The debriefing of Dutchbat soldiers turned out to be a source of constant fighting between the Military Security Bureau and the Army. It was regarded as normal for a doctor and a psychologist to be involved with the returning Dutchbat soldier, but a representative from Military Security was not tolerated at first. This changed later, and the returning soldiers were given a schedule of people to visit that included an officer of the Military Security Section.<sup>613</sup> The debriefings usually took place on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The report was drawn up on Friday, and it was sent to General Couzy the same day. There was sometimes feedback, after which the debriefing could be steered in a certain direction. The Security Section had particular interest in issues such as missing documents, equipment, arms, and ammunition. The Head of the Bureau made a selection of the intelligence to send to Couzy. He also decided which information would reach the Counterintelligence Bureau. There was no standard procedure for sharing intelligence. Under the new head of the MIS/Army, Colonel H. Bokhoven, who held this position from 19 April 1994 to 15 December 1995, progress was made in this area. The reports of the Military Security Bureau then went via Bokhoven directly to his predecessor, Colonel Hans Bosch, the head of Couzy's Private Office. A Military Security officer admitted that the underlying order was indeed to keep the Army out of the wind. The Commander-in-Chief was looked to first, and only in the second instance was the Minister attended to. The Military Security Bureau's primary responsibility was to its Commander-in-Chief. The Military Security Bureau was ordered to report in cases where the image of the 'Firm' could suffer any damage.<sup>614</sup>

In the area of military security too, the Military Security Bureau was not directed by the Commander-in-Chief. The Bureau did not report directly to the Royal Netherlands Marechaussee or the Public Prosecutor. This gave a Commander-in-Chief - in this case Couzy - the chance to examine an issue internally first, and possibly resolve it informally before the Marechaussee or the Public Prosecutor became involved. A grey area therefore existed in which, for example, there might be strong indications or even proof of criminal offences, but in which a commander or the Commander-in-Chief would refrain from communicating this to the Marechaussee or the Public Prosecutor. There were no rules or regulations on reporting criminal offences to the Marechaussee or the Public Prosecutor. The personnel of the Military Security Bureau admitted that they operated on a moral and legal slippery slope.

There was comprehensive discussion within the MIS/Army about the possible risks for soldiers in Bosnia, and the chance that Dutchbat soldiers could be approached, even before Dutchbat's departure. It was assumed that the Bosnian community in the Netherlands would attempt to take such action. When the smuggling of funds was discovered, this information was passed up the chain of

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612 Confidential interview (39).

613 Confidential interview (20).

614 Confidential interview (20).

command. The incident involving the tins of rice did not result in a criminal prosecution; Couzy decided no action was necessary.<sup>615</sup>

### *The Military Security Bureau and Dutchbat*

The Bureau thought it important to have its own representative in the enclave. Someone was assigned to this task in the deployment of Dutchbat I. However, Commander Vermeulen did not want him to go to Srebrenica, so that Military Security ended up having no contact of its own. They had no direct lines of communication of their own either, and everything was arranged through soldiers on leave who brought with them reports from the deputy S-2. Someone from the Bureau was attached to Dutchbat II, but his commander sent him to Simin Han, after which the Military Security Bureau again had no one in the enclave. Accordingly, there was little reporting on internal problems in DutchBat I and DutchBat II, while in contrast, there were many reports concerning internal problems in DutchBat III.

In mid 1994, a first signal was sent to senior officers of the Army that ‘this situation could not go on’; it was not possible to keep the Commander-in-Chief properly informed in this way. The Deputy CDS for Operations then issued a written instruction to the commander telling him to cooperate, and to give the Military Security Bureau all the space they needed from that point on. The Bureau’s representative was only to be allowed to carry out only military security tasks and no other activities. This only worked well in the case of the individual charged with this task in Dutchbat III, E.A. Rave. An additional advantage was that Rave and the Military Security Bureau officer responsible were old friends. They had worked together previously in an observation team. This officer went to Karremans and explained to him what Rave had to do. Rave occupied himself mainly with counterintelligence and security, and not so much with gathering intelligence.<sup>616</sup>

Rave’s predecessor in Dutchbat II had given him the tip of working in the liaison team, because this would give him the most freedom of movement. Rave was also advised: ‘make sure that you get into the enclave’. This was certainly necessary since the lack of a Military Security representative had meant that the rules with regard to security in the enclave were extremely disorganized. Nonetheless Rave was given a role in Dutchbat III. Another important reason for Rave’s arrival was that Karremans was the first commander to understand the importance of such an officer. His predecessors found it unnecessary. The problem was that Rave had no special secure link, which prevented him from performing his duties optimally. The Army or MIS/Army apparently did not deem it as essential, which was remarkable (to say the least). Rave therefore often had to make all sorts of cryptic remarks on the telephone.<sup>617</sup> This gave the Military Security Bureau an incomplete picture of the situation in Srebrenica. In spite of this, Rave was regularly able to issue intelligence.

### *Preparation for the deployment*

During a meeting in Assen, the Military Security Bureau gave a briefing prior to the departure of DutchBat III. In the period of Dutchbats I, II and III, this bureau was responsible for the military security aspects during the deployments. The briefings generally lasted two hours. After the briefing, there was another one from the Intelligence Department. It was observed that Karremans and his deputy Franken adopted a ‘tough’ attitude; they expected that the VRS would not even consider confining Dutchbat III to the enclave. ‘If necessary Dutchbat III would fight its way out’, according to Franken. The latter was often to be reminded of this tough talk later.<sup>618</sup>

During the briefing, attention was paid to issues such as taking good care of personal property, not leaving personal documents lying around, not admitting interpreters to the Operations room, not

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<sup>615</sup> Confidential interview (35).

<sup>616</sup> Interviews with E.A. Rave, 13/12/00 and 14/12/00.

<sup>617</sup> Interviews with E.A. Rave, 13/12/00 and 14/12/00.

<sup>618</sup> Confidential interview (20).

entering into close relationships with the local population, not putting envelopes in the wastepaper basket, and so on. A warning was also given that the UNMO interpreters had a direct line to the local political and military leaders, and that everything that was discussed with them was passed on immediately.<sup>619</sup>

Karremans said he already recognized this danger and had ordered the commander of the Operations room to keep an eye on the interpreters. Main reason: the Dutch could not be certain that the four interpreters were reliable.<sup>620</sup> These doubts proved justified: one of them was a cousin of ABiH commander Naser Oric. This was confirmed by intelligence officer Wieffer. Dutchbat was aware that they had to exercise extreme caution where their interpreters were concerned. Dutchbat therefore ensured that the interpreters had only a limited amount of knowledge; they never entered the Operations room. They had to remain outside, were not allowed to look at the maps and could not attend certain discussions. The same was true of the cleaning ladies who were hired in. They were allowed to do certain things and not others. This had to do with security. According to Wieffer, this system was mainly geared towards keeping the ABiH at a distance and it functioned reasonably well. The ABiH was not to know what Dutchbat knew about them or what was being said left and right about the VRS. Wieffer thinks that Dutchbat dealt with this problem fairly well.<sup>621</sup>

The Military Security Bureau or Counterintelligence Bureau did not investigate the background of the dispatched soldiers, including the battalion leaders. Staff of both Bureau's stated that they were never asked to investigate the pasts of Dutchbat soldiers, and Couzy never indicated to the MIS/Army that an extra check should be carried out on the battalion leaders. However, the Royal Netherlands Army did receive an offer to investigate the battalion leaders from the MIS/CO. It was not accepted.<sup>622</sup>

#### *The military security of Dutchbat in the enclave*

The next question concerns the state of affairs of Dutchbat's military security once the battalion arrived in the enclave. Much came to light during debriefings after the fall of Srebrenica. It is true that not all the personnel were debriefed after deployments, but attention was focused on key staff and soldiers who had experienced something specific. The list of people to be debriefed was drawn up in agreement with the unit's security officer, and sometimes with the staff officer for personnel or intelligence.

On their return, every soldier had to complete a form containing a number of specific questions. Questions were asked on the following: the function, loss or theft of arms and other equipment, contact with the warring factions, incidents, etc. Based partly on prior knowledge of the individuals concerned, this checklist determined who should be debriefed. After Colonel Bosch was appointed Head of Couzy's Private Office, it became customary to send General Couzy a report on a single A4 sheet of the most important items of information the very next day after a debriefing. Shocking matters sometimes emerged from these debriefings relating to security.<sup>623</sup>

For instance, it emerged from a debriefing of one Dutchbat soldier that the Opstina (the municipal council) assigned cleaners who spoke reasonable English or German. However, in spite of all the recommendations made by the Military Security Bureau, they were still allowed to clean the C Company Operations room in Potocari at the time of Dutchbat II. The Dutchbat soldier concerned found this rather surprising from a military security point of view. Yet the Operations room was cleaned twice a day by 3 or 4 women, and it was simply impossible to watch their every move. Patrol schedules, leave rosters, duty and guard schedules, and a detailed map showing the division into sectors all hung in the Operations room. There was also the communication equipment, and the logbook of incoming messages was left open in front of the radio. There were no classified documents or telexes,

619 MoD, *Archive MIS/CO, File 443-0224*, lecture to the LSO personnel 13th AMB, date unknown (approx. end 1993).

620 Karremans, *Who Cares*, p. 41.

621 Interview with E. Wieffer, 18/06/99.

622 Confidential interview (25).

623 Confidential interview (20).

but there were UNPROFOR Military Information Summaries. A bag containing all the outgoing post from C Company also hung in the Operations room. The local employees also entered the weapons room and kitchen and so also knew much about stocks and the food situation.

A Military Security official observed after the debriefing that this was particularly disturbing. In the light of this knowledge, it was not surprising that family members of dispatched soldiers were approached by Yugoslavs who knew everything about the soldier concerned. Another problem was that all envelopes were thrown away in the wastepaper basket, which the cleaners emptied. The addresses of the senders were written on the envelopes. This is how it came about that the home front was approached with requests to smuggle money. The cleaners were also in a position to make copies of leave lists, and in this way put together a picture of who was about to leave the enclave. No one was checked on leaving the compound, except for some hand baggage.<sup>624</sup>

Did the arrival in the enclave of a Military Security officer with Dutchbat III mean an improvement in military security? In any case, Rave soon noticed that the Bosnian Muslims were very well informed about the personal background of the battalion leaders. Rave knew, for example, that the deputy commander Franken was keen on horse riding, and shortly after Dutchbat III arrived in the enclave an invitation arrived from Oric for Franken to go riding. Rave wondered how Oric had found this out.<sup>625</sup> It was also remarkable that the buildings and rooms that were in use by Dutchbat in Srebrenica and Potocari were never 'swept', so that it was unknown whether they contained hidden microphones. Only after the summer of 1995, during the periods of IFOR and SFOR, was this done. One such 'sweep' did indeed uncover a microphone at the later headquarters of Dutch soldiers in Bosnia. The battalion leaders operated from the office of the manager of an old flourmill. He called in occasionally to look through his old accounts, and while he did so he locked the room for approximately one hour.<sup>626</sup>

The Bosnian security service attempted to gather intelligence in the units. For instance, Dutch UNPROFOR soldiers were sometimes questioned during 'social patrols' by people who probably worked for this service. The Bosnian Muslims also attempted to gather information by other methods. One day, a local artist offering paintings appeared outside the Support Command compound fence in Lukavac. In order to buy one, the Dutch had to write their name, rank, registration number and home address on a list. This 'artist' was probably an ABiH intelligence man.<sup>627</sup> Rave immediately intensified the military security in Srebrenica. Even before Dutchbat III arrived, there were reports that the interpreter for the transport battalion operations officer was typing out letters in his office. This was definitely against Rave's wishes, and indeed security risks of this nature did not occur in practice during Dutchbat III.<sup>628</sup>

### *The floppy disk affair*

Nevertheless, a remarkable incident still took place, brought to the attention of the NIOD by a former officer of the MIS/Army Intelligence and Security Department.<sup>629</sup> When Dutchbat departed for the Netherlands via Zagreb after the fall of Srebrenica, the equipment was left behind in the Croatian capital. During an inspection of the vehicles, a Dutch UNPROFOR officer encountered a chaotic scene: maps, documents and personal effects were all mixed up together. They were collected, put into a couple of large envelopes and taken away. Three members of the Military Security Bureau met the UNPROFOR officer concerned at Amsterdam Schiphol Airport, and the material from the Dutchbat APCs was handed over to them.

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624 MoD, *Archive 101 MIS/Cie*, Jawad to Van Dijk, Debriefing report, 09/02/95 and Archive MIS/TCBU, Vreman to Van Dijk, Debriefing report, 09/03/95.

625 Interviews with E.A. Rave, 13/12/00 and 14/12/00.

626 Confidential interviews (19) and (20).

627 MoD, *Archive 101 MIS/Cie*, Van Jawad to Hakort, Debriefing report 101 MIS/Cie, 23/12/95.

628 Confidential interview (19) and (20).

629 Confidential interview (35).

One envelope contained several floppy disks. The floppy disk in question (probably one of several floppy disks) contained part of the archive of Dutchbat's internal and external communication traffic. This was stored on floppy disks because the computer's hard disk was erased after the fall of Srebrenica, in order to prevent it falling into the hands of the VRS. On 12 July, Franken was ordered by the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff to ensure that as little as possible fell into VRS hands. The highest priority was the destruction of computers, laptops and satellite communication equipment.<sup>630</sup> However, this instruction did not prevent material ultimately falling into the hands of the VRS. In total, equipment worth more than 31 million guilders, including 5 million guilders in communications equipment, was lost, destroyed or taken by the VRS.<sup>631</sup>

One of Karremans' last messages was found on one floppy disk, translated into Serbo-Croat. It was message TK 95114 to Janvier, Bosnia-Herzegovina Command, Sector North East, Voorhoeve and the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, in which he reported on his meetings with Mladic on 11 and 12 July. In it, Karremans announced that he was not in a position to protect the Displaced Persons and his own battalion, that at that time he was unable to identify a suitable representative among the Displaced Persons, and also no ABiH representative, because the ABiH was in the process of attempting to open a corridor to Tuzla. How this translation had found its way onto the floppy disk was a mystery to interviewed MIS personnel.<sup>632</sup> If there was a question here of espionage or of a far-reaching breach of security in the compound, the translator would have had access to one or more stand-alone Dutchbat computers. This individual may have been working for an intelligence or security service of the ABiH or the VRS.

The head of the MIS/Army, Bokhoven, was on holiday in these days in July. He said his deputy never informed him of this incident. He acknowledged immediately that this should have happened because of the potentially compromising nature of this fact. The Chief of Staff of the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, Colonel Dedden, was informed on 12 August 1995 by the MIS/Army about a document in Serbo-Croat found in a Dutchbat vehicle in Zagreb. However, Dedden was unfamiliar with the existence of such a floppy disk.<sup>633</sup>

The discovery of the floppy disk would appear to be astonishing. It raises the question of who translated the text and who ordered it. The interpreters were fluent in English, and were in a position to convey the substance of the discussions as well as the requirements of Mladic verbally or in writing to the highest authorities in Srebrenica. The incident also raises the question of whether this translator had long had access to Dutchbat's internal communication system or to Karremans' laptop. It has been established that many interpreters regularly worked for intelligence and security services and had a duty to report to the ABiH.<sup>634</sup> Since the discovery of the floppy disk was never reported to the Head of MIS, he never ordered the matter to be investigated. Karremans stated that he himself knew of no diskette from Zagreb, nor of the translation of one of his own messages. Neither had he given instructions for anything to be translated: 'Why should I?'<sup>635</sup>

This answer from Karremans is remarkable, because one of the interpreters of the UNMOs stated before a Bosnian State Committee that on the morning of 12 July he was translating a letter that Karremans had sent to Janvier and the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff in The Hague. The interpreter did not make clear who had instructed him to do so.<sup>636</sup> Deputy Battalion Commander Franken was equally unaware of this translation.<sup>637</sup> Rave also had no explanation for the translated TK 95114; according to him, Karremans normally wrote this sort of message on his own laptop in his

<sup>630</sup> MoD, *Archive SMG, Box 1005*, the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff to Franken, No. 6146/31, 12/07/95.

<sup>631</sup> MoD, *Archive SMG, Box 1005*, G-4 Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff to CS Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, No. G4/950810/05, 10/08/95.

<sup>632</sup> Confidential interviews (28), (23) and (25).

<sup>633</sup> MoD, *Archive SMG, Box 1004*, Interview with Colonel Dedden of the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, 12/08/95.

<sup>634</sup> Confidential interviews (19), (20) and (37).

<sup>635</sup> E-mail from Thom Karremans to NIOD, 17/07/01.

<sup>636</sup> Bosnian State Commission for the Collection of Facts of War Crimes, Witness X.

<sup>637</sup> E-mail from Franken to NIOD, 01/06/01.

office, which was opposite the communication centre: ‘normally speaking, no interpreter was involved.’<sup>638</sup>

Ultimately, it was the Dutchbat officer, Major P. Boering, who was able to give a possible explanation. He immediately associated this incident with the preparation of the Displaced Persons’ delegation for the meeting with Mladic on the morning of 12 July. Information was given to the interpreter in connection with this meeting, and he had attempted to phone members of the Bosnian government. With this in mind, the interpreter was given a desk and a telephone.<sup>639</sup> But still no answer has been given to the question of how the text came to be on the floppy disk. It may have been that the interpreter was also permitted to translate this letter on the laptop. In this case there was therefore probably no question of espionage or of a far-reaching breach of security in Dutchbat III.

## 11. Conclusions

The information position of the Dutch intelligence and security services at the start of the outbreak of the conflict in Yugoslavia was neither strong nor unique. In this area, the Foreign Intelligence Service (IDB) no longer played any significant role, as the service was on the point of being disbanded. During the deployment of soldiers to Bosnia, the Netherlands therefore had no independent foreign intelligence service of its own, which meant that the government was deprived of a potentially important information source. According to various intelligence officers, this was regrettable during the war in the Balkans.<sup>640</sup> They were of the opinion that each state that cherishes its sovereignty and independence must have not only a diplomatic service and armed forces, but also an intelligence organization of its own. The voice of a state that does not have such a facility counts for less in the choir of nations. As Peter Hennessy once said: ‘Intelligence is without question an influence-multiplier in the sense that it enables a state to apply its other instruments of influence more effectively’.<sup>641</sup> One could add to this that a nation also has a duty to protect its sons and daughters from the consequences of having no intelligence. It is not just about taking a place at the table of nations, it is about honouring those who sacrifice on their nation’s behalf. A well-functioning IDB could have played an important role in gathering intelligence on Bosnia. As things were, only scant intelligence was available.

The National Security Service (BVD) concentrated on domestic security. After all, the stationing of Dutch soldiers in Bosnia could have consequences for state security and the democratic rule of law. With hindsight, that threat was not as bad as might have been expected. Serb, Bosnian or Croat secret services were all but inactive in the Netherlands, and hardly carried out any operations. Attempts were made on a limited scale to raise funds or to send arms and ammunition to the region. The service did keep close track of whether mercenaries were recruited and who was responsible for this. The BVD was also very much occupied with mapping out politically related crime among ex-Yugoslavs, and investigating whether this was geared towards supporting the war effort of states and militias.

In 1995, the service established that the developments in the former Yugoslavia had only limited consequences for state security. The changed situation in the Balkans prompted only a muted response among the ex-Yugoslavs. This did not develop into organized political activity. The fear of a horizontal threat (within the Yugoslav community) and a vertical threat aimed against Dutch subjects and institutions receded sharply. After the expulsion of two Serb intelligence officers, the BVD continued to pay attention to monitoring and influencing activities on the part of the Serb embassy. The remarks made in 1994 about a criminal network with political connections were more or less withdrawn. Organized crime may have been a phenomenon to be taken seriously, but there were hardly

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<sup>638</sup> Report of telephone conversation with Sergeant Major E.A. Rave, 11/06/01.

<sup>639</sup> Interview with P. Boering, 13/12/01.

<sup>640</sup> Confidential interviews (18), (25), (31), (34) and (36).

<sup>641</sup> P. Hennessy, ‘The secret service, open to question’, in: *The Independent*, 15/10/96. See also: ‘Intelligence and policy: What is constant? What is changing?’, in: *Commentary*, No. 45 (June 1994), p. 4.

any indications of continuous guidance from political power centres in the former Yugoslavia. For this reason, the BVD decided not to start its own investigation in this area. The only perceived danger was to the staff of the Yugoslavia Tribunal, but with only a few exceptions this threat was never serious in nature.

Intelligence had to come mainly from the MIS/CO and the Military Intelligence Services of two of the three branches of the Armed Forces: MIS/Army and the MIS/Air Force. It must be concluded that the information position was neither unique nor special. This did not change after the departure and stationing of Dutch soldiers in Bosnia. The MIS/CO had no special sources and the same was true of the MIS/Army. No Humint operations were executed, since such operations were not permitted by senior Ministry of Defence officials. Another tool for gathering intelligence from Dutch soil, Sigint, could not be used optimally because of technical obstacles. However, technical obstacles did not apply to DutchBat. Like nearly every other contingent they could have brought some tactical capability with them. Except for the Bangladeshis, Kenyans, Nepalese, and maybe the Indonesians, practically every other contingent had some sort of capability. As outlined above, this was not a technical problem, but a political problem, which prevented DutchBat from being able to protect themselves.

In this respect, the intelligence services of other countries were also unable to fill the void because they too had little intelligence available or had other priorities and areas for attention. Statements by the Ministers of Defence that the MIS analyses did not rise above the average level of the *International Herald Tribune* do no justice, however, to the quality of the many products that, in spite of all the internal and external problems, were actually supplied. What the Ministers were mainly given to read were the MIS/CO analyses, but this service was at a constant disadvantage relative to the MIS/Army. The MIS/Army, for example, ultimately had a clear insight into the order of battle of the warring factions and was definitely in a position to supply good political-strategic analyses. The same applied for work such as the Deny Flight Intelligence Summary supplied by the MIS/Air Force. However, the supply of information could have been much better, and this is a view shared by many MIS personnel.

Intelligence liaison was further obstructed because the Dutch intelligence and security services had little material to share. There was no intelligence input from Dutchbat, because no serious intelligence-gathering structure was set up with respect to the battalion. The local population was a potentially important source of information but contact with them was reduced to a minimum, particularly under Dutchbat III. Not only did this mean that Dutchbat itself remained deprived of potentially important intelligence, but neither could anything be passed on to Sector North East, Bosnia-Herzegovina Command or The Hague. This meant that on many levels political and military policymakers were groping in the dark. Another contributory factor was the awkward contact between Dutch staff officers and troops under UNPROFOR command. Other nationalities had less trouble with this and they did provide their respective capitals with information. Apparently, the instruction from New York that 'while serving the UN, officers must follow the UN Chain of Command and respond to orders from the UN, not from their national governments' was taken extremely literally.<sup>642</sup> Dutch UNPROFOR soldiers operated as prescribed: intelligence was not to be gathered within a UN context, although certain staff officers sometimes did issue intelligence directly to the Defence Crisis Management Centre. In this respect, the Netherlands was in fact more righteous than its UN masters.<sup>643</sup>

The information position of the military services was also weakened by the mutual infighting. This sometimes took place between the BVD and the intelligence services, but also within the MIS itself. There was also an element of competition between the various MISs. For many years, the MIS was an 'island kingdom; one service in name but in reality fragmented, difficult to manage, barely transparent and poorly understood', according to the former director of the MIS, Major General J.A.

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<sup>642</sup> Everyone was reminded of this at the end of 1995: MoD, *Archive, Operations file, BL-S*, Biegmans to Foreign Affairs, No. 1205, 07/12/95.

<sup>643</sup> Confidential interview (37).

van Reijn.<sup>644</sup> It is likewise clear that the information position of the MIS/CO, which had to advise the Minister, the CDS and senior Ministry of Defence officials, constantly lagged behind that of the MIS/Army. Raw intelligence was often held back by senior MIS officers in the Armed Forces, who attended first to the interests of their own branch of the Armed Forces and their own Commander-in-Chief. In this sense, it reflected the relationship between the senior RNLA officers and the Central Organization as a whole. Here too, there was no question of a regular exchange of information, and the Minister complained about the paltry amount of intelligence that reached him from the Army.

This mutual infighting had a significant influence on the coordination and rapport between the MIS analysts. In the period up to 1996, there were serious problems at the MIS as a consequence of the 'independence' of the departments in the Armed Forces; management problems as a consequence of the lack of insight into these departments; a lack of insight into the effective use of personnel and material resources; lack of clarity among foreign intelligence services as a consequence of diffuse and fragmented deployment of the Dutch intelligence services. The tensions between the intelligence services worked to the considerable detriment of their information position. Only after Srebrenica did the realization dawn that the MIS could not continue in this way. It also needs to be said, however, that political, administrative or military guidance was also sadly lacking. An anti-intelligence attitude prevailed in The Hague as regards the use of intelligence and security services in peacekeeping operations in a UN context. There was no insistence from senior Army officers that additional intelligence be gathered, and no control was asserted. What is more: no role whatsoever was set aside for the MIS/Army. Senior Ministry of Defence officials also asserted no control or showed any special interest in the work of the MIS. No additional financial or other resources became available, and they had to make do with what they had. The Minister's interest in the work of his service did not increase significantly, and in any case no specific requests were made for threat or risk analyses prior to deployment. The MIS/CO and the MIS/Army were not consulted by the Minister and senior military officers regarding the deployment. Once the decision had been taken, the service was not given additional equipment to step up its efforts. The cutbacks in the Armed Forces appear to have been more important than obtaining additional intelligence that could have been important to the security of the Dutch soldiers in Bosnia. There was no sign of heightened awareness at the Ministry of Defence in terms of evaluating this situation.

The same was true of Parliament. Neither before the decision to deploy nor after the actual deployment did Parliament insist on an improvement in the Dutch information position in the field of intelligence. Intelligence and security services played no significant role in Parliament either. Parliament even thought it unnecessary to inquire cautiously about the information position. The same applied to the press: there too, intelligence and security services played no role. If they had done, it would possibly have been a reason for the Ministry of Defence to do something structural about it. In terms of structural consideration of the use and availability of intelligence, the Netherlands is a 'poor' country. No enthusiasm existed for carrying out serious intelligence gathering. This is regrettable, because former GCHQ employee Michael Herman rightly pointed out that good intelligence acquired by civilian and military intelligence services puts a country in a position 'to punch above its weight'.<sup>645</sup> There was apparently no such need in the Netherlands.

When a senior foreign intelligence official did read a draft of this study chapter his comments were very harsh. 'Where Dutch policymakers, military leaders and lower ranking military personnel were derelict in their duty, and failed to take the least effort at remedial action, some heads should roll'. He added to this: 'Leaders knew the risk, sent those young boys in there with nothing but their spoons. Commanders knew it, and made it worse. General officers in UN positions of influence went out of their way to spit on those who may have been able to help. And they're spitting still'. He finished with this remark: 'They failed to act in anticipation of the known risk, they stood by idly as the facts became

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<sup>644</sup> Major General Joop van Reijn, 'De Militaire Inlichtingendienst, vandaag en morgen' (The MIS, today and tomorrow), in: *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 11, p. 585.

<sup>645</sup> M. Herman, *Diplomacy and Intelligence*, Diplomatic Studies Programme Discussion Paper no. 39, z.p.l. 1998, p. 10.



more and more clear, turned a deaf ear to knowledgeable voices crying out, and afterwards seek to blame all others but themselves. These were not casual mistakes, nor easy to overlook. They extended over years, and were deliberately continued in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary'.<sup>646</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> Confidential information (80).

## Chapter 4

# Secret arms supplies and other covert actions

‘Embargo! What Arms Embargo?’<sup>647</sup>

Tuzla is a diplomatic can of worms.’<sup>648</sup>

### 1. Introduction

There is an element that, strictly speaking, has no connection with all the activities surrounding the gathering of intelligence, but is intertwined with it: covert action (special or clandestine operations). Covert action involves secret activities oriented to influencing foreign governments, persons and organizations, or political, economic and military developments for the benefit of a country’s own national security policy. A crucial point is that the country’s own involvement remains strictly secret.

There are various forms of covert action, ranging from propaganda, paramilitary or political activities oriented to overthrowing or supporting a given regime; secret support to individuals or organizations (trade unions, newspapers and political parties); secret arms supplies; economic destabilization operations, and lethal attacks.<sup>649</sup> Covert action is therefore concerned with attempts to influence or to manipulate a country’s political policy. Strictly speaking, it is not an activity that falls within the definition of intelligence, although it can contribute to intelligence gathering.<sup>650</sup> Covert operations took place throughout the world during the Cold War.<sup>651</sup>

In this chapter, we will investigate which secret activities were carried out during the war in Bosnia. Attention will be paid to the resources that foreign services threw into the fray to support or to weaken one of the warring factions. In this, little or no attention will be paid to forms of covert action such as propaganda, coup attempts and assassination attempts. The reason is simple: so far nothing has been discovered on these activities. However, there will be a comprehensive discussion of one of the traditional resources in secret operations, the clandestine arms supplies to one of the warring factions. Such an operation, involving foreign services, was the secret arms supplies to the Bosnian army from Iran through what was known as the ‘Croatian pipeline’, which we will return to in Section 2. We will consider the role that the United States played in this.

Section 3 will go into further detail on the so-called Black Flights to Tuzla. In addition to Iran, other countries were actively involved in secret operations to supply the *Armija Bosna i Hercegovina* (ABiH) with weapons and ammunition. Section 4 will describe what has become known about the logistical military support to the other warring factions, Bosnian Serbs and Croats, and the associated role of Serbia and other countries. We will also pay attention to the ICFY Monitoring Mission that was

<sup>647</sup> O’shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 155.

<sup>648</sup> Ian Bruce, ‘Big stick may not work second time round’, *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 23/02/94.

<sup>649</sup> Cf. Roy Godson, ‘Covert Action: neither exceptional tool nor magic bullet’, in: Godson, May & Schmitt, *U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads*, p. 155 and Godson, *Dirty Tricks or Trump Cards*, passim.

<sup>650</sup> William J. Brands, ‘Intelligence and Foreign Policy: Dilemmas of A Democracy’, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 47 (1969), 2, p. 288. The same is true of counterintelligence (CI), which can best be defined as the identification and neutralization of the threat coming from foreign services and making attempts to manipulate these services and to use them for a country’s own benefit. CI is more a specific form of intelligence, and it also includes the gathering of information on foreign services, which may be either hostile or friendly services. CI also makes use of open and clandestine sources to gain information on the structure, working method and operations of these services. CI can also involve the penetration and destabilization of such services. See: Roy Godson, ‘Counterintelligence: An Introduction’, in: Godson, *Intelligence*, pp. 1-2. Further: Randall M. Fort, ‘Economic Espionage’, in: Godson, May & Schmitt, *U.S. Intelligence at the Crossroads*, p. 182. See also: *Annual report of the National Security Service (BVD) 1995*, pp. 29-30.

<sup>651</sup> For a historical overview of US operations: Richelson, *The US Intelligence Community*, pp. 342-364.

intended to monitor the border crossings on the Drina river. Section 5 will discuss the deployment of mercenaries. Much press attention has been devoted to the Mujahedin, who were said to have taken part in the conflict in substantial numbers on the side of the ABiH: numbers ranging from 1000 to 3000 Islamic fighters were mentioned.<sup>652</sup> Attention will also be paid to the deployment of mercenaries, including Dutch ones, by the other parties. Section 6 will deal with the deployment of Special Forces, such as the British SAS. The final section will present the conclusions.

## 2. Arms supplies to the ABiH: the Croatian pipeline

When the Security Council adopted resolution 713 on 25 September 1991, a document was on the table that requested every member state to stop supplying weapons and military goods to the warring factions from their own territory to the Balkans. It was the first Security Council resolution dealing with an embargo, three months after the outbreak of the conflict in Slovenia. By that time, various arms transactions had already been discovered. In early 1991, the Bosnian Minister of the Interior personally started purchasing Kalashnikovs and ammunition in Vienna.<sup>653</sup> On 15 August 1991, Russian-manufactured Kalashnikovs, American M-16 rifles, anti-tank grenades and rocket launchers destined for Yugoslavia were intercepted. The same happened in November. Furthermore, weapons that had first been delivered to Lebanon were sold off by this country because of the 'relative quiet' there. Various lots were bought back by Yugoslavia.<sup>654</sup> The German foreign intelligence service, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, was also said to be involved in arms supplies to Croatia via Hungary.<sup>655</sup> At that time, the Bosnian Serbs had allegedly already received weapons.<sup>656</sup>

Resolution 713 did not imply that member states also had to stop the supplies from third party countries to the region. An enforcement mechanism for resolution 713 was adopted only in November 1992 via resolution 787. This called on the member states, individually or jointly via regional agreements, to stop the import by sea. The arms embargo was further tightened by the UN on 30 May 1992. On 9 October 1992, the Security Council adopted resolution 781, which imposed a ban on military flights over Bosnia that had not been approved in advance. This was the well known No Fly Zone resolution. According to the mediator Lord Owen, his lobbying for the No Fly Zone resolution was partly inspired by his fear that Iranian aircraft would land at Tuzla Air Base, and the Bosnian Serbs would retaliate by stopping all humanitarian relief to them.<sup>657</sup> In spite of all the resolutions, UNPROFOR was not given the mandate to monitor or enforce violations of the arms embargo on land,<sup>658</sup> NATO and the WEU did do so at sea.

On 31 March 1993, the Security Council adopted resolution 816 to enforce the earlier resolution 781. It permitted military action by the UN against 'fixed wing and rotary aircraft', if permission was given by UNPROFOR. NATO Council imposed a No Fly Zone above the former Yugoslavia to monitor flight movements, and within the framework of Operation Sharp Guard, a fleet on the Adriatic Sea attempted to apprehend and inspect all suspicious vessels. Nonetheless, all the warring factions attempted to purchase weapons, ammunition and military equipment from abroad and

<sup>652</sup> Harald Doornbos, 'Het is tijd voor de jihad' ('It is time for the Jihad'), in *Elsevier*, 14/11/92 and 'Bewijs tegen moslim-generaals hele klus' ('Finding evidence against Muslim generals a tough job'), *NRC Handelsblad*, 09/08/01.

<sup>653</sup> Interview with B. Spasic, 16/09/01.

<sup>654</sup> 'Beiroet en de Balkan-connectie' ('Beirut and the Balkans connection'), *Trouw*, 10/07/91; 'Joegoslavische partijen op zoek naar wapens' ('Yugoslav parties in search of weapons'), *NRC Handelsblad*, 16/08/91 and 'Evacuatie waarnemers in Dubrovnik vertraagd' ('Evacuation of observers in Dubrovnik delayed'), *De Volkskrant*, 13/11/91. See also: NMFA, *DEU/ARA/00081*, PR Geneva to Foreign Affairs, no. 0 Gevi478/15043, 26/07/91.

<sup>655</sup> Blank, *Yugoslavia's Wars*, p. 115.

<sup>656</sup> Cekic, *Aggression*, pp. 86-88.

<sup>657</sup> Owen, *Balkans Odyssey*, p. 59.

<sup>658</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*, Akashi to Annan, Z-1106, 22/07/94.

to import them into the region.<sup>659</sup> The question now is what military impact these secret weapons supplies had on the events in Yugoslavia.

The supplies were firstly a violation of the arms embargo imposed by the international community on the warring factions. The embargo was officially sanctioned by the Security Council. The supplies to, for example, the ABiH, could be interpreted by the other warring factions, such as the *Vojska Republika Srpska* (VRS, Bosnian-Serb Army) and the *Hrvatsko Vijeće Odbrane* (HVO, the Croatian Defence Council, the army of the Bosnian Croats) as a violation of the embargo, and thus could provoke a military response. In retaliation, the VRS could shell airfields with tanks, mortars or artillery so as to impede the supply.<sup>660</sup>

The supply of arms to the warring factions also affected the stability in the region, and in many cases inflamed the armed conflict. It is no coincidence that military equipment was often delivered a few weeks before the start of new large-scale offensives by the ABiH, VRS or Croats. This often went according to a fixed pattern: clandestine supplies; training, possibly supervised by instructors, for operating the new weapons; and subsequently the start of military offensives. Logically this could lead, or did lead, to situations in which UN troops were put in immediate mortal danger. After all, the UN troops' task was to control or monitor these airfields.

Finally, the secret operations are of interest because various statements pointed to the conclusion that the clandestine supplies usually led to rapid transit to the eastern enclaves, such as Srebrenica and Zepa. The VRS complained that the supply of new weapons usually facilitated new sorties from the enclaves into Bosnian-Serb villages and military positions, which in turn provoked a response from the VRS. This action-reaction cycle again put UNPROFOR troops in danger. In the enclaves, the ABiH actually all too often used the Observation Posts (Ops) as a cover in military actions against the VRS. It is important to reconstruct the secret arms supplies from Iran via the 'Croatian pipeline' and the Black Flights to Tuzla, because this will make clear that different NATO member states had different political and military views on the possible consequences for the UNPROFOR troops on the ground.

### *The background to the Croatian pipeline*

On 4 September 1992, the CIA discovered an Iran Air Boeing 747 at Zagreb airport. Subsequent investigation revealed that the jumbo jet was loaded with weapons, ammunition, anti-tank rockets, communication equipment and other military equipment, such as uniforms and helmets, destined for the ABiH in Bosnia.<sup>661</sup> President Tudjman informed mediator Lord Owen accordingly. Apparently, he rejected Iranian involvement.<sup>662</sup> The Bush administration protested in Zagreb and the arms were confiscated, after which Croatia appeared to stop all further clandestine arms transport via Zagreb.

On 29-30 October 1992, Bosnian President Izetbegovic paid a visit to Teheran and entered into an agreement according to which Iran would again attempt to supply necessary goods via Zagreb. Turkey and Saudi Arabia also offered assistance but attached the condition that Izetbegovic should not request assistance from Iran. This did not dissuade the Bosnian from reaching an agreement with Teheran.<sup>663</sup> According to officials of an European intelligence service, Izetbegovic was a president who was less tied to the apron strings of the United States than everyone thought.<sup>664</sup> At least the former chairman of the British Joint Intelligence Committee, Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, was of this

<sup>659</sup> Confidential information (14).

<sup>660</sup> James Risen and Doyle McManus also point specifically to this danger in 'U.S. Okd Iran Arms for Bosnia, Officials Say', *The Los Angeles Times*, 05/04/96.

<sup>661</sup> Jacques Charmelot, 'Arms supply embargo is copiously violated', *AFP press release*, 08/04/96.

<sup>662</sup> Owen, *Balkans Odyssey*, p. 47. The reporter Robert Dulmers was a witness to the arms smuggling with the Iranian aircraft, but refused to make it public. See: Karskens, *Pleisters op de Ogen*, p. 263.

<sup>663</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 30/93, 28/04/93.

<sup>664</sup> Confidential information (48). It was even asserted that the CIA had evidence that Izetbegovic was on Iran's payroll. See: *Vesti*, 03/01/97.

opinion.<sup>665</sup> After Croatia had normalized its diplomatic relations with Iran in April 1992, it was represented in Teheran by the Croatian Muslim Osman Muftic, who elaborated the details of the agreement with the Bosnian ambassador in Teheran, Omer Behmen, and a confidant of Izetbegovic, Hasan Cengic.

On 1 November 1992, an Iranian Boeing 747 landed in Zagreb with sixty tons of 'humanitarian goods'. A few days later the Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei donated \$ 3.3 million to Sarajevo. At the end of November, the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ali Akbar Velayati, paid a visit to Zagreb to discuss the further logistical details.<sup>666</sup> This was surprising, because in this period there was heavy fighting between Croatia and Bosnia.

Perhaps Bonn put pressure on Zagreb to cooperate. Close connections happened to exist between the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* and the Iranian services. For example, this German service allegedly supplied computer hardware to Teheran, and it trained Iranian intelligence officers in Munich in 1992.<sup>667</sup> In the same period, a variety of clandestine arms supplies were set up for Croatia and Bosnia by Croatian Catholic relief organizations. They ran via Ludwigshafen under the leadership of Father Johannes, and involved walkie-talkies, helmets, sleeping bags, field kitchens and uniforms, which mainly came from old stocks from the GDR.<sup>668</sup>

On 19 January 1993, the Dutch Permanent Representative to NATO, Jacobovits, reported that his British colleague had announced that the United Kingdom had made *démarches* in various capitals in connection with large-scale violations of the arms embargo. Certain Islamic countries were then said to be in the process of collecting hundreds of millions of dollars for providing the ABiH with a serious offensive military capacity. The arms had to be purchased before a resort was made to enforcing the No Fly Zone.<sup>669</sup>

#### *Clinton on the stage: American initiatives to lift the arms embargo*

Around the time of the inauguration of President Bill Clinton, on 20 January 1993, the ABiH was in a poor position militarily, partly because the fighting between Croatia and Bosnia had flared up again. However, Clinton had a much more positive attitude towards the Bosnian issue than his predecessor, Bush, and during his presidential election campaign he argued for lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims. The future Vice-President Al Gore especially was a supporter of tough politics in the Balkans and the arming of the Muslims.<sup>670</sup> According to the later Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, a sense of frustration was felt during the election campaign because of the Bush administration's Bosnia policy. Little attention was paid to Bosnia under President Bush. His priorities were the Gulf states and Somalia rather than holding Yugoslavia together. For ideological and political reasons, Bush explicitly opposed any further involvement with the developments in Yugoslavia. The Clinton campaign capitalized on this.

Differences of opinion existed in the American administration under Clinton about the extent to which they should become involved in the conflict in Bosnia. There were different ideas, because some (including Albright) had 1938 Munich as a frame of reference in their heads, while others had Vietnam. Everyone did realize that the Balkans would provide the United States with better access to the Middle East. They also looked at the united Europe and constantly asked why the United States always had to take care of everything. The Clinton administration therefore also looked more often to

<sup>665</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>666</sup> Blaine Harden, 'Middle eastern Muslims Helping Bosnian Defenders Against Serb Forces', *The Washington Post*, 27/08/92 and John Pomfret, 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/96.

<sup>667</sup> Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, 'The Bundesnachrichtendienst, the Bundeswehr and *Sigint* in the Cold War and After', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *The secrets of Signals Intelligence*, p. 155. See for other accusations: Dzamic, *Psi Rata na Balkanu*, p. 220.

<sup>668</sup> Thomas Deichmann, 'Pater Johannes, patriotischer Waffenhaendler', *Die Tageszeitung*, 19/03/96.

<sup>669</sup> NMFA, *PVNATO*. *PVNATO* to Foreign Affairs, no. Brni068/1872, 19/01/93.

<sup>670</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 159.

the UN, which had expressed its concern about the conflict. Albright remained opposed to lifting the arms embargo. According to her, this would serve no purpose whatsoever. The opposing pressure from Congress and the media to lift the embargo, should certainly not be underestimated.<sup>671</sup>

The later National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, was also already a supporter of a tougher Bosnia policy in the 1992 campaign. Lake had considerable experience with foreign policy. In 1969 he served on Henry Kissinger's staff and resigned in 1970 after differences of opinion with Kissinger on Vietnam, especially on the invasion of Cambodia. These experiences had formed Lake's ideas: there must be no involvement at all of American ground forces, because 'Bosnia is a much tougher neighbourhood'. For him, Vietnam was still the reference: 'Think ahead. Don't make commitments that you can't meet. And just don't wander into something.'

In his function, Lake constantly had to mediate in a wide variety of conflicts about Bosnia between and within ministries and intelligence services. The relationship between Lake and Christopher was also said to be under constant tension.<sup>672</sup> In the spring of 1993, Lake was closely involved in 'selling' the so-called lift and strike strategy, which advocated lifting the embargo and a more rapid and heavier deployment of air power. He discussed this proposal with Canadian officials, and said that his government envisaged only one option: 'lifting [the] arms embargo with arms going to Bosnian Croats and Muslims and air power to stop Serbian interference with these shipments.' According to Lake, lifting the arms embargo was the right path for the Americans. Training must be provided by a third party country, which must certainly not be the United States, but preferably a non-radical Arab or Muslim state. As far as Lake was concerned, any country except Iran could supply arms to the ABiH, preferably by lifting the arms embargo, but if necessary illegally.

Approximately 30,000 ABiH soldiers would be armed in the subsequent 3 to 5 months, starting with small arms. The force would slowly be built up from this basis. Germany would put pressure on the Croats to prevent them from claiming too large a share of the supplies that were to run through Croatia and were destined for Bosnia. Germany would also put pressure on Tudjman to prevent an attack by Croats on the Bosnian Muslims. Humanitarian relief should probably be stopped because of these supplies, but should be reinstated later once the ABiH had gained territory. According to Lake, the arms supplies would not prolong the conflict.<sup>673</sup>

#### *Responses to the proposal to lift the arms embargo*

This new approach was discussed with the United Kingdom and France. The response was somewhat predictable. London was fiercely opposed to supplying arms and ammunition, and Lake expected Paris to respond in an identical way. According to Lord Owen, the French view on the arms embargo on Bosnia was largely the same as that of the British. British diplomats were said to have reported from Paris that the American solution of lifting the arms embargo was the worst solution imaginable. Moving along this path would enable everyone to arm all other parties, which they said was sure to happen. Russian weapons would find their way to the Serbs, and the Islamic countries would respond in turn.<sup>674</sup>

A Canadian official asked Lake whether account had been taken of the safety of Canadian UNPROFOR and other troops on the ground, Lake's answer was a revealing and at the same time disconcerting: 'no'. According to Lake there were 'no easy answers. If he were back at college debating the issue he would take the no side.'<sup>675</sup> In Ottawa, highly placed officials responded indignantly to

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<sup>671</sup> Interview with M. Albright, 28/09/01.

<sup>672</sup> Jason DeParle, 'The man inside Bill Clinton's foreign policy', *The New York Times*, 20/08/95. See for Lake's attitude to the participation of ground forces: Anthony Lake, 'Bosnia: America's Interest and America's Role', *Inside The Army*, 11/04/94.

<sup>673</sup> Confidential information (19).

<sup>674</sup> Interview with Lord Owen, 27/06/01.

<sup>675</sup> Confidential information (19).

Lake's statement.<sup>676</sup> As a Canadian functionary in the same time remarked: 'We are back to a world of big power politics and that is not kind to nations like Canada. We are just another troop contributor now, and no one is asking our opinion'.<sup>677</sup>

Lake had evidently paid no attention whatever to the safety of the UN troops on the ground, and had accordingly also seriously underestimated the possible reactions of the Bosnian Serbs to lifting the arms embargo. According to the Canadians, most military analyses demonstrated that, even with sufficient arms, the ABiH would first require long-term training before any improvement in the command could occur. Ottawa, London and Paris, which all had ground forces in Bosnia, opposed this initiative. Although lift and strike was officially adhered to, it had now become clear to the American administration that it would not be feasible, partly as a consequence of criticism from Europe.<sup>678</sup> The Chief Political Officer of UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, Corwin, expressed it as follows:

'Any sign of lifting the embargo will encourage a wider war, and a wider war will mean more refugees. The main reason why the European powers are in the former Yugoslavia in the first place is to prevent refugee flows to their own countries'.<sup>679</sup>

As David Hannay, Britain's permanent representative at the UN from 1990-1995, acknowledged later, the failure to take decisive action at crucial moments in the conflict was more due to the tensions between those member states with troops on the ground and those like the United States without. Whilst anxious not to undermine publicly the impression of allied unity, many NATO allies with troops on the ground were markedly reluctant. According to Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, formerly chairing the JIC and later leader of the UK delegation at Dayton, Ohio, the allies for a long time frustrated each other and were unable either to convince others of their position, or to concede to a different viewpoint.<sup>680</sup> And Boutros-Ghali cynically remarked: Washington devised a way to gain domestic political benefit from tough talk about air strikes, knowing that it was shielded from acting because its European allies would never agree to put their personnel serving with UNPROFOR in danger.<sup>681</sup>

In the spring of 1993, there were various spheres of influence that affected the United States. After the Gulf War it was payback time for the United States: there was an expectation in the Arab world (especially Saudi Arabia) that Washington would support the Bosnian Muslims. Furthermore, there was great pressure on the American administration from the media and from Congress, which was dominated by Republicans. In June 1993, Clinton received the head of the Saudi Arabian intelligence service, Prince Turki al Faisal, who was a close adviser to his uncle, the King. The Prince urged Clinton to take the lead in the military assistance to Bosnia. The American administration did not dare to do so: the fear of a rift within NATO was too great. However, the United States did consider the Saudi Arabian signal to be important, and therefore a new strategy was elaborated. Its architect was to be Richard Holbrooke, who started to look for a way to arm the Bosnian Muslims. In the summer of 1993, the Pentagon - the American ministry of defence - was said to have drawn up a plan for arms assistance to the ABiH, which included supplies of AK-47s and other small arms. This operation was to demand almost three hundred C-130 Hercules transport aircraft flights. The weapons were going to have to come from former Warsaw Pact stocks. The plan was rejected, however, for fear that it would leak out and to prevent protest from the European allies.<sup>682</sup>

<sup>676</sup> Confidential interviews (2) and (62).

<sup>677</sup> Norman Hillmer and Dean Oliver, 'Canada and the Balkans, in: Schmidt, *A History of NATO*, p. 82.

<sup>678</sup> James Risen, 'Administration Defends Its OK of Bosnia Arms', *The Los Angeles Times*, 04/08/96 and Owen, *Balkans Odyssey*, p. 73. See also: Jason DeParle, 'The man inside Bill Clinton's foreign policy', *The New York Times*, 20/08/95.

<sup>679</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*. p. 85.

<sup>680</sup> Pauline Neville-Jones, 'Dayton, IFOR and Alliance Relations in Bosnia', *Survival*, Vol. 38 (Winter 1996-97) 4, p. 64.

<sup>681</sup> Mats Berdal, 'Relations Between NATO and the UN', Schmidt, *A History of NATO*, pp. 61-64.

<sup>682</sup> Paul Quinn-Judge. 'US Denies Giving Arms', *The Boston Globe*, 18/11/94.

*The Croatian pipeline in practice until the beginning of 1993*

In the meantime, Iran, and by then also Turkey, supplied arms via Zagreb to Bosnia.<sup>683</sup> In April 1993, there were again discussions on this subject in Teheran between Bosnian Muslims, Croats and Iranians, which were also attended by the Iranian President Rafsanjani and the Bosnian President Izetbegovic. Rafsanjani took this opportunity to offer to supply all old Russian weapons to Bosnia and Croatia, under the condition that the Bosnian Muslims arranged for the transport. There were still some rather sensitive issues between the two countries: during the visit Rafsanjani expressed indignation to the Croatian delegation about the bloodbath in Ahmici, a village in central Bosnia, where more than one hundred Muslims were killed by Croatian units on 16 April 1993.<sup>684</sup>

Arms and ammunition transport did not always proceed without a hitch. For instance, the Bosnian Prime Minister Silajdzic was able to recall an incident in February 1993 in which a delivery of Milan anti-tank missiles, destined for East Bosnia, was confiscated by Croatian militias. And the leader of the Bosnian Croats, Boban, told Vance and Owen frankly in March 1993 that he and Croatia had suspended the transit of arms because of the ABiH operations around Mostar.<sup>685</sup> Boban had done so before, in July 1992.<sup>686</sup>

Sometimes the Croats sent a signal to Sarajevo referring to the dependence on the Croatian pipeline. For instance, a convoy of the relief organization *Merhamet* was intercepted in central Bosnia. It was transporting relief goods, but arms and ammunition were found under false floors. At the end of March, the two governments attempted to reconcile these problems: President Tudjman and President Izetbegovic reached an agreement in which Croatia would continue to transport arms in exchange for Bosnian electricity to Croatian Dalmatia. Tudjman visited Turkey in April 1993 in enhancement of this agreement. Furthermore, Croatia purchased Russian helicopters destined for Bosnia, which were properly delivered in Tuzla.<sup>687</sup> As Sarajevo was very much aware of its dependence on Croatia, Izetbegovic visited Teheran again on 14 September 1993 to deepen the defence relationship.

Meanwhile Holbrooke<sup>688</sup> was becoming increasingly frustrated that the Croatian pipeline was not progressing well. Lake once described Holbrooke as 'high-maintenance'<sup>689</sup>. Holbrooke therefore proposed to deliver arms and ammunition to the ABiH via third party countries. Lake, who had always welcomed such covert operations<sup>690</sup>, nonetheless found the plan 'too risky'. The Secretary of State, Christopher, shared this view. They did support 'lift and strike' but not 'lift, arm and strike'.<sup>691</sup> Holbrooke's proposals did lead to a debate within the administration. Clinton and State Department officials considered supplies via Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan. This was not new: in the 1980s, Saudi Arabia had already supplied arms worth \$ 500 million via the CIA to the Mujahedin fighters in Afghanistan. There had also already been a close relationship with Turkey in the area of intelligence for some considerable time. For instance, there were various American monitoring stations in Turkey, and there was close collaboration of the Turkish domestic security service with the CIA and the FBI in opposing the terrorism of the PKK.<sup>692</sup> It was proposed at least three times between 1993 and 1995 to

<sup>683</sup> F. Chipoux, 'Bosnians getting arms from Islamic countries', *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 30/08/92.

<sup>684</sup> Magas and Zanic, *The War in Croatia and Bosnia Hercegovina*, pp. 268-269.

<sup>685</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 21/93, 22/03/93.

<sup>686</sup> 'Bosnische president wil wapens van de Verenigde Staten' ('Bosnian president wants arms from the United States'), *De Volkskrant*, 09/07/92.

<sup>687</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 24/93, 05/04/93 and no. 25/93, 13/04/93 and Duygu Bazolu, 'Implications for Turkey's relations with Western Europe', in: Jopp (ed.), *The Implications of the Yugoslav Crisis*, p. 36.

<sup>688</sup> Holbrooke was never available for an interview with the NIOD despite various vigorous attempts by the Netherlands embassy in Washington DC.

<sup>689</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 178.

<sup>690</sup> Vernon Loeb, 'Tony Lake and the CIA', *The Washington Post*, 27/11/00.

<sup>691</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>692</sup> Confidential information (35).



engage these countries, but each time Lake and Christopher rejected it out of fear of leaks and European protests.

*Will the Americans support the Croatian pipeline?*

The head of the Croatian intelligence service - the son of the Croatian president - Miroslav Tudjman, visited Washington DC in the autumn of 1993. He spoke there with James Woolsey, the director of the CIA, and others. The cynical Woolsey welcomed him with the words: 'I hear that you've discovered the best kept secret in Washington - that we have no policy towards the former Yugoslavia.' When Tudjman stated later to the director of the National Security Agency (NSA) that intelligence for a stable regional solution to the conflict should not be sought in Bosnia, but in Washington, the American stated: 'If something is a secret, we can discover it, but not if it's a mystery.' Whether Izetbegovic's earlier visit to Teheran was also on the agenda remains unclear, but in any case Tudjman opposed the involvement of Iran.<sup>693</sup>

Meanwhile, from mid 1993, the idea arose within the American administration of establishing a Muslim-Croat federation. Washington wanted to bring an end to the conflict between Bosnian Muslims and Croats. In early 1994, the frustrations in Washington increased, partly because of the VRS attacks on Sarajevo and Gorazde. On Saturday 5 February 1994, shortly after noon, a mortar shell exploded on Sarajevo's Markale market, close to the cathedral. As a consequence of the attack, approximately seventy people died and some two hundred were wounded. It was the heaviest attack on the city. Blood and severed limbs could be seen all around the market. Western television companies chose not to broadcast large parts of the available image material because it was too dreadful. Nevertheless, the pictures that were broadcast did have 'a transforming political impact'.<sup>694</sup>

The incident coincided with a reorientation of the policy of the major Western countries, and two new major players entering the Bosnian drama. In addition to the UN Secretary-General's special representative, Akashi, the new British Bosnia Hercegovina Commander (BHC) in Sarajevo, General M. Rose, had taken over the function on 21 January of the Belgian General F. Briquemont. It was already noticeable during the NATO summit of 9 and 10 January 1994 that the US administration was in the process of reconsidering its position on Bosnia. William Perry, who had succeeded Les Aspin as Secretary of Defense, and General John Shalikashvili, who as the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff had taken the place of Colin Powell, were more inclined to deploy air power than their two predecessors. During a visit by US Secretary of State, Christopher, to Paris on 24 January, the French government had also firmly insisted on a greater US involvement in the crisis in Yugoslavia. One week later, on 1 February, the British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, addressed Christopher in similar terms in Washington. What had happened on 5 February in Sarajevo market also eased the turnaround of the American administration to become more closely involved in Bosnia.<sup>695</sup>

The US diplomats Charles Redman and Peter Tarnoff were dispatched to Europe after the attack in Sarajevo. The message that they took with them was that the United States was prepared to cooperate towards peace in Bosnia, but at the same time wished tougher actions against the Bosnian Serbs; also, humanitarian convoys must also no longer be obstructed.<sup>696</sup> A suspension of hostilities on 23 February and the formation on 13 March 1994 of the federation of Croatia and Bosnia, in which Redman played an important role, calmed the armed conflict.<sup>697</sup>

<sup>693</sup> Miroslav Tudjman, 'The First Five Years of the Croatian Intelligence Service', *National Security and The Future*, Vol. 1 (2000) 2, p. 60.

<sup>694</sup> Bell, *In Harm's Way*, p. 177.

<sup>695</sup> Cf. *Tweede Kamer, Session 1993-1994*, Proceedings, p. 3895 (Kooijmans, 16/02/94); Drew, *Edge*, pp. 410-411 en Schoemaker, 'Oorlog', p. 30.

<sup>696</sup> Interview with Charles Redman, 27/06/01.

<sup>697</sup> Andreatta, *The Bosnian War and the New World Order*, p. 14.

*The role of the Croats*

The Americans were aware that Iran had been supplying arms via Croatia since 1992, but that this had stopped or had been significantly reduced temporarily because of the conflict between Muslims and Croats in Bosnia. The establishment of the federation now offered an opportunity to reopen the Iranian pipeline. That, and the increasing American involvement, were important milestones in boosting the arms pipeline between Iran and Croatia. The Croatian Minister of Defence, Gojko Susak, also stated that in 1992 and 1993 the Americans still had no interest in the smuggling operations: 'The Americans never protested. When they asked, we would say that our original weapons were simply hatching babies.'<sup>698</sup>

The government in Zagreb was nonetheless divided on the transit issue, which was understandable, because Croatia and Bosnia had been involved in fierce fighting around Travnik and Zenica. This died down only after the establishment of the Federation in March 1994. On the other hand, Zagreb also needed arms and ammunition. At first, Croatia suffered the most under Security Council Resolution 713, in which every member state was requested to stop supplying arms and military goods from their own territory to the warring factions in the Balkans.<sup>699</sup> However, Susak was a fervent supporter of Iranian supplies because, in spite of the conflict with the ABiH, by 'skimming' the consignments, many weapons could remain in Zagreb. Furthermore, with the new arms the ABiH could tie up Bosnian-Serb units and resources, so that they could no longer be deployed against the Croats.

Miroslav Tudjman and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mate Granic, were opposed to the resumption of the supplies, however. They feared an excessive Iranian influence and an intensification of the fighting between Bosnia and Croatia. President Tudjman nonetheless took Susak's side because the additional arms could ensure military successes. Tudjman need have no more worries that UNPROFOR would take action against the supplies: in spite of all the resolutions, there was no mandate to monitor violations or to enforce the embargo. Observers were not even allowed to inspect aircraft.<sup>700</sup> Classified CIA documents to which the *Los Angeles Times* managed to gain access, proved that the American ambassador in Zagreb, Peter Galbraith, had already taken initiatives for supplies. In February or March 1994, he spoke with his CIA station chief about the option of secret arms supplies to Bosnia, to which the United States would turn a blind eye. The station chief reported this immediately to his headquarters.<sup>701</sup>

On 16 April 1994, Galbraith spoke with the religious leader of the small Muslim community in Zagreb, Iman Sefko Omerbasic, who later informed the Iranian ambassador that American diplomats had urged him to purchase arms for the ABiH. The CIA managed to gain access to a report of this discussion, and they suspected that Galbraith was engaged in a secret operation.<sup>702</sup>

On 27 April 1994, the Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Granic, visited the American ambassador, Galbraith. The Croatian government wished to reinstate the Iranian pipeline. Granic was still opposed to the supplies and urged Galbraith to say no. The following day, President Tudjman wished to discuss this with Galbraith. Tudjman wanted a formal answer to the question of how the Clinton administration would respond to a resumption of the supplies. Granic had expected Tudjman to accept a resumption of the supplies, as Zagreb wanted good relations with Washington. Galbraith, who was as frustrated as Holbrooke, thought that the supplies should be resumed. The next day, Galbraith had a brief discussion with Tudjman, who conveyed to him the Croatian request to consent to a resumption of the supplies.<sup>703</sup>

<sup>698</sup> John Pomfret, 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/96.

<sup>699</sup> Owen, *Balkans Odyssey*, p. 48.

<sup>700</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, Box 124, Akashi to Annan, Z-1106, 22/07/94.

<sup>701</sup> James Risen, 'secret messages by U.S. spies anger envoys', *Los Angeles Times*, 24/12/96.

<sup>702</sup> James Risen, 'Closer U.S. role seen on Bosnia Iran arms pipeline', *Los Angeles Times*, 23/12/96.

<sup>703</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'Clinton's Irangate spooks CIA', *The Observer*, 02/06/96.

Later that day, Galbraith reported to the State Department: ‘This matter is time-urgent.’ He was referring to the fact that the Croatian prime minister, Mikica Valentic, was due to depart for Teheran on 29 April. Without an American ‘green light’ the trip was cancelled. Galbraith proposed using disguised Iranian Boeing 747s for the supplies. Half of the consignment of arms would be destined for Croatia and the other half for the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>704</sup>

*The die is cast in Washington*

Galbraith approached Alexander Vershbow, the Assistant Secretary of State for Bosnia, who passed the problem on to the Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, and to Lake. Both understood the dilemma: the disadvantage was that Iran would be drawn into the region. This could have major consequences and could even cause the sudden collapse of the Muslim-Croat Federation. The advantage was that it would finally assure assistance to the Bosnian Muslims.

Meanwhile, State Department lawyers assessed the operation. They came to the conclusion that encouraging a foreign government to procure arms from Iran was not a secret action.<sup>705</sup> Talbott and Lake decided to inform Galbraith that he had no instructions: ‘a deft way or saying that the United States would not actively object.’

On 27 April 1994, Lake and Talbott discussed this with Clinton on board Air Force One. It was then decided to give a green light to the arms supplies from Iran to Croatia. The opponents were thereby overruled: Christopher was confronted with a *fait accompli*, and CIA director Woolsey was not informed at all.<sup>706</sup> According to Redman, Lake had ‘come around’ and he was the man behind the idea of supplying arms to the ABiH. The ‘No instructions’ instruction to Galbraith and Redman came from Lake.<sup>707</sup> Doubts remained about Iran’s possible role, but the complete change in policy rapidly became clear.<sup>708</sup>

At first Galbraith did not understand the ‘no instructions’ message. He wondered whether it meant that he should give Tudjman the green light. He phoned the Europe chief of the National Security Council, Jenonne Walker, who then consulted Lake. Walker then phoned Galbraith back: ‘no instructions’ was what Lake had said to her but ‘Tony [Lake] was smiling when he said it.’<sup>709</sup> On 28 April 1994, the architect of the Muslim-Croat federation, Charles Redman, accompanied by Galbraith, visited the Croatian president, Tudjman. Redman told him that Washington would have no objection to a clandestine channel through which arms would be transported to Bosnia. They told Tudjman specifically that they had ‘no instructions’ on this sensitive subject. Lake had again impressed upon the two American diplomats on 2 May that it was unnecessary to report on their ‘no instructions’ discussion with Tudjman to the State Department.<sup>710</sup>

Tudjman did not understand this message at first, was confused and asked for clarification on the following day. Galbraith then said to him: ‘focus not only on what I had said yesterday but what I had not said.’ Redman was clearer: ‘We don’t want to be the ones who say no to this.’<sup>711</sup> That was all

<sup>704</sup> James Risen, ‘Closer U.S. role seen on Bosnia Iran arms pipeline’, *Los Angeles Times*, 23/12/96. See also: James Hill, ‘Unwrap Arms Deal’, *The Phoenix Gazette*, 27/12/96.

<sup>705</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>706</sup> Walter Pincus, ‘Woolsey, in testimony, Criticizes White House’, *The Washington Post*, 11/06/96.

<sup>707</sup> Interview with Charles Redman, 27/06/01.

<sup>708</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 332-340.

<sup>709</sup> James Risen & Doyle McManus, ‘U.S. had options to let Bosnia get arms’, *Los Angeles Times*, 14/07/96.

<sup>710</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>711</sup> James Risen & Doyle McManus, ‘U.S. Envoy May Have Aided Arms Convoy to Bosnia’, *The Los Angeles Times*, 17/04/96; Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 13; Ed Vulliamy, ‘Clinton’s Irigate spooks CIA’, *The Observer*, 02/06/96 and Cohen, *Hearts grown brutal*, pp. 314-317.

Tudjman needed to hear and after talks with Izetbegovic he decided to take immediate action. From 29 April to 2 May 1994, the Croatian prime minister, Valentic, and the Bosnian deputy prime minister visited Teheran for consultations with President Ali Akbar Rafsanjani. A tripartite agreement was drawn up for arms supplies and humanitarian assistance to Bosnia.

### *Resumption of the arms supplies*

The first consignment from Iran landed in Zagreb on 4 May, with sixty tons of explosives and military equipment on board. The arms were transported in Croatian army trucks along the Adriatic coast to Bosnia. The first consignment was probably an Iranian gift. Subsequently it appeared that Teheran wanted hard currency for the supplies. On 6 May, Ali Akbar Velayati visited Zagreb to discuss the further logistics arrangements. He travelled on to Sarajevo to present a cheque for \$ 1 million to Izetbegovic. Because the supplies attracted too much attention at Pleso Airport in Zagreb, the flights subsequently went mainly to the Croatian island of Krk. Shortly after Iranian cargo aircraft had landed there, a number of Croatian helicopters arrived to continue transporting the load after dusk. Moreover, Albania was prepared to act as a transit port.<sup>712</sup>

In the summer of 1994, the first reports started to arrive that the Croats and Bosnian Muslims had again travelled to Teheran to reach a new agreement. According to British diplomatic sources, a secret agreement was reached in Teheran between the Iranians and Croats in June 1994. The foundation for this was laid in May, during the Croatian prime minister's visit to Teheran. The following agreement was reached: Iran purchased five oil tankers and three cargo vessels from Croatia worth \$ 150 million. Teheran was to pay this amount as follows: 25 percent in oil; 50 percent in cash and 25 percent in credit. In exchange, Iran would be provided unhindered access to Bosnia via Croatia. In this way, Teheran would initiate a flow of humanitarian relief and arms to Bosnia.<sup>713</sup> One consequence of the new US policy was that the British intelligence and security services stood alone in this phase because the American services no longer provided intelligence on violations of the embargo.<sup>714</sup>

Not everything went smoothly with the supplies in practice, because a helicopter (an MR-8 MTV-I) exploded at Zagreb airport in the night of 4 December 1994. It was President Izetbegovic's personal helicopter, which was completely filled with ammunition and explosives. The official statement to UNPROFOR was that a tanker had exploded, and the European Monitoring mission, ECMM, was told that a pyromaniac had committed suicide.<sup>715</sup>

The American assistant secretary Vershbow admitted to Dutch diplomats in July 1994 that he was aware of Islamic supplies and that part of the arms were handed over as 'bounty' to the Croats. He also expected that once the arms embargo had been lifted, a part of the American supplies would remain behind in Zagreb to ensure the cooperation of the Croats. He acknowledged that this could have negative consequences for UNPROFOR and the UN's refugee organization, UNHCR, but they would just have to be 'redeployed' somewhere else.<sup>716</sup> It was apparently that 'simple'.

### *The American division on the Croatian pipeline remains*

After this secret agreement to resume arms supplies, the ball started to roll in the United States. The CIA gathered an increasing amount of evidence of Iranian arms supplies via Croatia to Bosnia, in the

<sup>712</sup> For statements from 1993: MoD, *MIS/CO*. Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 24/93, 05/04/93 and no. 50/93, 24/08/93, and interview with Paul Koring, 05/07/00. Further: John Pomfret, 'Iran ships material for arms to Bosnians', in: *The Washington Post*, 13/05/94 and 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/96.

<sup>713</sup> Confidential information (20).

<sup>714</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>715</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 156.

<sup>716</sup> NMFA, *DEU/ARA/05274*. Bentinck to Foreign Affairs, no. Wasi485/13220, 15/07/93.

form of photos taken by spy satellites that revealed aircraft on Turkish airfields. Two days later, the CIA saw the same aircraft in Zagreb or other airports in Croatia. The aircraft flew via Turkey, where a stopover was sometimes made, before resuming the flight over the Black Sea via Bulgarian and Romanian air space to Zagreb, where the arms were unloaded. Part of the consignment was forwarded to Bosnia; Croatia was said to have received thirty per cent of the supplies. The CIA recorded approximately eight flights a month and also received reports from the Croatian intelligence services.

When the CIA got wind of the supplies, it produced a difference of opinion between the American ambassador Galbraith and the CIA station chief there. The station chief asked Galbraith to explain, and he answered that he was aware of the secret consignments from Iran; the station chief would just have to contact Miroslav Tudjman. The station chief would not be palmed off so easily. As a matter of fact, the State Department can covertly encourage anything the President tells them to. What would have been illegal was the involvement of the CIA without a 'written finding'. Covert diplomacy is not illegal. Covert action by the CIA is, however, illegal unless there is a finding. The station chief therefore asked Galbraith where the finding was, because without a finding he was not allowed to cooperate in the operations, which would then be illegal. If that was the case, it could have major policy consequences.

The chief of station raised the alarm with his headquarters in Langley, which subsequently wondered who knew about this at the State Department and in the National Security Council (NSC). A parallel was drawn with the Iran-Contra affair, which was also led from the NSC. The CIA wondered, although the ambassador can do what he wants, whether Ambassador Galbraith might have encouraged Tudjman to make requests for arms supplies. This fear would later be dismissed as unfounded by the Senate, but it did lead rapidly to speculations that the CIA had begun spying on State Department staff.<sup>717</sup> However, this fear proved to be correct. But the station chief in question had indeed decided to watch Galbraith's movements.<sup>718</sup> The station chief also became concerned because Iranian officials, who were apparently involved in the Croatian pipeline, visited the library of the United States Information Service, which was located immediately beneath Galbraith's office, daily. Out of fear of terrorist attacks, from then on only visitors with a membership card were allowed to enter the library, after which the Iranians disappeared.<sup>719</sup>

According to Langley, a covert operation had indeed been started in which the CIA was not involved. In response, the CIA in Washington took action at the highest level. The director of the CIA, Woolsey, approached in succession Lake, Christopher, and Talbott. On 5 May 1994, Talbott told Woolsey 'the essence of what had been decided'.<sup>720</sup> Galbraith had received no instructions. Incidentally, Woolsey later stated that he was not given the impression in this discussion that the policy on Iranian involvement changed with this instruction; although in practice this was definitely the case. According to a senior US intelligence official, Woolsey did not ultimately approach President Clinton. Once it was clear that the ambassador was acting on the authority of the White House and the Secretary of State and not off his own, the CIA interest stopped except to report the arms flows as intelligence.<sup>721</sup>

Talbott told Woolsey that another reason for permitting the operations had been that the ABiH was at the end of its tether. The American intelligence community arrived at a different conclusion, however: it thought that the ABiH could retain the major part of Bosnia without needing military assistance. There were apparently divergent assessments of the power of the VRS versus the ABiH. According to Corwin, something else played a role in Sarajevo:

<sup>717</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00; Tim Weiner & Raouf Bonner, 'Gun-Running in the Balkans: CIA and Diplomats Collide', *The New York Times*, 29/05/96.

<sup>718</sup> Interview with Tim Ripley, 12/12/99.

<sup>719</sup> John Pomfret, 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/96.

<sup>720</sup> See also his statement to the 1996 Congressional Hearings before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 23/05/96. Further: Walter Pincus, 'Woolsey, in testimony, Criticizes White House', *The Washington Post*, 11/06/96.

<sup>721</sup> Confidential interview (97).

‘In fact, one of the great miscalculations of Serb military strength in the former Yugoslavia was made by Russian military intelligence (GRU). Out of a wish to strike a blow at NATO hegemony and out of revenge for having lost the Cold War, the GRU constantly overestimated the Serb’s ability after summer 1994, to withstand Croatian and/or Bosnian offensives’.

According to Corwin, the US administration also had a tendency ‘to overestimate the military strength of the Bosnian Serbs, at least publicly, albeit for different reasons’.<sup>722</sup>

In spite of the fact that the CIA had been bypassed in these operations, Woolsey offered to have the CIA set up the secret operation for smuggling arms to Bosnia, only if a finding was signed by President Clinton. But this was rejected: Lake still feared that it would leak out.<sup>723</sup> Otherwise Lake appeared to have a pathological fear of leaks; he shared little information with others and was difficult to approach. He was nicknamed ‘the submarine’.<sup>724</sup> Woolsey confirmed that he was not aware of a presidential finding, and that in May 1994 he went to the NSC, and later to the Secretary of State to obtain information on the supplies, but to no avail. Talbott told him that his station chief in Zagreb must do nothing and make no comment. According to the Assistant Secretary of State, it concerned a ‘policy decision of the US Government’; the president could after all ask an ambassador to do something.

Woolsey was surprised at this state of affairs; after all, the CIA had built up the necessary experience with covert operations. If policymakers were to have requested him to organize the secret arms supplies, then his service would have taken care of the execution, even if he was opposed to it: ultimately this was one of his duties. Woolsey:

‘We would rather have had control and could have done it better and without Iranian involvement (...) The CIA did not move weapons to Bosnia. We were perfectly willing to do that. We had enough experience in this field but the policy level did not want the CIA to do that’.<sup>725</sup>

The Senate concluded later in 1996 that Talbott should have explained the policy - not to block the transit of Iranian arms for Bosnia via Zagreb - more clearly to Woolsey. Meanwhile the Iranian arms supplies had indeed leaked out: on 24 June 1994, the *Washington Times* printed the story of the ‘wink’ towards Tadjman. The precise details remained rather vague for now.<sup>726</sup>

There were also suspicions regarding the Croatian pipeline within UNPROFOR. On 18 July 1994, Akashi reported that the Bosnian Muslims were receiving large quantities of new arms via Croatia, which was demanding financial compensation or a share of the goods. Akashi was unable to take any action against this because UNPROFOR was not even allowed to inspect the Iranian aircraft at Pleso Airport in Zagreb.<sup>727</sup>

Iran may well have been permitted to supply arms to Bosnia, but not to receive any arms itself. The fact that the CIA was not involved in the Croatian pipeline did not yet mean that Iran had a free hand: for instance, in August 1994 a shipment of advanced technology from Slovenia, destined for Iran, was intercepted in Vienna following a tip off from the CIA.<sup>728</sup>

<sup>722</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 127.

<sup>723</sup> J. Risen & D. McManus, ‘U.S. had options to let Bosnia get arms’, *Los Angeles Times*, 14/07/96 and W. Pincus, ‘Woolsey, in testimony, Criticizes White House’, *The Washington Post*, 11/06/96.

<sup>724</sup> Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, p. 243.

<sup>725</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

<sup>726</sup> See: <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/1996>, Congressional Record, ‘Arms Shipments to Bosnia from Islamic Countries (Senate - April 17, 1996), Speech by Senator Joseph Lieberman.

<sup>727</sup> O’shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 156 and UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*. Akashi to Annan, Z-1106, 22/07/94.

<sup>728</sup> Marko Milivojevic, ‘slovenia - An Arms Bazaar’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6 (1994) 11.

In the summer and autumn of 1994, brainstorming continued at an informal level within the American government on the possibility of executing secret operations. Plans were elaborated for training the ABiH.<sup>729</sup> An US ‘mercenary outfit’ was to arrange this training. This was carried out by Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI), a company based in Virginia that employed various retired American generals and intelligence officials, such as the former director of the DIA, Lieutenant General Harry Soyster. With the consent of the State Department, MPRI trained the *Hrvatska Vojska* (HV, the Croatian Army) and later also the ABiH.<sup>730</sup> MPRI’s role arose from the signing of the agreement between the United States and Croatia on military collaboration. By engaging MPRI, Washington also reduced the danger of ‘direct’ involvement.<sup>731</sup> Interestingly, DPKO was never officially informed about these activities of MPRI.<sup>732</sup>

Holbrooke, meanwhile appointed<sup>733</sup> as Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs with the primary task of bringing an end to the war in Bosnia,<sup>734</sup> was becoming increasingly actively involved with the option of secret arms supplies to Bosnia. In reality, he was against this, because of the danger for European ground forces in Bosnia. On 6 September, he met Akashi and stated ‘on a strictly confidential basis’ that he wanted to avoid the embargo being lifted, because of the far-reaching consequences for UNPROFOR on the ground. ‘He appeared to be genuinely looking for alternative policies’, according to Akashi.<sup>735</sup>

What these alternatives were would soon be apparent. When in October Holbrooke visited Zagreb, Galbraith told him about the ‘no instructions’ instruction and the Croatian pipeline. Holbrooke apparently knew nothing of the matter;<sup>736</sup> which is remarkable because various articles had already been published on the subject. The political adviser to the British prime minister, Pauline Neville-Jones, was also convinced that Holbrooke was aware of the ‘no instructions’ instruction.<sup>737</sup>

On 2 November, the Dutch Permanent Representative to NATO also reported to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs about cargo aircraft from Teheran, which were delivering arms to Croatia via the Ukraine. His Canadian counterpart had tipped him off, referring to the *Globe and Mail*, which stated that UNPROFOR was aware of the matter, but was turning a blind eye.<sup>738</sup>

Holbrooke also spoke on this trip (on which he was accompanied, among others, by Brigadier General M. Hayden<sup>739</sup>, the head of intelligence of US European Command)<sup>740</sup> with the Bosnian prime minister, Haris Silajdzic, who urged him to do more for Bosnia. Holbrooke came up with a plan in which Sarajevo would accept that the arms embargo would not be lifted for the coming six months in exchange for American encouragements to third party countries to violate the UN embargo and to step up the supplies of military goods. Holbrooke had already instructed State Department lawyers to investigate the legal snags attached to such a separation of words and actions. Holbrooke said that their recommendation was ‘encouraging’:

<sup>729</sup> Ed Vulliamy, ‘America’s Secret Bosnia Agenda’, *The Observer*, 20/11/94.

<sup>730</sup> Danile Burton-Rose and Wayne Madsen, ‘Corporate Soldiers. The U.S. Government Privatizes the Use of Force’, *Multinational Monitor*, March 1999, pp. 17-19 Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, p. 90 and Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 334-335.

<sup>731</sup> Thomas H. Henriksen, ‘Covert Operations, Now More Than Ever’, *Orbis*, Vol. 44 (2000) 1, p. 153.

<sup>732</sup> F.E. van Kappen, ‘Strategic Intelligence and the United Nations’, Paper presented at the NISA/IDL Conference ‘Peacekeeping and Intelligence’, Delft, 15/11/02.

<sup>733</sup> For the difficult relationship between Lake and Holbrooke: Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace*, pp. 178-182.

<sup>734</sup> Doder & Branson, *Milosevic*, p. 218.

<sup>735</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*. Akashi to Annan, Z-1367, 06/09/94.

<sup>736</sup> James Risen and Doyle McManus, ‘U.S. had options to let Bosnia get arms’, *Los Angeles Times*, 14/07/96. See also: Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, p. 91.

<sup>737</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>738</sup> Paul Koring, ‘Iran believed arming Bosnia’, *Globe and Mail*, 03/11/94; John Pomfret, ‘Iran ships material for arms to Bosnians’, *The Washington Post*, 13/05/94 and NMFA, *PVNATO*, *PVNATO to Foreign Affairs*, no. Brni1718/17242, 02/11/94.

<sup>739</sup> General Michael Hayden declined to be interviewed by the author.

<sup>740</sup> Ed Vulliamy, ‘America’s Secret Bosnia Agenda’, *The Observer*, 20/11/94.

‘... suggesting to a foreign country that it might consider a covert action appeared perfectly legal; going one step further and encouraging a foreign country appeared legal but potentially risky from a political standpoint. Actually supporting the foreign action through direct participation, the reports said, crosses the line into covert action’.

Lake and Christopher rejected Holbrooke’s plan, however; Christopher still feared leaks and angry reactions from London, Ottawa and Paris, which could lead to the departure of UNPROFOR. Lake thought that this was a sort of covert operation anyway, in which case the president and Congress must be let into the secret.<sup>741</sup>

#### *Reactions in the Netherlands and in UNPROFOR to the lifting of the arms embargo*

Meanwhile, a debate was raging in the US Congress about lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia. This debate also did not go unnoticed in various capitals and in UNPROFOR. For instance, Netherlands Prime Minister Wim Kok told President Clinton by phone of his great concern about the possible lifting of the arms embargo. Clinton expressed understanding, but pointed to the domestic political pressure from Congress for lifting the arms embargo, which he himself called ‘hypocritical’, because in the event of a unilateral decision it would not be American but other troops who would run large security risks.<sup>742</sup>

In a gloomy and comprehensive scenario, Akashi outlined from Zagreb the possible consequences for the UN peacekeeping operations. The UNPROFOR commanders considered that lifting the arms embargo could be deemed by the Bosnian Serbs to be a *de facto* declaration of war by the international community. This had consequences for the humanitarian efforts and would lead to the VRS stepping up military actions against UNPROFOR. Furthermore, the VRS could feel forced to start large-scale military operations before the arms reached the ABiH, and UNPROFOR would lose any semblance of impartiality. The VRS would consider lifting the arms embargo to be new evidence of Western support to the Bosnian Muslims. Furthermore, the VRS would immediately withdraw its heavy weapons from the Weapon Collection Points in Sarajevo and other areas.<sup>743</sup>

In the autumn of 1994 there were in fact two tendencies that could be observed. The American government had to operate more cautiously, to prevent the ‘truth’ about the Iranian connection being revealed. At the end of 1994 a wide variety of rumours were circulating that Holbrooke had discussed a plan with foreign officials for Washington to make secret funds and/or arms available to the ABiH. A high American government official was said to have urged the Croatian government to continue certain military supplies to Bosnia.<sup>744</sup>

#### *Investigation by the Intelligence Oversight Board*

Holbrooke’s activities gave Woolsey renewed concerns; in October 1994 he approached Lake again, but again this had little effect. In the autumn of 1994, Woolsey then approached the Intelligence Oversight Board, a small unit in the White House that is responsible for internal investigation into possible false steps within the intelligence community. The reason for Woolsey’s move was that Congress was

<sup>741</sup> James Risen & Doyle McManus, ‘U.S. had options to let Bosnia get arms’, *Los Angeles Times*, 14/07/96.

<sup>742</sup> Archive Cabinet Office, Speaking notes for the prime minister’s telephone conversation with President Clinton, 09/09/94 and Letter Kok to Van Mierlo, no. 94G000062, 12/09/94. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asked if Kok wanted to broach the subject of lifting the embargo with Clinton himself.

<sup>743</sup> UNNY, DPKO, *File #87306, Box 6*. G-3 Plans to DFC, 31/10/94 and UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*. Akashi to Stoltenberg and Annan, Z-1646, 02/11/94.

<sup>744</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 4.



starting to have concerns about the Iran connection, and Woolsey wanted to prevent his service becoming the object of this concern.<sup>745</sup>

Some sections of the Clinton administration resented this move, because it ultimately led to an extremely thorough internal investigation by the Intelligence Oversight Board (IOB) that lasted six months, and that concentrated on three questions: whether Galbraith and Redman had offered assistance to Tudjman; whether either one of the ambassadors had actively intervened with Croatian officials for the transit of arms; and whether Galbraith or Holbrooke had offered arms and funds to Bosnia or Croatia. At the same time, the Intelligence Oversight Board examined whether French accusations from March 1994, that the Americans had executed airdrops over Bosnia, were correct.

And the IOB also scrutinized the deployment of US Special Forces, who originally went to Bosnia to assist in humanitarian relief. However, some Canadian and Swedish UNMOs had seen these units unloading and handling cargo. The Canadian report came from Visoko; the Swedish report came from Tuzla, where a Civil Affairs official of Sector North East made no secret of his Special Forces background.<sup>746</sup> Otherwise, American Special Forces were present throughout Bosnia: a British officer had personally witnessed an US Special Forces colonel scouting out the territory during a visit to the British headquarters in Gornji Vakuf in 1993. When asked what he was doing there, the American answered that he was looking for suitable helicopter landing places. In a night-time operation one day later, American C-130s dropped equipment, ammunition and arms, which were apparently transported in helicopters for the ABiH, and a few days later ABiH soldiers were walking around in brand new American uniforms carrying M-16 rifles. This was remarkable, because those were nowhere to be found in the Balkans.<sup>747</sup>

In May 1995, the IOB arrived at a better than expected conclusion for the supporters of the arms supplies resumption via the Croatian pipeline, namely that no definitive conclusions could be drawn on what had happened, but that no 'covert action was conducted in arms shipments and no U.S. laws were broken'; there had been no 'improper encouragement to President Tudjman', and the activities of Redman and Galbraith fell under 'traditional diplomatic activity', which required no permission from Congress. According to Redman, the Bosnian Muslims actually never discussed arms supplies with the Americans, because it was known in Sarajevo how legalistic American government thinking was.<sup>748</sup> A subsequent conclusion of the IOB was that Holbrooke had made no offer. The Pentagon and the CIA had already investigated these French accusations and arrived at the conclusion that no such activities took place, and that furthermore no US Special Forces had been involved.<sup>749</sup>

#### *The further American policy on the Croatian pipeline*

In early 1995 James Woolsey resigned as Director Central Intelligence. A senior White House adviser stated that Woolsey's relationship with the White House and Congress was poor, and that this caused his departure. He described him as someone with 'an inherent tendency of always swimming against the stream'.<sup>750</sup> Woolsey agreed with this observation but for other reasons. 'If you are a Director of Central Intelligence and you let the politicians tell you what intelligence should say, then you are a menace to the country's security'.<sup>751</sup> Woolsey's successor was John Deutch, and in 1997 Clinton appointed Lake as

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<sup>745</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

<sup>746</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 159.

<sup>747</sup> Confidential interview (80).

<sup>748</sup> Interview with Charles Redman, 27/06/01.

<sup>749</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>750</sup> Confidential interview (14).

<sup>751</sup> Interview with James R. Woolsey, 01/10/02.

Deutch's successor. However, according to a prominent French military officer, the Senate, was to oppose Lake's appointment as CIA director, partly because of the Croatian pipeline.<sup>752</sup>

A second tendency in the autumn of 1994 was that Clinton came under increasing pressure from the prospective Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia. Dole described the embargo as outrageous and indefensible.<sup>753</sup> It must not be forgotten that Dole had a former Croatian as political adviser, and that the lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia almost automatically also meant lifting the same embargo against Croatia. Croatia would after all have to forward the arms in transit to Bosnia. For the Croatian government it was therefore absolutely unacceptable to lift the arms embargo for Bosnia only.<sup>754</sup> The American government had to do something to respond to this pressure, and on 28 October Albright submitted a draft resolution to the Security Council for lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia. This was more of a political gesture, because the implication of accepting this resolution would be that UNPROFOR would have to withdraw from Bosnia,<sup>755</sup> which the Americans definitely did not want.

In November a law drafted by the Democratic senators Sam Nunn (Georgia) and George Mitchell (Maine) came into force banning the use of government funds for the support of, or assistance in enforcing the arms embargo against Bosnia. This law was incorporated in the Defense Budget Authorization Bill. The consequence was that American vessels that took part in Operation Sharp Guard no longer 'diverted or delayed vessels that contained arms or other cargo for the purpose of enforcing the arms embargo' against Bosnia. This would also mean that the exchange of intelligence on arms supplies would be stopped.<sup>756</sup> This put the commander of the southern NATO command (CinCSouth), Admiral Leighton Smith, in a curious position relative to Force Commander Janvier and the new BHC Commander Rupert Smith,<sup>757</sup> and the overall efficiency of the operation consequently suffered.<sup>758</sup> Lake himself described this as an 'uneasy compromise with Congress'.<sup>759</sup>

Senator Dole also remained active on lifting the arms embargo against Bosnia; with this goal in mind he introduced Bill S.21 on 4 January 1995. According to Dole the bill also had an ulterior motive: '[A] decision to arm the Bosnians would reduce the potential influence and role of radical extremist states like Iran' in Bosnia. It was clear that Iran had meanwhile started to be an important political factor in Bosnia. On 7 June 1995 Dole stated:

'When those of us who advocate lifting the arms embargo point out that other countries would also participate in arming the Bosnians, we are told that this would allow Iran to arm the Bosnians. Well, the fact is that the arms embargo has guaranteed that Iran is a key supplier of arms to Bosnia and administration officials have actually used that fact to argue that there is no need to lift the arms embargo. From statements made by State Department officials to the press, one gets the impression that Iran is the Clinton Administration's

<sup>752</sup> Confidential interview (1). Also: James Risen, 'Closer U.S. role seen on Bosnia Iran arms pipeline', *Los Angeles Times*, 23/12/96. Lake later expressed regret that he had not informed Congress in good time. Senate Testimony by CIA Director-Designate Anthony Lake before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, 11/03/97.

<sup>753</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'America's Secret Bosnia Agenda', *The Observer*, 20/11/94. Dole was very critical of UNPROFOR's performance and accused French troops of setting up a 'Bihac pipeline' to put Sarajevo under pressure. UNNY, DPKO, coded cables, Stoltenberg to Annan, Z-1588, 15/12/93 and 'Dole seeks Investigation of UN Spending', *Associated Press*, 04/11/93.

<sup>754</sup> Owen, *Balkans Odyssey*, p. 47.

<sup>755</sup> UNNY, UNPROFOR, Annan to Akashi, no. 3545, 28/10/94. For the Security Council debate on the lifting of the arms embargo: see Chapter 10 in Part II.

<sup>756</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>757</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 90.

<sup>758</sup> Congressional Record, Page: E1054, Letter by Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs, State Department, Barbara Larkin to Hon. Lee Hamilton, House of Representatives, 24/04/96. Further: W. Drozdiak. 'France, Russian Warn U.S. On Tilt Toward Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 17/11/94.

<sup>759</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, p. 145.

preferred provider of weapons to the Bosnians. If the Administration has a problem with Iran arming Bosnia, it should be prepared to do something about it'.<sup>760</sup>

Dole therefore appears to have been aware of the Croatian pipeline, and of Iran's involvement in secretly providing Bosnia with arms. The fact that he was aware of the supply of arms was denied by the Republican party. On the other hand, Senator Lieberman (Connecticut) pointed out that Dole could not have failed to notice the article in the *Washington Times* of 24 June 1994 regarding the Iranian supplies; Dole said nothing then and he did not demand that Clinton do something.<sup>761</sup>

Clinton remained set against lifting the arms embargo, but openly stated that he was no longer prepared 'to enforce the arms ban'. Washington itself would supply no arms, but neither would it intervene if other countries were to do so.<sup>762</sup> Dole was not the only important politician who supported lifting the arms embargo. For example, in August 1995 he quoted from a letter from the former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, who said the following to Dole:

'I am writing to express my very strong support for your attempt to have the arms embargo against Bosnia lifted (...) The safe havens were never safe; now they are falling to Serb assault. Murder, ethnic cleansing, mass rape and torture are the legacy of the policy of the last three years to the people of Bosnia. It has failed utterly'.

With this attitude she was (not for the first time) publicly turning against the British Conservative government's national security policy.<sup>763</sup>

#### *The Croatian pipeline after 1994*

Meanwhile, arms flowed liberally through the Croatian pipeline. In early 1995, Iranian cargo aircraft landed in Zagreb three times a week. The CIA and the White House and State Department continued to have different opinions, this time regarding the scale of the military support via the Croatian pipeline: the CIA settled on 14,000 tons between May 1994 and December 1996. According to the State Department from May 1994 to January 1996 Iran delivered a total of 5000 tons of arms and ammunition via the Croatian pipeline to Bosnia. The clandestine Iranian arms supplies were to stop only in January 1996, after American ground forces were stationed in the region.<sup>764</sup>

Sarajevo would nevertheless have felt uncomfortable at the time. The fact is that the ABiH was completely dependent on Zagreb's cooperation. Croatia could stop or reduce the transit at any moment. The Bosnian government will also have been disturbed by Croatia's 'skimming' of the supplies that were destined for it. According to Lord Owen, the percentage of arms that Croatia confiscated was fifty per cent or more.<sup>765</sup> Turkey and Saudi Arabia possibly exerted pressure in the background to allow fewer arms to flow via the Iranian connection. These two countries had in the

<sup>760</sup> See: <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/1996>, Christopher Cox, House Republican Policy Committee: Policy Perspective, p. 2.

<sup>761</sup> See: <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/1996>, Congressional Record, 'Arms Shipments to Bosnia from Islamic Countries (Senate - April 17, 1996)', speech by Senator Lieberman.

<sup>762</sup> The *Washington Post* reported on this matter on 14 & 15 April 1995. For this see for example:

<http://www.fas.org/irp/news/1996>, Congressional Record, 'Arms Shipments to Bosnia from Islamic Countries (Senate - April 17, 1996)', speech by Senator Lieberman.

<sup>763</sup> See: <http://www.fas.org/irp/news/1996>, Christopher Cox, House Republican Policy Committee: Policy Perspective, p. 2.

<sup>764</sup> J. Risen & D. McManus, 'U.S. OK'd Iran Arms for Bosnia, Officials Say', *Los Angeles Times*, 05/04/96 and James Risen, 'Iran gave Bosnia leader \$ 500,000', *Los Angeles Times*, 31/12/96.

<sup>765</sup> Owen, *Balkans Odyssey*, p. 47.

past already indicated that they were not happy with the situation. Izetbegovic appeared as a clever politician to be playing all parties off against each other, and so held the different movements (a Western oriented one and a more Islamic-fundamentalist one) within his political party in balance.<sup>766</sup>

For this reason, it was decided at the highest level to seek out opportunities for the ABiH to acquire arms and ammunition without the intervention of Zagreb. This meant direct supplies, but this was impossible via Sarajevo because the airfield was frequently under fire. Therefore Tuzla Air Base, in East Bosnia was decided upon.

### 3. Secret arms supplies to the ABiH: the Black Flights to Tuzla

At 17.45 on 10 February 1995, the Norwegian Captain Ivan Moldestad, a Norwegian helicopter detachment (NorAir) pilot, stood in the doorway of his temporary accommodation just outside Tuzla. It was dark, and suddenly he heard the sound of the propellers of an approaching transport aircraft; it was unmistakably a four engine Hercules C-130. Moldestad noticed that the Hercules was being escorted by two jet fighters, but could not tell their precise type in the darkness.

There were other sightings of this secretive night-time flight to Tuzla Air Base (TAB). A sentry who was on guard duty outside the Norwegian medical UN unit in Tuzla also heard and saw the lights of the Hercules and the accompanying jet fighters. Other UN observers, making use of night vision equipment, also saw the cargo aircraft and the fighter planes concerned. The reports were immediately forwarded to the NATO Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) in Vicenza and the UNPF Deny Flight Cell in Naples. When Moldestad phoned Vicenza, he was told that there was nothing in the air that night, and that he must be mistaken. When Moldestad persisted, the connection was broken.

The secretive C-130 cargo aircraft flights and night-time arms drops on Tuzla caused great agitation within UNPROFOR and the international community in February and March 1995. When asked, a British general responded with great certainty to the question of the origin of the secret supplies via TAB: 'They were American arms deliveries. No doubt about that. And American private companies were involved in these deliveries.'<sup>767</sup> This was no surprising answer, because this general had access to intelligence gathered by a unit of the British Special Air Services (SAS) in Tuzla. The aircraft had come within range of this unit's special night vision equipment, and the British saw them land.<sup>768</sup> It was a confirmation that a clandestine American operation had taken place in which arms, ammunition and military communication equipment were supplied to the ABiH. These night-time operations led to much consternation within the UN and NATO, and were the subject of countless speculations. The question is whether the British general was right in his allegation that these were American consignments, and who was involved in these supplies on the Bosnian side.

#### *The Bosnian connection: the Cengic family*

It would seem likely that Bosnian intelligence services played a role in such supplies. They were closely connected with the Cengic family, who were described by Western intelligence services as 'Mafia'. The family was based in Visoko.<sup>769</sup> It controlled this region entirely through its own militias. Before the war, the Cengic family already had connections in Europe and the Middle East, and owned countless companies in Turkey and Croatia. When the war broke out, the Cengic family proved capable of sidestepping the international embargo and of equipping the ABiH with arms and ammunition.

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<sup>766</sup> MoD, *Archive Bystas. Aftermath*, HMIS Kok to Minister, no. DIS/95/12.13/1286, 31/05/95.

<sup>767</sup> Confidential interview (87).

<sup>768</sup> Interview with H. Nicolai, 11/06/99.

<sup>769</sup> This profile is based on: MoD, *MIS/CO, File 438-0190*, Box 307, The Bosnian civil intelligence service AID, 07/05/97; MIS profile of Hasan Cengic, undated, and John Pomfret, 'Bosnian Officials Involved in Arms Trade Tied to Radical States', *Washington Post*, 22/09/96.

Because of the logistical usefulness of the family Cengic, it was logical that a family member, Hasan Cengic, was involved in the arms supplies.

Hasan Cengic's family was devoutly Islamic. His father Halid was appointed in 1990 as an SDA member of the Foca town council, and after the outbreak of the hostilities he organized the defence of Foca. When the town fell in 1992, the Cengic family moved to Visoko and later to Zenica. Halid Cengic was the most important person responsible for ABiH logistics from Visoko.<sup>770</sup> All donations and the acquisition of arms and military technology ran via him. This made him one of the wealthiest Muslims. Halid Cengic also controlled the Bosnian intelligence service.

Of his two sons, the best known in intelligence circles was Hasan. The other son, Muhammed Cengic, had an important position within the SDA. As deputy prime minister he concluded a military collaboration agreement with Turkey in March 1992 under the pretence of assuring Bosnia of Turkish purchases from Bosnian arms manufacturers who were no longer able to supply to the Yugoslav army, the JNA.<sup>771</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the Turkish-Bosnian arms traffic in reality went in the opposite direction.

Hasan Cengic studied at the faculty of theology at Sarajevo university, and his studies meant that he spent some time in Teheran. Izetbegovic was his great example and mentor. After completing his studies, the friendship persisted. From 1977 the Yugoslav state security service kept an eye on him. In 1982, the Iranian consulate in Vienna organized an 'educational trip' to Teheran, in which Cengic participated. After his return from Iran he was convicted together with thirteen other Muslim intellectuals of 'activities directed against the state'; Izetbegovic was one of the other accused. From 1983 to 1986 he served his sentence in Zenica.

Cengic moved to Zagreb in 1989, where he worked as an Islamic cleric. He was also active outside the religious community and organized countless symposia and lectures. At the same time, he intensified the contacts with Izetbegovic. On the foundation of the SDA, Cengic fulfilled a main role in the area of organization, party rules and statutes. He also organized the party's financial affairs. In 1990, he became secretary of the SDA. After the outbreak of the hostilities that marked the start of the war, Cengic was instructed to organize Muslim combat units. He succeeded in collecting Muslim officers from the Yugoslav army, he organized a General Staff and was involved in founding the 'Patriotic League', which was later integrated into the territorial defence from which the ABiH was formed.

Cengic carried out his activities partly from Zagreb, where he collaborated with staff of the Croatian Ministry of Defence. From 1992, he worked for the Bosnian army, especially in the area of arms procurement. He was responsible for contacts with Iran and Islamic fundamentalist organizations, which contributed to the Bosnian war effort with arms, money and people. Because he worked from Zagreb, transactions could therefore only take place with the assent of the Croatian authorities.

Cengic was also closely involved in executing the agreement that Izetbegovic had concluded in October 1992 on a visit to Teheran, according to which Iran was to supply military goods via the Croatian pipeline.<sup>772</sup> In exchange for this, between twenty per cent and fifty per cent of the arms and equipment accrued to the Croats.

Slovenia was also involved in the arms trade; for instance, in the event of transport problems, goods could be stored temporarily at Maribor airport. This led on 21 March 1993 to the 'airport affair', when large quantities of arms and ammunition were discovered. After the outbreak of the hostilities between Bosnian Muslims and Croats, Cengic left Zagreb and sought refuge in Turkey, where he held the position of military attaché at the Bosnian embassy.<sup>773</sup> He remained in Ankara until early 1996, when he was appointed Deputy Minister of Defence and acquired a large amount of influence over the ABiH and the military intelligence services. Cengic's appointment in January 1996 was intended to

<sup>770</sup> Charlotte Eagar, 'Invisible US Army defeats Serbs', *The Observer*, 05/11/95 and James Risen, 'Report of Bosnian Spy Network stirs concerns in U.S.', *Los Angeles Times*, 06/02/97.

<sup>771</sup> Moore, 'Relations', p. 9.

<sup>772</sup> John Pomfret, 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/096.

<sup>773</sup> 'Murder of Bosnian general ordered by Izetbegovic's son', *Agence France-Presse*, 01/05/94.

allow him (as one of the SDA confidants) to keep an eye on Vladimir Soljic (Croat and Minister of Defence). The Americans (and Croats) agitated against the lack of cooperation in the creation of a Federal Army and Cengic's contacts with Islamic countries. In protest, Washington refused to continue arms supplies and demanded his resignation.<sup>774</sup> He was dismissed on 6 November 1996 and was given another post.

Cengic was a personal confidant of Izetbegovic and had fairly radical views. For instance, he stated that a Muslim may never receive blood from a non-Muslim and that a Muslim may also never give blood for a non-Muslim. He was also said to have insisted on striking a deal between the Bosnian Muslims on the one hand and the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs on the other, and fighting out the war with the Croats. This was consistent with the prevailing view of the rulers in Teheran. It was in the joint interest of Islam and the orthodox faith to fight the Catholics together.

In September 1997, it was reported that Cengic had been involved since 1993 in building an airfield in Visoko, which was intended for arms supplies. He was said to have invested a total of \$ 5 million in this project. According to British sources, this airfield was built by the Americans. It was situated in a valley to the northwest of Sarajevo. The runway was long enough to handle C-130s or larger transport aircraft. However, Visoko was within VRS artillery range. The airfield was managed in 1995 by Hasan's father, Halid Cengic; many arms were said to have been brought via Visoko, and the flights would not be observed by NATO and UNPROFOR. This was because the arms flights would always arrive in Visoko when there were no NATO AWACS aircraft in the air, or only AWACS with a purely American crew.<sup>775</sup>

These assertions are incorrect, however. UNPROFOR certainly did report on flights to Visoko. For instance, in March 1995, Force Commander Janvier reported to Kofi Annan that Visoko was in use.<sup>776</sup> Bosnian intelligence officers, incidentally, dispute that Visoko was important for arms supplies; according to them, arms arrived via convoys from Croatia, and not via Visoko. The airfield was allegedly never finished and the meteorological conditions were said to be too poor; the reason for its existence was simply that the SDA wanted to build an airfield no matter what.<sup>777</sup>

Hasan Cengic also dominated the Bosnian military intelligence services, which were closely involved in the arms supplies. In 1995 there were two military intelligence and security services, the VOS and Vojna KOS. The Vojna KOS was the counterespionage service of the Ministry of Defence, which collaborated closely with the military police. In December 1996, the former Chief of Staff of the ABiH, Safet Halilovic, was head of the Vojna KOS. The *Vojna Obavjestajna Služba* (VOS) was the intelligence service of the ABiH. This was led by Brigadier Mustafa Hajrulahovic, alias *Talijan* (the Italian). He had worked for a long time for the pre war Yugoslav secret service, the KOS, and had been stationed in Italy. The most important task of the VOS in other countries was to arrange logistics for the ABiH. The service occupied itself with arms deals and raising funds. This was carried out via umbrella firms and Islamic humanitarian organizations. The Cengic family was involved in many of these logistics activities: for instance, the arms imports from Iran ran mainly via the Cengic family's logistics network. Iran supported the ABiH not only with arms, but also with advisers, though there were never very many of them. In addition, the ABiH obtained its arms via the VOS from Austria, Germany, Turkey, Argentina and Czechoslovakia.<sup>778</sup> British services also came into the possession of evidence that Iran supplied military equipment and arms directly to the ABiH. The supplies consisted of anti-tank weapons of the Red Arrow type (a Chinese variant of the Russian AT-3 Sagger) and detonators for artillery and mortar ammunition.<sup>779</sup>

<sup>774</sup> Christine Spolar, 'US-Bosnian Dispute Delays Major Arms Delivery', *Washington Post*, 27/10/96.

<sup>775</sup> Charlotte Eagar, 'Invisible US Army defeats Serbs', *The Observer*, 05/11/95.

<sup>776</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 139*. Janvier to Annan, Z-350, 02/03/95. Further: Confidential collection (4), G-2 Air Desk to COS, Visoko Airfield, 28/06/95.

<sup>777</sup> Confidential interview (5).

<sup>778</sup> Bulatovic, *General Mladic*, p. 192.

<sup>779</sup> Confidential information (31).

An Islamic humanitarian organization that the Cengic family made much use of, was the Third World Relief Agency (TWRA). It was led by the Sudanese diplomat Elfatih Hassanein, and arms transactions were carried out, funds were collected, and intelligence gathered under its cover. It was said to have amounted to \$ 350 million. TWRA had offices in Sarajevo, Budapest, Moscow and Istanbul. They had direct links with the Bosnian government: in October 1992, the Bosnian minister of foreign affairs, Haris Silajdzic, visited the First Austrian Bank in Vienna and issued a bank guarantee for Hassanein, and in 1993 Izetbegovic sent a letter to this bank to the effect that this Sudanese official had the complete confidence of his government.

Later, in 1994, incriminating material was found at the Third World Relief Agency office in Vienna during a police raid. Cengic was a member of the supervisory board of this organization, and was said to have used it in 1992 to smuggle arms from Sudan to Bosnia. The arms were collected in Khartoum and delivered to Maribor, Slovenia. Chartered helicopters from an American-Russian company continued the transport of the arms, with Croatian permission, to Tuzla and Zenica. The funds were also used to bribe Croatian officials after the conflict between Croatia and Bosnia had flared up again. Cengic also used the Slovenian company Smelt International to have 120 tons of arms and ammunition flown in from Libya using Slovenian cargo aircraft to Maribor in July 1993.<sup>780</sup> TWRA was used by the military intelligence service, not by the Bosnian intelligence service, AID, which used the *Cenex* company for arms transactions. The then Bosnian Minister of the Interior, Deli Mustafic, was involved in 1991 in smuggling Kalashnikovs and ammunition from Vienna to Sarajevo.<sup>781</sup>

Even UNPROFOR was covered by Cengic's network: his TWRA was also involved in smuggling light arms worth \$ 15 million with the involvement of Turkish and Malaysian UNPROFOR troops.<sup>782</sup> Not only Turkish or Malaysian, but also other UNPROFOR detachments brought more arms than they needed for themselves. For example, soldiers from Bangladesh sold ammunition on a large scale to the ABiH, which was officially to have been used during exercises,<sup>783</sup> and the battalion from Malta ordered four thousand mortar-shells while they only had four mortars.<sup>784</sup> In other words: in spite of the international arms embargo, Bosnia was to receive arms through a variety of channels. The ABiH even bought arms and ammunition in Serbia. In November 1993, the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) already reported the possibility that Arab donations were being used to purchase arms in Serbia. These arms transactions ignored the political differences in the Balkans. The Bosnian minister Muratovic, frankly admitted to the European negotiator, the Swede Carl Bildt, that the ABiH had crossed the Drina in the vicinity of Zepa to buy arms in Serbia. Bildt apparently responded with surprise, to which Muratovic answered: 'This is the Balkans. Things sometimes work rather differently.'<sup>785</sup> A former VRS officer confirmed that the ABiH in Zepa received many goods from Serbia for it was situated on the Drina. This took place both with convoys and by means of smuggling.<sup>786</sup>

<sup>780</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*. Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 54/93, 08/09/93; Marko Milivojevic, 'slovenia - An Arms Bazaar', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6 (1994), 11, and a three-part series in *Nasa Borba*, Instalment 3, 26/09/96.

<sup>781</sup> Interview with Bozidar Spasic, 16/09/01. Many transactions were dealt with through the Bosnian embassy in Vienna. According to press releases, Osama Bin Laden received a Bosnian passport there. See: 'Bin Laden was granted Bosnian passport', *Agence France-Presse*, 24/09/99.

<sup>782</sup> John Pomfret, 'How Bosnia's Muslims Dodged Arms Embargo', *The Washington Post*, 22/09/96 and 'Background on group', *Agence France-Presse*, 22/09/96.

<sup>783</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*. Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 10/94, 15/02/94. Further: 'UNPROFOR sells Weapons', in *Strategic Policy*, Vol. XXII (1994), pp. 11-12, and 'Kriminalci u plavom', *Borba*, 06/01/95.

<sup>784</sup> Confidential interview (34).

<sup>785</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*. Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 66/93, 24/11/93 and Carl Bildt, *Peace Journey*, p. 70.

<sup>786</sup> Interview with Momir Nikolic, 20/10/00.

### *The choice of Tuzla*

Various European countries meanwhile became increasingly suspicious concerning the expanding arms supplies to Croatia and Bosnia. Little credence was attached to the assertions that Washington had nothing to do with them. There was a suspicion that one of the US intelligence services had received the green light to set up an operation for which assent was probably sought and obtained in from the Republicans.<sup>787</sup> Tuzla was chosen for the supplies to East Bosnia. This was logical. *Dubrava* airport had been in use as a Yugoslav Army military airfield until 18 May 1992. The airfield had better facilities than Sarajevo, it was at a lower altitude (237 metres) and climatologically it was a better location, which assured the pilots of better visibility during takeoff and landing.

Tuzla Air Base (TAB) was one of the largest airfields and the most important airfield in East Bosnia. It was said to have been used by the ABiH for covert operations with helicopters around Srebrenica.<sup>788</sup> Another reason for using Tuzla was probably that the transit of arms to the ABiH in East Bosnia, which were delivered via Croatia or to Visoko airfield, presented too many problems. TAB was leased by UNPROFOR from the Bosnian government on 7 March 1994. Akashi opened it on 22 March, but after 39 flights the airfield was closed again on 31 May 1994 because the VRS were unwilling to guarantee the safety of the aircraft.<sup>789</sup>

The UN controlled the largest runway (Tuzla Main) which was 2300 metres long and 8 km to the southeast of Tuzla, but exercised no control over the other three runways, which were not close to each other. The most important of them was without doubt the Tuzla Highway Strip, approximately 6 km to the south of Tuzla Main. This runway was approximately 1800 metres long. Tuzla East was approximately 1.5 km further to the east of the Highway Strip, and was a grass track approximately 1100 metres long. Finally, there was Tuzla West with a runway of approximately 2 km, but, to all appearances, this could not be used because there were large piles of earth on it. As it happens, an UNPROFOR worker stated that Tuzla West certainly could be used: according to him the piles of earth were removed after dark, so that small aircraft could land and the arms could be transported further.<sup>790</sup> The advantage of using the three runways other than Tuzla Main was that they were out of sight of the VRS, and also outside VRS artillery range.<sup>791</sup>

The equipment that was delivered in Tuzla consisted mainly of quick-firing weapons, ammunition, uniforms, helmets, new anti-tank weapons and Stingers. The archive of the 281st ABiH Brigade in Zepa reveals that much military equipment was delivered from Tuzla by helicopter for Zepa, largely to be forwarded in transit from there to Srebrenica. The ABiH commander of Zepa reported, for example, that on 14 February 1995, a few days after the first observations of the Black Flights, forty machine guns were transported by air, some of which were to be brought to Srebrenica. The VRS did fire on the helicopter, but without result. At the same time, the flight delivered DM 308,000. The commander of Zepa did not know what he was supposed to do with this money, but he assumed that it was destined for the 28th Division in Srebrenica.

Two days later, on 16 February, an ABiH helicopter was hit by VRS anti-aircraft fire.<sup>792</sup> The increasing number of helicopter flights with military equipment not only to Zepa, but also directly to Srebrenica, led to an order from the Drina Corps to various VRS units to shoot down these aircraft.<sup>793</sup> In mid April, the ABiH commander of Zepa gave a summary of what he had received by air and what had been forwarded in transit to Srebrenica. Zepa had received the following items: 23,500 7.62 mm calibre cartridges, 15 mines (82 mm), 25 mines (60 mm), 4 TF-8 rockets, 34 B.R. M-93 machine guns

<sup>787</sup> Confidential interview (11).

<sup>788</sup> 'Tanjug details Muslim 'secret operation' to down air-drop planes', *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, 01/03/93.

<sup>789</sup> Confidential collection (12), Memo from Le Hardy to Brigadier Ridderstad, 'Tuzla Airbase - The Rationale', 29/01/95.

<sup>790</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>791</sup> Confidential collection (12), 'Reports of Possible Fixed Wing Flight Activity at Tuzla 10/12 Feb 95', 18/02/95.

<sup>792</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Ivanisovic*. Avdo Palic, Zepa to Enver Hadzihasanovic, Sarajevo, Broj:08--20-114/95, 11/02/95, Broj:08--20-129/95, 14/02/95, Broj:08--20-140/95, 16/02/95 and Broj:08--20-141/95, 16/02/95.

<sup>793</sup> ICTY, Krstic Trial, Order Supreme Command of the Drina Corps, no. 08/8-15, 25/02/95.



and 1 rocket launcher for a TF-8 rocket. The total forwarded in transit to Srebrenica was 50,000 7.62 mm calibre cartridges, 35 mines (82 mm), 75 mines (60 mm), 90 B.R. M-93 machine guns, 123 uniforms and 124 pairs of shoes. A computer and a printer were also delivered to Srebrenica.<sup>794</sup>

#### *Evidence of flights to Tuzla Air Base*

Nothing was done with Moldestad's report on 10 February 1995 that he had heard a Hercules C-130 on Tuzla Air Base. The Norwegian logistics battalion (known as NorLogBat), 4 kilometres from Tuzla West, also reported observing three unidentified aircraft: one cargo aircraft and two jet fighters. The cargo aircraft was described as a four-engine Hercules; the two fighters each flew close to either of the wing tips of the C-130 and left the area immediately after the Hercules has started the final approach. This was a familiar flying trick, because it created the impression on the radar screen that only one aircraft was in the air. Independently of this, Norwegian medical personnel (of NorMedCoy) reported seeing the same C-130. Shortly afterwards, observers heard how the jet fighters skimmed over Tuzla. At 18.45 hours a report arrived that all the aircraft had left again. These events were repeated on 12 February.<sup>795</sup> After these observations, the Norwegian commander drafted an official report (*Vakrapport*), which summarized all the reports of NorLogBat and NorMedCoy, including the observations of 10 and 12 February. The NorMedCoy observer was extremely emphatic: he had seen the Hercules.<sup>796</sup>

Not only did the Norwegians draft a report, but the headquarters of Sector North East also immediately sent a report to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in Sarajevo. The author was Lieutenant Colonel C.A. Le Hardy. It started with: 'this is a sensitive report.' The report set out the events: immediately after the first reports, a patrol was sent to investigate. It arrived on the spot one and a half hours later. This patrol was fired on near the Tuzla Highway Strip, and then surrounded by thirty ABiH soldiers. The patrol saw five trucks near a few old hangars,<sup>797</sup> but were forced to leave without being able to observe an aircraft or inspect any possible military cargo. There was nothing strange about the fact that the patrol did not see a Hercules: the aircraft left again within barely one hour at 18.45 hours, while the patrol only arrived at 19.30 hours. The ABiH had sufficient time to hide, camouflage, or remove in trucks the delivered arms and military goods.

In fact, the Hercules would not actually have had to land: according to Le Hardy, it was possible that a 'para-extraction delivery method' was used, which is a way of performing 'low-altitude extraction of cargo airdrops'. In this method, 'kickers' at the ends of the cargo holds push the load out of the aircraft at extremely low altitude. Le Hardy was otherwise unable to confirm this. Tuzla Main was certainly not used in this operation.<sup>798</sup> Le Hardy considered the risks attached to the operation to be relatively high, and therefore the value of the load was probably considerable. There was a suspicion that what was delivered was not so much heavy arms but rather communication equipment.<sup>799</sup> Heavy arms may well have been urgently needed, but this risk, in view of the limited quantity that a Hercules was able to transport, would not have been justified. Furthermore Le Hardy pointed out that Moldestad's and the Norwegian sentry's statements were made in quick succession, so that there could be no question that they were both mistaken.

The Norwegian sentry, Lieutenant Saeterdal, was an observer with a great deal of experience, which he had gained with UNIFIL in Lebanon.<sup>800</sup> The staff temporarily attached to the Fifth Allied

<sup>794</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Ivanisovic*. Avdo Palic, Zepa to Asima Dzambasocicha, Sarajevo, Broj:08--20-454/95, 19/04/95.

<sup>795</sup> Confidential collection (12), 'Reports of Possible Fixed Wing Flight Activity at Tuzla 10/12 Feb 95', 18/02/95.

<sup>796</sup> Confidential collection (12), Letter from the AftenPosten editorial team to BBC Panorama, 03/10/95 plus Norwegian Vaktrapporten.

<sup>797</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 139*. G-2 HQ UNPROFOR, Daily Info Summary, 11/02/95.

<sup>798</sup> Interview with Hans Holm, 08/03/99.

<sup>799</sup> Confidential interview (43).

<sup>800</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihać*, p. 158.

Tactical Air Force in Tuzla were unaware of any flight, and they were 'as mystified as the rest of us. There is apparently a high level of consternation at the Fifth Allied Tactical Air Force because of this incident', according to Le Hardy. According to him, it was still possible that an aircraft had landed on the Tuzla Highway Strip, without being noticed by nearby OPs, but it was deemed impossible for a Hercules to leave without the OPs noticing. The noise produced by the jet fighters could well have drowned out that of the C-130.<sup>801</sup>

This assessment was adopted by the French Force Commander, General De Lapresle. He reported to Annan that on both 10 and 12 February, a Hercules, escorted by two fighter aircraft, had made a landing. De Lapresle had NATO aircraft sent to Tuzla, which were able to find nothing above Tuzla, however, but then they did arrive three hours later. According to De Lapresle, their departure was repeatedly postponed, but in principle the aircraft could have been flying above Tuzla within 10 to 30 minutes. De Lapresle's conclusion was very plain: according to him it involved 'two clandestine resupplies' probably with 'high value/high technology such as new generation anti-tank guided missiles or perhaps surface-to-air-missiles'. Because, however, two deliveries would have been insufficient, from a military point of view, substantially to strengthen the ABiH, the French general expected more supplies by secret flights to be on the cards.<sup>802</sup>

On 16 February, another C-130 was observed, and in the following days two more. A British daily newspaper even made a connection with a visit by Holbrooke to Turkey in mid February.<sup>803</sup> This was not the end of the matter, because a further four flights were observed, where one aircraft was seen by a British UNMO using night vision binoculars.<sup>804</sup> On 17 and 19 February, UN personnel made sixteen reports of helicopters that landed on Tuzla Air Base. Yet another cargo aircraft was said to have landed, or to have ejected its load at low altitude. Norwegian UNPROFOR patrols were consistently hindered by the ABiH. They did observe a few days later that the ABiH were wearing new American-manufactured uniforms.<sup>805</sup> UNPROFOR soldiers established that a convoy of approximately 75 trucks left the airfield in the evening.

Furthermore UNPROFOR observers saw how on 17 February, late in the evening, the head of the Bosnian Air Force suddenly showed up at Tuzla Air Base. No explanation was forthcoming from the Bosnian side. NATO deployed aircraft on that day, but they lost radar contact.<sup>806</sup> It was still remarkable that the Black Flights were able to enter Bosnian air space and not be detected by the NATO AWACS over the Adriatic Sea. Le Hardy paid no attention to this: according to his report, no AWACS aircraft of NATO member states other than the United States were flying on that night. According to him there were two possible explanations: 'Either the mission was carried out by powers capable of neutralizing the radar surveillance or it was made with the consent and support of the authorities commanding the assets in the area at the time.'<sup>807</sup> The clandestine flights almost always seem to have taken place on nights either when no AWACS were in the air, or AWACS aircraft with US crews. On the night in question, there were only US aircraft (Grumman E-2c Hawkeye Radar and F/A-18C Hornets), which have a much smaller radar range. This allowed the Black Flights to fly to Tuzla unhindered. 'It is like Nelson putting the telescope to his blind eye and saying: "I see no ships"', according to a British researcher.<sup>808</sup>

On Friday 13 February, the daily overview report of UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo stated that there was 'continued evidence of [A]BiH arms re-supply activity'. Since early January 1995,

<sup>801</sup> Confidential collection (12), Report Le Hardy to MA Commander, BHC, 'Incident at TAB', 13/02/95.

<sup>802</sup> Confidential collection (12), De Lapresle to Akashi, Zagreb, UNPROFOR Z-0257, Unidentified fixed wing aircraft flight in Tuzla (4p), 14/02/95 and Confidential interview (67).

<sup>803</sup> Richard Dowden & John Carlin, 'US secretly supplying weapons to Bosnia', *The Independent*, 26/02/95.

<sup>804</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 139*, G-2 HQ UNPROFOR, Daily Info Summary, 11/02/95.

<sup>805</sup> Interview with N.E. Petersen, 29/10/99.

<sup>806</sup> Confidential collection (12), J2 Report Tuzla Air Activity, 17/02/95.

<sup>807</sup> Confidential collection (12), Report Le Hardy to MA Commander, BHC, 'Incident at TAB', 13/02/95 and UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*. De Lapresle to Annan, Z-268, 15/02/95.

<sup>808</sup> Confidential interview (67).

the convoys from Croatia with arms and ammunition had increased considerably, and in other parts of Bosnia the same observations were made.<sup>809</sup> In the spring, Dutchbat would also establish that the ABiH received new arms from Tuzla and that training was being stepped up.<sup>810</sup> This news spread rapidly, and in due course this could only have negative consequences for the clandestine arms supplies to the ABiH. The American pressure on Le Hardy was apparently increased, because he 'became involved in an acrimonious exchange with Americans on this subject'.<sup>811</sup> Under apparent American pressure (see below in this chapter) he produced a second report on 18 February in which he stated that his earlier report was incorrect and he made recommendations for achieving more accurate reporting from then on. According to him, no one had seen the aircraft - which was not true - but only heard it. He also made a number of suggestions so that the Norwegians could report better.<sup>812</sup> This second report is remarkable: on the one hand Le Hardy states that all alleged observations of the Hercules were wrong, but at the same time he makes a wide variety of recommendations, including stationing a Danish tank on Tuzla Air Base, to control the Highway Strip and to occupy more favourable positions, to improve the chance of actual 'hard' observations.

On the question regarding Black Flights, the commander of the Norwegian battalion, Colonel G. Arlefalk, stated that his soldiers sometimes reported six to eight aircraft to him, approaching from the direction of Brcko. The aircraft flew low and mostly without lights. One night, Arlefalk himself saw a Hercules approximately at 100 metres above his head at 03.00 hours. Arlefalk himself had flown in a C-130 on several occasions, and its sound and silhouette were unmistakable according to him. A temporary observation post was set up to gain a better view of these flights. In response to one of his reports, he was told that they had been AWACS, and moreover that they had been much further to the east: 'all the soldiers laughed themselves silly when that answer came', Arlefalk said.<sup>813</sup> It is clear, and Le Hardy's second report in no way detracts from this, that aircraft were observed above Tuzla in February that landed on the Highway Strip or ejected their load from a very low altitude. It was abundantly clear to all parties that something was going on.<sup>814</sup> There were even aerial photographs of crates on the Highway Strip.<sup>815</sup>

#### *Awareness of the Black Flights under the Bosnian Serbs*

All in all, sufficient evidence exists that these flights took place. However, little protest was forthcoming from the Bosnian Serbs, and the question is why that was the case. No definite answer was obtained to this question.<sup>816</sup> The VRS was in any case well aware of these flights. On 13 and 24 February 1995, General Mladic sent letters to General De Lapresle in Zagreb and to General Smith in Sarajevo. According to Mladic, aircraft had landed in Tuzla on these days, escorted by two jet fighters, and they had delivered arms and ammunition. Mladic complained that this had happened in front of the eyes of UNPROFOR, but they had not intervened. He accused UNPROFOR of bias and stated that from now on he could no longer guarantee the safety of NATO aircraft in the air space.<sup>817</sup> On 5 March 1995, Mladic again complained to General Smith about the flights.<sup>818</sup>

It was also possible to deduce that the VRS was well aware of the state of affairs from an interview with the former Minister of Information of the Republika Srpska, Miroslav Toholj. He was minister from 1993-1996 and asserted that the Bosnian Serb regime in Pale realized all too well that the

<sup>809</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 157.

<sup>810</sup> For example: MoD, *Sitreps*. Milinfo DutchBat, 25/04/95, 02/05/95, 08/05/95 and 14/05/95.

<sup>811</sup> Simms, *Unfinest Hour*, p. 202.

<sup>812</sup> Confidential collection (12), Colonel Le Hardy to NordBat, no. 3471.3/TAB/008, 18/02/95.

<sup>813</sup> Interview with G. Arlefalk, 18/05/00.

<sup>814</sup> For example: 'Muslimanski 'fantomi' u Tuzla', *Borba*, 01/03/95.

<sup>815</sup> Confidential interview (31) and confidential information (32).

<sup>816</sup> Confidential interview (67).

<sup>817</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 161. See also: interview with Eric-Lars Wahlgren, 03/06/99.

<sup>818</sup> UNNY, DPKO. Akashi to Annan, Z-363, 06/03/95.

military and other assistance from Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Malaysia and other Islamic countries would eventually enable the ABiH to conduct a long war. Toholj asserted that Pale knew of the flights of the C-130s - according to him not American but Turkish Hercules aircraft, with an element of 'logistics patronage' from the United States. According to Toholj, the arms were transported from Tuzla to Srebrenica and Zepa.<sup>819</sup> The VRS would not have dared to fire on these aircraft for fear that this would be interpreted and presented by the media in the West as an attack on an aircraft with humanitarian relief goods. Attempts had been made, however, to take photos of the Turkish C-130s, but without success.<sup>820</sup>

A problem with Toholj's statements is that it is unclear whether the former minister already knew this in March 1995 or that he found out with the passing of the years through the many publications. However, the fact that Mladic already complained about the matter in writing at an early stage is a clear indication that Pale already knew about the Black Flights in March 1995. Another indication is that after the first flight the VRS immediately moved its anti-aircraft missiles (SAMs) from Han Pijesak to a position that was the closest to Tuzla Air Base.<sup>821</sup>

There are indications that the Bosnian Serbs turned a blind eye to the Black Flights, for example in Bihac, where similar flights took place. This siege made the situation for ABiH General Dudakovic's 5th Corps in the Bihac enclave almost untenable. He told General Rupert Smith so via the Joint Commission Observers. One night, the Danish General Helsø - the UNPROFOR commander in the Bihac enclave - heard the sound of propellers on a gravel airstrip in the enclave. He recognized the specific sound of the four propellers of the Hercules C-130, because they kept turning. The Krajina Serbs fired a number of shells, but they all fell next to the runway, and this while the Krajina Serbs at other times fired very accurately with their artillery. This was, according to General Helsø, a warning along the lines of: 'we know what you are up to, but don't go too far'. This is an indication that the only reason for the VRS to permit the flights was that the VRS did not want the Americans against them. Helsø wanted, like his colleagues in Tuzla, to start an investigation, but he and his patrol were also obstructed by ABiH soldiers. In the following days it became clear that American-manufactured arms, uniforms and helmets had arrived.<sup>822</sup>

The Netherlands MIS also knew as early as 1992 of the existence of supplies transported by smaller aircraft from Cazin airfield to the north of Bihac.<sup>823</sup> From 1992 onwards, daily helicopter flights were made into Bihac. East European pilots were paid \$ 5000 per trip by the Bosnian Army's 5th Corps. In August 1994, a large Antonov An-26 transport aircraft, owned by a Ukrainian air charter, was shot down by the VRS and the crew killed while flying from Croatia to Bihac.<sup>824</sup> There were also Black Flights to the besieged Muslims in the Maglaj. According to a former SAS officer the flights were executed by C-130s and the CIA was involved. These flights departed from a US Air Force base in Germany, like Ramstein or Rhein-Main.<sup>825</sup> However, the reliability of some Russian and East European pilots was not always that great. In the spring of 1995 a helicopter pilot flying amongst others 150.000 Deutschmarks into the enclave Gorazde disappeared with his cargo.<sup>826</sup> The many independent observations of UN observers who had night vision equipment were included in Le Hardy's very first report, which was sent by means of a Code Cable from De Lapresle to the UN headquarters in New York. It was time for damage control on the American side.

<sup>819</sup> Interview with Miroslav Toholj, 14/12/99.

<sup>820</sup> Interview with Milovan Milutinovic, 20-22/03/00.

<sup>821</sup> Confidential interview (31).

<sup>822</sup> Interview with K. Helsø, 28/11/99. See also: Confidential collection (4), UNMO HQ Bihac and UNMO HQ BHC, 01/08/94.

<sup>823</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO, No. 2721*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 94/92, 07/12/92.

<sup>824</sup> Ripley, *Mercenaries*, p. 59.

<sup>825</sup> Spence, *All Necessary Measures*, pp. 99 - 104.

<sup>826</sup> Ripley, *Mercenaries*, p. 59.

*The attempt at a cover-up*

As mentioned above, Le Hardy's report covered the Black Flights, and therefore had to be rendered 'harmless'. For this reason, the Americans were said to have exerted pressure on Force Commander De Lapresle to withdraw his earlier report to New York, in which he reported that, among other things, advanced military technology had been delivered, and that the origin of the military cargo and the cargo aircraft themselves was unknown.<sup>827</sup> A British researcher stated that this could only mean that American military experts must also have flown to Bosnia to train the ABiH to handle this equipment. The Americans did not want this to be revealed, and they therefore wanted De Lapresle to issue a statement to the effect that 'no unauthorized air activity occurred at the Tuzla airfield' on 10 and 12 February.<sup>828</sup>

The morning briefing of South European NATO Command (AFSOUTH) on 16 February paid attention to the flights. According to these reports, there was no question of actual observation of Hercules aircraft (the Norwegian observations were therefore simply denied) and the escort aircraft mentioned were involved in Close Air Support training, according to the report. The Dutch liaison officer, Colonel J. Beks, considered this to be a strange moment for such training. He had 'picked up' a letter from Mladic to Smith and he found it remarkable that Mladic had already protested on 13 February. Beks interpreted the instructions and overreaction of American officers involved as an attempt to cover up the Special Operations activities, in the context of arms supplies to the ABiH. According to Beks, this was not to the benefit of NATO cohesion, and could even jeopardize the implementation of Deny Flight. Beks made the following comparison: 'A defensive player on the football team has no trouble with occasionally (...) letting a ball through.'<sup>829</sup>

The actual cover-up started with the 'official report' of Colonel Douglas J. Richardson of the US Air Force. He spoke to Moldestad, and made it clear to him that he had not used night vision binoculars, had not seen a cargo aircraft, and had only heard sounds that resembled the engines of a C-130. According to Richardson, Moldestad then started to have doubts. Richardson also made clear to him that on that night NATO jet fighters were in the process of a Close Air Support training mission over Tuzla, between 20.00 and 05.00 hours. According to Richardson, these had been under UNPROFOR control. Richardson came to the conclusion that Moldestad had made a mistake, and that he could have seen neither any NATO aircraft nor a C-130.<sup>830</sup> Unfortunately for Richardson, Moldestad's observation was at 17.45 hours, well before 20.00 hours. The question now is what was really going on.

According to the American Colonel Timothy C. Jones, two Danish Forward Air Controllers were working with two A-6 E jet fighters, which were exercising at low altitude over Tuzla. According to him, two F-18 jet fighters were also flying to the south of Tuzla. Besides the two Danes, according to Jones, no one else knew that NATO aircraft were operating in this region, which is rather unlikely: Le Hardy's earlier report suggests that Norwegians in Tuzla also saw them. They had made subsequent enquiries in Sarajevo, but neither had Bosnia-Herzegovina Command been informed of Close Air Support training. Sarajevo had therefore not responded to the messages from Tuzla.<sup>831</sup>

Jones denied furthermore that the UN observers used night vision binoculars. This was actually incorrect: a British SAS soldier had made an observation with such binoculars. In October 1994 the Force Commander had already been pointed out blind spots in the No Fly Zone that were apparently inevitable. It was decided then to issue night vision binoculars to observers in the areas around Tuzla.<sup>832</sup> The use of night vision binoculars was also confirmed in the Senior Staff Meeting with Akashi on 13

<sup>827</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 157.

<sup>828</sup> Confidential interview (67).

<sup>829</sup> MoD, *DCBC*, Fax to Col. Van Veen, 16/02/95.

<sup>830</sup> Confidential collection (12), Memo for the Record by Colonel USAF Douglas Richardson, Tuzla 'sitings', 17/02/95.

<sup>831</sup> Confidential collection (12), Report Le Hardy to MA Commander, BHC, 'Incident at TAB', 13/02/95.

<sup>832</sup> UNNY, *DPKO, File #81302*, FC Eyes Only, Point Paper No Fly Zone Monitoring, 23/10/94.

February 1995.<sup>833</sup> According to Jones, neither were any visual observations made. This too conflicted with Le Hardy's report, which stated that various people had seen the wingtip lights.

Jones pointed out further that a Jordanian unit that was stationed to the east of the Tuzla West runway had observed nothing. This was not so strange, because the Hercules had landed or dropped its load on the Tuzla Highway Strip, which was approximately 10 km away from the Jordanian unit. And as Le Hardy had already indicated in his report, it was deemed possible that a large aircraft had landed on the Tuzla Highway Strip without nearby OPs noticing, let alone the Jordanian unit 10 kilometres away. According to Jones, the aircraft noises could be explained easily. This was 'serbian airline traffic.' The flight movements and lights that had been seen were 'consistent with the normal civilian airline traffic patterns in Serbian airspace', according to Jones. This statement is extremely implausible: there was actually a No Fly Zone above Bosnia, and Belgrade was far away from Tuzla. It is then illogical for regular Serbian commercial traffic to be flying so low, at a height of 300 metres over Tuzla. If that had been true, the ABiH could have fired at those aircraft. Jones did not explain this, however.

The sound of the cargo aircraft that different witnesses had heard could be explained, according to Jones, because they had been two A-6 E jet fighters. This too is peculiar, because the noise of an aircraft with four propellers is unmistakably different from that of a jet fighter. It was not even necessary to be a practised observer to notice this such as the people who had seen and heard the Hercules actually were.

Other evidence for the Black Flight was that an UNPROFOR patrol had been fired on by the ABiH when it wanted to inspect the Tuzla Highway Strip, but Jones apparently did not find this unusual. He concluded that 'there was no evidence that an aircraft landed or delivered any supplies by air at the Tuzla airfields'. This report was offered as a joint NATO/UNPROFOR investigation to the highest NATO authority in the region, Admiral Smith, to Force Commander De Lapresle and to Bosnia-Herzegovina Commander Rose. According to Jones, all the commanders agreed with the conclusion: there was no evidence that on 10 and 12 February 'unauthorized air activity' had taken place over Tuzla.<sup>834</sup> An indication that the report left much to be desired was that a senior French military official even spoke of a forged NATO report.<sup>835</sup> However, the document was sent to the UN in New York and the Americans could be satisfied.

#### *The response from the UN in New York*

Anyone who thought that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations would easily accept the reassuring reports was in for a surprise. On 17 February, Akashi reported that there were discrepancies between the UNPROFOR and NATO reports.<sup>836</sup> On 21 February, the political adviser to Boutros-Ghali, Ghinmaya Gharekhan, drafted a secret memo for Under-Secretary-General Annan, in which he indicated that the affair would come before the Security Council before too long: 'For us to tell the Security Council that there was no evidence to suggest any unauthorized air activity would be tantamount to saying that UNPROFOR should, in effect, stop reporting any air activity.' Force Commander De Lapresle had recently established helicopter flights from Zagreb to the Bihac, and Gharekhan wondered rhetorically whether this would also be retracted.

Gharekhan criticized the official NATO report and the explanations 'such as there were'. He wanted to know what that so-called regular commercial Serbian airline traffic had been.<sup>837</sup> Two days later, Akashi told Annan that the investigation was deadlocked: he had discussed the affair with the

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<sup>833</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*. Akashi to Annan, Z-284, 17/02/95 and FC, File #88040, SRSG Meetings, Senior Staff Meeting, 13/02/95. Cf. Harald Doornbos, 'Groene spionnen tussen blauwhelmen' ('Green spies between blue helmets'), *De Stem*, 10/05/95.

<sup>834</sup> Confidential collection (12), 'Reports of Possible Fixed Wing Flight Activity at Tuzla 10/12 Feb 95', 18/02/95.

<sup>835</sup> Confidential interview (1).

<sup>836</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*, Akashi to Annan, Z-284, 17/02/95.

<sup>837</sup> MoD, *CRST*. Annan to Akashi, 566, 22/02/95 and O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 158.

Force Commander and with General Smith, and the conclusion was that the investigation would not yield any satisfactory answers. The NATO report had meanwhile been modified somewhat to bring it more in line with the UNPROFOR findings. It now stated that there was no 'conclusive evidence' of the flights.

It was difficult to maintain, however, that nothing at all had happened.<sup>838</sup> The later Deputy Head of the MIS, Colonel Bokhoven, confirmed that during his time at UNPROFOR he had also heard of the Black Flights. According to him it was clear that they were American or Turkish aircraft.<sup>839</sup> Another Dutch officer who had dealings with the Black Flights was Brigadier J.W. Brinkman, who was Chief of Staff at Bosnia-Herzegovina Command from September 1994 to March 1995. Brinkman never found any evidence for the clandestine American support to the ABiH, but neither had he ever looked for any. He did observe that within six months of the supplies in February and March, the ABiH's appearance improved considerably: they were wearing real uniforms and carrying better arms. Brinkman heard from local UN commanders that aircraft of unknown origin landed in Tuzla. They were C-130s, protected by fighter planes, the signatures of which bore a suspicious resemblance to those of NATO.<sup>840</sup> Another Dutch staff officer at Bosnia Hercegovina Command, Lieutenant Colonel De Ruiter, had also heard that supply flights had taken place. Whether the Americans were behind them was unclear to him, because there were no identifying markings on the aircraft. The supplies also went via third party countries, 'but whatever, there were landings', according to De Ruiter.<sup>841</sup>

On 23 February, Annan sent a 'most immediate code cable' to Akashi. He referred to De Lapresle's report and to the Moldestad's statement. The Norwegian stated in the 'joint' NATO/UNPROFOR report that he had not seen a C-130, but only heard one. De Lapresle's earlier report, however, stated that he definitely had seen a transport-type aircraft, and had also made an analysis of the flight pattern. Annan wanted to know whether Moldestad had really been interviewed by the researchers, and Annan also pointed out that the commercial airline traffic to Belgrade usually closed after 16.00 hours. He was prepared to agree to the joint report provided the outstanding questions and identified contradictions were resolved, and if it could be clearly indicated that the UNPROFOR report was drawn up professionally and in good faith in the first instance, but that new facts had emerged after a NATO investigation that were not available at the time of the earlier investigation.<sup>842</sup>

This was not the only message that reached Akashi from New York. On 24 February he was told through his adviser, Jesudas Bell, that UN headquarters through Shashi Tharoor was 'extremely upset' about the clandestine arms flights reports. Meanwhile, more reports had arrived from UNPROFOR soldiers, who had seen aircraft over Tuzla on 17, 22 and 23 February. Tharoor stated that New York was outraged at an investigation, described as a joint NATO/UNPROFOR investigation, that contained so many unanswered questions. If this had been a joint investigation to which UNPROFOR had linked its name, then the Norwegian report and the commercial airline traffic in Serbian airspace should also have been investigated. On this last matter, UNPROFOR should have contacted the Serbian authorities through its office in Belgrade and asked them to confirm the commercial airline traffic, according to Tharoor.

Tharoor added that UNPROFOR had put its name to an official investigation report that on the one hand contradicted the UNPROFOR reports and on the other hand provided no conclusive evidence why there were such divergent final conclusions. Tharoor felt that the document seriously undermined the credibility of UNPROFOR and the UN secretariat. Various delegations had already asked questions because the UNPROFOR reporting on the incidents was so contradictory and

<sup>838</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR, Box 124*. Akashi to Annan, Z-310, 23/02/95. For a similar ECMM analysis: NMFA, *DDI/DEU*, Paris Coreau, 14/03/95.

<sup>839</sup> Interview with H. Bokhoven, 16/05/01.

<sup>840</sup> Interview with J.W. Brinkman, 11/10/99.

<sup>841</sup> Interview with A. de Ruiter, 29/06/00.

<sup>842</sup> Confidential collection (12), Annan to Akashi, no. 578, 23/02/95.

sometimes incorrect. Adding new building blocks would only further fuel this debate, Tharoor predicted. His preference was therefore for a separate investigation and a supplementary NATO report, to which UNPROFOR would only attach its name if it incorporated its earlier information: this would benefit UNPROFOR's credibility. Bell told Akashi that General Smith was aware of this view. Meanwhile, a variety of rumours was circulating in the press. If a request was made for comment, New York would state that the report had been received but that a more detailed explanation had been requested.<sup>843</sup>

Akashi responded several days later. According to him, the NATO investigation team had not heard all the witnesses, because a few of them were on leave. Moldestad was interviewed by telephone. Akashi was disappointed with 'the lack of rigorous documentation in the NATO team's report, and its failure to substantiate contradictions with original UNPROFOR observations'. He had decided not to put NATO under further pressure by producing a more reliable report, but he had agreed with the sentence 'We agree that the United Nations should not put its name to a report that falls short of achievable standards', which represented General Smith's conclusion.<sup>844</sup> The new Force Commander, Janvier later referred back to the matter in a curious way: at the beginning of March he told Annan that the Hercules aircraft had actually been helicopters.<sup>845</sup>

#### *The consequences of the reports about the Black Flights*

The Black Flights led to tense relations between the United States, the UN and NATO. According to SACEUR, General George Joulwan, Islamic countries were involved in the supplies to the ABiH.<sup>846</sup> The commander of the southern NATO command, Admiral Leighton Smith, promised Janvier and Akashi that he would resign if it should appear that American uniformed military personnel were involved in this operation, and wanted a thorough investigation. It had become known to him that on the day in question, 10 February, indeed no AWAC aircraft had flown above Bosnia. E-2 jet fighters from US aircraft carriers had taken over this task at the last moment. However, these fighters do not have the same capabilities as AWACS. So, it is no surprise that they spotted nothing. This then raises the question as to the nationality of the transport aircraft: Smith wanted to know if perhaps they were Turkish aircraft. Some British officials told him later that in Gorazde too the ABiH had been provided with new uniforms.<sup>847</sup> The Bosnian Minister Toholj also claimed that the entire affair led to tense relations within the UN. Akashi's spokesman, Williams, had told him so. He hinted that NATO did not want UNPROFOR to reveal the secret supplies to Tuzla.<sup>848</sup>

It was not only in New York that this was a sensitive matter. The British Foreign Secretary, Hurd, also took the matter seriously. According to Lord Owen, he informed various embassies by telegram that the United Kingdom certainly was not involved in a cover-up of the Black Flights. Hurd stated that the flights were observed on 10, 12 and 23 February; meanwhile, according to Hurd, it was also known that there had been many more flights. Hurd reported further that one of the observers was a British officer who was at the head of the Operations Section in Sector North East, referring to Le Hardy. Hurd referred to Jones's report and then established that neither NATO, nor UNPROFOR had been able to produce a complete and definitive report. He therefore deemed it possible that these clandestine flights had taken place, although there was still no hard evidence.

According to Hurd, it had now been decided that both the UN and NATO should end this affair. NATO had decided not to investigate the affair further as long as no new facts appeared on the table. However, Hurd pointed out that Moscow did want further investigation, and Paris was also

<sup>843</sup> Confidential collection (12), Memo Jesudas Bell to Akashi, 24/02/95.

<sup>844</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, Box 124, Akashi to Annan, Z-328, 27/02/95.

<sup>845</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, Box 139, Janvier to Annan, Z-350, 02/03/95.

<sup>846</sup> Interview with George Joulwan, 08/06/0.

<sup>847</sup> Interview with Leighton Smith, 06/06/00.

<sup>848</sup> Interview with Miroslav Toholj, 14/12/99.



urging it, because they suspected that the United States was behind the clandestine operation, even if British diplomats in Washington were told repeatedly that this was not the case. The US ambassador in London made a special trip to the Foreign Office to forcefully deny this.<sup>849</sup>

The Black Flights were also raised for discussion at a summit between the US Secretary of Defense and the Ministers of Defence of the United Kingdom, France and Germany. They discussed the situation in Bosnia from 3 to 5 March 1995 in Key West (Florida). There was a comprehensive discussion of the options of direct support to the Bosnian government and a continuation of the UNPROFOR presence. At the end of the meeting, the American Secretary of Defense, Perry, made a statement. He had apparently been asked by the other ministers about the secret arms supplies to Bosnia. Perry stated for the record that 'if any aircraft were landing at Tuzla, they were neither US aircraft nor arranged by the US'.<sup>850</sup> This in turn raised the question of whether Perry actually knew nothing, or that he was being rather economical with the truth.

In any case, earlier assertions in the NATO/UNPROFOR report to the effect that 'all those involved' had been heard, were incorrect. The British journalist Nik Gowing tracked down several Norwegian witnesses to the Black Flights, who stated that they had never spoken with Jones or his team. They declared in front of the camera that they had seen and heard an aircraft with propellers. Furthermore, a Norwegian relief worker had met two Americans in plain clothes in a warehouse in Tuzla, who were in the process of unpacking arms, apparently from the Black Flights. A Norwegian patrol that had gone to investigate on the night in question, had also clearly seen and heard a Hercules. Neither had the members of this patrol been questioned. The same was true for the Norwegian sentry who was one of the first to have heard and seen the Hercules.<sup>851</sup>

Later, one of the most important Norwegian witnesses, Moldestad, would be taken aside by three American officers. They took him to a balcony on the fifth floor of a hotel in Zagreb, and made clear to him that if he stuck to his account and said any more on the subject, things could get messy for him. After reports on British television and articles in the press, journalists were also put under pressure by the American embassy in London. They heard all manner of threats. The embassy was said to have been acting on the instructions of the State Department.<sup>852</sup> Flights were reported into April, also by the Netherlands MIS.<sup>853</sup> The question remains, of course, whether American aircraft were actually involved in the clandestine flights to Tuzla.

### *Who flew to Tuzla?*

Former CIA director, Woolsey, was not aware of the Black Flights. Of course, these took place after his departure from the CIA. If the CIA had been involved with the flights to Tuzla, then, according to him, a written presidential finding would have had to have been issued for such a covert operation or for the ones that the CIA helps with.<sup>854</sup> The affair was also examined by the US Senate. The flights had been investigated at an earlier stage by the Pentagon, as part of a NATO investigation and of an investigation for US policymakers. After studying the Pentagon investigation report, the Senate found in November 1996 that the investigation was scantily documented. It came to the conclusion that no activities had taken place that pointed to supplies of arms and there was no American involvement. The Senate was able to peruse documents of the Department of Defense and the CIA, to conduct interviews, but

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<sup>849</sup> Interview with Lord Owen, 27/06/01 and confidential information (33).

<sup>850</sup> Confidential information (34).

<sup>851</sup> See also: Press release of *Channel 4 News*, 17/11/95 and ITN documentary by Nik Gowing.

<sup>852</sup> Confidential interview (67)

<sup>853</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*. Situation in the former Yugoslavia, briefing 21 April, 20/04/95.

<sup>854</sup> Interviews with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00 and 01/10/02.

concluded nonetheless that there had been ‘no U.S. role in any clandestine military airlifts’. No comment was made on who was involved, or what actually happened.<sup>855</sup>

Journalists and researchers have asked the question whether it was not American aircraft after all that carried out the Black Flights. The most common answer was that only one country actually qualified for these night-time operations: the United States. The fact is that it is unlikely that the Americans would ‘blind’ their AWAC aircraft for Iranian planes. The operation was said to have been paid for from a Pentagon Special Operations budget, with the complete assent of the White House. Probably the most important members of Congress were informed in the deepest of secrecy, and they were therefore ‘in the loop’ concerning the events.<sup>856</sup>

In Tuzla itself it was impossible to establish via interviews with Bosnian military and intelligence officials the identity of the C-130s. It was clear from observations that not all aircraft physically landed, but that some dropped their load from a low altitude. From a technical point of view, later explanations that no American aircraft had ‘landed’ were then correct, but the question remains as to whether absolutely no American aircraft were involved.

In *Deliberate Force*, Ripley describes how three Southern Air Transport C-130s from Rhein Main airfield in Germany carried out the flights. It is not so strange that Southern Air Transport (SAT) crops up in this account: it was, like Civil Air Transport, Air Asia and Air America, former CIA property. These companies were involved in many secret CIA operations. They carried out hundreds of Black Flights around the world. It was only in the mid 1970s that these companies were sold, but they continue to perform so-called contract work for the CIA, and the service still exercises considerable influence on the affairs of the airline company.<sup>857</sup>

However, the involvement of SAT is still not self-evident. After all, if the CIA was not involved in the secret operations in Bosnia, who then did use SAT? There is another reason why the involvement of Southern Air Transport was not self-evident: the company was far too notorious because of its past. On the discovery of these Black Flights, fingers would quickly be pointing at the CIA. Other sources assert, according to Ripley,<sup>858</sup> that the Bosnian air force had a modest fleet of planes, consisting of a C-130 and CASA 212, *Antonov* AN-26 and AN-32 transport aircraft. These aircraft were allegedly stationed in Cyprus and Slovenia and were to have operated from Ljubljana and elsewhere.<sup>859</sup>

The question remains, however, whether this ‘relatively young Bosnian air force’ was capable of performing such operations. Ripley is of the opinion that the State Department and the National Security Council (NSC) were involved in the operation, and not the CIA or DIA.<sup>860</sup> This is probably correct: it seems that after the scandals of recent years the CIA has become more cautious with foreign covert operations. They must be covered ‘by the book’ by the White House.<sup>861</sup> In addition, the director of the CIA, Woolsey, was of the opinion that clandestine operations probably could not remain secret for long.<sup>862</sup> Others concluded that private companies, such as Tepper Aviation, or Intermountain Aviation were involved in the Black Flights. Both companies have a CIA background.<sup>863</sup> A British

<sup>855</sup> Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>856</sup> Confidential interview (67) and interview with Tim Ripley, 12/12/99.

<sup>857</sup> See for the history of CAT: Leary, *Perilous Missions*, passim. For SAT and Air Asia: Prados, *President's Secret Wars*, pp. 184, 231 and 325.

<sup>858</sup> Interview with Tim Ripley, 12/12/99.

<sup>859</sup> Confidential information (35).

<sup>860</sup> Ripley, *Deliberate Force*, pp. 59-63.

<sup>861</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>862</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00 and Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, *U.S. Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995*, Washington DC, 1996, p. 4.

<sup>863</sup> Ranelagh, *The Agency*, p. 335. See also [http://pw.1.netcom.com/~ncoic/cia\\_infor.htm](http://pw.1.netcom.com/~ncoic/cia_infor.htm), *Results of the 1973 Church Committee Hearings on CIA Misdeeds*, p. 3 en Richard Kolb, ‘Into the Heart of Darkness. Cold War Africa: Part 2 Angola’, *VFW Magazine*, May 1999.

General and researcher, Brendan O'shea, also concluded that private companies were involved here; to be precise, reservists or retired American pilots (not in uniform and not in the active service of the American armed forces) were to have flown these C-130s.

The aircraft that took part in the various Black Flights were also seen by observers of the ECMM, the European monitoring mission. On 23 February they saw four C-130s on Split airfield. One of them was a Spanish cargo plane that was used for supplying the Spanish battalion in Mostar, but the other two aircraft were American C-130s. According to O'shea, they belonged to the 37th ALS Blue Tail Flies. The fourth plane had only a small American flag on its tail and no registration numbers, and was painted in different colours from the other two planes. The observers noticed that the crew were wearing green uniforms without rank or nationality markings. They were able to continue to work undisturbed and were not hindered by the Croatian police or UNPROFOR observers. Shortly before their departure from Split, the ECMM observers 'coincidentally' encountered the Croatian Colonel Kresimir Cosic, President Tudjman's personal adviser, in the departure lounge. Cosic was also the liaison with the State Department in the matter of the activities of the military company Military Professional Resources Incorporated.<sup>864</sup> The ECMM launched its own investigation, but it yielded nothing.

The conclusion is that there are only suspicions but no hard evidence that American aircraft carried out the Black Flights. A British researcher put a question regarding American involvement to various sources, and most ('eyes were raised ceiling-wards') answered him as follows: 'Who else has the skill and expertise to carry out such a swift, delicate mission covertly? The Saudis? The Turks? The Iranians?' The specialized crews and the types of aircraft for these night-time operations indeed appeared to point in only one direction: that of the United States.<sup>865</sup>

Nonetheless, it is improbable that US aircraft were involved, but this does then raise the question of who had organized the operation. Woolsey was willing to have the CIA to carry out such a secret operation; his service had relevant experience. Woolsey stated, however, with great certainty: 'The CIA did not move weapons to Bosnia. We were perfectly willing to do that. We had enough experience in this field, but the policy level did not want the CIA to do that.'<sup>866</sup> Woolsey's offer was therefore rejected, also because Lake (again) feared leaks<sup>867</sup> and Christopher was afraid here too of angry reactions from London and Paris which could lead to UNPROFOR's departure. NATO Secretary-General Claes had warned Clinton of this.<sup>868</sup> Lake also considered this a covert operation; another reason for it not to be allowed to go ahead was that Congress would have to be informed.<sup>869</sup> The strategy via third party countries was then opted for. This indeed seems to be the course that was followed.

### *Turkey flies to Tuzla*

There are other indications that the CIA was not involved in the Black Flights to Tuzla. Like the attitude of the CIA station chief in Zagreb, who gave a negative recommendation regarding Galbraith's plans for the Croatian pipeline and the later negative recommendations of the CIA on the clandestine supply of arms to the Croats and Muslims as Holbrooke had wanted.<sup>870</sup> Much points in the direction that this was an operation by a third party country, with the assent of parts of the US government. Another indication that US services were not directly involved, was Holbrooke's evidence to Senate:

<sup>864</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihać*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>865</sup> Confidential interview (67).

<sup>866</sup> Interview with R.J. Woolsey, 08/06/00.

<sup>867</sup> James Risen & Doyle McManus, 'U.S. had options to let Bosnia get arms', *Los Angeles Times*, 14/07/96 and Walter Pincus, 'Woolsey, in testimony, Criticizes White House', *The Washington Post*, 11/06/96.

<sup>868</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'America's Secret Bosnia Agenda', *The Observer*, 20/11/94.

<sup>869</sup> James Risen & Doyle McManus, 'U.S. had options to let Bosnia get arms', *Los Angeles Times*, 14/07/96.

<sup>870</sup> Confidential interviews (12) and (13).

‘US intelligence agencies were not involved.’ This is correct if it refers to an operation that was sanctioned ‘remotely’. Leighton Smith’s promise to Janvier and Akashi that he would resign if it were to appear that uniformed military personnel were involved in the Black Flights, is also consistent with this picture. A prominent White House adviser confirmed that the United States did not wish to violate the arms embargo. It would undermine the authority of Security Council resolutions, however much the Americans were uncomfortable with this embargo. If the Americans themselves were to violate the embargo, then the imposition of an embargo elsewhere would be made impossible.<sup>871</sup>

Washington definitely did play a role in the background, however. The attempts at a cover-up after the first observations of the flights to Tuzla point to this involvement. Why otherwise would the Norwegian key person be physically threatened, would several witnesses not be heard, the reported facts be distorted, journalists put under pressure, and attempts made to hold back De Lapresle’s report? The fact that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and UNPROFOR ultimately agreed and let the matter rest, probably has more to do with the wish no longer to disturb the relations between Washington and the UN and NATO; after all, the ‘lift and strike’ debate had already caused a considerable deterioration in transatlantic relations.<sup>872</sup>

A number of countries are candidates for having supplied directly to Bosnia. Pakistan delivered equipment, as did the Sultan of Brunei, who paid for anti-tank missiles from Malaysia. In January 1993 already, a Pakistani vessel with ten containers of arms, which were destined for the ABiH, was intercepted in the Adriatic Sea.<sup>873</sup> Pakistan definitely defied the United Nations ban on supply of arms to the Bosnian Muslims and sophisticated anti-tank guided missiles were air lifted by the Pakistani intelligence agency, ISI, to help Bosnians fight the Serbs, an ex-ISI Chief has officially admitted in a written petition submitted before a court in Lahore. The document was submitted by Lt. General (Retd) Javed Nasir, who was head of the ISI from March 1992 to May 1993, in a case he filed against the owner and editors of the largest newspaper and TV group of Pakistan, in an anti Terrorism Court.<sup>874</sup> It remains unclear how the missiles were transported to Bosnia and who did it.

Furthermore, tons of diplomatic post regularly arrived by air in Sarajevo from Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Iran. Doubts were raised about the diplomatic immunity of the content of the load.<sup>875</sup> A foundation that was affiliated to the Saudi royal family also provided millions of dollars in arms assistance.<sup>876</sup> Moreover, Malaysia attempted to sidestep the embargo via merchant shipping and the Malaysian UNPROFOR soldiers that were stationed in Bosnia.<sup>877</sup> All of these were direct supplies to Bosnia, because the Bosnian government was dissatisfied with the Croatian authorities’ practice of skimming the arms supplies, or because the government did not want to become entirely dependent on Zagreb. This could be avoided by direct flights from certain countries.<sup>878</sup>

In addition to Iran (via Croatia), Turkey proved to be the most important supplier of arms to the ABiH. Turkey had been closely involved in the secret arms supplies to Bosnia for some time. As early as 1992 Iran had opened a smuggling route to Bosnia with the assistance of Turkey; this was two years before the Clinton administration gave ‘permission’ for creating the Croatian pipeline. Bosnian government officials acknowledged that in 1993 a Turkish pipeline also existed, through which the above-mentioned arms from Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Brunei and Pakistan were smuggled. Other consignments came from Belgium, Hungary, Uganda and Argentina. In Argentina a scandal erupted because President Menem had issued a decree for the delivery of 8000 FN-Fals (automatic rifles), 155

<sup>871</sup> Confidential interview (14).

<sup>872</sup> For this, see Chapter 10 of Part II of the Srebrenica report.

<sup>873</sup> ‘Wapens moslims onderschept’ (‘Muslim arms intercepted’), *Trouw*, 21/01/93.

<sup>874</sup> ‘Ex-ISI Chief Reveals Secret Missile Shipments to Bosnia defying UN Embargo’, in: *South Asia Tribune Publications*, Issue No 22, Dec 23-29, 2002.

<sup>875</sup> Confidential interview (44) and James Risen, ‘Iran gave Bosnia leader \$ 500,000’, *Los Angeles Times*, 31/12/96.

<sup>876</sup> ‘The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina’, *Janes’s Intelligence Review*, February 1993, pp. 63-65.

<sup>877</sup> For example: MIS/CO. Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 26/95, 01/06/95.

<sup>878</sup> Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, p. 90.

mm guns, 2000 pistols, 211,000 hand grenades, 3000 rockets, 30,000 grenades, 3000 landmines and millions of rounds of ammunition to Bolivia. This country stated, however, that it had ordered nothing and the Argentine parliament discovered that the arms and ammunition were destined for Croatia and elsewhere.<sup>879</sup>

At the beginning of 1993, the name of Turkey was again dropped as direct supplier.<sup>880</sup> The Bosnian Vice-President Ganic had an interview in mid February with the Turkish President Özal, but denied that he had promised him an aircraft full of arms. Ganic did admit to receiving arms in a different manner.<sup>881</sup> During a visit to Sarajevo of the later Prime Minister of Turkey, Tansu Ciller, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto, both ladies publicly called for a lifting of the arms embargo.<sup>882</sup> In the summer and autumn of 1994, the CIA reported that spy satellites had taken photos of Iranian aircraft on Turkish airfields. Two days later, satellite photos were taken of the same aircraft in Zagreb or at other airports in Croatia, where the arms were unloaded.

According to O'shea, Turkey's involvement was clear. Specially modified C-130s from American bases in the United Kingdom and Germany would pick up their cargo on remote runways in the Turkish part of Cyprus. The cargo, which consisted of arms and ammunition, would have been delivered there by Iranian and Turkish aircraft. The aircraft would fly to Croatia via the Adriatic, and then on to Bosnia. If the Hercules, with its modest range, could not achieve its objective in one hop, it could always make a stopover on the Croatian island of Brac, close to the coast near Split. The population there indeed often observed C-130 aircraft that operated from this airfield. From this island the CIA also operated its UAVs flying over Bosnia.<sup>883</sup> The Croatian Minister of Defence, Susak, claimed that most of the aircraft that landed there came from Turkey and not Iran.<sup>884</sup> Also quite some military goods were delivered to the Pula airport on the Istrian peninsula.<sup>885</sup>

The Turkish government therefore provided full cooperation to the Croatian pipeline. There was more: the Turks also flew directly to Tuzla with C-130s. This allegedly happened after the Chief of Staff of the ABiH 2nd Corps was sent to Ankara as an additional military attaché.<sup>886</sup> UNPROFOR officers assumed that Turkish aircraft flew in from Cyprus, with American military authorities acting as intermediary.<sup>887</sup> French military officials likewise asserted that Turkey was responsible for the flights. NATO officers stated in a British daily newspaper that if the American intelligence services used a cover, 'Turkey would be the obvious choice'. The Turkish air force had C-130s that could reach Tuzla. This was otherwise also true of the Iranian and Pakistani air forces, which were also mentioned as possible third-party countries for supplies via Turkey to Tuzla.<sup>888</sup>

The UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) was also aware of the American secret arms supplies to the ABiH. According to a British intelligence official, the DIS never made an issue of them, so as not to further damage the sensitive relationship with the US services. An internal DIS analysis concluded that the arms were delivered via 'a different network', and that the entire operation was probably led by the NSC. It was stressed that the CIA and DIA were not involved in the Black Flights

<sup>879</sup> John Pomfret, 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/96 and Johan Peleman, 'Wapenhandel naar Bosnië-Herzegovina' ('Arms trade to Bosnia-Herzegovina'), *Noord-Zuid Cabier*, No. 22(3), September 1997, pp. 88-89.

<sup>880</sup> Robert Fox, 'Dangerous games of fact and fantasy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10/02/93. See also the statements of former FC L. MacKenzie: 'Interventie zal in Bosnië geen vrede brengen' ('Intervention will bring no peace in Bosnia'), *De Volkskrant*, 06/02/93.

<sup>881</sup> 'Bosnische vice-president: Kroaten hebben ons nodig' ('Bosnian president: Croats need us'), *Trouw*, 23/02/93.

<sup>882</sup> Rose, *Fighting for Peace*, p. 81.

<sup>883</sup> O'shea, *Crisis at Bihac*, p. 159.

<sup>884</sup> John Pomfret, 'US Allies Fed Pipeline Of Covert Arms in Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 12/05/096.

<sup>885</sup> Interview with Jan-Inge Svensson, 15/11/02.

<sup>886</sup> Confidential interview (68).

<sup>887</sup> William Drozdiak, 'US Accused of Covert Bosnia Aid', *Chicago-Sun Times*, 28/07/95.

<sup>888</sup> William Drozdiak, 'US Accused of Covert Bosnia Aid', *Chicago-Sun Times*, 28/07/95; Richard Dowden & John Carlin, 'US secretly supplying weapons to Bosnia', *The Independent*, 26/02/95 and Robert Fox, 'Iran's cases of cash helped buy Muslim victory in Bosnia', *The Daily Telegraph*, 01/01/97.

to Tuzla. Incidentally, the DIS received a direct order from the British government not to investigate this affair. This was not permitted for the simple reason that the matter was too sensitive in the framework of American-British relations. The DIS also obtained intelligence on the secret supplies to the ABiH from the German military intelligence service and the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, because some of the flights departed from Frankfurt. However, no American-German alliance existed in the matter of clandestine support to the ABiH.<sup>889</sup>

Cengic had set up the entire operation. The Cengic family owned numerous companies in Turkey, and during the war Cengic worked in Ankara as a military attaché, and would reach an agreement there with the Turkish government on secret arms supplies. They were to take place in Tuzla with the involvement of the Special Branch of the Turkish General Staff. This unit had also been responsible for covert operations in the past.<sup>890</sup> The Pentagon had likewise identified Cengic as the main link between the supplies from Islamic countries, such as Iran, Turkey and Pakistan.<sup>891</sup> Even the Dutch national security service BVD observed that Turkish aircraft repeatedly dropped arms over areas that were under ABiH control. The service described the Turkish action as a 'solo performance'.<sup>892</sup> MIS/Navy reports also mention the involvement of Turkish aircraft; it was observed that Turkey was in a position to fly with C-130s to Tuzla directly or via third party countries.<sup>893</sup> The conclusion must be that the United States 'turned a blind eye' to the Croatian pipeline, but in the case of the Black Flights to Tuzla Air Base, they deliberately closed their 'eyes' (of the AWAC aircraft) for the direct Turkish flights. US aircraft did not themselves fly to Tuzla, because their discovery would have seriously embarrassed the US government and put transatlantic relations under even greater pressure. Supplies via a third party country were a simpler solution for the United States.

#### 4. Military assistance to the Bosnian Serbs

The clandestine arms supplies to the ABiH were not the only thing to stir up feelings: so too did the supplies to the Bosnian Serbs. According to some sources, Russian intelligence services even had a secret arms agreement with the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>894</sup> Throughout the entire war, accusations were made that Serbia supplied arms and ammunition on a large scale to the VRS. For example, an article in the *New York Times* asserted that hundreds of Serbian helicopter flights had been recorded over northeast Bosnia. An anonymous UNPROFOR officer stated: 'We have not seen anything on this scale before and doubt that the Bosnian Serbs could organize this number of helicopter flights without the active involvement of the Yugoslav Army.'<sup>895</sup> To Annan's irritation, this article, 'which runs counter to every element of analysis provided to us by yourselves', led directly to a request from the non-aligned countries for a debate in the Security Council. Annan requested Akashi to report all messages about helicopter flights directly. Akashi had already informed Annan that cross border flights were probably not involved, and that the number of flights observed from the ground was exaggerated.<sup>896</sup>

It was evident that the border between Serbia and Srpska was used regularly for the clandestine supply of arms and oil. A special organ was even created for its supervision: the ICFY Monitoring Mission, a product of the Yugoslavia Conference, which was established on 17 September 1994. The Finnish General Tauno Nieminen was the head of the mission from 13 January to 14 December 1995. He maintained regular contact with UNPROFOR, but worked mainly for the ICFY. There were

<sup>889</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>890</sup> 'Turska pokusavala da naoruza bosanske Muslimane', *Borba*, 05/12/94 and confidential information (36).

<sup>891</sup> Robert Fox, 'Iran's cases of cash helped buy Muslim victory in Bosnia', *The Daily Telegraph*, 01/01/97.

<sup>892</sup> NMFA, 911.31. BVD to CVIN+ participants, 29/04/93, p. 25.

<sup>893</sup> MoD, MIS/CO, File 438,0315, AR Briefing, no. 7/1995, 20/02/95.

<sup>894</sup> Johan Peleman, 'Wapenhandel naar Bosnië-Herzegovina' ('Arms trade to Bosnia-Herzegovina'), *Noord-Zuid Cahier*, No. 22(3), September 1997, pp. 92-94.

<sup>895</sup> Roger Cohen, 'U.N. Reports Serbian Helicopters Are Flying Into Bosnia', *The New York Times*, 21/09/94.

<sup>896</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, Box 124. Akashi to Annan, no. Z-1457, 22/09/94 and Annan to Akashi, no. 3101, 22/09/94.

divergent opinions on the Serbian supplies to the VRS. In a comprehensive report, the Bosnian government complained about the Serbian support to the VRS. From August 1994 to July 1995, Serbia and Montenegro are alleged to have supplied to the Bosnian Serbs a total of 512 tanks, 506 APCs, 120 howitzers, 130 other artillery pieces, 6 MIG 29s, SU-25 and SU-27 aircraft and more than 20 helicopters. These were formidable quantities, enough to equip an entire army. For this reason alone, these Bosnian quantities were implausible. According to Nieminen, these data were incorrect, and the checks at this border were watertight. He pointed out that the checking was not random, but that every car was inspected and completely investigated. Observers were even authorized to have cars or trucks dismantled.<sup>897</sup>

According to staff of a European intelligence service, the sanctions did not work on the Drina, however. For example, the observers had instructions to withdraw immediately in the event of danger. The Serbs usually fired a series of salvos in the air as darkness fell to frighten the observers, who then withdrew rapidly. On the basis of reliable intelligence data, this service came to the conclusion that military equipment was often transferred at night from Serbia to Srpska, usually consisting of 2 tanks (T-54), 2 APCs, 2 trucks with artillery, 2 buses with soldiers of the Yugoslav army and 2 trucks with fuel.

This was the normal pattern of Serbian support to the VRS; they also considered the sanction committee to be a political mission. It was confirmed from the side of the VRS that much fuel had been supplied from Bulgaria and Romania to Serbia, which was forwarded in transit to the VRS. Train wagons crossed the border, and fuel also arrived on the Danube. The observers were repeatedly put on the spot by a skipper who would say that he was going to sail on, or otherwise dump the oil in the Danube.<sup>898</sup> However, General Nieminen persisted in claiming to the NIOD that reports of deliveries of tanks, APCs and trucks over the Drina had no basis in truth. If Milosevic supported the VRS on a large scale, then the question remains as to how this happened. Milosevic ran enormous political risks in doing so. What is clear is that support was provided from Serbia in the form of soldiers, technical recommendations, integrated air defence and financial assistance, but therefore not in the form of large-scale military equipment.<sup>899</sup>

A senior White House adviser confirmed this. He had never seen convincing evidence that arms had been delivered to the Bosnian Serbs via the Drina. The road via Croatia, however, was open for this purpose. He called the embargo 'fairly effective' but admitted that there were leaks. According to this source, intelligence on the violations was all Sigint, but it was not permitted to share this information with foreign intelligence services. What particularly stung the senior official was that Washington had failed in bringing about a financial embargo, because central banks in the EU, such as the Bank of England and the *Bundesbank* did not cooperate. The Security Council resolutions did not take this into account, and the banks hid behind national legislation. The particular culprit here was the Austrian central bank. According to this official, no progress was booked on this point against 'serbia Incorporated'. Milosevic was able to launder his money via Cyprus. Money was also laundered in Moscow, which was made easier by the state of the Russian banking system. Otherwise, according to this official, the war could have finished earlier, because then Milosevic would no longer have been able to pay the VRS officers.<sup>900</sup>

According to Sarajevo, in addition to arms and ammunition, other items were supplied to the Bosnian Serbs. The Bosnian government claimed that 8700 tons of fuel were supplied.<sup>901</sup> According to Nieminen, Serbia supplied the oil mainly via the Krajina, and there was a back door via Croatia because of the relationship between Tudjman and Milosevic. The problem was that the mandate of his mission

<sup>897</sup> Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00.

<sup>898</sup> Confidential interview (48). See also: Robert Block, 'serbs march in secret to the aid of Bosnian kin', *The Independent*, 05/07/95.

<sup>899</sup> Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00.

<sup>900</sup> Confidential interview (14).

<sup>901</sup> NMFA, PL/NY. Biegan to Foreign Affairs, attached Bosnian memo, 04/09/95

did not extend to Croatia. What was supplied from this region via the Krajina to the VRS therefore fell outside his field of view.<sup>902</sup>

There were rumours about pipelines across the Drina that provided the Bosnian Serbs with oil, but Nieminen stated that he knew for certain that they had never existed. His mission had foot and vehicle patrols in operation 24 hours a day along the banks of the Drina: they would at least have seen their tracks or trucks. The same applied to all the claims about pontoon bridges. In an official report, the Bosnian government actually claimed that 25 secret military pontoon bridges were being used. Half of them were between Bijeljina and Zvornik.<sup>903</sup> In one of the weekly overviews, Nieminen did report on such a Serbian pontoon bridge. According to the Yugoslav Army liaison officer, it was built in this sector to deal with refugees in case of a possible ABiH offensive.<sup>904</sup> Sometimes oil would be taken across in small boats or with a number of barrels at once. Trucks also drove to and fro with full diesel tanks between Serbia and Srpska.

The question then remains as to how the Yugoslav Army, the *Vojska Jugoslavija* (VJ), supported the VRS. According to an European intelligence service, the VJ was active in East-Bosnia. This service gathered intelligence that proved that many parents in Serbia were complaining that their sons had to go to Bosnia. The obituaries in Serbian newspapers were scrutinized, only to reveal that soldiers had perished in Bosnia. Conscripts were sent over the border in groups by bus. They consisted mostly of approximately fifty soldiers without equipment, who had probably exercised in Serbia. Furthermore, Serbian staff officers worked in Pale, VRS officers were trained in Serbia and the VRS were paid their salaries via Belgrade. Much logistics support was also given to the VRS. Repairs and spare parts were provided by the VJ, and the VRS equipment was kept up-to-date by Serbia. The transportation of tanks and APCs was coordinated by the VJ.<sup>905</sup>

According to Nieminen, it must not be forgotten that before the arrival of the observers, Milosevic had had all the time he needed to supply as much as possible.<sup>906</sup> His opposite number in Serbia, Kertis, was the greatest smuggler, according to sources within Western intelligence services.<sup>907</sup> He was instructed by Milosevic to keep Nieminen's mission happy. Whatever Kertis said happened, the objective of which was 'to keep us happy so that nobody would blame Milosevic', according to Nieminen.<sup>908</sup> Violating the embargo actually meant that the sanctions against Serbia would be intensified again.

The mission of Nieminen would run into trouble in late May 1995. There were air strikes on Pale on 25 May 1995 and hostages were taken in reprisal. On 29 May, the American embassy reported that information had been obtained about a direct threat to the American observers. This resulted in all US and ten Canadian observers immediately being withdrawn. The majority of the observers came from MPRI and the others were from the State Department. According to an intelligence officer, after much urging Nieminen, who in the first instance disagreed with the withdrawal, was finally shown reliable intelligence that proved that they actually were in danger. The CIA was said to have shown the Finnish General reports that made clear that the US service had a source or sources close to Mladic or Karadzic. They also showed him intercepted message traffic. In Pale the decision had already been made to take American observers hostage and to abduct them over the Serbian border to Srpska; after that the Finnish General agreed with the withdrawal of the observers.<sup>909</sup>

The original plan was that the mission would comprise 250 observers. This was never achieved, however, and the maximum staffing was 210, from September to October 1994. Nieminen's mission

<sup>902</sup> See for the military border traffic: UNNY, *DPKO*. Janvier to Annan, Z-1120, 09/07/95.

<sup>903</sup> NMFA, *PVNY*. Biegman to Foreign Affairs, attached Bosnian memo, 04/09/95

<sup>904</sup> Confidential information (148).

<sup>905</sup> Confidential interviews (48).

<sup>906</sup> Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00.

<sup>907</sup> Confidential interviews (48).

<sup>908</sup> Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00.

<sup>909</sup> Confidential interview (42).



had total freedom of movement along the border with Serbia. The ICFY mission did not occupy all border crossings; many of them were not monitored or were monitored by hired-in Serbian personnel. The mission itself was said to have admitted that 71 potential border crossings on the Drina were not under their control. The Bosnian government then concluded that the mission was not in a position to exercise effective control. This would have required 1760 static observers, 310 mobile observers, 100 interpreters and 80 administrative staff. Furthermore, according to the Bosnian government, the mission would have to have 2 helicopters, 214 vehicles and a radar detection system for tracking low flying aircraft.

In May 1995 the number declined sharply; when the American and Canadian observers had been withdrawn, Nieminen had 151 observers left. Of the 18 Border Control Points, four were closed. There were then observers from 18 countries: mainly from the EU, Norway, Russia, and Czechoslovakia. They were professional customs personnel, who operated in every sector.<sup>910</sup> Other countries sent additional personnel, and in July 1995 the mission again had 185 observers who manned 19 border crossings 24 hours a day. It appears from their comprehensive reports that smuggling attempts were occasionally made over the border between Serbia and Srpska via the Drina,<sup>911</sup> but no large smuggling operations were recorded. Three days before the attack on Srebrenica observers even noted that on two occasions buses with men of compulsory service age were held up at the border by Serbian militias, and were not allowed to enter the Republika Srpska.<sup>912</sup>

Nieminen constantly complained about the lack of cooperation of the US intelligence community. They regularly took aerial photographs above the Republika Srpska, but when Nieminen asked for them, he was not given them. A White House adviser confirmed that this intelligence was not shared, and was kept for the Americans themselves.<sup>913</sup> Nieminen only received intelligence piecemeal, sometimes in the form of intercepts, but the question was whether it was always reliable. The Bosnian services also intercepted communication traffic, which showed evidence of Serbian involvement.<sup>914</sup> The intermediary concerned was Mirko Krajisnik, the brother of the chairman of the Bosnian-Serb parliament, Momcilo Krajisnik. The intercepts revealed that the Serbian Minister of the Interior and head of the Domestic Security service, Jovica Stanisic, were involved in clandestine supplies of arms and fuel.<sup>915</sup>

The French and British intelligence services did give information to Nieminen 'to balance US intelligence reports', and the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND) contributed observers only in the autumn of 1995, who had an anti-Serbian attitude, however. Nieminen also had to take disinformation into account; the German embassy in Belgrade occasionally produced reports of suspect reliability. For instance, the embassy reported on 16 March 1995, probably on the authority of the BND, that a temporary bridge had been built over the Drina between Serbia and Srpska at Jagostica, which was used to transport equipment to the VRS. Four border crossings were also mentioned across which goods were smuggled to the VRS. The messages immediately raised doubts; the bridge would actually have been in the Zepa pocket and the smuggling of military goods destined for the VRS via a Muslim area was unlikely. The British Army sent an SAS patrol to inspect the alleged bridge. The surroundings turned out to resemble a Norwegian fjord, with a steep rock wall more than 200 metres high. The German information was therefore incorrect, and the account of the smuggling via four border posts also proved to be incorrect because all posts were monitored 24 hours a day by UN observers.<sup>916</sup> The information of the Bosnian Muslims was likewise not always to be trusted. Sometimes Nieminen

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<sup>910</sup> NMFA, *PVNY*. Biegman to Foreign Affairs, attached Bosnian memo, 04/09/95. Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00. Confidential collection (6), Letter Nieminen to Owen and Stoltenberg, 31/05/95.

<sup>911</sup> Confidential information (149).

<sup>912</sup> Confidential information (150).

<sup>913</sup> Confidential interview (14).

<sup>914</sup> See Chapter 6 of this study for the Bosnian Sigint capabilities.

<sup>915</sup> Roy Gutman, 'Arms-Running Traced To Yugoslav Regime', *Newsday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>916</sup> Confidential information (9).

received intercepts, but account was always taken of the possibility of disinformation. In that period, as mentioned, many Bosnian reports were sent to the UN of large quantities of tanks and trucks that crossed the Drina.

The American observers in his team were often frustrated by the response from Washington, which only complained there that their reports were incorrect. Contradictory reports came from Washington, but they also often appeared to contain incorrect information. Although one of Nieminen's closest colleagues was a State Department official, the Americans remained reluctant to share their intelligence openly.<sup>917</sup> Therefore the mission was constantly confronted with disinformation about sundry tanks that crossed the Drina. A member of the mission gave as an example the attack on Zepa, in which American and German services claimed that tanks had been moved across the Drina. It turned out later that the two services used different aerial photographs, where the German photo was not of the Drina but of a completely different river.

The relationship with the US services improved later. The mission then received intelligence from the CIA on trucks that were moving to and fro between Serbia and Srpska. This service was able to say precisely which trucks were involved, the nature of the cargo, and the time and the place that they would cross. However, it was only in the autumn of 1995 that the mission received this intelligence rapidly and in good time;<sup>918</sup> by which time American ground forces had arrived.

A 'very hot potato' were the helicopter flights from Serbia to Srpska. The following mysterious episode may serve as an illustration. On 7 February 1995, Nieminen was phoned by UN negotiator Stoltenberg. Fifteen to twenty helicopter flights were said to have passed the border, and to have landed somewhere near Srebrenica. These helicopters came from Serbia.<sup>919</sup> The US intelligence community had probably informed Stoltenberg of this.<sup>920</sup> Nieminen then drafted a special report for the Security Council. On 8 February came the Serbian denial that there had been any flights; on 22 February, Nieminen had a talk with Milosevic on the helicopter flights, which he also denied. On 2 March, UNPROFOR reported again that between 21 and 27 February nineteen helicopters had flown from Serbia to Bosnia. Nieminen demanded immediate clarification, but the VJ claimed that it knew nothing.<sup>921</sup> A new report was made on 27 March: this time it involved 27 helicopters, which flew at an extremely high altitude from Serbia to VRS territory. On the way back, the helicopters probably deliberately flew very low, so as to avoid the radar systems; Nieminen was told that the AWACS had problems tracking helicopters.

Nieminen had earlier ordered a large-scale investigation. On 28 March 1995, Lieutenant Colonel R. Gudmundsson presented his findings to Nieminen. Between October 1994 and March 1995, observers from the Belgrade airfield, Surcin, had recorded a total of 73 cross border helicopter flights. Radar tracks from various radar posts confirm this. All posts were linked with the two most important air traffic control centres: one in Zagreb and one in Belgrade. Four radars were available in Surcin, but they did not have a wide range. They were too far from the border between Bosnia and Serbia to be able to track low flying aircraft.

The radar tracks came exclusively from a radar post that was situated approximately 90 kilometres from the border with Bosnia. The 79 violations were distributed as follows: there were 6 violations of the No Fly Zone in Bosnia. This also included ABiH flights.<sup>922</sup> There were 13 violations involving flights from Serbia to Bosnia. The remaining 60 violations were helicopter flights from Bosnia to Serbia. In March 1995, in other words shortly after the Black Flights to Tuzla, a total of 30

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<sup>917</sup> Also regarding the financing of the mission. At the beginning of March 1995, the United States had still made no financial contribution. Nieminen also complained about this: UNNY, UNPROFOR, Box #88041, file 4.4 Notes on Meetings, Bell to Akashi, 16/03/95; confidential information (152).

<sup>918</sup> Confidential interview (42).

<sup>919</sup> Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00.

<sup>920</sup> Confidential interview (42).

<sup>921</sup> Interview with Tauno Nieminen and Aaro Suonio, 25/05/00.

<sup>922</sup> For example near Srebrenica: UNNY, DPKO, Janvier to Annan, Z-483, 26/03/95.

violations were observed. These included 26 helicopter flights from Bosnia to Serbia and 4 violations of the No Fly Zone in Bosnia. The track headings were mainly in the direction of Belgrade.

Gudmundsson also had an opinion on what the helicopters were transporting from Bosnia to Belgrade as opposed to the other way around. According to him, the helicopters were transporting valuable goods on their return journey, and flying back unobserved from Serbia was no great problem, because look-out posts on the airfields and at the borders could be used to check if UNPROFOR or ICFY mission observers were in the vicinity. Gudmundsson observed further that these flights sometimes took place after one or two days of heavy fighting in Bosnia. They were apparently not medical flights, because they were permissible, and these flights were unannounced.

Gudmundsson determined that in two cases a NATO jet fighter had been close to a helicopter, but that no action was taken. Neither were the helicopters ever intercepted, but the question was whether an AWACS was able to detect these low and slow flying helicopters; according to Gudmundsson it was possible, but 'the findings are normally filtered out by the computer system'. He had noticed something else remarkable: not a single violation was seen simultaneously by both the Belgrade airfield Surcin and by UNPROFOR or ICFY. This could mean that only helicopter flights at high altitude were seen by Surcin, but if that was the case, the Serbian air defence alarm would have sounded after observation, which never happened. This could indicate that the air defence was aware of the origin of these helicopters; perhaps the helicopters were equipped with a transponder that operated on a certain military frequency, to simplify coordination with the Serbian anti-aircraft defence.<sup>923</sup>

Gudmundsson concluded that if a helicopter had been 'seen', it would also have to return, so that the total number of violations would have to be doubled. All in all, the air border between Serbia and Bosnia was not closed, and if the aircraft flew back from Serbia to Bosnia they would be able to transport important cargo. 'The amount of suspected helicopters turning back to Bosnia have capacity of carrying substantial operational, logistic and personnel support to local authorities or commanders.'<sup>924</sup> On 30 March, Owen was briefed on Gudmundsson's findings. It remained unclear who carried out the flights, with what goal, and what the helicopters had transported. An attached map did indicate that there were many flights near Srebrenica.<sup>925</sup> Serbia responded with irritation to the conclusions of this report.<sup>926</sup>

On 11 April, Nieminen had another talk with Milosevic, the basis for which was an UNPROFOR report with evidence that between 2 and 7 April 1995, 25 helicopters had flown from Serbia to Bosnia. He showed Milosevic all the reports and demanded that this stop. If not, then he and his mission would finally depart. After this, the flights from Serbia to Bosnia did not stop completely, but they did become less numerous.

#### *Western intelligence services on the support of the VJ to the VRS*

The reports of Serbian supplies continued. According to a Canadian UNPROFOR worker, many heavy trucks arrived in the area, which was controlled by the Bosnian Serbs, through border crossings with Serbia.<sup>927</sup> At the same time, British intelligence services also investigated the supplies to the VRS. In March 1995, the British military intelligence service determined that this was taking place, and by the VJ using helicopters, according to various intelligence reports. British diplomats in Belgrade were not completely convinced, however; they disagreed with this analysis by Joint Headquarters in Salisbury of

<sup>923</sup> A transponder issues a unique signal enabling air traffic control to identify the aircraft on the radar screens.

<sup>924</sup> Confidential collection (12), Lt.Col Gudmundsson to Brig. General Tauno Nieminen, 28/03/95. Report of 5 pages plus 2 maps of violations.

<sup>925</sup> Confidential collection (6), Nieminen to Owen and, 30/03/95.

<sup>926</sup> UNNY, DPKO. Nieminen to Owen and Stoltenberg, 11/04/95; Kirudja to Akashi, CBZ-956, 11/04/95 and Kirudja to Annan, Z-588, 12/04/95.

<sup>927</sup> Tom Quiggin, 'srebrenica en de internationale gemeenschap in Bosnië' ('srebrenica and the international community in Bosnia'), *De Internationale Spectator*, Vol. 52 (1998) 2, p. 81. Quiggin pointed out that supporting supplies continued to flow from Croatia and Serbia to the Muslim rebel Fikret Abdic in Bihac.

8 March. It stated that ‘the VRS are clearly being resupplied across the Drina by helicopters’. According to British diplomats, this claim completely contradicted the ICFY report of one week earlier. They wondered why, if intelligence existed, it was not made available to the ICFY. British diplomats suspected that this was ‘repeddling of others’ unsupported intelligence reports’.<sup>928</sup>

The BND and Netherlands MIS likewise reported on violations of the embargo against Serbia and Montenegro by Romania and Greece. The Greek covert support to Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs during the war in Bosnia is extremely well documented by the Greek journalist, Takis Michas.<sup>929</sup> Russian and Ukrainian oil supplies to Serbia took place across the Danube. Hungarian cargo vessels, officially in transit to Romania, were also said to have actually been unloaded in Serbia, and the oil forwarded to the Republika Srpska. These services also reported that Greece violated the embargo by drawing large quantities of electricity from Bosnia each day. Otherwise, this ran properly via Serbia to Greece, and the Greek state energy company paid \$ 20,000 a month to Belgrade for using the electric power lines. Furthermore, according to these services, the arms embargo was evaded on a large scale via Macedonia.<sup>930</sup> Greek banks on Cyprus were also used and via these banks more than 770 million Euros was spent by Serbia to buy arms from Russia and Israel. The Greek Central Bank would later refuse to cooperate with the Chief Prosecutor of the Yugoslavia Tribunal in The Hague, Carla Del Ponte.<sup>931</sup> The trial at the Tribunal in The Hague against Serbia’s retired President, Milan Milutinovic, might perhaps bring more evidence to light as regards the Greek involvement. He apparently played a pivotal role in the alliance between Greece and Serbia during the Balkan conflict.<sup>932</sup>

Much fuel was also brought in by train from Skopje. The British press accused Akashi of failure in this regard: ‘Akashi just wanted to push this into a black hole so we could forget about it’, according to an anonymous official. This reproach of Akashi is unjustified: UNPROFOR had no mandate to monitor violations of the arms embargo or to enforce the embargo.<sup>933</sup> Finally, it is remarkable that no report was made of smuggling of nuclear fuels to Serbia, although this country did have a secret nuclear programme.<sup>934</sup>

#### *Other ‘donors’ to the VRS*

The VRS also received support from the Russian mafia, who supplied arms and oil abundantly. Much would reach Serbia in transit via the Danube; payments were made from Cyprus. In the summer of 1995, more than 480 Serbian companies were based on that island, a number of which had direct links with Milosevic. Oil, petrol, trucks, arms, ammunition, machine parts and consumer goods were purchased through these companies. Each week, the trade was estimated at £ 6 million. The Russian mafia was also said to be involved with the sale of tanks from Red Army stocks.<sup>935</sup>

Israel is also alleged to have supplied arms to the VRS. The intermediary in this was Jezdimir Vasiljevic, a banker and a confidant of Milosevic. In October 1991, he reached an agreement with Israel, and after that transactions went via the Croat Boris Krasni and the state companies *Jugoeksport*

<sup>928</sup> Confidential information (15).

<sup>929</sup> Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, passim.

<sup>930</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO. No. 2694*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 66/92, 14/09/92 and ‘Bundesnachrichtendienst: Handel mit Serbien geht weiter; Embargo wird umgangen’, *Sueddeutsche Zeitung*, 21/07/92 and Marko Milivojevic, ‘The Balkan Medellin’, in; *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, Vol. 7 (1995), 2.

<sup>931</sup> Cees van Zweeden, ‘DutchBat in Srebrenica beschoten door Grieken’ (*DutchBat in Srebrenica shot at by Greeks*), *Rotterdams Dagblad*, 22/06/02.

<sup>932</sup> Helena Smith, ‘Greece faces shame of role in serb massacre’, *The Observer*, 05/01/03.

<sup>933</sup> Robert Fox, ‘UN failing to halt sanction-busting trade with Serbia’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 12/05/94 and UNGE, *UNPROFOR, Box 124*, Akashi to Annan, Z-1106, 22/07/94.

<sup>934</sup> William C. Potter, Djuro Miljanic & Ivo Slau, ‘Tito’s Nuclear Legacy’, *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 56 (2000) 2, pp. 63-75.

<sup>935</sup> Josef Bata, ‘serbiens geheime Auslandskontakte’, *Aussenpolitik, No. IV*, 1993, pp. 378-381 and David Williams, ‘How Russian Mafia helps fuel Serbs’ campaign of slaughter’, *Daily Mail*, 15/08/95.

and *Jugoslavija Publik*. According to press publications, in 1992 Bosnian Serbs allowed large parts of the Jewish community in Sarajevo to leave the city in exchange for arms supplies from Israel. There were more indications of Israel's involvement: at the end of 1994, an investigation into the remains of a mortar grenade on Sarajevo airfield revealed that it bore Hebrew letters, and in August 1995, a news programme on Israeli television reported that private Israeli arms dealers were supplying the VRS. This must have taken place with the consent of the government.<sup>936</sup>

In summary: the VRS, like the ABiH, was supplied with arms, ammunition and oil on a large scale. Serbia, as well as other countries, was responsible. The supplies ran partly through the border crossings on the Drina, but also via Croatia. The ICFY mission did its best to monitor the embargo, but received hardly any intelligence, and was also not in a position to man all the checkpoints, so there was a great deal that they were unable to observe.

## 5. The deployment of mercenaries, advisers and volunteers

The fact that the war in Yugoslavia attracted mercenaries and volunteers was to be expected.<sup>937</sup> This phenomenon manifests itself in almost every armed conflict; examples are volunteers of the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War in 1936-1939, or the Belgian mercenaries in Katanga during the fighting in the Congo in the 1960s. The distinction between mercenaries and volunteers was also clear in Yugoslavia. The first group were paid for their activities; the second group were not, and they fought for 'a just cause'. A search in the press turns up many articles on the involvement of mercenaries, volunteers and advisers. They are said to have operated with all the warring factions, where it is noticeable that some nationalities - such as British and Germans - worked for the Bosnian Croats, the Bosnian Muslims and for the Bosnian Serbs.

The first reports of Russian volunteer units, which consisted mainly of Afghanistan veterans, appeared as early as the end of 1992. Russian mercenaries and advisers generally worked for the VRS.<sup>938</sup> According to accusations made by the Bosnian government, Russian military advisers were sent from Serbia and more than 4000 mercenaries from Russia, the Ukraine, Romania and Greece supported various paramilitary organizations.<sup>939</sup> Romanian mercenaries were supposedly fighting with the Bosnian Serbs near Sarajevo in 1992.<sup>940</sup> Greek and Russian mercenaries were also involved in the attack on Srebrenica. A Greek Volunteer Guard, a unit based in Vlasenica, was formed in March 1995 and was fully incorporated in the Drina Corps.<sup>941</sup> Only about one hundred men fought with this unit and in September 1995 Karadzic decorated four members of the Guard with the medal of the 'White Eagle'.<sup>942</sup> The ABiH also intercepted a message from the VRS, which stated that the Serbian flag had been run up on the destroyed orthodox church.<sup>943</sup> Another message suggested that the Greek mercenaries should also run up their flag, and that 'because of the marketing' this should be recorded on video.<sup>944</sup>

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<sup>936</sup> Glisic, *Srpska Vojska*, p. 27 and Igor Primoratz, *Israel and the war in the Balkans*, see: <http://www.hr/darko/etf/isr2.html>.

<sup>937</sup> For a good overview: Ripley, *Mercenaries*, pp. 40 - 59.

<sup>938</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO. No. 2726*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 100/92, 21/12/92; UNNY, *DPKO*, coded cables. Janvier to Kittani, Z-2056, 06/11/95; Robert Fox, 'Dangerous games of fact and fantasy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 10/02/93 and 'Nederlands konvooi in oosten Bosnië overvallen' ('Dutch convoy attacked in east Bosnia'), *De Limburger*, 30/05/94.

<sup>939</sup> NMFA, *PVNY*. Biegman to Foreign Affairs, attached Bosnian memo, 04/09/95.

<sup>940</sup> Ripley, *Mercenaries*, p. 57.

<sup>941</sup> Interview with Emira Selimovic, 21/10/98.

<sup>942</sup> Michas, *Unholy Alliance*, pp. 17-41.

<sup>943</sup> ABiH Tuzla. *Komanda 2. Korpusa*, Str. Pov. Br. 02/8-10-1223, 11/07/95.

<sup>944</sup> ABiH Tuzla. *Komanda 2. Korpusa*, Str. Pov. Br. 02/8-10-1224, 11/07/95 and interview with Semsudin Murinovic, 17/0/99.

The number of mercenaries was never considerable, because the warring factions generally paid poorly.<sup>945</sup> Therefore it was mainly volunteers that were active. Their military duties ranged from taking part in hostilities to gathering intelligence. For instance, a Danish volunteer travelled through Srpska in a car with Danish registration plates. His Danish passport gave him sufficient protection for intelligence gathering for Croatia. Many soldiers claimed that they had served with the French Foreign Legion or the SAS, but that seldom proved to be the case.<sup>946</sup> Dutch mercenaries likewise fought on the side of the Croats 'at Zageb, Zabeg, Zagreb, or whatever it is called'.<sup>947</sup> The mercenaries responded to an advertisement on 2 November 1991 in the newspaper *De Telegraaf* by the Dutch-Croat Foundations, which was set up by the right-wing extremist Douwe van de Bos. Their applications led to the deployment of the First Dutch Volunteer Unit in Croatia.<sup>948</sup>

Most Dutch mercenaries were, like their American, British, Canadian, German and French counterparts in Croatia, active in the 103rd infantry brigade, which was formed in the winter of 1992 as an International Brigade. There was also a special Italian unit, the Garibaldi battalion. In addition, there were reports of Dutch mercenaries in Bosnia. According to Serbian accusations, some mercenaries, including Dutch, were guilty of war crimes.<sup>949</sup> One of them was the Dutch mercenary Johan Tilder, who was mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>950</sup>

### *The Mujahedin in Bosnia*

The greatest tension was caused by the participation of Muslims from Western Europe and the Middle East in the ABiH. 'Approximately 4000 Mujahedin, supported by Iranian special operations forces, have been continually intensifying their activities in central Bosnia for more than two years', according to the American Lieutenant Colonel John Sray, who was an intelligence officer in Sarajevo from April to August 1994.<sup>951</sup> There are no reliable figures on the number of mercenaries or volunteers in Bosnia, Srpska and Croatia. Neither is anything known about their effectiveness. According to Bosnian-Serb sources, in the Muslim-Croat Federation there were more than 1300 fighters, including those of Kurdish, Algerian and other Arab origin. This group was said to be centred around Zenica. The MIS considered the number mentioned to be exaggerated.<sup>952</sup> Like the author Ripley points out, there was no joint Muslim

<sup>945</sup> For an overview of most of the paramilitary factions and the role of mercenaries and volunteers, see: MoD, *MIS/RNL4*, Supintrep no. 29417/4/040794, 04/07/94.

<sup>946</sup> A. Rogers, 'Yugoslavia', in: *Flashpoint 1994*, London, 1994, pp. 139-148.

<sup>947</sup> 'Het moet daar gewoon afgelopen zijn' ('It just has to stop there'), *De Volkskrant*, 02/12/91.

<sup>948</sup> See for example Sluik & Kurpershoek (eds.), *De Duiveljager*, pp. 97-109; 'Oud-strijders mobiliseren Nederlands steunkorps voor onderdrukt Kroatië' ('Ex-servicemen mobilize Dutch support unit for repressed Croatia'), *Trouw*, 06/11/91; 'Extreem-rechts schiet leger Kroatië te hulp' ('The extreme right leaps to the aid of Croatia's army'), *Trouw*, 07/11/91; 'Garanties ontbreken: vrijwilligers gaan niet naar Kroatië' ('No guarantees: volunteers not going to Croatia'), *Trouw*, 08/11/91; 'Vrijwilligers alsnog "op verkenning" bij militairen Kroatië' ('Volunteers "on reconnaissance" with Croatia's soldiers after all'), *Trouw*, 25/11/91; 'Ultra-rechts in Europa op de bres voor Kroatië' ('The extreme right in Europe into the breach for Croatia'), *NRC Handelsblad*, 06/11/91; 'Werving Kroatië-strijders gestopt na kritiek op comité' ('Recruitment of Croatia fighters stopped following criticism of committee'), *De Volkskrant*, 08/11/91; Jos Slats, 'De huurling gaat omdat de hele wereld Kroatië laat stikken' ('The mercenary goes because the whole world is leaving Croatia in the lurch'), *De Volkskrant*, 11/12/91; idem, 'Nederlandse huurlingen vuren op Serviërs' ('Dutch mercenaries fire on Serbs'), *De Volkskrant*, 23/12/91; idem, 'Vrijwillige strijders vereerd door Kroaten' ('Voluntary fighters honoured by Croats'), *De Volkskrant*, 14/01/92; 'Nederlandse huurlingen gevangen in Hercegovina' ('Dutch mercenaries captured in Hercegovina'), *De Telegraaf*, 25/07/92; and Bert Huisjes, 'Opgejaagd op de Balkan' ('Rout in the Balkans'), *Algemeen Dagblad*, 19/09/01.

<sup>949</sup> 'servische media: Nederlandse huurlingen pleegden oorlogsmisdaden' ('serbian media: Dutch mercenaries committed war crimes'), *De Limburger*, 18/05/95.

<sup>950</sup> Confidential interview (19). See also: 'serviërs schieten Nederlandse huurling dood' ('serbs shoot dead Dutch mercenary'), *De Limburger*, 17/05/94.

<sup>951</sup> John Sray, 'selling the Bosnian Myth', *Foreign Military Studies*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1995 and MoD, CRST. Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, Bastiaans to Brantz, 11/07/94.

<sup>952</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO. No. 2694*, Developments in the former Yugoslav federation, no. 02/94, 08/09/92. See also; Andrew Hogg, 'Arabs join in Bosnia battle', intelligence service *The Times*, 30/08/92.

command and the rival Iranian, Saudi, Turkish and Malaysian-back groups all operated according to their own agendas.<sup>953</sup>

Mercenaries of non-Yugoslav origin were involved from the outbreak of the armed conflict. An active group was the Mujahedin. These were non-Bosnian, Islamic-fundamentalist fighters from Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Jordan, Lebanon, Algeria and Saudi Arabia. Furthermore, the names of *Jihad*, *Fis*, *Hamas* and *Hezbollah* were linked with the Mujahedin in Bosnia. Sray estimated the number of Mujahedin fighters at 4000; in April 1994, the CIA arrived at the conclusion that there were approximately 400 fighters.<sup>954</sup> In 1994, the UN put the number<sup>955</sup> at 450 to 500, and in 1995 at approximately 600. American estimates, however, spoke of 1200 to 1400. A BVD report from late 1995 likewise gave an estimate of only 200.

This group withdrew from the control of the Bosnian authorities, both politically and militarily. There were unconfirmed reports of control by authorities of the countries of origin, by Islamic-fundamentalist terrorist organizations and by criminal organizations.<sup>956</sup> The Mujahedin formed part of the 4th, 7th and 8th *Muslimski* brigade, stationed around Zenica in central Bosnia, and took part in the activities of several paramilitary units, such as the Black Swans. They fell under the responsibility of the ABiH 3rd and 7th Corps. Furthermore, there were approximately 25 other Muslim factions and units active in Bosnia, which also included women.<sup>957</sup>

These groups were supplied by the ABiH, but operated decentrally as special units or shock troops. Many ABiH sources, according to an internal UNPROFOR report, considered their military value to be limited. Nonetheless, the UNPROFOR intelligence staff followed their movements closely. The UN estimated their number in the summer of 1995 to be no more than 1500 fighters.<sup>958</sup> Military experts were, according to the BVD, of the opinion that because of their small number, the threat from these Mujahedin should not be overestimated.<sup>959</sup>

Furthermore, the population was not particularly enthusiastic about the fighters and appeared to be indifferent to their religious propaganda. The Bosnian government appeared to have less antipathy to the Mujahedin. President Izetbegovic especially appeared to see the fighters as 'a conduit for funds from the Gulf and Middle East'.<sup>960</sup> Within the framework of the Dayton agreement, the Mujahedin fighters should have left Bosnia before 13 January 1996.<sup>961</sup> In October, UNPROFOR concluded that the numbers had declined to between 700 and 800. The presence of the Mujahedin was used by the Croats in particular to delay the process of reconciliation and normalization. The number of clashes with the local population around Tuzla increased, and the risk to the British UNPROFOR units was deemed to be significant. According to the ABiH, radical elements within the 7th *Muslimski* Brigade were responsible. The mood deteriorated after a British soldier killed a Mujahedin fighter. According to UNPROFOR, the US pressure on Izetbegovic was stepped up strongly to force the Mujahedin out of Bosnia.<sup>962</sup> Janvier also appealed to the UN in New York to step up pressure on the Bosnian and Croatian ambassadors.<sup>963</sup> Iran did continue to support Izetbegovic, and in the autumn of

<sup>953</sup> Ripley, *Mercenaries*, p. 57.

<sup>954</sup> James Risen, 'Iran gave Bosnia leader \$ 500,000', *Los Angeles Times*, 31/12/96.

<sup>955</sup> UNNY, *DPKO, Coded Cables UNPROFOR*. De Lapresle to Annan, Z-1371, 07/09/94; UNNY, *UNPROFOR, Box 88039*. DFC to Brigadier Baril, 03/11/94.

<sup>956</sup> Archives BVD, BVD Report *The Mujahedin in Bosnia*, 29/01/96.

<sup>957</sup> For an overview of most paramilitary factions and the role of mercenaries and volunteers, See: MoD, *MIS/RNLA*. Supintrep no. 29417/4/040794, 04/07/94.

<sup>958</sup> UNNY, *DPKO, File #87303*. G-2 to COS, 07/01/95 and UNGE, *UNPROFOR*, Janvier to Annan, Z-1623, *Mujahedin in Bosnia*, 08/09/95.

<sup>959</sup> Archives BVD, BVD Report *The Mujahedin in Bosnia*, 29/01/96.

<sup>960</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR*. Janvier to Annan, Z-1623, *Mujahedin in Bosnia*, 08/09/95.

<sup>961</sup> Archives BVD, BVD Report *The Mujahedin in Bosnia*, 29/01/96.

<sup>962</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR*. Akashi to Annan, Z-2024, *Update on Mujahedin in Bosnia*, 31/10/95.

<sup>963</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR*. Janvier to Kittani, Z-2040, *Mujahedin Activities in Bosnia*, 03/11/95.

1996 they donated another \$ 500,000 to his election campaign. Only at the end of 1996 did the US government get its own way, and Bosnia severed the military and intelligence links with Iran.<sup>964</sup>

## 6. Special Forces in Bosnia

The signing of the Washington Agreement in March 1994 and the institution of a ceasefire in central Bosnia made an effective liaison between UNPROFOR and the warring factions necessary to supply accurate information to the UN commanders. The activities, expertise and competence of the UNMOs was deemed insufficient. Furthermore, the UNMOs did not fall under the authority of Bosnia-Herzegovina Commander Rose. London therefore decided to introduce special troops into Bosnia, which were known as Joint Commission Observers (JCOs).<sup>965</sup> In reality these were units of the Special Air Services (SAS) and Special Boat Service (SBS).

The JCOs operated in small teams of a few soldiers. Attempts were made to create a multinational JCO organization, but because of the different levels of skill, poorly coordinated communication facilities and the lack of a joint intelligence infrastructure, the mixed patrols were no great success. There were various SAS operations in Bosnia. *The Guardian* reported a special SAS operation involving ambulances, which carried communication equipment instead of stretchers. These 'ambulances' were donated to Bosnia by the British Humberside health authority out of humanitarian considerations, but would often suddenly appear in the most surprising places, such as in the Bihac.<sup>966</sup> According to a former UNPROFOR worker, the JCOs were already active in Bosnia from 1992 and gathered UK-eyes-only Humint. These JCOs reported within a UK-eyes-only chain. Part of what they gathered was shared with the UNPROFOR Military Information Office in Zagreb.<sup>967</sup>

An SAS unit was stationed in Gorazde<sup>968</sup> and an SAS unit was also sent as JCOs to Srebrenica.<sup>969</sup> The primary underlying objective of the JCOs in Srebrenica was to gather intelligence on Dutchbat and to discover whether anything illegal was happening between the ABiH and Dutchbat.<sup>970</sup> On 18 March 1995, a new two-man JCO team arrived in Srebrenica. They relieved a team of four JCOs, consisting of three British soldiers and a Swedish soldier nicknamed 'schwarzenegger'.<sup>971</sup> On 17 May, a third British soldier joined this new team. The patrol was attached to the commandos in Potocari. The JCOs were mainly involved in the normal reconnaissance patrols. This SAS unit was easy to identify by their British uniforms.<sup>972</sup> Shortly after his arrival in the enclave, their commander had a meeting with Karremans, whom he immediately offered support, such as the use of secure satellite communication equipment. The SAS unit also worked with one time pads (codes for one-off use) and cryptography equipment. According to a British intelligence service official, the SAS communication traffic was unbreakable.<sup>973</sup>

Karremans insisted that the JCOs should work only with the commandos. The JCOs encouraged the commandos to explore 'hot spots', and to talk with the warring factions, which until then they had not done. However, Dutchbat soldiers were not allowed by the battalion leaders to have

<sup>964</sup> Barry Schweid, 'CIA: Bosnia has broken military, intelligence ties with Iran', *Associated Press*, 31/12/96; James Risen, 'Iran gave Bosnia leader \$ 500.000', *Los Angeles Times*, 31/12/96 and James Risen, 'Report of Bosnian Spy Network stirs concerns in U.S.', *Los Angeles Times*, 06/02/97.

<sup>965</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>966</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'Britain's secret war in Bosnia', *The Guardian*, 02/04/96 and Franchet, *Casque bleu*, pp. 27-30.

<sup>967</sup> Confidential information (39).

<sup>968</sup> MacDonald, *SAS*, p. 153-154.

<sup>969</sup> See for a personal account of one of the SAS soldiers: Nick Cameron, 'Witness to Betrayal', *The Sunday Times*, 07/07/02; 'Left to Die', *The Sunday Times*, 21/07/02 and 'Going in for the Kill', *The Sunday Times*, 21/07/02. 'Britse Defensie wil SAS'er Srebrenica de mond snoeren' (*British MoD wants to silence SAS soldier*), *Leidsch Dagblad*, 01/08/02.

<sup>970</sup> Confidential interview (68).

<sup>971</sup> Interview with D.J.E. Veen, 11/01/99.

<sup>972</sup> Interview with C.J. Matthijssen, 11/10/99.

<sup>973</sup> Confidential information (1) and interview with J.R. Mulder, 06/10/98.



much contact with the population. The JCOs did rapidly meet ABiH representatives, a consequence of which was that Karremans banned such meetings in the future, and he also banned the JCOs from attending the regular meetings between Dutchbat and the warring factions. The JCOs continued with their patrols together with the commandos. In April, the fighting increased, and there were rumours that the VRS was going to attack the enclave. The local ABiH commander, Oric, seemed to have disappeared; another SAS patrol then arrived from Zepa on a 'visit' to Srebrenica. Dutchbat soldier Van Duijn recalled this incident; he later became acquainted with a British soldier on an SAS course in the UK who had been in the enclave in April 1995. Van Duijn did not recall seeing the soldier, which turned out to be correct, because the SAS soldier stated: 'I arrived with a patrol from the outside.' They were looking for Naser Oric, who had meanwhile left the enclave and was in Tuzla. The SAS soldiers wanted to know where he was. Van Duijn later asked how they ended up in Srebrenica; it seemed that the SAS unit had simply walked from Zepa to Srebrenica. One of them spoke fluent Serbo-Croat.<sup>974</sup>

On 25 May, Bosnia-Herzegovina Command informed the commander of the JCOs that an operation against the eastern enclaves was a realistic probability, and that Srebrenica would then be the first on the list. This was passed on to Karremans, but he did not believe it. On 27 May, the VRS announced to Dutchbat that it intended to capture OP-E. The VRS threatened to use force and Dutchbat reinforced the OP; an offer of help from the SAS was rejected by Karremans, because he said he had enough soldiers available. Subsequently, on 3 June, OP-E fell into VRS hands.<sup>975</sup>

On 8 June, the ABiH announced to Dutchbat that an attack on the entire enclave was expected soon; the JCOs too then reported that to Karremans. The JCO commander pointed out afterwards, however, that such rumours circulated constantly and were difficult to take seriously. The JCOs had furthermore no intelligence of their own that indicated an attack. Only on 9 July was it clear to the JCOs that the VRS wanted to capture the entire enclave.<sup>976</sup> Karremans considered the JCOs mainly as potential Forward Air Controllers and not so much as useful 'instruments' for gathering additional intelligence. There were differences of opinion between the SAS and Karremans on several occasions, and the battalion commander restricted the opportunities for their operational action considerably.<sup>977</sup> Had the SAS gone against the wishes of Karremans, they would have been asked to leave the enclave.

After the start of the attack, the JCOs contributed to guiding NATO aircraft to VRS targets (for this see comprehensively Chapter 6 of Part III of the main Srebrenica report). The JCOs were led by Major Jacko and had their own communication equipment. Their mission was also to serve as 'forward observers' during NATO air strikes. That this came too late, had, according to Muslim witnesses, to do with the fact that the JCO unit had refused to make a correct assessment of the severity of the VRS attack.<sup>978</sup> Eventually, the SAS would leave the enclave at the same time as Dutchbat. In May 1996, the *Daily Telegraph* revealed the presence of the SAS in Srebrenica, which had been given the task of reporting to General Smith in Sarajevo.

The SAS also operated in the area of the Scandinavian battalion. This battalion was not authorized to give orders to them. The ten-man SAS unit did not report to the Scandinavian battalion nor was this unit responsible for the safety of the SAS soldiers. An agreement was reached later with the commander of Sector North East at least to know in which areas the SAS were located. According to commander Arlefalk of that battalion, the SAS soldiers moved 'hither and thither' and so occasionally got caught up in skirmishes.<sup>979</sup>

In addition to British, there were also French Special Forces active in Bosnia, especially in the Skenderija district of Sarajevo. A number of them came from the French Gendarmerie's special

<sup>974</sup> Interview with L.C. van Duijn, 02/07/99. A British intelligence source denied that a SAS patrol ever walked from Zepa to Srebrenica. Confidential information (85).

<sup>975</sup> For this, see also Part III of the main Srebrenica report.

<sup>976</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>977</sup> Confidential interviews (43) and (49). Further: Tom Walker, 'SAS Book on Bosnia blocked', *The Sunday Times*, 09/07/00.

<sup>978</sup> Jon Swain, 'The Damned', *The Sunday Times*, 12/05/96.

<sup>979</sup> Interview with G. Arlefalk, 18/05/00.

intervention team, where they were responsible for anti-sniper duties. These teams had been through a very special training, and they had the most up-to-date optical devices and equipment. The French determined that Bosnian-Serb snipers were not the only ones that were active and causing large numbers of victims among the population, but some sniper fire also came from ABiH soldiers, who deliberately fired on their own civilian population to be able to blame the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>980</sup> The ABiH 'hated' the French special unit, because they sometimes used laser weapons to disable their opponents.<sup>981</sup> The French Special Forces also operated in the Maglaj. In early 1993 they are said to have been on standby in Split to free Morillon from Srebrenica in a secret rescue operation.<sup>982</sup>

#### *How the Canadian battalion got out of the enclave*

American special units were also often spotted in Bosnia. The most important operation in which Special Forces were involved took place in March 1993. Until then, neither the VRS nor the ABiH had permitted the Canadian battalion to be relieved by Dutchbat. On 12 February 1994, an agreement was reached between the Canadian prime minister, Jean Chrétien, and President Clinton: American Special Forces were to remove Canbat from Srebrenica in a night-time operation with helicopters and Suppression of Enemy Air Defence (SEAD) aircraft. It was more or less an execution of the agreements set down in an earlier secret American memorandum, destined for the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff, containing the promise that the American army would come to the aid of the Canadian peacekeepers if 'circumstances warranted and their safety was in peril'.

It was agreed that in addition to Canbat, a Dutch reconnaissance unit would also be removed from the enclave in this operation, which after many problems<sup>983</sup> had meanwhile arrived in Srebrenica at the end of February. The Chief of Operations on the Canadian side was General Maisonneuve. There were two landing sites, Dorval and Mirabel, named after the Montreal airports. The Canadians and Dutch were to muster at Dorval, and all vehicles and heavy materiel was to be placed at Mirabel. This site was to be destroyed after removing the soldiers, so that the ABiH and VRS would not benefit from the equipment. NATO in Naples was informed of this plan.<sup>984</sup> It is not known whether UNPROFOR command in Zagreb, or Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in Sarajevo, were aware of it.<sup>985</sup> General M. Baril, Boutros-Ghali's Canadian military adviser, said otherwise that he was unaware of these plans to remove Canbat from the enclave by force.<sup>986</sup> The same was true of Netherlands Defence Minister Relus Ter Beek.<sup>987</sup>

The tension in Ottawa increased: Canbat could not leave Srebrenica and Dutchbat had still not arrived. The question was whether Dutchbat would arrive before the rotation was forced by the deployment of air power and the Special Forces. On 20 February, a discussion took place between the Canadian commander in Srebrenica, Yvan Bouchard, and the overall Canbat commander, Moore, through coded messages. Moore spoke, for example, of visitors from Italy (being US Special Forces). The following day, the two talked to each other again about the execution of the operation.

On 22 and 23 February, a meeting took place in Naples between a Canbat representative and four members of the Canadian Joint Task Force Two (JTF2), which can be compared with the British SAS.<sup>988</sup> In the nine-page operation plan that was discussed in this meeting, the operation for removing

<sup>980</sup> John Sray, 'selling the Bosnian Myth', in: *Foreign Military Studies*, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, October 1995 and Tom Quiggin, 'srebrenica and the international community in Bosnia', *The International Spectator*, Vol. 52 (1998) 2, p. 83.

<sup>981</sup> Confidential interview (9). These arms were forbidden by international conventions. See also: Harald Doornbos, 'Groene spionnen tussen blauwhelmen' ('Green spies among blue helmets'), *De Stem*, 10/05/95.

<sup>982</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, p. 105.

<sup>983</sup> DND, Ottawa, *Green Folder Confidential*, Memo J3 Ops Note, 24/01/94.

<sup>984</sup> Interview with D. Moore, 15/11/99.

<sup>985</sup> The British government was also informed. Confidential information (16).

<sup>986</sup> Interview with M. Baril, 21/12/99.

<sup>987</sup> Interview with A.L. ter Beek, 13/01/00.

<sup>988</sup> For JTF2 operations in Bosnia: Pugliese, *Canada's Secret Commandos*, pp. 41 - 46.

from the enclave a total of 140 Canadian UN soldiers, six members of the Dutch reconnaissance party, six UNCivPol workers, two UNMOs and four *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) workers with Sea Stallion helicopters was covered in great detail. The code name of the plan was Operation Royal Castor/Blue Jay. It described on a minute-by-minute basis how, from takeoff to landing in Brindisi, Italy, a total of 158 people would be removed from the enclave in a secret night-time operation in a matter of few hours. Different scenarios were considered, including one in which the operation would be carried out in a moderately to highly hostile environment. The Joint Task Force Two together with US Special Forces were to carry out the operation.<sup>989</sup>

On 24 February, the Special Forces arrived in Zagreb and were brought to a state of readiness. An air fleet of 2 C-130 Gunships and a few F-18s were to provide close air support and the operation was to start at 18.00 hours. The mission was flown from the aircraft carrier USS Saratoga and from the air force base Brindisi (Italy). Bouchard received instructions that the Dutch were not allowed to come to Dorval and Mirabel, but they would be taken along. In the meantime, Canbat had started with the expansion of the night-time APC patrols, so that neither the ABiH nor the VRS would be alarmed by Canadians driving around in the dark. In total, five people were informed of the entire operation, but otherwise it was a completely American-Canadian affair, in which UNPROFOR was entirely uninvolved. The expectation was that there would be approximately fifteen deaths.

The plan was sent to Visoko. A Canadian officer, whom Moore sent to Srebrenica with an aid convoy as a courier, carried the secret operation plan on his body. On 2 March, this officer returned from Srebrenica, after speaking extensively with Commander Bouchard about the operation. On 3 March, the official handover to Dutchbat took place; one day later, the Canadian compound in Srebrenica was blocked by five hundred ABiH soldiers. Canbat was accused in a hostile atmosphere of permitting the VRS lines to be advanced. The VRS also stepped up the pressure and refused to allow the convoy that had come to collect Canbat access to the enclave.<sup>990</sup> On 5 March 1994, the ABiH surrounded the compound again, this time with more than 2000 people.<sup>991</sup>

After this news, Ottawa decided to execute the plan. Apparently only Canbat was to be evacuated, and there were no plans to take along the Dutch reconnaissance unit. The evacuation of Canbat was to be carried out with helicopters, and furthermore the aircraft carrier Saratoga was standing by. Bouchard told the Dutch that he had developed a plan involving close air support and tear gas to clear a path out of the enclave.<sup>992</sup> He gave the impression of being under severe stress in those days.<sup>993</sup>

On 7 March, everyone was ready and the special operation should have taken place, but ultimately it was abandoned at the last moment, because the VRS lifted the blockade and Canbat could leave by road after all.<sup>994</sup> Canbat was therefore able to leave the enclave without intervention, although it was a close shave.<sup>995</sup>

The evacuation of the Canadian battalion appeared to be problematic and raises the question of whether similar plans also existed for Dutchbat. According to the Chief of Staff of BHC, General Brinkman, the evacuation of Dutch units was never seriously discussed. The grip on the UN troops was actually extremely loose. The headquarters in Sarajevo was not a normal headquarters, and there was not even any formal transfer of authority over the troops. All the national governments maintained varying degrees of frequent contact with their own units in the field. They also took their own measures

<sup>989</sup> Confidential information (17).

<sup>990</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR. Declassified by DND, Briefing Note for COS J3, 07/03/94 and 'serbs stall Canadian withdrawal', *The Toronto Star*, 04/03/94.

<sup>991</sup> 'Bosnian Muslims want Canadian troops to stay', *The Toronto Star*, 07/03/94 and Interview with Yvan Bouchard, 15/11/99. Further: Confidential information (18).

<sup>992</sup> Canadian AIA, Relief in Place, p. 95.

<sup>993</sup> Jellema, *First-In*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>994</sup> Interview with D. Moore, 15/11/99. See also: 'Canadian convoy heads to Srebrenica' *The Toronto Star*, 09/03/94.

<sup>995</sup> NMFA, *Embassy Ottawa*, Fietelaars to Foreign Affairs, no. 046, 22/04/94.

to support or evacuate their units. Nonetheless, the US Secretary of Defense, Perry, had indicated that the Dutch soldiers in Bosnia would be able to count on support if they were to find themselves in difficulty. The promised support was not specified in detail at the time, and neither did that appear to be necessary then, with this promise on the table.<sup>996</sup> According to Brinkman, UN-plans for an evacuation continued to be no more than paper tigers. The serious plans had to come from NATO, such as the withdrawal plan Oplan 40104 as well as from the national governments: the British for Gorazde and the French for Sarajevo.<sup>997</sup>

US Special Forces also remained active in Bosnia later. They were said to have been given permission to use UNHCR jeeps fitted with special registration plates for their operations.<sup>998</sup> The security services of the Bosnian Serbs had allegedly occasionally picked up CIA or SAS personnel, but an arrangement was worked out with UNHCR, that they would then issue a statement that it was one of their people.<sup>999</sup> Dutch soldiers for example observed fifty US Special Forces soldiers in Mostar, who vanished again abruptly.<sup>1000</sup> After July 1995, US Special Forces and the SAS were even more active in the region; there were said to be serious plans to have them capture Karadzic.<sup>1001</sup>

## 7. Conclusions

The following quotation gives a clear indication of what the secret operations in the Balkans were all about.

‘All the conflicts concerned are fundamentally struggles for power, irrespective of whether the operations are initiated in order to provide humanitarian aid or to limit the scope of an armed confrontation. (...) Experience shows that the parties to the intervention inevitably become parties to the conflict, with their own distinct interests’.<sup>1002</sup>

The secret arms supplies to the warring factions took place within the framework of a complex international political constellation.

The United States had to deal with a variety of fields of tension. After the Gulf War, it was payback time and in the Arab world (especially Saudi Arabia) it was expected that Washington would support the Bosnian Muslims. Furthermore, great pressure was brought to bear on the Clinton administration by the media and Congress, which was dominated by the Republicans. On the other hand, open military support would bring the United States into conflict with European countries that were contributing ground forces to UNPROFOR. The European countries expected that additional arms would encourage the conflict to flare up, resulting in a growing stream of Displaced Persons. The lift and strike strategy (lifting the embargo and resorting to air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs) that the Americans opted for, was partly motivated by a desire to meet domestic and foreign pressure: a ‘political gesture’, because the US government knew that the Security Council would not agree and that it would lead to a decision in London and Paris to withdraw from UNPROFOR. The US lobby in the Security Council for lifting the arms embargo was also connected to the desire not to have to deploy any American ground forces.<sup>1003</sup>

<sup>996</sup> Interview with J.C. Gmelich Meijling, 04/12/01 and also Interview with M.C.J. Felix, 06/04/00.

<sup>997</sup> Interview with J.W. Brinkman, 11/10/99 and F. van Bouwdijk Bastiaanse, 28/08/00. See also: Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 87. See also Part III of the main Srebrenica report.

<sup>998</sup> Harald Doornbos, ‘Groene spionnen tussen blauwhelmen’, *De Stem*, 10/05/95.

<sup>999</sup> Interview with Milovan Milutinovic, 20-22/03/00.

<sup>1000</sup> Confidential interview (38).

<sup>1001</sup> Confidential interview (69) and Maggie O’Keane, ‘Hunting Radovan’, *The Guardian*, 20/02/01.

<sup>1002</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 86.

<sup>1003</sup> David Morrison, ‘How Bosnia is Becoming a Priority’, *National Journal*, 20/08/94.

The third party country strategy offered an even better way out of this dilemma: the so-called 'Croatian pipeline' (arms supplies from Iran to Croatia and from there to Bosnia) was an alternative to strengthening the Muslims and Croats in a military sense after the creation of the Muslim-Croat Federation. Furthermore, a stronger Bosnia and Croatia would ensure a reduction of the pressure on Washington to send ground forces.

The American government could do nothing towards supplies by third party countries, because Congress had removed that possibility. A law drafted by senators Nunn and Mitchell banned the use of government funds for the support of or assistance in enforcing the arms embargo. It is the firm conviction of Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, who in 1993-1994 was chairman of the British Joint Intelligence Committee, that American personnel themselves were not involved in the purchase and transport, but were responsible for the funding. According to her, these supplies definitely were a flagrant violation of international law: the actions of these bodies meant that the American government violated Security Council resolutions.<sup>1004</sup>

As such, the UN itself in part also generated these secret operations. The fact is that Bosnia was officially admitted to the United Nations as the 177th member state. It is strange then that the Security Council did not draw the logical conclusion that a new state may take measures for defence against an armed attack. The embargo curbed the legal arms trade, but did nothing to reduce the demand for, and the supply of, arms, and only displaced it onto illegal circuits.<sup>1005</sup>

Although the US government will have observed the increasing influence of Iran, they put up with it. Sarajevo would ultimately, it was thought, allow the political and military solidarity with the United States to take precedence over that with Teheran. In the course of time, US intelligence services will have established that the number of Mujahedin fighters was not considerable and moreover that they were not in great favour among the Bosnian population. The military leaders of the ABiH also had a low estimate of their fighting power. The Mujahedin seen especially as a 'political tool' for obtaining the support of some countries in the Arab world.

At the same time, the Islamic fighters played a role as a political lever: Izetbegovic was aware that Saudi Arabia and Turkey were unhappy with the Iranian influence.<sup>1006</sup> There is no doubt that the Bosnian government will have played this trump card to gain the support of these two countries. Izetbegovic clung as long as possible to the Iranian connection, but in 1996 Sarajevo had to let go of this under US pressure. The same was also true of bringing in the Mujahedin. They were tolerated in Bosnia, and were used by Izetbegovic as a political lever for attracting funds in the Middle East.

In view of the long history of Turkey in the Balkans, an active role in the region for this country was predictable. The traditional Greek links with Serbia and the political support of Athens to Belgrade will without doubt have played a role. Furthermore, Ankara will have wished to contain the Iranian influence. Turkey was a perfect candidate to serve as a direct supplier. The armed forces had the aircraft, arms and logistic infrastructure. Operations could take place undisturbed from the Turkish occupied part of Cyprus, and Croatia and Bosnia were easy to reach. The American 'logistics patronage' moreover ensured that the flights to Tuzla remained 'unseen'. It was likely that the Croatian pipeline would be discovered, but because UNPROFOR did not have the mandate and the resources to act against it, it did not matter. It was likewise to be expected that the direct flights to Tuzla, Visoko and Bihac would be seen, in spite of the fact that the AWACS had been rendered 'blind' or did not fly. The Americans managed through damage control to limit the damage, while taking a further step-up in the pressure on transatlantic relations into the bargain.<sup>1007</sup>

The indirect American support of the ABiH by looking the other way in the presence of direct arms supplies and the Croatian pipeline were described as a sort of 'Vietnamization' of the war. In other words: a strong ABiH was created, which was able to compensate for the lack of American

<sup>1004</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>1005</sup> Johan Peleman, 'Wapenhandel naar Bosnië-Herzegovina', *Noord-Zuid Cabier*, Vol. 3 (1997) 22, pp. 94-95.

<sup>1006</sup> See also: Roger Cohen, *Hearts grown brutal*, p. 408.

<sup>1007</sup> See also: 'Allies and Lies', *BBC Correspondent*, 22/06/01.

ground forces with a robust mandate.<sup>1008</sup> Something similar happened at the end of the war in Vietnam. It is not strange that different views existed within the Clinton administration on arms supplies to Bosnia and the influx of Mujahedin. There were also greatly divergent views within the CIA on a comparable operation during the Reagan administration, when Stinger missiles were supplied to the Mujahedin fighters in Afghanistan. The then Head of Operations for the Middle East at the CIA, T. Twetten, described the supporters of collaboration with the Mujahedin fighters within the Reagan administration as 'strange people developing strange ideas' at the time.<sup>1009</sup> Now too there were dangers attached to illegal arms supplies, which some certainly did recognize.

The direct results of the clandestine arms supplies to the warring factions are difficult to identify precisely. In general terms, the VRS will have consolidated and sometimes reinforced its military position. The problem with the Bosnian Serbs was not so much the availability of light and heavy arms, but rather shortages of trained soldiers. They were supplied amply from Serbia. The clandestine arms supplies were therefore of greater importance to the Croats and the Bosnian Muslims. The training and the supplying of arms, for example, simplified the Croatian operations in the Krajina in mid 1995.

Alongside secret arms supplies, the company MPRI provided training. An observer who was a witness to the operations in which Croatian commandos crossed the river Una during the offensive against the Bosnian Serbs, observed that this was a 'textbook US field manual river crossing'.<sup>1010</sup> By engaging this company, Washington at the same time also reduced the danger of 'direct' involvement.<sup>1011</sup> The operation resulted in the killing of more than 500 civilians and the exodus of more than 150.000 ethnic Serbs from the Krajina. In view of the US covert support to the Croats it will be interesting to see if the International War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague will seriously investigate this matter.<sup>1012</sup>

The ABiH had no lack of soldiers, but did lack arms. Heavy arms especially were necessary, but these did not flow through the Croatian pipeline. Only light arms and ammunition came through, because Zagreb was all too afraid that the Bosnian Muslims would terminate the Muslim-Croat Federation sooner or later, and would turn on Croatia with these 'Iranian arms'. The Croats had for instance not yet forgotten the fighting around Mostar in the autumn of 1993. The ABiH then paid the VRS to shell Croatian positions. In some areas, the Croatian authorities therefore also collaborated with the VRS, and there were supporters of containing the flow of arms to Bosnia.<sup>1013</sup>

The clandestine arms supplies through the Croatian pipeline and Black Flights were a violation of the arms embargo imposed by the international community against the warring factions in the former Yugoslavia. This embargo was officially sanctioned by the Security Council. The Black Flights were moreover a serious violation of the No Fly Zone over Bosnia.<sup>1014</sup> This could have led to the total ruin of the peace process, and the negotiations on reopening Tuzla airfield for humanitarian flights were put directly at risk.<sup>1015</sup> The special representative of the UN Secretary-General, Akashi, reported regularly in 1994 and 1995 on new arms and weapons systems. UNPROFOR, however, had no mandate to monitor or to oppose the violations of the arms embargo.<sup>1016</sup> The sanctions and the No Fly Zone were violated systematically and could not be seriously enforced. This sent the wrong signals to

<sup>1008</sup> Sean Gervasi, 'Involvement of the US and German intelligence services', *Strategic Policy*, No. 3, 1995, passim.

<sup>1009</sup> Bill Gertz, 'study reveals "politicization" of intelligence', *The Washington Times*, 09/10/00.

<sup>1010</sup> Charlotte Elgar, 'Invisible US Army defeats Serbs', *The Observer*, 05/11/95. See also W. de Jonge, 'Train and Equip', in: *Militaire Spectator* Vol. 169 (2000) 9, pp. 480-489.

<sup>1011</sup> Thomas H. Henriksen, 'Covert Operations, Now More Than Ever', *Orbis*, Vol. 44 (2000) 1, p. 153.

<sup>1012</sup> George Rudman, 'Hague tribunal could spell trouble for former U.S. officials', *The Washington Times*, 18/05/02 and Jeffrey Kuhner, 'Tribunal probes U.S. aid to Croatia', *The Washington Times*, 06/12/02.

<sup>1013</sup> Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, pp. 385-386.

<sup>1014</sup> James Risen & Doyle McManus, 'U.S. Okd Iran Arms for Bosnia, Officials Say', *The Los Angeles Times*, 05/04/96.

<sup>1015</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 139*. G-2 HQ UNPROFOR, Daily Info Summary, 11/02/95.

<sup>1016</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 124*. Akashi to Annan, Z-1070, 18/07/94.

the warring factions, namely that the international community was not prepared to put serious effort into this issue.<sup>1017</sup>

The influence of the supplies was also felt in East Bosnia when in April 1995 the ABiH Spring offensive started. The ABiH in Srebrenica also received new arms. It has been demonstrated that the clandestine supplies usually led to rapid transit by helicopter to the eastern enclaves such as Srebrenica and Zepa. New arms generally facilitated new sorties from the enclaves into Bosnian-Serb villages and military positions, which in turn provoked a response from the VRS. This sometimes put Dutch soldiers in danger, because in the enclaves the ABiH all too often used Dutchbat's OPs as cover in military actions against the VRS.<sup>1018</sup> Therefore the enclave increasingly acquired the status of a 'protected area' for the ABiH, from which the ABiH could carry out hit and run operations against, often civilian, targets. These operations probably contributed to the fact that at the end of June the VRS was prepared to take no more, after which they decided to intervene: the VRS decided shortly after to capture the enclave.

In this respect, the Black Flights to Tuzla and the sustained arms supplies to the ABiH in the eastern enclaves did perhaps contribute to the ultimate decision to attack the enclave. In this connection it is not surprising that Mladic and other Bosnian Serbs constantly complained about this, but usually received no response to their complaints.<sup>1019</sup> In the eyes of the VRS, the complaints were perhaps justified, but it must not be forgotten that UNPROFOR did not have the mandate to oppose the supplies. In fact the sanctions and the arms embargo had little substance. At most, the flow of arms, ammunition, resources, oil and other goods was reduced somewhat. The smuggling trade flourished, and otherwise organized international criminals, including Russians, ensured sufficient supply.<sup>1020</sup> The border between Serbia and Srpska over the Drina may well have been monitored by the ICFY mission, but this check was far from watertight.

Smuggling operations from Serbia to Srpska took place daily. There were perhaps too few observers to man all the crossings, but neither did any major supplies of tanks, APCs and artillery take place, as the Bosnian Muslims claimed. There was cooperation from the Yugoslav authorities, because Belgrade had much to lose in the event of excessively visible violations of the embargo. The UN headquarters in Zagreb did hear constant rumours of support of the VJ, but hard evidence of it was never received.<sup>1021</sup> Secret UN documents, to which the media referred and that indicated that the VRS was receiving 'high-level military support' from the VJ and that personnel and equipment was being supplied across the Drina<sup>1022</sup>, were not found by the NIOD in the UN archives. The conclusion was therefore that there was Serbian involvement in the war in Bosnia in 1995, but not in a direct way. The military infrastructure of the old Yugoslavia was still largely intact; the Serbian assistance related to logistics support, components, payment of officers' salaries and communications.<sup>1023</sup>

From the American side it was confirmed that no evidence was ever supplied that arms went to the Bosnian Serbs across the Drina. The road via Croatia was open, however. The conclusion therefore was that the embargo along the Drina was 'fairly effective', albeit not watertight.<sup>1024</sup> There was another Western intelligence service that never had hard evidence in the period before the fall of Srebrenica of the VRS receiving arms from the VJ, but it still cannot be ruled out completely.<sup>1025</sup> In addition, the ICFY mission had to contend with a formidable opponent in the form of Kertis, who is described by

<sup>1017</sup> Filippo Andreatta, *The Bosnian War and the New World Order*, WEU Occasional Paper No. 1, October 1996, p. 14.

<sup>1018</sup> For example: UNNY, *DPKO coded cables* De Lapresle to Annan, Z-528, 04/04/94.

<sup>1019</sup> For this: see also Chapter 8 of this study and especially Part III of the Srebrenica report.

<sup>1020</sup> William C. Potter, Djuro Miljanic & Ivo Slaus, 'Tito's Nuclear Legacy', *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, Vol. 56 (2000), 2, pp. 63-75.

<sup>1021</sup> Interview with Tony Banbury, 11/05/00.

<sup>1022</sup> See: 'Documentary alleges Serbian Arms Used to Invade Srebrenica', *ANP English News Bulletin*, 30/05/95 and *Reuter*, 29/05/96.

<sup>1023</sup> Interview with R.A. Smith, 12/01/00. Smith did not rely on intelligence reports from UNPROFOR.

<sup>1024</sup> Confidential interview (14).

<sup>1025</sup> Confidential interview (8).

Western intelligence services as the best organized smuggler in the Balkans. Large deliveries probably took place completely outside the view of ICFY, and much was supplied with low-flying helicopters or through the Krajina; this then happened with the knowledge of Croatia, which had an interest in a sustained conflict between the ABiH and the VRS because it tied up Bosnian-Serb troops, who could then not be deployed against the Croats. It also assured that the ABiH was not nurturing any particularly large-scale offensive plans against Croatia. Zagreb will moreover, as with Iran, have skimmed the Serbian supplies.

The arms supplies to the warring factions increased the instability in the region and allowed the armed conflict to flare up. It is no coincidence that offensives by the ABiH, VRS or Croats took place a few weeks after the military material was delivered. A common pattern was as follows: clandestine supplies, training - whether or not supervised by instructors - and after that the start of offensives. New arms mostly facilitated, the VRS complained, renewed sorties from the enclaves into Serbian villages and military positions, which in turn provoked a response from the VRS. Finally, the reconstruction of the secret arms supplies shows that divergent views existed in the various NATO member states on the possible consequences for the UNPROFOR troops in the former Yugoslavia. Washington had different ideas on this from most European capitals, but then Washington had no ground forces in Bosnia.



## Chapter 5

# The Signals Intelligence war of the Western intelligence services in and around Bosnia

‘In God we trust, all others we monitor’

(motto of an intercept operator)

### 1. Introduction

Intercepted conversations played an important role during the war in Bosnia and intercepted communications traffic had become an area of interest just a few months after the fall of Srebrenica. ‘Intercepts’ and prior knowledge of the attack on Srebrenica have been inextricably linked in various publications. The article by the journalist Andreas Zumach published in October 1995, also printed in various newspapers in the Netherlands, can serve as an example here.<sup>1026</sup> According to Zumach various sources claimed that from 17 June 1995 onwards, more than three weeks before the attack started, American intelligence services had monitored the daily conversations between General Momcilo Perisic, Chief of Staff of the Yugoslav Army, the *Vojska Jugoslavija* (VJ), and General Ratko Mladic.

Zumach is not specific which US intelligence service was supposedly reading this traffic and is more or less lumping all 17 US intelligence services into one group. Nevertheless, in these conversations the two generals are said to have planned the operation against Srebrenica. Excerpts from these conversations were reportedly published. The conversations proved that the initiative for the attack on Srebrenica came from Belgrade. Perisic is said to have had command of the actual attack on the enclave. This intelligence about the planned attack was not passed on to UNPROFOR in order not to disrupt the peace efforts of President Clinton.<sup>1027</sup> When asked about this, Defence Minister Voorhoeve said he was aware of these reports; he addressed an inquiry about their correctness to his American colleague William Perry.<sup>1028</sup>

Until the present day, knowledge about the role and importance of Sigint in the years after the end of the Second World War can actually best be described as ‘an inventory of ignorance’. The British historian Christopher Andrew wrote:

‘The biggest gap in our knowledge of United States intelligence collection during the Cold War concerns the role of Sigint. No history of the Second World War nowadays fails to mention the role of the Anglo-American code breakers in hastening victory over Germany and Japan. By contrast, most histories of the Cold War make no reference to Sigint at all’.<sup>1029</sup>

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<sup>1026</sup> Andreas Zumach, ‘US Intelligence knew Serbs were planning an assault on Srebrenica’, *Basic Reports*, No. 47, 16/10/95. See also: ‘VS wisten van komende val Srebrenica’ (US knew of impending fall of Srebrenica), *Nederlands Dagblad*, 13/10/95 and ‘VS wisten al weken tevoren van val Srebrenica’ (US knew about fall of Srebrenica weeks in advance), *De Gelderlander*, 13/10/95.

<sup>1027</sup> See also: ‘Amerikanen verzweigen voorkennis Srebrenica’ (Americans kept advance knowledge of Srebrenica for themselves), *De Stem*, 13/10/95.

<sup>1028</sup> Ewoud Nysingh, ‘Joegoslavische generaal leidde aanval op Srebrenica’ (Yugoslavian general led attack on Srebrenica), *De Volkskrant*, 31/10/95.

<sup>1029</sup> Christopher Andrew, ‘Conclusion: An Agenda for Future Research’, *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 12 (1997) 1, p. 228.

To date little is known about the role of Sigint and the interception of communications traffic during the war in the Balkans and in Bosnia in particular. This is chiefly because Sigint is one of the most secret methods of gathering intelligence.

To begin with we need a good definition of Sigint. A US Marine Corps manual describes it as ‘intelligence gained by exploiting an adversary’s use of the electromagnetic spectrum with the aim of gaining undetected firsthand intelligence on the adversary’s intentions, dispositions, capabilities, and limitations’.<sup>1030</sup> Sigint involves the acquisition of information from electromagnetic transmissions (of any type whatsoever) aiming to intercept electronic message and data traffic and is always conducted under the greatest secrecy by technical means. This is usually conducted from ground stations, special ships, aircraft or satellites. Sigint consists of three separate, mutually interconnected gathering techniques: Communications Intelligence (Comint), Electronic Intelligence (Elint) and Foreign Instrumentation Signals Intelligence (Fisint).<sup>1031</sup>

Communications Intelligence (Comint) concentrates on intercepting and processing domestic and foreign communications by means of voice and data traffic through telephone, radio, Morse, code, fax, video and telegraph links, and by means of other electronic media. Comint does not relate to the interception of postal traffic or the monitoring of foreign radio and TV broadcasts.<sup>1032</sup> A typical target of Comint during the Cold War was formed by the routine activities of Soviet airfields in the GDR, Poland and elsewhere: the radio links, the traffic between the ground personnel and the control towers, the conversations of the pilots and the weather reports for the pilots.

Electronic Intelligence (Elint) concentrates on all the other information and data traffic transmitted by domestic and foreign electronic equipment. The most common Elint targets are transmissions by radar stations and navigation systems. By means of Elint these radars can be identified by function, type, range and capabilities and their location can be precisely determined. This intelligence is chiefly of importance to the Military Intelligence Services.<sup>1033</sup> Foreign Instrumentation Signals Intelligence (Fisint) involves the gathering and processing of emissions related to the testing of certain aircraft, missiles and (un)manned space vehicles. Fisint is also involved in the interception of electronic traffic transmitting video images to ground stations, and of transmissions intended to test all sorts of weapons systems.<sup>1034</sup>

Over the last ten years Sigint has increasingly been used to intercept a new electronic communication medium: digital data traffic. Its main purpose is to transmit enormous quantities of digital data between computer systems and networks. One example is a special program for the monitoring of electronic banking traffic. This program was used, for instance, to closely monitor Milosevic’s cash flows abroad (especially to and from Cyprus).<sup>1035</sup> During the Balkan war too the intelligence services devoted attention to Comint, with particular attention given to the gathering, intercepting and decoding of military and diplomatic messages. This traffic can be conducted over an ‘open’ line, but it may also be coded or encrypted. In cryptography (the art of secret writing) information is converted in a way that third parties are not thought capable of deciphering.

<sup>1030</sup> US Marine Corps, Marine Corps Warfighting Publication (MCWP), 2-15.2, *Sigint*, June 1999, p. 1-1.

<sup>1031</sup> US House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, *Annual Report by the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*, 95th Congress, 2nd Session, 1978, p. 50.

<sup>1032</sup> US Senate, Report No. 94-755, *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations With Respect to Intelligence Activities*, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, 1976, Book III, p. 737; US House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Report No. 95-1795, *Annual Report by the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence*, 1978, pp. 31, 58; Department of Defense Directive S-5100-20, *The NSA and the Central Security Service*, 23/12/71; David L. Christianson, ‘sigint’, in: Hopple & Watson (eds.), *The Military Intelligence Community*, p. 41.

<sup>1033</sup> E.A.O. Onderdelinden, ‘Verbindingsinlichtingen. Wat is dat eigenlijk?’ (Signals Intelligence. What is that actually?), in: *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 12, pp. 675-683.

<sup>1034</sup> Fisint was earlier known as Telemetry Intelligence. David L. Christianson, ‘sigint,’ in: Hopple & Watson (eds.), *The Military Intelligence Community*, p. 40.

<sup>1035</sup> NAIC, *Draft, Technical Requirements Document (TRD) for the SIGINT System Integration Contract*, 24/07/00. See: [http://www.pixs.wpafb.af.mil/pixslibr/DATAEX/sigsoo\\_drft1.doc](http://www.pixs.wpafb.af.mil/pixslibr/DATAEX/sigsoo_drft1.doc).

In addition Comint can be important even if the code is not broken, because an analysis of the traffic in combination with Elint can enable intelligence services to establish the location, movements and even the strength of the Armed Forces.<sup>1036</sup> Increasing transmission activity from a military headquarters can, for instance, be an indication of an imminent military operation. Before this chapter moves on to a closer examination of the claims made in publications regarding intercepted communications traffic and the possible successes and failures in this Sigint war between the warring parties, Section 2 will first outline the advantages and disadvantages of Sigint. This is important because these are also reflected in the war in Bosnia during the period 1992 to 1995.

Subsequently, section 3 devotes brief attention to the history of the most important Sigint Services that focused on the war in Bosnia. A description is given of the largest (in budget and staff) service in the world, the American National Security Agency (NSA). Attention is also devoted to several other western bodies, such as the Canadian Communications Security Establishment (CSE), the British Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ), the German *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND) and the French *Direction du Renseignement Militaire* (DRM). This section also describes the resources that these services employed in Bosnia.

Section 4 then turns to the difficult issue of exchanging Comint (especially of a strategic nature) between friendly Western Services. The results of Comint are generally subject to strict secrecy and are not automatically shared by Western services with sister services. Even within NATO Sigint is not exchanged with full freedom; this is partly because the Intelligence-gathering Service does not wish to reveal its own capacities. A variety of accounts have been published regarding the results achieved in the field of Comint.

In Section 5 these are compared and supplemented by the author's own research. On the basis of the goals of Comint and Elint a distinction is made between the following categories: firstly the diplomatic and military communications traffic of the warring factions (the military targets), such as the VJ in Serbia; secondly the VRS in the Republika Srpska and the ABiH in Bosnia; thirdly the Elint targets in and around Bosnia; and finally UNPROFOR as a target. What can be said about the successes and the reliability of the published accounts? This section also considers the capacities and activities of the *Afdeling Verbindingsinlichtingen* (Sigint Department) of the Netherlands Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Finally, the conclusion in Section 6 looks back at the Sigint war between 1992 and 1995 and examines the role and the importance of Comint during the war in Bosnia.

## 2. The advantages and disadvantages of Signals Intelligence

Little is known about Sigint during the Cold War and following the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>1037</sup> A blanket of secrecy has always lain over this subject. Sigint is rather technical in nature and it is thus often difficult to explain its importance. This is one reason why scientists and journalists have generally avoided the subject. The little attention that has been devoted to Sigint in print mostly relates to World War II.<sup>1038</sup> Nonetheless, thanks to the specific information that it provided Sigint has been of enormous importance in military conflicts during and after the Cold War. Since time immemorial, governments have always wanted to know what their enemies (but also their friends) are up to. The easiest way to find this out is simply to listen to their communications traffic. By way of illustration, the former head of the US Navy Comint organization wrote: 'The ambition of every nation has been to develop unbreakable ciphers for its own use and to solve every cipher in use by its actual or potential enemies.'<sup>1039</sup>

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<sup>1036</sup> Polmar & Allen, *Spybook*, 1998, p. 131 and Richelson, *The US Intelligence Community*, pp. 24-27.

<sup>1037</sup> This section makes extensive use of: Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, 'Introduction on the importance of SIGINT in the Cold War', Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 1-24.

<sup>1038</sup> For a detailed discussion of this see: Matthew M. Aid, 'Not So Anonymous: Parting the Veil of Secrecy About the NSA', in: Theoharis (ed.), *Culture*, pp. 65-67.

<sup>1039</sup> NA, RG-457, CP, SRH-264, *A Lecture on Communications Intelligence by Captain J.N. Wenger, USN*, 14/08/46, p. 8.

### *Advantages of Sigint*

Due to the specific nature of the information obtained, Sigint has a number of special qualities making it a highly effective method for gathering intelligence. Indeed, Sigint proved to be one, if not the, most important source of intelligence during and after the Cold War. In October 1998 John Millis, the late Staff Director of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, said that Sigint ‘has been and continues to be the intelligence of choice of the policymaker and the military commander’. He added: ‘the fact of the matter is, it’s there quickly when needed. It’s always there. Or it has always been there.’<sup>1040</sup> Nine advantages are listed below. One major advantage of this form of intelligence is that it is a passive method, generally conducted without the target knowing about it. Moreover, Sigint can be used against a target that is sometimes hundreds or even thousands of kilometres away. It is often not necessary to position the intercepting equipment close to the target. Sigint thus has few political or physical risks; an exception is formed by the gathering of this information by aircraft flying along the coasts of various states.

Secondly, Sigint is objective; it has a high reliability and that can sometimes even result in a perfect intelligence product. Sigint will, in contrast to intelligence gained from Humint, always be free of political prejudice and will not be influenced by the political perception of the agent’s sources. Humint can sometimes be politically coloured because it is supplied by traitors, or for reasons of blackmail, corruption, or political or financial gain. But Sigint provides, in a raw state, exactly what has been recorded in an unembellished, uninfluenced and undistorted form. Sigint has thus acquired an important status with the recipients of intelligence. As a former CIA agent put it: ‘You know the origin and you know that this is genuine. It’s not like a clandestine (Human Intelligence) report where you don’t know if this is a good agent or a weak agent or a bad agent or a double agent.’ Another CIA officer immediately pointed out the down-side too: ‘Electronic intercepts are great, but you don’t know if you’ve got two idiots talking on the phone.’<sup>1041</sup>

A third advantage is that some – certainly not all – intercepts can be an autonomous intelligence product, without the information needing to be verified through other sources. The former director of the CIA, Stansfield Turner, wrote in 1991:

‘Electronic intercepts may be even more useful [than agents] in discerning intentions. For instance, if a foreign official writes about plans in a message and the United States intercepts it, or if he discusses it and we record it with a listening device, those verbatim intercepts are likely to be more reliable than second-hand reports from an agent’.<sup>1042</sup>

An intercept can thus supply unique intelligence. This is why every morning the American president is presented with not only a Top Secret Intelligence Summary but also a ‘Black Book’ with the most important intercepts of the past 24 hours. In The Hague the highest government policymakers are provided with a similar publication focussing on the Netherlands, known as the *Groene Editie* (Green Edition).<sup>1043</sup>

Fourthly, Sigint is usually the form of intelligence most rapidly available to the intelligence recipient. The NSA in particular can, thanks to its global eavesdropping network, supply Sigint faster than any other form of intelligence. During the 1962 Cuba Crisis, for instance, on average more than a week was needed before a Humint report reached the CIA. Intercepts were directly available to the

<sup>1040</sup> ‘Address at the CIRA Luncheon, 5 October 1998; John Millis’ Speech’, in: *CIRA Newsletter*, Vol. XXIII (1998/1999), 4, p. 4.

<sup>1041</sup> Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, ‘Introduction on the importance of *SIGINT* in the Cold War’, in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, p. 6. See also: Bob Drogin, ‘At CIA School, Data Outweigh Derring-do’, *Los Angeles Times*, 27/08/00.

<sup>1042</sup> Stansfield Turner, ‘Intelligence for a New World Order’, *Foreign Affairs*, Fall 1991, p. 158.

<sup>1043</sup> De Graaff & Wiebes, *Villa Maarbeeze*, pp. 280-282. In the UK this is known as the Blue Book. See: Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha*, p. 8.

policymakers, however. As a result Sigint and Imagery Intelligence (Imint) started to play an ever more important role in warning about an enemy attack.

Fifthly, Sigint provides much more intelligence on a broad range of subjects than any other form of intelligence. At the end of the 1960s the NSA was already producing more than 400,000 intelligence reports a year, i.e. more than a thousand reports every day.<sup>1044</sup> Sixthly, Sigint 'never sleeps'. After all, agents and their sources need to rest from time to time and Imint is sometimes unavailable due to darkness, sandstorms or meteorological conditions. Sigint, however, can be used day and night: 24 hours a day and 365 days a year.

Seventhly, Sigint is more flexible and more focussed on the recipient than most other forms of intelligence. This is why a report by the American Congress in 1998 stated: 'much of the NSA's past strength has come from its localised creativity and quick-reaction capability'.<sup>1045</sup> In particular the larger Sigint organizations are able to eavesdrop on new targets quickly. After all, intelligence services are not able to establish a whole new network of agents and spies within 24 hours. Imint is not flexible enough either, because bringing an espionage satellite into a new orbit involves huge costs. Eighthly, the potential of Sigint is much greater than any other form of intelligence. A successful breakthrough in cracking a foreign code can provide more valuable information than all other intelligence sources together. Breaking a code is sometimes 'equivalent not of one but of a thousand spies, all ideally placed, all secure, and all reporting instantaneously'.<sup>1046</sup> Even the most fervent advocate of Humint, the legendary CIA director from 1953 to 1961 Allen W. Dulles, had to admit that Sigint provided 'the best and "hottest" intelligence that one government can gather about another'.<sup>1047</sup>

Finally, Sigint is said to be the most effective manner (compared to other methods) of gathering intelligence: despite its high costs, Sigint generally provides 'more value for money'.<sup>1048</sup> Sigint is admittedly expensive. During the Cold War the American government spent four to five times more money on Sigint than on Humint. Since 1945 the NSA has probably spent more than \$100 billion, 75 percent of which was on Sigint and the remainder on Communications Security (making communications links secure).<sup>1049</sup> In short, Sigint was and is probably one of the most productive ways of gathering intelligence. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall the relative importance of Sigint has increased even further. This goes not only for the United States, but also for its European allies. The latter, due to the lack of a major Imint capability are probably even more dependent on Sigint.

By way of illustration one can cite the corresponding links between the United States and the United Kingdom: even during the 1980s the majority (80 to 90 percent) of the intelligence supplied to the UK Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) every day was derived from Sigint. In May 1999 the British Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, stated that 'the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) work is vital in supporting our foreign and defence policies'.<sup>1050</sup> The 2000 annual report by the Intelligence and Security Committee to the British Parliament also indicated the importance of Sigint: 'The quality of the (Government Communications Headquarters) intelligence gathered clearly reflects

<sup>1044</sup> Vladislav M. Zubok, 'spy vs. Spy: The KGB vs. the CIA, 1960-1962', *Cold War International History Project Bulletin* (1994) 4, pp. 22-33. As comparison: in 1960 the Soviet Union decoded 209,000 diplomatic code telegrams from 51 countries and 572 intercepts were distributed per day. In 1967 Moscow was able to read the coded traffic of 71 countries. See: Raymond Garthoff & Amy Knight, 'New Evidence on Soviet Intelligence: The KGB's 1967 Annual Report,' *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, (1998) 10, p. 214.

<sup>1045</sup> US House of Representatives, Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, Report 105-508, *Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999*, 105th Congress, 2nd Session, 05/05/98, p. 10.

<sup>1046</sup> Codevilla, *Informing Statecraft*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>1047</sup> David Kahn, 'Cryptology', in: *The Encyclopedia Americana*, Vol. 8 (1987), p. 276.

<sup>1048</sup> An exception may be formed by the spy satellites of the American National Reconnaissance Office (NRO).

<sup>1049</sup> David A. Fulghum, 'sigint Aircraft May Face Obsolescence in Five Years', *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 21/10/96, p. 54 and William Rosenau, 'A Deafening Silence: US Policy and the Sigint Facility at Lourdes', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 9 (1994), 4, p. 726. In the former Soviet Union, Sigint took up 25% of the annual KGB budget.

<sup>1050</sup> Press Release, 'GCHQ Accommodation Project Site Announced', 07/05/99. To be consulted at: <http://www.fco.gov.uk/news/newstext.asp?2391>.

the value of the close co-ordination under the UKUSA agreement.’<sup>1051</sup> This refers to a treaty signed by London and Washington in June 1948, known as the UKUSA Comint Agreement. This set out the division of the Comint efforts that at that time were directed against Moscow and its allies. At a later stage Canada, Australia and New Zealand also joined this agreement.<sup>1052</sup>

Sigint was of great importance to other countries too, such as Canada, a major supplier of troops to UNPROFOR. The national Sigint agency, the Communications Security Establishment (CSE), was the most important supplier of intelligence in Ottawa.<sup>1053</sup> And in the Netherlands too Comint has played an important role in the past, for instance during the oil crisis. In later years too the *Afdeling Verbindingsinlichtingen* (Signals Intelligence Department/AVI) of the MIS supplied important intelligence.<sup>1054</sup>

### *Disadvantages of Sigint*

Despite its advantages, Sigint also has a number of disadvantages. These weak aspects and limitations are however sometimes also applicable to other intelligence disciplines. Twelve disadvantages are listed below. Firstly, intercepts are always a matter of the greatest secrecy. The distribution of the Sigint product is thus always very limited. Only a very small circle of the highest political and military policymakers have access to Sigint. This secrecy is also important in the context of intelligence-sharing between the United States and its allies. Sigint is often incorporated into intelligence reports, but Sigint is often available to just a few people and then mostly only on a need-to-know basis. The main reason for this is that leaked Sigint can cause considerable damage. If the person or organization being monitored, the ‘target’ in intelligence jargon, discovers this, then he or it can quickly change codes or ciphers, thus at a stroke rendering useless all the previous effort expended in breaking this code or cipher.

The disadvantage of this extreme secrecy is that Sigint often fails to reach the right people at the lower levels. Sometimes Sigint does not reach the commander on the ground, because it has been decided that this Sigint has a need-to-know classification and hence the intelligence is not distributed any further. This was the case, for instance, during the war in Korea. The Comint not only failed to reach the US troops on the ground, but also failed to reach the US Navy and Air Force. As a result highly valuable tactical and strategic intelligence remained unused. Little was learned from the Korean War, because virtually the same thing happened in the Vietnam War. Important Sigint about the locations of North Vietnamese defence systems and MIG fighter aircraft remained ‘hung up’ at the NSA and never reached the US Air Force and Navy. The consequences were far-reaching: more US aircraft were shot down and more pilots were killed needlessly.

In the mid-1980s, under the Reagan administration, the NSA initially even refused to pass on to the CIA intercepts about support provided by Cuba and Nicaragua for the armed resistance in El Salvador. Such limitations also apply to other countries than the United States. In Moscow the KGB and the Military Intelligence Service (GRU) supplied their Sigint only to a small group within the Politburo. Sharing Sigint with members of the Warsaw Pact was even officially forbidden. In European countries too, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France and the Netherlands, access to Sigint is confined to a select group of policymakers and military commanders.<sup>1055</sup>

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<sup>1051</sup> CM 4897, Intelligence and Security Committee, *Annual Report 1999-2000*, 02/11/00. For this see: <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm48/4897/4897-02.htm>.

<sup>1052</sup> Andrew, *Eyes Only*, p. 163 and Hager, *Secret Power*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>1053</sup> For the importance of CSE: Martin Rudner, ‘Canada’s Communications Security Establishment from Cold War to Globalization’, in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Signals*, pp. 97-128.

<sup>1054</sup> Cees Wiebes, ‘Dutch Sigint during the Cold War, 1945-1994’, in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 243-284.

<sup>1055</sup> Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, ‘Introduction on the importance of SIGINT in the Cold War’, in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 12-14.

A second disadvantage of Sigint, besides the extreme secrecy and limited distribution, is the inhibition regarding its use. During the 1950s and 60s each American Comint report started with the following standard sentence: 'No action is to be taken on information herein reported, regardless of temporary advantage, if such action might have the effect of revealing the existence and nature of the source.' This initial sentence is probably still used today. This limitation has led to extremely bizarre situations. To give one example, it is claimed that in October 1995 the Australian Sigint agency, the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD), intercepted Indonesian military messages which indicated that there were plans to execute five Australian journalists who had been arrested in East Timor. The service decided not to pass on this information to the Australian Prime Minister, because it was feared that he would then act on the basis of these intercepted messages, or would even publicize them. This, it was reasoned, could reveal the ability of the Defence Signals Directorate to eavesdrop on Indonesian military traffic. Following this decision, all five journalists were murdered by Indonesian Special Forces.<sup>1056</sup>

A third disadvantage was that Sigint was often not valued properly or sometimes not even believed. During the Cold War, for instance, Sigint was not regarded as a sufficiently reliable source. As early as the Korean War, the top commanders of the US Armed Forces attached no value to Comint regarding the true strength of Mao's Red Army. During the war in Indochina, French commanders refused to heed intercepts of enemy communications traffic because these did not fit into their own analysis of the military situation.<sup>1057</sup> A further disadvantage was to be found in the converse possibility, namely that during the Cold War many countries were too dependent on Sigint. In 1978 the US intelligence community had become so dependent on it that President Jimmy Carter issued a clear warning: 'Recently (...) I have been concerned that the trend that was established about 15 years ago to get intelligence from electronic means might have been overemphasized.'<sup>1058</sup> Equally, the Soviet military leadership became fully dependent on Sigint when it came to early warning of a nuclear or conventional attack. This had very unpleasant consequences, as became apparent in the autumn of 1983. A serious nuclear crisis threatened then, as a result of misunderstandings: Soviet and Warsaw Pact ground stations interpreted a NATO exercise totally wrongly. On the basis of Sigint they thought that a surprise attack by US Pershing missiles was imminent.<sup>1059</sup> And in May 1998 a false interpretation of intercepts by the Sigint service of the Indian Army almost led to a nuclear confrontation between India and Pakistan.<sup>1060</sup>

This relates to the fifth disadvantage: blind faith in Sigint can lead to a sort of 'sigint snobbery'. During and after the Cold War ever greater importance was attached to Sigint. In particular the introduction of spy satellites and the U-2 spy plane led to a neglect of Humint. A sort of intelligence elitism arose, also known as the 'Green Door syndrome': the notion that only Sigint (and to a certain extent Imint) could still be trusted. Humint was then frequently dismissed as unreliable. The 'BrixMis' espionage missions in the GDR suffered from this, for example, because their mission reports sometimes diverged from the Sigint reports on the same subject. Then it was usually the Sigint that was believed, simply because reports from GCHQ were classified much higher ('secret' or 'Top Secret'), while the same intelligence in the BrixMis report was only classified as 'UK Confidential'.<sup>1061</sup>

Excessive faith in Sigint can also bring another risk, listed here as the sixth disadvantage: this intelligence product must often be viewed together with Humint and Imint. If Sigint is the sole intelligence product then it provides a sure foundation only in special cases. Sigint often provides only part of the puzzle and not the entire puzzle, as such intelligence is often fragmentary and indirect. This

<sup>1056</sup> Marian Wilkinson, 'Our Spies Knew Balibo Five at Risk', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13/07/00.

<sup>1057</sup> For the latter see: Roger Faligot, 'France, Sigint and the Cold War', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 177-208.

<sup>1058</sup> Godson (ed.), *Intelligence*, 1982, p. 118.

<sup>1059</sup> Gates, *From the Shadows*, pp. 270-273.

<sup>1060</sup> Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, 'Introduction on the importance of SIGINT in the Cold War', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>1061</sup> Geraghty, *BRIXMIS*, pp. 282-285.

also means that the intelligence of the NSA does not form a strong basis because it consists only of raw Sigint (a single source product) and not of 'finished intelligence' (an all source product). The responsibility for creating a finished intelligence product lies with the consumers of the raw material supplied by the NSA. Consequently, analysts within the US intelligence community must analyse hundreds or even thousands of Sigint items if they want to get a clear picture. A member of an American intelligence service stated with regard to this: 'You rarely get a Sigint smoking gun. It's usually very fragmentary (...) Very often you don't even know who you're listening to.'<sup>1062</sup> This confirms that neither Sigint provides all the answers; used alone, it is certainly not enough to expose the political plans or internal political machinations of a foreign government. For that matter, Imint and Humint are seldom able to do this either.

A seventh disadvantage is that although Sigint is fast, it can still sometimes arrive too late. During the Suez Crisis in 1956 and the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 there was enough Sigint available in the NSA for instance, but its processing, analysis and reporting proved to be too time-consuming. The Sigint first became available days after these two invasions. This relates to the eighth disadvantage, which is probably the most important one: the flow of information is enormous but the analysis capability is not sufficient. Powerful computers can carry out a rapid preselection and separate the wheat from the chaff, but it is the analyst who must ultimately decide if a message is valuable. In a time of crisis Sigint organizations are flooded with masses of intercepts. CIA analysts were not able to predict the war in the Middle East in 1973 because they had hundreds of Comint reports from the NSA on their desks and thus, to put it simply, were unable to see the wood for the trees.

Admiral McConnell, the director of the NSA in 1995, stated for instance that 'NSA's capability to intercept far exceeds its capability to decode, analyse and report. The good news is the agency can decode and analyse a million messages a day; the bad news is the agency must decide which million, of the billions of messages sent globally, to decode.'<sup>1063</sup> Around 1995 the NSA did indeed process about just one percent of the intercepts that reached its headquarters in Fort Meade: in the 1980s this figure had been twenty percent. It was typical for the relationship between incoming intercepts and outgoing intelligence that the current director of the NSA, General Hayden, had to admit that the NSA now produces *less* intelligence than it did ten years ago. The intelligence production of the NSA was also not helped by the fact – revealed by an internal study in early 1995 – that there was constant bureaucratic infighting between the military and civilian sections of the Operations Division of this organization. This brought a considerable delay in the flow of intelligence to other departments: in mid-1995 many consumers of the intelligence products of the NSA complained that the NSA was not meeting their needs.<sup>1064</sup>

A ninth disadvantage is formed by the inherent vulnerability of Comint. Signals are rendered secure, codes can suddenly be changed, the transmitters can frequency-hop (whereby the transmitter jumps between different frequencies in a pattern known only to the legitimate recipient). Burst transmissions can be conducted as well, in which enormous amounts of information are sent in a few seconds. A spread spectrum can be used, whereby the information for transmission is distributed over simultaneously transmitted frequencies. Another way for the 'eavesdropped' party to disrupt Comint is to intentionally disseminate false messages in the hope that these will be intercepted. Cryptography is another excellent method of protecting communications traffic. Millis described this as one of the major threats to the efforts of the NSA: according to him Sigint was in a crisis due to these factors and the world of communications traffic could no longer be called Sigint-friendly.<sup>1065</sup>

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<sup>1062</sup> Bob Drogin, 'Crash Jolts US e-Spy Agency', *Los Angeles Times*, 21/03/00.

<sup>1063</sup> Charles Smith, 'The information vacuum cleaner', *WorldNetDaily*, 09/04/00.

<sup>1064</sup> Matthew M. Aid, 'The Time of Troubles: The US NSA in the Twenty-First Century', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000), 3, pp. 17-20.

<sup>1065</sup> 'Address at the CIRA Luncheon, 5 October 1998; John Millis' speech, in: *CIRA Newsletter*, Vol. XXIII (1998/1999), 4, p. 4; E.A.O. Onderdelinden, 'sigint. What is this actually?', *Militaire Spectator* Vol. 170 (2001) 12, pp. 675-683.



All efforts can of course also be negated by espionage or betrayal. Soviet spies such as William Weisband, William H. Martin and Bernon F. Mitchell caused enormous damage to American attempts to acquire Comint. Mistakes by the American president can have the same effect. In 1969, for instance, President Richard M. Nixon revealed during a press conference that the NSA was able to read the communications traffic of the Soviet Union and North Korea. Following this statement Moscow and Pyongyang changed their cryptographic systems and the NSA was immediately rendered 'deaf'. The NSA needed months to repair the damage caused by Nixon's slip-up.

A tenth disadvantage is that Sigint, due to its limited distribution, can also be used for personal political ends. Henry Kissinger did this when he was national security advisor to Nixon: certain sensitive intercepts were not shared with the State Department and Pentagon.<sup>1066</sup> And in 1986 the NSA even refused to share Sigint about the Iran-Contra affair with the Minister of Defence, Casper Weinberger: the reasoning used was that the Pentagon did not have a 'need-to-know'.<sup>1067</sup> An eleventh advantage often cited is the lack of coordinated intelligence gathering activities. During the Cold War the various Sigint units of the three branches of the US Armed Forces and of the various intelligence services were often engaged in the same tasks. This led to an enormous multiplication of Comint. This even occurred after the Cold War, for instance during the hunt for the drugs king Pablo Escobar in 1992-1993. The NSA and Sigint units of the CIA and the Armed Forces all operated totally independently of each other, in an attempt to show that their staff and equipment were 'better' than those of the other organizations. In the Soviet Union too the KGB and GRU often worked separately, and this phenomenon was not confined to the superpowers. In Germany the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND) and Military Intelligence Service spent more than 20 years in a mutual struggle for authority over Sigint.<sup>1068</sup> In Chapter 3 it has already been noted that in the Netherlands too there were three separate military organizations for Sigint, and there was virtually no cooperation or serious effort to achieve integration. It was only in 1996 that these three services were merged to form one Signals Intelligence Department (AVI).

As twelfth factor, technical obstacles can also hinder Sigint. Such factors as atmospheric disturbance, static, poor reception and the occasional 'drop-out' of signals can prevent a good intercept. Built-up areas, or mountains and valleys too, can often make good long-distance interception impossible. Finally, serious disruptions can also be caused by industrial activities.<sup>1069</sup>

To summarize, Sigint is an important, safe, fast, permanently deployable, valuable, productive and highly reliable method of gathering intelligence in the form of Comint. It also has a number of disadvantages, however, the most important of which are the avalanche of intercepted information, the lack of sufficient analysis capacity, the limited possibilities for interception due to cryptographically protected signals via landlines, the nature of the topography and human habitation, and atmospheric conditions. Before considering which of these factors were important during the war in Bosnia, the focus first turns to the history of the most important Sigint organizations.

### 3. The most important western Signals Intelligence organizations

Sigint organizations do not need to be physically close to the land or region being monitored: this is possible from considerable distances, although the interception of specific types of communications traffic does require that monitoring posts be in the vicinity. If the region is very mountainous, then

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<sup>1066</sup> Hersh, *Price*, p. 207.

<sup>1067</sup> Weinberger did not know that this took place on the orders of the White House. See: Walsh, *Iran-Contra*, pp. 13 and 207 and Stephen Engelberg, '3 Agencies Said to Have Received Data About Iran Money Transfers', *The New York Times*, 27/11/86.

<sup>1068</sup> Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, 'The Bundesnachrichtendienst, the Bundeswehr and *Sigint* in the Cold War and After', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 129-176.

<sup>1069</sup> Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, 'Introduction on the importance of *SIGINT* in the Cold War', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 17-21.

communications traffic via walkie-talkies, radio telephones or VHF traffic, for instance, is hard to pick up. Turning to the Bosnian conflict, the question is which organizations monitored, or 'targeted', the various warring factions (especially the VRS and the ABiH). First of all we will look at the American National Security Agency (NSA).

### *The National Security Agency*

Since its creation in November 1952, the NSA has been responsible for the management and control of all activities relating to the gathering and processing of Sigint for the American federal government. With regard to the history of the NSA, an expert states: 'It is extremely difficult for an outsider to accurately evaluate the current importance of this agency to the US foreign intelligence effort. No agency of the US intelligence community has been able to better insulate itself from public scrutiny.'<sup>1070</sup>

In the year 2002 the NSA is the biggest intelligence service in the world. It is the primary gatherer and processor of Comint and Foreign Instrumentation Sigint (Fisint), and since 1958 has been the central coordinator for all Elint. The NSA produces only Sigint, and not finished intelligence reports based on analysis. This responsibility lies with the consumers of the NSA product within the American intelligence community. Furthermore the NSA is responsible for monitoring the security of the signals, the communications traffic and the data traffic of the American federal government. Within the NSA this is known as Information Security (Infosec). Since the mid-1980s the NSA has also been responsible for the Operations Security (Opsec) programme of the American government.

The most important customers of the NSA are the White House, the Pentagon, the Departments of State, Energy, Trade, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the CIA, DIA, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the leadership of the US Armed Forces, the three Military Intelligence Services and several foreign intelligence services with which the NSA cooperates. At the end of the 1960s more than 100,000 people worked for the NSA. At the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, some 75,000 American military personnel, civilians and temporary staff were engaged in Sigint operations in the United States and at bases overseas. Of these 75,000, more than 25,000 people worked at the headquarters in Fort Meade (Maryland).<sup>1071</sup>

The NSA is not the only agency engaged in Sigint, but it is at the top of a pyramid formed by three other Military intelligence services: the US Army Intelligence and Security Command, the Naval Security Group and the Air Intelligence Agency. The NSA also closely collaborates with the Sigint division of the CIA, the Office of Technical Collection,<sup>1072</sup> and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), which manages the US spy satellites.<sup>1073</sup> Since 1962 the United States has had special Sigint satellites such as Magnum, Orion and Jumpseat operating in space, as well as special Comint satellites such as Vortex and Intruder which have the job of 'hoovering up' Comint.<sup>1074</sup>

Right from the start the NSA took a strong interest in the conflict in Bosnia. The activities were increased further after Clinton had been sworn in as president in January 1993. In the same year the lack of translators and analysts who spoke Serbo-Croat proved to be a problem. The NSA thought it would encounter problems if Clinton decided to make a military contribution to UNPROFOR, and the NSA decided to place an advertisement in daily newspapers in order to recruit translators. On April 1993 this ad appeared in the *Commerce Business Daily*, announcing the need for 'a group of approximately

<sup>1070</sup> Matthew M. Aid, 'The Time of Troubles: The US NSA in the Twenty-First Century', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3, p. 2.

<sup>1071</sup> Matthew Aid, 'The National Security Agency and the Cold War', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 27-66 and CIA, *A Consumer's Guide to Intelligence*, September 1993, p. 17.

<sup>1072</sup> Richelson, *Wizards*, pp. 254-265.

<sup>1073</sup> Matthew M. Aid, 'The Time of Troubles: The US National Security Agency in the Twenty-First Century', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3, pp. 2-3.

<sup>1074</sup> Richelson, *Intelligence Community*, pp. 176-180.

125 linguists to provide translation and interpretation support for US forces in Yugoslavia'. According to the advertisement the work would take place in 'a hostile, harsh environment'.<sup>1075</sup>

From 1991 to 1995 NSA was interested in virtually all aspects of the conflict in Bosnia: diplomatic, military and economic. Much emphasis was placed on diplomatic Sigint, i.e. intercepting the communications of the Croatian, Bosnian Muslim, Bosnian Serb and Yugoslav governments about the conflict and related political issues, as well as the role of various outside governments in the conflict, such as the involvement of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards. This was generally referred to as 'strategic Sigint', much of which was very sensitive in nature. The organization is said, for instance, to have monitored telephone conversations that the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, conducted with the Croatian president Franjo Tudjman. At the same time, NSA (not the military) also collected massive amounts of Sigint about military developments in the region, much of it tactical in nature (such as Croatian Army battalion xx moving from place A to place B), using listening posts and mobile reconnaissance platforms. In addition to diplomatic and economic, NSA also monitored a wide range of other subjects, such as wire transfers coming in and out of the various former Yugoslav republics, illicit arms shipments, petroleum smuggling into the former Yugoslavia, terrorist activities, narcotics trafficking, etc. It is probably fair to say that by 1995, the former Yugoslavia was probably the single most important Sigint target for NSA, despite the fact that there were no American troops yet on the ground.<sup>1076</sup>

Due to the involvement of the US Air Force and Navy, the NSA also focused on the Serb air defence in Bosnia. The agency was interested in the military developments on the ground despite the fact that US Ground Forces were not stationed in Bosnia. The NSA supplied intelligence for Operation Deny Flight, in the form of Sigint from the military communications traffic and Elint from Serb air defence operations. This was fed into the Linked Operational Intelligence Center Europe (LOCE) system. The Americans were interested in the air defence systems of the (Bosnian) Serbs. US intelligence officials indicated, however, that it was not impossible that information on this subject that was passed on by the NSA to the Pentagon for further processing then became 'hung up' at the Pentagon.<sup>1077</sup>

#### *The deployed American aircraft and satellites*

Sigint satellites and aircraft formed the chief resource for 'hoovering up' the telephone, radio, digital and analogue computer data, fax and modem transmissions between computers and GSM traffic. A new generation was in use at this time: the Mercury (Advance Vortex) satellite which is supposedly able to intercept from space even very low-power radio transmissions, such as those from walkie-talkies.<sup>1078</sup> Moreover, between 1994 and 1997 three new Sigint satellites (Trumpet) were launched, intended for amongst others monitoring military targets. Because Trumpet used a special orbit, it could not hover over designated points on the Earth's surface as geosynchronous Sigint satellites do. These satellites copy primarily civilian traffic. Because of the unique dynamics of these special orbits, the system has no utility for monitoring civilian telecom nets because it passes too quickly over designated points over the Earth; but the system does have great utility against mobile military-type communications and Elint emitters in the northern hemisphere.<sup>1079</sup>

<sup>1075</sup> Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, p. 554. Strangely enough Bamford otherwise writes nothing at all about the Sigint operations in Bosnia.

<sup>1076</sup> E-mail message Matthew Aid to the author, 13/09/02 and confidential information (80). See also: 'Andreas Zumach Responds to Philips', in: *Covert Action Quarterly* (1995-96), 55 p. 59.

<sup>1077</sup> The head of the Balkan Sigint unit in Stuttgart at that time was Pat Donahue. Confidential interviews (6), (13) and (54).

<sup>1078</sup> The *Mercury* also has Electronic Intelligence and Fisint tasks. For the 'Mercury' see the FAS Space Policy Project: [www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org).

<sup>1079</sup> Matthew M. Aid, 'The Time of Troubles: The US NSA in the Twenty-First Century', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3, pp. 13-14 and E-mail Matthew Aid to the author, 13/10/02.

In fact the existence of Sigint satellites remained secret until 1996 until officially confirmed by the Director of the CIA of the day, John Deutch. This confirmation was long discussed within the US government. The State Department was mainly afraid of the impact this would have in certain countries. Despite the blacked-out sections in a State Department document<sup>1080</sup> it is clear that the main concern was countries hosting US ground stations responsible for receiving and processing Comint from Sigint satellites. The countries in question are the United Kingdom (Menwith Hill), Germany (Bad Aibling), Japan (Misawa Air Base) and Australia (Pine Gap). These stations are linked to the stations of the UKUSA partners: Morwenstow in the United Kingdom, Leitrim in Canada, Kojerena in Australia and Waihopai in New Zealand.<sup>1081</sup>

Nonetheless, many doubt whether there is still much point in equipping satellites for Sigint tasks. The late John Millis, former Staff Director for the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, believed that the possibilities provided by ground stations for Sigint were sufficient. In his opinion the next generation of satellites no longer needed to include Sigint in their package, with the possible exception of Elint.<sup>1082</sup> In addition to satellites, special manned and unmanned aircraft were also used to monitor the warring parties in Bosnia: RC-135 *Rivet Joint* Sigint aircraft from the 922<sup>nd</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron flew from RAF Mildenhall, and U-2R *Senior Span* reconnaissance aircraft from Fairford in Great Britain and in 1996 from Istres Le Tube in France. US Navy EP-3 Aries aircraft, stationed at Souda Bay Air Base on the Greek island of Crete, operated over the Adriatic Sea and were used to monitor the military activities of the Bosnian Serbs, Muslims and Croats. The gathered Sigint (chiefly Elint) was passed on to the NATO Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) in Vicenza in Italy, which coordinated air operations over Bosnia. The Special Handling and Evaluation Detachment (SHED), in which the NSA participated, received this intelligence in Vicenza.<sup>1083</sup> In Mildenhall were also linguists, analysts and other specialists stationed the 488<sup>th</sup> Intelligence Squadron of the US Air Intelligence Agency.<sup>1084</sup>

The first RC-135 *Rivet Joint* Sigint mission was flown over the Adriatic on 10 July 1992. As part of Operation Provide Promise, the UN's humanitarian air bridge to Sarajevo, the RC-135s flew more than 600 missions, monitoring Serb and Bosnian Serb air defence systems, military radio traffic and radar pulses. These aircraft also tracked the cargo planes that transported the aid to Sarajevo. These missions were continued during Operation Deny Flight, which once again monitored the air defence systems of the Yugoslavian Army and the Army of the Bosnian Serbs in the No Fly Zone. The RC-135s were also active in the air strikes on VRS positions during Operation Deliberate Force in 1995.

The RC-135 was not the only Sigint weapon. U-2R Senior Span reconnaissance aircraft also regularly flew over Bosnia. The aircraft are based at Beale Air Force Base in California, but these *Beale Bandits* later flew from Aviano Air Force Base in Italy and Istres in France.<sup>1085</sup> The intercepts from these U-2s were immediately passed on by satellite to a specially created unit, known as the Consolidated Remote Operating Facility, Airborne (CROFA) at the headquarters of the NSA. If an intercept is immediately passed on to a unit, this is known in the jargon as 'real-time intelligence'. The near-real-

<sup>1080</sup> American FOIA, Letter from Daniel Krutzer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, to Vice Admiral J. McConnell, Director NSA, 06/09/95. See: [www.gwu.edu](http://www.gwu.edu).

<sup>1081</sup> The NRO strongly advocated revealing the existence of Sigint satellites. DIRNSA, 'Fact of Overhead *SIGINT* Collection', January 4, 1996. For the release of information see State Department memorandum: <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB23/index2.html#13>.

<sup>1082</sup> 'Address at the CIRA Luncheon, 5 October 1998; John Millis' speech, in: *CIRA Newsletter*, Vol. XXIII (1998/1999) 4, p. 4.

<sup>1083</sup> Tim Ripley, 'Operation Deny Flight', *World Air Power Journal*, Vol. 16 (Spring 1994), pp. 19-20; Dylan Eklund, 'The Reconnaissance Squadron', *Air World International*, November 1995, p. 36 and Chris Pocock, 'U-2: The Second Generation', *World Air Power Journal*, Spring 1997, p. 94.

<sup>1084</sup> Deedee Doke, 'US to beef up long-term air intelligence in Balkans', *European Stars & Stripes*, 18/07/96.

<sup>1085</sup> Gert Kromhout, 'Op de grens van lucht en ruimte' (On the boundary of air and space), in: *De Vliegende Hollander* (1997) 3/97, pp. 13-15 and 'Overwerk voor de Dragon Lady' (Overtime for the Dragon Lady), in: *ARMEX*, 81 (1997) 3, pp. 22-25.

time intercepts involved here were processed and translated and then distributed as raw intelligence.<sup>1086</sup>

Aircraft of the US Navy were also involved in Sigint missions over Bosnia. By around the end of May 1997, the EP-3 Aries Sigint aircraft stationed at Souda Bay had flown more than 1100 Sigint missions against VJ and VRS targets since 4 July 1992, clocking up over 10,000 flying hours in the process. Smaller ES-3A Shadow aircraft, stationed on US aircraft carriers in the Adriatic, also flew thousands of hours over Bosnia. The first ES-3A missions were carried out over Bosnia from February 1994 onwards, from the aircraft carrier *USS Saratoga* in support of Operations Provide Promise and Deny Flight.<sup>1087</sup> A unit of ES-3A aircraft on the carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* also supplied Sigint support for the air strikes on Bosnian Serb targets.<sup>1088</sup> American submarines were also involved in Sigint operations. Teams of navy cryptologists, including Serbo-Croat translators, were on board the *USS Archerfish* and *USS City of Corpus Christi*, which operated in the Adriatic during 1991 and 1992. These American submarines chiefly monitored the military activities of the VRS during Operations Provide Promise and Sharp Guard.<sup>1089</sup>

### *The Canadian Signals intelligence service*

The Communications Security Establishment (CSE) is a part of the Department of National Defence. In April 1946 Prime Minister MacKenzie King agreed to the creation of a Sigint agency; in the same year all Sigint units of the three branches of the Armed Forces were merged into the Communications Branch of the National Research Council<sup>1090</sup> Canada became a member of the UKUSA intelligence alliance between the US, UK and Canada. In 1957 the Communications Branch stopped its cryptanalysis activities, meaning that Canada was 'demoted' to a simple supplier to the NSA and GCHQ. This step made the Communications Branch dependent on the NSA with regard to decoding, translation and processing of the Canadian Comint. In 1975 the Communications Branch of the National Research Council was given a new name: the Communications Security Establishment (CSE). Due to Canada's unique special relationship with the United States, the CSE had (and has) unlimited access to all Comint generated within the aforementioned UKUSA alliance. This special position exists because Canadian territory is absolutely essential for American defence against nuclear missile attacks by hostile powers: Sigint sites in the far north would be the first to pick up corresponding signals. This gave CSE unique access to the innermost secrets of the US intelligence community.

The CSE reports to the intelligence coordinator in the Privy Council Office and the intelligence cells at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, and the Department of National Defence. At the operational level Canada's Sigint monitoring stations are not manned by CSE personnel, but by specialist military personnel on detachment from the Canadian Forces Information Operations Group (CFIOG), who do however work under the command of the CSE. The CFIOG has about a thousand employees, mostly military Communications Research Operators, known internally as '291-ers'. They work at the Leitrim monitoring station, but also at highly isolated stations such as Alert, Gander and Masset. Until recently it was not known that a special CFIOG unit was stationed at Pleso (near Zagreb) during the war in Bosnia. This unit arrived at Pleso in March 1995, where a special Sigint unit was stationed; this unit, among other tasks, supplied information directly to the deputy Force

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<sup>1086</sup> Mark Harlfinger, USAF, 'C-ROFA Becomes Arsenal of IO', *Spokesman*, December 1997, p. 9.

<sup>1087</sup> Command History Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Six for CY 1994, Enclosure 1, p. 4; David A. Fulghum, 'Flexibility, Endurance Are Valued EP-3 Assets', *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 05/05/97, p. 52 and Lt. Col. Richard L. Sargent, 'Deliberate Force' in: Owen, *Deliberate Force*, pp. 8-15 - 8-16.

<sup>1088</sup> Command History Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron Six for CY 1995, Enclosure 1, p. 3 and 'Operation Deliberate Force', *World Air Power Journal*, Vol. 24 (Spring 1996), pp. 24 and 28.

<sup>1089</sup> 'Naval Security Group Sailors of the Year', in: *NCVA Cryptolog*, Summer 1997, p. 1.

<sup>1090</sup> Kevin O'Neill, *History of CBNRC* (1987) [Classified]. Parts of this internal history have been released under the Canadian Access to Information Act.

Commanders, the Canadian Generals Ray Crabbe and later Barry Ashton.<sup>1091</sup> There was a considerable overlap between the activities of the NSA and the Canadian unit in Pleso. Both services ensured a constant flow of Comint for the Canadian troops participating in UNPROFOR, who were stationed in Visoko and at other locations. This CFIOG also had a special, secure link to the intelligence staff at the Canadian Department of National Defence, thus giving them access in near-real-time to UKUSA Sigint.<sup>1092</sup>

### *The British Signals intelligence service*

The United Kingdom was also active in Bosnia in this field, through the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ). Compared with the two other British intelligence services, MI5 and MI6, much less has been published and much less is known about the GCHQ. A bibliography of the British intelligence and security services refers to hundreds of publications, of which only six relate to the GCHQ in the time following 1945. Nevertheless, this service, measured by the volume of produced intelligence, by the size of the annual budget and by the size of its staff, is the biggest service. In 1966 the GCHQ, and the organizations that gathered intelligence for the service, employed some 11,000 people: more than the combined strengths of MI6 and MI5. The service was also larger than the entire British diplomatic service, including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London and the overseas embassies and consulates.<sup>1093</sup>

Thanks to the participation in the UKUSA alliance, the GCHQ is said to have acquired a strong position in the United Kingdom. However, the GCHQ was rather overshadowed by the NSA. At the start of the 1950s, due to budgetary reasons and the 'shrinkage' of the British Empire, London was forced to reduce its activities in the field of Comint and cryptanalysis. GCHQ had to close monitoring stations and make staff redundant. As a result it became increasingly dependent on the NSA for financial support and technical equipment, such as receivers and fast computers.<sup>1094</sup> Two British authors issue a tough verdict on this period: from a 'post-Second World War partnership of equals' the relationship between the NSA and the GCHQ became a 'master-servant arrangement of convenience'.<sup>1095</sup>

GCHQ became used to this situation and was even able to gain an advantage from it. The attraction of US dollars and sophisticated technology was irresistible. Former GCHQ official Michael Herman wrote, for instance: 'For Britain and others, access to the United States' weight of resources, technology and expertise is an overwhelming attraction'.<sup>1096</sup> The relative decay of the strength and capacity of the GCHQ meant that over the years London gained more advantages from the relationship with the NSA than it contributed. This did however mean that the GCHQ seemed even more strongly 'married' to the NSA.<sup>1097</sup> The annual report of the British Parliamentary Intelligence and Security Committee thus stated, with regard to the intelligence of GCHQ, that 'the quality of the intelligence gathered clearly reflects the value of the close coordination under the UKUSA agreement'.<sup>1098</sup>

The fear of being marginalized in the UKUSA alliance, due to the shrinking significance, budgets and technical resources of the GCHQ, became a serious concern in London in the 1970s and 1980s. An internal memorandum of the GCHQ, the Strategic Direction Summary, came to the

<sup>1091</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1092</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (62) and (90).

<sup>1093</sup> For the early period of GCHQ see: Richard J. Aldrich, 'GCHQ and Sigint in the Early Cold War 1945-1970', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 67-96.

<sup>1094</sup> Richard Norton-Taylor, 'GCHQ's Service to US Crucial', *The Guardian*, 17/05/94.

<sup>1095</sup> Lanning & Norton-Taylor, *Conflict*, p. 33.

<sup>1096</sup> Herman, *Intelligence*, p. 204.

<sup>1097</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>1098</sup> CM 4897, *Intelligence and Security Committee*, Annual Report 1999-2000, 02/11/00. For this report see: <http://www.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm48/4897/4897-02.htm>.

conclusion that the contribution of GCHQ within the UKUSA alliance needed to be sufficient 'and of the right kind to make a continuation of the Signals Intelligence-alliance worthwhile to our partners'.<sup>1099</sup> Direct and hidden subsidies for the British Sigint efforts have certainly contributed to this. To give one example, British interception equipment was bought that was more expensive than comparable American equipment.

In 1992 MI6 and the GCHQ encountered problems as a result of the open British support for George Bush's presidential campaign. Clinton took exception to London's behaviour and this was initially felt in the field of intelligence too, when the British services were to some extent 'starved' by Washington. Anglo-American intelligence relations improved after Prime Minister Tony Blair took office in 1997, but nonetheless GCHQ became increasingly dependent on the NSA. As early as 1993, much of the Sigint processed by GCHQ was of US origin. In terms of finance, monitoring stations and secure transatlantic communications links as well, the British were more or less dependent on the NSA. The British could for instance make partial use of an US Sigint satellite and GCHQ staff were seconded to the NSA facility at Menwith Hill to share in tasking and operating the satellites. Early in 1995, during the war in the former Yugoslavia, GCHQ exercised its capability to change the orbit of one of the US satellite constellations to obtain better coverage of Bosnia, but 'the NSA could override GCHQ, even in tasking the craft'.<sup>1100</sup>

According to a senior US intelligence official this National Command override authority was never used, so far as he knew. According to this official it was a topic of a lot of policy discussion, and played far bigger than it ever really was. In this respect he remarked the following. 'Why would the US relinquish command authority over their own satellite when US vital National interests were at stake and under what circumstances would a vital US National interest not also be of crucial concern to the UK?' He knew of no circumstance when such an unusual conflict arose, much less require the implementation of the National Command override authority.<sup>1101</sup>

It was in this relationship of dependency for the GCHQ that the war in Bosnia started. GCHQ had traditionally been interested in Yugoslavia, and this did not change when that country fell apart. The British services soon realized that when it came to intelligence in the former Yugoslavia they could place no reliance at all on the UN or UNPROFOR. The Head of the UK Defence Intelligence Staff, Air Marshal John Walker, put it as follows:

'Intelligence is a dirty word in the United Nations. The UN is not a thing in itself; it's an amalgam of 183 sovereign nations. If it does intelligence, it will be doing it against a sovereign UN member, so it's incompatible. But you need a military intelligence job to protect your troops. If you don't, you pay for it in body bags'.<sup>1102</sup>

As the United Kingdom's political, military and humanitarian involvement in the events in Bosnia increased, the British services soon started to set up a wide range of intelligence units in the region. The most important task of these units remained the gathering of this intelligence for the British government, not for UNPROFOR.

#### *The British resources*

One British intelligence unit was stationed in Split, one at Bosnia Hercegovina Command (BHC) in Kiseljak in central Bosnia, and later one in Sarajevo itself. This growing involvement in the war also led

<sup>1099</sup> Richard Norton Taylor, 'GCHQ's Service to US 'Crucial'', *The Guardian*, 17/05/94.

<sup>1100</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes Alpha*, p. 300. The results were reportedly disappointing given the types of communications systems used by the Serbs, Croats and Bosnian Muslims. Also: Mark Urban, 'The Magnum Force', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 01/09/96.

<sup>1101</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1102</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 238-241.

to a greater use of intelligence resources. British warships in the Adriatic started gathering Sigint more actively and E-3 AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft of the Royal Air Force were increasingly deployed for Elint and Comint missions. Comint monitoring personnel of the 9th Signals Regiment of the British Army operated from Akrotiri Air Base on Cyprus.<sup>1103</sup> Britain's two sovereign bases areas (SBA's) in Cyprus cover 98 square miles (250 square kilometres), which is an area a quarter the size of Hong Kong, and are considered to have vital strategic interests as listening and military posts. The centres include the *Episkopi* garrison and RAF (Royal Air Force) Akrotiri, as well as a listening station at *Ayios Nikolaos*. Akrotiri is the largest RAF base outside Britain and an important staging post for military aircraft. It is also an essential element to Britain's global communications and surveillance network. The bases enable Britain to maintain a permanent military presence at a strategic point in the eastern Mediterranean and provide a training ground for its forces. About 3,000 UK-based military personnel train annually in Cyprus.<sup>1104</sup>

Probably the most important activity on the bases is the work of the electronic eavesdroppers listening to radio traffic in the Balkans and the Middle East. They are linked to Britain's GCHQ.<sup>1105</sup> The 399th Signals Unit of RAF Digby in the UK was also active in Bosnia, as were elements of the British army's only electronic warfare unit, the 14th Signals Regiment (EW) from RAF Brawdy in Wales. This section was active in Bosnia with a Sigint unit of fifty soldiers in Banja Luka in the British zone, and passed on Comint and Elint to the British army commanders in Bosnia. Nimrod aircraft of the RAF flew missions over the Adriatic from *Goai delle Colle* Air Base in Italy, while the frigates of the Royal Navy in the Adriatic were equipped with a Classic Outboard Sigint system to monitor VRS and VJ radio traffic.<sup>1106</sup>

In addition, GCHQ also received information from the Combined Group in Pullach, where it closely cooperated with the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*. While in Bosnia from April 1995 onwards members of the British Intelligence Corps worked together with other NATO member states in the Military Information Office in Zagreb (see Chapter 1). This body monitored the military situation but also gathered political, economic and humanitarian intelligence, although in the UN context reference could only be made to military information and not to intelligence. One British military officer within the MIS had the sole task of liaising with the commander of the British troops and with London. In addition some of the information gathered by the Joint Commission Observers (JCOs), who were also present in Srebrenica, was shared with the MIO.<sup>1107</sup>

### *The British working methods in Bosnia*

The British author Mark Urban makes an interesting remark concerning the gathering of Sigint which probably also illuminates the way that other countries deal with their intelligence:

‘Any channelling of Sigint or agent reports from the Government Communications Headquarters and MI6 to troops in Bosnia Hercegovina was constrained by the intelligence community's strict rules about dissemination’.

As already demonstrated in Section 2, this is a major disadvantage of Sigint. Due to this limitation much important and extremely interesting information fails to reach the troops on the ground, as even

<sup>1103</sup> Udo Ulfkotte, ‘Die Nato ist im Bilde, doch gibt sie nur wenig preis’ (*NATO is informed, but it is not letting on*), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10/04/99.

<sup>1104</sup> ‘British bases in Cyprus vital military staging point’, *AFP Report*, 27/12/01.

<sup>1105</sup> Colin Smith, ‘Cypriot rebel to continue fight on ‘satan masts’’, *The Sunday Times*, 08/07/01.

<sup>1106</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 216; *The Rose and the Laurel: Journal of the Intelligence Corps*, 1996, p. 43; *The Rose and the Laurel: Journal of the Intelligence Corps*, pp. 83-85; Major Robert L. McPeck, ‘Electronic Warfare British Style’, *Military Intelligence*, January - March 1996, p. 23 and Graig Covault, ‘Joint Stars Patrols Bosnia’, in: *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 19/02/96, p. 45.

<sup>1107</sup> Confidential information (39). Smith, *New Cloaks*, p. 210 talks about a Forces Military Information Unit in Zagreb but he probably confused this with MIO.



happened during the Gulf War, where the command structure was almost ideal. In Bosnia, Russian and Ukrainian troops also formed part of UNPROFOR and thus the chance was very small that London would pass on valuable intelligence. If intelligence was passed on, then this was ‘sanitized to the point of near-uselessness’.<sup>1108</sup>

The officer on the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) chiefly responsible for Bosnia was Captain Jonathan Cooke. He had an excellent perspective on the results of the Sigint. According to him MI6, the GCHQ and also the DIS had various teething troubles, and intelligence gathering only slowly got off the ground. GCHQ ‘had to start from scratch in Bosnia’ regarding the frequencies that needed to be monitored. At the outbreak of the war in the Balkans, the service apparently had only a few specialists in the field of Serbo-Croat who really spoke the language fluently. In fact everything had to be built up; Bosnia was actually *terra incognita* for the GCHQ.<sup>1109</sup>

It is remarkable, and actually hard to understand, that an area in which the United Kingdom had shown such interest in the past, especially during the Second World War and the Cold War, should suddenly be totally unknown territory for a service such as the GCHQ or SIS. The website of the GCHQ, for instance, did not actively advertise for Serbo-Croat linguists. On the other hand the NSA had initial problems with the availability of sufficient Serbo-Croat translators as well. According to Cooke another problem was that the flow of Comint and Humint to the Balkan Current Intelligence Group in Whitehall was often sufficient to give ministers good general briefings, but ‘the usual rules on the dissemination of sensitive reports further limited what was given to troops serving in-theatre’. British commanders in UNPROFOR noted this lack of intelligence and often had to fall back on Osint to get a better picture.<sup>1110</sup>

#### *The German Signals intelligence service*

In Germany the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (Federal Intelligence Service, BND) is responsible for gathering Sigint. This service, which reports to the Federal Chancellor, was set up on 1 April 1956. The forerunner to the BND, the *Organisation Gehlen* (Gehlen Organization) was based in Pullach near Munich and the BND was established there too.<sup>1111</sup> The main responsibility for all Sigint was given to the BND. The German Military Intelligence Service, the *Amt für Nachrichtenwesen der Bundeswehr* (Intelligence Office of the Federal Armed Forces) in Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, did have its own Sigint capabilities through its three Armed Forces, but intercepted messages were supplied directly to the BND for processing. It was not until 1978 that the *Amt für Nachrichtenwesen der Bundeswehr*, following considerable resistance from the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, was given its own military Sigint analysis and processing centre.<sup>1112</sup>

The *Amt für Nachrichtenwesen der Bundeswehr* remained however fully dependent on the material supplied for analysis, because the ultimate responsibility for selecting targets and for the analysis remained with the BND. The *Amt für Nachrichtenwesen der Bundeswehr*, with its 620 employees, was in this respect more a consumer of intelligence than a producer. Over all these years there was a continual struggle between the BND and the Ministry of Defence with regard to the authority over Sigint, and nowadays this struggle seems to have turned to the disadvantage of the BND. During the war in Yugoslavia the *Bundeswehr* (German Army) started its own Sigint operations (independently of the BND) by making use of its own tracking and monitoring stations in Germany.<sup>1113</sup>

<sup>1108</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 213-215.

<sup>1109</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 215-216. A senior British intelligence official confirmed this to the author: Confidential interview (79).

<sup>1110</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 217.

<sup>1111</sup> For the creation of the BND: Zolling & Höhne, *Pullach intern*, pp. 95-247. For the relationship between Gehlen and the CIA: Reese, *General Reinhard Gehlen*, passim.

<sup>1112</sup> Schmidt-Eenboom, *Schnüffler*, p. 236.

<sup>1113</sup> Erich Schmidt-Eenboom, ‘The Bundesnachrichtendienst, the Bundeswehr and Sigint in the Cold War’, in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 129-176.

According to press reports the BND operated from a monitoring station in the Austrian Alps. This station was originally manned by the Austrian Army, which used it to monitor signals in the former Yugoslavia. The *Bundesnachrichtendienst* is said to have been involved in setting up a joint intelligence centre of the BND, the CIA and the NSA in Augsburg (Germany). At this centre Sigint data from the NSA and BND was combined with Humint information gathered by both services in the former Yugoslavia. When the Bosnian crisis reached its climax in the summer of 1995, the BND flew daily Sigint missions with a Breguet Atlantique aircraft over the Adriatic. This aircraft had been active since 1992 and was chiefly directed at Serb military activities in Bosnia.<sup>1114</sup> Interviews by the author established that the BND was initially quite successful from 1993 onwards as regards Sigint operations against the VRS and VJ. However, the Bosnian Serbs soon found out and began to use different crypto and better equipment. The BND could no longer eavesdrop on the Bosnian Serb traffic. For this reason there was no Sigint available regarding the VRS attack on Srebrenica.<sup>1115</sup>

The war in Bosnia also brought the German Sigint services an alliance. In 1995 the NSA concluded the first tripartite airborne tactical Sigint exchange programme between the American, German and French Air Forces. As part of this agreement, the German *Luftwaffe* flew Sigint missions over the Adriatic in support of ground operations in Bosnia, while the French Air Force flew Sigint missions with the same goal over the Mediterranean. In addition, the American, German and French Air Forces agreed to share all the intelligence they gathered and to distribute it via the headquarters of the NSA/CSS Europe in Stuttgart.<sup>1116</sup> Another source of information for the Germans was the close cooperation with the French in Austria, where a joint French-German unit was active on the border to the former Yugoslavia. The German contribution was drawn from the 320th *Fernmelde Regiment* (Signals Regiment) and a joint monitoring station was maintained in the Austrian Alps to the North of Slovenia. This station was formally under the command of the Austrian Military Intelligence Service, but the Sigint was shared with the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* and probably with French services too.<sup>1117</sup>

### *The French Signals intelligence service*

In recent years more has become known about the activities of the French services responsible for intercepting diplomatic and military traffic.<sup>1118</sup> The French foreign intelligence service, the *Service de documentation extérieure et de contre-espionnage*, was set up on 28 December 1945. This contained two units responsible for Sigint: the *Service des matériels techniques*, better known as the *Service 26*, and the *Service 28*, responsible for intercepting and decoding foreign diplomatic coded cables sent by the foreign embassies in Paris. On 4 April 1982 this service was given a new name: the *Direction générale de la sécurité extérieure* (DGSE). Following the arrival of a new director for this service, in January 1988, its budget for Sigint was increased considerably. In the period 1970-1980 Sigint was mostly handled by this service. The French Military Intelligence Service was much less involved in this area.

The Foreign Intelligence Service and the Military Intelligence Service operated jointly in the Mediterranean with a spy ship, the *Berry*. The Sigint infrastructure of the intelligence service abroad was further expanded in the 1990s. In 1996 the number of employees totalled more than 2500, while new monitoring stations were built on the Plateau d'Albion in the Haute-Provence and in Saint-Laurent-de-Salanque on the border with Spain. To begin with the main task of these stations was to intercept communications traffic from African countries, but they were later directed towards Bosnia as well.

<sup>1114</sup> Bruce, 'Allies Hamper Inquiry', *The Glasgow Herald*, 01/12/95; Ian Bruce, 'Why These Men Remain Free', *The Glasgow Herald*, 09/05/97; Dierhart Goos, 'Marine-Offizier soll Kfor-Abteilung im Kosovo führen' (*Navy officer to lead KFOR section in Kosovo*), *Die Welt*, 13/05/00 and 'Report Details Luftwaffe Support for NATO', in: *FBIS-WEU-95-171*, 03/09/95.

<sup>1115</sup> Confidential interviews (98) and (99).

<sup>1116</sup> Biography, Lt. Col. Garry E. Sitze, USAF, undated. See: [http://jitic-emh.army.mil/iop\\_conf/bios/sitze.htm](http://jitic-emh.army.mil/iop_conf/bios/sitze.htm).

<sup>1117</sup> Confidential Interviews (21) and (45).

<sup>1118</sup> For the following brief history of French Sigint operations, see: Roger Faligot, 'France, Sigint and the Cold War', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 177-208 as well as information from the Intelligence Resource Program of the FAS. See: [www.fas.org](http://www.fas.org).

The Gulf War showed that there were ‘major gaps’ in the French monitoring network. This led to the dissolution of the Military Intelligence Service, which was replaced in 1992 by a larger service, the *Direction du Renseignement Militaire* (DRM). This service was to receive considerable Sigint capabilities, later strongly increased by the launch of the Helios spy satellite. The Sigint production was also increased by a new organization, the *Brigade de Renseignement et de Guerre Electronique*, which was set up on 1 September 1993. This latter service reported directly to the French Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and was chiefly active in Sarajevo and Bihac. The former Director of Operations of this service, General Jean Heinrich, became the Head of the *Direction du Renseignement Militaire*. He immediately started the recruitment of some 300 new intelligence specialists. In 1995 the DRM had some 1600 employees. The accumulated expertise and its extensive network were also directed at Bosnia.

#### *French resources*

The service had excellent Sigint resources at its disposal, such as DC-8 Sigint aircraft and ‘sarigue’ (*Système aéroporté de recueil d’informations de guerre électronique*), belonging to the 51st *Electronique ‘Aubrac’* (EE.51) Squadron, normally stationed at Evreux Air Base. This DC-8 flew countless Sigint missions over the Adriatic in support of French ground operations in Bosnia. In addition two Transall C-160 ‘Gabriel’ reconnaissance aircraft were in the air over Bosnia, originating from the 54th Electronics Squadron stationed at Metz-Frescaty Air Base in eastern France. The C-160 Gabriel can intercept communications traffic and radar emissions at a distance of 800 km. This aircraft and the DC-8s were used over Yugoslavia. Paris also had four AWACS aircraft at its disposal, as well as the Helios satellite which includes Sigint monitoring equipment and was built in great secrecy by the French company Matra.<sup>1119</sup> The *Direction du Renseignement Militaire* had kept this secret from its European partners and, by the same token, did not share this Sigint with them although they had made major financial contributions to Helios. Finally, French Mirage F1-CR reconnaissance aircraft also flew Elint missions over Bosnia.<sup>1120</sup>

#### *Other European countries*

Besides the United Kingdom, Germany and France, other European countries also conducted Sigint operations in the former Yugoslavia. To date almost nothing has been known about this. One known fact is that Italian monitoring stations were active during the war in Bosnia. To give one example, some time before the attack on the enclave the Italian monitoring service, via a monitoring station in Italy, intercepted a telephone conversation between the mayor of Srebrenica and President Izetbegovic. In this call the mayor requested permission to evacuate the population, but this was refused by Izetbegovic.<sup>1121</sup> In 1995 the Italian Military Intelligence Service, the *Servizio per le Informazioni e la Sicurezza Militare* (SISMI) operated a major satellite communications (Satcom) monitoring station in Cerveteri outside Rome. Ten parabolic antennas listened in to communications traffic in the Balkans, the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>1122</sup> It also seems that elements of the 8th *Battaglione Ricerca Elettronica ‘Tonale’* of the Italian Army were active in Bosnia.<sup>1123</sup> Furthermore, the Italian Navy probably had special trawlers for Sigint operations.

<sup>1119</sup> Guisnel, *Pires*, p. 156 and Lt. Col. R.L. Sargent, ‘Deliberate Force’, in: Owen, *Deliberate Force*, pp. 8-15 - 8-16.

<sup>1120</sup> ‘Les Avions-Espions Français Gabriel et Sarigue’ (The French spy planes Gabriel and Sarigue), *Air & Cosmos/Aviation International*, no. 1460, 21-27/02/94; ‘French Support Bosnian Elint Ops’, *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 14/08/95, p. 23 and ‘French and US MillInt’, *Intelligence Newsletter*, 07/12/95.

<sup>1121</sup> Confidential information (77).

<sup>1122</sup> Alberto Sisto & Francesco Sorti, ‘Echelon: Italia nel mirino’, *Il Mondo*, 10/04/98. See also:

<http://www.privacy.it/nigro20010619.html> and ‘L’Echelon segreta di casa nostra’, *La Repubblica*, 19/06/01.

<sup>1123</sup> ‘Abruzzo: Rischio smobilitazione per la stazione radar di Sant’ Antonio Abate’, *Il Messaggero*, 22/06/98.

The military intelligence services of the Scandinavian countries also monitored the communications traffic in Bosnia. The Netherlands military intelligence service discovered, for instance, that a Scandinavian intelligence service monitored the traffic between various military units of the Dutch signals battalion in Bosnia: this service had intercepted a conversation in which two soldiers had made highly derogatory remarks about their commander.<sup>1124</sup> The Danish military intelligence service managed to intercept telephone traffic between the Generals Rose and Mladic; these generals spoke to each other very regularly on the telephone.<sup>1125</sup> The Austrian military intelligence service was also very active in the field of Sigint; the Balkans had long been one of Austria's major centres of interest. For many years Austria had been a Third Party and had cooperated closely with the NSA. The Austrian monitoring stations on Mount Königswarte close to the Slovenian border, in Salzburg, Sankt Johann (Tyrol) and Mühlenviertel were the main stations aimed at the former Yugoslavia. The NSA is said to have played a major part in funding these stations.<sup>1126</sup> This also applied to the Greek, Turkish, Spanish, Swiss and Hungarian Sigint organizations, which were active in monitoring signals traffic in the Balkans. It is still not known what results they achieved.

#### *The Netherlands Signals intelligence service*

Hence, the question now to be asked is whether Dutch Sigint operations also targeted the warring factions in the Balkans. This was indeed the case: in 1995 there were three Dutch military units engaged in Sigint activities. These were the *Eerste Luchtmacht Verbindingsgroep* (First Air Force Signals Group), the *Verbindingsbataljon* (Signals Battalion) of the Netherlands Army and the *Technische Informatieverwerkingscentrum* (Technical Information Processing Centre) of the Netherlands Navy. In 1996 these three services were merged to create the *Afdeling Verbindingsinlichtingen* (Sigint Department) of the Military Intelligence Service. These events were examined in detail in Chapter 4. This account shows that many Western Sigint services were extremely interested in the developments in the military theatre of operations in Bosnia. This is not surprising in view of the involvement of European ground troops in UNPROFOR and the role of the US Air Force within NATO. Much energy was expended, but the key question to be examined in the rest of this chapter is what results were achieved. To this end we will examine whether the intercepted messages were also shared between the allies within UNPROFOR, and if analytic capability was also present; this is a crucial issue due to one of the major disadvantages of Sigint, namely its extreme confidentiality and problems regarding its dissemination.

## **4. The international exchange of Signals Intelligence**

As described above, the dissemination of intercepted signals is always accompanied by great secrecy. The exchange of Comint in particular is very limited; only a small circle of the highest political and military policymakers are given access to this. This secrecy is also important when it comes to sharing intelligence between the United States and its allies. The British Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, is reported to have resisted the release of intercepts made by the GCHQ which the NSA wanted to hand over to the Yugoslavia Tribunal in support of the prosecution of Slobodan Milosevic. This related to intercepts from Cyprus, and which supposedly showed the connection between Milosevic and the Serb atrocities in Bosnia. At the end of 1996 too the Clinton administration was prepared to release intercepts for this purpose, but once again the British government blocked the process.<sup>1127</sup>

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<sup>1124</sup> Interview with J.M.J. Bosch, 10/10/01.

<sup>1125</sup> Interview with H.A. Couzy, 04/10/01.

<sup>1126</sup> 'USA zahlten Horchposten' (USA paid for monitoring stations), *Magazin*, No. 16, 21/04/99.

<sup>1127</sup> D. Leigh & J. Calvert, 'Rifkind put paid to war crimes inquiry', *The Observer*, 18/05/97.

Despite this reservation there is a long history of Sigint cooperation between the Western intelligence services.<sup>1128</sup> The intensive collaboration in this field dates from the Second World War, when the United States and the United Kingdom collaborated closely to break the German and Japanese codes. This endeavour proved highly successful and the cooperation was formalized after the war had finished. On 5 March 1946 the British-United States Comint Agreement was signed, opening the way for cooperation in the field of Comint. In June 1948 this was superseded by the UKUSA Comint Agreement.<sup>1129</sup>

During the Cold War the relationship between the NSA and the other Sigint partners, such as GCHQ and CSE, gradually developed to the disadvantage of the non-American services. After UKUSA increasingly started to deliver more Sigint, on an almost industrial basis, the Sigint services had to work ever more efficiently to process the avalanche of intercepted signals. This was made possible by a new division of tasks, the use of US technology and better and faster computers. This was noticed in the rest of Europe, and the interest in joining this collaboration thus grew steadily. Various European countries, such as the Scandinavian states, had started giving priority to Sigint from 1950 onwards. Other countries invested chiefly in Humint. The *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, for instance, spent most of its budget on Humint at the expense of Sigint.

In April 1968 the famous founder and Head of the BND, Richard Gehlen, ended his tenure. This was followed by a shift from Humint to Sigint. The German Military Intelligence Service also drastically increased its investments in Sigint from the start of the 1970s onwards. The French Intelligence Service was another organization that initially showed little interest in Sigint. The Dutch situation was different: from 1945 onwards major investments were made in Sigint although there was constant dispute about the budget and which ministry should 'cough up' for it.<sup>1130</sup>

Declassified American government documents show that from the mid-1950s onwards the United States and the United Kingdom concluded a series of bilateral agreements with Norway, Austria, West Germany, Italy, Greece and Turkey. These countries are known as the Third Parties, and were ideally located gathering Sigint on the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact. The NSA exchanged not only intercepts with these countries, but also information regarding cryptography and cryptanalysis. Moreover, major investments were made to equip certain countries with the required antennas, monitoring equipment and computers. The Netherlands was not among the Third Parties.

However, according to some publications, there was a 'price tag' attached to this cooperation. The independence of the Third Parties, and also of the non-American UKUSA countries (Canada, Australia and New Zealand) decreased further with regard to Sigint, and their dependence on the NSA became ever greater. The NSA asked for and received practically all intercepts gathered by the UKUSA partners. A former Sigint analyst of the US Air Force expressed the lopsided relationship between the US and Third Party countries as follows: 'they received absolutely no material from us, while we get anything they have, although generally it's of pretty low quality.'<sup>1131</sup> However, this was an observation from 1972. Has much changed?

According to some authors, around 1985 the GCHQ was nothing more than an extension of the NSA. An internal GCHQ document stated the following, for instance: 'This may entail on occasion the applying of UK [Sigint] resources to the meeting of US requirements'.<sup>1132</sup> A senior US intelligence official added that this observation was true, 'as it should be between partners in a global intelligence effort'. In return, he observed that US resources were routinely committed to meet purely UK requirements. Classic example is the routine commitment of British HF intercept capabilities to meet

<sup>1128</sup> For this section much use has been made of: Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, 'Conclusions', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 314-332.

<sup>1129</sup> Andrew, *President's Eyes*, p. 163 and Hager, *Secret Power*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>1130</sup> Cees Wiebes, 'Dutch Sigint during the Cold War, 1945-1994', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 243-284.

<sup>1131</sup> 'US Electronic Espionage: A Memoir', *Ramparts*, August 1972, p. 45.

<sup>1132</sup> Richard Norton-Taylor, 'GCHQ's Service to US 'Crucial'', *The Guardian*, 17/05/94.

US requirements for open ocean HF intercept, particularly high speed burst data streams. Similarly, US Elint assets were committed to meet UK Elint requirements during conflicts such as the Falklands.<sup>1133</sup>

Indeed, the NSA could dictate in general terms which targets the UKUSA and Third Party allies should focus on. In these countries this was at the expense of certain targets that the governments were also interested in: the investment needed to monitor these targets independently was too great for them. Furthermore, most of the allies were dependent on the American computer-assisted analysis capability. Only the NSA was able to break and to translate the greatest number of, and hardest, codes. This relationship of dependence meant that the NSA could ultimately determine which decoded and analysed Sigint it was prepared to share with its allies. Limitations were even placed on the sharing of Comint with London. The reason given for this was that British personnel could be unmasked as KGB spies.

In those cases where this intelligence was shared, technical details such as frequency, date and time were first removed from the intercept. The compartmentalization (the strict separation of the activities of Americans and other personnel) at monitoring stations was taken to extremes. To give one example, British staff working at the US Sigint site at RAF Chicksands were explicitly forbidden to enter the so-called Joint Operations Centre Chicksands. This centre was manned exclusively by US personnel.<sup>1134</sup>

However, the NSA was not the only party to withhold intelligence: the GCHQ also kept some things to itself, such as decoded communications traffic contained in clandestine Soviet radio traffic between Moscow and the Soviet mission to Mao's Communist forces in Yenan. At a later date the British were prepared to hand over these intercepts.<sup>1135</sup> Third Party countries were often treated even worse by the United States. They were expected primarily to simply deliver Sigint, while they seldom got back decoded, translated and analysed intelligence products derived from this raw material: this was not considered desirable by the NSA or the CIA. The reason for this was usually American fears of leaks, or incorrect or uncontrolled use of the information.

This situation was often a cause for complaint, for instance by the West German, Norwegian, Danish and also Dutch governments, but it made little impression on the Americans. Staff of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, for instance, complained that they were treated by the NSA as a second-grade ally. At the joint American-German Sigint station in Augsburg, for example, German requests regarding certain targets were always put at the back of the queue: the American targets always took priority. The BND staff were also not allowed to enter certain parts of the monitoring station. British staff at the Anglo-American Teufelsberg monitoring station in Berlin experienced similar treatment. In September 1999, a tour of the station was conducted during a public, CIA-organized conference; some former British Sigint staff then discovered for the first time that this monitoring station contained rooms that they did not even know existed.<sup>1136</sup> However, this must have been fairly junior Brits because senior GCHQ staff helped to plan that station with the Americans and walked all over the place whenever they wanted.<sup>1137</sup>

The fear of leaks often prompted the NSA to break off contacts with other services. The collaboration with France was broken off in the 1960s, for instance, when it was discovered that the French Foreign Intelligence Service had been infiltrated by the KGB. It was only after ten years that the collaboration was resumed.<sup>1138</sup> The forerunner of the Dutch *Afdeling Verbindingsinlichtingen*, the *Technisch Informatie en Verwerkings Centrum* (TIIVC) (Technical Information and Processing Centre), also encountered regular rebuffs. It became clear that the love was felt on one side only, that of the Dutch.

<sup>1133</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1134</sup> Duncan Campbell, 'Over Here and Under Cover', *The Independent*, 06/10/93, p. 24.

<sup>1135</sup> Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, 'Conclusions', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, p. 322.

<sup>1136</sup> Various interviews during the conference on *The Intelligence War in Berlin, 1946-1961* at the Teufelsberg, Berlin, 10-12/09/99.

<sup>1137</sup> Confidential information (84).

<sup>1138</sup> Mangold, *Cold Warrior*, p. 134.

The NSA and CIA, as well as GCHQ, did not intend to institute extensive intelligence exchange with the Netherlands. In the year 2003 this matter has still not been arranged to the satisfaction of the Dutch.<sup>1139</sup>

The complaints from the Cold War were repeated in the 1990s: the NSA received much more Sigint from its European partners than it itself was prepared to share with them. One specific European complaint concerned the NSA's refusal to share high-level (the most secret and thus most valuable) Comint. This had been the case in the Cold War too. As early as 1951 the forerunner of the Dutch Sigint agency stopped the weekly transmission of intercepts of communications traffic from the Soviet embassy in The Hague, which were supplied to the CIA station attached to the American embassy in The Hague. The reason for this embargo was that the CIA refused to share its analysis of these intercepts with The Hague. So little has changed in this respect.

Third Party countries received the same treatment from America. A former Norwegian intelligence officer stated: 'Where it was not in the interest of the NSA that we should possess cryptographic insight, they did not have to share such matters with us.'<sup>1140</sup> A British analyst recently wrote the following: 'America's allies have long complained that it is particularly mean with its intelligence'.<sup>1141</sup> Staff of the UN verification mission in Iraq (UNSCOM) constantly complained that all their Sigint was supplied to the NSA, but that they seldom got to see the results.<sup>1142</sup>

The American refusal to share high-level Comint is based on a directive dating from the 1950s, which derived directly from the NSA. It is not clear whether this directive is still in force,<sup>1143</sup> but this is probably the case. The bilateral Sigint relations of the NSA with other countries were certainly continued into the 1990s. In the process, some partners received more intelligence than others; this was often determined by geopolitical and geographical considerations. Norway, for instance, always had a favoured position, but this was because the NSA was dependent on Norway for the information that was indispensable to the Americans: Norwegian monitoring stations provided Foreign Instrumentation Sigint on the Soviet launch base in Plesetsk and the testing base at *Nenoksa* on the White Sea.<sup>1144</sup>

Other Third Parties, such as Greece and Turkey, were involved less generously. The relations with these countries were regarded as a relic of the Cold War. European intelligence officers also suspected that the NSA sometimes played off these two countries against each other. The problem of dependence on the Americans still exists today. Some European countries tried to overcome this by collaborating more closely. France and the United Kingdom exchanged Sigint, for instance, even in the period following 1966 when Paris had left the military structure of NATO. Since the 1970s Paris and London have exchanged much Sigint relating to international terrorism. Another sign that European countries were trying to decrease their dependence on the Americans was seen during the Falklands War in 1982. The United States initially failed to help London, upon which the GCHQ received direct help from allies such as the Netherlands, France, Germany and Norway.<sup>1145</sup> Moreover, on French initiative the cooperation with the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* was increased through bilateral agreements. And since the end of the 1990s the cooperation between the Dutch, German and French monitoring services has been growing strongly. Together with Denmark and Belgium, a so-called 'Group of Five' is slowly taking shape, intended as a counterbalance to UKUSA.<sup>1146</sup> The irritation in Washington at this fact is clearly noticeable. It was revealed by the sudden decision to close the sizeable US monitoring station at Bad Aibling, Germany.<sup>1147</sup>

<sup>1139</sup> Confidential interview (21).

<sup>1140</sup> Riste, *Norwegian*, p. 95.

<sup>1141</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>1142</sup> Marian Wilkinson, 'Revealed: Our Spies in Iraq', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28/01/99.

<sup>1143</sup> Matthew Aid & Cees Wiebes, 'Conclusions', in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, p. 323.

<sup>1144</sup> Berdal, *The United States*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>1145</sup> Grant, *Intimate Relations*, p. 6.

<sup>1146</sup> Confidential interview (22).

<sup>1147</sup> Duncan Campbell, 'Fight over Euro-intelligence plans', *The Guardian*, 03/07/01.

Another way of retaining some independence from the NSA and GCHQ is not to admit these services onto one's sovereign territory. The Scandinavian countries, France, Belgium and the Netherlands have succeeded in this resolve to date. In the countries where US ground stations are located, this has been a constant source of diplomatic tension. Some Third Parties, such as Turkey, used the presence of these ground stations to make extra financial and material demands on the Americans; the NSA responded to this by gradually closing its ground stations there.

In fact, the history of the Cold War shows that when it comes to Sigint no intelligence service is really the friend of another service; instead, there are only intelligence services of countries that are friends with each other. In the world of Sigint all NATO and EU member states spy on each other. The forerunners of the NSA and GCHQ started this during World War II, and have never stopped doing it since 1945. These services and the Canadian CSE still read the coded telegrams of the larger and smaller NATO and EU members states, including those of the Netherlands. The Dutch diplomatic code was broken back in 1943, and in the 1960s Dutch diplomatic coded cables were still being read by the NSA. In the 1950s, as appears from an internal newsletter, Dutch was one of the languages taught in the translation training; this was still the case in 2001.<sup>1148</sup> In 2000 the GCHQ openly advertised on its website for analysts who spoke Dutch. The CSE in Ottawa is also able, thanks to the collaboration in the UKUSA alliance, to read secret Dutch code telegrams. Inside the Netherlands intelligence community, it is known that this country is high on the list of targets of the biggest NSA base in the United Kingdom, Menwith Hill. Every hour this station scans more than 2 million domestic and foreign telephone calls.<sup>1149</sup> The above account shows that the international exchange of Sigint has not always been a smooth affair. In particular the exchange of high-level Comint has often proved to be problematic, as such intelligence gives direct insights into the capabilities of the monitoring service in question.

#### *Exchange between monitoring services with regard to Bosnia*

The previous sections have indicated that political differences are sometimes an inhibiting factor in the exchange of Sigint. It can thus be assumed, for instance, that in view of the tense relations between Greece (pro-Serbia) and Turkey (pro-Bosnia) little intelligence was exchanged between these countries. It was less difficult to exchange military-tactical Sigint and Elint. Such intelligence was generally released easily. During the conflict in Bosnia much Elint was exchanged between the NATO allies between 1992 and 1995. This intelligence was channelled to the Linked Intelligence Operations Centre Europe (LOCE) network of the American Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth (see Chapter 3). This joint system handled mostly Elint, as is indicated by the daily intelligence summaries of the JAC. This related chiefly to emissions from hostile radar stations and other air defence systems. Tactical military Comint was also contained in this LOCE system, with the main focus on lower-level communications traffic. But there is no trace in LOCE of the 'better' high-level Comint, such as conversations between Milosevic and Mladic: assuming these were intercepted.<sup>1150</sup>

The question to be asked now is why the information in this LOCE network was so limited and contained so little Comint. To begin with one should consider the highly limited distribution of this intelligence product. High-level Comint was indeed available to the Americans, but it was not shared. There were further problems at the NSA, however. Between 1990 and 1998 almost 7000 employees left the organization, which strongly reduced the processing capacity. This personnel problem, together with the strong growth in international communications traffic, better encryption, increased use of fibre-optic cables and communications satellites such as Intelsat and Inmarsat, meant that the NSA was gradually 'going deaf'. Interception no longer seemed a problem, but processing certainly was. The capabilities of the NSA and its UKUSA partners are certainly impressive: around 1995 more than 90

<sup>1148</sup> Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, pp. 134 and 616.

<sup>1149</sup> Udo Ulfkotte, 'Die Nato ist im bilde, doch gibt sie nur wenig preis', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10/04/99.

<sup>1150</sup> Confidential interviews (31) and (32).



million messages, sent via Intelsat and Inmarsat communications satellites, were intercepted each month. The technical structure was strongly upgraded from 1994 onwards. The problem was that the NSA ‘was buying all these new toys, but they don’t have the people to use them’, according to an intelligence expert.<sup>1151</sup> The inevitable happened: the NSA found itself unable to process the enormous flow of intercepts.<sup>1152</sup>

The greatest problem for the agency proved to be ‘the continuing decline of its Sigint processing, analysis and reporting infrastructure’. There was a major lack of trained personnel as a result of early resignations and departures for the private sector. Around 1995 the service was in serious trouble, because there was no money available to recruit new and competent personnel. The NSA encountered ‘a particularly severe problem with the size, age, skills and make-up of its workforce’. Internal problems probably also created further obstacles to the ‘free flow of intelligence information to the Agency’s customers’. Indeed, the internal communications systems within the NSA proved to be questionable.<sup>1153</sup> Moreover, the NSA is said to have had a poor relationship with the Pentagon, which often complained about the NSA’s unwillingness to share Sigint for fear of compromising the source.<sup>1154</sup> Pentagon staff openly complained that the NSA was often unwilling to part with the military Sigint that they needed to carry out their tasks. One Pentagon employee even said that staff of the NSA ‘are still fighting the Cold War and are more worried about maintaining security than improving tactical warfighting capabilities’.<sup>1155</sup> In short, besides the inherent objection to sharing high-level Comint, insufficient analysis capabilities and internal bureaucratic struggles proved a further hindrance to the exchange of Sigint.

The initial lack of US Comint capabilities was also revealed by the creation of an intelligence unit at the Southern European NATO Command at Naples (AFSOUTH), known as the Deployed Shed Facility (DSF). The chief American reason for participating in this intelligence unit was that the NSA had major gaps in its Sigint in Bosnia.<sup>1156</sup> The NSA did not have the personnel capacity to man this unit on a 24-hour basis, so other countries were asked to help out; reportedly the Netherlands Military Intelligence Service (MIS) also had to contribute to this multinational unit.<sup>1157</sup> The proposal was supported by NATO, but before the Head of the MIS, Piet Duijn, was prepared to agree to this he first wanted to know the view of Defence Minister, Relus ter Beek, who immediately agreed to participation.<sup>1158</sup>

In the course of time the US services became prepared to share more Sigint. The U-2 reconnaissance aircraft were also able to supply valuable Sigint. The US services wanted to contribute this to the multinational gathering and processing unit in Vicenza, which was to work closely with the new DSF. In administrative terms this cell would report to NATO; the MIS supplied personnel for this unit too.<sup>1159</sup> Apart from the LOCE system, and within the DSF, the NATO member states also mutually exchanged Sigint on Bosnia. This took place (and takes place) traditionally on a bilateral basis. There was also a regular exchange between NATO member states and non-alliance countries such as Austria and Finland, and also with neutral states such as Switzerland and Sweden.

<sup>1151</sup> Confidential interview (62).

<sup>1152</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, ‘The Intelligence Gap: How the Digital Age Left Our Spies Out in the Cold’, *The New Yorker*, 06/12/99, p. 58 ff.

<sup>1153</sup> See: Matthew M. Aid, ‘The Time of Troubles: The US NSA in the Twenty-First Century’, in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3, pp. 1-32.

<sup>1154</sup> Matthew M. Aid, ‘The Time of Troubles: The US NSA in the Twenty-First Century’, in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3, pp. 17-20.

<sup>1155</sup> David Fulgrum, ‘Compute Combat Rules Frustrate the Pentagon’, *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 15/09/97, p. 68.

<sup>1156</sup> Confidential interview (22).

<sup>1157</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO. No. 14312*, Report of Directing Council, no. DIS/93/157/1645, 23/04/93.

<sup>1158</sup> MoD, *DS. no. 335*, Memorandum from Commodore P.J. Duijn, no. DIS/93/214/1474, 28/04/93 and Memorandum from Commander J. Waltmann to the Minister, no. SN93/938/2918, 12/05/93.

<sup>1159</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO. HMID Kok* to the Minister of Defence, no. DIS/95/50.1/1366, 09/06/1995.

The Americans also profited from intelligence from NATO member states through the back door. At that time the US General Hayden received Sigint as Director Intelligence of the US European Command (EUCOM), an American national command outside the NATO lines of communication. In this capacity he was supported by a team of 60 Sigint experts from the NSA, that operated from Stuttgart, and from the Regional Sigint Operations Center at the US base Fort Gordon, which had the special task of providing Sigint support for this US EUCOM. This enabled the Americans to combine their own information from intercepts with the information gathered for them by NATO member states. An American intelligence officer stated with regard to this: 'if the NSA knew, Stuttgart would know'.<sup>1160</sup> All things considered, the Americans had considerable information available to them from Sigint, but the exchange with other countries was limited. The next question is whether this also applied to the Sigint shared with the UNPROFOR staffs in Sarajevo and Zagreb. This seems indeed to be the case: the American and other Sigint agencies shared some intelligence with UNPROFOR.

In 1995 the Head of the intelligence staff in Zagreb was the Swedish officer Colonel Jan-Inge Svensson. He was assisted by his compatriot Lieutenant Colonel Ingmar Ljunggren, while the deputy intelligence officer was an American from the US Navy, Commander Morgan. The Swedes had national intelligence input at their disposal, and were also supplied with intelligence by the Americans, French and British. The French and British intelligence was rated as 'good'. One should bear in mind here that Sweden was not an 'official' member of NATO. Sometimes Svensson and Ljunggren received both tactical and strategic Sigint, such as fragments of telephone calls between Generals Mladic and Perisic. Briefings were also held on the basis of Sigint. However, they also rated Humint as an important source.<sup>1161</sup>

Another UNPROFOR staff member confirmed that the intelligence staff in Zagreb sometimes received tactical military Sigint. These intercepts were also occasionally translated into French for Janvier, partly so that the interpreter did not then have to translate the English text out loud and thus to prevent the Croatian intelligence service from eavesdropping on this.<sup>1162</sup> The fact that Janvier had this information has already been dealt with in Chapter 1.

Some members of the intelligence staff in Zagreb also had access to valuable Sigint relating to Bihac. This was obtained through the LOCE system and national channels. In addition, intelligence officers in Zagreb often monitored the communications traffic between local commanders and Sarajevo, and they are even said to have monitored the regular telephone calls between their commanders in Zagreb and Sarajevo.<sup>1163</sup> Members of the UNMO intelligence staff in Zagreb confirmed that they too had Sigint at their disposal. This is said to have originated from monitoring stations near Naples. During a critical situation in Bihac in November 1994 the UNMO officers working there at the time received copies of intercepts of communication between the Commander in Chief of the ABiH, Rasim Delic, and the ABiH General Dudakovic.

#### *What Sigint was exchanged regarding the attack on Srebrenica?*

In 1995 too, foreign monitoring services managed to intercept the communications traffic of the ABiH Commander in Chief Rasim Delic. An interviewed UNMO officer therefore wondered: 'Why didn't we receive this sort of information regarding the fall of Srebrenica?'<sup>1164</sup> The probable reason for this was that this Comint did not in fact exist, because the various Western services did not have good Sigint coverage of Eastern Bosnia and thus were not able to monitor this area intensively.

There are further indications that there was no Sigint that directly indicated that the attack on Srebrenica was imminent. A few days before the attack the Deputy Head of the intelligence section in

<sup>1160</sup> The head of the Balkan Sigint unit in Stuttgart at that time was Pat Donahue. Confidential interviews (6), (13) and (54).

<sup>1161</sup> Interviews with Jan-Inge Svensson and Ingmar Ljunggren, 04/11/99.

<sup>1162</sup> Confidential information (35).

<sup>1163</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>1164</sup> Confidential interview (44).

Zagreb, Morgan, – Svensson was on holiday in Sweden – arranged a briefing for Akashi. Morgan told him that the Croatian attack in the Krajina was imminent. Reliable intelligence had been received on this, partly on the basis of Comint. Morgan reported nothing about Srebrenica; he had access to almost all US Sigint, and would certainly have mentioned that attack if he had seen any cause to do so. The British intelligence unit in Sarajevo did not have any knowledge of the true intentions of the VRS either. The regular consultations between the intelligence sections in Zagreb and Sarajevo reveals that BHC was also unaware that the VRS intended to take over more than the southern tip of the enclave.<sup>1165</sup>

A former US intelligence officer who could follow the flow of intelligence to the intelligence section in Zagreb stated that Comint is one of the most difficult forms of intelligence. An analyst needs to weigh up, translate and analyse all intercepts and compare them with other forms of intelligence such as Humint. Nonetheless, Sigint was the best way of determining where the parties were located, or wanted people to think they were located. This officer also pointed out that unfortunately there were no monitoring stations in Eastern Bosnia. In his opinion this could have provided valuable Comint, since the links between Belgrade, Pale and the VRS headquarters in Han Pijesak traversed this area.

This US official was flooded with Sigint on a daily basis, but according to him this was mostly tactical military data and policy information; none of it had any reference to Srebrenica. He did however confirm that Morgan, the intelligence officer in Zagreb, shared this information as much as possible with the generals Janvier and Ashton. This was indeed the aim of the American presence in the Zagreb intelligence section. He was sure that there was no Sigint available with regard to the attack on Srebrenica.<sup>1166</sup> A foreign intelligence evaluation also concluded that at the tactical level Sigint provided little information about the activities of the warring factions below the corps level.<sup>1167</sup>

#### *Exchange of Signals Intelligence elsewhere in Bosnia*

Comint was also supplied to the intelligence staff of the UNPROFOR Commander Smith in Sarajevo. As a British officer he received mostly intercepts from GCHQ, but this consisted mostly of tactical military messages from the warring factions. Smith's staff in Sarajevo is not reported to have received any high-level Comint (such as conversations between Mladic and the Chief of Staff of the Yugoslav army, Perisic), but instead only tactical military traffic. According to British sources the GCHQ had major problems intercepting this communications traffic because the VRS and the ABiH almost always used secure land lines or Motorola walkie-talkies. The GCHQ sometimes managed to intercept the communications traffic between Mladic's headquarters in Han Pijesak and the various communications towers. The intercept site at Gornji Vakuf was the primary station to achieve this.<sup>1168</sup>

On one other occasion valuable intercepts were managed. It was probably this same monitoring station that was responsible for intercepting a conversation between an ABiH and a VRS commander at the end of 1993. At this time heavy fighting was taking place around Mostar between Bosnian Croats and Muslims. The ABiH, it seems, wanted to buy artillery shells from the VRS and to pay for these in German marks. After an agreement had been reached on the quantity and the means of transport – by truck – the ABiH commander decided on another approach: he asked whether the VRS would be willing to shell the Croat positions themselves. The VRS commander agreed to do this for an extra charge. When Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg told Milosevic about this, he was furious. Karadzic, who was also present, confirmed that this had happened and promised that it would not happen again.<sup>1169</sup>

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<sup>1165</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>1166</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1167</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>1168</sup> Confidential interview (43).

<sup>1169</sup> Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, pp. 384-385.

Smith's staff also received intelligence from the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS). The Bosnia Cell in this service was also very nationally oriented, and chiefly had access to intelligence gathered by British and US services. This unit supplied mostly strategic intelligence to the Ministry of Defence. The Bosnia Cell supplied almost no tactical intelligence. Much material from the DIS did go to General Smith, however, via a specially created secure communications system of the British Army. The contact person for this service on General Smith's staff was his military assistant, Lieutenant Colonel Baxter.<sup>1170</sup> In addition to his own intelligence cell, Smith also received intelligence from the British 'Black Box' intelligence cell in Sarajevo, according to a foreign intelligence officer.<sup>1171</sup>

International negotiators, such as Lord Owen and Carl Bildt, also sometimes received Comint to support their work. Asked whether he received intelligence, Bildt answered that formally he did not, but informally he did. He did not wish to say much about this, but did admit that he also received Comint when he asked for it. He had noticed that the raw data in the reports from the various organizations was often the same as the intelligence resulting from it. This implied that he received his intelligence from his own Swedish Intelligence Service and from the Americans. According to Bildt, however, this intelligence did not constitute an important factor: moreover, it related to military affairs and this was of no use to him when he had to deal with international organizations. According to him, the Americans were usually busy counting tanks, and that was not relevant for a politician. Bildt cited BBC radio as a particularly important source of information for him. The information he received from their broadcasts was, in his opinion, faster and often more relevant than the analysed and processed Sigint reports.<sup>1172</sup>

In short, the basic Sigint situation was far from ideal. Nevertheless, it was in this situation that joint cooperation and mutual exchange on Bosnia needed to take place. It was a difficult affair, because the war in Bosnia led to divisions between the European countries and also put pressure on the relationship between the United States and the NATO member states. The political ideas about a possible solution to the armed conflict were disparate, and this was reflected in the way that Sigint was (or was not) shared.

## 5. The results of Signals Intelligence in Bosnia

In view of the extreme secrecy surrounding Sigint and the very limited distribution, in particular of Comint (often only on a need-to-know basis), it is not surprising that little is known about the results of the use of Sigint in the former Yugoslavia. Governments have never released any information about possible results achieved through Comint. Moreover, such material has never been declassified on the basis of the US Freedom of Information Act or any other similar act.

Nonetheless, disclosures have occasionally been made in recent years. These were mostly by journalists and other authors, who have found out more about the successes and failures of Sigint during the war in the former Yugoslavia through interviews and off-the-record media briefings with members of the western intelligence community. This section aims to sketch the achieved results, successes and failures, based on these publications and the author's own research. When describing targets for Comint and Elint, a distinction will be drawn between the following categories: diplomatic traffic and military communications traffic of the warring factions (military targets), such as the 'old' Yugoslav Army (the VJ) in Serbia, the VRS in the Republika Srpska, and the ABiH in Bosnia, in that order. This is followed by an examination of the Elint targets in and around Bosnia, and finally UNPROFOR as target.<sup>1173</sup>

<sup>1170</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>1171</sup> Confidential interview (9). It was not possible to confirm this through other interviews.

<sup>1172</sup> Interviews with Lord Owen, 27/06/01 and Carl Bildt, 13/12/00.

<sup>1173</sup> The Croat Sigint operations are not considered because Croatia had probably nothing to do with the attack on the eastern enclaves.

### *Monitoring targets in Serbia*

Officials of the international intelligence community, who are mostly quoted anonymously in publications, believe that the NSA certainly gathered Comint from Serbian and Bosnian Serb government communications links. Intensive monitoring of the microwave telephone network of the Yugoslav government, by means of satellites, special aircraft and other interception methods, reportedly enabled the NSA to intercept telephone calls between Milosevic in Belgrade and the Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic in Pale. According to officials of the US intelligence community, these intercepts clearly showed that Milosevic gave considerable political and military support to the military operations of the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>1174</sup> Milosevic is reported to have been informed of the attack on Srebrenica (see also Chapter 8).<sup>1175</sup> Intercept reports showed that Milosevic was equally aware of, and also agreed to, the programme of ethnic cleansing as conducted by the Bosnian Serb government. This material is said to be so incriminating that long before his arraignment by the Yugoslavia Tribunal, in July 2001, the authorities had been considering the prosecution of Milosevic. The US government decided however to keep the peace process alive, and thus to continue to make use of the services of Milosevic, because he was seen as the most important political personality in the Balkans.<sup>1176</sup> The trial of Milosevic will need to show whether these claims are correct.

The existence of these intercepts was confirmed by a western diplomat. During a meeting at the White House between Gore and Bildt, the Swedish negotiator tried to convince the US vice-president that he should not form an excessively black-and-white image of President Milosevic. Gore responded to these statements by reading from US intercepts, which showed that Milosevic had consulted with Mladic about the attack on Srebrenica. Gore then reportedly said to Bildt: 'Forget about this. Milosevic is absolutely not the friend of the West.'<sup>1177</sup> However, it should be noted that Bildt has no recollection that this happened.<sup>1178</sup>

US intelligence officials claimed, however, that in fact there are no intercepts, which might indicate a possible involvement by Milosevic in the war crimes around Srebrenica. 'After all, he's not an idiot', commented one CIA officer. According to this official, the microwave traffic was indeed monitored, but this resulted mostly in tactical military intelligence, gathered by the 'vacuum cleaner' method. The down side of this method has already been mentioned: due to the enormous quantity of intercepts much important material was missed by the Serbo-Croat translators. A Vortex satellite, for instance, intercepted 22,000 telephone calls a day. As a result, the Americans gained most of their strategic intelligence not from satellites, but mostly from taps on hardware.<sup>1179</sup>

A former French intelligence official confirms that Milosevic had no prior knowledge of the attack on Srebrenica. Asked whether the French Military Intelligence Service (DRM) had intercepts of conversations that Mladic and Karadzic conducted with Belgrade (Milosevic or the Chief of Staff of the VJ, Perisic), or whether this service had any indications about what Mladic was planning, the former Head of this service, General Heinrich, answered negatively. The reason he gave for this was that Mladic and Karadzic did not trust other people. Heinrich claimed that Mladic mostly communicated with Belgrade via an underground fibre-optic cable. He said that the Americans had employed many secret methods, but ultimately failed to intercept this communications traffic regularly. When they did

<sup>1174</sup> 'Washington gaf tribunaal bewijs over oorlogsmisdaden Milosevic' (Washington provided tribunal with proof of war crimes by Milosevic), *De Volkskrant*, 29/05/99.

<sup>1175</sup> According to the Bosnian Serb politician Rajko Dukic, Milosevic reacted with great surprise to the attack. Interview with Rajko Dukic, 14/06/00.

<sup>1176</sup> Karsten Prager, 'Message from Serbia', *Time*, 17/07/95 and Tim Sebastian, 'The Secret Deal: Why Justice Won't Be Done', *The Sunday Times*, 25/02/96. See also: Ian Bruce, 'Allies hamper inquiry', *The Glasgow Herald*, 01/12/95.

<sup>1177</sup> Confidential interview (53).

<sup>1178</sup> Confidential interview (101).

<sup>1179</sup> Confidential interviews (12) and (13).

finally manage to do this – thanks to the DRM and by means that Heinrich did not wish to describe in detail – the Dayton Accord had already been signed.<sup>1180</sup>

In view of the long animosity between the Americans and the French, it is however doubtful whether the US services showed all their cards to the French. Various Canadian intelligence officials stated, according to the German author Udo Ulfkotte, that the NSA did in fact monitor many high-level conversations. Ottawa was ideally situated in this respect, because through participation in the UKUSA alliance the Canadians had access to American and British Comint and to material from Third-Party countries. According to Canadian officers the NSA was able to intercept, break and read the coded military traffic of the Bosnian Muslims, the Serbs and the Bosnian Serbs. The Serbs and the Bosnian Serbs tried to prevent this with the use of electronic warfare equipment, but this usually made no difference. The code was often broken within about 15 minutes. Most other communications via telephone, fax, telex and e-mail were monitored too. The NSA reportedly also received many intercepts from the Austrian Military Intelligence Service (HNA) and for a long time the GCHQ was able to locate and monitor Karadzic by his mobile phone.<sup>1181</sup> This last claim may be doubted, however, because at that time there was no extensive GSM network in place in the Republika Srpska. It could only have been his satellite phone, which indeed could be intercepted for satellites as was done, for example, in the case of tracking Osama Bin Laden.<sup>1182</sup>

Since 1994 a special Bosnia Group had been operating at the NSA. A ‘four-hour turnaround time’ was applied for Sigint from Bosnia and Serbia: following interception a signal was translated, processed and analysed and within four hours was on the desk of the intelligence customer, such as the CIA or the State Department. According to an American intelligence official, in this period this NSA team carried out one of the best operations in its history.<sup>1183</sup> Canadian and US officials drew however attention to the problem already mentioned earlier: the issue of how the flow of communications traffic should be processed. A Canadian analyst cited the example that the NSA was able to search for the work ‘tank’ in the intercepted signals; the problem was that this could also turn out to be a Serb who spent an hour complaining on the phone about the leaking petrol tank of his truck.<sup>1184</sup> Besides all these factors, one should also consider that the interception of diplomatic communications before the fall of Srebrenica was of very limited value: the attack was a purely military operation. It was not to be expected that relevant military signals regarding the eastern enclaves would be exchanged through diplomatic channels. Only the traffic between Pale and Belgrade could have contained such information. This is why the NSA mostly focussed on military communications traffic during the Bosnian conflict.

Messages to and from units of the Yugoslavian Army was sometimes relatively easy to intercept as these units often used conventional radio equipment. The intercepts were supposedly revealing. It appeared that the VJ was closely involved in the war and handled almost all tasks for the VRS in the field of ‘command, control and communications’. Moreover, Belgrade reportedly ensured the operational status of the VRS air defence and early warning systems and is said to have provided military experts to do this work. The NSA and CIA are also reported to have discovered the coaxial cable system that linked Belgrade to the sites from where air defence missiles were fired (in military terminology, SAM sites). ‘We have unequivocal intelligence that Milosevic has his hand in the cookie

<sup>1180</sup>Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, no. 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de Jean Heinrich, 08/02/01, pp. 179-186.

<sup>1181</sup> Ulfkotte, *Verschlusssache BND*, p. 31.

<sup>1182</sup> Peter Finn, ‘Bin Laden Used Ruse to Flee’, *The Washington Post*, 21/01/03.

<sup>1183</sup> Confidential interview (13). Later 15 translators from this unit were offered to the Tribunal in The Hague, but the Tribunal did not wish to employ them.

<sup>1184</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (47) and (62).

jar', said an US intelligence official. Intercepts apparently showed that Belgrade was involved in the 'loan' of military equipment to the VRS.<sup>1185</sup>

*Intercepting Serb communications traffic in practice*

It is established that conversations between Karadzic and Mladic were intercepted. According to intelligence officials who had access to these UKUSA intercepts, these conversations were sometimes entertaining to read: the two gentlemen did not like each other and constantly shouted at each other on the telephone. Sometimes they swore at each other too. However, the intercepts of such conversations can also lead to confusion. Mladic once shouted down the telephone at a local commander, telling him that he should take tough action and should put an end to 'the damned trouble'. Otherwise Mladic would intervene personally and remove the commander's head in the process. When this call was intercepted an alarm was immediately sounded (by a 'critic') at the NSA in Fort Meade. Was this taken to mean that the VRS was about to attack an ABiH position? US officials in the region were alerted. They in turn contacted UNPROFOR, but the force was unable to detect any heightened state of readiness or any preparations for an attack. Following long and intensive investigation, it was revealed that Mladic had ordered that an end should be put to the political unrest in the local commander's unit.<sup>1186</sup>

Comint operations were certainly not a simple matter, as members of US, Canadian and European Sigint organizations all emphasized. Interception by the 'vacuum cleaner' method was conducted by means of satellites, ships, aircraft and from the ground. The most common method of monitoring Comint was by satellite and special AWACS flights, conducted from Hungary. The VRS and the Yugoslav Army were aware of these flights, however, and usually all electronic equipment was then turned off. An US intelligence official admitted that there was no good Sigint coverage of the eastern enclaves, even though Sigint satellites do cover eastern Bosnia from a fixed geostationary orbit 22,000 miles over the Earth. These satellites targeted in particular the high-level command-control-communications, which used very extensively the microwave radio relay/telephone network. Vortex and other spy satellites in orbit at the time were designed specifically to collect this kind of microwave traffic.<sup>1187</sup>

If interception did succeed, then a further problem was that really *everything* was intercepted, from conversations between Mladic and Karadzic to a music channel. Hundreds of thousands of signals were intercepted on all possible frequencies. Sigint organizations thus needed to conduct highly focussed searches for 'a needle in a haystack'. One important thing that these agencies needed to know, for instance, is what HF frequency Mladic's communications equipment was using. But even then, for instance, a pilot of a scheduled KLM flight, could contact Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam on precisely the same HF frequency, in which case this call would be recorded too. The services thus had to refine their 'search key' more and more, and to note call times in order to discover whether, for instance, there was a regular pattern in the conversations conducted by Mladic. The calls finally selected were then screened for key words by computers. In most cases this still resulted in more than a hundred simultaneous conversations. These were then analysed on content and usefulness, and that required a lot of time. Ultimately only a few relevant intercepts landed on the desks of the policymakers.<sup>1188</sup>

Something else that made interception much more difficult was that the majority of the most important communications traffic took place via landlines or couriers, in order to prevent intelligence services from listening in. Moreover, there were no monitoring stations close to Belgrade or Pale. Another factor was that if the Serb forces were withdrawn far into the hinterland, they were outside the

<sup>1185</sup> Karsten Prager, 'Message from Serbia', *Time*, 17/07/95 and Tim Sebastian, 'The Secret Deal: Why Justice Won't Be Done', *The Sunday Times*, 25/02/96.

<sup>1186</sup> Confidential interview (47).

<sup>1187</sup> Confidential interview (13) and E-mail Matthew Aid to the author, 17/12/02.

<sup>1188</sup> Confidential interview (47).

range of the RC-135 and U-2R reconnaissance aircraft, as these usually flew over the Adriatic. Due to all these reasons, a detailed and substantial Sigint coverage of Serb military activities was fairly difficult. The previously mentioned taps on hardware sometimes presented an alternative.

*The cryptography offensive against the Serbs*

The use of cryptography equipment by the Serbs also made it harder to monitor their communications traffic. Despite this it was possible to discover weak points: in the past the VJ and the former Yugoslav government had bought most of their equipment from *Crypto AG* in Switzerland. The VRS and the current Serbian government inherited most of this equipment. It is now known that this company had a secret agreement with the NSA to build in a 'back door' in the computer software of the supplied encryption equipment. This enabled the Americans to read the coded messages.<sup>1189</sup> Interviewed persons in Washington and London claimed that as a result of this secret agreement the coded traffic between Belgrade and various Serbian embassies abroad was systematically intercepted and read by the NSA, thanks in part to the use of *Crypto AG* equipment. Other countries were also 'victims'. Officials at the Vatican even labelled *Crypto AG* as 'bandits'.<sup>1190</sup> Representatives of a European intelligence service confirmed this weak link in the Serb communications, but they also point out that in the past the Croats had supplied much computer equipment to Belgrade. This equipment too was provided with a 'back door'.<sup>1191</sup>

Another relevant fact in this context is that the western (and above all the French) intelligence services had long suspected that the NSA had made an agreement with the producer of the most widely used computer software, Microsoft. According to a report by the French Ministry of Defence, this agreement meant that Microsoft reportedly provided all its Windows software with a 'back door'. Microsoft immediately denied all the accusations and stated it was prepared to cooperate with the French Government. The author of the French report, Admiral J. Marguin, was frank in his comments to journalists: 'After all, what would we do if we possessed such an effective group as Microsoft?'<sup>1192</sup> Furthermore the NSA is said to have made agreements with American, British, Swiss, Dutch, Belgian, Swedish, Italian, Finnish and Hungarian software companies engaged in marketing encryption programs.<sup>1193</sup>

The scandal in Washington involving the Cylink Corporation is another indication that both the required encryption software and the encryption equipment can be penetrated from outside. Cylink has been producing encryption software for foreign governments and companies for more than 16 years. However, the company had always managed to export its products, even to countries officially subject to a trade embargo, such as Libya, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Iraq and probably also Serbia. Following all events around Cylink, the Cryptome website put the question: 'How is Cylink able to freely export security products, while other encryption companies were punished?'<sup>1194</sup> It is in fact also known from other sources that Washington constantly encourages companies making code equipment or encryption software to include a back door in their products; this was confirmed to the US Congress by FBI director Freeh.<sup>1195</sup>

<sup>1189</sup> Interview with Wayne Madsen, 21/06/99.

<sup>1190</sup> Confidential interviews (6), (11) and (91) and interview with Wayne Madsen, 21/09/96. See also: Wayne Madsen, 'Crypto AG. The NSA's Trojan Horse?', *Covert Action Quarterly*, No. 63 (Winter 1998), passim and 'Huge NSA Encryption Scam', *GSRReport*, 10/02/99.

<sup>1191</sup> Confidential interview (48).

<sup>1192</sup> Charles Bremner, 'French accuse Gates of bugging software', *The Sunday Times*, 23/02/00.

<sup>1193</sup> Madsen, *Data*, pp. 6-7.

<sup>1194</sup> 'Cylink decrypted?', op: <http://cryptome.org/cylinked.htm>, 10/03/00. Cylink's lawyers - Morrison & Foerster - threatened to take the owner of this website, John Young, to court for libel. However, nothing more has come of this threat - which is unusual for American circumstances. See letter Morrison & Foerster to John Young, 09/03/00.

<sup>1195</sup> E-mail from Stephen Peacock about Encryption on *Intelforum*, 10/03/00.



Naturally the Serbs had taken precautionary measures to prevent eavesdropping. To give one example, they used – and still use – ‘one-time pads’ for their most secret and most important communications. These are number or letter codes which are used only once and are thus very difficult or impossible to crack, even for the NSA. This has led to other methods of breaking the codes: increasingly often, clandestine operations are carried out in which specialists of the CIA (abroad) and the FBI (in embassies and consulates in the United States) penetrate a building to place monitoring equipment in the code room or to copy encryption software. This type of special operations has seen a strong growth in recent years as it is an easier way to gather intelligence than breaking difficult codes. However reliable and sophisticated the encryption equipment may be, vulnerable points will always exist. To give one example, if every night a Serb unit transmits the same sentence in code to the headquarters in Belgrade like ‘Quiet night: nothing to report’, then sooner or later this will lead to the code being broken. A comparable example was that all Saudi-Arabian diplomatic coded cables to the king ended with the sentence: ‘May Allah prolong your life to eternity.’ Once this is known, then every crypto-analyst can break the code quickly. A cryptography attack is always aimed at such weak spots.

### *The Special Collection Service*

The only resource that the NSA and CIA were sometimes able to use was the joint Special Collection Service (SCS) of these two organizations. This unit manned special monitoring stations, which were based, in the greatest secrecy, in American embassies. These monitoring stations were set up in specially separated and closed rooms. The SCS had a monitoring station in the American embassies in Belgrade and Zagreb,<sup>1196</sup> and from time to time the SCS managed to achieve high-level intercepts, such as a conversation between Mladic and Perisic or Milosevic.

The SCS also occasionally achieved high-level intercepts of conversations between Yugoslav political and military leaders. This happened sporadically however, and not in a systematic manner.<sup>1197</sup> The activities of the SCS usually remained unknown to the ambassador and sometimes even to the CIA station chiefs in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo. These SCS stations produced extremely useful Comint from the communications traffic around Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb. An US intelligence official confirmed that the most important intelligence derived from these Embassy Collection Sites at the American embassies in Zagreb and Belgrade. There was also a SCS station in the US embassy in Sarajevo; this was accommodated in separate containers at the headquarters of Bosnia Hercegovina Command.<sup>1198</sup>

### *Interception of Serb communications traffic: which country knew what?*

One thing cannot be emphasized often enough: it was not easy for the Sigint services to intercept Serb communications traffic. One-time pads, the use of secure landlines or couriers hindered western services in their attempts to eavesdrop on Serb communications. The Special Collection Service post at the US embassy in Belgrade was probably the only monitoring station inside the Serbian capital. Moreover, the Armed Forces operated on the mainland, not always within range of the US reconnaissance aircraft flying over the Adriatic. This made it hard to achieve a detailed and extensive Sigint coverage of (Bosnian) Serb military activities. Only when the Serbian Army operated close to the border of, or even within Bosnia, and communications traffic increased strongly, did the NSA manage to intercept these activities effectively. This was the case shortly before the attack on Srebrenica: around this time much intelligence was intercepted regarding logistical matters, such as relocation of tanker trucks, trucks and other military support.<sup>1199</sup>

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<sup>1196</sup> Confidential interview (6).

<sup>1197</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1198</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1199</sup> Confidential interview (6).

The Americans generally had strong capabilities for intercepting high-level communications traffic. This is also indicated by the fact that the NSA trained and employed Serbo-Croat translators.<sup>1200</sup> However, the main focus of the efforts was on important military traffic, and that was harder to monitor. Statements by US sources are confirmed by members of the Canadian intelligence community. This is important, because only Canada – and to a lesser extent also the United Kingdom – has a special relationship with America in this respect, and thus access to high-level Sigint. Despite American concern about General Rose's alleged sympathy for the Serb cause and political differences between the Clinton government and Whitehall about policy regarding Bosnia, the British like the Canadians continued to have direct access to the Sigint archives and databanks of the NSA and CIA. But GCHQ also independently achieved successes in the Sigint war. British sources confirm that GCHQ (not necessarily via the UKUSA alliance) sometimes managed to intercept and monitor the conversations of the major political and military leaders in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>1201</sup> The question is whether this also included communications traffic relevant to the eastern enclaves. This is probable, but the British services concentrated exclusively on Gorazde because British ground troops were stationed in this enclave. When the threat to Gorazde became greater in July 1995, communications traffic – probably intercepted by the British – indicated that the VRS was building up a Command and Control Architecture. At the same time it was admitted that it was difficult to gather intelligence on the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>1202</sup> The GCHQ also had difficulties getting started in this area, and thus gave priority to Comint regarding the VRS and ABiH around Gorazde. The second area of attention was formed by the other British military units in Bosnia.

#### *Monitoring military targets in the Republika Srpska*

A major part of the efforts of the NSA regarding Comint was concentrated on the VRS, under the command of General Ratko Mladic and his headquarters in Han Pijesak in eastern Bosnia. Spying on the military communications traffic of the VRS originally seemed relatively simple, so that the NSA was able to follow the military activities of the VRS in general terms. The VRS had minimal capabilities and resources for transmitting tactical military and operational radio traffic in encrypted and coded form. Military units of the VRS were, to begin with, completely dependent on the radios and walkie-talkies provided by the Yugoslav army (the VJ) in Belgrade.

Later however the VRS also acquired walkie-talkies that had been bought on the open market. These were used to maintain contacts with the local commanders. This often created difficulties for intelligence services, regarding not only the VRS but the Yugoslav army as well. Comint staff who worked in Bosnia had good reason to call the war in the region a 'walkie-talkie war', since most of the VRS communications took place via Motorolas or walkie-talkies of Japanese manufacture. Nowadays this traffic would be easier to intercept by satellite, but in 1994-1995 satellites were not yet able to intercept communications via Motorolas on a large scale given the extremely mountainous terrain of Eastern Bosnia. Only RC-135 aircraft were able to do this, but even then only under perfect conditions.

Due to the limited range of these walkie-talkies (3 to 25 km), proper interception of such communications traffic required a monitoring station in the vicinity, but there were none. In mountainous terrain it is not possible to pick up signals from walkie-talkies, radiotelephones or VHF transmitters at long range. Additionally, the communications equipment of a tank had a maximum range of 60 km, thus making it difficult to monitor these as well. US intelligence officials admitted this frankly to the journalist Gutman. The UK Defence Intelligence Staff was faced with the same problem. Due to the mountainous terrain in Bosnia, the results of the intercepted military Comint from the GCHQ and NSA were not spectacular.<sup>1203</sup> When asked about this, Canadian intelligence officials

<sup>1200</sup> Bamford, *Body of Secrets*, p. 616.

<sup>1201</sup> Confidential interview (11).

<sup>1202</sup> Confidential information (183).

<sup>1203</sup> Roy Gutman, 'UN's Deadly Deal', *Newsday*, 29/05/96 and Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 216-217.

confirmed that monitoring walkie-talkie communications in Bosnia initially presented problems. They confirmed the story that Belgrade had concluded an agreement with the Motorola company and had bought a large number of walkie-talkies from this company. After pressure on Motorola to cooperate as regards certain technical specifics<sup>1204</sup>, it became easier to monitor this type of traffic.<sup>1205</sup>

The HF frequency is less suitable for tactical military operations. The warring factions did however often use this frequency for long-distance links of a strategic military nature. This meant that for a great deal of the remaining signals traffic, the VRS had to use what was left of the telephone and fax networks. Much of this traffic was routed via short-wave towers, located on all hill and mountain tops along the most important roads in Serbia and Bosnia. As soon as the signals were transmitted from these towers, the satellites and aircraft of the NSA 'had a field day'.<sup>1206</sup> The VRS commanders were equally aware of the dangers of communications through these channels and took this into account.

In early 1995 it became clear that the Americans were able to monitor this traffic. In diplomatic discussions about the (temporary) suspension of the sanctions against Serbs, the greatest stumbling-block was how reporting of violations of the embargo should be conducted. US diplomats revealed to European colleagues that they had intercepts with instructions from Belgrade to drivers of trucks to cross the border with the Republika Srpska. The diplomats had considerable difficulty with how they should use this evidence. The American services considered that this should remain secret in order to protect their methods and capabilities.<sup>1207</sup>

A second example which showed that the Americans could read this communications traffic dates from the end of May 1995. At this time all US staff operating within the ICFY Border Mission were suddenly withdrawn (the task of this mission was to supervise the observance of the sanctions, for instance on the Drina). The Americans were suddenly withdrawn because the US embassy in Zagreb had received Comint and Humint about a direct threat to these Americans.<sup>1208</sup> A third example dates from August 1995, when it appeared that the NSA had access to the signals traffic from the headquarters of the Drina Corps of the VRS. This service intercepted the instructions from this corps to four units to shoot down NATO aircraft, operating close to Split, as soon as these aircraft entered the territory of the Republika Srpska.<sup>1209</sup> This was within the capabilities of the Drina Corps because the VJ and VRS had an integrated air defence system. The aforementioned examples show that the NSA was apparently able to tap the military communications traffic in the region. The units of the Special Collection Service at the American embassies in Belgrade, Zagreb or Sarajevo were probably responsible for this.<sup>1210</sup>

The VRS did possess code and encryption equipment, but it was often of poor quality or out of date. In times of crisis or armed conflict the VRS was regularly forced to use open links. Insofar as the VRS used encryption equipment, the NSA succeeded in intercepting and monitoring this traffic because the VRS also used equipment from Crypto AG. Since the NSA employed an increasing number of linguistic specialists, a marked improvement was also to be seen in the quantity and quality of the Comint product. Intercepts of HF and short-wave radio traffic from Pale confirmed the long-existing suspicion that Mladic had a direct fibre-optic line to the former Yugoslav General Staff in Belgrade, and also a direct line to Milosevic. This latter fact seemed obvious in view of earlier attempts

<sup>1204</sup> Confidential interviews (6) and (12).

<sup>1205</sup> Confidential interview (47).

<sup>1206</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 217 and Charles Lane & Thom Shanker, 'Bosnia: What the CIA Didn't Tell Us', in: *New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96, p. 11.

<sup>1207</sup> Confidential information (36).

<sup>1208</sup> Confidential information (42).

<sup>1209</sup> Confidential information (37).

<sup>1210</sup> As regards intercepting cellular phone traffic, Motorola has even applied for a patent for this. According to Motorola, all GSM or other mobile communications traffic routed via a satellite is relatively easy to intercept. See: Barry Fox, 'The Spy who bugged me. Why make it easy to eavesdrop on satellite telephone calls?', *New Scientist Magazine*, 11/03/00.

by Milosevic to get rid of Karadzic through a *coup d'etat* by Mladic in the Republika Srpska, as Lord Owen recalled.<sup>1211</sup>

The analysis by the NSA of this high-level military traffic gave US policymakers and analysts from the intelligence community important information about the VRS activities in Bosnia. The messages from Mladic's headquarters in Han Pijesak were intensively monitored, which led to considerable insights into the military activities and capabilities. The regularly intercepted communications also told the analysts, however, a great deal about Mladic's personality and changing moods. The GCHQ was also reportedly able, via the British Army Intelligence Corps in Gornji Vakuf, to monitor the communications to and from Mladic. Various sources confirm that GCHQ and the British Sigint units in the region had successfully intercepted this military communications traffic. Later in the war these intercepts gave 'a dramatic insight into the general's depression, paranoia and growing mental instability'.<sup>1212</sup>

*Did Sigint provide prior knowledge of the aims of the VRS regarding Srebrenica?*

Up to now it is not clear whether, through Sigint, Western intelligence services knew of VRS plans to conquer Srebrenica. The issue of prior knowledge of the attack is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 8. There have been many press publications about Comint relating to the Srebrenica attack. In July 1995 the NSA, the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, the French and also the Austrian Military Intelligence Services are reported to have intercepted military radio traffic which, it is said, proved conclusively that the VRS planned to attack Gorazde, Zepa and Srebrenica. This intelligence supposedly showed that the offensive was supported in deep secrecy by Belgrade.

However, a CIA employee with access to high-level Comint dismissed these reports as false. He noted that much tactical military information about the reinforcement of the VRS around Srebrenica was available, but according to him the aims of the VRS were totally overlooked by analysts of the US intelligence community due to insufficient analysis capacity.<sup>1213</sup> Staff of the GCHQ and the UK Defence Intelligence Staff, also discovered that Comint only seldom produced reports containing a warning of impending military offensives by the VRS. An employee of the former organization told the journalist Urban: 'A lot of communication is done by [secure] land line or face-to-face. Mladic likes to be there in person during a big operation.'<sup>1214</sup> Indeed, this proved highly relevant to the events in Srebrenica.

The first press articles claiming that the American intercepted messages indicating a planned VRS attack on Srebrenica date from August and November 1995. According to articles in the international media, three weeks before the attack on Srebrenica and for the period of a full week the NSA intercepted a large number of messages between Mladic and the Serbian general Perisic in Belgrade. These intercepts related to the planning of the offensive, which was then in full swing. The number of required troops and suitable dates for the VRS offensive are said to have been discussed. A western intelligence officer claimed that 'Mladic and Perisic conferred constantly about their strategy and what they were doing'. According to him it was also the case that 'Mladic is always asking Perisic about what he should be doing'.<sup>1215</sup> It should be noted here that a great deal of preparatory planning was not required for the taking of Srebrenica. Mladic could probably do what he needed to on his own. Mladic probably did not need Perisic for the actual attack, apart from logistic support, and this was already constantly available. These considerations do not however rule out the possibility that they had contacts.

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<sup>1211</sup> Interview with Lord Owen, 27/06/01.

<sup>1212</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 216-217 and Karsten Prager, 'Message from Serbia', *Time*, 17/07/95.

<sup>1213</sup> Confidential interviews (12), (13) and (54).

<sup>1214</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 216-217.

<sup>1215</sup> Cabell Bruce, 'Belgrade Blamed', *Newsday*, 12/08/95 and Roy Gutman, 'Federal Army Tied to Bosnia Crimes', *Newsday*, 01/11/95.

The same month new articles appeared in the press. According to Daniel Plesch, the director of the British American Security Council, his organization had seen intercepts, which indicated prior American knowledge of the VRS attack on Srebrenica. He also mentioned intercepted calls between the Yugoslav Chief of Staff, Perisic, and Mladic. The contacts reportedly concerned the planned attack and later executions of Muslims. This information, said Plesch, was not passed on by the US services to the UNPROFOR and NATO partners.<sup>1216</sup> A British researcher had also heard rumours about the existence of Comint relating to the VRS attack. He had tried to track this down, but had never made any discoveries. According to the rumour, the NSA and the CIA did have intercepted messages, but these were probably never shared with the GCHQ or other western services.<sup>1217</sup>

Janvier is said to have been told about the VRS plans for an attack on the enclave at least two weeks in advance by the French Military Intelligence Service, the *Direction du Renseignement Militaire*. The French services, just like the British ones, are said to have managed this without US intelligence. This Comint was reportedly passed to Janvier in his capacity as French commander, not as commander of the UN forces.<sup>1218</sup> In Chapter 8 it will be shown that the veracity of these reports must be doubted.

Little is known about the British Comint successes against the VRS and the ABiH in the Balkans. In Bosnia the Army Intelligence Corps operated from Gornji Vakuf in close collaboration with the French and Canadian troops within UNPROFOR. This mostly concerned operations aimed at gathering tactical military intelligence on the VRS and the ABiH, to be used in briefing commanders. This British Army base also later functioned as a conduit: intercepts from GCHQ were passed on to a special British Black Box intelligence cell in Sarajevo that was equipped with special communications equipment. Staff gave daily briefings to General Rose and later to General Smith.<sup>1219</sup> The GCHQ was the major supplier of Comint to the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS): this mostly comprised tactical Sigint on troop movements, with logistical information on matters such as fuel stocks and summons to meetings obtained through Elint. In 1995 the priorities of the GCHQ lay almost exclusively with Bosnia, but UHF/VHF traffic was often very hard to intercept, even from British ships in the Adriatic. The only possibility in this respect was the British monitoring station in Gornji Vakuf.

It has already been mentioned that British Sigint did not provide a clear picture because the VRS and the VJ used couriers and secure direct lines. There was only a limited exchange between the British and the ABiH, because the Bosnian Muslims actually interpreted everything in the sense that the UN should join them in the fight against the VRS. High-level intercepts, such as those of the conversations between Mladic and Perisic, were in any case not provided to the DIS, according to former staff members. Such intercepted messages may have existed, but if so then they remained at the very highest levels.

According to members of the DIS, high-level intercepts may have been gathered by the NSA, but this agency kept much intelligence to itself. Moreover it sometimes lasted a very long time – one to two weeks – before NSA analyses reached the desks of the DIS. The British could do little about this, however, because the GCHQ was dependent on the NSA when it came to Sigint in Bosnia. After all, this agency had greater capabilities due to its satellites and special aircraft. Besides this, the relationship between the American and British services became increasingly difficult: the British had a much more differentiated view of the conflict than the Americans. This more differentiated British vision led the CIA and DIA to limit the supply of information to the DIS from early 1995 onwards.<sup>1220</sup> This also meant that the British were deprived of intelligence regarding the actions of the ABiH.

<sup>1216</sup> Ambrose Evand-Pritchard, 'Americans bow to forces of realpolitik in Bosnia: US steps in only when the minefield is clear', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 26/11/95.

<sup>1217</sup> Confidential interview (79). See also: Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 217.

<sup>1218</sup> Andreas Zumach, 'Grosser Lauschangriff auf Srebrenica' (Major bugging operation for Srebrenica), in: *Die Tageszeitung*, 30/10/95 and Ian Bruce, 'Allies hamper inquiry', *The Glasgow Herald*, 01/12/95.

<sup>1219</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, pp. 213-215.

<sup>1220</sup> Confidential interview (8).

*The Bosnian government and the ABiH as Comint target*

The traffic between Pale, Han Pijesak and Belgrade was not the only target of the Americans. The NSA also intercepted the communications of the Bosnian government in Sarajevo. This became apparent in 1994 when the NSA intercepted conversations between a number of Bosnian government officials, who talked on the telephone about future secret weapons deliveries that had obviously been arranged by the US government. The NSA also intercepted conversations between Bosnian officials in Sarajevo and several foreign governments, in which the Bosnians let drop that they were receiving military support from Washington.

Furthermore, in 1996 intercepts of Bosnian government communications revealed that hundreds of militant Iranian fighters of the Revolutionary Guard were still operating throughout Bosnia, despite the government's promise that they would be removed from the country, as agreed in the Dayton Accord of 1995.<sup>1221</sup> The Americans probably leaked this information to the press on purpose to give a political signal to the government in Sarajevo. Also Iranian intelligence agents were active in Sarajevo. There were even accusations that these agents were using advanced German spy technology to eavesdrop on US peacekeeping forces in Bosnia. This equipment was bought from the BND but the German service denied this.<sup>1222</sup>

As described above, the British Army Intelligence Corps also conducted operations against the Bosnian government and the ABiH from Gornji Vakuf. The Bosnian Army was well aware of this, as was revealed by an internal memorandum of the National Security Service, which warned about British eavesdropping activities from Base A in Gornji Vakuf. The security service also reported that newly arrived British troops on the Kiseljak - Kresevo line possessed the same Sigint equipment. This involved operations chiefly intended to gather tactical military intelligence on the ABiH, for use in briefing commanders.<sup>1223</sup>

The French intelligence services were also active, from both France in Sarajevo, in intercepting Bosnian traffic. Not only the communications of the government was targeted but also the messages between ABiH snipers. These snipers caused a large number of dead and wounded among French UNPROFOR soldiers. According to a member of the Canadian Military Intelligence Service, the French in Sarajevo had the best-working intelligence system of all UNPROFOR participants, with both Sigint and Imint capacities. According to the Canadians, the French service was the best-organized in Sarajevo: it had an excellent, centrally operated all-source intelligence system that stood head and shoulders above the other services in operational, tactical and strategic terms. The problem, however, was that the French service simply refused to share its intelligence with NATO allies. The Canadian intelligence officials in Sarajevo did however, thanks to the bilingual character of this country and some good personal relations, receive some French intelligence.<sup>1224</sup>

*UNPROFOR as target of the US Sigint operations and the British-American animosity*

Despite the close relationship within the UKUSA framework, fundamental differences of opinion about Bosnia remained between the Americans and the British. London was particularly disturbed by the wish for a more substantial use of air power, and the US refusal to deploy ground troops. This created animosity between the American and British services, which at one moment led to some of the US intelligence flow to London being cut off. Captain Cooke of the UK Defence Intelligence Staff commented on this:

<sup>1221</sup> Walter Pincus, 'US Sought Other Bosnia Arms Sources', *Washington Post*, 26/04/96 and James Risen, 'Iran Paid Bosnian Leader, CIA Says', *Los Angeles Times*, 31/12/96.

<sup>1222</sup> 'Bonn denies Tehran using German spy gear in Bosnia', *Reuters Report*, 09/12/96.

<sup>1223</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMS*. 2nd Corps ABiH to 28th Division, no. 06-05-173/95, 14/06/95.

<sup>1224</sup> Confidential interview (9).

‘They more or less admitted they were holding stuff back from us; not everything, but really the bits relating to most pronounced political divide. They didn’t feel we took their information about Serb atrocities seriously enough (...) They pushed the stuff which favoured more punitive action against the Bosnian Serbs’.<sup>1225</sup>

In other words, the Americans did not cut off the flow of intelligence completely, but it was gradually reduced. In fact, US ideas for a solution to the Bosnian conflict failed not only to meet with the approval of the British, but also not with the approval of the Canadians and the French for instance. This led to considerable mistrust on the part of the Americans. The consequences were wide ranging: UN traffic became a Sigint target for the NSA. This involved the communications between the military and civil UNPROFOR representatives in Bosnia.

The headquarters of Bosnia Hercegovina Command (BHC) in Sarajevo and of UNPF in Zagreb were notorious for their ‘near stone age communications’. Generally speaking both headquarters communicated with each other or with the UN via Inmarsat or via the non-secure satellite telephones (VSAT). Moreover, there were initially just four channels available for the entire BHC. According to intelligence experts the UN communications were monitored ‘as a matter of course’.<sup>1226</sup> There was almost no encryption equipment for links with New York and Zagreb, just a few purely national satellite lines in BHC and the American STU-III satellite telephone for the contacts with NATO in Italy. When General Smith left Sarajevo, for instance, then US Special Forces provided communications with a mobile satellite telephone. This meant, however, that the American services were able to listen in to what Smith discussed on the telephone, and this is just what they did, as Stankovic revealed in his book.<sup>1227</sup>

Moreover, Smith’s staff was convinced that most offices were bugged by Bosnian and Serb services. Some suspected that the nearby US embassy also bugged their conversations.<sup>1228</sup> This certainly seems possible because the embassy had a special Sigint cell of the NSA, the existence of which was not even known to the Chief of Station who was later assigned to the embassy. Moreover, US intelligence services operated from three containers at Smith’s Sarajevo headquarters: this involved a unit of the Special Collection Service.<sup>1229</sup> Smith himself regarded his surroundings as non-secure with regard to communications. This is why he did not often correspond with Zagreb. He also assumed that most conversations he conducted at his headquarters were bugged by the Bosnian Intelligence Service.<sup>1230</sup> Two studies issued by the headquarters of the British troops in Sarajevo, BritFor, in July and September 1995 also assumed that all three of the warring parties had Sigint capabilities. These studies pointed out that the former Yugoslavia had possessed a substantial Sigint organization. Various cases had been noted in which communications traffic to and from UN troops had been intercepted, or jammed. Consequently the Sigint threat was estimated as ranging ‘between medium and high’.

As already described, most UN communications traffic was routed via Inmarsat and VSAT satellite telephones. According to the British, all links via VSAT, Inmarsat and the local post office telephones were completely non-secure. The ‘Tempest’ threat was also rated as high; this involves the scanning of data emissions from computer screens, telephones and telephone cables in a given building from *outside* the building. In particular the non-secure UN telephones could be used by the warring factions as a suitable means for monitoring data. It was thus recommended that computers be positioned at least three metres away from non-secure telephones. Moreover, power cables and

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<sup>1225</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 241.

<sup>1226</sup> Confidential interviews (44) and (80). Also: Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, p. 459.

<sup>1227</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, pp. 250-252.

<sup>1228</sup> Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, pp. 40-41.

<sup>1229</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>1230</sup> Interview with R.A. Smith, 12/01/00.

telephone cables should not run next to each other.<sup>1231</sup> There had been many past cases when a telephone receiver 'on the hook' had been used to monitor conversations in rooms.

The UN's 'secure fax' also had to be regarded as completely insecure and 'compromised' because the UN had lent such a fax machine to the VRS for a while in order to enable communication with Pale from Sarajevo and Zagreb. The experts of the VRS and the VJ are sure to have taken all steps to study this 'secure communications resource' in detail. Moreover, the communications centre regularly made mistakes, such as sending Coded Cables via non-secure fax machines.<sup>1232</sup> In January 1995 there was not even a secure communications link by fax or telephone between NATO Southern Command Headquarters (CINCSOUTH) and UNPF in Zagreb. In fact it was intentional UN policy not to use secure links; this was permitted only at the very highest level.<sup>1233</sup> The former UNPROFOR commander, Rose, claims in his memoirs that his former headquarters in Sarajevo was monitored by US services in 1994-1995. The monitored conversations are said to have been sent directly to the US military leadership in Naples. He also claimed that his communications traffic with the UN headquarters in New York was intercepted by the NSA. According to Rose the Americans did this because they feared he was too sympathetic towards the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>1234</sup> Rose did not reveal how he was monitored. It would indeed not be surprising if Rose was monitored, because the Americans did not automatically have access to all the general's correspondence. Rose was probably also monitored by the Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Serbs.<sup>1235</sup> In an interview Rose also claimed that the Bosnian secret service eavesdropped on him.<sup>1236</sup>

Milos Stankovic's book also revealed that the communications links of the highest UNPROFOR commanders were a major target for the US intelligence services. Stankovic worked as interpreter and translator for Rose and later Smith. The Americans provided secure encrypted links between Sarajevo and NATO for General Smith. These conversations normally took place via a secure link, known as the Tactical Satellite Radio (TacSat). This link consisted of two components: a receiver component and a transmitter component. During the time of Rose, and later under Smith, this suddenly became three components. One day a member of General Smith's staff discovered what the third component was for. Smith had just carried out a number of conversations on this TacSat with Washington and London. Then Smith, accompanied by an aide, hurried to the neighbouring US embassy for a meeting. This member of Smith's staff took a look around the embassy building while the general was in the meeting, and suddenly heard Smith's voice coming from a room. It transpired that an American official was making a report of the telephone conversations that Smith had conducted half an hour earlier. Smith's staff then knew for sure: the third component of the TacSat was an extra transmitter, which passed on all calls directly to a receiver at the US embassy.<sup>1237</sup> After this Smith, to the fury of the Americans, started using a special TacSat of the British SAS for his communications. This worked with the help of an encrypted link, which was difficult to intercept and to break. The NSA is however reported to have managed to do this. It all points to a deep-rooted American distrust of British foreign policy.<sup>1238</sup>

The Americans monitored not only Smith and Rose, but probably the entire UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo. Special 'sweptteams' sometimes came from the UK to Sarajevo to sweep the building clean. But each time new eavesdropping microphones were found, which could however also

<sup>1231</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR, Box 220*, File RRFOS/2300-3 Opsec. Memorandum RRFOS, 25/07/95 and 08/09/95.

<sup>1232</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR, Box 211*, BHC Communications to HQ Zagreb, Security Violation, T-040, 30/11/94.

<sup>1233</sup> Confidential collection (7), Annan to Akashi, MSC-337, 27/01/95 and G 6 to COS Log, no. G6/94/031, 15/08/94.

<sup>1234</sup> Rose, *Fighting*, pp. 72-73; Andrew Gilligan, 'American Satellite Spied on Britain', *Daily Telegraph*, 01/09/96 and *Intelligence Newsletter*, no. 347, 26/11/98.

<sup>1235</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1236</sup> Marijnissen & Glastra van Loon, *De Laatste Oorlog*, pp. 108-109.

<sup>1237</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, pp. 251-252 and confidential interview (80).

<sup>1238</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'How the CIA intercepted SAS signals', *The Guardian*, 29/01/96 and 'CIA luisterde VN-commandant generaal Rose in Sarajevo af' (CIA eavesdropped on UN commander General Rose in Sarajevo), *De Volkskrant*, 30/01/96.



have been part of a Bosnian government operation.<sup>1239</sup> The UNPROFOR headquarters was probably also monitored from the site itself. Under both General Rose and Smith the UNPROFOR compound, which accommodated the headquarters of the British generals, also always hosted three interconnected containers. A forest of antennas projected from this installation,<sup>1240</sup> and only American officers were allowed to enter the containers; no other nationalities were allowed access. The only exception was occasionally made for the Head of the Bosnian Intelligence Service, General Taljan Hajrulahovic. The service that these Americans worked for and the precise nature of their tasks was shrouded in secrecy: no one knew and no questions were asked. It was suspected that this Special Collection Service unit was engaged in 'vacuuming up' all the communications traffic in and around Sarajevo.<sup>1241</sup> In this way not only UNPROFOR was monitored, but also the activities of the Mujahideen fighters in Bosnia.<sup>1242</sup>

Another example of the animosity between the Americans and the British was that the NSA intercepted the calls made by General Rose to the Forward Air Controllers in Gorazde. This was done because the Americans had a certain distrust of the British political line in the region. They viewed Rose as pro-Serb because, according to the Americans, he constantly cited instances that the ABiH and the Croatian Army were also guilty of breaking cease-fires and other misdemeanours. In the view of Washington, Rose simply had 'the wrong agenda'; according to the American services General Rose was 'fucking up the script'. They did not trust Rose and suspected that he did not sufficiently encourage his Forward Air Controllers to promptly report Serb violations of the Gorazde Safe Area, and to keep a close watch on the intentions of the VRS. Cooke of the UK Defence Intelligence Staff told Urban this:

'We certainly believed the Americans tapped into communications of that sort (...) the Americans interpreted the threshold for air strikes differently to us. They could use those sorts of interceptions to say the UN knew the Serbs were doing something and didn't react'.<sup>1243</sup>

Another example that seems to indicate major distrust was that the CIA Directorate of Operations had a special cell of about twenty employees whose most important task was to analyse British intelligence reports. The aim here was to establish which agents MI6 or the DIS had recruited in the former Yugoslavia and which other sources the British services had in Bosnia. It should be said that the CIA dismissed this report as absolute nonsense.<sup>1244</sup> It was only in the summer of 1995 that the transatlantic relations were to improve again, but the Americans persisted in not passing all their intelligence on to the British.

#### *The Electronic Intelligence war: the (Bosnian) Serb air defence*

It can thus be seen that the cooperation within NATO in the field of Sigint, and above all the sharing of high-level Comint, was not, to put it mildly, all it could have been due to the considerable American distrust of London (and Paris). Things were very different when it came to Elint: here mostly relevant to the interception of radar signals. American operational collection platforms, supplemented by other Sigint equipment, were not only intended to intercept communications traffic. Elint and also Foreign Instrumentation Sigint (Fisint) enabled the NSA to chart the VJ and the VRS air defence systems in detail. It is no surprise that the cooperation in this field was good, in view of the participation of the US Air Force and Navy in operations over Bosnia. American aircraft mostly collaborated closely with aircraft of other NATO allies, so there was a direct interest in sharing Elint. Furthermore, Elint was

<sup>1239</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, p. 292.

<sup>1240</sup> Interview with A.P.P.M. van Baal, 01/11/01.

<sup>1241</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, pp. 251-252 and confidential interview (6).

<sup>1242</sup> James Risen, 'Iran gave Bosnia leader \$ 500.000', *Los Angeles Times*, 31/12/96.

<sup>1243</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 241 and Mark Urban, 'The Magnum Force', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 01/09/96.

<sup>1244</sup> Confidential interview (79). See also: Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 241.

usually not subject to any political considerations, thus reducing the secrecy constraints and making distribution easier. Cooperation was thus almost perfect in the field of Elint. A constant stream of Elint was sent via NATO's LOCE system to the allies. Radar stations, frequencies, surface-to-air missiles and other air defence systems were charted in great detail and most of the VJ and VRS systems were no secret to the NATO planners.

The analysts had more trouble with the fact that the VRS and the VJ sometimes did not switch on the radars of their air defence systems, or relocated them, in order to avoid discovery. The Elint and Fisint clearly showed that the VRS air defence was operated from Belgrade, and in fact it was commanded and coordinated there too. In the summer of 1995 the American services broke into the Serbian and Bosnian Serb HF and microwave radio networks and established that the headquarters of the VJ in Belgrade was 'feeding the Bosnian Serb anti-aircraft network information on NATO overflights' over Bosnia. Elint showed that Serbian early warning radar sites were stationed on Bosnian Serb territory, and that these tracked NATO flight movements and that this radar data reached the VRS headquarters in Han Pijesak almost in real time.<sup>1245</sup>

The VRS had a network of eight large early warning radar sites of Soviet manufacture, as well as Swedish *Ericsson Giraffe* radars. These covered the Krajina and Bosnia, and thus gave Mladic sufficient warning, in the event of NATO air strikes, to move equipment to safety. The VRS air defence also had advanced early warning systems with which the Bosnian Serbs could monitor the radio traffic of NATO, the UN and the Bosnian and Croatian armies. This radar network, mobile surface-to-air missiles and early warning systems were linked together by a network of more than twenty short-wave relay towers centred around the military headquarters at Han Pijesak. Via links in Han Pijesak and Bijeljina these towers were linked to the VJ air defence network.<sup>1246</sup> Moreover, Bosnian Serb spotters who hung around the air bases in Italy kept a close watch on the movements of NATO aircraft. This information was passed on to Belgrade via amateur radio links.

#### *Electronic intelligence in practice: the shooting down of O'Grady's F-16*

One clear instance of the close collaboration between the VJ and the VRS was the shooting down of the aircraft flown by US Captain Scott O'Grady. On 2 June 1995 a U-2R Senior Span Sigint aircraft is reported to have intercepted radar waves from an SA-6 Gainfall surface-to-air missile, of Soviet manufacture, in North-Western Bosnia. This meant that the NSA knew of this threat. One day later O'Grady's F-16 was shot down by a surface-to-air missile of the Bosnian Serbs, close to Banja Luka. According to press reports the NSA intercepts never reached O'Grady: apparently this commander was firmly convinced that there were no surface-to-air missiles stationed in the area over which he was flying. The Russian representative in the UN Security Council had originally doubts about the SAM of Soviet manufacture but Albright told him: 'If something looked like a duck, quacked like a duck and walked like a duck, then it probably was a duck'. Later analyses by the NSA revealed that the U-2 Senior Span had discovered brief radar emissions by the VRS tracking radar, before O'Grady's F-16 was brought down. This intelligence reached Fort Meade in just a few seconds, but never reached the AWACS aircraft that were monitoring O'Grady's mission and checking that no hostile air defence was in the vicinity. This AWACS was not an American aircraft, and as a result it did not have any communications equipment compatible with the warning systems on board the F-16.<sup>1247</sup>

Following the shooting down of the American F-16, it was Sigint that gave the first indication that O'Grady was still alive. Sigint aircraft and submarines monitored the VRS military radio traffic, and this provided evidence that O'Grady had survived. This ultimately resulted in a successful operation to

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<sup>1245</sup> Karsten Prager, 'Message from Serbia', *Time*, 17/07/95.

<sup>1246</sup> Ripley, *Operation Deliberate Force*, p. 78.

<sup>1247</sup> Dana Priest, 'US Fliers Didn't Get Missile Data: Antiaircraft System Was Detected By NSA', *Washington Post*, 11/06/95; 'system Failed Downed Pilot, CIA Official Says', *Washington Post*, 28/06/95; Dana Priest, 'Communications Glitch Blamed in F-16 Downing', *Washington Post*, 08/07/95 and 'Commander's Comments', *Spokesman*, May 1996, p. 3.

get O'Grady out of Bosnian Serb territory alive (see Chapter 2 of Part III of the main Srebrenica report).<sup>1248</sup> Despite the technical causes that led to the failure to prevent O'Grady's F-16 from being downed, the alliance cooperation in the field of Elint was generally good. It has already been concluded that this was much less so regarding the exchange of American high-level military and political Comint. The role played by the Netherlands in this Comint flow has not yet been discussed. This chapter thus concludes with a closer examination of the position of the Netherlands Military Intelligence Service in the field of Sigint.

## 6. Dutch Sigint in the Bosnian conflict

Between 1992 and 1995 there were three units engaged in Sigint: the First Tactical Air Force Signals Groups (1LVG), the 898th Signals Battalion (898 Vbdbat) of the Royal Netherlands Army, and the Technical Information Processing Centre (TIVC) of the Royal Netherlands Navy. In 1996 these three services were merged to produce the *Afdeling Verbindingsinlichtingen* (Sigint Department, AVI) of the Military Intelligence Service (MIS). Until this time each of the three branches of the Armed Forces intercepted Sigint for itself.

Around 1995 the situation was as follows. The 898th Signals Battalion, with its home base at Eibergen, was then still under direct command of the Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army. The Sigint material was passed to the MIS/Army. The Sigint units at Eemnes, Zoutkamp and Amsterdam were then under the command of the MIS/Navy. Eibergen concentrated mostly on intercepting military communications traffic on the HF frequency. The TIVC, with its Granger antennas in Eemnes, also concentrated on intercepting international traffic on the HF frequency and also, via two receiving dishes in Zoutkamp, on intercepting signals sent by satellite. The Sigint section of the Air Force, 1LVG, also concentrated on intercepting military traffic on the HF frequency. This section did not however engage in any interception of HF links in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>1249</sup> Interception of Comint was carried out in various ways. The first method is to search the ether, and especially satellite links, with a 'vacuum cleaner'. This is done with the help of a computerized dictionary that can search for key words. Another method was to program computer systems for specific telephone, fax or GSM numbers. If the material received at Eemnes or Zoutkamp was coded then it was passed to the encryption analysis section in Amsterdam, where attempts were made to break the code with computers.

Following the fall of the Berlin Wall the tasks of these three units – i.e. one unit for each branch of the Armed Forces – generally involved the production of operational Sigint for the Netherlands Armed Forces with regard to Sea, Ground and Air Forces in the countries of the former Soviet Union. Another task was to produce strategic Comint; this related to political and strategic decision-making, organized crime, proliferation of nuclear weapons, terrorism and economic developments. This intelligence was produced for the Ministries of Defence, Justice, Foreign Affairs and Internal Affairs. Both the operational and strategic intelligence production was based on the interceptions and subsequent processing by each of the three aforementioned units, combined with shared Comint from foreign partners. It was only following the reorganization in 1996 that the exchange of Comint was also extended to crisis management operations.<sup>1250</sup>

At no time during the deployment of Dutchbat did the Army, Air Force and Navy interception services actively focus on the events in the former Yugoslavia. The only exception to this was on 17 July 1994, for one of the three, the 898th Signals Battalion at Eibergen, concentrated on intercepting

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<sup>1248</sup> Daniel Williams, 'I'm Ready to Get the Hell Out of Here', *Washington Post*, 09/07/95 and Richard J. Newman, 'Breaking the Surface', *US News & World Report*, 06/04/98, p. 30. See for the problems regarding sharing of US national intelligence with US marines supposedly to rescue O'Grady: Margaret S. Macdonald and Anthony G. Oettinger, 'Information Overload', *Harvard International Review*, Vol. XXIV (Fall 2002) 3, p. 48.

<sup>1249</sup> NIOD, Letter from MIS, Department AVI/BR&C to C. Wiebes, 10/07/00.

<sup>1250</sup> MoD, MIS, HAO to HMID, no. AO 960708, 31/12/96.

military communications. The Commander in Chief of the Army, General Couzy, then gave the unit a task relating to the former Yugoslavia: to produce an overview of the possibilities (or impossibilities) of receiving and recording Yugoslav military communications traffic. It was thus only at a late stage that the Eibergen unit was told to ‘take a look’ at Yugoslavia. The first problem was that the antennas were, as had always been the case, aimed at the East-West confrontation; it has already been discussed in Chapter 3 how it was a ‘mortal sin’ to focus on conflicts that did not fit into a Cold War view of things.<sup>1251</sup>

#### *Eibergen’s slow turn towards Bosnia*

On 14 July 1995, three days after the fall of Srebrenica, the 898th Signals Battalion received the order from Couzy to ‘take a look’ at Bosnia. The Eibergen unit immediately submitted a request for support; supplementary technical material and translation support was urgently needed. In addition, the Western partners were informed that certain interception activities would be halted due to ‘srebrenica’.<sup>1252</sup> It was not until March 1996 – none too late – that Eibergen was actually ‘up and running’; this was when a second Beveradge antenna had been installed. The monitoring station was now able to look south. It needs to be said that Minister Voorhoeve provided little support in this respect. He had little affinity with intelligence in general and with the work of the MIS in particular. He mostly asked why the Netherlands needed to engage in Sigint activities, if foreign services did the same, and whether it couldn’t be done more cheaply. The minister could only be convinced if a successful result was presented from time to time.<sup>1253</sup>

The Deputy Head of the MIS, Lieutenant Colonel A. Bleumink, confirmed that it was only after the summer of 1995, with the help of Comint, that some insight was obtained into communications networks of the VRS and the ABiH. This was only managed with ‘jury-rigging’ methods, because Eibergen’s monitoring installations were oriented towards the east, being the wrong direction. One reason why Dutch Sigint services only gradually abandoned their Cold War mode, and continued to look towards the East, was that the Netherlands would otherwise be left with nothing at all to exchange with its Western allies.<sup>1254</sup>

Furthermore, the MIS was faced with a shortage of Serbo-Croat translators. This problem had already been raised in May 1993: the 898th Signals Battalion in Eibergen announced that in order to conduct its tasks it had an immediate requirement for an initially limited interception of communications traffic in the former Yugoslavia, and Serbo-Croat translation capabilities. It was proposed that five members of the 898th Signals Battalion should undertake this training from the start of 1994 onwards.<sup>1255</sup>

Ultimately five intercept operators, also active as translators, were assigned to start a six-month training course at the Military Intelligence Service School from May 1994 onwards. Actual interception of communications traffic slowly started in January 1995, with limited use of personnel (ca. six people) who at that time still had relatively poor language skills. These operators worked in a five-shift system, with one interceptor on duty per shift. The translator examined all the intercepted messages fairly quickly, and later translated the most important ones. However, a long start-up phase was required in order to get to grips with the Yugoslav communications traffic. Frequencies needed to be located, for instance, transmitters and units charted, call-signs recognized and the battle order defined. A number of months are required for a Sigint organization to get to grips, even on a basic level, with a region as large

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<sup>1251</sup> Confidential interviews (21, 22 and 33).

<sup>1252</sup> MoD, *MIS*, Memorandum: HINL to Wnd. SC-O, no. INL/194/140795, 14/07/95 and Message ‘Change of Targets’ to partners, 13/07/95.

<sup>1253</sup> Interview with H.J. Vandeweyer, 27/01/00.

<sup>1254</sup> Interview with A. Bleumink, 19/03/01.

<sup>1255</sup> MoD, *MIS*, *File 443.0801*. Colonel Bosch, HAI&V MIS/RNLA to Training Command Netherlands Army, no. 21892/1/270593, 18/05/93.

as the Balkans. Two to three years were needed to get the operation running really well. However, it was not until 15 August 1995 that Eiberger made its first tactical military reports on Yugoslavia.<sup>1256</sup>

The military and political Comint relating to Bosnia that was nonetheless intercepted while Dutchbat was in that country was primarily intended for the intelligence agencies of the three branches of the Armed Forces (see Chapter 3). According to a MIS member, all relevant information obtained from Comint was passed on (in paraphrased form) via the Netherlands Army Crisis Staff to Dutchbat.<sup>1257</sup> This claim can be doubted, however, because hardly any Comint was available at the MIS.

Research by the NIOD in the Military Intelligence Service archives in The Hague, the former Technical Information Processing Centre (TIVC) in Amsterdam and the former 898th Signals Battalion in Eiberger indicates that, prior to the fall of Srebrenica, there were just a few intercepts or integral transcriptions of intercepted signals traffic from Bosnia, and these bore no relation to the attack by the VRS on the enclave.<sup>1258</sup>

The archives did however contain standard reports on unidentified military networks in Bosnia. These did not however contain any hard information, but dealt more with procedural traffic. This could in itself be useful to the MIS for localizing and charting certain troop forces. This material was obtained via interception by both the Dutch and foreign sister organizations. None of the data present makes reference to fighting in or around Srebrenica. This could be ascribed to the geographical location of the enclave (in a valley), which made it technically almost impossible to intercept local radio traffic around Srebrenica from Eiberger.<sup>1259</sup> Research in the archives of the First Tactical Air Force Signals Group and the 898th Signals Battalion also shows that, between 9 and 20 July, no information was available on the Drina Corps of the VRS, which carried out the attack on the enclave.<sup>1260</sup>

On 15 August 1995 Eiberger started producing and supplying reports. This resulted in reports on the target area, but still in modest quantities. Moreover, the capabilities did not extend beyond military traffic on the HF frequency. Intercepting military VHF traffic in the region was not feasible, as this could not be 'netted' in Eiberger. The shorter the range of the transmitter, the harder it is to intercept this. VHF communications from tanks have a range of about 60 km, for instance, and can only be monitored from aircraft or some satellites. Indeed, no Western partner is reported to have had monitoring equipment on the ground in the Srebrenica area in this period which could have intercepted such short-range traffic. The mountains and the topography also made it harder to intercept the military traffic.

So even from August 1995 onwards the Sigint situation was not good; one should also note that differences between day and night, between summer and winter, and technical factors could also all affect the interception of communications traffic. It was not possible to precisely determine the transmission point of signals. The TIVC, operating with HF interception from Eemnes and satellite interception from Zoutkamp, was not aimed at the Balkans in 1995 either. In the period from 1993 to 1995 the interception capabilities of the TIVC were confined to HF radio traffic and telex communications via satellite. It was not possible to intercept telephone and fax traffic via satellite. Furthermore, between 1993 and 1995 the TIVC exchanged raw interception material with sister organizations; this material comprised intercepted HF and satellite communications traffic (telex material). Fax material was not exchanged during this time.<sup>1261</sup>

To sum up, some intelligence was exchanged with partners, but since the MIS did not have much to offer it also did not receive a great deal of intercepted Sigint. In addition, the MIS did not focus on the Inmarsat satellite, and it was precisely through this channel that most communications

<sup>1256</sup> Confidential interviews (21) and (33).

<sup>1257</sup> MoD, *SMG*, Report of interview with Col. Bokhoven, 25/07/95.

<sup>1258</sup> MoD, *MIS*, Overview report Bureau A-4 to HMID/RNLA, no. 31701/4/130395, 13/03/95.

<sup>1259</sup> Confidential interviews (21), (22), and (33). See also: MoD, *MIS*, Internal information by mr. D. Bijl to the WOB request from the NOS Journaal, Strictly Confidential, undated (ca. 24/03/99).

<sup>1260</sup> MoD, *MIS*, Signal days 95190 to 95199.

<sup>1261</sup> NIOD, Letter from MIS, Department AVI/BR&C to C. Wiebes, 10/07/00.

were routed, such as the UN communications traffic. Furthermore, the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs made considerable use of encryption equipment, land lines, beam transmitters and one-time pads (codes used one time only) for their most important diplomatic and military traffic. This too made it almost impossible for Dutch services to monitor their traffic or to break their codes. In view of the above, MIS staff admitted that while the events in the Balkans, with the presence of Dutch troops, necessitated a corresponding intelligence response, this response by the Dutch intelligence services in fact came too late.<sup>1262</sup>

*What did the Netherlands hear from other western services?*

The fact that the MIS had little to exchange is indicated by the following. On 5 October 1995 Minister Voorhoeve had a meeting with his US colleague Perry. Voorhoeve asked him if it was true that the US intelligence community had intercepted a telephone call by Mladic in which the general had requested buses. Perry confirmed that such a request by Mladic was indeed known to the American sources, but left open whether this information had been obtained through intercepts or other intelligence sources. Voorhoeve asked Perry to check the date on which this call had been made, and whether the recipients of the call were the authorities in Pale or in Belgrade. If the request had been directed to Belgrade, it could be concluded that the Serbian authorities were involved in the forced deportation, and could possibly even have been aware of the plans for mass executions. Perry promised that General Shalikashvili would investigate this.<sup>1263</sup>

On 18 October the Americans, via their embassy in The Hague, presented an Information Paper in which they dealt with Voorhoeve's question. The memorandum stated that the US services had no information about a telephone call between Mladic and Milosevic regarding the use of buses for the deportation of citizens from Srebrenica. This answer seems evasive, because Milosevic was, after all, not a bus operator. In such a matter Mladic would have been more likely to have consulted with the General Staff in Belgrade. Voorhoeve had also not asked whether Mladic had spoken to *Milosevic*, but only whether a telephone call had been intercepted in which the general asked for buses.<sup>1264</sup>

*Did the MIS have access to calls between Janvier and Chirac?*

Nonetheless, reports about this matter reached the NIOD from MIS officers who wished to remain anonymous. These persons reported that calls between Janvier and the French president Chirac had been intercepted during the attack on Srebrenica. The use of Close Air Support for Dutchbat is reported to have been discussed in these calls. In view of the weak information position of the Netherlands in the field of Sigint, it seems rather unlikely that the MIS should be aware of such high-level intelligence. The NIOD has sought indications for this in the archive of the Sigint Department of the MIS. Research in the material of foreign partners was excluded in view of relevant international agreements.

The archiving process in Eibergen is as follows. The intercept operators write down what they intercept, and these handwritten notes are kept for two years. These handwritten notes regarded mostly geographic locations, coordinates and frequencies. They are also kept in another form, in radio logbooks. Everything intercepted electronically is recorded on tape (intercepted conversations) or in the computer. In addition the physical intercepts are stored in the Comint archive. The Yugoslavia archive also contains the messages from the NATO Sigint cell in Vicenza and Naples. This intelligence cell works exclusively on the basis of Comint supplied by the alliance partners.

This author conducted research in Eibergen with the help of a very extensive list of keywords. This was aimed at material from the unit's own archive of Comint, the Yugoslavia archive, the raw

<sup>1262</sup> Confidential information (38).

<sup>1263</sup> NIOD, Coll. Van den Breemen. Report of a meeting between Voorhoeve and Perry, 05/10/95.

<sup>1264</sup> NIOD, Coll. Van den Breemen. US Information Paper, 18/10/95.

Comint archive and other archive material. Keywords (including ‘srebrenica’) were entered for the years 1992 to 1999. This research in the intercepts and reports resulted in a good picture. It transpired that although a great deal of intercepted material is present, very little of it concerns the events around Srebrenica in the summer of 1995. This tallied with the statements in a confidential briefing given to the author. There is some material at Eibergen that concerns Srebrenica, but this can be regarded as non-relevant. There is very little material about the military developments in the region. It is highly probable that foreign-partner material does not contain any intercepted calls between Janvier and Chirac either, because their presence would always have left traces, in disguised form, in the normal MIS reports.

In this way it was established that the claims made by anonymous sources that the Eibergen archive contained intercepts of calls between Janvier and Chirac were not correct. The same went for the archive of the TIVC in Amsterdam and the central Comint archive of the Signals Department in The Hague. This author conducted extensive research in these archives too. On the basis of a large number of relevant keywords a search was made for possibly present intercepted telephone calls, such as between Janvier and Chirac or between Mladic and Perisic. This material was not found in these archives either. Hence it can be concluded that these intercepts are not present in the Netherlands. Another reason why it is unlikely that these intercepts would be present in Eibergen is that the 898th Signals Battalion of the Netherlands Army concentrated only on strictly military networks, not on telephone traffic between UNPROFOR and national governments. In July 1995, however, Eibergen was not even capable of monitoring the military networks in view of the limited interception capacity and technical resources. The same applied to the TIVC of the Netherlands Navy in Amsterdam. It can further be assumed that General Janvier and President Chirac did not talk to each other on an open and non-secure telephone line.<sup>1265</sup>

The claim that staff of the MIS have been enjoined to secrecy on this matter, as claimed by one MIS staff member, has not been substantiated. The author was able to speak freely to every staff member. On the basis of research in the MIS archives it can be concluded that if American high-level Comint was available on such conversations, it was not shared with the MIS. Thorough study of the MIS reports, and many interviews, indicated that nothing relating to this matter was exchanged with the Netherlands. In this respect the MIS was treated the same as the services of other alliance partners.

#### *A secret request to the MIS: a suitcase for Dutchbat*

The MIS would have been able to acquire a good intelligence position if a secret American offer had been accepted. Staff of American, Canadian, British and Dutch intelligence services confirmed that the NSA intercepted only few conversations in Eastern Bosnia. The Americans had problems with their Comint coverage, although they intercepted fairly large quantities of information. Communications via walkie-talkies presented a problem however, as described in the previous section. This provided an opportunity for the Netherlands. The Head of the MIS/CO Commander P. Kok – he occupied this post from 1 January 1994 to 25 June 1995 – was approached by the CIA representative in The Hague immediately after Kok took up his post at the start of 1994.<sup>1266</sup> Dutchbat I was then about to leave for Srebrenica and the CIA made an offer ‘which you cannot refuse’.<sup>1267</sup>

Kok was told the following. The NSA, it appeared, had a serious problem: the service was unable to intercept communications via Motorola walkie-talkies in and around the eastern enclaves. The range of such communications equipment was no more than about 30 km. The Americans wanted to set up an interception network at various points in the Balkans, and envisaged Srebrenica as one of

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<sup>1265</sup> MoD, *SMG*, Report of visit to Lt. Col. A. Bleumink, 09/08/95.

<sup>1266</sup> Confidential interview (78). A request for a confidential interview with this American chief of station was refused by the CIA.

<sup>1267</sup> An initial indication of this operation was received during a confidential interview (6) with a former employee of the NSA.

these points. They proposed setting up a reception and transmission installation at a number of OPs in the enclave. This involved equipment with the format of two ‘samsonite’ suitcases. One suitcase was for interception of the traffic, and the other provided a direct link to an Inmarsat satellite. The intercepted messages would be shared with the MIS. In exchange for this cooperation the MIS was also offered other ‘broad’ intelligence, taken to mean also Imagery Intelligence.

For Dutchbat, then about to depart for Srebrenica, it would be easy to take along a few suitcases. The Bosnian Serbs would not be suspicious because these looked like normal communications equipment. The Dutch could decide for themselves how many of these suitcases they installed and how many hours a day the equipment would be operated. Two or three soldiers of the Electronic Warfare Company would need to operate the equipment and the Americans would provide a brief training course. Three men would provide round-the-clock coverage. The suitcases would be larger in size than the ‘satellite Communication-M’ system that had been in service with the Netherlands Army since 1994 and weighed less than 7 kg. The system was usable globally and very user-friendly.<sup>1268</sup>

Kok first took this request to a member of the Intelligence & Security Section of the MIS/Army. He asked whether this was a realistic option in technical terms. The official in question confirmed to the author when asked that Kok had talked to him about the American offer for provision of a ‘sort of box’. This official thought it was an excellent idea; in his view it would even be possible to camouflage the suitcases.<sup>1269</sup> Another official within the MIS/CO had also heard about this American request. He believed it concerned boxes in which Sigint equipment was hidden. He knew nothing about suitcases, but that was not unusual. Kok always kept such matters concealed from his subordinates.<sup>1270</sup>

Kok then approached the head of the MIS/Army, H. Bosch, with this proposal. This was logical since all matters regarding intelligence and the operations of Dutchbat were the responsibility of the Army. Kok went together with Bosch to the Commander in Chief of the Army, General Couzy. The latter was not happy about the idea, however. Couzy said he could not remember the reason for this visit.<sup>1271</sup> Bosch, who was to establish a good relationship with Kok, could not remember this incident either. He declared emphatically however that he had full confidence in Kok’s account. Bosch, a great advocate of Comint, later tried to convince Couzy again about the usefulness of deploying an Electronic Warfare unit in the enclave, but Couzy rejected this proposal too.<sup>1272</sup>

The CIA, also acting on behalf of the NSA, is said to have asked five or six times between March 1994 and January 1995 whether the MIS would cooperate in this project. Kok always had to reply in the negative.<sup>1273</sup> Kok was to try five times to get approval from the MIS/Army for this idea. He tried again with Bosch’s successor as Head of MIS/Army, Colonel H. Bokhoven. According to Bokhoven, Kok passed this request to him just once; he could not recall that Kok said that he had been approached by the CIA several times. Kok presented this to Bokhoven as a ‘spectacular’ proposal, but Bokhoven considered that the MIS should not cooperate in this project. He viewed it as an offensive intelligence task that did not fit the context of UNPROFOR, and also felt it was more suitable for the intelligence services of other countries. Bokhoven confirmed to the author that he had refused to cooperate in the installation of these Comint devices in the enclave.

Bokhoven’s view was based on his experiences in UNPROFOR: he was afraid that the Bosnian Serbs would discover the purpose of the suitcases and this would compromise him. Kok claimed that following positioning of the suitcases The Hague would receive more American intelligence, but Bokhoven still viewed the risk as too great. Bokhoven informed Couzy of the matter. According to

<sup>1268</sup> See: MoD, *MoD LL*. Internal memorandum from G-6 OPS/BLS, no. OPS/BLS/1997/6927, 27/06/97.

<sup>1269</sup> Confidential interview (22).

<sup>1270</sup> Confidential interview (25).

<sup>1271</sup> Interview with H.A. Couzy, 04/10/01.

<sup>1272</sup> Interview with J.M.J. Bosch, 10/10/01.

<sup>1273</sup> Confidential interview (78).



Bokhoven Couzy supported him in his rejection of the offer.<sup>1274</sup> It is remarkable that Couzy can remember nothing of this. He could not recall ever having been approached by Kok, Bosch or Bokhoven about this matter. He could also not recall whether he had ever gone to Ter Beek or Voorhoeve with this proposal. Couzy did however tell the author that Kok could have stuck to his guns and have had him overruled by the Chief of the Defence Staff. This clearly did not happen.<sup>1275</sup>

In November 2002 both Defence ministers testified before the Dutch Parliamentary Inquiry into Srebrenica that they were never approached regarding the Sigint suitcases. Both ministers claimed that they would have gone along with this operation.<sup>1276</sup> Former Minister Voorhoeve had earlier already confirmed to the author that he had never received the suitcases proposal. Asked whether he would have cooperated, in view of the poor information situation of Dutchbat, Voorhoeve answered: 'Yes, certainly. The non-defensible position of Dutchbat, and what could happen, caused me to lose sleep from the moment I took office.'<sup>1277</sup> The Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence, M. Patijn, had never received information about a request from a foreign intelligence service either.<sup>1278</sup> In 2001 Bokhoven still held the opinion that it would not have been possible to keep this operation properly concealed or secret. Even if the suitcases had been camouflaged as normal communications equipment, he thought the Bosnian Serbs would have discovered them and then the equipment would not have reached the enclave. Bokhoven was, and remained, convinced on the basis of his earlier experience in Bosnia that the VRS would have discovered the suitcases. As an example he cited the special encryption communications equipment of the British Joint Commission Observers (JCO) unit in the eastern enclaves. He said that these devices had been brought into the enclave secretly by land or air and not via the normal route in convoys or suchlike, as they would otherwise have been discovered.<sup>1279</sup> Bokhoven is mistaken here however: the British JCO unit had taken along its own communications equipment in its Land Rovers.

For Bokhoven the risk of this secret operation failing seemed real. The secure encryption equipment could then have fallen into hands of the ABiH or the VRS. The only way of transporting the suitcases without drawing attention to them would have been for Dutchbat I to take them along when all other communications equipment went to the enclave. Discovery of the equipment during the presence of Dutchbat would not have been a major problem. If the equipment threatened to fall into the hands of one of the warring factions, it could simply have been destroyed.

Kok finally visited Couzy again with the American request, but on the advice of Bokhoven the latter refused, as recounted, to provide his cooperation. Couzy did not want the MIS to carry out any intelligence or Sigint operations regarding Srebrenica; this related to the fact that Couzy was not particularly intelligence-minded.<sup>1280</sup> Kok did not give up however and made a second direct attempt with Couzy, but the latter once again rejected the idea: no spying for the Americans, he said; this was a peacekeeping mission and not a war. He was not receptive to the Force Protection argument, and the likelihood that this exchange would, in Kok's view, result in much intelligence on a *quid pro quo* basis. Kok continued to insist this involved equipment of a modest scale would not endanger Dutchbat. Couzy stuck to his previously adopted standpoint: he wanted a strict separation between strategic and operational intelligence. Couzy could not recall anything about this visit either. The possibility that the MIS/Army, responsible for gathering operational military intelligence, would benefit from such an operation was not regarded by Couzy as an argument of sufficient importance.

<sup>1274</sup> Interview with H. Bokhoven, 16/05/01. From April 1994 to December 1995 he was Head of the MIS/Army. Before this in 1993 and 1994 he was Plan Officer in UNPROFOR under General J. Cot.

<sup>1275</sup> Interview with H.A. Couzy, 04/10/01.

<sup>1276</sup> Testimonies by Relus ter Beek, 14/11/02 and Joris Voorhoeve, 28/11/02.

<sup>1277</sup> Interview with J.J.C. Voorhoeve, 01/10/01.

<sup>1278</sup> Interview with M. Patijn, 28/08/00.

<sup>1279</sup> Interview with H. Bokhoven, 16/05/01.

<sup>1280</sup> Interview with A. Bleumink, 19/03/01.

Kok then went to R.J. Hoekstra, Secretary-General of the Ministry of General Affairs and in this capacity *ex officio* intelligence coordinator. The latter said that he could do nothing either, and the Deputy Secretary-General of the Ministry of Defence, Barth, also told Kok he could do nothing. Barth was more interested in cutting back the MIS. These events frustrated Kok intensely. By his own account he could not adopt a harder stance than he already had, because everything relating to Dutchbat fell under the authority of Couzy as Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army. Other top officers of the Army did not wish to burn their fingers once Couzy had said 'no'. The Chief of Defence Staff, General A. Van der Vlis, had earlier taken a sympathetic attitude to the MIS/CO, but Kok did not involve him in this operation for Srebrenica. According to Kok, taking along the suitcases would have led to a win-win situation.<sup>1281</sup>

The MIS actually had another good opportunity to achieve an excellent information position, because most of the official international communications traffic in the region went via the KPN (Dutch Post Office) satellite reception station in Burum, in the northern Dutch province of Friesland. Letters from, for example, Karadzic to General Cot and General Briquemont, sent via the fax of the UNMO liaison officer in Pale, went always via Burum.<sup>1282</sup> According to an employee of a Western foreign intelligence service, such a commercial ground station involved in international communications traffic could have provided valuable intelligence for the MIS.<sup>1283</sup> The situation in the Netherlands would disappoint this official, however. The KPN had in fact previously broken off all links with the MIS in this field; in the past the KPN had already experienced great difficulties with such proposals.<sup>1284</sup> The MIS did not expect that the government would permit the service to make use of this satellite reception station. This was indeed never proposed, in the belief that Voorhoeve or the government would never agree to it. Voorhoeve may have recognized the importance of Comint,<sup>1285</sup> but he would probably never have agreed to such an operation. Members of foreign intelligence services would doubtless be surprised to hear that the Dutch did nothing to use the possibilities offered by Burum.

Another question is whether the Military Intelligence Service could have managed this technically. When one considers the possibilities of the TIVC in 1993, it must be concluded that this centre could never have intercepted the satellite communications on its own. The organization was not able to intercept Inmarsat satellite traffic, and this was the route taken by all the communications. There was also virtually no chance that the TIVC could have obtained such intercepts in that period through exchange with a sister service, partly due to the refusal of the American offer.<sup>1286</sup> The only serious chance that the MIS probably ever had of obtaining excellent Comint about the VRS and the ABiH was thus the US offer of the suitcases for Dutchbat. This chance was not taken: Couzy refused to cooperate, partly on the advice of the head of the MIS/Army. The chances of the operation succeeding seemed large. Then the MIS and Dutchbat would have been given 'ears' and probably 'eyes' too. It would in any case have brought a major improvement to the weak Dutch intelligence situation and thus to the position of Dutchbat; this would now remain weak right up to the fall of the enclave.

## 7. Conclusions

With regard to the successes achieved during the war in Bosnia, one can conclude that American, British, French, German and other European services intercepted a great deal of military and political communications traffic. Comint targets included the VRS, the VJ, the ABiH but also the

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<sup>1281</sup> Confidential interview (78).

<sup>1282</sup> Confidential collection (7), Letter from Karadzic to Cot and Briquemont, R 4574, 25/012/93.

<sup>1283</sup> Confidential interview (62).

<sup>1284</sup> Cees Wiebes, 'Dutch Sigint during the Cold War, 1945-1994, in: Aid & Wiebes (eds.), *Secrets*, pp. 243-284.

<sup>1285</sup> Jensen & Platje, *De Marid*, p. 390.

<sup>1286</sup> MoD, MIS, Memorandum AVI/00/0471, Analysis of the message from Karadzic to Cot of 25 December 1993, 24/03/00.

communications traffic of UNPROFOR. In particular, much interception was conducted in the field of Elint, and Sigint was exchanged between the NATO partners. The Comint seems mostly to have been low level. This too was shared between some NATO member states.

*Was high-level intelligence also intercepted?*

Members of the American and Canadian intelligence community confirm that high-level diplomatic Comint was also available, but this was not shared with the allies. Probably it was only the Canadians who had access to this, thanks to their special relationship, while the British services – despite the UKUSA alliance – did not. This particular Comint is in fact of less importance to research into the fall of Srebrenica, because plans for the attack on Srebrenica were probably not discussed in these channels. Things are different with regard to high-level military Comint, such as conversations between the Army commanders of the VRS with each other or with the leaders of the VJ. The overriding opinion among many intelligence experts, authors and journalists is that above all the US services, but also German and French intelligence services withheld information regarding the VRS attack. Highly important intercepts revealing prior knowledge of the attack were supposedly not passed on to UNPROFOR and not even to NATO allies, including the United Kingdom and the Netherlands.<sup>1287</sup> This view is opposed by a senior US intelligence official who had access to archival Sigint. When the first articles appeared in the press, such as the one by the journalist Zumach, he went through all the old Sigint archives of the US intelligence services and found nothing that vaguely resembled the intercepts referred to by Zumach. This suggests that the intercepts in question do not exist after all, or that this official had no access to these secret intercepts. However, a large number of those interviewed continue to have doubts, and believe that such intercepts do indeed exist.

This immediately raises two questions. If these important messages were intercepted, why did the intelligence services not pass them on to UNPROFOR? It would be the height of cynicism to suggest that these services wanted Srebrenica to fall into the hands of the Bosnian Serbs. As a senior intelligence official declared to Lane and Shanker: ‘We make mistakes but we don’t withhold information and let people get killed.’<sup>1288</sup> In turn, one can note that at least in Australia people sometimes thought differently about this, in view of the fate of the five journalists executed in East Timor (see Section 2).

It seems more likely that in the case of Srebrenica it was a problem of information not being made available in time, of priorities and of insufficient analysis capacity. This in turn relates to the fact that there were no American, German or French ground troops active in the region. That raises the penetrating question as to whether, if the information had been passed on, the killing of thousands of soldiers and civilians after the conquest of Srebrenica could have been prevented. This question will be returned to in Chapter 8.

One must conclude that high-level intercepts did exist. The evidence for this was provided by the conversation between Gore and Bildt, when Gore read aloud from these intercepts. The NSA will have concentrated chiefly on the international political developments; the question as to whether the intercepts also contained important intelligence about the attack and the later events in Srebrenica must probably be answered negatively. The eastern enclaves did not enjoy a high priority within the US intelligence community. The same went for the GCHQ, which concentrated on Gorazde. The French Military Intelligence Service mostly concentrated on Sarajevo for the same reason. The Comint coverage in Eastern Bosnia was poor, and the VRS is sure to have frequently applied strict communications security. The messages, which the NSA nonetheless intercepted will, due to insufficient analysis and translation capacity, have landed in the ‘pending but not urgent pile’. What

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<sup>1287</sup> Roy Gutman, ‘Federal Army Tied to Bosnia War Crimes/Serb Leaders ‘Death Camp’ Link’, *Newsday*, 01/11/95; Richard Norton-Taylor, ‘Inside Story: The Ghosts of Nuremberg’, *The Guardian*, 28/11/95 and Charles Lane & Thom Shanker, ‘Bosnia: What the CIA Didn’t Tell Us’, *New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96, pp. 12-13.

<sup>1288</sup> Charles Lane & Thom Shanker, ‘Bosnia: What the CIA Didn’t Tell Us’, *New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96, p. 11.

remained were items of military Comint. Apart from this, the history of the exchange of Sigint is not exactly encouraging. Since 1945 this liaison has never been optimal, and the exchange of important diplomatic and military Sigint between the countries contributing troops to UNPROFOR and within NATO never took substantial form in Bosnia either. Much Comint was not analysed on time or was not allowed to be distributed due to its high classification – not among NATO allies and sometimes not even to a country's own national commanders. The exchange of Elint did go well, due to the common threat of the (Bosnian) Serb air defence.

### *Reasons for not sharing Sigint*

The reason for any high-level intercepts from VRS or ABiH communications not being shared must thus be sought in the reasons cited in this chapter. Intercepts are always surrounded by the greatest secrecy, meaning that the distribution of the Sigint product is always very limited. Only the highest political and military policymakers have access to high-level Sigint. Only a few are privy to such information, and even then only on a need-to-know basis. Many of the consulted members of the western intelligence community state that this presented a major barrier. During the war in Bosnia between 1993 and 1995, and later during the war in Kosovo, the NSA was faced with problems specifically relating to the exchange of Sigint with its NATO allies. This was mainly caused by the fact that most of the allies were not part of the UKUSA alliance – while not even the United Kingdom was given everything.

An initial summing up of the interception operations in the Balkans was made at a conference of the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association in Washington in June 2000. Bill Black, the former head of the European Center of the NSA and later deputy director of the NSA, declared that operations in the region had suffered strongly under the difficulties relating to an effective sharing relationship with allies. Black stated that in the past the NSA had only exchanged information on a bilateral basis, and that the American legislation regarding compartmentalization made it difficult to do the same in a coalition of allies. Bill Nolte, the Former Head of the NSA's Legislative Affairs Office, declared that the 'compartmentalization of intelligence doesn't really work anymore in modern coalition operations'. He also complained about 'the current problems of getting the NSA to modernize both its practices and mentality'. A British speaker said that there was a well-coordinated sharing arrangement between the English-speaking countries, but this was not the case between Washington and other foreign services.<sup>1289</sup> Staff of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* are also reported to have complained repeatedly in this context about the American refusal to share really high-level Sigint.<sup>1290</sup>

In short, the exchange between the allies in Bosnia (but also Kosovo) was not optimal. This extreme secrecy brought major disadvantages. Sigint often failed to reach the right commanders on the ground because it was decided that this Sigint had a need-to-know classification. As a result the intelligence product was not distributed any further. In fact this had already been the case in the Korean War, but the situation continued in the 1990s. A former intelligence official of the US Air Force, Richard Boyd, stated for instance that the 'intelligence connectivity between Air Force units and the NSA was "not good" in Kosovo'.<sup>1291</sup> According to Cooke another problem was that the flow of Sigint and Humint to the Balkan Current Intelligence Group in Whitehall was often sufficient to give good briefings to ministers. The most important limitation of Sigint is the enormous flow of information in relation to an insufficient analysis capability. Many customers of the NSA product complained in mid-1995 that the NSA was not able to meet the needs of the intelligence consumer.

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<sup>1289</sup> 'How Co-operation in Balkans Works', *Intelligence Newsletter*, 29/06/00.

<sup>1290</sup> Udo Ulfkotte, 'Die Nato ist im bilde, doch gibt sie nur wenig preis', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10/04/99 and confidential interviews (99) and (100).

<sup>1291</sup> 'How Co-operation in Balkans Works', *Intelligence Newsletter*, 29/06/00.

Moreover, the NSA is reported to have had a poor relationship with the Pentagon, which often complained about the unwillingness of the NSA to share Sigint for fear of compromising the source.<sup>1292</sup>

The limited usefulness of Sigint sometimes prevented the taking of practical action. This was the case in Bosnia too. Even the supply of British Comint to UK commanders was a problematic affair. Cooke, responsible for Bosnia at the DIS, was clear about this: ‘the usual rules on the dissemination of sensitive reports further limited what was given to troops serving in-theatre.’ But British commanders in UNPROFOR felt this lack of intelligence and often had to fall back on open sources intelligence to get a good intelligence ‘picture’.<sup>1293</sup>

In the case of Bosnia the disadvantages of Sigint probably outweighed the advantages. The disadvantages were: an avalanche of intercepted data; the lack of sufficient translators and analysis capability; and the limited possibilities of interception due to cryptography, secure links via land lines, the nature of the terrain and atmospheric conditions. In particular the interception of the most common form of communications traffic in Bosnia, the walkie-talkie, presented serious problems. In September 1995 an American commission established that some of the ‘limiting factors identified in tactical Sigint were outside the range of technical fixes – the fact that the former Yugoslav forces practice very good Communications security/Operational security and the shortage of Serbo-Croatian linguists’. It also established that the result of tactical Sigint (especially HF and VHF) had been inadequate.<sup>1294</sup>

Another reason for not passing on intelligence could have been the aftermath of the open British support for Bush’s presidential campaign and the dominant opinion in Europe about how the Balkans crisis could best be solved. The more or less neutral attitude taken by London and Paris towards the Balkans conflict was not properly appreciated.<sup>1295</sup> The US-UK animosity led to the Americans gradually reducing the flow of information from their side. The tap was not totally shut off, for that would have been in conflict with mutual agreements. But the flow slowly became less and of poorer quality, and the processing time was longer. Canadian intelligence officials, who still received this US intelligence, confirmed that the Americans imposed these limitations. They declared that the Americans had also reduced the flow of intelligence in the past, for instance during the Gulf War.<sup>1296</sup> A Canadian official confirmed that 85 percent of all intelligence from the United States ‘was stamped Can-US Only’, chiefly to keep the British out of the circuit. According to this official London reacted to this by reducing the intelligence flow to the other side of the Atlantic too.<sup>1297</sup>

Despite all the resources employed by the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Austria and other countries, and despite all the successes apparently achieved, it must provisionally be concluded that little Sigint landed on the desks of policymakers and of UNPROFOR commanders. Members of the British intelligence community claim that if American high-level intercepts did exist, they were definitely not passed on to UNPROFOR. Officers of UNPROFOR were noticeably bitter about this cynical behaviour by the US ally.<sup>1298</sup> A former UNPROFOR intelligence officer said in this respect that his organization ‘lost ownership of the picture of the battlefield to the point where it was irrecoverable’.<sup>1299</sup>

This non-sharing by the Americans involved both strategic and tactical Sigint. With respect to the latter an US military expert said: ‘NATO-releasable Sigint reporting consistently was a day late and a dollar short. It often comprised only marginally useful information as much as three to four days old.’

<sup>1292</sup> Matthew M. Aid, ‘The Time of Troubles: The US NSA in the Twenty-First Century’, in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3 pp. 17-20.

<sup>1293</sup> Urban, *UK Eyes*, p. 217.

<sup>1294</sup> Zachary Lum, ‘Balkan Eyes: Airborne Recon over Bosnia’, in: *IED On-Line*, November 1995. For this see: <http://jed-prod.weblabs.com/jed/hml/new/now95/feature.html>.

<sup>1295</sup> Confidential interview (47).

<sup>1296</sup> Confidential interviews (62) and (90).

<sup>1297</sup> Confidential interview (9).

<sup>1298</sup> Ian Bruce, ‘US let safe haven fall. US knew of Serb build-up’, *The Herald*, 24/10/95.

<sup>1299</sup> Smith, *New Cloak*, p. 210.

He concluded that in Bosnia Humint formed a much more valuable, precise and rapid source of tactical military intelligence, as compared to Sigint.<sup>1300</sup> His remark related to the SFOR period, following the Dayton Accord. It can safely be assumed that the situation was no better before the summer of 1995, as at this point no American ground troops were present in Bosnia. It can be concluded that much intelligence material gathered through national strategic platforms, such as satellites and special aircraft, was simply not automatically provided to UNPROFOR.

Akashi confirmed this to Annan. Some of the countries that had contributed troops did indeed have access to a 'very large pool of detailed tactical and strategic intelligence'. After all, Yugoslavia was the object of scrutiny by all intelligence services. Akashi said that a large part of the intelligence gathered by the leading troop-contributing nations was indeed Sigint, 'the most jealously guarded of all intelligence products'. In the case of the US, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand this is governed through the UKUSA alliance, and 'sharing outside this agreement is simply not possible', according to Akashi.<sup>1301</sup>

It is also important that UNPROFOR, and probably Akashi himself, were important American and European monitoring targets. Not only was the communications traffic of the Generals Rose and Smith intercepted; their headquarters in Sarajevo, and that of Janvier in Zagreb, were permanently monitored with special eavesdropping equipment. In this respect the headquarters and the communications traffic with New York, Zagreb, Geneva and other capitals was also a relatively easy target, as virtually nothing was done to raise communications security. After all, the UN was an open and transparent organization. This made it possible, for instance, for a Scandinavian service to intercept the communications between various Dutch units,<sup>1302</sup> and the Danish Military Intelligence Service managed to monitor telephone conversations between Rose and Mladic.<sup>1303</sup>

Bosnia was an 'intelligence carnival' with dozens of intelligence actors, all seemingly operating independently of each other in the area of SIGINT. In this respect it is only fair to say that SIGINT was given to different UN intelligence officers in Zagreb and Sarajevo, but to them where it was coming from and in what form it was being received was not clear. It is also indisputable that the vast majority of the raw intelligence that was being provided to UN forces in Bosnia came from US sources, including much of the low-level SIGINT. However, the complaints were often that there was no source information attached to the intercepts, so the consumers in Bosnia had no idea where it was coming from, how reliable it was, etc.

But it is easy to have critique on Washington DC. For instance, why did the European Sigint organizations contribute so little to UNPROFOR? The Germans, French, Brits, Austrians, Italians, etc. all conducted extensive Sigint collection in and with respect to Bosnia. However, this material was hardly forwarded to UNPROFOR or the Dutch but mostly used in support of their own forces in Bosnia and not for sharing with the smaller nations participating in the Bosnia peacekeeping operation. There is much in this chapter about NSA's history of failing to liaise with NATO allies. However, the truth is also that British, French, German, Austrian or other national Sigint services operating in and with respect to Bosnia were any better than the Americans in providing comparable Sigint. The 'simple' answer probably must be that they were just as 'bad' as the Americans, which should be one of the lessons of Bosnia from an intelligence standpoint. It was not until Kosovo in 1999 that the system was partially repaired through greater sharing of intelligence, including Sigint. But this was a NATO operation rather than a UN sponsored operation.

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<sup>1300</sup> Lt. Col. George K. Gramer, Jr., USA, 'Operation Joint Endeavor: Combined-Joint Intelligence in Peace Enforcement Operations', *Military Intelligence*, October-December 1996, p. 13.

<sup>1301</sup> UNNY, DPKO, UNPROFOR, Akashi to Annan, Z-1189, 18/07/95.

<sup>1302</sup> Interview with J.M.J. Bosch, 10/10/01.

<sup>1303</sup> Interview with H.A. Couzy, 04/10/01.

*The role of the Netherlands: no to the suitcase operation*

The Netherlands MIS hardly played a role in this Sigint war between 1992 and 1995. The service, and thus also the Ministry of Defence, were completely dependent on the intelligence that allies were prepared to exchange. Since the MIS had almost nothing to offer, however, this exchange remained very limited. The MIS could have played an important role if the secret American proposal for Dutchbat to take Comint suitcases into the enclave had been accepted. If true that the CIA made this offer five or six times, then it can be concluded that the US services themselves clearly were not achieving good results. Following each refusal the Americans came back to ask again; this is an indication that they were apparently not able to intercept the short-range communications traffic from satellites, U-2R aircraft or other aircraft. This was confirmed by British and Canadian intelligence officials. Flights by the U-2R did not provide much useful intelligence either. The main reason for setting up one intelligence cell, the Deployed Shed Facility in Naples, was therefore because the NSA had major gaps in its Comint in Bosnia.<sup>1304</sup>

The US services were obviously desperate to change the situation; this meant that if the Dutch had agreed to the suitcases operation, the Americans would presumably have done everything they could to maintain friendship with the MIS. Agreeing to the operation would probably also have resulted in the MIS being able to give Dutchbat ‘ears’ and perhaps also ‘eyes’ in Srebrenica. The ‘ears’ would have been the capability to monitor VRS and ABiH radio traffic in and around the enclave, and ‘eyes’ would have been provided because the CIA, as part of the exchange of intelligence, would probably have also been able to share aerial photographs – which the Canadians had also been able to access. This would have given the MIS a strong position of power; if the Americans had not kept to their promises, then turning off the switch would have been an effective threat.

Turning to the opinion of the former head of the MIS that the Bosnian Serbs would not have let this monitoring equipment through, one can note that it is unlikely that the VRS soldiers who manned the checkpoints would really have been capable to judge whether the suitcases were intended for communications or for monitoring equipment. The entire interception capability was contained in the software supplied with the package: the equipment itself looked like a normal transmitter and receiver. It would have been easy to ship in a few suitcases with the arrival of Dutchbat I, because Dutchbat I was allowed to take its own communications equipment in the normal manner.

For national use the Royal Netherlands Army had already provided a coded telephone and fax for the commander of Dutchbat, for the Defence Crisis Management Centre and the Army Crisis Staff in The Hague, for the Dutch Deputy Commander of Sector North East in Tuzla, Colonel C. Brantz, and for General Nicolai of Bosnia Hercegovina Command.<sup>1305</sup> During the fall of the town this satellite telephone worked well. This sophisticated technology was packed in six suitcases;<sup>1306</sup> and if these could be taken into the enclave, then why not the American suitcases? The only answer to the question why the suitcases were not permitted to be taken in was because the ‘top brass’ of the Netherlands Army did not wish to allow this type of operation. Refusing the deployment of their own national Sigint assets in Bosnia meant that DutchBat was cut off from an important flow of intelligence. Would the Netherlands have been unique as a smaller member of NATO by deploying their own assets? Not at all because other smaller members of NATO like Denmark had already deployed their own national assets with respect to Sigint in Bosnia. Refusing the American offer was not wise and shortsighted.<sup>1307</sup> Therefore it is very difficult to understand why general Couzy until this day is defending this decision.<sup>1308</sup>

<sup>1304</sup> Confidential interview (22).

<sup>1305</sup> MoD, CRST. G-6 RNLA Crisis Staff to CS Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, 09/05/95.

<sup>1306</sup> ‘Binnen halve minuut is Dutchbat thuis’ (Dutchbat home in half a minute), *Haagsche Courant*, 13/07/95.

<sup>1307</sup> Interview with General T. Lyng, 29/10/99.

<sup>1308</sup> Testimony of General H. Couzy before the Netherlands Parliamentary Inquiry into Srebrenica, 21/11/02.

## Chapter 6

# The Signals Intelligence War of the Warring Factions

‘A huge human mass of about 5,000 concentrated around Cerska and Kamenica. So many, you can’t kill them all...’ quoted from a Bosnian intercept of a conversation between VRS soldiers, 17 July 1995.

### 1. Introduction

The key role played by intercepted conversations during the conflict in Bosnia came to light in the spring of 2001 when the commander of the Bosnian-Serb Drina Corps, General Radislav Krstic, was standing trial in The Hague. At the Yugoslavia Tribunal a tape was played on which – according to the prosecution – Krstic could be heard issuing orders to eliminate groups of Bosnian Muslim prisoners. This message had been intercepted by the ABiH and was now being used as evidence against Krstic. One speaker on the tape identified himself as Krstic and was addressed as ‘General’ by the other speaker. The prosecution claimed that this was a recording of a conversation that took place on 2 August 1995 between Krstic and Lieutenant-Colonel Dragan Obrenovic, Chief of Staff of the VRS Zvornik Brigade. At that moment the Zvornik Brigade was scouring an area in search of ABiH soldiers, which were heading from Srebrenica to Tuzla. One voice on the tape said that Muslims were still being taken prisoner now and then. The other voice, allegedly that of Krstic, issued orders such as ‘Kill all in turn’ and ‘Don’t leave a single one alive’.

This incriminating intercept was immediately challenged by Krstic himself and his lawyers, but the prosecution had a trump card up its sleeve in the form of an identical recording of the same call registered at another Bosnian interception station. The ABiH had intercepted the same call from two different stations: Okresanica and Golija.<sup>1309</sup> So, it looked as if it had been monitored by both stations on 2 August 1995. The operators had recorded it on an audio tape and then entered it in their logbooks. Their notes were later typed out and sent on to army headquarters for further analysis.

It never became clear during the trial why these intercepts were not introduced as evidence against Krstic until November 2000.<sup>1310</sup> One possible explanation is that at the end of 1999 the ABiH was still busy working out transcripts for the benefit of the Tribunal.<sup>1311</sup> One former ABiH general said that it was a miracle, or sheer coincidence, that the tapes had survived at all, as the ABiH archives had suffered serious fire and water damage in 1998.<sup>1312</sup> During the conflict in Bosnia it was not only the US, Canadian and European services that used Communications Intelligence (Comint). The Serbs, the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Muslims also used it to obtain important advance information on military operations and activities. This chapter explores the resources and capacity of the VJ (*Vojaska Jugoslavij*, the Yugoslav Army), the VRS and the ABiH as they fought out a Sigint war alongside a ‘normal’ war. The main reason for investigating the signals war is that, insofar as can be determined, the following question has never been addressed at the Yugoslavia Tribunal or by the reports on Krstic’ trial in the international and domestic press or by current affairs programmes on radio and television.

If the Bosnian Muslims had intercepted calls relating to the attack on Srebrenica, the hunt for the column of men and boys, and the orders to kill everyone and carry out mass executions – calls

<sup>1309</sup> It is somewhat strange that Golija was mentioned; this lies in Western Bosnia and, given its distance from Srebrenica, it is hard to believe that the communication around the enclave was intercepted.

<sup>1310</sup> ‘srebrenica Trial - Expert witness assesses key radio *intercept* evidence’, in: *IWPR’s TRIBUNAL UPDATE 214*, March 19-24, 2001.

<sup>1311</sup> Interview with S. Arnautovic, 05/11/99.

<sup>1312</sup> Confidential interview (73) and interview with S. Arnautovic, 05/11/99.



made by Krstic and other Bosnian Serbs – why did they not loudly announce this to the world in the summer of 1995? It is after all very hard to believe that the Bosnian signals services would have listened in ‘live’ to the killing of their friends, colleagues and perhaps even members of their family without raising the alarm. To be sure, world-wide publication of these intercepted messages might have saved a lot of lives and prompted the Bosnian Serbs to halt their atrocities. Before addressing these questions and drawing conclusions it is important to shed light on the intelligence capacity and the targets of the hostile parties.

Section 2 will discuss the Signals Intelligence (Sigint) operations of the VJ and the VRS; it will describe the resources that the Serbs and the Bosnian Serbs had at their disposal, the ways in which they cooperated and the ABiH communication traffic that was intercepted by the Sigint units of the VJ and the VRS. The VJ and the VRS will be discussed in the same section because many documents and interviews have revealed that they cooperated closely on this type of intelligence.

Section 3 will concentrate on the Sigint operations of the ABiH. These appeared to be of high-quality, as demonstrated by the tape produced at the trial of General Krstic. It will also describe which Bosnian-Serb communication traffic the ABiH was able to intercept. Section 4 will answer the pressing question of whether the ABiH was able to follow these conversations in real time. In other words, were the intercepted messages and conversations directly available to the recipients of the intelligence product? And, if so, why did the Bosnian politicians and military commanders then decide to do nothing with this highly volatile intercepted communication? Why did they keep it under wraps and only reveal it years later to the researchers of the Yugoslavia Tribunal in The Hague?

This section will also deal with the exchange of Comint with UNPROFOR. Between 1992 and 1995 the ABiH and the Bosnian politicians wanted more western involvement in the war on the ground. They could have achieved this by throwing their intercepts into ‘the fight’ at UNPROFOR, but they would have had to be able to produce them at that moment, specifically those on the attack on Srebrenica and the flight to Tuzla by the Muslim soldiers. The VRS and ABiH had each other as Comint target. However, all the warring factions, including the VJ, also had a common target, namely, UNPROFOR units in general and Dutchbat in Srebrenica in particular. Section 5 will therefore consider UNPROFOR and Dutchbat as a Comint target for all the warring factions. Section 6 will draw some conclusions on this local Sigint war.

## 2. The Signals Intelligence War of the VJ and the VRS

The following extract is taken from a secret the British report of August 1995.

‘The former Yugoslavia had a considerable Signals Intelligence organization. The present location of Signals Intelligence assets cannot be accurately ascertained, but it must be assumed that all three Warring Factions have an intercept capability. There are recorded examples of limited Warring Faction intercept and jamming against UN troops. The Communications Intercepts threat has to be considered medium to high’.<sup>1313</sup>

It appears therefore that UNPROFOR knew about the excellent Sigint operations and capacity of the VJ. Certain background details can be established about this capacity.<sup>1314</sup>

The VJ (formerly the JNA) set great store by Sigint materiel and capabilities during the Cold War. In the 1980s the equipment was radically modernized to bring it up to western standards. This modernization programme took place under the code name *Arios*. Between 1989 and 1991 the VJ

<sup>1313</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, File RRFOS/2300-3 Opsec, Memorandum RRFOS, 25/07/95 and 08/09/95.

<sup>1314</sup> The information which follows on the Sigint of the VJ is taken from confidential interviews (5), (6) and (73) and the MoD, *MIS*, Report by the Dutch NIC, 04/02/99. The information dates from October 1998. See also: [http://www.vj.yu/vojska\\_e/struktura/vidovi/kov/](http://www.vj.yu/vojska_e/struktura/vidovi/kov/).

obtained the components for four *Arios* electronic warfare systems. Each system consisted of 14 vehicles which, during the conflict, had to collect Sigint across a 50-kilometre front. At the heart lay the Watkins Johnson WJ-8955 Electronic Support Measures System. During the conflict in the Krajina in 1991 the VJ used this system to launch artillery attacks on Croatian targets within one minute of a Croatian radio transmission. At the same time, it had enough supplies of older materiel which could be lent to the VRS, the army of the Bosnian Serbs. This consisted largely of French, Japanese, Swedish and older Russian systems. Some of the special equipment had been purchased in the USA by rich Serb businessmen who then smuggled it into Yugoslavia.

Before the conflict broke out in Bosnia the Serbs had all the Comint on hand: this comprised a complete system with defence attachés, Signals Intelligence (Sigint), Human Intelligence (Humint), Electronic Intelligence (Elint), Radar Intelligence (Radint) and direction-finding. Most of the equipment came from Japan and was assembled in Hungary. The Hungarian firm of Videoton was especially involved in this. This firm also helped to build special Sigint trucks for the VJ. The VJ acquired other crypto equipment from Siemens, but developed its own crypto systems later on the basis of the Siemens products. It set up its own institute for this purpose.

There were Sigint units in Izvor and Vranje with targets in Macedonia and the Adriatic. Sigint stations were set up in Valjevo and Vojvodina for operations against Bosnia and Croatia. Permanent interception stations were established in Batajnica with a staff of around sixty, which battalions were under the direct command of the VJ General Staff. This site was unquestionably the most important HF site and was also responsible for direction-finding; other sites were situated in Novi Sad, Podgorica, Kraljevo and Pirot. The interception station in Batajnica analysed the intercepts of domestic and foreign telephone lines as well as diplomatic communication, data transmission and encrypted digital traffic. It is not known whether the VJ was able to decode this; but it was considered unlikely in NATO circles as far as high-level communication was concerned.<sup>1315</sup>

Western embassies in Belgrade will also have been key targets for Comint. It is known, for instance, that Serb intelligence services monitored communication from the Australian Embassy.<sup>1316</sup> UNPROFOR and later SFOR<sup>1317</sup> and IFOR were, at any rate, important Comint targets. The operators were trained at Banjica military academy in Belgrade. The time taken for intercepting, processing and sending the report to the Ministry of Defence ranged from 20 minutes to two hours. This station was also able to send important intercepts direct to Belgrade via secure land lines. Another important Sigint listening post was situated on top of a mountain in Kutlovo. In addition to all of this, the VJ had the so-called 109<sup>th</sup> Electronic War Battalion, stationed in Prokuplje, at its disposal. This battalion had, in turn, various Sigint detachments at diverse locations. Its operations included analysis, communication traffic and radar detection.

In addition, the VJ used mobile interception trucks, which monitored and registered specific frequencies. These trucks were constantly on the move from one location to another and did not, as a rule, stay longer than two days in the same spot. They had to follow and intercept tactical military frequencies at the front. Most of the intercepted traffic was recorded on tape and analysed at brigade level. Decisions were also taken at this level on the number of Sigint trucks allocated to each sector.

During the conflict in Bosnia the Serbian air force also had access to special Sigint aircraft. For example, the VJ had a squadron of twelve special MIG-21 planes. This squadron, which was fitted with 'pods' on the underside of the aircraft, carried out Imagery Intelligence (Imint) and Sigint tasks from the air base in Ponikve and Belgrade. These aircraft carried out a maximum of five reconnaissance missions a day. The special *Obrva Soko* aircraft were also used for Sigint missions. UHF/VHF radio

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<sup>1315</sup> Confidential interviews (6), (8) and (13).

<sup>1316</sup> P.J. Spielman, 'ABC TC Yanks Lead Story on Aussie Spying on Chinese Embassy', in *Associated Press Worldstream*, 25/05/95.

<sup>1317</sup> See for example: Alix Kroeger, 'Bosnian Serbs eavesdrop on NATO', *BBC News*, 23/05/02. The sites Prijedor and Livno were mentioned: 'UN Radio Headlines, *UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, 28/05/02 and 'sFOR Block Livno Telecommunications Center', *FBIS-EEU-2000-1120*, 20/11/00.

messages, which were intercepted using Yugoslav and Russian equipment, were taped but were not directly relayed to a ground station. It was not until the end of a mission that the tapes were analysed. These MIGs were stationed at Ladjevci air base near Krajevo in Serbia. They were often moved to keep them out of sight of US spy satellites and U-2 missions. Sometimes, they flew over the Drina for operations above Bosnia. The VJ also used special Elint freight aircraft.<sup>1318</sup>

Like Croatia, Serbia had special UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) for Sigint operations. Before the war these were stationed in Bihac, and some of them fell into Croat hands. They were originally made in East Germany and ran on MIG 21 engines. They took off like a jet and could stay in the air between 45 and 60 minutes. The Yugoslav Navy had a special Sigint ship which was initially stationed in the port of Split but which was later transferred to Kotor in Montenegro. This ship was equipped with both Comint and Elint capabilities and was used constantly to monitor UNPROFOR and NATO traffic. During the war in Kosovo the VJ also used Sigint to mislead NATO. Special units were assigned the task of sending out disinformation. It was not possible to ascertain whether this also took place during the conflict in Bosnia, but it cannot be ruled out.

The VJ was the first organization responsible for Sigint in Serbia and had specially trained personnel for this purpose. Each worker was allocated a specific set of frequencies and had to tape the most important messages. The interceptor noted the time of interception and the subject of the message. He then took his notes and the tape recording to his superior for analysis. The interception station then informed the commanders of the other military units, who decided whether or not to inform the president. Routine military intercepts were sent direct to a brigade for analysis. If the messages turned out to be highly important, they were sent on immediately to the Commander-in-Chief via secure land lines. Every week, President Milosevic received a two-hour intelligence briefing, which included Sigint. Milosevic considered Comint especially important to the political and military decision-making process. He would have received tapes of, among other things, the telephone calls between Izetbegovic and political and military policy-makers in Washington.<sup>1319</sup> He supposedly also heard telephone calls made by Karadzic. This led him to conclude that Karadzic was only using the Krajina as a concession to Mladic in exchange for areas in Bosnia: Karadzic knew that, in terms of military strategy, Mladic was more attached to Western Bosnia and the Krajina. Karadzic himself was more interested in Eastern Bosnia as it was geographically contiguous with Serbia.<sup>1320</sup>

The telephone traffic between the enclave Srebrenica and Izetbegovic was also monitored. On 22 April and 4 May 1994 the VRS intercepted and allegedly taped two calls between Naser Oric and Izetbegovic in which Oric announced a military offensive. The two men also discussed the humanitarian situation in the enclave.<sup>1321</sup> Oric was in permanent contact with the General Staff in Sarajevo and sent them reports on a regular basis.<sup>1322</sup>

The VJ assisted the VRS by giving them old equipment. Up to the Dayton Accord VRS officers could participate in the special Sigint training in Belgrade. Afterwards, the VJ stopped this, saying that the VRS could not afford to pay for the training. Between 1993 and 1995 the VRS and the VJ cooperated closely in Sigint and Elint. Intelligence on NATO air strikes were especially shared in full; this gave the VRS time to switch off their radar systems and bring certain installations to safety (see also Chapter 7). The Krajina Serbs were also connected to this warning system and had excellent Sigint capabilities. Nevertheless, the bombings inflicted serious damage on the VRS Comint and Elint systems<sup>1323</sup>, which made the VRS even more dependent on the VJ for Sigint. When the conflict was

<sup>1318</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1319</sup> Berislav Jelinic, 'Croatian citizen is the primary financier of both Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic', in: *Nacional*, Issue 294, 05/07/01.

<sup>1320</sup> Confidential interview (95).

<sup>1321</sup> MoD, *Sitrap*s. HQ DutchBat to HQ SNE, 15/05/94.

<sup>1322</sup> Report of a meeting with the *Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Committee for Compiling Data on Crimes against Humanity and International Law*, Belgrade, 11/06/98.

<sup>1323</sup> For a photo of the elimination of such a communication antenna see Lutgert & De Winter, *Check The Horizon*, p. 445.

underway the VRS could sometimes call upon the Serb planes operating from Banja Luka, where some 40 or 50 aircraft were stationed, some with Sigint capabilities. According to a ABiH general, the MIGs could do very little or nothing at all because of the No-Fly Zone.<sup>1324</sup>

Like the VJ, the VRS had a network of permanent interception stations at diverse locations. This was based on a detailed plan for the communication traffic of the Bosnian Serbs, which went under the code name of *Vatra* (Fire).<sup>1325</sup> The interception device that was used most by the VRS was the RPK-3. It also used Hungarian-made Sigint trucks which had come from the VJ. Bosnian military sources claimed that the Hungarians had always had excellent technical equipment. These trucks were converted by the VJ and fitted with the most suitable equipment. These trucks were capable of intercepting two HF, four VHF, and two air force frequencies.

Furthermore, the VRS had special scanners, which could easily intercept tactical intelligence at battalion level. A former ABiH general claimed that the VJ and VRS also had special helicopters with Sigint and Imint capabilities at their disposal. Some Bosnian Serb MIG-21s had Sigint as well as Imint equipment on board. The information would allegedly be relayed directly to the special Sigint trucks.<sup>1326</sup> Comint turned out to be a crucial source of information for the VRS. A VRS document dated 1993 shows that 70% of all intelligence received by the VRS high command came from Sigint.<sup>1327</sup> The main intelligence targets of the VJ and the VRS were the radio connections of the ABiH. When the conflict erupted, the VRS seized the Stolice tower to the north of Tuzla. This tower was the axis of all the communication traffic in Eastern Bosnia. The VRS cut off all the connections between Bosnian territory and Eastern Bosnia, with the result that Tuzla became isolated. It then cut off all connections with Croatia, Sarajevo, and Srebrenica.

Until early July 1993 this communication tower was still being used by the ABiH. At that time the telephone connection ran from Tuzla via the Stolice Tower to Srebrenica; this line was definitely tapped by the VRS. After that, the communications of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla ran to Sarajevo via Konjuh and to Croatia via Okresanica. When the main centre of communication, the Stolice Tower, fell into the hands of the VRS, the number of ABiH phone lines fell from 1080 to only 24.<sup>1328</sup> After the tower had been seized, the ABiH made several attempts – also with the aid of tanks – to destroy it, but without success. It did, however, manage to inflict some damage.<sup>1329</sup> Thereafter, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps switched to high voltage cables for their communication. Most likely, the lightning conductors were used for connections.<sup>1330</sup> This gave the ABiH access to a few extra channels for which special equipment was used. This type of telephone connection was set up mainly with Sarajevo because the high-voltage cables with Croatia were severed. In addition, there were underground telephone cables between Tuzla and Srebrenica and between Srebrenica and Sarajevo, which were probably destroyed by the VRS during the conflict. There were no separate telephone lines for the army.

The VRS units responsible for electronic warfare did not have such a difficult job, as the ABiH had no special receivers. Most of the units, including the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in Srebrenica, used a YEASU FM Receiver FT-411E. This was a Japanese-made walkie-talkie which worked on the 144 - 146 MHz frequency. It had a range of between five and ten kilometres and a capacity of 2 Watts. The VRS could monitor this traffic because it normally operated with the same equipment or with Motorolas, which could intercept the YEASU. Though the YEASU had a small aerial, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division could still reach Tuzla from the enclave if they used an extended aerial (such as a wire in a tree) on the top of a mountain. Initially, an extended aerial was mounted on the roof of the Telecom building in Srebrenica;

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<sup>1324</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1325</sup> Cekic, *Aggression*, p. 199.

<sup>1326</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1327</sup> *Judgement in the Krstic Trial*, § 112, p. 41.

<sup>1328</sup> For suspicions: MoD, *MIS/Bakker Commission*, Vreman to Van Dijk, Debriefing report, 09/03/95.

<sup>1329</sup> Confidential interview (73). See also: MoD, Sitrap, HQ SNE to BHC, Sitrep, 29/06/94.

<sup>1330</sup> MoD, *MIS/Bakker Commission*. Vreman to Van Dijk, Debriefing report, 09/03/95.

later treetops were used. Throughout the conflict the ABiH purchased this version of the YEASU in consignments of twenty, costing approximately DM 25,000.<sup>1331</sup>

The Electronic Warfare units of the VRS also had to intercept the permanent ABiH transmitter in Srebrenica. This was a RUP-20 transmitter and receiver, which was used in 1992 and had a range of around 50 kilometres. The RUP had a capacity of 20 Watts and operated on a frequency of 2-20 MHz. A second transmitter came later. Still later, the Presidency of the town, Opstina, obtained a RUP-12 with a range of 12-15 kilometres and a capacity of 2 Watts which operated on a VHF of 30-70 MHz.<sup>1332</sup> The ABiH used two other extra communication systems. HF traffic with ABiH headquarters in Sarajevo and the headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla ran through the 'Pactor'. HF communication had a range of between 50 and 500 kilometres. One Pactor was flown by helicopter to Srebrenica via Zepa in January 1995. The so-called Paket VHF Radio System was connected with Tuzla and became operational on 20 March 1993. An encrypted message was fed into the Paket in Tuzla through a personal computer and then sent to Srebrenica, where it was subsequently decoded. Up to 1 March 1994, 586 messages were received and 525 were transmitted in Srebrenica.<sup>1333</sup> There are no figures available for subsequent years.

The 28<sup>th</sup> Division of the ABiH in Srebrenica received direct orders from Sarajevo via the Pactor. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps received a transcript. Sarajevo also issued orders to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division via Tuzla.<sup>1334</sup> As the incoming orders never bore the signature of the commander, they were sometimes ignored. The connections ran initially through the old telephone network, which was then still operational. Later, this was no longer possible.<sup>1335</sup> The Electronic Warfare units of the VRS were, however, confronted with Bosnian crypto programmes, designed by a team led by Dr Muhidin Lelic at the ABiH. These were based on the NATO crypto programme. US intelligence services supposedly helped Lelic to compile them. According to an ABiH general, the VRS never cracked this code.<sup>1336</sup> This claim is unlikely as the VRS could read the open as well as the encrypted communications of the ABiH before, during and after the attack on the enclave. The VRS had broken the ABiH crypto software and could read most of the communication traffic of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in Srebrenica.

#### *What ABiH communication traffic did the Bosnian Serbs intercept?*

As early as 14 June 1995, Tuzla sent a warning to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division that the VRS had penetrated the ABiH radio network. Tuzla issued instructions to improve the communications security: makeshift landlines laid by the ABiH were to be monitored and checked every week. Telephone connections close to VRS territory had to be checked every day.<sup>1337</sup> These precautions were to no avail. On 9 July the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps announced that the VRS was still constantly intercepting the open and coded messages of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division and that the Bosnian intercepts were being sent direct to the Command of the VRS Drina Corps for processing. The analysed messages were then immediately sent back to the VRS units at the front around Srebrenica. In the meantime, the commander of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division was again warned that their communications system had weak cryptographic protection.<sup>1338</sup>

No doubt the VRS also intercepted messages regarding a possible joint defence of Srebrenica by Dutchbat and the ABiH. Bosnian Muslims have claimed that Dutchbat and the ABiH had agreed on

<sup>1331</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1332</sup> Interview with Osman Suljic, 04/03/98.

<sup>1333</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. 28<sup>th</sup> Division to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, No. 02/8-537/2, 13/03/94. The claim by General Sead Delic that the 28<sup>th</sup> Division did not have its own crypto equipment is untrue. Interview with Sead Delic, 10/03/98.

<sup>1334</sup> Confidential information (37).

<sup>1335</sup> Interview with Sefko Hodzic, 24/05/99.

<sup>1336</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1337</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Section MSS, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to 28<sup>th</sup> Division, no. 06-05-159/95, 14/06/95.

<sup>1338</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to Odbrana Republike VoVJ TaVJ, no. 02/8-01-1130, 09/07/95.

a concerted defence shortly before the attack.<sup>1339</sup> These assertions were denied by Dutchbat.<sup>1340</sup> The belief by the ABiH soldiers that such an agreement had been reached was more a question of wishful thinking. They referred to it in early July in their communications with 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla. It is only logical that the VRS would have intercepted these transmissions and would have been aware of the discussions between Dutchbat and the ABiH.

On 9 July Osman Suljic, the War President of Srebrenica, called President Izetbegovic. During this call Suljic asked the Bosnian President to save the population of Srebrenica but Izetbegovic did not respond. It is likely that this too was intercepted by the VRS.<sup>1341</sup> The belief that this call indeed was intercepted, is supported by the fact that, on 10 July 1995, the headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla sent another message to, among others, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division saying that the VRS had again deciphered some coded ABiH documents. This had happened because of weak cryptographic protection: the code had been cracked with the aid of a calculator. A special measure was then introduced whereby the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in Srebrenica was ordered to keep messages which were transmitted through HF, VHF and UHF to a bare minimum and to use the K-2 crypto programme. General documents had to be coded by means of frequently changing frequencies and keys. Telephonic contacts with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla could only take place after changes had been made to the secret names and numbers.<sup>1342</sup> However, Lelic's apparently weak crypto programme was used right up to the fall of Srebrenica.

#### *Interception of the column heading from Srebrenica to Tuzla*

The flight of the column of Bosnian Muslims from Srebrenica to Tuzla is addressed in detail in Chapter 1 of Part IV of the Srebrenica report.<sup>1343</sup> This section explores how far the VRS was able to intercept calls made during this event. The ABiH took along a laptop computer with crypto software, which was later destroyed by the operator. The VRS found the demolished laptop and took the operator prisoner. He was taken to Zvornik where he was tortured in the hope that he would disclose his secrets. The ABiH knew through Comint that he had been arrested and taken to Zvornik. The operator did not break under torture and the VRS eventually released him.<sup>1344</sup>

It was fairly easy for the VRS to track the ABiH column as it made its way to Tuzla. Throughout the journey the ABiH used various Motorola walkie-talkies, including the YEASU. These had probably been supplied to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in the spring of 1995; spare batteries were charged before the column set out. The different parts of the column communicated through couriers and Motorolas; the vanguard maintained contact with the command of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, the middle section and the rearguard (on another frequency). The commander of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division was in the middle and had an overview of the whole column. Some 20 Motorolas were used in the course of the manoeuvre. The VRS were constantly tuned in to the YEASU Motorolas and knew the exact locations of the different segments of the column. Hence, they could easily launch targeted shelling and claim many victims.<sup>1345</sup> Two intercepts by the intelligence service of the Drina Corps of the VRS, sent through the police station at the town Bijeljina, indicated that two groups in the column attempted to get instructions on how to act when they ran into an ambush near Kamenica. Later, the VRS experienced increasing difficulty when it tried to intercept the Motorolas of the ABiH, because the batteries gradually ran out and use had to be kept to a minimum. When the ABiH reached the village Baljkovica the batteries were flat.<sup>1346</sup>

<sup>1339</sup> *ABiH Tuzla, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps*, no number. Additional statement by Ramiz Becirovic, 16/04/98, based on an earlier statement of 11/08/95.

<sup>1340</sup> See Chapter 6 of Part III of the main Srebrenica report for a detailed discussion.

<sup>1341</sup> Interview with Osman Suljic, 04/03/98.

<sup>1342</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to 28<sup>th</sup> Division*, no. 02/08-684/2, 10/07/95.

<sup>1343</sup> See for the English version: [www.srebrenica.nl](http://www.srebrenica.nl)

<sup>1344</sup> Confidential information (37).

<sup>1345</sup> Confidential information (37).

<sup>1346</sup> For the journey to Tuzla: Chapter 1 in Part IV of the main Srebrenica report.

### *Conclusions on the interception by the Bosnian Serbs*

As far as the attack on Srebrenica is concerned, the measures taken by the ABiH for the defence of the enclave probably held no secrets for the Bosnian Serbs if they were passed on through radio. It has become apparent that the ABiH had been making considerable use of these channels in 1993 and 1994 as well. Communication traffic between Dutchbat and the ABiH was also constantly and successfully monitored by the Sigint units of the VRS. The men and boys in the ABiH column heading for Tuzla must therefore have been an easy prey for the VRS units. It must have been relatively easy to pinpoint the positions of the various groups in this long column by working out cross-bearings on the basis of the intercepted messages. In addition, the VRS must have been able to gather intelligence on the internal problems in the column, the difficulties it encountered, and the internal agreements and planning. Sigint provided the VRS with clear insight into what was happening within the ABiH and gave it a permanent head start on a group that was already in serious trouble.

### **3. The Signals Intelligence operations of the ABiH**

‘We were listening to their communications and we could hear them as they crossed the river and headed to Bratunac.’ This statement was made by a Bosnian intelligence officer, who concluded from intercepts that the VJ was involved in the attack on Srebrenica.<sup>1347</sup> Sigint not only played a key role in the VRS attack on Srebrenica in 1995, but also much earlier, in 1993. However, at that time the attack on Srebrenica (and Zepa) did not ultimately go ahead. Mladic knew from his own intelligence service that the local ABiH commander of Srebrenica, Naser Oric, was desperate and ready to surrender and therefore he probably decided to ‘push on’. ABiH soldiers claimed that they had intercepted a radio message from Mladic to the VRS besiegers of Srebrenica; at that moment the VRS was 800 metres from the centre. Mladic ordered a local VRS colonel to ‘move forward’ and take the town.<sup>1348</sup> The exact wording of the intercepted message was allegedly: ‘Tell all units to enter Srebrenica this night. Go straight into town, no journalists, no reports, no statements’.<sup>1349</sup> In the same period the Bosnian Foreign Minister, Haris Silajdzic, showed a journalist from the *Washington Post* VRS messages intercepted by the ABiH which indicated that Zepa was to be taken and that everyone there was to be killed.<sup>1350</sup>

The limitations of the ABiH Comint capacity in Srebrenica in the spring of 1993 did not make it any less effective. For instance, the ABiH could intercept VRS communications on HF as well as on walkie-talkies. They usually achieved this with the assistance of the Srebrenica amateur radio club, which operated in the enclave and was also responsible for the connections with Tuzla and Sarajevo. Two ABiH officers headed a group of forty, all members of the amateur radio club, which had two transmitter-receivers. Later, the 28<sup>th</sup> Division obtained an extra transmitter-receiver, which was capable of intercepting VHF communications.<sup>1351</sup> This equipment, which was flown into the enclave, was suitable for tracking VRS walkie-talkie communications. In addition, VRS radio equipment was sometimes captured.

The Comint reports were always sent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla for further analysis and not to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division. The results were, of course, sent back to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in Srebrenica. ABiH soldiers admitted that the Bosnian Army was not able to decipher the VRS coded messages.<sup>1352</sup> During the demilitarization of Srebrenica in 1993 the radio equipment was hidden from UNPROFOR.

<sup>1347</sup> Cabell Bruce, ‘Belgrade Blamed’, *Newsday*, 12/08/95

<sup>1348</sup> Mladic would after the fall of Srebrenica boast to DutchBat Commander Karremans that he had again excellent intelligence. Interview with Th.J.P. Karremans, 17/12/98.

<sup>1349</sup> ‘srebrenica on the verge of falling to Serbs’, *The Toronto Star*, 17/04/93.

<sup>1350</sup> Phil McCombs, ‘At the Bosnia Crossroads’, *The Washington Post*, 05/05/93.

<sup>1351</sup> Confidential information (38) and interviews with Sefko Hodzic, 24/05/99 and Isnam Taljic 18/05/99.

<sup>1352</sup> Confidential information (38).

After the summer of 1993 the Comint network was greatly extended; new equipment was smuggled in, especially in 1994.<sup>1353</sup> The couriers between Srebrenica and Zepa were issued with ten pieces of RUP-12 and IC H 10 portable radio equipment, which was also used to track and intercept VRS messages en route. In January and February 1995 additional portable radio equipment, including a short-wave radio, 50 metres of coax cable, a short-wave antenna and telephone cables were brought into Srebrenica.

The Comint experts of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division were constantly requesting new equipment, as the quality of the supplied equipment left much to be desired. New problems soon arose: the batteries could not be charged easily. There was not enough fuel for the generators and the ABiH was forever wrestling with flat storage batteries. A decision was taken to bring an 'energy-saving' Bertoli generator by helicopter to Srebrenica. Later, the ABiH illegally tapped electricity from Dutchbat to help solve this problem.<sup>1354</sup> Sigint experts often dub the conflict in Eastern Bosnia 'the Motorola War'. Everyone used walkie-talkies in the mountainous terrain because they were ideal for short-range military-tactical communications. The ABiH was very active in intercepting traffic around Srebrenica, both from the enclave itself and from special interception stations. The fact that the Muslims were intercepting VRS radio communications around the enclave was also brought to light by Milos Stankovic, translator-interpreter to General Rose and later Smith. During his stay in Srebrenica in the spring of 1993 Stankovic had tried to win the trust of the Bosnian Serbs by disclosing the burial place of his father, a Cetnik, who was handed over by the British and was subsequently executed by Tito's troops. ABiH officers referred to this a day later; suddenly, they also knew of the burial place.<sup>1355</sup>

Not only the ABiH tried to intercept (sometimes successfully) walkie-talkie communication from Srebrenica, it also had various interception stations outside the enclave. The most important of these were in Okresanica and Konjuh, which formed the operational base of the Electronic Warfare Unit of the ABiH 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, the Electronic Warfare Unit of the 21<sup>st</sup> Division and – from April 1993 – the Sigint section of the Bosnian National Security Service. Though this latter unit worked independently, it shared some of its intelligence with the Electronic Warfare Unit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, especially during the events in Srebrenica. This unit focused on the interception of civil communications in Srpska in the Podrinje and around Zvornik and Vlasenica, though it also followed military communications.

In 1992, the ABiH started organizing activities related primarily to Comint in Eastern Bosnia through permanent interception stations. There is not much archive material for this start-up period, but it was possible to build the following reconstruction on the basis of interviews and confidential information. There was, to begin with, very little technological expertise. Only one unit had interception equipment, as a lot had been taken by the VJ. At that time, it was possible to intercept two HF, four VHF and two air force channels from Konjuh and Okresanica; one soldier was available per wavelength for this purpose. He decided which frequency to intercept and reported verbally. The information was not analysed, and there were no crypto analysts, so the ABiH could only intercept open communication.

The intelligence was, however, good because the VRS did not bother to encrypt its messages at first. The Bosnians discovered that the higher the rank of the commander, the more open was the VRS communication. The VRS was scarcely aware of communications security, even though it emerged at Krstic's trial that it had always known that the ABiH could intercept their messages. Apparently, this was a risk they were willing to take. In 1992 the Bosnian Serbs had already pinpointed the location of nine well-equipped and manned ABiH interception stations. A signals officer of the Drina Corps testified to the Yugoslavia Tribunal that the communications security was not properly observed.<sup>1356</sup> Consequently, the ABiH could collect intelligence on, say, VRS units, the location of VRS radio

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<sup>1353</sup> UNGE, *ICTY*. 283<sup>rd</sup> Brigade to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, no. 191-10/94, 07/11/94.

<sup>1354</sup> UNGE, *ICTY*. Cos Enver Hadzihasanovic to Naser Oric, no. 1-1/224-1, 07/02/95 and NIOD, *MIS CD-Roms*, 28<sup>th</sup> Division to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, no. 02-08-04/95, 17/02/95.

<sup>1355</sup> Stankovic, *Trusted Mole*, p. 251.

<sup>1356</sup> *Judgement in the Krstic Trial*, § 113, p. 42.



equipment, planned operations, the supply of fresh troops, the order of battle, losses, new operational plans and logistical problems.

Before long, the ABiH in Eastern Bosnia needed more Sigint personnel in order to cope with the flow of information. The VRS realized that the ABiH could intercept their messages. Pressure was then put on the VRS command to use crypto equipment, but apparently without much effect. The ABiH also discovered that the VRS could easily follow UNPROFOR communication traffic. It is for this reason that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps exhorted Sector North East in Tuzla on various occasions to use crypto equipment. The intelligence officers of the Scandinavian battalion in particular were alerted to this threat but the UN allegedly refused to do anything about it.

To convince UNPROFOR of these threats one ABiH general even carried out a test designed to elicit a response from the VRS. The ABiH sent out a false radio message about an ABiH patrol. The Scandinavian battalion sent this message on to Sarajevo whereupon the VRS responded immediately with shelling.<sup>1357</sup> This was confirmed by the British Lieutenant-Colonel C.A. Le Hardy, Intelligence and Operations Officer from Sector North East in Tuzla. He believed that there was indeed a leak in the radio transmission with Bosnia-Herzegovina Command: there was no question of secure communication. Le Hardy claimed that the Bosnian Serbs had excellent Sigint and had come into possession of a lot of information by eavesdropping on phone lines.<sup>1358</sup>

Later, it became increasingly difficult for the ABiH to monitor VRS communication as the Bosnian Serbs were making more frequent use of better crypto equipment; in addition, sometimes important discussions were carried out in Romanian or Hungarian. However, the ABiH could still follow the traffic at brigade level and lower. Usually, the communication was carried out at set times. Sometimes the ABiH intercepted calls from senior VRS officers who complained about logistical and other problems. At that time, the ABiH still had only limited technical capabilities, a personnel shortage and no mobile interception trucks. It was also plagued by a shortage of spare parts and fuel to keep the electricity generators running at the interception stations.<sup>1359</sup> The interception stations at Konjuh and Okresanica targeted the military communications of the VRS. Various witnesses at the trial of General Krstic testified that these communications were followed before, during and after the fall of Srebrenica. The Electronic Warfare Unit in Konjuh focused primarily on the Drina Corps and the General Staff of the VRS. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH also had its own interception station in Tuzla.<sup>1360</sup>

The ABiH encountered considerable problems with the interception of this type of radio traffic. The VRS used the Stolice Tower, which it had seized from the Bosnian Muslims, for most of their communications, which the ABiH was unable to disrupt. The VRS also used mainly radio links. As all the stations and antennae were on Bosnian-Serb territory they could not be intercepted by the ABiH; these were line-of-sight radio links with a maximum point-to-point range of 50 kilometres. An electronic warfare unit can only intercept this type of communication if it has a 'highly directional' antenna, which for a good interception needs to be positioned directly under the radio link as the beam travels in a straight line from antenna to antenna and can cover anything from 100 to 1,000 channels.

There were no radio links between the Stolice Tower above Srebrenica and the military nerve centre of the VJ in Tara (Serbia). That connection was maintained via Veliki Zep. At that time, the ABiH did not have receivers to tap in to radio links; this equipment was not among secret weapon deliveries such as the 'Black Flights'. However, early in the conflict the ABiH, working from Zepa, had managed to destroy the tower in Veliki Zep and put it out of operation for a long time.<sup>1361</sup> The VRS repaired it later during the war.

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<sup>1357</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1358</sup> Interview with C.A. Le Hardy, 08/10/97.

<sup>1359</sup> Confidential information (37).

<sup>1360</sup> Overview of Court Proceedings, statements by 8 witnesses, 23/06/00 and 30/06/00, on: <http://www.un.org/icty/news/Krstic/Krstic-cp.htm>.

<sup>1361</sup> John Pomfret, 'Bosnian Muslims Flee As Serbs Seize Town', *The Washington Post*, 25/07/95.

As far as the technological capabilities of the Bosnian Comint stations in Konjuh, Okresanica and Tuzla were concerned, the ABiH only had old scanners at the start of the conflict. These could only be used for listening in to tactical intelligence at battalion level; strategic and operational intelligence were not obtained with Comint. The Comint itself was analysed at the headquarters in Sarajevo. There were no teleprinters or computers for crypto analysis. Though the ABiH did sometimes manage to obtain strategic intelligence, this was more by coincidence and usually took the form of communication between VRS soldiers.

The search for frequencies in Konjuh and Okresanica took place manually. There were not enough tapes to record conversations, so the same tapes were used over and over again. Every evening a report appeared containing the information collected on that day. In Konjuh only two or three people, working in eight-hour shifts, tried to follow the communication; they independently selected the frequencies and recorded only parts of the VRS communication on tape. No real-time intelligence was possible here. The VRS also used the normal telephone connections between Bratunac, Skelani and Milici. The ABiH were unable to tap these lines for they could not get near it. They did not launch any special operations to break this connection.<sup>1362</sup>

In Konjuh the ABiH also had several RUP transmitters and receivers with a range of over 50 kilometres and a capacity of 20 Watts. They operated on a frequency of between 2 and 20 MHz. The RUP could only listen in to one frequency at a time, and, though between four and eight receivers were in use, they could not all be used at once because of a shortage of fuel and batteries. A maximum of four frequencies could be listened to at the same time. In total, both Konjuh and Okresanica had around ten people, including security, who worked in shifts. So, work did not continue non-stop on Comint. One person worked on two stations, concentrating on finding frequencies that were used for the command. Sometimes there were long periods of silence, or the frequencies changed and the search had to begin again. Most of the VRS communication took place in the morning and evening.<sup>1363</sup>

The crew of the Electronic Warfare Unit of the 21<sup>st</sup> Division in Okresanica was small, consisting of three interception positions which were manned round-the-clock in shifts. Each team worked between four and eight hours a day for a whole week and then had a week off. Operators who intercepted the message made crude notes and worked it out later in their logbooks. These notes were passed on to the commander, who typed out the messages on a computer. The intercepts were then sent by courier to the command of the 21<sup>st</sup> Division for further analysis. Important messages were phoned through immediately to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla. There was no direction-finding equipment and frequencies were identified on the basis of the knowledge of the Comint operator.<sup>1364</sup>

In the course of the conflict the Electronic Warfare Unit of the ABiH in Konjuh, Okresanica and Tuzla encountered more and more difficulties as it tried to intercept the messages of the Bosnian Serbs. The civil authorities and the VRS made increasing use of crypto equipment, which they borrowed or obtained from the VJ. The VRS used the KZU-31 system and frequently changed the keys. For example, it would start with Code 11. After two hours it would change keys and use Code 12. This made it impossible to penetrate the traffic. The KZU-31 was mechanical and was used for connections between headquarters of a corps and headquarters of a brigade.

The constantly changing keys often presented the ABiH code breakers with insurmountable problems. The Electronic Warfare Unit did, however, discover during the attack on Srebrenica that the Bosnian-Serb General Milenko Zivanovic had a direct line to Mladic, who since 9 July had been in the forward commando post of the Drina Corps in Pribicevac. These communications were always protected by a crypto connection. The decoding programme of the Drina Corps ran via a telex and the KZU-31 encrypting machine which was produced in Serbia. According to a former ABiH general, this

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<sup>1362</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1363</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1364</sup> 'srebrenica Trial - Expert witness assesses key radio *intercept* evidence', *IWPR's TRIBUNAL UPDATE* 214, March 19-24, 2001. See also statement by witness CC (Radio Interception operator in Okresanica) on 27/06/00.

made it impossible to follow these messages.<sup>1365</sup> This was confirmed by a message sent by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division on 9 July 1995. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps had intercepted a encrypted message between the VRS General Staff in Han Pijesak and the Drina Corps, which the ABiH was unable to decode. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps suspected that it related to the shelling of Srebrenica.<sup>1366</sup> At a lower level, VRS units used codebooks. For instance, the word ‘tank’ was assigned number 323 and ‘lorry’ 325. The ABiH sometimes managed to get their hands on VRS codebooks during military operations, but the VRS changed the system every day. All the words were assigned new numbers. It was only when the fighting started that plain language was used again.

A study conducted by some foreign Sigint experts in Konjuh, Okresanica and Tuzla in 2000 revealed that the interception equipment used during the conflict was suitable for intercepting the aforementioned messages. In Okresanica a twelve-metre high antenna was found with different types of aerials attached. There was also a parabola antenna with a diameter of 1.5 metres which was intended for monitoring UHF radio traffic (above 300 MHz) and a YAGI antenna to intercept the VHF frequency (30-300 MHz). These were placed on a two-metre-high mast on top of the reception tower, giving an effective height of 842 metres above sea level. This tower stood at the top of Majevisa Mountain.

One of the radio systems that were used was the RRU 800. This was a 12- or 24-channel radio receiver that worked on the 610-960 MHz frequency and had a maximum range of 70 kilometres. An extra RRU 800 was available for communication traffic at greater distances. This system targeted communication between brigades and their headquarters. The second radio system was the RRU 1. This receiver intercepted messages at 230-270 MHz and had a range of approximately 50 kilometres. The RRU 1 targeted the communication traffic between the headquarters of battalions and brigades and could also be used as a mobile Comint system. One of the key ABiH targets was Veliki Zep. Both the RRU 800 and the RRU 1 systems in Okresanica focused on this. Veliki Zep, Cer and Gucevo were the most important communication nodes of the VRS. Communications in Veliki Zep were intercepted with an ICOM IC-R100 VHF/UHF receiver. Seven UHER tape recorders were used during the conflict. An ABiH officer in Okresanica said that he had read an intercept, which indicated involvement by the local police in the VRS operations after the fall of Srebrenica.

Konjuh was an interception station, which was not far away from Olovo and Kladanj. It was situated at the top of a mountain at some 1,316 metres above sea level. Originally, Konjuh had been an important relay station for communication in former Yugoslavia. When the ABiH threatened to seize Konjuh, the VRS tried to destroy the station, but were prevented from doing so by a swift ABiH operation. Konjuh was then converted into an ABiH intercept site. This is where the VRS communications on the column from Srebrenica to Tuzla were followed. It was closed after the Dayton Accord.<sup>1367</sup> There were still tape recorders in the building in 2000. The former staff in Konjuh said that they had only UHER tape recorders at their disposal during the conflict. Communications were intercepted with a parabola antenna with a diameter of 1.5 metres and two other antennae. These were still directed at Veliki Zep.<sup>1368</sup>

*What warning did the ABiH claim to have about the attack on Srebrenica?*

In 1995 the Comint capabilities in Srebrenica itself were still very limited. The 28<sup>th</sup> Division of the ABiH did not have enough specialists or equipment. They used the Paket and Pactor to listen in to VRS communications. According to a former ABiH general, the VRS observed a radio silence from the moment it opened Pribicevac as its command centre and headquarters (from which the attack on

<sup>1365</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1366</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. ABiH Komanda 2. Korpusa to Komanda 28. Divizije br. 02-/8-1132, 09/07/95.

<sup>1367</sup> Konjuh is now being used as an intercept site by the US Army’s 103<sup>rd</sup> Military Intelligence Battalion from Fort Stewart, Georgia. E-mail from Matthew M. Aid to Cees Wiebes, 19/12/00.

<sup>1368</sup> Confidential information (39).

Srebrenica would be coordinated) until 6 July. Though this radio silence was not entirely observed, no major preparations could be construed from an analysis of the communications. All that the ABiH knew was that troops were being regrouped near Skelani and Bratunac.

The ABiH could also follow, to some extent, the movement of VRS tanks and troops and the arrival of reinforcements. However, it had no insight into the actual intentions of the VRS. So, as there was no real-time intelligence, the ABiH did not realize that the VRS was preparing a major offensive. It was unknown which units of the Zvornik Brigade were heading south. Nor was anything reported about buses that were ferrying in fresh troops. An ABiH soldier who was involved in this said that there was no foreknowledge and that the ABiH could not break the VRS code.<sup>1369</sup>

This is contradicted by other ABiH military, who allege that there was intelligence available and that it was possible to break the code. Statements by witnesses could imply that the army command of the ABiH in Sarajevo, or at least the leaders of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla, were actually aware of the preparations the VRS were making to attack Srebrenica. For example, the electronic warfare expert of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla, Captain Hajrudin Kusic, stated that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps knew from Sigint that the attack was pending long before it happened.<sup>1370</sup> Kusic initially worked in the Operations Section, but was seconded to the Electronic Warfare Unit because there were no Sigint experts in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps. In his estimation, Sigint provided important prior information on the forthcoming attack. It was not too difficult for Kusic to construe this from intercepted messages: he had lived in Serbia for nine years, during which time he worked for the Operations Section of the VJ. He said that the training he received there – under heavy Soviet influence – and the operations left little scope for originality: he could easily identify the same patterns in the VRS. The main VRS communication tower, situated at an altitude of 1,537 metres at Veliki Zep, had a wide range, so Kusic's unit picked up real-time intercepts from Tuzla. The VRS used an analogue signals system and coded as well as open traffic, but these, according to Kusic, presented no problems for the ABiH.

The VRS communication ran between Veliki Zep and Pribicevac. A lot of information was derived from high-placed officers' complaints about the vision and behaviour of Mladic. The ABiH was also assisted by the frequent use that Mladic made of open lines. This is how one of Kusic's units managed to intercept calls between General Zivanovic, Commander of the Drina Corps, and Colonel Vukovic of the Skelani Brigade. The Skelani Brigade was positioned on both sides of the road at Zeleni Jadar; the Bratunac Brigade was in the east, the Milici Brigade in the north-west and the Romania Brigade in the west. There were no conventional front lines. The VRS controlled the key communication lines and the heights. Covert allusions were made to the planned attack in the form of comments such as 'spring is coming'; Kusic could remember that OP-E was captured around the time of this intercept.

General Sead Delic, Commander of the ABiH 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, confirmed that the leaders of his Corps in Tuzla had prior intelligence of the VRS attack. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps is supposed to have warned Commander Karremans, but he did not believe them. The ABiH also sent warnings to Sector North East of UNPROFOR, but they did not share in its conviction. ABiH intelligence was not taken seriously.<sup>1371</sup> The ABiH commander in Sarajevo, General Rasim Delic, also stated that messages from Mladic had been intercepted, which indicated that he was gearing up for an attack. According to General Delic, confidential information from one of the US intelligence services confirmed that a conversation had taken place between Mladic and Milosevic. For a whole week all sorts of subjects were discussed with Belgrade. Delic reported the conversation as follows: 'Look, Mladic, are you really going to Srebrenica?'. The answer was 'Of course, I haven't finished the job. I'm going to take Zepa and Gorazde as well.' There were other signs, such as the regrouping of troops, propaganda, the increasing frequency of incidents around the Safe Areas, and statements from the international

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<sup>1369</sup> Confidential interview (73).

<sup>1370</sup> Interview with Hajrudin Kusic, 17 and 18/05/99.

<sup>1371</sup> Interview with Sead Delic, 10/03/99.

community that the situation was becoming critical and prompting serious thought.<sup>1372</sup> There are also reports of intercepts of Serb communication that pointed to VJ involvement in the attack on Srebrenica<sup>1373</sup> and indicated that the commands for executions were issued from Belgrade.<sup>1374</sup>

The Croats supposedly had identical intelligence, which they passed on to the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>1375</sup> According to these sources, no clear orders were ever issued for mass executions but there were vague references such as ‘getting rid of the problem’.<sup>1376</sup> Delic concluded that VJ troops were involved in the attack on Srebrenica, claiming that the ABiH had documents and intercepts to indicate this. These would prove that the VJ and specifically the Arkan Tigers were involved in the attack.<sup>1377</sup> However, these documents were not made available.

#### *What did the ABiH claim to know about the column to Tuzla?*

After the fall of Srebrenica, a long column of over 10,000 Muslims trekked through the mountains to Tuzla. On 12 July 1995 the intercept site at Konjuh was ideally positioned for tracking the progress of the column and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla also had an approximate idea of the size of the column. This was confirmed by a Sigint expert of the ABiH. The VRS used denigrating terms, like ‘swines’, to refer to the men from Srebrenica. VRS Colonel Vukovic asked: ‘Are you ready for the hunt?’ and orders to ‘kill all the beasts’ were issued. The order to catch Oric alive was also intercepted;<sup>1378</sup> apparently, not everyone was aware that Oric was already in Tuzla. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps also knew from Comint from Okresanica that the VRS was hunting down the column.<sup>1379</sup>

The Sigint unit of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla knew the VRS frequencies and followed the fate of the column, often through intercepts of orders issued to VRS commanders inside and outside the enclave. During an interview held with the intelligence officer of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH, Major Sefko Tihic had some intercepted messages brought in which he then read aloud.<sup>1380</sup> The first was allegedly a conversation that took place between Colonel Obrenovic and General Krstic after the fall of Srebrenica. It ran as follows: ‘How are you? Are there more fish to catch?’ Mention was then made of the column. The two men agreed that most of the Muslims would probably step on mines anyway. Then the order was issued to ‘kill all of them’. The second intercept concerned a question from a VRS commander to the commander of a VRS Special Forces unit: ‘Where are my units? Are they in Milici?’ The answer was: ‘Yes, they are. They are working there and capturing people’. A third intercept indicated, according to Tihic, that the VRS knew that the ABiH were listening. Here, a VRS soldier warned Krstic, ‘They are listening to us’. Krstic replied, ‘Let them hear us talk. We will do the same in the other areas’.

At Krstic’s trial intercepts of 15 July were submitted in which a VRS colonel complained to Krstic that he still needed to distribute 3,500 parcels. ‘Parcels’ was the code for Muslims and ‘distribute’ was the code for execute. The colonel asked Krstic for more men to finish the job.<sup>1381</sup> Some of these intercepts had already been published in the summer of 1998 in *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna* by journalist Mehmed Pargan, who had managed to lay his hands on 200 pages of intercepted VRS messages and

<sup>1372</sup> Delic provided no clear answer when asked by the NIOD whether the knowledge obtained from the US source came only after the attack.

<sup>1373</sup> Ed Vulliamy, ‘srebrenica killer in the dock’, *The Guardian*, 01/06/96.

<sup>1374</sup> Roy Gutman, ‘Bosnia Evidence Secret’, *Nesday*, 08/11/95.

<sup>1375</sup> FOIA State Department, Washington DC, US Mission Vienna to SecState, no. 2135, 26/07/1995.

<sup>1376</sup> Interview with Sefko Tihic, 08/03/99.

<sup>1377</sup> Interview with Sead Delic, 10/03/99.

<sup>1378</sup> Interviews with Hajrudin Kistic, 17 and 18/05/99.

<sup>1379</sup> UNGE, ICTY, No. 00924932, Okresanica to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, no. 01/12795, 12/07/95.

<sup>1380</sup> Interview with Sefko Tihic, 08/03/99.

<sup>1381</sup> Annieke Kranenberg, ‘Krstic liet ‘pakjes’ in Srebrenica doden’ (Krstic had ‘parcels’ killed in Srebrenica), *De Volkskrant*, 14/03/00 and ‘Krstic aangeklaagd voor volkerenmoord’ (Krstic indicted for genocide), *Algemeen Dagblad*, 14/03/00.

other documents relating to the period from 30 June until the end of July. He revealed that on 14 July the ABiH had intercepted VRS orders to kill the men in the column.

According to Pargan, the Electronic Warfare Units of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps were disseminating disinformation on 14 July by sending out messages that Oric and his unit had broken the stranglehold on the column. This message triggered a panic in Zvornik, which led to the mobilization of larger numbers of VRS soldiers. As a result, it was even more difficult for the refugees to break through the VRS lines. Intercepts on 14 July revealed that the VRS asked for bulldozers at Konjevic Polje. Intercepts disclosed that a panic had broken out in the VRS ranks about the events. The VRS leaders had no clear idea of what was going on, so they consented to a ceasefire of 24 hours, which was negotiated by ABiH Major Semsudin Muminovic.<sup>1382</sup> The actual existence of this Comint could be construed from interviews with the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, General Sead Delic, the Sigint experts of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, Captain Hajrudin Kusic, the Head of Intelligence of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, Major Sefko Tihic and the ABiH commander in Srebrenica, Ramiz Becirovic. It was moreover confirmed by Bosnian Comint that was placed at the NIOD's disposal<sup>1383</sup> and by the report by researcher the ICTY researcher Richard Butler, *Srebrenica Military Narrative – Operation Krivaja 95*, which was specially compiled for the Yugoslavia Tribunal.

The question at the Tribunal was, however, if the information from the interviews was accurate, and if the ABiH troops were not bluffing about their ability to intercept VRS communication. Butler answered these questions by testifying to the Tribunal that the tape recordings of the intercepted VRS radio communications were credible. He admitted that he too was sceptical at first but had later reviewed his assessment. Butler stated that he had listened to 80-90% of the militarily relevant radio traffic and had studied thousands of documents. It appeared to him from the intercept protocols that people were speaking openly over the radio about the mass murder of the Muslims from Srebrenica. Two men whom Butler could not identify spoke about 10,000 Muslims of military age who had fled. 'Have we halved them yet? Four or five thousand must be dead by now.'<sup>1384</sup> Another expert, who was called in by the prosecutor at the Yugoslavia Tribunal, also judged the intercepts as authentic.<sup>1385</sup>

Orders issued by Krstic and other conversations about 'parcels' were also registered. On 17 July a message was intercepted about 'A huge human mass of about 5,000 concentrated around Cerska and Kamenica, so many you can't kill them all'. When Krstic, in an intercepted conversation with an unidentified person, asked who had issued orders to send soldiers to a specific place, he was told that the orders had come from the General Staff. This implied that the General Staff was directly involved in leading the operations. Intercepted calls indicated that the VRS also had 'secure lines'. However, although the VRS did have secure means of sending messages, the Tribunal heard evidence that these systems were not always functional and that often unsecured lines were used for expediency. In addition, secured communications took much longer to prepare and send.<sup>1386</sup> The 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps had ascertained this earlier after a military operation around Zepa. Two VRS soldiers who were killed in this operation had documents on them which revealed that calls were being made to Han Pijesak via fixed telephone lines from barracks to the north of Zepa. The documents listed the direct telephone numbers of Mladic, Gvero, Milovanovic and other generals.<sup>1387</sup>

It can safely be concluded that the Sigint units of the ABiH were highly capable. This is also evident from the tape recording of the (disputed) intercepted conversation in which the former

<sup>1382</sup> Mehmed Pargan, 'B-H Army Eavesdropped on VRS', *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna* (FBIS translation), 11/07/98.

<sup>1383</sup> Confidential information (38).

<sup>1384</sup> *Judgement in the Krstic Trial*, § 115, p. 23 and Butler, Testimony 5107. See also: 'Verslagen afgeluisterde tapes zeer geloofwaardig' (Reports of monitored tapes highly credible), in: *ANP Press release*, 18/07/00 and 'Tapes val Srebrenica zijn zeer geloofwaardig' (Tapes on fall of Srebrenica highly credible), *METRO*, 19/07/00.

<sup>1385</sup> *Judgement in the Krstic Trial*, § 114, p. 42.

<sup>1386</sup> See for example: ICTY (IT-98-33) D 66a, 28<sup>th</sup> Division to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, Weekly Morale Report, no. 04-113/95, 30/06/95. See for all intercepts: Coll. NIOD, *ICTY, OTP Ex. 738*, List of Exhibits contained in Ex. 364 (2 volumes of Intercepts). For the existence of the special secured connections: *Intercept* 17 July/12/ii.

<sup>1387</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. 285<sup>th</sup> Brigade, Zepa to General Staff ABiH, no. 08-13-52/95, 17/05/95.

commander of the Bosnian-Serb Drina Corps, General Radislav Krstic, issues orders to kill the ABiH soldiers. A British expert, Dr Peter French, testified to the Tribunal that he had not been able to definitively identify the voice as that of Krstic. According to the prosecution, the intercepts showed that Krstic had issued the order to kill the Muslim prisoners. The prosecution claimed that this was a tape of a conversation, which took place on 2 August 1995 between Krstic and Major Obrenovic, Chief of Staff of the Zvornik Brigade of the VRS. At that moment, the Zvornik Brigade was busy combing an area searching for ABiH soldiers from the column. One voice on the tape said that Muslims were still being captured. The other voice, presumably belonging to Krstic, responded with 'kill them all; don't leave anyone alive'. At the trial Krstic and his lawyers maintained that the intercept was a complete and utter fake. French, an expert in the analysis of speech and language, said that the recording was 'inconclusive'. He claimed that the poor quality and the brevity of the conversation made it impossible to determine whether the voice did indeed belong to Krstic. But an American witness testified that it was a conversation between 'speakers of ethnic Serb background' which according to this expert would be difficult for Muslims to imitate.

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the prosecution had a trump card up its sleeve: the same intercept, but registered from another Bosnian interception station. Since the ABiH intercepted VRS communication from two different stations, Okresanica and Golija, on 2 August both stations had listened in to the conversation. The intercepting operators recorded it in their logbooks. It was typed out later and sent to the Army command for further analysis.<sup>1388</sup>

All things considered, there are enough grounds for assuming that the Muslims had, since 1992, indeed been capable of intercepting important political and military communication traffic of the Bosnian Serbs. This took place from Srebrenica, Tuzla, Konjuh, Okresanica and perhaps at other stations as well and by other ABiH units. The evidence that the ABiH was actually capable of this was presented in the form of intercept texts to the NIOD, the Yugoslavia Tribunal and journalists. But the question still remains as to whether this was real-time intelligence. In other words, were the intercepts also directly available to the recipient of the intelligence or did it take days, or even weeks, before the contents were known?

#### 4. Was the ABiH Signals Intelligence real-time?

Despite the emphatic claims by Bosnian military that they did have real-time Comint, there is still room for doubt. First, the ABiH was incapable of following most of the encrypted messages of the VRS. This is suggested by a message on 9 July 1995 from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of the ABiH to the commander of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in Srebrenica, which said that the codes could not be cracked.<sup>1389</sup> There may well have been intercepts which showed that VRS soldiers were incidentally ordered to kill ABiH soldiers, but no messages have been found in which Mladic or others ordered a mass execution.<sup>1390</sup>

As neither the Bosnian Army nor the political leaders ever shared intercepts with UNPROFOR or the UN in New York, it is vital to establish whether these intercepts were real-time or near-real-time. If they were real-time, then the military of the Electronic Warfare Unit of the ABiH must have listened 'live' to orders to kill their Muslim brothers without taking any action. An US intelligence official commented that these VHF intercepts were 'authentic, genuine intercepts communications of Serb VHF communications and phone communications at tactical, operational and command levels'. He estimated that some 15,000 hours must have been spent on interception between 15 June and 15 July 1995. The Electronic Warfare Units in Konjuh, Okresanica and Tuzla reported to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps as well

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<sup>1388</sup> 'srebrenica Trial - Expert witness assesses key radio *intercept* evidence', *IWPR's TRIBUNAL UPDATE* 214, March 19-24, 2001.

<sup>1389</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. ABiH Komanda 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to 28<sup>th</sup> Division, no. 02-/8-1132, 09/07/95.

<sup>1390</sup> Interview with S. Arnautovic, 05/11/99.

as ABiH headquarters in Sarajevo and the senior politicians. The Bosnian national security service in Okresanica probably reported only to the Bosnian political leaders.<sup>1391</sup>

The question that now needs to be answered is: what was possible regarding the processing of the intercepts in real time? Simple arithmetic shows that, if the number of channels multiplied by the number of required personnel is greater than the number of available personnel, then near-real-time processing and reporting is impossible. A conservative estimate indicates that the monitored channels probably covered telephone calls from Okresanica via live interception or relayed intercepts. In addition to non-military traffic, the Bosnian national security service was bound to have been interested in the VRS high command and the operational levels immediately below. If we assume on the basis of this estimate that an absolute minimum of ten channels had to be monitored continuously, that three persons were needed per channel for interception, transcription and reporting and that there was a rotation of three shifts a day and a seven-day working week, then at least 90 Sigint operators would have had to be active in Okresanica. Not to mention 15 or 20 staff for support, technology, security, catering and so on. Hence, if there were 20 channels – probably a more realistic estimate – then at least 180 people would be needed. In reality, a maximum of ten people worked in Okresanica. Most of the communication was recorded on tape. It seems therefore that near-real-time analysis and processing was unattainable.

The VHF radio traffic was intercepted by the Electronic Warfare Units of the ABiH in Okresanica and Konjuh. We can perform some simple arithmetic on these activities as well. It appears from all the descriptions that these were standard Comint sites where the listener tuned in manually to the channels that were being monitored. On the basis of a very conservative estimate, around 30 channels would have to be manned permanently, including five frequencies at the level of high command, ten at operational level and ten tactical frequencies between units in the field. Thirty frequencies are regarded as the absolute minimum by US Sigint experts. The command and operational frequencies had to be monitored round-the-clock and the tactical frequencies 18 hours a day by three teams, each consisting of three listeners, who were individually responsible for interception, transcription and reporting. On the basis of this absolute minimum, around 210 people would have had to be working in Okresanica and Konjuh. The station was, moreover, not only responsible for monitoring communications around Srebrenica, but also the battles around Mount Vis, the northern part of Republika Srpska and other areas. At least 400 people would have been needed to follow all this traffic. In fact, the level of personnel was no higher than twenty. So, near-real-time analysis was impossible here as well.<sup>1392</sup> We have already shown that the Electronic Warfare Units were also very modest in size.

The processing of Comint can only be described as long and laborious. With only a limited number of receivers at his disposal the interceptor probably decided to listen to the most valuable frequencies. If the number of valuable frequencies was greater than the number that could be intercepted, then tape recorders were used. In addition, the interceptor missed much of the messages when he had to leave his post to make his transcriptions in rough notes. Presumably, the interceptor spent 25% of his working hours away from his receiver and missed a lot, because there was no-one to relieve him. The commander then had the thankless job of 'handling' the intercept for the third time and typing it out. Probably, Okresanica did not have a direct phone line with Tuzla. As a result, the worked-out intercepts had to be stored on a floppy disk and sent by courier to the headquarters of the 21<sup>st</sup> Division or the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps.

According to witnesses at the Tribunal, the working methods were exactly the same in Okresanica and Konjuh.<sup>1393</sup> In some cases the intercepted calls were first recorded on tape and then later worked out on paper or in a logbook. The messages were then typed out on a computer and sent

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<sup>1391</sup> Confidential information (54).

<sup>1392</sup> Confidential interviews (6), (13), (54) and (62).

<sup>1393</sup> See: <http://www.un.org/icty/news/krstic/krstic-cp.htm>.



to headquarters. The Comint operators often – but not always – made a note of the date and time of the intercepts.<sup>1394</sup> The conclusion is that though some phone calls and VHF channels may have been monitored ‘live’, the bulk of the very extensive military traffic of the VRS was tape-recorded and was not analysed until later. This undermined cohesion and meant that VRS communication that was actually intercepted in real time could not be placed in the right context. For the Electronic Warfare Units to have operated in real time the Bosnian national security service in Okresanica would have needed a staff of at least 120 while the ABiH units would have needed at least 210 people in both Okresanica and Konjuh. The very fact the Electronic Warfare Units existed implies, however, that they must have delivered valuable intelligence from time to time, but this will only have been a drop in the ocean compared with the huge flow of Bosnian-Serb communications. It may be safely assumed that the VRS used more than a hundred walkie-talkies during the attack. Given the number of available personnel, there can never have been any question of large-scale real-time intelligence.

In summary, we can draw certain conclusions about the Bosnian efforts regarding Sigint. To begin with, intelligence is useless (except in hindsight) if the information is not presented to the consumer promptly in a form that is both understandable and usable. If the intelligence is not reported or is kept secret for fear of compromising the source, then there is no point in collecting it, except for later use or storage in an archive. Taking the Bosnian efforts as a whole, it must be concluded that the service responsible for the Sigint was simply too undermanned (ten people per station) and too poorly equipped to fulfil its mission adequately. Though there were many intercepts, the processing, analysis and reporting were totally inadequate. Intercepts were not typed out immediately in a word-processing programme but transcribed by hand in a logbook; tapes bearing messages were re-used and hardly any use was made of computers to process and disseminate the data flow.

Moreover, there were no Comint analysts at the interception stations to analyse the messages and assess their value. There were no secure lines with various regional ABiH headquarters and no indications that the Bosnian services had any intelligence analysts at brigade, corps or higher level who were able to swiftly integrate the Comint with, say, Humint. Even if Bosnia had had the political will to publish the most volatile intercepts worldwide, it would never have succeeded because the intelligence structure was simply not geared for this. Even the real-time intercepts were too fragmented. There is, furthermore, no evidence that the ABiH Comint service shared intelligence with Dutchbat, western services or UNPROFOR.

*Or was there near-real-time intelligence after all?*

Nonetheless, an ABiH general claimed that the messages were actually intercepted and analysed in real time.<sup>1395</sup> This assertion should, however, be treated with the utmost scepticism. If the Bosnian Muslims did have real-time Comint then why did they not use it? According to an US intelligence official, this would have been the ‘best PR stunt ever’, and the Bosnian Muslims could have screamed ‘bloody hell and murder’. He suspected that the ABiH simply did not have real-time capacity. He offered the following example. If, in the best-case scenario, the ABiH had had 150 people in Konjuh, some of them would have had friends or even family in the enclave or in the column. Keeping the Comint under wraps would have triggered a ‘stampede’ among the staff in Okresanica, Konjuh or Tuzla for they would have done everything possible to save these people. According to this official, the ‘absence of a stampede’ implies ‘an absence of real-time intercepts’. In his opinion, the ABiH did not know about the contents of the intercepts until weeks, months, or even years after the fall of Srebrenica. If ABiH intercepts were to have any influence on military and political measures, they should have been available on the evening of 10 July at the latest.

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<sup>1394</sup> *Judgement in the Krstic Trial*, § 107, p. 40.

<sup>1395</sup> Confidential information (38).

It is more likely that the Electronic Warfare Units did not realize at that moment what the intercepted messages actually meant. Though the ABiH intercepted many messages, they did not conduct enough analysis to form a measured judgement. Perhaps priority was accorded to other targets in the region so that Sigint on Srebrenica had to take a back seat.<sup>1396</sup> It is also quite likely that Sigint on Sarajevo had top priority. Another American intelligence officer also believed the tapes had been processed weeks, months or possibly even two years after the event.<sup>1397</sup> The Bosnians openly admitted that the ABiH had a huge backlog of unprocessed intercepts.<sup>1398</sup>

There is yet another indication that the Bosnian Muslims did not have real-time Sigint. The many intercepts that were later published and disclosed at the trial of General Krstic give the impression that the VRS troop movements were efficiently followed by the Muslims in real time. There were dozens of intercepts which showed that the ABiH interception stations in Konjuh, Okresanica and Tuzla closely followed the VRS conversations about the column heading for Tuzla. However, at Krstic's trial no attention was paid to whether this intelligence was shared with UNPROFOR. This would, after all, have been a logical step, given that the Bosnian Muslims dearly wanted to get UNPROFOR or NATO on their side in the fight against the VRS.

*Why did the ABiH not share intelligence with the western powers?*

According to Lieutenant-Colonel Baxter, military assistant to General Smith, the ABiH in Sarajevo never delivered as much as a snippet of intelligence to Smith, his staff or the rest of UNPROFOR. ABiH General Rasim Delic only consulted with Smith four times a year. Smith's door was always open to the Head of the Bosnian Intelligence Service, General Taljan Hajrulahovic, but he never dropped by. On the other hand, the ABiH had excellent intelligence contacts with the Americans. Smith's staff discovered, through a slip of the tongue of the US Ambassador John Menzies, that General Wesley Clark called General Delic in Sarajevo every day from the Pentagon to discuss the latest military developments.<sup>1399</sup> General Janvier also denied ever having received Bosnian intercepts of VRS communication.<sup>1400</sup> Members of the US Intelligence Community said they were sure that, if the Bosnian Muslims had passed on these intercepts to the CIA or NSA, the US Administration would certainly have done something. Balkan experts from the CIA stated that the reports of the executions first reached Washington after soldiers from the column arrived in Tuzla.

It did not take long for rumours to circulate about the executions, but no one had the slightest idea of the scale. The ABiH did not share its Comint on the executions or the VRS hunt for the members of the column with the CIA. Rumours about mass graves and various stories prompted a search for the truth. No-one could confirm the rumours or give any indication of the scale. The Americans had never seen intercepts by the ABiH which referred to 'parcels' or 'swine'. According to the US intelligence officials, the ABiH frequently made 'a lot of noise' during the conflict but it was very difficult to prove such rumours.<sup>1401</sup>

Other officials who were working for the US Intelligence Community in 1995 stated that they too were unaware of the existence of the Bosnian intercepts; it was definitely news to them. If the NSA or CIA had known about these intercepts in 1995, then the officials would have known as well through their close involvement in the Balkan Task Force at the State Department.<sup>1402</sup> Canadian intelligence officers made similar statements.<sup>1403</sup> Journalist Roy Gutman also heard from US officials that the US

<sup>1396</sup> Confidential interviews (13) and (54).

<sup>1397</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1398</sup> Interview with S. Arnautovic, 05/11/99.

<sup>1399</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

<sup>1400</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, (Srebrenica, report of a massacre) Assemblée Nationale, no 3412, 2 Vols, Paris 2001, Vol 2, Interview with M. Bernard Janvier, 21/06/01, pp. 106-139.

<sup>1401</sup> Confidential interview (7).

<sup>1402</sup> Confidential interviews (12) and (13).

<sup>1403</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (62) and (90).

Intelligence Community had no access to such intercepts. The ABiH ‘was in a better position to collect tactical intelligence such as this’.<sup>1404</sup>

The Comint on the attack on Srebrenica, the column, and the later executions of the ABiH soldiers was not passed on to the Dutch Military Intelligence Service (MIS) either. Archival research and interviews with MIS staff revealed that no-one knew anything about the intercepts until the publication in the press in 1995 and the trial of General Krstic.<sup>1405</sup> The fact that this Comint was not shared is another indication that the intercepts were not available in real time. Otherwise, one has to countenance the cynical idea that the ABiH and the political leaders in Sarajevo were prepared to sacrifice Srebrenica and thousands of Muslims to win over the West once and for all to the side of the Bosnian Muslims. This thought was actually expressed before and after the fall of Srebrenica by the Bosnian Foreign Minister Sacirbey, who said: ‘Well, now we have one problem less’.<sup>1406</sup>

A CIA official who worked in the region also suggested during an interview that there was a certain disinterest regarding the events in the enclave. Srebrenica was scarcely broached in his talks with senior Bosnian commanders and government officials. The war crimes committed in the enclave did not top the list of questions that the ABiH wanted to solve or urgently discuss with the CIA. Instead, pertinent questions posed earlier by the CIA officer on the matter were avoided. There has never been a clear explanation for this. Apparently, everything revolved around Sarajevo, and Srebrenica was pushed into the background.<sup>1407</sup> That this should apply to the mass murders is, however, a cynical scenario that cannot be supported with convincing evidence.

#### *What if the ABiH had shared its intelligence with UNPROFOR?*

If the ABiH had actually been in possession of real-time Comint and passed it on to UNPROFOR, could this have influenced the fate of Srebrenica or saved the male Muslims? ‘What if’ questions are, by definition, difficult to answer. A senior member of the US Intelligence Community took the view that it would have made no difference; he pointed out that both the ABiH and UNPROFOR knew that the enclave was under attack. They knew that a large group of soldiers had left the enclave but, for various reasons, neither of them took action.

UNPROFOR could perhaps have interpreted its mandate more freely or exerted pressure on Pale and Belgrade, but this would have taken so much time that it would not have helped to save Srebrenica or the men.<sup>1408</sup> On the other hand, the immediate publication of these intercepted messages might have turned the tide for the men and boys in the column. The Bosnian Serbs might have halted the mass executions if their scale had been made known to the outside world. Pale and Belgrade would probably have had to give in to diplomatic, military and other pressure. The only people with whom the Bosnian Government was prepared to share its volatile Comint were journalists. In October and November 1995 the Bosnian Foreign Minister, Sacirbey, offered the aforementioned ABiH intercepts to various journalists. However, he waited until months after the fall of Srebrenica, perhaps in an attempt to improve his own negotiating position.<sup>1409</sup> The obvious conclusion from this is that neither the Bosnian military nor political leaders shared the intercepts with UNPROFOR, the UN in New York or the US intelligence services. Presumably, this was mainly because the Muslims did not have real-time communication intercepts.

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<sup>1404</sup> Roy Gutman, ‘UN’s Deadly Deal’, *Newsday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>1405</sup> Confidential interviews (21), (22), (24) and (27).

<sup>1406</sup> Interview with Anđeljko Makar, 12/06/00.

<sup>1407</sup> Confidential interview (12).

<sup>1408</sup> Confidential information (13).

<sup>1409</sup> Confidential information (6).

## 5. UNPROFOR and Dutchbat as a target for Communications Intelligence

As already mentioned in a previous chapter, according to an article published in the Dutch newspaper *Het Parool*, 'During the conflict in Bosnia, Sarajevo was a hive of espionage. Everyone was spying on everyone else: the warring factions and the countries of the UN peace force.' *Het Parool* reported in 1998 that the telephone of General Rose was being tapped not only by one of the allies but by the Muslims as well.<sup>1410</sup> The Chief-of-Staff under General Rose, General A.P.P.M. van Baal, also confirmed that the residence of Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in Sarajevo was bugged. This building, Tito's former country retreat, was filled with bugging devices. Furthermore, the two lower storeys of an outbuilding were being used by the Bosnian intelligence services. Van Baal said that General Rose sometimes called out – for a joke – that an attack was pending. Shortly afterwards, a call would come from ABiH headquarters claiming that an attack was underway.<sup>1411</sup>

UNPROFOR communications were a key target for all warring factions (VJ, VRS and ABiH). As far as Comint operations of the VRS in and around Sarajevo are concerned, virtually all the conversations between UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo and Zagreb and the leaders of the Bosnian Government were intercepted. But the Bosnian national security services and the ABiH were not sitting idle either. In November 1994, during the Bihac crisis, the Bosnian Muslims intercepted phone calls between General Rose and the political advisor of Karadzic, Jovan Zametica.<sup>1412</sup> The previous chapter has already addressed the fact that UN telephones and faxes were insufficiently protected against interception. Sometimes interception was not even necessary and the VRS and the ABiH got direct access to the UNPROFOR communications network due to internal errors at the UN.<sup>1413</sup>

In addition, the Bosnian intelligence services had been heavily infiltrated by the Serb military intelligence service. The Serbs had realized before the conflict broke out that the federal intelligence services would disintegrate. Hence, the Chief of the Federal Intelligence Services (KOS), Aleksandar Vasiljevic, started up an operation aimed at infiltrating various sections of the Bosnian secret service. He is thought to have succeeded in the case of the Bosnian military intelligence service (VOS) and the Bosnian civil intelligence service (AID). The VRS intelligence service probably received further assistance from the Serb Foreign Ministry (MUP), which had its own satellite monitoring station in Belgrade. The main targets of the MUP were the UNPROFOR and NATO communications that ran via Inmarsat and/or Intelsat. Here, the VRS was doubly successful: the Bosnian military intelligence service led by Brigadier-General Mustafa Hajrulahovic permanently listened in to UNPROFOR headquarters and all international telephone calls. As the VRS, in turn, intercepted the communications of the Muslims, it also had access to these intercepts.<sup>1414</sup>

This is how the VRS discovered through Comint that a senior UNPROFOR official had struck a deal with a prominent Bosnian minister. During the negotiations with the Bosnian Serbs the UNPROFOR official would try to get the access routes re-opened for humanitarian convoys to Sarajevo. A member of General Smith's staff heard this from VRS liaison officer, Major Milenko Indjic, and reported it to his superior. Smith disbelieved it at first, but it was quickly confirmed by another UN worker who had heard the same thing from the secretary of the Bosnian minister. In return for keeping the access routes open for four days a sizeable sum of money would be deposited in the UNPROFOR official's Swiss bank account. The Bosnian minister had already transferred substantial sums into this account. The Bosnian but also Bosnian-Serb mafia was namely making a fortune from the humanitarian

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<sup>1410</sup> 'sarajevo zat vol spionnen in oorlog' (Sarajevo full of spies during war), *Het Parool*, 24/04/98.

<sup>1411</sup> Interview with A.P.P.M. van Baal, 27/05/98.

<sup>1412</sup> Rose, *Fighting for Peace*, pp. 203 - 204.

<sup>1413</sup> Confidential collection (7), UNPROFOR Outgoing Fax, C. White to Sector Sarajevo, no. 007, 27/02/95.

<sup>1414</sup> In Croatia this operation was known as *Operation Labrador*. MoD, MIS, File 438-0190, box 307, Memorandum: The Bosnian civil intelligence service AID, 07/05/97.

aid being sent to Sarajevo. Both parties even shot at UN planes bringing the aid. As these were then prevented from delivering the goods, the prices on the black market rose.<sup>1415</sup>

Corruption hit UNPROFOR in another way, too. A member of General Smith's staff said: 'The Coded Cables of the UN were sold in Sarajevo for \$1000'.<sup>1416</sup> The Bosnian Minister Muratovic made no secret to the temporary Dutch *chargé d'affaires*, Glaubitz, of the fact that Bosnian Muslims were intercepting UNPROFOR communications.<sup>1417</sup> Insiders knew this already, but that did not make Muratovic's admission any less remarkable.

The fact that UNPROFOR messages were being intercepted at the very highest level was also confirmed by a message from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps, which reported on 11 July 1995 that it had listened in three times to a phone call through an open line between Generals Janvier and Zdravko Tolimir.<sup>1418</sup> The ABiH also intercepted phone calls between Generals Mladic and Janvier on 9 and 10 July,<sup>1419</sup> and between the Dutch General Nicolai and the General Staff of the VRS.<sup>1420</sup> UNPROFOR headquarters was also a favourite target of the Bosnian intelligence services.<sup>1421</sup> For example, all faxes from the Chief Political Officer of UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, Phillip Corwin, were intercepted by the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>1422</sup> This equally applied to the UNPF headquarters in Zagreb; here the Croatian services were responsible. According to a member of the UNPF intelligence staff in Zagreb, the Croatian national security and military intelligence services systematically monitored UNPROFOR traffic in Croatia and had engaged interpreters especially for this purpose. Rumour had it that they were experiencing problems with Belgian traffic, because Belgian officers tended to switch often between French and Flemish.<sup>1423</sup>

The Croatian Army benefited considerably from UNMO intercepts, especially during the attack on the Krajina. They were among their best sources of intelligence.<sup>1424</sup> This was confirmed by the Post Mission Report of the UNMOs in UNPROFOR and UNPF, which said that, between 1992 and 1996, the Communications Security of UNPROFOR 'was a real disaster for UNPROFOR/UNPF'. The UNPF headquarters in Zagreb and the UNMO headquarters both used unprotected land lines for their daily reports and 'for that period UNMO (and UNPF in general) has become unwillingly (let's hope) "the second intelligence agency" for Croatian Army'. The satellite connections used by the UNPROFOR units were also an easy prey for the warring factions' interceptors. The headquarters of UnCivPol and the UNMOs in Srebrenica were monitored by the ABiH. Dutchbat made this public after it was discovered.<sup>1425</sup> The communications traffic of the UNMOs was similarly intercepted and read by the ABiH and as such became another a key source of military information.<sup>1426</sup>

Up till then, open communications had been one of the cardinal principles of a UN operation. However, an UNPROFOR evaluation report stated: 'It is right for an academic Peacekeeping Operation, but for such an active operation like UNPROFOR it is not. There is a strong belief that it should be reconsidered on the basis of sad experience of this Mission'. The report stressed yet again that all the warring factions had stolen or seized large amounts of UNPROFOR communication

<sup>1415</sup> Confidential interview (80).

<sup>1416</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

<sup>1417</sup> NMFA, *DEU Srebrenica*, Glaubitz to Ministry of Foreign Affairs, no. 25, 03/09/96.

<sup>1418</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Message from 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to Odbrane Republike VoVJ TaVJ, no. 02/8-0101215, 11/07/95.

<sup>1419</sup> ICTY, *OTP Ex. 738*, List of Exhibits contained in Ex. 364 (2 volumes of Intercepts), Conversation 9 July/1 and 10 July/1, 09/07/95 and 10/07/95.

<sup>1420</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. ABiH Komanda 2. Korpusa to Komanda 28. Divizije br. 02-/8-1132, 09/07/95 and ABiH Komanda 2. Korpusa to Komanda 28. Divizije br. 02-/8-1142, 10/07/95.

<sup>1421</sup> 'sFOR discovers eavesdropping center in Sarajevo', *Glas Javnosti*, 13/01/01.

<sup>1422</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 165.

<sup>1423</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>1424</sup> Thomas Quiggin, Response to 'No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 13 (1998) 4, p. 206.

<sup>1425</sup> Interviews with Bob Patchett, 19/11/99 and E.A. Rave, 13 and 14/12/00.

<sup>1426</sup> For example: NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Komanda 2. Korpusa, Tuzla to Generalstab ABiH, Sarajevo, no. SP. 06-712-24-7/95, 15/07/95.

equipment and that the Sigint units of the VJ, the VRS and the ABiH were therefore able to intercept UNMO communications 24 hours a day ‘as the most reliable source of information’.<sup>1427</sup> A Scandinavian UNMO in Sarajevo was for example introduced to a Bosnian Serb officer who would act as his liaison. The VRS official told him simply that he actually did not need an introduction because he knew already everything about the UNMO because he did read the daily reports sent to this UNMO.<sup>1428</sup> Even the Coded Cables sent from Sarajevo or Zagreb to New York were unsafe. All sides to the conflict were able to read them.<sup>1429</sup>

As was revealed during the UNSCOM mission in Iraq, the UN had learned very little from the Sigint war against UNPROFOR. The Iraqi intelligence service was able to decipher and read coded communication with UN headquarters in New York. Apparently, the crypto programme was too weak and could be easily broken. At that time, it was impossible to buy strong American crypto software because of the stringent export controls imposed by the National Security Agency. After all, weak crypto software also enabled the NSA to read the messages. After the Iraqi operation was discovered, UNSCOM switched to the *Pretty Good Privacy* software, which was still unbreakable at that point.<sup>1430</sup>

Various Croatian intelligence services carried out intelligence operations against UNPROFOR. The Office of National Security served as an umbrella organization for the Croatian Foreign Intelligence Service, the Intelligence Service of the General Staff, the Security Intelligence Service of the Ministry of Defence, and the Intelligence Service of the Croatian Army. All of these agencies were active against UNPROFOR. Bureau IV of the latter organization was in charge of military Comint operations, which were coordinated from the Lucko air base in Zagreb. Bureau IV had close ties with the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* and the CIA, both of which provided equipment and organized training. The Croatian National Signals Intelligence service also collected Sigint outside Croatia.<sup>1431</sup>

Members of an European intelligence service also emphasized that at the start of the conflict the Croatians delivered a lot of computer hardware to Belgrade. All this hardware had, however, been fitted with a ‘back door’ so that the Croatian intelligence services could look over the Serb shoulders. Tudjman’s son reportedly played a key role in these operations.<sup>1432</sup> The Croatian weekly publication *Globus* printed quotations from telephone conversations which purportedly took place between President Clinton from his presidential plane *Air Force One* and President Milosevic. The Croatian services allegedly listened in to hundreds of such calls.<sup>1433</sup>

In addition, NATO intelligence flowed to the Croatians via the *Bundesnachrichtendienst*, much to the displeasure of NATO members, who knew that the Serbs had infiltrated deep into the Croatian intelligence services. This had been going on since 1989 through *Operation Labrador*, when Milosevic had ordered that a Serb network be set up within the Croatian intelligence community. Intelligence from US and German services ended up in Belgrade via this route.<sup>1434</sup> However, BND officials deny that this happened.<sup>1435</sup>

The National Service for Electronic Monitoring – which formed part of the Croatian Agency for National Security – focused on intercepting civil internal and foreign communications. This section,

<sup>1427</sup> Confidential collection (5), *UNMO in UNPROFOR/UNPF, Post Mission Report 1992 - 1996*, Zagreb 1996, p. 29.

<sup>1428</sup> Confidential interview (100).

<sup>1429</sup> MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, p. 319.

<sup>1430</sup> ‘UNSCOM Hurt by Weak Encryption’, in: *Intelligence Newsletter*, no. 403, 05/04/01 as published on 18/04/01 on: <http://216.167.120.50/>

<sup>1431</sup> Miroslav Tudjman, ‘The First Five Years of the Croatian Intelligence Service’, *National Security and The Future*, Vol. 1(2000) 2, p. 47 - 74.

<sup>1432</sup> Confidential information (48).

<sup>1433</sup> ‘Ophef over gesprekken tussen Clinton en Milosevic’ (Commotion about calls between Clinton and Milosevic), *De Volkskrant*, 07/02/02; Alex Todorovic, ‘Tapes reveal Sloba chummy with Bill’, *The Gazette (Montreal)*, 07/02/02 and ‘In leaked Milosevic tapes, father knows best’, *The New York Times*, 07/02/02.

<sup>1434</sup> Marko Milivojevic, ‘Croatia’s Intelligence Services’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, Vol. 6, No. 9, pp. 404 - 410 and Confidential interview (15).

<sup>1435</sup> Confidential interviews (99) and (100).

established in 1991, also received considerable American support. It was able to intercept 40,000 GSMs at the same time and to register over 100 conversations with the aid of target words in computers. The Berlin firm *Rhode & Schwarz* supplied the hardware and the CIA supplied the programs. The NSEM reportedly collected 70% of all the intelligence delivered to the Croatian political and military leaders.<sup>1436</sup>

But not only high-level UNPROFOR communication was a key target for all the warring factions; tactical military communications were important as well. A member of the UNPF intelligence staff in Zagreb said that the ABiH and the VRS constantly intercepted this traffic, using Motorolas from captured UNPROFOR vehicles. The Chief Political Officer of UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, Phillip Corwin, said that as it was impossible to change communication codes every time a car was hijacked. They had to assume that their mobile communications were being monitored by all sides.<sup>1437</sup> ABiH soldiers even broke regularly into these UNPROFOR communications to, for instance, improve target bearings in observation reports.<sup>1438</sup> The Croats followed suit.<sup>1439</sup> The British Royal Welch Fusiliers partially solved this problem by using Welsh-speaking communications staff; none of the warring factions could follow the conversations in Welsh.<sup>1440</sup> UNPROFOR traffic was regularly tapped by the VRS. Scandinavian UNPROFOR units meticulously observed the locations hit by VRS mortar grenades around Tuzla and passed this information on direct to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command via an open radio link. The VRS listened in to these messages and used the UNPROFOR observations to correct their aim.<sup>1441</sup> The VRS only had to 'capitulate' when the Scandinavians communicated in one of their national languages.

Yet another target was the communications of the British SAS. It was not only the NSA that listened in to these connections;<sup>1442</sup> the ABiH did so as well, but they never managed to break the code. A member of a British intelligence service said that the ABiH probably read 'open routine traffic' but not crypto traffic. This was 100% safe.<sup>1443</sup> The fact that the ABiH was following SAS communication was revealed by a report sent by the Bosnian national security services to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division. This report mentioned information that was being passed on by the JCO unit in Srebrenica to the Joint Commission Observer headquarters in Sarajevo on the fighting around the enclave and the numbers of dead and wounded.<sup>1444</sup>

### *Dutchbat intercepted*

The communication traffic of Dutchbat was an equally important target for Comint. Communication equipment was regularly stolen from Dutchbat personnel.<sup>1445</sup> The VRS listened in to the traffic between the various OPs and between the OPs and the Dutch base in Potocari. As the OPs were situated on ABiH territory, the VRS collected a lot of information on all sorts of military operations, because the Dutchbat soldiers dutifully reported all the movements of the ABiH troops. Accordingly, the VRS sometimes fired on targets where Dutchbat had just spotted the ABiH. The connections between the

<sup>1436</sup> Ivo Pukanic, 'Echelon Spy System' and 'The Details behind the Lepej Affair', *Nacional*, Issue 291, 14/06/01; Ivo Pukanic, 'The Wiretapping Fever has Shaken the New Government', *Nacional*, Issue 292, 21/06/01; Milivoj Dilas, 'The Wiretapping Affair', *Nacional*, Issue 293, 28/06/01 and 'Croatia Using Advances US-Installed Intelligence Technology', *Belgrade Glas Javnosti*, 03/01/02.

<sup>1437</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 4.

<sup>1438</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>1439</sup> Confidential interview (44).

<sup>1440</sup> Thomas Quiggin, Response to 'No Cloak and Dagger Required: Intelligence Support to UN Peacekeeping', in: *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 13 (1998) 4, p. 207.

<sup>1441</sup> A. Walter Dorn, 'The Cloak and the Blue Beret: Limitations on Intelligence in UN Peacekeeping', in: *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence*, Vol. 12 (1998) 4, p. 416.

<sup>1442</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'How the CIA intercepted SAS signals', *The Guardian*, 29/01/96.

<sup>1443</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>1444</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Section MV, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to 28<sup>th</sup> Division, No. 06-05-174/95, 27/06/95.

<sup>1445</sup> Hans van Alphen, 'Binnen halve minuut is Dutchbat thuis' (Dutchbat home in thirty seconds), *Haagsche Courant*, 13/07/95.

UNPROFOR OPs and Sector North East were also intercepted by all the warring factions. This explains how a Danish report of an ABiH column near Tuzla led directly to VRS shelling. The ABiH also had knowledge of the communications between Dutchbat and the UNMOs. Sometimes, their reports contained literal quotations from Dutchbat reports.<sup>1446</sup>

In October 1994 the Royal Netherlands Army used satellite communication equipment in the form of Inmarsat-A terminals as a key communications channel. These terminals were primarily intended for operational voice/fax traffic to the Netherlands, as well as contacts with the home front. However, they proved inadequate as the units were barely accessible due to the saturation of the Inmarsat system. The communication with the home front also impeded operational contact. Consultations were held and a suggestion was mooted to switch to a multiple-channel VSAT network, which used the PTT ground station in Burum (Friesland). This system was also suitable for data, crypto and video applications.<sup>1447</sup>

However, on 10 December 1994 two Dutch UN vehicles fitted with satellite communication equipment were stolen by the Bosnian Serbs near Sarajevo. This gave the VRS the equipment and technology to improve their capability for listening in to the Dutch troops.<sup>1448</sup> The Dutch units in UNPROFOR used two civil satellite systems, namely, VSAT and Teledata. Secure and open telephone and fax traffic could be sent through these systems. It was possible to communicate with Dutchbat through the PTT and the satellite communication link. In addition, the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff had a radio connection (HF-EZB) with Dutchbat, which could send written messages, even those classified as 'secret'. Four international telecom land lines rented from the Bosnian PTT were also used for the Transport Battalion. In the meantime, Dutchbat was engaged in negotiations with the Bosnian PTT for the rental of international lines at Lukavac.<sup>1449</sup>

The Dutch ambulances and command vehicles were fitted with satellite communication equipment for maintaining contact with the command post in the compound. This traffic was unencrypted. Under the terms of a contract signed with KPN (Dutch PTT) each message was relayed first by satellite to Burum and then sent on by satellite or fax. This procedure took approximately three minutes. Communication with the home front also went by satellite.<sup>1450</sup> The ABiH and the VRS monitored this open communication to determine the general atmosphere and actual military situation at Dutchbat. Karremans's predecessor had already discovered that this was going on.<sup>1451</sup> This came to light, for example, in a memo at the end of 1994 on efficiency improvements at Dutchbat which stated: 'At the moment all connections are being intercepted by both the Muslims and the Bosnian Serbs'. The Dutchbat commander found it absolutely necessary that a secure connection be set up; apparently there was none at that moment.<sup>1452</sup> These requests, which were submitted in December 1994, did not meet with an animated response. Indeed, it was not until 9 May 1995 that the Netherlands Army Crisis Staff started addressing the problem.

The compiler of a memo of May 1995 proposed that Dutchbat use the VSAT system of the UN to establish secure connections between the battalion and Bosnia-Herzegovina Command and Sector North East. The argument was that, as the system could also deal with crypto fax traffic, it could 'therefore not be intercepted'. This was wrong: the traffic could certainly be followed. Secure voice connections were not possible. As intense use was made of the telephone in a serious crisis, this traffic was indeed also 'open' to all the warring factions. For national use, the Army staff had placed the

<sup>1446</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Zilich Mehmed to 28<sup>th</sup> Division, no. 06-401-103-2/95, 25/06/95.

<sup>1447</sup> MoD, *CRST*. Nr. 976, G-6 RNLA Crisis Staff to DOKL.HCIV, no. CRST\1004, 06/10/94 and 'VSAT-systeem voor teledata'. Compiler F. Polle, no. CRST/1132, 28/10/94.

<sup>1448</sup> MoD, *MIS*. File 1378, De gebeurtenissen in het voormalig Joegoslavië van juli 1994 tot januari 1995, (Events in former Yugoslavia from July 1994 to January 1995), 101 MIS/Cie, February 1995.

<sup>1449</sup> MoD, *CRST*. File 2504, Information on the communications structure from Major Luiting, 18/05/95.

<sup>1450</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Koreman*. Diary Koreman.

<sup>1451</sup> MoD, *Sitreps*. Dutchbat Sitrep, 19/04/94.

<sup>1452</sup> MoD, *BDL*. File 7914, Commander W.J.E. van Rijn to the Minister, no. S/94/061/4497, 23/12/94.



crypto telephone and fax with the Dutchbat commander, the Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC), the Army Crisis staff, the Dutch Colonel Brantz in Sector North East in Tuzla and Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (General Nicolai).<sup>1453</sup>

Bosnian military officials confirmed that the traffic of Dutchbat was a vital source of intelligence for the VRS. This was further borne out by intercepted communications traffic of the VRS. Sometimes, the ABiH could follow Dutchbat communications between patrols or vehicles, but they could not intercept the more important traffic. The messages sent from Dutchbat OPs to Potocari could not be received in Tuzla, but intercepts of the VRS communication led the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to realize that the VRS could listen in to UNPROFOR as well as Dutchbat lines. According to ABiH soldiers, the VRS could follow the communication of UNPROFOR perfectly, and the Bosnian Serbs were always well informed.<sup>1454</sup> This was illustrated by a message at the end of June 1995. Probably, the ABiH intercepted a message from the VRS which referred to a Dutchbat report. Dutchbat had just noticed newly arrived VRS formations and spotted new tanks. According to Dutchbat, a full mobilization had taken place in Bratunac. The Dutchbat report said that the Opstina had ordered that no new building was to be carried out in the enclave. Dutchbat subsequently concluded that a political deal had been struck and that an exchange of territory was in the pipeline. Moreover, people were being allowed to leave Srebrenica for a payment of DM6,000.<sup>1455</sup>

Similarly, the NGO *Médecins Sans Frontières* (MSF) in Srebrenica was an important source of information for the VRS. A study of the reports of this NGO revealed that it was passing on a lot of tactical information to MSF in Belgrade. This information stemmed from Dutchbat meetings with the UNMOs, local ABiH commanders and the Opstina of Srebrenica, where MSF was also represented. These messages often went by telex or satellite to Belgrade, but it would not have been too difficult to intercept them there. After all, the Serb national security service had its own listening station in Belgrade which used word databases. This service was allegedly capable of tapping 440,000 phone calls simultaneously.<sup>1456</sup> The main targets were the communications traffic of UNPROFOR and NATO via Inmarsat and/or Intelsat. The traffic of *Médecins Sans Frontières* fell under this.

The same applied to the UNHCR, the UN refugee organization, whose reports were even more meticulous than those of MSF, because its network in the enclave probably gave it access to better information, especially on the humanitarian situation. This connection also ran through the KPN communication node in Burum (*It grutte ear*). This likewise applied to the open connections of the International Red Cross and the communication sent from Srebrenica by the Swedish Shelter Project and Norwegian People's Aid. The traffic of these humanitarian organizations was an easy target for the intelligence and security services of the (Bosnian) Serbs. This was probably also true of the Muslims because they, like the VRS, usually saw the representatives of UNHCR and the International Red Cross as members of the intelligence services.<sup>1457</sup> The conclusion is that no-one trusted anyone in the enclave and that everyone was spying on everyone else.<sup>1458</sup> To complete the paranoia, President Izetbegovic even distrusted his personal staff. He had over 600 telephones in the presidential headquarters tapped by the Bosnian national security service.<sup>1459</sup>

<sup>1453</sup> MoD, *CRST*. G-6 RNLA Crisis Staff to CS RNLA Crisis Staff, 09/05/95.

<sup>1454</sup> Interview with Harudin Kusic, 17 and 18/05/99.

<sup>1455</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Section MV, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to 28<sup>th</sup> Division, no. 06-401-103-2/95, 25/06/95.

<sup>1456</sup> Interview with Bozidar Spasic, 16/09/01. See also: Udo Ulfkotte, 'Milosevic Geheimdienst' (Milosevic Secret Service), *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 17/04/99.

<sup>1457</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-Roms*. Section MV, 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps to 28<sup>th</sup> Division, no. 130-13-75/94, 09/09/94.

<sup>1458</sup> See also testimony to the Tribunal of the British General Francis Richard Dannatt: ICTY, (IC-98-33) Testimony Dannatt, 25/07/00.

<sup>1459</sup> 'sFOR discovers eavesdropping center in Sarajevo', *Belgrade Glas Javnosti*, 13/01/01.

## 6. Conclusions

It has to be said that the Comint activities of the VRS in Eastern Bosnia were excellent. Before, during and after the fall the VRS was able to read the open and encrypted communication of the ABiH. This traffic held no secrets for the VRS and enabled Mladic and his generals to pinpoint ABiH operations when Muslims referred to them via radio connections. An ABiH general claimed that the VRS never managed to break the crypto programmes of the ABiH. He was wrong. The VRS had certainly broken the crypto software of the ABiH and could read most of the communication of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division. It was not without good reason that the 28<sup>th</sup> Division was warned by Tuzla on 14 June that the VRS had penetrated the ABiH radio network. Orders were issued to especially improve the security of the communication, but to no avail.

During the attack on Srebrenica the VRS continued to read the communications of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division. Hence, on 10 July 1995, the headquarters of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps in Tuzla sent another message to the 28<sup>th</sup> Division in Srebrenica that the VRS had broken its crypto traffic. It could not, however, prevent the fall of Srebrenica. The ABiH plans for defending the enclave – if they were not sent by courier but rather through technological channels such as walkie-talkies and other radio connections – presumably held no secrets for the VRS. If the ABiH was convinced that agreements had been reached with Dutchbat and then radioed this to Tuzla and Sarajevo, then it must be assumed that the VRS knew what was afoot. The Comint units of the VRS constantly monitored the communication traffic of Dutchbat and of the ABiH – with considerable success judging by official documents.

The evidence clearly suggests that the ABiH column of predominantly men and boys heading for Tuzla was an easy prey for the VRS units. It must have been relatively easy to pinpoint the positions of the various segments, for example on the basis of cross bearings. At no point in the journey were the ABiH soldiers safe. Their Motorola connections afforded the VRS an excellent opportunity to follow the progress of the journey. Intercepts not only enabled the VRS to determine the location of the column but to also gather intelligence on the internal problems, the difficulties, and the internal agreements and planning. This gave them clear insight into the *modus operandi* of the ABiH and a permanent head start. The column never had a chance.

Some of the intercepted messages which Butler, the military analyst at the Yugoslavia Tribunal, had access to were already published in the summer of 1998 by the journalist Mehmed Pargan in *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna*. He accused the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps of flagrant neglect and passivity because it made no attempt to lure the VRS away from the column. In his estimation, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps merely waited until the fighting stopped and observed the murders.<sup>1460</sup> However, his accusations are ungrounded: there was simply not enough real-time intelligence available. The murders were not observed and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps was not passive. That said, the efforts to help the column were small.<sup>1461</sup> The Civil Affairs Officer of Sector North East, Ken Biser, seemed to share Pargan's opinion on the inaction of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps. He reported, for example, from Tuzla on the eve of the fall that high-placed military personnel at the 2<sup>nd</sup> Corps thought that the VRS attack on Srebrenica was merely an attempt to divert attention from Sarajevo and they were not prepared 'to create any additional diversions to relieve pressure on the enclaves'.<sup>1462</sup>

If the ABiH knew about the VRS attack on the enclave, the column of between 10,000 and 15,000 males (including around 5,000 soldiers) and the subsequent murders, why did it not pass this information on to UNPROFOR or friendly western intelligence services? High-ranking officials of the ABiH who were interviewed, insisted that this crucial intelligence was definitely passed on. But the members of UNPROFOR staff who should have received it were equally insistent that it never arrived. Notably, nothing was found relating to the matter in the UNPROFOR reports or archives. According

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<sup>1460</sup> Mehmed Pargan, 'B-H Army Eavesdropped on VRS', *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna*, (FBIS translation), 11/07/98.

<sup>1461</sup> See Part IV, Chapter 1 of the main Srebrenica report.

<sup>1462</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, *Box 67, Folder 25*. Report for week ending 7 July, 10/07/95.

to Baxter, the Military Assistant of General Smith, the ABiH in Sarajevo never delivered intelligence to General Smith, his staff or anyone else at UNPROFOR.<sup>1463</sup>

Various members of foreign intelligence services also said during interviews that no intelligence had been received from the Bosnian Muslims. This also holds true for the MIS and the Netherlands National Security Services. Studies of UNPROFOR documents revealed that no 'hard' tactical intelligence based on Comint and Humint that were apparently collected was ever passed on. Nonetheless, Sigint was altogether a principal source of intelligence information for both the ABiH and VRS for Humint penetration was probably extremely difficult other than low-level Humint collection.

It has to be concluded that the Bosnian Muslims did not have enough personnel, interception equipment, crypto analysts, analysis capabilities or even an adequate internal communication network to get the collected Comint to the right destination quickly and efficiently. The monitoring methods were so labour-intensive that many recorded messages are 'missing'. Only snippets were intercepted. These snippets could still, on occasion, have provided important intelligence, but never the complete picture. It is clear that the ABiH did not have a centralized Sigint service, but rather depended on independent collection efforts by electronic warfare units assigned to corps and divisions. This is obviously important because it explains the disorganized nature of the ABiH intelligence effort in general. It also important to emphasize the fact that the Sigint effort by the ABiH was crude and created from nothing, which explains why they used a hodge-podge of commercially available and military radio equipment in their Sigint effort. There were no computers to assist in decryption work, which meant that they were dependent on plain-language voice intercepts for the bulk of their information.

In this regard, the ABiH was always a step behind the VRS in its intelligence operations. In addition, the Bosnian Muslims could not count on the support of the Americans or other intelligence agencies for the delivery of Comint. And, as was shown in the previous chapter, their Sigint coverage of Eastern Bosnia was poor. The question still remains as to why the Bosnian Government or the military leaders did not pass on to UNPROFOR even the small amount of intelligence which they claimed to have. One possible explanation is that, according to many documents and official agreements, UNPROFOR in Safe Areas was considered ineffective by the ABiH and partial by the VRS.<sup>1464</sup> In 1995 ABiH hostility towards UNPROFOR merely intensified.<sup>1465</sup> Sarajevo was even contemplating non-renewal of the UNPROFOR mandate because the UN troops had not clearly and openly taken the side of the Muslims or helped the ABiH in the fight against the VRS. Very little came of attempts to gain more active armed involvement from the international community, specifically NATO. This triggered calls in the spring of 1995 to face the future without the UN. Relations between the ABiH and UNPROFOR deteriorated while Muslim offensives continued to increase. More and more UNPROFOR soldiers were shot or attacked and the ABiH imposed more and more restraints on UNPROFOR freedom of movement.

It is often forgotten that the freedom of movement of the Canadian troops around Visoko was almost reduced to zero by the Bosnian Muslims and that Canadian soldiers were even held hostage by the ABiH in June 1995. Canadian units at observations posts were also cut off from convoys carrying food, medicine and fuel. So, it is not only the Bosnian Serbs who were guilty of such practices. Perhaps its low level of expectation and downright hostile attitude contributed to the fact that the ABiH passed no intelligence on to Sector North East in Tuzla, BHC in Sarajevo, or UNPF in Zagreb. The Bosnian Government may have accorded prime importance to exploiting the unconditional support of the international media in its campaign to blame UNPROFOR for the failure of the defence of Srebrenica and Zepa.<sup>1466</sup>

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<sup>1463</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

<sup>1464</sup> Confidential information (178).

<sup>1465</sup> Confidential collection (7), Janvier to Annan, no. Z-1068, 28/06/95.

<sup>1466</sup> Confidential collection (4), G-2 UNPF HQ, '*ABiH Hostile Attitude towards UNPROFOR*', G-2 Rick Morgan (drafter Capt. Theunens) to COS, 12/07/95.

Secondly, the ABiH and the Sigint Unit of the Bosnian national security service may have been trying to protect their sources, capabilities, methods and techniques. This is conceivable but less plausible, given that the ABiH and the VRS knew that they were monitoring each other's communication. After all, most of the Sigint experts had worked for the VJ before the disintegration of Yugoslavia and each party knew that the other had the expertise.

But if the protection of sources was the real reason behind the decision not to pass on intelligence to UNPROFOR, then this would lead to the highly cynical conclusion that senior Bosnian military and political echelons did nothing to prevent the executions, simply in order to protect their sources. It is therefore more likely that the Bosnians knew nothing about what actually happened until days, weeks or months after the executions. By then, Comint efforts were too late to make any difference to the fate of those fleeing. Perhaps the contents of these intercepts were, however, considered useful at a later date to serve the wider political interests of Bosnia.

## Chapter 7

# Imagery Intelligence in Bosnia

‘Communications without intelligence is noise; intelligence without communications is irrelevant’,

General Alfred M. Gray.

### 1. Introduction

The capture and fall of Srebrenica were soon followed by allegations that the American intelligence services had aerial and overhead (satellite) images showing VRS preparations for the attack on the enclave. Photographs of the arrest and later executions of the Muslim males were also believed to exist. This can be illustrated by citing some examples. According to Westerman and Rijs, US spy planes and satellites had photographed the fleet of buses which were brought in to transport the Displaced Persons after the enclave fell: ‘It beggars belief that the American satellites did not also observe the build-up of tanks and artillery near Zeleni Jadar’.<sup>1467</sup> Magda van der Ende, a member of the Netherlands-Srebrenica association, also claimed that satellite photos which ‘must have shown troop concentrations’ were taken in the weeks leading up to the attack. Van der Ende said that she did not receive these photos from Minister De Grave because the CIA refused to release them.<sup>1468</sup> Some accusations went even further and, being of a somewhat cynical nature, were also less credible. The newspaper *La Croix* claimed that the CIA had followed the executions ‘live’ on large screens in their Observation Room. This allegedly took place in the presence of one of Clinton’s aides, who reportedly directly informed the White House and all the allies.<sup>1469</sup>

Not only were accusations levelled, questions were asked as well. Why did satellites and spy planes such as the U-2 fail to spot the VRS troop movements and reinforcements around the eastern enclaves? Why did the US intelligence community with all its sophisticated technology fail to ‘see’ the deportation of the Muslims at an early stage, thus enabling timely intervention? And why was the imagery of the buses at Potocari, the rounded-up prisoners and the later executions discovered so late?<sup>1470</sup>

As in the previous chapter, the question that needs to be answered is whether real-time intelligence was available and, if so, why Washington did not inform the other NATO partners in time. Some Dutch parliamentarians appeared confused and ignorant about this issue. For example, a written question was submitted in the Dutch House of Commons on why NATO satellites were not used. Apparently, the politician was evidently unaware that NATO does not have any such satellites at its disposal.<sup>1471</sup> These and other questions were asked after Madeleine Albright, the US Permanent Representative at the United Nations had, on 10 August 1995, shown the Security Council photographs of Bosnian Muslim prisoners and churned-up earth where their bodies had been buried after execution.<sup>1472</sup>

<sup>1467</sup> Westerman & Rijs, *Het Zwartste Scenario*, pp. 149 – 150; ‘VS wisten al weken tevoren van val Srebrenica’ (The US knew about the fall of Srebrenica weeks before), *De Gelderlander*, 13/10/95; Bert Steinmetz, ‘Voorhoeve door VS fout ingelicht’ (Voorhoeve wrongly briefed by US), *Het Parool*, 15/05/96.

<sup>1468</sup> *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 10/03/99.

<sup>1469</sup> ‘AICG call to indict General Janvier’, *Bosnia Report*, No. 1, November-December 1997, p. 3.

<sup>1470</sup> This question was also asked during a Netherlands Ministerial Council meeting. See: Objectivized summary of the minutes of the Ministerial Council meeting of 25/08/95, prepared for the purposes of the present NIOD study.

<sup>1471</sup> MoD, *DCBC*, box 59, No. 1307, HMID to DS/HOPN, Parliamentary Questions on Srebrenica, 16/11/95.

<sup>1472</sup> ‘US Reveals Photographs Of Apparent Mass Grave’, *International Herald Tribune*, 10/08/95 and ‘Up to 2,700 Massacred By Serbs, UN is Told’, *International Herald Tribune*, 11/08/95. Doubts were also expressed as to the existence of mass graves

The principal aim of this chapter is to clarify the ‘story’ behind these satellite images. It will begin by studying the general substance of the various accusations. Section 2 will present an inventory of the ‘eyes’ which the international intelligence community (also in the Netherlands) had at its disposal in Bosnia in the summer of 1995 and answer the question whether these instruments were actually deployed above Eastern Bosnia at that time. The images in question taken from the air are referred to as ‘Imagery Intelligence’ (Imint). The section will conclude by discussing the limitations of imagery intelligence.

Section 3 will explore the question whether Imint was also shared with UNPROFOR and the NATO allies and whether the photos – if available – were passed on by US intelligence services. Section 4 will analyse the ‘discovery process’ of the photos. Various interpretations and versions of this process have been mooted over the years. Concrete evidence – the actual photos, in so far as these have been released – will be used to ascertain what kind of photos were taken and on which dates. The deployment and success of Imint have always been cloaked in obscurity. Some claim that more Imint existed than has been published to date. Photos taken by US satellites and spy planes purportedly show the location where the estimated 4,000 men were taken by the Serbs.<sup>1473</sup> However, the first reports that the Americans had photos indicating a planned VRS attack on Srebrenica did not surface until October 1995. A journalist said to have heard this from sources in the US intelligence community. US Intelligence also allegedly had photos of mass executions to the north of Srebrenica.<sup>1474</sup>

The argument that was put forward for not passing on the intelligence on the planned attack was that nothing could be allowed to upset President Clinton’s efforts to broker a peace deal.<sup>1475</sup> The implicit suggestion here is that the Bosnian Serbs had a free hand to go ahead. Several weeks later, reports appeared in the press that US satellites and unmanned spy planes had taken photos of tank and artillery concentrations in the vicinity of the enclave. Allegedly, reinforcements of VRS infantry were also observed from the air and from space. This prior knowledge of VRS movements was not, however, communicated to UNPROFOR. Officers at UNPROFOR were said to be somewhat embittered by this ‘cynical behaviour’ on the part of the Americans.<sup>1476</sup>

At the end of 1995, reports again emerged of the operations of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). *The Sunday Telegraph* and *The Herald International Tribune* both claimed that UAVs had been deployed above Bosnia and that the Americans had video footage from Predators (unmanned aircraft vehicles) of the murders in and around Srebrenica.<sup>1477</sup> The accuracy of these allegations will be addressed in this chapter. To begin with, a few things need to be placed in perspective: the principal question is whether photos existed of the military preparations of the Bosnian Serbs in addition to the photos of mass graves.

and the estimated number of executed Muslim males. The finger of blame was also pointed at the press who had not taken the trouble to sound out the situation locally. See the letter of George Jatras, ‘Vilifying the Serbian Scapegoat’, *The Washington Times*, 20/07/97. For a more or less identical story see: Stella L. Jatras, ‘srebrenica - Code Word to Silence Critics of US Policy in the Balkans’, 31/07/00. At: [www.antiwar.com/orig/jatras.3.html](http://www.antiwar.com/orig/jatras.3.html)

<sup>1473</sup> ‘Onduidelijkheid over nieuwe luchtfotos val Srebrenica’ (Obscurity on the new aerial photos of Srebrenica), *Drentsche Courant*, 23/09/98. This report appeared in most of the GPD newspapers.

<sup>1474</sup> Andreas Zumach, ‘US Intelligence knew Serbs were planning an assault on Srebrenica’, *Basic Reports*, No. 47, 16/10/95. See also: ‘VS wisten van komende val Srebrenica’ (US knew of impending fall of Srebrenica), *Nederlands Dagblad*, 13/10/95; ‘VS wisten al weken tevoren van val Srebrenica’ (UN knew weeks in advance of the fall of Srebrenica), *De Gelderlander*, 13/10/95.

<sup>1475</sup> See also: ‘Amerikanen verzwegen voorkennis Srebrenica’ (Americans withheld foreknowledge of Srebrenica), *De Stem*, 13/10/95.

<sup>1476</sup> Ian Bruce, ‘US let safe haven fall. US knew of Serb build-up’, *The Glasgow Herald*, 24/10/95. See also: Ian Bruce, ‘Cover-Up led NATO to betray Muslims’, *The Glasgow Herald*, 20/04/01.

<sup>1477</sup> Ambrose Evand-Pritchard, ‘Americans bow to forces of realpolitik in Bosnia: US steps in only when the minefield is clear’, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 26/11/95; Ian Bruce, ‘Allies hamper inquiry: Serb war crimes hidden’, *The Glasgow Herald*, 01/12/95.

## 2. What instruments were available for imagery intelligence?

Before examining the role of Imint in Bosnia it is necessary to determine what the term actually means. As explained in Chapter 1, the bulk of Imint consists of photos taken from a high altitude outside the atmosphere. This involves, for example, the use of photo satellites (Satellite Intelligence, Satint), some of which are fitted with infra-red sensors, which enable them to operate night and day, but only in the absence of cloud cover. Infra-red gives a night capability, but not all-weather because infra-red energy is blocked by moisture in the air. To get an all-weather capability, one has to use radar. Another form is photo intelligence (Photint) provided by photo satellites. This also includes Imint obtained from special planes or unmanned aircraft, which are designed to take photos of an area from a high altitude at a high speed or by high-speed planes at a low altitude. It should be remembered that most high-altitude aircraft taking pictures are not high speed at all. The U-2 is a good example of a low-speed, high altitude platform, which has survived so well in the satellite era. There are important reasons for that. Satellites were not designed to provide tactical intelligence. The U-2 can often overfly an area several times before a satellite can be reprogrammed. A U-2 can also provide Imint along any given path while a satellite may be over a portion of the path at one point because it is orbiting around the earth. Finally, U-2 Imint is less sensitive to dissemination compared to Satint.<sup>1478</sup>

### *The American National Reconnaissance Office (NRO)*

Most of the knowledge on the Imint capacity that was deployed above Bosnia relates to the Americans. In 1995, the NRO was primarily responsible for collecting Satint and for operating the various Imint tools.<sup>1479</sup> The existence of NRO was officially confirmed on 18 September 1992. In previous years it had been a standard joke that the abbreviation NRO stood for 'Not Referred to Openly'.<sup>1480</sup> The NRO, which is based in Chantilly, Virginia, designs, builds and manages the US reconnaissance satellites. It forms part of the US Defense Department, but it also has CIA members on its staff. It gets part of its budget from the National Foreign Intelligence Program.<sup>1481</sup>

The US intelligence services deployed a considerable number of Imint tools during the crisis in former Yugoslavia. These included satellites, U-2 planes and Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), such as the Predator. The Imint satellite that was deployed above the Balkans was the Keyhole KH-11. The first KH-11 was launched on 19 December 1976. Unlike its predecessors, the KH-8 and KH-9, this satellite relayed Imint directly to Earth via a satellite data system. The first KH-11 had a life-span of 'only' 770 days, but it soon became possible to extend this to over three years.

On 28 November 1992, an 'advanced KH-11/Improved Crystal Metric System satellite' was launched, which operated in a higher orbit (around 1,000 kilometres) and had a life-span of approximately eight years. A second was launched in December 1995.<sup>1482</sup> These satellites have infra-red capabilities, which enables them to operate in darkness. They also have a highly advanced crystal metric system so that they can meticulously register differences in height on the ground. Not much later, a third satellite of the same type was launched. Thanks to a much larger fuel reservoir, this KH-11 could be used more flexibly and positioned in new orbits around the earth.<sup>1483</sup> All Advanced KH-11 satellites circled regularly above Bosnia and sent back Imint.<sup>1484</sup> The same is true for the Lacrosse and other radar-imagery satellites, which are capable of penetrating clouds.<sup>1485</sup>

<sup>1478</sup> Polmar, *Spyplane*, pp. 232 - 233.

<sup>1479</sup> For an overview of the development of the US satellite programme: Burrows, *Deep Black*, passim.

<sup>1480</sup> Laura Sullivan, 'A peek into secrets most jealously guarded', *The Baltimore Sun*, 08/09/01.

<sup>1481</sup> See: [www/nro.gov/background.html](http://www/nro.gov/background.html).

<sup>1482</sup> For the orbits of these Keyhole satellites see: Allen Thomson, 'satellite Vulnerability: a post-Cold War issue?', *Space Policy*, Vol. 11 (1995) 1 pp. 19-30.

<sup>1483</sup> Richelson, *The U.S. Intelligence Community*, pp. 150-170.

<sup>1484</sup> E-mail from Jeffrey Richelson to Cees Wiebes, 29/11/99.

<sup>1485</sup> See: Jeffrey Richelson, 'U.S. Satellite Imagery, 1960-1999', 14/04/99, at: [www.gwu.edu](http://www.gwu.edu).

Very little is known of the technical operation and capabilities of Imint satellites, but some information can be gleaned from interviews with intelligence experts who had access to Imint. On average, the satellites fitted with pivotal cameras can cross a region once or twice a day. Making zigzag movements, they photograph swathes of territory, sometimes with a width of as much as 40 kilometres. The cameras take raster images (similar to those on a television or computer screen) made up of pixels (tiny points). Each pixel forms part of the overall image. If the satellite has a resolution of one metre, then each pixel represents a diameter of one metre. This means that objects of one metre or larger can be observed. The lower the resolution of the satellite photo, the easier it is for the Imint analyst to detect small objects. These pixels are relayed to Earth and, with the aid of the reflected radar beam, the analyst can precisely determine the height of buildings, installations and other objects.

He or she can also determine with a reasonable degree of accuracy whether a pit has been dug at a specific location for an execution and filled up again later as loose earth holds the radar beam slightly longer than compact earth. This brief absorption is enough to indicate whether the soil has been disturbed. Also, interred bodies cause a difference in ground temperature that can be picked up by infra-red sensors. This is how satellites discovered disturbed soil along a road near Srebrenica, which later turned out to contain a mass grave. Other locations identified in the same way, incidentally, later turned out (through air and ground inspections) to be loading sites for timber transport.<sup>1486</sup>

For many years the resolution of the cameras was around one metre. Stories that circulated around 1995 about photographs of number plates or matchboxes were myths which were kept alive to mislead the enemy. This has all changed by 2002: even commercial satellites can now produce photos with a resolution of about 6 inches.<sup>1487</sup> People with daily access to US satellite images say that car number plates can now be distinguished without too much effort.<sup>1488</sup> The new generation of US satellites will be much smaller in size and will soon be able to produce photos with a resolution almost ten times better than the resolution of the photos taken by commercial satellites. These new satellites will be capable of delivering real-time images to US ground commanders anywhere in the world.<sup>1489</sup> The extensive and near-real-time capacity of US satellites can be inferred from the current generation of commercial satellites. These circle the earth at an altitude of around 700 kilometres, moving in a zigzag pattern that enables them to look 350 kilometres to the left and right. Images from these satellites are available within 18 minutes. It can safely be assumed that in 2003 the US satellites perform far better than in 1995.<sup>1490</sup>

### *Could satellites 'see' the executions?*

Imint experts have offered explanations for the failure of the satellites to photograph the summary executions of the Bosnian Muslims. Before a satellite could have recorded these images a lot needed to have happened under truly ideal circumstances. Normally, a satellite crosses an area (like Srebrenica) once or twice a day. As the demand for Imint is enormous, it is impossible to assign the satellites extra tasks above the region. There are geo-stationary satellites with a fixed position in relation to the earth but these are only used for Sigint, Elint and early warning systems for observing rocket launches.

Srebrenica was simply in too low a position on the list of priorities. But even if it had had higher priority and more Imint tools had been deployed, it would still be debatable whether the executions would have been discovered sooner. One Imint expert illustrated this point by offering the following calculation. If four satellites above the region were to circle the enclave four times a day, this would result in 16 sweeps for each video camera. If each sweep lasted 10 minutes, this would produce 160 minutes of footage of Srebrenica. Only some of this would be taken in daylight: in the summer this

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<sup>1486</sup> Confidential interviews (13), (47), (54) and (62).

<sup>1487</sup> See for example: [www.globexplorer.com/imgallery/image](http://www.globexplorer.com/imgallery/image)

<sup>1488</sup> Confidential interview (62).

<sup>1489</sup> Joseph Fitchett, 'spying From Space: U.S. to Sharpen the Focus', *International Herald Tribune*, 10/04/01.

<sup>1490</sup> Mark Stout and Thomas Quiggin, 'Exploiting the new high resolution satellite imagery: Darwinian imperatives?', *Commentary*, (1998) 75, pp. 3-4.



would leave around 18 hours out of every 24. The satellite would then deliver two hours of footage, assuming that there were no low-hanging clouds, mist or heavy rain, as not all the satellites had infra-red equipment. The dense fog and cloud cover that often shrouded the mountains of Bosnia reduced the effectiveness of orbiting satellites. So, the executions would have had to have taken place at some point in these two hours, and in ideal circumstances, i.e. in broad daylight, with a full sun and no clouds, and precisely at the moment when the satellite was overhead.<sup>1491</sup> The fact that executions usually took place at the edge of a wood, under trees or in a building is an additional factor which further reduces the chance of satellite detection. In short, a large percentage of these two hours must be subtracted in order to establish the period during which these executions could actually have been observed.

Even if more satellites had been targeting Eastern Bosnia it would still have been a 'lucky shot' – all things considered – if they had photographed the executions. Obviously, there were no 'lucky shots', but even if there had been, it is still possible that the Bosnian Serbs took account of the capacity of the US satellites. It is easy enough to find their orbit times on the Internet. Conversely, the possibilities of concealing objects or events from satellite reconnaissance should not be overestimated. For example, experts say that a spy satellite need not necessarily follow an exact path above a target to make good photos. As soon as it appears above the horizon there are already enough photo options, even if the target is hundreds of kilometres away.<sup>1492</sup> That said, there will always be moments when a target is outside a satellite's range.

There are also other problems that need to be considered. For instance, where exactly should the analysts have looked? They did not know if executions had been carried out on a road to the north or the south of Srebrenica. They did not know which enlargements to make of which sectors in a sweep of 40 km x 10 km. It is, moreover, extremely difficult to identify a small group of people who are about to be executed. This takes a considerable amount of time, even for the most experienced analyst. All of this is typical of a classic intelligence problem, which also figures in other types of intelligence, namely, the intricate process of the intelligence cycle, whereby all data must first be converted into information. This information frequently leads to knowledge, but such knowledge is only useful if placed in the right context by thorough analysis. This can be a highly time-consuming procedure in both Satint and Sigint. Two US intelligence experts claimed that in 1995 the fastest Imint from satellites was  $\pm 2$  days old, provided that all the analysts worked on nothing else.

The intelligence gathered from the above-mentioned satellites revealed that though satellite photos of the whole of Bosnia and the eastern enclaves were constantly available, they definitely did not take priority in the analysis of all the incoming Imint. There was always a satellite with near-real-time intelligence in a good orbit above former Yugoslavia, but this had to cover the entire country. It then crossed Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Kurdistan in Northern Iraq, the rest of Iraq, Iran and the area to the south of Iran. In the words of an American intelligence expert: 'I'm sorry for Dutchbat, but if you take a good look at this list, you can understand that the enclaves had absolutely no priority'.<sup>1493</sup> When one looks at the broader picture, it is hardly surprising that the photos which Albright presented to the Security Council turned up so late in the day. The countless number of photos and the abundance of rumours prevented the Imint analysts from searching for evidence of the deportations and executions until the start of August 1995. This matter will be returned to in Section 4.

#### *The Imagery Intelligence technology of other countries than the US*

Where the importance attached by the UK, one of America's closest allies, to Imint is concerned, it can be said that this country was bound hand and foot to the Americans for Imint after the failure of its

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<sup>1491</sup> Confidential interview (47) and James Risen, 'Experts Warn U.S. Intelligence Help Has Limits', *Los Angeles Times*, 07/06/95.

<sup>1492</sup> Confidential interviews (13) and (62).

<sup>1493</sup> Confidential interview (75).

ZIRCON spy satellite. It was also dependent on them for Sigint and other sorts of intelligence. London paid £ 500 million to get access to the Imint of the second generation Magnum satellite, which was launched in 1995.<sup>1494</sup> The UK did not, therefore, have its own satellite for overhead photo's.

Another satellite intelligence player in Yugoslavia was the Soviet Union. In the 1970s and 1980s the Soviet Union launched over thirty spy satellites a year. After the USSR collapsed, this number declined sharply. In 1999 there was only one launch and in 2000 there were three. There were four types of Russian satellites. The first was the Yantar-1KFT (codenamed *Kometa*) which gathered topographical intelligence for the Ministry of Defence. The second series was the Yantar-4K2 satellite (codenamed *Kobalt*) with an endurance of between 60 and 120 days. The Cobalt satellites had three small re-entry vehicles on board: two to bring back films to Earth and one to bring back the camera and the last roll of film. The Yantar-4KS1 (codenamed *Neman*) satellites were capable of sending digital images to ground stations in Russia directly or via communications satellites. They operated for over a year. During the 1980s it looked as if Moscow would be keeping at least one Neman and one Cobalt satellite permanently in space, but this was no longer possible after the country disintegrated.<sup>1495</sup>

Experts claim that Moscow may have provided the VJ or the VRS with photos, especially satellite photos of the military positions of the ABiH and the Croatian forces. This is doubtful, given the limited Imint capacity of the Russians and the mediocre resolution of their photos. It is also debatable whether such photos would have been of any real use to the VRS in the area of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde. The information position of the Bosnian Serbs on top of the mountains and hills around the enclaves was so good that in reality they did not need satellite photos. In this respect Imint did not play a role in the VRS attack on Srebrenica.<sup>1496</sup> Apart from the USA and Russia, the only other country with a reasonably good satellite intelligence capacity is China. There are no indications that Beijing played a role in Bosnia. Despite the close ties between the Chinese and Serb intelligence services in Belgrade, no Imint appears to have been exchanged in 1995.<sup>1497</sup>

Commercial satellites, such as Landsat, did not play an important role in the conflict either, because of their limited resolution. The French SPOT (*Système Pour l'Observation de la Terre*), though more suitable, also had a low resolution: it produced monochrome photos with a resolution of some ten metres.<sup>1498</sup> More could be expected of the Ikonos satellites, launched by Space Imaging Eosat (SIE) in Arlington, Virginia. SIE also manages the Landsat satellite.

Germany was not significantly involved in Satint, as the joint Franco-German Helios satellite was not launched until August 1995, i.e. after the fall of Srebrenica. It appears therefore that the only country, which was really active in gathering Imint was the US. They had sufficient capacity to take satellite photos of the ground situation, because a US spy satellite crossed Bosnia twice a day.<sup>1499</sup> Imint was shared with the BND but according to a senior German intelligence official, it often arrived after a specific German request after only 4 to 5 days. For example, Imint of the Muslim prisoners in the town of Bratunac arrived after the men already had been removed.<sup>1500</sup>

### *American Imint technology*

The American U-2s were essential for reconnaissance above Bosnia. Building started on the U-2 in 1953 and the first flight over the USSR took place in July 1956. The U-2 programme was the direct responsibility of the CIA. Since then, the U-2 has proven indispensable in diverse international crises

<sup>1494</sup> Dorril, *MI-6*, p. 778.

<sup>1495</sup> Moscow did not even have a single spy satellite in space between 28 September 1996 and 15 May 1997. The most recent photo-reconnaissance satellite is the Orlets-2 (codenamed *Yenisey*) which can carry more than 20 capsules that can be sent back to Earth. See: Phillip S. Clark, 'Russia has no reconnaissance satellites in orbit', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 08/05/01.

<sup>1496</sup> Confidential interviews (6) and (91).

<sup>1497</sup> Jasper Becker, 'spy boss welcomed by Serbian counterpart', *South China Morning Post*, 23/06/95.

<sup>1498</sup> See: Jeffrey Richelson, 'U.S. Satellite Imagery, 1960 - 1999', 14/04/99, at: [www.gwu.edu](http://www.gwu.edu).

<sup>1499</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1500</sup> Confidential interview (98).

and has provided policy-makers with intelligence by photographing targets and objects. For example, the U-2 and the later version, the TR-1, flew over 800 missions during the crisis in the Persian Gulf in 1990 and 1991. It comes in various versions, not least the U-2R (Comint version), which collects information on enemy radar systems. Another model of the U-2R carries out Elint assignments as well as photographic reconnaissance. The production figures are a state secret, but it is likely that many versions were built of the U-2 and the TR-1.<sup>1501</sup>

According to various sources the U-2s which were active above Bosnia sent 'imaging radar data via satellite links' for processing and analysis to their home base, the 99<sup>th</sup> Reconnaissance Squadron at Beale Air Force Base, California. Beale then sent the processed intelligence back to the commanders in Bosnia.<sup>1502</sup> The U-2s were fitted with special radar equipment for taking photos night and day at an altitude of around 30 kilometres, regardless of the weather. The resolution of the photos was around 2.87 metres.<sup>1503</sup> However, one can have some doubts about this. The radar-version of the U-2, which flew over Bosnia was probably pulled from duty in Korea only in October-November 1995. A problem was also on having the available satellite bandwidth for relay of the imagery. Downlinking to a ground station was the conventional approach, but nobody wanted to put such a ground station within the footprint in Bosnia. The satellite uplink was the only solution, and that wasn't available until the US troop deployments began in October-November 1995, which jacked up the priority as the Dayton Accords took shape. In addition, there was probably never adequate data storage on-board the aircraft to hold the radar imagery for later analysis.<sup>1504</sup>

Some aircraft, including the U-2R, were equipped with sophisticated video systems and produced near-real-time Imint. The U-2s have a range of over 11,000 kilometres and a cruising speed of 700 kilometres per hour. Their cameras presently have a resolution of 35-45 centimetres. The U-2 missions over Bosnia were usually launched and recovered in 1995 from RAF Alconbury in England.<sup>1505</sup> No missions over Bosnia were flown from the RAF base at Akrotiri on Cyprus. U2 flights out of Akrotiri flew missions in support of the treaty commitments from the Camp David Accords in Golan Heights and elsewhere in the Israel-Arab theatre.<sup>1506</sup> One of the recipients of the U-2 product in 1995 was the Combined Air Operations Center (CAOC) at the air-force base in Vicenza (Italy). The U-2s were managed by the Defense Airborne Reconnaissance Office (DARO) in Washington.<sup>1507</sup>

Although the U-2 activities were stepped up after the Dayton Accord, when US ground troops arrived in Bosnia, U-2 aircraft were already operational above the enclaves in the spring and summer of 1995 and delivered considerable amounts of Imint. Each U-2 flight was not meticulously charted beforehand on the basis of intelligence requirements and targets but they did fly a huge pattern over Bosnia each time, and took pictures of everything that wasn't cloud covered. If there was a requirement for an unusual, special target area, such as Srebrenica, then they would amend their flight path as needed. In general, they had only a few flight patterns, each of which was submitted and approved to a special reconnaissance command element in Washington. The flight pattern was divided into 'boxes'. After take-off (from the UK) the Polaroid camera was activated. A full mission delivered between 9 and 11 kilometres of film, which was analysed in small sections on a priority basis and priority basis here means less than one day. Sometimes, the U-2s flew over Bosnia twice a week. If the first flight was

<sup>1501</sup> Polmar and Allen, *Spybook*, pp. 561 - 563.

<sup>1502</sup> Graig Covault, 'USAF U-2 Satcom Link Employed in Bosnia Operation', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 26/02/96, p. 26.

<sup>1503</sup> Gert Kromhout, 'Op de grens van lucht en ruimte' (At the border between air and space), *De Vliegende Hollander*, (1997) 3, pp. 12 - 15 and Gert Kromhout, 'Overwerk voor de *Dragon Lady*' (Overtime for the Dragon Lady), *ARMEX*. 81 (March 1997), p. 25.

<sup>1504</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1505</sup> Richelson, *U.S. Intelligence*, pp. 158 - 159.

<sup>1506</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1507</sup> In 1996 the U-2s were stationed at the French air base of Istres, near Marseilles. They originally came from the RAF Fairford base in England. In August 1995 a U-2 crashed near Fairford. See: 'U.S. Spy Plane Crashes', *The New York Times*, 30/08/95.

successful, the second was called off. After the U-2 film, all eleven kilometres of it, was developed, the U-2 photos were analysed and reported within 18 hours. Some target boxes were studied but most were not. It was totally impossible to analyse a whole U-2 film because there were not enough skilled analysts.<sup>1508</sup> However, according to an intelligence analyst all eleven kilometres of film was examined. He added that it perhaps was not reviewed with the scrutiny one might wish, if personnel, time and other demands were optimized. But a special team of photo-interpreters did their best to cover the film from one end to the other, and did a remarkable job to meet the requirements levied on them.<sup>1509</sup>

The new requirements and targets were then defined and the second U-2 mission (if necessary) was planned and executed. The photos from U-2 planes arrived via the purely US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) at Molesworth. At that time, the intelligence team was well-coordinated and worked at wartime capacity. However, the pressure was so high that some people even committed suicide.<sup>1510</sup> US intelligence officials responsible for Bosnia regularly issued additional assignments which required movements from target box to target box. The most suitable Imint tool for these target boxes was always determined beforehand: U-2, Predator, satellite or Tactical Air Reconnaissance (TACRECCE) like the F-16. Some tasks were not only performed by Molesworth but also by US European Command (EUCOM) in Stuttgart where Brigadier General Michael Hayden ruled the roost.<sup>1511</sup>

The planned successor of the U-2 was the Lockheed A-12 (Oxcart), which made its first test flight at the end of 1964. Eighteen Oxcart are thought to have been built. The Oxcart was a success, but the last flight was carried out in 1968. The A12/Oxcart programme was terminated in 1968 because of a political decision to let the US Air Force assume responsibility for the missions. Its successor, the SR-71 Blackbird, became operational in 1968. The SR-71 was immune to fighter planes and air-to-air missiles, because it moved at such a high speed (Mach 3.3) and was undetectable on radar screens. The SR-71 was decommissioned in March 1990. Some went to museums and a few were stored in hangars. In 1994, Congress asked the US Air Force to keep some SR-71s ready for use or to make them operational again. The Air Force refused the request because of the high costs: \$39,000 per flight hour. In 1995, Congress decided to foot the bill itself and offered \$100 million. In return, the US Air Force had to keep three aircraft in working order. The resources were, however, never used and all requests by commanders to access the money were rejected by the Air Force Command.<sup>1512</sup>

Contrary to certain claims, these aircraft did not carry out photographic or Sigint missions above former Yugoslavia.<sup>1513</sup> An official press statement announced that two SR-71s with crew would not be operationally deployable until 1 January 1997.<sup>1514</sup> It is more plausible that, after 1997, they carried out missions and test flights in the USA for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). This was the main reason for the decision by Congress to recommission them in the first place. In any case, up till now no convincing evidence has been gleaned from documents or interviews that the Lockheed SR-71 operated above Bosnia.<sup>1515</sup> In March 1998, the US Secretary of Defence, after a review of options for the Blackbird program termination, approved permanent retirement of the SR-71.<sup>1516</sup>

Other aircraft with 'eyes and ears' that *were* active in the region were the RC-135 Rivet Joint, US NAVY F/A-18C fighters and the ERC-130 Airborne Command and Control Centers. These were fully

<sup>1508</sup> Confidential interviews (6), (13) and (91).

<sup>1509</sup> Confidential interview (80).

<sup>1510</sup> Confidential interviews (8) and (54).

<sup>1511</sup> E-mail from Jeffrey Richelson to Cees Wiebes, 05/05/01.

<sup>1512</sup> E-mail from Jeffrey Richelson to Cees Wiebes, 01/08/99 and Gert Kromhout, 'Overwerk voor de Dragon Lady', *ARMEX*, 81(1997) (March), p. 25.

<sup>1513</sup> Steve Macko, 'The SR-71 Blackbird Rises Like a Phoenix', *Emergency Net News Service*, Vol. 2 (1996) 45, 14/02/96.

<sup>1514</sup> 'SR-71 Blackbird Back in Business', *Air Combat Command News*, 24/01/97.

<sup>1515</sup> E-mail Jeffrey Richelson to Cees Wiebes, 29/07/99.

<sup>1516</sup> FOIA National Security Archive, Letter William J. Lynn to Members of Congress, 21/0898. See also: Jeffrey T. Richelson (editor), *The U-2, OXCART, and the Srebrenica-71. U.S. Aerial Espionage in the Cold War and Beyond*, NSA Electronic Briefing Book No. 74, 16/10/02.

operational in Bosnia, like the P-3C and EP-3 Orion planes (used by NATO). The P-3C Orion had 'eyes' and 'ears' and had been active since early 1994. After the arrival of US ground troops, it sent live images to ground stations in Mostar, Banja Luka and Tuzla. However, it is unlikely that these were deployed in operational Imint missions above the eastern enclaves in the summer of 1995.<sup>1517</sup> However, from 1994 onwards there been problems because the overwhelming majority of targets were small or mobile rather than large, fixed sites. In the beginning US flyers even used 15 year-old hand-held 35 mm cameras, for they lacked timely imagery, according to a published account and Pentagon memos. In July 1994, a confidential NATO report claimed that of the 206 aircraft assigned to the operation Deny Flight only 14 were capable of air reconnaissance tasks. But some NATO members had their own national assets, which contributed to the overall intelligence picture.<sup>1518</sup>

Another excellent tool for observing troop movements and the repositioning of tanks and artillery was the Joint Stars aircraft, more commonly known as JSTARS, but these were not fully operational in the Balkans until 27 December 1995. The JSTARS were one of the great successes of the Desert Storm campaign. These E-8Cs (converted Boeing 707s) were able to register troop movements, tank formations and artillery positions at great distances with almost 100% accuracy. This is known as the detection of 'Moving Target Indicators' in military jargon. The JSTARS had direct contact with the ground commanders via near-real-time satellite connections.<sup>1519</sup>

But, as was pointed out by the former director of the French military intelligence services, General Jean Heinrich, Bosnia was not Iraq. The CIA knew what was happening on the ground in Iraq because it was desert terrain, something US intelligence services were comfortable with. The Americans were not used to flying over mountainous, densely-forested areas where small groups moved around in misleading ways, Heinrich said.<sup>1520</sup> The JSTARS also owed its success in the Kuwaiti desert to a string of other factors: large numbers of tanks, armoured vehicles and trucks that operated in large formations; low levels of civilian motorized traffic; a clear and broad dividing line between the two sides; no place to hide military materiel from radar missions; minimum vegetation and inhabited areas; flat terrain; air supremacy; and clear targets. Apart from air supremacy, none of these ideal operational conditions existed in Bosnia. On the contrary, in Bosnia the JSTARS were later confronted with mountains and hills and with 'false radar returns' from bare mountain expanses in what was later the French sector (in Republika Srpska). These signals were interpreted as moving targets and formations.<sup>1521</sup>

The JSTARS did not operate well in Bosnia. They could not distinguish between civilian and military traffic along the narrow roads. Sometimes a signal denoting a convoy was received, but this usually turned out to be vehicles passing each other. In any case, the ABiH and VRS generally travelled by bus to the theatre of war and not in long military convoys. Aside from the fact that the enclaves had no priority in the US intelligence community, the JSTARS had the greatest difficulty observing movements of troops, tanks and artillery in Bosnia.<sup>1522</sup>

As the JSTARS were not fully operational in the Balkans until December 1995, the American and the international intelligence community (especially within NATO) did not have access to this intelligence platform in the summer of 1995. But even if they had, it is unlikely, given the local

<sup>1517</sup> Daniel Wakin, 'Camera in Sky Keeps Eye on Bosnia', *The Washington Post*, 19/12/97.

<sup>1518</sup> Tony Capaccio, 'Intelligence, Imagery Shortfalls Mar NATO Air Campaign', *Defense Week*, 05/12/94 and confidential information (81).

<sup>1519</sup> *Annual Command History, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fiscal Year 1995, Top Secret*, 30/09/96.

<sup>1520</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, No 3412, 2 part, Paris 2001, Deel 2, Audition de Jean Heinrich, 08/02/01, pp. 179 - 186.

<sup>1521</sup> Colonel Collin A. Agee, 'Joint Stars in Bosnia. Too Much Data - Too Little Intel?', *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, (October-December 1996), pp. 6-10. See also in the same issue: Captain Bruce A. Niedrauer, 'Joint Stars Support to Special Operations Command', pp. 15 - 17.

<sup>1522</sup> Captain Kristin M. Baker, 'Operation Joint Endeavor. Joint Stars in the Balkans', *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, (October-December 1996), pp. 27 - 29 and Graig Covault, 'Joint Stars Patrols Bosnia', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 19/02/96, p. 45.

conditions, that the operational performance of the JSTARS would have contributed much – if anything at all – to the general intelligence on the situation in the enclaves. Finally, another air intelligence platform that could have been important was the ‘Guardrail’ mission, which had long been flown to all sorts of hotspots. The US Air Force had a fleet of 12 Guardrails (mainly for Comint and Elint), but they were not deployed in Bosnia before 1995.<sup>1523</sup>

The European NATO allies did not have much to offer in this field. As far as the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) concerned, Imint took third place as a source of intelligence. Photos were delivered by the RAF Nimrods which carried out photo reconnaissance flights in the region. The U-2 flights also frequently produced good results. The British had borrowed U-2s in the past for various missions over the Soviet Union, but it is not known whether British pilots still fly U-2s. As a rule, the British used RAF Nimrods, Jaguars and Sentry AWACS for air reconnaissance and photography.<sup>1524</sup> None of these aircraft was active above the eastern enclaves. The DIS also had access to photos from UAVs, but most of the intelligence they provided pertained to Gorazde. These photos came from US UAVs, as the British UAV (Raven) was not flying over Bosnia at that time. According to a DIS official, Satint were delivered directly to the purely US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth.

The Nimrods performed Sigint as well as Imint tasks and were used chiefly for intercepting communications and electronic traffic.<sup>1525</sup> France deployed its own Mirage photo-reconnaissance planes above Bosnia but mainly for national assignments. In short, most of the western nations were capable of collecting their own Imint above Bosnia with special (spy) planes. However, as in the case of the spy satellites, American technology predominated.

The question that now needs to be answered is whether unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) such as the GNAT 750 (1987-1996) and the Predator (1994-1997) delivered intelligence. The only UAVs which were operational in the region in the summer of 1995 were those of the CIA.<sup>1526</sup> At the start of 1994, the first report appeared that the CIA had placed two long-range UAVs in Albania plus a ground station for satellite links. These were GNAT-750s, which had been flying since 1989. The GNAT fell under a CIA project known as ‘Tier 1’.

Depending on the terrain, the GNAT could make normal take-offs and landings, thanks to its retractable undercarriage. It could also be launched from a container and recovered with a parachute. The GNAT 750 is fitted with a data-link which needs a continuous line-of-sight connection. The CIA used to work with SGM-2-37A *Schweitzer* gliders which were flown by a two-man crew. It used these for photo reconnaissance missions. To secure the line-of-sight connection with the GNAT 750 a military version of the *Schweitzer*, the RG 8A, was later deployed as a relay station for the GNATs. The RG-8A is specially designed for silent flight operations; its acoustic signature is so low that it can operate above enemy territory without being heard. Two or three RG-8As are used by the CIA for special missions.

This manned aircraft had an endurance of only eight hours; as it operated from Albania, it meant that the GNAT 750 had an on-station time of only two hours. The aircraft had to operate from Albania because the Italian government had refused a CIA request to operate from Italy. The Albanian government was apparently less reluctant. The GNAT 750s were brought to Europe in January 1994 and stationed in Gjader, 30 miles north of Tirana. They became operational on 4 February 1994. They were fitted with several cameras (one with a 900 mm lens) and infra-red sensors.<sup>1527</sup> The GNAT had a range that covered the whole of Bosnia and Belgrade as well. It had an endurance of 24 hours and a maximum altitude of over five kilometres. Presumably these GNATs were used mainly for collecting near-real-time military information.<sup>1528</sup> The targets were air bases, entrenchments, fortifications, supply

<sup>1523</sup> Ronald W. Wilson, ‘Eyes in the Sky: Arial Systems’, *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, Vol. 22 (1996) 3, p. 23.

<sup>1524</sup> Smith, *New Cloak*, p. 210.

<sup>1525</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>1526</sup> For the history of the UAV see: Richelson, *Wizards*, pp. 224 - 226.

<sup>1527</sup> Frederic Lert, *Wings of the CIA*, Paris, 1998, pp. 395 - 399 and MoD, *MID/TCBU, Folder 443-0350*, MID/KM Report, UAV's boven Bosnië (UVA's above Bosnia), PIR 95/1, 02/02/95.

<sup>1528</sup> David A. Fulgham, ‘CIA to deploy UVAs in Albania’, *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 31/01/95, pp. 20 - 22.

lines and troop movements. After approximately twelve flights, however, the CIA discontinued operations with the GNAT-750. The intended 30 missions did not go ahead due to bad weather, technical difficulties and problems with the relay of video images.<sup>1529</sup> They were later used to protect US troops in Macedonia against possible attacks.

In June 1994, the CIA renewed their efforts. It again wanted to fly three GNATs, preferably from Italy and otherwise from Albania. The home base was eventually Albania once again, but a new launch-site was set up in Croatia in November 1994. Now the GNATs were also fitted with Sigint capabilities to intercept communications and electronic traffic and radar emissions. As the GNAT was suitable for Comint, the CIA could now easily intercept ground communication passing through GSM phones or Motorolas and other walkie-talkies. The new GNATs could follow convoys and could even distinguish between fake and authentic artillery fire.<sup>1530</sup>

The GNATs appear to have played a key role in November 1994. The stationing of the twenty members of the GNAT team on the island of Brac off the coast of Dalmatia (*Operation Lofly View*) coincided with the signing of the American-Croat military agreement on 29 November 1994. According to the journalist David Binder, the placement of the GNATs in Croatia also had a lot to do with the Bosnian-Serb counter-attacks against ABiH offensives. In return for their cooperation, the Croatian military commanders received intelligence about the positions, troop movements and communication links of the Bosnian Serbs. This information was allegedly also shared with the ABiH.<sup>1531</sup> At any rate, UAV flights by the CIA and the Pentagon were carried out in January 1995 in the air space of the warring factions.<sup>1532</sup> As will be shown later, the eastern enclaves were also on the target list and photos were taken by Predators. The GNATs definitely flew until 1996.<sup>1533</sup> At least, at the end of June 1995, GNAT UAVs with RG-8As were still flying for the Pentagon.<sup>1534</sup>

Apparently, the results delivered by the GNATs were disappointing, though, because reports appeared before long that serious work was in progress to produce a successor. This would eventually be the Predator.<sup>1535</sup> The Predator, a more sophisticated version of the GNAT 750, falls under the 'Tier 2' programme of the CIA. It is much larger than its predecessor, but the greatest difference is the addition of a satellite data-link, which dispenses with the constant line-of-sight connection through the interim station of the RG-8A. The Predators were allegedly deployed in July 1995. The Americans are alleged to have had Predator video footage of the murders in and around Srebrenica.<sup>1536</sup>

Images were indeed relayed by UAVs. Though the Predators were still in the test-flight phase, they were operational above Bosnia. These ground-controlled UAVs were deployed by the US Defense Department and the CIA. The Predator therefore carried out various missions depending on the actual 'owner', ranging from intelligence gathering on potential threats against US ground troops and planes (Defense Department) after the Dayton Accord to the collection of general intelligence on the warring parties (CIA). Hence, different types of UAVs were operational in the Balkans with Elint and Imint tasks.<sup>1537</sup>

<sup>1529</sup> 'GNATs Weathered Out', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 14/02/95, p. 19.

<sup>1530</sup> 'spying on Bosnia', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 06/06/95, p. 23 and David A. Fulgham, 'CIA to fly missions from inside Croatia', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 11/07/95, pp. 20 - 21.

<sup>1531</sup> David Binder, 'GNATs for Bosnia', *The Nation*, 08/05/95, pp. 620 - 621.

<sup>1532</sup> MoD, DCBC, File 792, DocId, 9221, AFSOUTH to ASCAL, 27/01/95.

<sup>1533</sup> David A. Fulgham, 'Predator survives lost satellite link', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 25/03/96, p. 24.

<sup>1534</sup> MoD, DOKP.u. STAOOPER. Telegram from Commander 5ATAF to AIG 5781, 27/06/95.

<sup>1535</sup> David A. Fulgham, 'Tier 2 UAV aborts first test flight', in *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 11/07/95, p. 22 and David A. Fulgham, 'Predator UAV produces high-quality images', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 28/11/95, p. 62.

<sup>1536</sup> Ambrose Evand-Pritchard, 'Americans bow to forces of realpolitik in Bosnia: US steps in only when the minefield is clear', *The Sunday Telegraph*, 26/11/95 and Ian Bruce, 'Allies hamper inquiry: Serb war crimes hidden', *The Glasgow Herald*, 01/12/95.

<sup>1537</sup> A tactical UAV, the *Hunter*, was deployed by the Pentagon in 1999 in Kosovo but probably never flew above Bosnia. See: Lt. Commander J.D.R. Dixon, *UAV Employment in Kosovo: Lessons for the Operational Commander*, Naval War College paper, 08/02/00, p. 4.

John. M. Deutch, the later Director of the CIA, was a particularly staunch advocate of UAVs. As Defense Secretary, he had already argued for a broader deployment in July 1993.<sup>1538</sup> It was also known at the Military Intelligence Service (MIS) of the Royal Netherlands Navy that the CIA was using seven Predators. The 'Periodic Intelligence Report' of February 1995 stated that for some time the CIA had been operating with this type of UAV above Bosnia. At the end of June 1995, the MIS/Air Force informed the MIS/Navy that the US Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) wanted to station the Predator in Albania for 60 days.<sup>1539</sup>

Qualitatively, the Predator was definitely the best UAV.<sup>1540</sup> This Medium-Altitude Endurance UAV (MAE UAV) can operate day and night and has huge merits compared with most spy satellites. It has an infra-red sensor for reconnaissance and target recognition. An important mission of the MAE UAV is to gather Sigint.<sup>1541</sup> The Predator also delivers Imint in the form of photos, but it can produce live video footage as well. These UAVs constantly relayed Imint with a resolution of 30 centimetres to ground stations. Thanks to zoom lenses this can provide sharp images. The UAV controllers on the ground could therefore observe targets such as tanks, APCs and other military vehicles on the ground from an altitude of ten kilometres. From an altitude of five kilometres they could distinguish a tank from an APC and from 1,800 metres they could identify the type of tank. The UAV has a range of over 800 kilometres and an endurance of 40 hours. It flies virtually silently at an altitude of 10,000 feet and it is more or less undetectable by radar systems, partly because it flies very slowly.<sup>1542</sup> The UAVs were later guided to their targets by JSTARS. For instance, in 1996 the Predators were apparently capable of sending live images of VRS activities in Northern and Central Bosnia to the USA with a delay of one second.<sup>1543</sup>

The deployment of UAVs in *Operation Nomad Vigil* became particularly relevant after the hostage-taking of UNPROFOR personnel in the spring of 1995. The shooting down of an American F-16 on 2 June 1995 was the main reason for bringing additional Predators to the region. Only then were the operational activities of the UAVs stepped up from Gjader (Albania) in order to support UNPROFOR and to prevent Serb air attacks in Bosnia.<sup>1544</sup> For example, on 5 June 1995, a UAV heading towards Kososka mountain was spotted close to the confrontation line at Drazevici in Sector South West. According to UNMO observers, this Drone was shot down by the VRS.<sup>1545</sup> It was not until after the summer that larger numbers of UAVs were deployed by the US Army and Air force. But, from the very start, the deployment of UAVs in Bosnia was not exactly successful. The Predators turned out to have serious flaws. In August 1995, two Predators were destroyed in four days. This led to an internal joke that 'they managed to add "soil-sampling" to their collection techniques'. One Predator was hit by anti-aircraft fire when it descended to fly under the clouds. The other had engine problems.

Later versions of the Predator were fitted with Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), which meant that they would not have to fly below the clouds and hence could undertake reconnaissance missions in bad weather.<sup>1546</sup> SAR enables the Predator to look through clouds and even to detect planes through the roofs of metal hangars. Its range was extended to 925 kilometres and it could fly at a maximum altitude of 7.5 kilometres. It was only after September 1995 that the Predators started sending important intelligence about VRS tanks, heavy weapons, ammunition depots and artillery positions

<sup>1538</sup> See for example: [www.fas.org/irp/aganecy/daro/uav95/endurance.html](http://www.fas.org/irp/aganecy/daro/uav95/endurance.html)

<sup>1539</sup> MoD, *MID/TCBU*. AR Briefing MID/KM, State Secret, AR No. 26/1995, 03/07/95.

<sup>1540</sup> In 1998 followed by the *Outrider*.

<sup>1541</sup> The planes will also be fitted with options for detecting minefields. See: Ronald W. Wilson, 'Eyes in the Sky: Arial Systems', *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, Vol. 22 (1996) 3, p. 23.

<sup>1542</sup> Raymond D. Pickering, 'Tactical UAVs: A Supported Unit's Primer', *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin*, Vol. 23 (1997) 2, pp. 45 - 48 and Donald Harvey, 'Intelligence Notes', *American Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 16 (1995) 1, p. 94.

<sup>1543</sup> David A. Fulgham, 'Bosnian sky spy snoops for crime', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 06/05/96, p.25.

<sup>1544</sup> *Annual Command History, U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command, Fiscal Year 1995, Top Secret*, 30/09/96, pp. 31 - 32.

<sup>1545</sup> Confidential information (50).

<sup>1546</sup> David A. Fulgham, 'Two Predators Destroyed in Bosnia', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 21/08/95, pp. 24-25.



around Sarajevo and Gorazde. This information was passed on to UNPROFOR for the eventuality of air attacks on the VRS positions. Croatian Army officers admitted that the success of their offensive in the Krajina was partly attributable to the information from the Predators.<sup>1547</sup> They appear to have received this intelligence from the Americans. Late 1995 the Pentagon pulled its advanced Predator drones out of Bosnia because they were not equipped with the radar to see through dense Bosnian cloud cover. The drones were being flown so low beneath the clouds that they became easy targets for VRS ground fire. It did not take the Bosnian Serbs long to find a fast and effective weapon against low-flying UAVs. One tactic was to fly an Mi-8 HIP helicopter alongside the UAV. The gunner then shot the UAV to pieces with a 7.62 mm machine gun through the open side-door. This was a popular tactic during the war in Kosovo until NAVO fighter planes brought it to an end by firing at the helicopters.<sup>1548</sup> The CIA declined to discuss whether it also had withdrawn its drones from the Balkans.<sup>1549</sup>

Besides the UAVs of the CIA, the US marines had their own UAVs, the Navy VC-6 Pioneers, which had been operating from sea and land since 1994, supporting the Sixth Fleet in the Adriatic. This was a short-range and older US Navy aircraft.<sup>1550</sup> Missions were flown over Bosnia from September 1994.<sup>1551</sup>

#### *The deployment of other unmanned aerial vehicles*

Did UNPROFOR itself have UAVs at its disposal? The Swedish Force Commander Wahlgren had already commented early on that his experience of getting correct and accurate information about Srebrenica and Zepa was not always positive. Getting intelligence from NATO was not much of a success. He suggested approaching Israel, which had used unmanned Drones for air reconnaissance missions in the past. UNPROFOR could perhaps buy or borrow some Drones for deployment in Bosnia. They were to be allocated to temporary ultra-mobile Drone teams which could be used quickly in problem areas.<sup>1552</sup> In the summer of 1993, France also had deployable UAVs at its disposal. Brigadier General C. Ritchie, who was working for UNPROFOR in Zagreb, told DPKO in New York as early as at the end of 1993 that intelligence-gathering tests had been conducted with French UAVs. These five UAVs were rented from Paris but were only used above Bihac for the benefit of the French troops stationed there. They flew from Pleso airfield with the consent of Generals Briquemont and Cot. Their main task was to monitor troop and artillery movements.<sup>1553</sup>

As it happened, these UAVs did not perform up to scratch, but despite negative recommendations, UNPROFOR still rented them for \$ 1,000,000 for a period of three months.<sup>1554</sup> A second bill arrived at the end of 1993 in which the French company *CAC Systèmes* charged UNPROFOR almost \$ 253,000 for two UAVs which had crashed. UNPROFOR had doubts as to who was to blame for the accidents. A problem was, however, pinpointed: UNPROFOR had agreed not to fit UAVs with parachutes. This inevitably meant that the UAVs would crash in the event of problems. So the advice in August 1994 was to pay the bill.<sup>1555</sup> The intelligence product that was eventually

<sup>1547</sup> David A. Fulgham, 'Predators bound for Bosnia soon', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 13/11/95, p. 73 and MoD, *MIS/TCBU*. MID/KM Report, UAVs above Bosnia, PIR 95/1, 02/02/95.

<sup>1548</sup> Lt. Commander J.D.R. Dixon, *UAV Employment in Kosovo: Lessons for the Operational Commander*, Naval War College paper, 08/02/00, p. 10.

<sup>1549</sup> James Risen and Ralph Vartabedian, 'spy Plane Woes Create Bosnia Intelligence Gap', *Los Angeles Times*, 02/12/95.

<sup>1550</sup> 'UAVs in Bosnia', at: <http://www.edwards.af.mil.pmay98/cover/bosnia.htm>.

<sup>1551</sup> See for example: [www.fas.org/irp/aganecy/daro/uav95/pioneer.html](http://www.fas.org/irp/aganecy/daro/uav95/pioneer.html)

<sup>1552</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR. Wahlgren to Annan, Unprofor Z-596, 067/05/93.

<sup>1553</sup> Confidential Collection (4), CoS Unprofor, Zagreb to BHC, Kiseljak, No. C811, 18/11/93.

<sup>1554</sup> UNGE, *DPKO*, No. 81307, *File DFC Office*, Brig. Gen Ritchie, UNPROFOR, Zagreb to Annan, UNPROFOR-Z-1628, Drone Deployment, 23/12/93, 6p.

<sup>1555</sup> UNNY, *DPKO*, No. 81307, *File DFC Office*, 02/08-04/08/95, DFC Crabbe to COS, BHC, DFC 233, 24/08/94 and DFC, Crabbe to COS, BHC, DFC 266, 31/10/94.

delivered by the French UAVs could not be found in the archives of UNPROFOR or DPKO. Be that as it may, the problems with these UAVs prompted Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) to ask the headquarters in Zagreb to have other aircraft carry out photo reconnaissance missions at low altitudes.<sup>1556</sup>

Though previous experience had proven negative, these were again French UAVs, namely, the FOX, which came in three versions: AT1, AT2 and TX. The French started developing these UAVs in 1986. The AT1 and AT2 were used for short-range battlefield reconnaissance and the TX was used for electronic warfare. The FOX was launched with a catapult and could be programmed or controlled from the ground. It landed by means of a parachute. The FOX had a real-time data-link and could be fitted with TV cameras, infra-red sensors, VHF or radar jammers (TX version). The UN is said to have had ten FOX AT1s at its disposal for reconnaissance flights above Bosnia. The FOX had a limited action radius of 55 km and a maximum endurance of 1.5 hours. The Netherlands Military Intelligence Service (MIS) had no knowledge of the operational base of these UAVs or who was responsible for their deployment. Nor did it know where the intelligence arrived, how it was processed and who was responsible for the processing.<sup>1557</sup> Again, the Imint which the French UAVs eventually delivered could not be traced in the archives of UNPROFOR or the DPKO. It did, however, clearly emerge that UNPROFOR footed the bill for the force protection activities of the French Army. The French also neglected to inform UNPROFOR that their military intelligence services were also working with their own UAVs. These were only operational in Sarajevo in the form of small, unmanned helicopters with a limited flying time. The results were not shared with UNPROFOR; the French were playing things close to their chest.<sup>1558</sup> It is therefore also unknown what Imint was collected by these UAVs in 1995.

The 'Raven', the UAV tested by the British in the 1990s, was not operational above Bosnia, but the German UAV, the Dornier CL-289 UAV, is thought to have been active in the region in 1995. These UAVs, which had a Zeiss camera and infra-red capacity, were especially involved in military tactical reconnaissance. An official of the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* claimed that this Imint was passed on to NATO.<sup>1559</sup> Most likely, these German UAVs were mainly active above Croatia. Their limited flying distance (less than 200 kilometres) continued to constitute a major problem. During the war in Kosovo, the German photos were rated as the sharpest, and the colour video of the Predator was deemed the best Imint.<sup>1560</sup>

Among the warring factions, only the Croatians made regular use of UAVs – the MAH-1 and the MAH-2 – for gathering Imint. These machines were built in Croatia. In February 1995, UNMOs observed a launch near Karlovac. The Croatian UAVs were frequently deployed above Bihac. A Croatian officer who participated in this programme said that the Croatian UAVs even flew above Belgrade. Croatian electronic warfare experts were also reportedly able to get access to the American VSAT downlinks which relayed images from the Predators to the ground.<sup>1561</sup>

During the conflict in Bosnia the Serbian air force also had access to special Imint aircraft. For example, the VJ had a squadron of twelve special MIG-21 planes. This squadron, which was fitted with 'pods' on the underside of the aircraft, carried out Imint and Sigint tasks from the air base in Ponikve and Belgrade. These aircraft carried out a maximum of five reconnaissance missions a day. They were often moved to keep them out of sight of US spy satellites and U-2 missions. Sometimes, they flew over the Drina for operations above Bosnia.<sup>1562</sup> It may be construed on the basis of this information

<sup>1556</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR. BHC to Unprofor, Zagreb, No. AOCC/OPS/30, 07/12/93.

<sup>1557</sup> MoD, MID/TCBU. MID/KM Report, UAVs above Bosnia, PIR 95/1, 02/02/95.

<sup>1558</sup> Confidential interview (54). See also: Eriksson, 'Intelligence and Peacekeeping Operations', *International Journal of Intelligence and Counter-intelligence*, Vol. 10 (1997) 1, p. 11.

<sup>1559</sup> Confidential interview (58).

<sup>1560</sup> Tim Ripley, 'UAVs above Kosovo - did the Earth move?', *Defence Systems Daily*, 01/12/99. Later during the Kosovo crisis in 1999, besides the Americans, various European countries reportedly deployed UAVs including the French with their *Segem* and the Germans with their *Dornier CL-289*. Even the Italians operated UAVs from Albania.

<sup>1561</sup> Ripley, *Operation*, p. 83.

<sup>1562</sup> Confidential interview (73).

that especially American, French and presumably also Croatian UAVs were active above Bosnia, Srpska and Serbia. Quite a lot is known about the performance and results of the American UAVs, but nothing is known as yet about the performance and results of the French and Croatian UAVs.

#### *Dutch reconnaissance flights*

The Dutch Ministry of Defence also had access to Imint. Reconnaissance flights were carried out above Bosnia by four Dutch RF-16s.<sup>1563</sup> On 7 and 8 April 1993, four RF-16 photo reconnaissance aircraft of the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron were dispatched to Bosnia. These RF-16s could take photos from a special pod attached to the fuselage. The pod contained five daylight cameras and one infra-red camera, which could operate in the dark.<sup>1564</sup> These four RF-16s were later withdrawn but four RF-16s were sent to Villafranca in February 1994.<sup>1565</sup> Before long it emerged that the intelligence flow to this unit was below par. This was partly due to the fact that updated intelligence was not available on time.<sup>1566</sup> While the four RF-16s photo reconnaissance aircraft of the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron were stationed in Villafranca, there were squabbles among the personnel and a lack of cooperation between the Dutch detachment commander and the head of the Intelligence & Security Office at Villafranca. This came to light during a visit to Villafranca by two members of the Intelligence & Security Department of the Operational Command of the Netherlands Air Force. The commander and the head of Intelligence & Security were no longer on speaking terms, and the commander had a low opinion of the daily Deny Flight Intsums. Relations on the workfloor between the flyers and Intelligence & Security personnel were, however, good.

It also emerged that the Combined Air Coordination Center (CAOC) in Vicenza was being run by Americans and that US politics was determining the deployment of the resources. In addition, the possibility of national tasking for photo reconnaissance was being explored. The Dutch Senior National Representative was not averse to this but he pointed out that operations above Bosnia were subject to stringent constraints. It was even impossible to take photos above Croatia. In a later discussion with the Dutch tasker for reconnaissance flights it turned out, however, that such possibilities did exist after all. Implementation might then have to be undertaken by other NATO member states. Finally, the deployment of the UAVs was discussed and efforts would be made to find out what had become of this intelligence. It was, in any case, clear that The Hague did not receive any UAV Imint.<sup>1567</sup>

A search in the photo archives of the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron failed to uncover any additional photographic material. The 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron carried out a few photo reconnaissance flights to Tuzla, Srebrenica and the surroundings between February 1994 and May 1997. The most interesting photos are of the compounds in Potocari and Srebrenica, which were taken on 2 March 1995. However, no photos were taken by Dutch aircraft of VRS military activities in the months before the fall.<sup>1568</sup>

But this does not rule out the possibility that photos were taken by other NATO aircraft, even though aerial activities were scaled down after a US F-16 had been shot down on 2 June 1995. The Netherlands never ordered flights for its own purposes; it always adhered strictly to orders. This could not be said of the USA, the UK and especially France, which regularly executed operations for its own

<sup>1563</sup> MoD, *MID/TCBU. MID/KL*, AI, Report on the enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa, undated.

<sup>1564</sup> 'Eerste fotoverkeningsvliegtuigen naar Villafranca vertrokken' (First photo-reconnaissance planes leave for Villafranca), *ANP* press release, 08/04/93. For the role of the Royal Netherlands Air Force in Bosnia see: Lutgert & De Winter, *Check the Horizon*, passim.

<sup>1565</sup> 'Vier photoverkeners naar Villafranca' (Four photo reconnaissance vehicles to Villafranca) *Defensiekrant*, 17/02/94 and P.E. van Loo, 'Een open oog voor de Balkan' (An open eye for the Balkans), *Militaire Spectator*, Vol. 170 (2001) 12 pp. 684 - 697.

<sup>1566</sup> MoD, *DOPKlu*, No. 1475, Notes on *intelligence* problems, No. 9400603/01/U, 28/11/94.

<sup>1567</sup> MoD, *DOPKlu*, No. 1482, Summarized report: Visit to Villafranca, No. DOP 95004673/956, 20/01/95.

<sup>1568</sup> MoD, *DCBC*, box 61, Lt-Colonel J. Eikelboom to DOPKlu, No. VF/2498/95, 12/08/95.

national intelligence authorities. This was demonstrated when a Dutch aerial photo showed a French reconnaissance plane in an area where it had no right to be.<sup>1569</sup>

The last flight of the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron (mission 1357), which was stationed in Villafranca and in charge of photo reconnaissance missions above Bosnia, dates from 27 May 1995. The activities on the western side were more or less stopped after the American F-16 of O'Grady was shot down. This incident showed that radar signals from were detected by the NSA before it downed the F-16 over Bosnia but that the vital intelligence was not relayed to the pilot. The deputy director of the CIA admitted that the system designed to collect and disseminate intelligence in Bosnia failed.<sup>1570</sup> An American U-2R aircraft, operating on behalf of the NSA, picked up SA-6 missile radar transmissions on and off for almost 3 hours before the shootdown. If this intelligence had been timely forwarded O'Grady would have had time to get out of the area, according to the chairman of the JCS, General John Shalikasvili.<sup>1571</sup>

In fact, no reconnaissance flights on behalf of UNPROFOR were carried out at all between 11 and 30 June. Apparently, it was considered too dangerous to operate after this date, given the mounting threat from the Bosnian-Serb anti-aircraft systems. During the war in Bosnia, the Bosnian Serbs and Serbs often fired their guided missiles without radar. If the flight route was roughly known, the VRS could adjust its anti-aircraft systems accordingly. The VRS radar was usually switched off out of fear of US HARM missiles. Another factor was that the VRS and the JNA had an integrated air-defence system, especially for early warning tasks. The JNA had also positioned air missiles along the Drina to support the VRS. These were also activated in the summer of 1995 during the operations against the eastern enclaves. Most of the time, the VRS worked with mobile missile launchers, which they moved around. The Dutch reconnaissance flights were not resumed until 2 August 1995 (mission 1358).<sup>1572</sup> Unlike France, the Netherlands did not carry out independent missions (outside UNPROFOR and NATO) above Bosnia.<sup>1573</sup>

### *The limitations of Imint*

Though the Imint capacity of satellites, spy planes and UAVs appears impressive, it should not be overestimated. The claims of the French newspaper *La Croix* that the CIA even followed the murders 'live' on large screens in its Observation Room must be consigned to the realm of fantasy.<sup>1574</sup> Usually, there is no real-time Imint from satellites; there is only near-real-time intelligence. An explanation for this is the following. Near real time translates into available on the ground in 10 minutes, analysed sometime later, ranging from tens of minutes for US National Command priorities like destruction of Arafat's Compound, to several hours, like the sort of priorities discussed here. The dwell time of any imagery satellite from horizon to horizon would be less than ten minutes, from start to finish. Even best case, 'live' only lasts ten minutes, and would only be seen ten minutes after the fact. To do that, the satellite must pivot for the duration of its view time, looking only at a specific point on the ground. All other coverage of the theatre would be lost while the satellite stared at the one spot (like Srebrenica) on the ground. If such a feat were technically possible, which is arguable, it would mean the loss of hundreds of other targets across the theatre from the central Mediterranean to the Baltic. No one would imagine that any imagery target in the Eastern Enclaves would warrant that sort of priority.<sup>1575</sup>

<sup>1569</sup> Interview J. Schouren, 04/12/99 and Confidential interview (31).

<sup>1570</sup> Bill Gertz, 'NATO jet broke radar relay to U.S. pilot', *The Washington Times*, 28/06/95 and Dana Priest, 'system Failed Downed Pilot, CIA Official Says', *The Washington Post*, 28/06/95.

<sup>1571</sup> 'Bosnia', *Aviation Week & Space Technology*, 03/07/95 and Dana Priest, 'Data Delay Blamed for Plane Loss', *The Washington Post*, 12/07/95.

<sup>1572</sup> Confidential interview (32) and MoD, *Archive 306 SQN PI-SECTIE*, Overview of all reconnaissance flights above Bosnia, undated.

<sup>1573</sup> MoD, *DCBC, File 1486*, Memorandum from P.C. Berlijn to K. Hilderink, 02/08/96.

<sup>1574</sup> 'AICG call to indict General Janvier', *Bosnia Report*, No. 1, November-December 1997, p. 3.

<sup>1575</sup> Confidential information (80).

So, it would have been impossible for the CIA to have followed everything live. The claims of *La Croix* were also technically implausible: the number of satellite orbits makes it scarcely credible that the CIA watched live.

But the *La Croix* article contained even more errors. The CIA does not have an Observation Room, though it does have a Watch Center. Any Imint that went to the CIA was delivered by the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) to a CIA department, the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC). It is indeed true that Imint went to the CIA Watch Center. But the CIA and pretty much everybody else in the US intelligence architecture does have access to imagery which was acquired using a near real time system. NPIC, more than anybody else except for a ground station element, has access to near real time imagery, arriving there about eight-ten minutes after the shutter of the satellite goes 'click'. These are all still photos. 'Live' coverage requires satellite gymnastics that are impractical, if not impossible.<sup>1576</sup>

Nowadays, all Imint goes direct to a unit of the National Imagery and Mapping Agency (NIMA) at Fort Belvoir. Established on 1 October 1996, this agency is an amalgamation of the Defense Mapping Agency, the Central Imagery Office, the Defense Dissemination Program Office and NPIC.<sup>1577</sup> It was created largely to meet the fast-growing need for Imint and to bundle the Imint production of the various organizations and intelligence services. It was also probably the result of PPD 35, which decreed intelligence support for foreign armies and crisis operations.<sup>1578</sup>

A unit of this new institute is currently stationed at Fort Belvoir in the USA. It has access to all Imint as soon as the satellite has relayed it to the ground. The only source of delay is the time that the Imint needs to reach the various ground reception stations from the sophisticated KH-11 satellite via the special satellite link. Fort Belvoir therefore has real-time Imint, but its analysts perform 'a primary analysis, particularly to determine if the imagery indicates something that requires immediate attention from policy-makers and analysts'.<sup>1579</sup>

It may therefore be safely assumed that as real-time intelligence only became available after 1997, it could certainly not have been at the disposal of the CIA in 1995. It should also be remembered that, in 1995, the priorities of American intelligence did not lie with Srebrenica. In this light, it is hardly surprising that the satellite photos produced by Albright were not found until very late in the day and after a thorough search of archival Imint. In addition, before the establishment of the NIMA, a huge problem was who could issue orders to the satellites. There were more customers and orders than the satellites could cope with, which led to an almost daily bureaucratic fight in Washington.<sup>1580</sup>

During the war in Kosovo, UAVs like the Hunters and the Predators were capable of sending real-time Imint to the ground with the aid of the Pentagon Global Broadcast System. Real-time Imint from UAVs arrived at the CAOC in Vicenza. But given the limited capacity, the tasking of the UAVs and the lack of a real-time downlink to the CAOC, there was no question of live Imint in the summer of 1995.<sup>1581</sup>

But there were more problems attached to the collection and processing of Imint. First, the bureaucratic obstacles: effective and fast dissemination of Imint has long been a problem at the Pentagon.<sup>1582</sup> The success of Imint during the Gulf War increased the demand for Imint so much that it could only be met with the greatest difficulty. This problem was exacerbated by chronic rivalry between

<sup>1576</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1577</sup> See: <http://www.nima.mil/>

<sup>1578</sup> Jeffrey Richelson, 'Examining US intelligence failures', *Jane's Intelligence Review*, September 2000, pp. 41 - 44. The establishment of the NIMA led to the departure of many *Imint* analysts who used to work for the CIA. A direct result of this was for example that the preparations for an Indian nuclear test in May 1998 was not discovered on time.

<sup>1579</sup> E-mails from Jeffrey Richelson and Matthew Aid to Cees Wiebes, 19/07/00 and 21/07/00.

<sup>1580</sup> The Permanent Select Committee of the US House of Representatives also pointed this out. Now the director of the CIA decides on the tasking. See: Joseph Fitchett, 'spying From Space: U.S. to Sharpen the Focus', *International Herald Tribune*, 10/04/01.

<sup>1581</sup> Tim Ripley, 'UAVs over Kosovo - did the Earth move?', *Defence Systems Daily*, 01/12/99.

<sup>1582</sup> James Woolsey, 'The American Intelligence Community', in: Carmel (ed.), *Intelligence*, p. 175.

the various US intelligence services. The computer systems of the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines were often incapable of communicating with one another. The chairman of a Congress Committee which investigated this said ‘When it came to Imint, it was like we had four separate countries out there rather than four services from one country’.<sup>1583</sup>

Second, low-hanging cloud, mist between the mountains and valleys, poor weather and darkness often made it impossible to make good quality photos. Third, the ‘enemy’ often takes account of Imint and employs counter-measures. For example, India was able to conceal its nuclear tests from spy satellites by planning and conducting these tests during a period beset by sandstorms.<sup>1584</sup> During the Gulf War all sorts of cardboard missile systems were attacked which had been identified in the desert on the basis of Imint. Tanks and artillery that had already been eliminated were sometimes re-targeted because the analysis of the Imint was inconclusive. Sometimes, the Iraqi Army moved these destroyed tanks to another area to create the impression that they were new materiel. The same happened in Bosnia with the result that NATO planes attacked previously eliminated VRS tanks. After nightfall VRS soldiers moved the tanks a few hundred metres, giving the impression that they were new tanks. However, opportunities for misleading the enemy, though present, are often limited. For example, experts say that a spy satellite does not have to follow a circuit exactly above a target in order to take good photos.<sup>1585</sup>

Then there is the issue of time. This must not be overlooked. The analysis of Imint makes heavy demands on specialists, as new images must constantly be compared with previous ones. The question that needs to be answered is what has changed in relation to the old situation and what conclusions can be drawn from this. These analyses are highly labour-intensive, even with the aid of sophisticated computer systems. The ‘enemy’ takes account of the capacity and possibilities of Imint and constantly moves operational weapon systems to confuse the observations of satellites, U-2s and UAVs. For example, Serb Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) sites were moved every three or four hours with the result that the Americans regularly attacked old and deserted sites.<sup>1586</sup> Sometimes, dummy SA-6 missiles were set up, only to be identified after a U-2-mission, a UAV flight and a thorough analysis.<sup>1587</sup>

Systems can also be hidden in bunkers, caves, sheds and garages. These can only be detected by infra-red sensors, and then only on the basis of heat emanating from the engine. These operations are also beset by problems because it is often impossible to determine whether the shed holds a tractor or a tank. Such problems can have a profound influence on the intelligence product derived from Imint. Members of the US intelligence community claimed that Imint was not the best method for locating the confrontation lines, especially amid the mist-covered and forested mountains around Srebrenica. By way of example, they pointed out that, in the spring of 1995, Imint was no use in pinpointing the whereabouts of the UNMO hostages, because there was no approximate idea of where they were being held.<sup>1588</sup>

Finally, it is a misconception that all Imint is published in the form of photos. No more than two or three photos of Bosnia appeared each week in most reports because photos take up too much space. Usually, it is only the analysis of the Imint that is published. After all, reports sent by the intelligence services to high-level policy-makers must be short and concise. For example, the Intelligence & Research section of the State Department could only produce two-page reports upon the orders of Secretary of State Christopher. One American analyst wondered how on earth he could explain such a complicated conflict to Christopher, given the permanently shifting political and military circumstances.<sup>1589</sup>

<sup>1583</sup> Christopher Andrew, ‘How we won the spy game’, *The Times*, 10/12/01.

<sup>1584</sup> Jeffrey Richelson, ‘Examining US intelligence failures’, *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, September 2000, p. 44.

<sup>1585</sup> Confidential interview (62).

<sup>1586</sup> Confidential interview (31).

<sup>1587</sup> See for example: MoD, *MID/TCBU. MID/Klu*, Missile Order of Battle, 22/10/95.

<sup>1588</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1589</sup> Confidential interview (13).

### 3. With whom was imagery intelligence shared?

Imint was used from the very start of the conflict in Bosnia. In August 1992, *Newsday* accused the Bush Administration of deliberately withholding evidence of prison camps and executions of Muslims and Croats. Imint from Keyhole satellites was said to have delivered proof of this. Originally, the US intelligence services had purportedly even refused to use U-2s to take a closer look at the concentration camps. This was considered 'too provocative'. Earlier revelations by *Newsday* supposedly led to the clearance of camps which had been identified by Imint. After criticism from presidential candidate Clinton, Bush declared that he had ordered the intelligence community 'to use every asset' to track down war crimes in Bosnia.<sup>1590</sup>

The US diplomat Ron Neitzke confirmed that Imint was available in 1992.<sup>1591</sup> The newspaper *The Guardian* managed to lay its hands on a report of a secret briefing by the CIA and NSA from late May 1992, in which Imint was shown of the VRS artillery around Sarajevo.<sup>1592</sup> In 1993, satellite photos were also used to ascertain the precision of the American food droppings by C-130s.<sup>1593</sup> The fact that the Americans were gathering Imint on the prison camps came to light at the start of 1993 when the US negotiator Cyrus Vance was handed a list of camps which had been compiled partly from satellite photos and partly from Humint.<sup>1594</sup> Special aircraft were also deployed for photo reconnaissance above the enclaves. The subsequent intelligence was then shared with NATO. The Chairman of the Military Committee, Sir Richard Vincent, told NATO in January 1994 for example that detailed air reconnaissance was being carried out above Bosnia and that NATO now had a large database of the positions of the warring factions. Closer attention would now be paid to air reconnaissance above the enclaves of Srebrenica and Tuzla.<sup>1595</sup> No doubt Vincent made this promise because he was aware of the difficult predicament of the Canadian battalion at that time. The handover to Dutchbat was being impeded by the VRS and the ABiH, and a plan was being considered to send in US and Canadian Special Forces to extract the Canadians from the enclave by force (see Chapter 4). Probably, these photos were taken by normal NATO air reconnaissance planes and not by specialized aircraft such as the U-2.<sup>1596</sup>

The Imint was shared within NATO through a heavily protected communication network known as the Linked Operational Intelligence Center Europe (LOCE) system. The results of imagery, electronic and other types of intelligence were exchanged through the LOCE system. In principle, U-2 Imint went to all NATO members, but often analyses ('read-outs') were distributed instead of photos. Initially, Satint could only be released to the US Secretary of State or a four-star general at the head of the US EUCOM.<sup>1597</sup> Later, U-2 and other Imint arrived more often via LOCE. However, in the early stages of the Balkan War, LOCE registered no Imint. Presumably only the Canadian services had direct access to this. Inevitably, the fact that no Satint was shared with most European allies often led to complaints within NATO. Keith Hall, Director of the NRO, pushed for more comprehensive sharing with the European allies, but diplomats expected that this would be met by protests from the rest of the US intelligence community and Congress.<sup>1598</sup>

A military analyst of the MIS/Air Force who worked in Villafranca between 1 April and 1 October 1995 said that he received Imint in Villafranca, but there was no way of determining whether it came from a U-2 or a satellite. Experts claim that U-2 imagery was of a better resolution. Nevertheless, it is often claimed that the Imint was made a bit fuzzier to conceal the actual resolution. However, this

<sup>1590</sup> K. Royce and P. Sloyan, 'The U.S. waited back in June, CIA told Bush officials of atrocities', *Newsday*, 15/08/92.

<sup>1591</sup> Cohen, *Hearts grown brutal*, p. 173.

<sup>1592</sup> Ed Vulliamy, 'US feud sealed Bosnia's fate', *The Guardian*, 20/05/96.

<sup>1593</sup> Tony Capaccio, 'Bosnia Airdrop', *Air Force Magazine*, July 1993, p. 56.

<sup>1594</sup> Confidential information (52).

<sup>1595</sup> Confidential information (53).

<sup>1596</sup> For the history of the U-2 see: Van der Aart, *Spionage vanuit de lucht*, pp. 28-45.

<sup>1597</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1598</sup> Joseph Fitchett, 'spying From Space: U.S. to Sharpen the Focus', *International Herald Tribune*, 10/04/01.

is disputed. Like one US intelligence official claimed: Who had time to ‘fuzzy’ pictures? The transmission across second-rate communications paths alone degraded the resolution to near unrecognizable.<sup>1599</sup> The analysis was carried out by the US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth. Normal imagery always went to Vicenza. In Villafranca this analyst had a direct national line to The Hague and delivered material every day. He had access to LOCE and telex for communicating intelligence and received finished intelligence from Molesworth. He also received the reports from Vicenza.<sup>1600</sup>

Imint in the form of written reports was also made available to the UNPROFOR staff in Zagreb. From 1993, the workers at the Military Information Office had regular access to U-2 Imint, none of it relating to the Safe Areas.<sup>1601</sup> Under General Rose, Imint from satellites was originally passed on to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) in Sarajevo via the American deputy intelligence officer at BHC. Rose discovered from satellite photos that Sarajevo was not as isolated from the outside world as most of the observers believed. There were more supply lines than just the tunnel under the airport. Rose enjoyed telling his staff the story of how, one morning in early 1995, he received a satellite photo of the city. There had been a fresh fall of snow and the confrontation lines and the trenches were clearly visible. The next day Rose received another photo. No further snow had fallen during the night and a comparison of two photos showed a total of 25 lorry tracks cutting right across the lines. Apparently, during the night, lorries had crossed the lines with the permission of the warring factions. Everybody was cashing in on Sarajevo’s ‘isolated position’.<sup>1602</sup>

An US military official for example watched how 55 tons of luxury goods, cigarettes and women’s clothing - not food - being lifted out of the tunnel. But senior political figures in Washington DC and other capitals continued to believe that Sarajevo was under some sort of medieval siege. When The Deputy Commander US EUCOM, US General Chuck Boyd, told US Secretary of Defence, Perry, about the tunnel it seemed it was the first time that Perry heard about it.<sup>1603</sup>

Later, the Americans came to regard Rose as too pro-Serb, and US intelligence services suspected that there were Bosnian-Serb spies among his staff. This reduced the flow of Imint. Scarcely any Imint was supplied to BHC in Sarajevo or SNE in Tuzla. The military aid to General Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Baxter, confirmed that Smith’s staff had no access to satellite photos. Smith did, however, get U-2 photos. This probably had less to do with American reluctance and more with the lack of secure connections with the Bosnian capital. Images from UAVs were not made available to BHC until August and September 1995.<sup>1604</sup>

However, General Janvier in Zagreb already had access to military-tactical Imint from UAVs in June 1995. Imint was also shared with other officials in the Zagreb staff. The Deputy Force Commander, the Canadian General Barry Ashton, confirmed that he received Imint on a regular basis. However, it was not shared with the Dutch Colonel H. de Jonge, who was responsible for determining the military targets. He pointed out that the US Deputy G-2, Commander Morgan, was concerned that he scarcely received any Imint and could do little for UNPROFOR that way. This prompted Morgan to visit the US embassy Zagreb every two days, where he ‘shopped around’ for more information through secure communication links at organizations unknown to De Jonge.<sup>1605</sup>

However, US intelligence officials claimed that the Deputy G-2 was receiving regular Imint reports from a variety of sources. This was shared with De Jonge and his staff. However, De Jonge wanted actual photos, which was a much tougher nut to crack, given the sort of communications links

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<sup>1599</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1600</sup> Confidential interviews (31), (32) and (38).

<sup>1601</sup> Confidential interview (47).

<sup>1602</sup> Confidential interview (80).

<sup>1603</sup> Ripley, *Deliberate Force*, p. 92.

<sup>1604</sup> Interview James Baxter, 16/10/00.

<sup>1605</sup> Interviews Barry Ashton, 30/05/00 and J.H. de Jonge, 30/05/01.



available.<sup>1606</sup> The head of the intelligence section in Zagreb, the Swedish Colonel Jan-Inge Svensson, and his assistant Lieutenant Colonel Ingmar Ljunggren also occasionally received photos from Predators after mid-July. Other intelligence from Predators was also phoned through to them after analysis. They had never seen photos taken by German UAVs. The analyses of photos and other intelligence from satellites or the U-2 *Dragon Lady* were always passed on to them by word of mouth. As Sweden was not a NATO member, neither Swede ever actually saw the Imint.<sup>1607</sup>

So, many UNPROFOR officials in Zagreb had access to Imint: sometimes in the form of written reports. One member of the UNPROFOR staff even recalled that the first aerial photos of suspected mass graves and relating excavations were available a few days after the fall of Srebrenica.<sup>1608</sup> However, requests from SNE for Imint were to no avail. On 21, 22, 24, 26 and 29 April, General Haukland repeatedly and urgently requested satellite or other aerial photos of areas where the Bosnian Serbs were operational. NATO never even acknowledged his requests and Haukland never received the photos.<sup>1609</sup> When the Dutch Minister Jan Pronk confronted General Nicolai about this during a visit to Bosnia in July 1995, he was told that troops from a non-NATO state (Pakistan) were manning the reception station for the requested photos.<sup>1610</sup> If that was the case, then UNPROFOR should have intervened. After all, a station is useless if the personnel stationed there are not authorized to receive Imint. It might have been better at the time to deputize a US intelligence officer with secure connections to Haukland's staff in Tuzla. This example is a further indication that neither UNPROFOR nor NATO accorded high priority to Eastern Bosnia.

Initially, the Americans shared their photos with The Hague (probably from U-2s), but that was during the Dutch presidency of the European Union. Later on, they only shared them for the purposes of planning a possible joint emergency helicopter evacuation of Dutchbat from Srebrenica. But this was months before the attack.<sup>1611</sup> Canada was probably the only ally with whom the Americans shared everything. The intelligence analysts at the Canadian Ministry of Defence had permanent access to imagery and other intelligence (raw as well as finished). The Canadian intelligence community in Sarajevo – and also in Zagreb – had access to Imint in their own intelligence cells. This was mostly current near-real-time Imint.

There was also Satint available on Eastern Bosnia which occasionally showed VRS troop movements. The Canadian intelligence cell in Bosnia itself had near-real-time Imint which was about five days old. Sometimes it had been processed, but the Canadian officers could always get archival Imint. The Canadian intelligence cell in Bosnia never received Imint on Croatia from the Americans.<sup>1612</sup>

The British community also had some idea of the events around Srebrenica through Imint. According to an official of the UK intelligence community, most of the information on the troop build-up came from Imint. It never emerged whether this came from satellites or U-2s. Anyway, Imint delivered pictures of VRS troop concentrations, though it did not show that the VRS was preparing to launch an attack. Eventually, this was also concluded by the UK Defence Intelligence Staff.<sup>1613</sup> The British services also categorically insisted that Srebrenica was not an important area, not even for the DIS, which had focused all its attention on Gorazde and Sarajevo.<sup>1614</sup>

<sup>1606</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1607</sup> Interview Jan-Inge Svensson and Ingmar Ljunggren, 04/11/99.

<sup>1608</sup> Confidential information (58).

<sup>1609</sup> Interview V. Haukland, 22/09/00.

<sup>1610</sup> NIOD, Letter from J. Pronk to NIOD, 29/05/01; NMFA, DMP to R, draft report of the trip by J. Pronk to Tuzla and Sarajevo, NH-618/95, 31/07/95.

<sup>1611</sup> Interviews with M.J.C. Felix, 06/04/00 and A.M. van der Togt, 04/05/00.

<sup>1612</sup> Confidential interviews (9), (47), (62) and (90).

<sup>1613</sup> The question of 'Foreknowledge' will be addressed in detail in the following chapter.

<sup>1614</sup> Confidential interview (8).

#### 4. How were Albright's satellite photos discovered?

On 10 August 1995, the American Permanent Representative at the UN, Madeleine Albright, produced the previously mentioned photos in the Security Council. The photos showed Bosnian-Muslim prisoners and upturned earth where the bodies of the executed men had been buried.<sup>1615</sup> Every set of U-2 imagery recovered at RAF Alconbury in Great Britain had a complete, separate copy run for shipment to DIA in Washington DC. The images shown by Albright to the UN unquestionably came from the DIA copy of Molesworth developed U-2 film.<sup>1616</sup> The DIA copy was shipped separately by air to Washington, usually within a week or so. Albright showed these photos to the Security Council because initially there was nothing to suggest that executions had taken place. This came later, after the survivors reached Tuzla. Their testimonies then prompted a search for specific Imint. Albright used the photos to provide the Security Council with evidence of the atrocities and to pressurize both the Security Council and the Clinton Administration into taking a harder line. She stated that there definitely was sharper and better Imint but this had not been released in order to safeguard the techniques and the technology.<sup>1617</sup> Albright also reputedly used the photos in an attempt to win support for the idea of a larger peacekeeping operation in Bosnia with US involvement.<sup>1618</sup>

Other UN officials suspected more sinister motives. In August 1995, the UNMOs in Zagreb organized a press conference on large-scale human rights violations by the Bosnian Croats during the recently completed Operation Storm (carried out with US assistance). The room was full of journalists and things were just about to start when an official from the US Embassy in Zagreb suddenly entered and announced that a press conference was about to begin at the embassy where information would be released on aerial photos of possible mass graves around Srebrenica. The room emptied immediately. The UNMOs had an uneasy feeling that the announcement was planned to divert attention from the Croatian crimes.<sup>1619</sup> It is, however, likely that there were no sinister motives.

There are various versions of how the photos eventually were discovered. In one version Sacirbey, the Bosnian Permanent Representative to the UN, plays a role. Very soon after the fall of Srebrenica, Albright was tipped off by Sacirbey that atrocities had either already taken place or were about to do so. After consulting the Deputy National Security Advisor, Samuel Berger, she requested assistance from the US intelligence community. This request probably did not get high priority: the NPIC, which had a special team for analysing photos satellite and U-2 photos, allegedly did not start searching for the photos until mid-July. Priority rested with the VRS advance towards Zepa and Gorazde and the anti-aircraft threat to the NATO planes.<sup>1620</sup> The National Photographic Interpretation Center is said to have discovered the first photos on 2 August.<sup>1621</sup> It revealed this on 4 August in the *National Intelligence Daily*, a publication which is intended only for the eyes of the most senior policy-makers. On 10 August, Albright took the photos to the Security Council.<sup>1622</sup>

Another version of the run-up to 10 August stemmed from interviews with Tune Bringa, a member of Akashi's Analyses and Assessment Unit, and the former US Ambassador in Croatia, Peter Galbraith.<sup>1623</sup> Galbraith was recalled to Washington for talks between 5 and 18 July 1995. At that moment, two UN researchers were busy screening displaced persons in Tuzla. Bringa came into contact with them and spoke with someone who had escaped the executions. She realized then that large-scale

<sup>1615</sup> 'US Reveals Photographs of Apparent Mass Grave', *International Herald Tribune*, 10/08/95 and 'Up to 2,700 Massacred by Serbs, UN is Told', *International Herald Tribune*, 11/08/95.

<sup>1616</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1617</sup> Interview with M. Albright, 28/09/01. A request by SAGE for the release of other satellite photos of Srebrenica was rejected by the court on 7 August 2001. For the judgement see: [www.fas.org/sgp/news/2001/08/sage/html](http://www.fas.org/sgp/news/2001/08/sage/html)

<sup>1618</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1619</sup> Confidential interview (44).

<sup>1620</sup> M. Dobbs & R. Jeffrey Smith, 'New Proof Offered of Serb Atrocities', *Washington Post*, 29/10/95.

<sup>1621</sup> Rohde, *A Safe Area*, pp. 334 - 335.

<sup>1622</sup> Confidential information (54).

<sup>1623</sup> Interviews with Peter Galbraith, 23/07/99 and Tune Bringa, 13/07/00.

war crimes had probably been perpetrated. On 25 July, she returned to Zagreb and asked Galbraith whether this could be further investigated. On the same day, he sent a message to Washington through special channels (probably the CIA) requesting an investigation into possible war crimes. Holbrooke is said to have taken the telegram personally to Christopher, asked him to read it and take urgent action. This led to, amongst others, a mission by John Shattuck, who found more indications and reported his findings to Christopher on 4 August.<sup>1624</sup> The Deputy Director of Intelligence at the CIA, John Gannon, thought that it was a combination of reports and visual observations by Dutchbat and the interviews by Shattuck, which had led to the discovery of Imint.<sup>1625</sup>

Galbraith also asked the CIA through the Intelligence and Research Bureau of the State Department to find out whether there were satellite and U-2 photos of ABiH prisoners or the mass murders in Konjevic Polje. Enough intelligence had been gathered by 2 August to indicate search areas. After searching for twenty-four hours and comparing thousands of Imint photos, one analyst at the intelligence service discovered that such photos did indeed exist.<sup>1626</sup>

The third version is the most credible. The other two could easily be mistaken interpretations of personal actions in response to Albright's photos. What the fore-mentioned people could not know was that one US intelligence service had an invaluable Humint source. Only a handful of people knew the identity of this source. Since 1992, the DIA had been running an extensive programme for debriefing refugees. By the end of 1992, important intelligence had been gathered from over 800 interviews. American debriefers, who officially worked for the UN, also went to work in Tuzla and, after the fall of Srebrenica, their reports went to the highest echelons in the US Administration. Nothing was yet known in mid-July.

On 17 July, the Balkan Task Force of the CIA wrote in its secret daily report that countless eye-witness accounts had delivered details which strongly implied that atrocities had been committed. It also added that 'we lack authoritative, detailed information to substantiate this information'. Reporters of the *Washington Post* got no answer when they asked whether the intelligence analysts had taken any steps to get hold of the missing information. 'It was not a military priority,' said a CIA official. 'A lot of this [atrocities] stuff is not looked at at the time it is collected, the official said'.<sup>1627</sup> Another CIA worker who wishes to remain anonymous told the *New York Times* that his service 'lacked information regarding specific places and atrocities'.<sup>1628</sup>

These scenarios are not entirely implausible because they do not contain the crucial data, such as the dates and times of the executions, the locations and the units involved. This kind of information could not possibly have come from interviews with refugees. What is more, if this information is missing, then a random search through old Imint is useless. Specific information is needed in order to select and compare the right images from a collection that runs into hundreds of thousands. It was, in fact, a crucial Humint source which eventually triggered the search for the execution sites and the mass graves. This source, who was unknown to Bringa, Galbraith and others, decided to pass on detailed information to an intelligence agency at the end of July.<sup>1629</sup>

The source claimed to have personally witnessed the atrocities of the Bosnian Serbs and provided detailed information including dates, times, precise locations and drawings of the execution sites, such as the Branjevo state farm in the village of Donja Pilica on the road between Bijeljina and Zvornik. A bloodbath had also taken place there in the local theatre.<sup>1630</sup> It was only after the witness had described the atrocities to the intelligence service that the search really got underway. It appears

<sup>1624</sup> American FOIA Declassification, John Shattuck to Secretary of State, 04/08/95.

<sup>1625</sup> DDI Speech by John Gannon for the SFRC, 09/08/95. See: [www.209.207.112/irp/cia/product/](http://www.209.207.112/irp/cia/product/)

<sup>1626</sup> Rohde, *A Safe Area*, pp. 334 - 335.

<sup>1627</sup> M. Dobbs & Jeffrey Smith, 'New Proof Offered of Serb Atrocities', *Washington Post*, 29/10/95.

<sup>1628</sup> 'srebrenica: the Days of Slaughter', *The New York Times*, 29/10/95.

<sup>1629</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1630</sup> See for photos: ICTY, (IT-98-33) Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 25/6-25/14.

therefore that the late availability of the photos was not due to US reluctance to release them, as was suggested by a minister of the Dutch Cabinet.<sup>1631</sup>

It emerged eventually that a satellite and U-2 had photographed hundreds of Muslim men on 13 July. CIA analysts had paid no attention to this because they were busy with other priorities. These photos from the U-2 were shown to President Clinton and his advisors for the first time on 4 August.<sup>1632</sup> This was probably be the DIA copy of the RAF Alconbury U2 mission. This chain of events was largely confirmed in a talk with a US intelligence officer. Srebrenica and the other eastern enclaves had absolutely no priority in the summer of 1995. So, Imint from this region was not studied or analysed.<sup>1633</sup>

## 5. What photos were taken and on which dates?

The question still remains as to what kind of photos were actually taken, when these were taken and what they provided in the way of imagery. The search in the Imint archives after the tip-off from the Humint source eventually produced a lot of material. As has already been described, satellites, U-2s and UAVs were operational above Bosnia. Using background interviews, documents and aerial photos it is possible to reconstruct the various missions above Bosnia and specifically above Srebrenica. The shooting down of the F-16 flown by O'Grady on 2 June was the main reason for bringing extra Predators to the region. On 16 June, the US intelligence community approved the target plan for the UAVs. The most important targets were Bihac and the Croatian areas; the Livno valley had priority. However, UNPROFOR's priorities lay with Sarajevo. Janvier was briefed on the possibilities of UAVs and said that he wanted to receive Imint. On 19 June, the intelligence staff in Zagreb asked the US intelligence community for Predator photos of Bosnia.<sup>1634</sup>

The first report based on UAV images dates from 26 June and relates to the Livno valley. One important piece of information was that all the retreat routes from the Krajina could be cut off by the Bosnian Croats. The American UAVs also took photos above Croatia, but these were sent straight to the Croats and not to the intelligence section in Zagreb: at that time, the CIA was running the Predators. The Predator operations were based out of Croatia, and the photos for Croatia were part of the quid-pro-quo for that basing agreement. Thanks to a UAV flight, it was reported on 28 June that the Bosnian Croats could attack within 24 hours.

On 26 June, a U-2 flew over the whole of Bosnia, which was 65 per cent cloud covered. The U-2 Imint reports were received and disseminated at HQ Zagreb on 28 June, but presumably paid no attention to the eastern enclaves. Given the earlier UAV reports, the focus of interest was probably Croatia. So, the priorities of the Imint analysts lay elsewhere. On 26 June a Predator indeed conducted a test flight over Liki Petrovo Selo.<sup>1635</sup> On 27 June, the MIS/Air Force also knew that the Americans had decided to send some Predators to the Balkans for a period of 60 days. An analysis concluded that this may have stemmed from the agreed support for the Rapid Reaction Force.<sup>1636</sup> All aircraft in Operation Deny Flight were warned to watch out for UAVs.<sup>1637</sup> Things settled down for a while after this.

On 2 July BHC in Sarajevo was requesting imagery emphasis on the Mt. Dinara area, where VRS artillery and mortar fire was threatening Tuzla area. A flight with an UAV was planned but the UAV was grounded on 4/5 July for unknown reasons but probably because of maintenance. On 5 July,

<sup>1631</sup> Objectivized summary of the minutes of the Ministerial Council meeting of 25/08/95, prepared for the purposes of the present NIOD study.

<sup>1632</sup> Interview with Peter Galbraith, 23/07/99 and Tune Bringa, 13/07/00.

<sup>1633</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>1634</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1635</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1636</sup> MoD, *SMG, 1002*. Summary of Intsums MID/KL, 27/06/95.

<sup>1637</sup> MoD, *DOKP.n. STAOOPER, Dossier 312*, DocId, 6241, COMFIVEATAF to AIG 5781, 27/06/95.

a US national asset (unknown is what Imint system) photographed the now notorious Branjevo farm at Donja Pilica.<sup>1638</sup> Most of the photos of the region around Srebrenica were probably a spin-off from a wider reconnaissance mission above Bosnia and were not specifically intended for the collection of intelligence on the situation around Srebrenica. The same Imint asset took photos of the village of Glogova and of Orahovac, the area around Karakaj-Dulici, Kozluk and Cerska.<sup>1639</sup>

*Imint during the attack on and fall of Srebrenica*

On 7 July, another UAV flight was carried out, this time above Western Bosnia. On the same day there was also a flight above Eastern Bosnia, which lasted until 11.20 hours. This US national asset also flew over Dvor, where a Danish UNPROFOR soldier had been killed. It is unclear whether Srebrenica was included. Given the start of the VRS attack, it might have been expected that this asset also flew above Srebrenica. Vicenza reported at 08.45 hours on 9 July that a U-2 was present. However, at 11.30 hours, a report came through that it had a defective camera. It was being protected by SEAD planes in order to stave off VRS anti-aircraft fire. This is remarkable and hard to believe statement. It was probably not a U-2 but another US national asset. This can be explained as follows. The U-2 required no SEAD support at 50-60 thousand feet and it did not fly at low altitudes, especially over a SEAD threat. It would run out of gas if it didn't get shot down. The engines of a U-2 are optimized for high altitude and that is where its fuel efficiency is best. Any low altitude operations would require aerial refuel immediately off-station over the Adriatic, and the fuel tankers operating in that area were already heavily committed to refuelling fighter aircraft in Deny Flight.<sup>1640</sup>

On 10 July, a US national asset flew over Puzmilici at 15.00 hours and observed burning houses in West Rajne. At 19.00 hours, this asset passed the front line directly to the east of the town. By now, Janvier, who regularly received finished Imint via his intelligence staff in Zagreb, was beginning to realize the value of the UAVs like the Predator. It should be observed that the analysts at the MIS/Air Force were in this phase still under the impression that the Predator was not operational. They incorrectly thought that the Predators would not fly until 14 July.<sup>1641</sup>

On 11 July Zagreb HQ asked for UAV support over Srebrenica but an UAV was not yet available. An US official pointed to the problems as regards getting an UAV flying over Srebrenica. He claimed that the UAV in the months preceding to the attack on Srebrenica did not have a night landing capability in June, and recovery at Brac in Croatia would have been very dicey after dark. There were hesitations to risk the UAV at this time, and Srebrenica was at the farthest edge of the UAV envelope. It would be very surprising, according to this US official, if it flew over to the eastern enclaves at all due to range considerations, and certainly not at the risk of losing the platform altogether due to crashing in the dark. The same official wondered if the Dutch intelligence community ever submitted collection requirements for Srebrenica? If nobody ever asked for it, 'you can bet it was never provided'. To his knowledge, the Dutch never submitted any collection requirements in support of DutchBat.<sup>1642</sup>

Despite all these problems a discussion took place on 11 July in the US community on how to get a UAV above Srebrenica. This discussion was prompted by this request from Janvier for Imint on Srebrenica as he suspected 'atrocities'. This suggests that, up till then, Janvier knew that UAV missions had been flown over Bosnia. This was the same Janvier who claimed that he did not receive NATO intelligence. The US intelligence community told Janvier's intelligence staff in Zagreb that there was a probability that a UAV could be flown above Srebrenica early in the day (usually from 09.00 hours). But this mission never materialized partly because of the poor weather conditions in Eastern Bosnia

<sup>1638</sup> Confidential interview (7). See also: ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 24/.

<sup>1639</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 9/2 and Volume II, Ex. 16/1, 2020/1-20/2, 22/1 and 27/1.

<sup>1640</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1641</sup> MoD, DCBC, 392. MID/Klu DFI (NATO secret), 13/07/95.

<sup>1642</sup> Confidential information (80).

(mist and low-hanging cloud), the fact that Srebrenica was at the farthest edge of the UAV envelope and partly because the US intelligence community still refused to give priority to Eastern Bosnia.<sup>1643</sup>

One source claimed that a U-2 reconnaissance flight was sent out over Srebrenica during the VRS attack around 10 or 11 July, but it returned with engine problems and no photos.<sup>1644</sup> This statement was probably incorrect. It was not a U-2 but another Imint asset which actually took photos of the post-strike area on 11 July. These photos, shown in Washington DC to the author, were classified as 'secret, Releasable to NATO'. They showed four bomb craters that were caused by the air attack of 11 July. The first was taken at 09.34 hours and showed the route to the south. The second was taken at 13.17 hours and showed the four bomb craters.<sup>1645</sup> Did this Imint come from a U-2, a UAV or another platform like a Tactical Air Reconnaissance (TACRECCE) flight with an F-14 or F-16?

The standard classification on all U2 imagery was 'Confidential: Releasable to NATO'. All U2 imagery was subject to declassification upon approval of specific requests. But the standard classification on all NATO TACRECCE photos was 'secret: Releasable to NATO'. This suggests that the U2 photos described above, taken at 0934 and 1317 may have been in reality TACRECCE photos. Another rationalism for this was that the U2 would ordinarily not retrace its flight path for a revisit of the same area at all, much less four hours later. If the Srebrenica area just happened to correspond to an off-angle view from an adjacent track, a second look was feasible, but highly unlikely. In sharp contrast to the improbability of the UAV and the U2, NATO aircraft flew 25-30 sorties per day over Bosnia, most of which were at liberty to fly over the eastern enclaves. In addition to US Navy F-14's, which were the only American TACRECCE capability, French and British TACRECCE capabilities (and of course Dutch F-16's) all were much more probable platforms for any photos taken, by several orders of magnitude.<sup>1646</sup> So, the photo's shown to the author came probably not from a satellite, U-2 or UAV.

On 12 July, an Imint platform (probably a TACRECCE mission by a NATO-member) took photos of Potocari showing the Dutch compound.<sup>1647</sup> The photos that were later released during Krstic's trial show the Fontana Hotel, the football pitch and other buildings.<sup>1648</sup> Presumably, this photo-reconnaissance mission was specifically searching for clues about the situation on the ground. Another photo, taken at 14.00 hours, shows a fleet of over twenty parked buses. Photos with a better resolution show the football stadium with the prisoners.<sup>1649</sup> At 14.00 hours on 13 July, photos were taken above Potocari, which clearly showed the buses and lorries that had come to collect the women, the children and the elderly from the civilian population. It also registered signs of disturbed earth.<sup>1650</sup> On 13 July, photos were also taken of a warehouse in Kravica, situated between Bratunac and Konjevic Polje. Researchers of the Yugoslavia Tribunal in The Hague later found bloodstains and numerous bullet holes in this warehouse.<sup>1651</sup> The collection of Imint was difficult because of bad weather. US systems confirmed heavy cloud cover over eastern Bosnia. Finally, on 18 July US assets confirmed the presence of two VRS tanks at Srebrenica HQ.<sup>1652</sup>

During this period the CIA conducted several test flights with Predators in Croatia and on 15 July a Predator made a flight but the quality of the Imint was not what had been hoped for. The same day other US national systems confirmed heavy cloud cover over eastern Bosnia. On 17 July a Predator took off just after midnight and was recovered in the afternoon. All target areas were cloud covered and the UAV encountered mostly thunderstorms mostly. The Predator collected good imagery of

<sup>1643</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1644</sup> Confidential interview (25).

<sup>1645</sup> Confidential information (55).

<sup>1646</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1647</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 5/15.

<sup>1648</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 6/2.

<sup>1649</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 6/3 and 6/4.

<sup>1650</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 5/2-5/4.

<sup>1651</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 8/3 - 8/8

<sup>1652</sup> Confidential information (80).

Mostar and loitered in Zepa area for three hours. However, the UAV was confronted with bad weather but no artillery or refugees were observed. Bad weather played an important role in these days because on 18 July a Predator flight cancelled due to foul weather. But the US intelligence community had more Imint platforms at its disposal.

American C-130s with special infra-red sensors were also deployed above Srebrenica. These flew from Brindisi (Italy) above the eastern enclaves if circumstances were favourable for nocturnal operations. They probably flew on the orders of the DIA. On 10 July these platforms identified at 17.00 burning houses in the enclave. At 22.30 hours on 12 July, the infra-red sensors of these C-130s detected a large mass of prisoners in the vicinity of Srebrenica (the exact position is unknown). The infra-red sensors enabled these special C-130s to follow both the column of Muslim men and the VRS advance on Zepa and Gorazde. The C-130s observed campfires along the road throughout the night and registered the heat from the tank and lorry engines. Other US Imint platforms confirmed 4 military trucks plus sedans next to a house.<sup>1653</sup>

What happened to this Imint and was it shared with Zagreb HQ and BHC? It was shared indeed with the senior UN leadership. This intelligence regarding campfires was conveyed to UN leadership on the morning of the 14<sup>th</sup>. In particular, intelligence passed was about the primary and secondary position of the VRS, with campfires at locations 2 km, 4.5 km and 6 km south-west of Srebrenica, and approximately 13, 14, 15 km north-east of Zepa. The position of additional VRS units located in a certain area was also reported. This intelligence was also delivered to Sarajevo, briefed to the UN leadership, and injected into the Zagreb overall threat assessments for Zepa delivered again to the UN leadership, in the COS's office at noon on 15 July.<sup>1654</sup>

In this phase the stories about warcrimes started to circulate more persistently. The stories about mass executions were greeted with incredulity at first. But when more and more signs emerged that atrocities had taken place on a mammoth scale and that thousands of men were still missing, the Imint activities were stepped up. The photos which a KH-11 had taken of Srebrenica and the immediate surroundings were now analysed. Suddenly, the Americans were taking the rumours of mass murders more seriously. The U-2 flights now targeted the eastern enclaves more often and the analysts were instructed to analyse the images.

A report to General Michael Hayden, Director of Intelligence at US EUCOM, stated that Mladic had told a UN official that hundreds had been killed in the Bandera triangle inside the enclave Srebrenica. By then, the 'collection priorities' in the American intelligence community had changed. They were now: '1) Zepa; 2) Potocari and Srebrenica; 3) Gorazde and 4) Tuzla camp and the column of men and boys'. Even so, requests for 'atrocities verification' through Imint were still rejected. At that time, there was still insufficient evidence or indications.<sup>1655</sup>

As described earlier, on 15 July, a Predator again headed for Eastern Bosnia. Its main assignment was 'Bratunac males key priority'. But the quality of the video footage was disappointing. The main targets were still the men in Bratunac. The UAV flew above Zepa, and then more reports came on a regular basis which entered the LOCE directly. On the same day, Hayden heard that, according to UNMO reports, some 10,000 men had disappeared. On 17 July, another US asset flew over Branjevo farm at Donja Pilica.<sup>1656</sup> A photo was later released by the US Administration.<sup>1657</sup> However, the author was shown much sharper photos than this one, which clearly showed a great many people and corpses as well as lorry tracks and digging operations.<sup>1658</sup> On 21 September, another U-2 flight showed that Branjevo farm seemed totally deserted.<sup>1659</sup> This U-2 also flew above Glogova,

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<sup>1653</sup> Confidential interview (54) and confidential information (80).

<sup>1654</sup> Confidential interview (54) and confidential information (80).

<sup>1655</sup> Confidential interview (53).

<sup>1656</sup> Interview with J. Schouren, 04/12/99.

<sup>1657</sup> For the photos: [www.fas.org/irp/Imint/bosnia16.html](http://www.fas.org/irp/Imint/bosnia16.html)

<sup>1658</sup> Confidential interview (7). See also: ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 24/2-24/3.

<sup>1659</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 24/4.

where comparisons with the photos of 5 July revealed that digging had also taken place.<sup>1660</sup> At 18.12 hours on 18 July, satellite intelligence on Srebrenica was also available in the US intelligence community. A satellite had spotted two tanks in front of the headquarters at Potocari. The photos also showed an APC in Glogova.<sup>1661</sup>

The fact that US Imint was available in this period emerged in Belgrade on 15 July, during the negotiations on Srebrenica between Akashi, Bildt, Stoltenberg, Smith, Milosevic and Mladic.<sup>1662</sup> US Imint (presumably from a U-2 or UAV) was on the table. It had been provided by the US Embassy in Belgrade and was causing Mladic serious discomfort. These photos, incidentally, were not the same as those, which Albright presented to the Security Council.

Albright's photos came as a complete surprise to Bosnia-Herzegovina Command in general and to Smith in particular. Bosnia-Herzegovina Command (BHC) knew nothing of their existence.<sup>1663</sup> Again, this was not so much attributable to reluctance on the part of the Americans but rather to the insecure connections with the Bosnian capital. An intelligence analyst with access to American Imint said that Satint of (the surroundings of) Srebrenica again became available on 19 July. The content of these photos is unknown. On the same day, it was announced that the Predators would no longer fly above this area because of the situation around Zepa. Judging from their Deny Flight Intelligence Summary, the analysts at the MIS/Air Force found this a remarkable message, especially considering that UAVs were perfect for performing such local reconnaissance operations. Regular aircraft could not do it. On the other hand, the Deny Flight Intsum stated that the MIS analysts at the Air Force had the impression that the VRS troops around Zepa were not pushing forward. There was no real need for this, because the international community had already given up on Zepa and, according to the MIS/Air Force, an evacuation was being considered.<sup>1664</sup> This could indeed explain why the Predator reconnaissance flights were halted above Zepa. Perhaps the fear of a repetition elsewhere of the atrocities of Srebrenica also played a role in this; apparently, the UAV had more important missions to perform. Paris reacted immediately. The French would step up its reconnaissance flights above Bosnia because Paris thought that Washington was not sharing aerial photo intelligence with the allies.<sup>1665</sup>

After the fall of Srebrenica, the Dutch Chief of Defence Staff asked the United Nations if detailed satellite photos or UAV photos could be taken of the surroundings of Srebrenica and Bratunac to ascertain whether there were prison camps in the area. Minister Voorhoeve wanted to know whether this request had been productive and sent a memo to this effect to the deputy Chief of Defence Staff.<sup>1666</sup> The Director of Atlantic Cooperation and Security at the Foreign Ministry also wanted more details. On 6 August, it had asked the UN Permanent Representative for further information on aerial photos of men deported from Srebrenica. No photos were available at the NATO Situation Centre or Intelligence Division; NATO said that there may have been US satellite photos but that national intelligence was only shared with allies in exceptional cases.

This did not deter the Dutch Permanent Representative from making inquiries of his American counterpart, who had sent out an all-stations call on the same day but had received no answer. The Permanent Representative thought that perhaps in this case the request would get a positive answer.<sup>1667</sup> The government had also asked Minister Voorhoeve if it could see Imint.<sup>1668</sup> The Chief of Defence Staff, the Director of Atlantic Cooperation and Security and the minister did not have to wait long.

<sup>1660</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 9/3.

<sup>1661</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1662</sup> For example: Rohde, *A Safe Area*, pp. 309 - 310

<sup>1663</sup> Confidential interview (43).

<sup>1664</sup> MoD, *DCBC, 1696*. MID/Klu DFI (NATO secret), 19/07/95.

<sup>1665</sup> 'Onwaarschijnlijk dat Belgen Zepa helpen evacueren' (Belgians unlikely to help evacuate Zepa), *De Standaard*, 19/07/95.

<sup>1666</sup> MoD, *PCDS, DE01108*, Voorhoeve to PCDS, No. 26/95, 04/08/95.

<sup>1667</sup> NMFA, *PVNATO*, Permanent NATO representative to Foreign Affairs, No. 0017, 07/08/95.

<sup>1668</sup> Interview with C. Hilderink, 11/08/00.



*Albright shows the photos*

On 10 August, Albright produced the photos of the disturbed ground where the executed men were buried.<sup>1669</sup> They were also passed on to the Ministry of Defence by the US Embassy in The Hague.<sup>1670</sup> If the Dutch Government wanted to see more photos or more detailed photos then Washington would be prepared to look favourably on this request.<sup>1671</sup> The DPKO did not, however, receive the same treatment because, on the same day, all that Annan's advisor, Tharoor, received was a copy of Albright's speech. He did not get the photos because of 'technical difficulties'.<sup>1672</sup> He would get them on 15 August through a separate briefing. DPKO was also shown a sketch of a classified photo of a wider area one kilometre north of Nova Kasaba. The actual photo was not released.<sup>1673</sup>

On 18 August, Minister Voorhoeve received an answer to the memo he had sent two weeks before. In the meantime, the Albright photos had been published. The US military attaché also had some classified detailed imagery of the vicinity of Srebrenica, but they could betray the technological possibilities of the satellite. For this reason, his government had instructed him not to release them. But it would not object if they were studied, analysed and interpreted by government photo analysts at the Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC). The Royal Netherlands Air Force was therefore asked to make a team of photo analysts available on 21 August.<sup>1674</sup>

On the same day, American representatives showed the strictly classified satellite photos to analysts of the Air Force. During the weekend Joup Schouren and his colleagues were allowed to briefly analyse the photos at the DCBC under the watchful eye of an US colonel. Schouren would have liked to have inspected them at the Volkel air base, but this was not allowed. The Americans did not offer their own interpretation of the photos. Standard details were also missing, including the type of film, the time, the height and the focal distance of the lens for calculating the scale of the photos. The only available information was the date and the position. After a short analysis the photos had to be returned directly to the US Embassy.<sup>1675</sup>

However, an erroneous observation is presumably made here by Schouren. Time, date and geographic co-ordinates are standard annotations for any sort of imagery, but altitude and focal length are definitely not. This observation clearly comes from a TACRECCE person (which Schouren was), where such information is normally imbedded in the photo with a matrix arrangement. It does not apply to UAV imagery, U2 imagery, or any sort of satellite imagery.<sup>1676</sup>

One interpretation of Albright's satellite photos was as follows: two groups of 'possible' prisoners were discernible on a football pitch near Nova Kasaba, 19 kilometres west of Bratunac and Srebrenica and five kilometres south of Konjevic Polje: one of approximately 100 persons and one of approximately 500 persons. Both groups were seated on the ground and surrounded by twenty or so sentry posts. There were five vehicles at the entrance to the football pitch. On the photos Schouren saw a football pitch with guards, space for loading people onto transport, people (some of whom were kneeling), two bulldozers and two T-55 tanks with a bulldozer blade, a hole in the ground, buses and trucks.

He could also see a British Warrior in UN colours driving in a bus convoy. It was not a Dutch APC; the British had lost a few Warriors to the VRS earlier in the war. Schouren counted 600 men kneeling at an assembly point. There was also a camp enclosed by fencing, which reminded him of

<sup>1669</sup> 'US Reveals Photographs of Apparent Mass Grave', *International Herald Tribune*, 10/08/95 and 'Up to 2,700 Massacred By Serbs, UN is Told', *International Herald Tribune*, 11/08/95.

<sup>1670</sup> MoD, DCBC, Box 61. US Army Attaché to Commander Hilderink, 11/08/95.

<sup>1671</sup> MoD, DJZ. Permanent NATO representative to Foreign Ministry, No. 1147, 11/08/95.

<sup>1672</sup> UNNY, DPKO. Annan to Akashi, No. 2686, 11/08/95.

<sup>1673</sup> Confidential Collection (8), Annan to Akashi, No. MSC 2720, 15/08/95 plus a copy of photos.

<sup>1674</sup> MoD, DS, No. DE01107, Acting Commander of Defence Staff Schouten to Minister Voorhoeve, No. S95/061/3269, 18/08/95.

<sup>1675</sup> Interview with J. Schouren, 04/12/99 and J.J.C. Voorhoeve, 13/03/97.

<sup>1676</sup> Confidential information (80) and confidential interview (54).

aerial photos he had seen of a POW camp in World War II during his training in England. One photo had been made 16 kilometres west of Srebrenica. Photos that were later released to the Yugoslavia Tribunal did indeed clearly show two groups of prisoners and a convoy of buses in Nova Kasaba. An enlargement left no doubt about there being two groups.<sup>1677</sup> This was probably the same Imint which was released at the start of August, which Schouren was allowed to examine.

Two groups of possible prisoners were discernible in the enlargement of the satellite photo of Sandici taken at 14.00 hours on 13 July.<sup>1678</sup> one group of 80 and one of 320. Five large buses were parked at the entrance. A U-2 flight (codenamed *Creek Quick*) produced photos of digging operations at exactly the same spots on 27 July.<sup>1679</sup> Excavations performed later by personnel of the Yugoslavia Tribunal revealed that bodies were buried there.<sup>1680</sup> The U-2 also took photos in the vicinity of Konjevic Polje, Cerska, Orahovac and the area around Karakaj-Dulici, Kozluk and Glogova.<sup>1681</sup> These photos also clearly showed digging operations and many lorry tracks leading to and from the location.<sup>1682</sup> U-2 flights on 14 August, 7 September, 27 September, 2 October, 12 October, 18 October, 20 October, 23 October, 30 October and 9 November again registered traces of digging at the fore-mentioned sites, but also at various other locations, such as HodZici, Liplje, Snagovo, Cancari and Redzici.<sup>1683</sup> Photos taken at the end of September showed that the bodies at Branjevo farm had been exhumed.<sup>1684</sup>

Photos of the compound in Potocari also show traces of digging operations.<sup>1685</sup> These photos illustrate how the interest of the Imint analysts always focuses on the roads and the surroundings. As U-2s always followed the connecting routes in the valleys, they did not register the column of Muslim men or the fighting between the VRS and the ABiH in the mountains and the forests. The satellites, on the other hand, did not have these limitations.

Schouren confirmed that it is difficult to analyse photos taken by U-2s. Though an experienced photo interpreter, he too would have failed to notice the presence of people. He might have spotted the buses and trucks, but would probably have paid no attention to them because he was looking for other things. After all, huge amounts of data can be gathered from Imint. Many of the photos taken by satellites, U-2s and UAVs are a by-product of a specific mission. The analyst's attention therefore focuses on the mission, and not on the by-products.<sup>1686</sup>

Certain comments may be mooted about the signs of digging operations and the bulldozers. According to analysts, photos which were produced at the Yugoslavia Tribunal showed the arrival of bulldozers of the 5<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion of the Drina Corps at Konjevic Polje on 5 and 27 July. Other photos taken on the same dates also reportedly showed the arrival of bulldozers.<sup>1687</sup> However, no bulldozers are discernible on the actual photo, but (according to the official description on the actual U-2 photo) mobile bridge trucks, some low-loaders and a tractor with a trailer.<sup>1688</sup> These may have been intended for the transportation of forestry equipment across the River Drina. Another photo, which

<sup>1677</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 12/1 - 12/3 and Volume II, Ex. 14/2. See also: ICTY Dossier, Krstic Case, Case IT-98-33-T, OTP Exhibits, No. 87.

<sup>1678</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 7/3 and 7/4.

<sup>1679</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 7/7 and Volume II, Ex. 14/2 - 14/4 and 15/1.

<sup>1680</sup> For photos of the exhumed bodies: ICTY Dossier, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 14/7-14/8 and 17/2-17/3. See also: Rohde, *A Safe Area*, pp. 334 - 350.

<sup>1681</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 9/3 and Volume II, Ex. 16/1-16/2, 20/1-20/2, 22/1 and 27/1.

<sup>1682</sup> MoD, *MID/TCBU*. American analysis (secret), undated and analysis by Schouren and Molleman, 22/08/95. The latter memorandum is more or less a literal translation of the American analysis.

<sup>1683</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 12/5 - 12/6 and : ICTY Dossier, Krstic Case, Case IT-98-33-T, OTP Exhibits, No. 161/5, 161/6, 162/4, 162/5, 162/2, 164/3, 1662-166/11.

<sup>1684</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, Case IT-98-33-T, OTP Exhibits, No. 165/4.

<sup>1685</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume I, Ex. 5/27.

<sup>1686</sup> Interview with J. Schouren, 04/12/99.

<sup>1687</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, Case IT-98-33-T, OTP Exhibits, No. 160/5 - 160/9.

<sup>1688</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, Case IT-98-33-T, OTP Exhibits, No. 160/1 and 160/3.

was taken some time in 1999, even shows two similar trucks which had apparently been abandoned because they were defective.<sup>1689</sup>

The photos do not make clear whether the murders had been planned in advance. However, the photos of bulldozers did lead to additional evidence, for the 5<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion of the Drina Corps and other units involved in the digging operations had kept meticulous records of the fuel consumption (with a view to theft) and also of the heavy machinery that was used for trips between the execution sites and the burial sites.<sup>1690</sup> One member of the British intelligence community verified that there was no Imint on the executions, but there was intelligence about the Muslim fighters who had been taken prisoner and about the start of the flight to Tuzla. It was unclear whether this Imint came from U-2s or satellites.<sup>1691</sup>

Albright had personally shown the Dutch deputy military attaché to the Permanent Representation at New York, Major E. Koestal, detailed photos which even showed an arm protruding from the ground. These photos were never released, ostensibly because they were considered unsuitable for publication.<sup>1692</sup> The real reason was that the capabilities of the satellites had to be safeguarded. On 24 August 1995, the Americans responded to further Dutch questions in a Secret Noform memorandum.

When asked when the mass graves were first discovered the US services replied that there was evidence of digging operations on 2 August. This emerged when an Imint analyst was examining a U-2 film from a mission flown on 27 July. The analyst was studying specific locations on the basis of Humint (presumably the US Humint source) and intelligence reports from open sources. He discovered areas that appeared to indicate the presence of mass graves. A comparison between this and other Imint, taken by a satellite on 13 July, revealed that changes had occurred in the soil structure. It was then that the groups of prisoners were discovered on the Imint.

The fact that this was not discovered earlier was explained by saying that the people on the ground 'could have been mistaken for vegetation and overlooked where the analyst was not aware of subsequent press reports from refugees claiming that people were herded onto soccer fields in the area'. The explanation further stated that there was 'no usable coverage, however, between 13 and 27 July, because of bad weather or poor image quality – the principal factors affecting whether we have coverage'. This meant that the Americans only had images of the locations before and after the executions and no images of the execution itself. The conclusion was that the people in the football stadium had probably been executed shortly after 13 July.<sup>1693</sup> This was confirmed by an official at the US intelligence community.<sup>1694</sup>

On 28 August, the Minister of Defence was briefed at the Defence Crisis Management Centre on the basis of this analysis. In addition to Voorhoeve, the Chief of Defence Staff and his deputy were present. The Director-General of Political Affairs was also invited to attend.<sup>1695</sup> In an interview Minister Voorhoeve said that, during the briefing, he had asked the Americans if they had more photos dating from before the fall of the enclave. He was told that this would be looked into.<sup>1696</sup> Voorhoeve again raised the question of whether there were more satellite photos when he met his American counterpart, Perry, on 5 October 1995. Perry told him that he had closely studied the Imint and Sigint and that though these did not provide conclusive evidence of mass executions, there were certainly indications

<sup>1689</sup> ICTY, Krstic Case, Case IT-98-33-T, OTP Exhibits, No. 160/4.

<sup>1690</sup> Mirko Klarin, 'Analysis: Danube surrenders Kosovo Cover-up evidence', *IWPR's TRIBUNAL UPDATE* No. 223, Part I, May 28-June 2, 2001.

<sup>1691</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>1692</sup> Interview with E. Koestal, 24/02/00.

<sup>1693</sup> MoD, *DCBC, box 61, No. 2850*, American memorandum, 24/08/95.

<sup>1694</sup> Confidential information (57).

<sup>1695</sup> NMFA, *DGPZ*, Memorandum from Acting DAV to DGPZ, 23/08/95. At the bottom was written: "This will also provide an opening to push the United States for the release of any additional photographic material (vide dzz memo dd. 15/8)". This took place on 31 August. See: NMFA, *DDI DAV 999.241*. Letter from J. Vos to T. Dornbush, 31/08/95.

<sup>1696</sup> Interview with J.J.C. Voorhoeve, 13/03/97.

to that effect. Perry said that no alternative picture had been pieced together from additional intelligence. He was prepared to release this additional intelligence to the Yugoslavia Tribunal.<sup>1697</sup>

To make doubly sure, Voorhoeve listed all the points a few days later: the US intelligence services did not have foreknowledge of the VRS attack on Srebrenica on the basis of Imint. He added: 'Not even on the basis of the photos taken on 11 July'. Perry had admitted that there was plenty of photographic material pointing to mass executions. This material pertained mainly to the period between 13 and 27 July. Perry was prepared to hand these photos over to the Yugoslavia Tribunal but 'some conditioning/adjustments would be needed' in order to protect the sources and the technology. The Minister pressed for further action through the US Embassy in The Hague.<sup>1698</sup> On 18 October, he received an Information Paper via the US Embassy but this document did not contain any further information.<sup>1699</sup>

## 6. Conclusions

On the basis of the above and the released Imint it has to be concluded that photos were available which were taken by US spy satellites, U-2s and UAVs of the events before, during and after the fall of the enclave. Reports of the existence of these photos appeared regularly in the press and other publications from the autumn of 1995. The debate on the photos began after the US Administration released photos of mass graves and locations where the Muslim men had been executed. This action triggered all manner of wild speculation that the agencies, such as the CIA, had more photos of Srebrenica and the surroundings. It prompted a battery of accusations, not least that these services had withheld from their European allies vital intelligence regarding prior knowledge of the attack. There were also rumours of photos showing the summary executions. However, as the researcher for the Yugoslavia Tribunal, Ruez, testified to the French Parliamentary Inquiry in Paris, there were no such photos. Hence, the Yugoslavia Tribunal only had photos of before and after the executions.<sup>1700</sup>

This was confirmed by intelligence officials who had full access to the Imint on Eastern Bosnia during the Bosnian conflict. The characteristics of Imint, analogous in many regards to the Sigint realm, resulted in documenting the war crimes, but not preventing them. After the fact, the information came slowly, but only, and this must be said, as a result of a lengthy effort by the US.<sup>1701</sup> If the Americans had possessed any such photos then they would, of course, have informed the allies accordingly. Janvier later told the French Parliamentary Investigative Commission in Paris that he had never seen Imint such as those, which Albright presented to the Security Council. He knew nothing of their existence until 16 August.<sup>1702</sup>

The publications on whether or not Imint existed have also resulted in a general conviction among the public and the press that satellites function as a sort of 'ubiquitous eye'. This is a misconception. Though satellites, U-2s and UAVs have impressive capabilities, most of the systems are occasionally hampered by unfavourable local weather conditions, which can affect their operational performance. As has already been demonstrated, other elements also play a role. The analysis speed, the focus and expertise of the photo-analyst and other factors can affect the quality of the Imint product. The problem is not so much the dispatch speed of the Imint but rather the whole time-consuming process of analysis, processing and searching for further confirmation. One author concluded: 'For that reason, it would be difficult to intervene in a specific incident of ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless,

<sup>1697</sup> NIOD, Coll. Van den Breemen. Report of a meeting between Voorhoeve and Perry, 05/10/95.

<sup>1698</sup> NIOD, Coll. Van den Breemen. Voorhoeve to CDS, No. 32/95, 09/10/95 and Report of Main Points Confidential interview Perry, 05/10/95.

<sup>1699</sup> NIOD, Coll. Van den Breemen. American Information Paper (*Secret Releasable Netherlands*), 18/10/95.

<sup>1700</sup> 'Ruez testifies for French committee', *AFP Press Release*, 22/02/01 and confidential information (56).

<sup>1701</sup> Confidential interviews (8) and (54) and confidential information (80)..

<sup>1702</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, No 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Deel 2, Audition de M. Bernard Janvier, 25/01/01, pp. 106-139.

tracking the civilian toll had value in a war where the political stakes are high.’ In a nutshell, Imint is basically unsuitable for stopping war crimes, but it can detect them.<sup>1703</sup> One should add that they can also be used to document war crimes, but not to prevent them. The Dutch photo-analyst Schouren confirmed that it is extremely difficult to analyse photos taken by satellites and U-2s.<sup>1704</sup> In addition, it is undeniable that the Americans did not accord Srebrenica high priority in their Imint. To be perfectly frank: the Dutch intelligence community did neither. Obviously, Sarajevo was the main US target and not the eastern enclaves, including Srebrenica.<sup>1705</sup>

Summarizing, it can safely be said that US spy satellites, U-2s and UAVs collected a lot of Imint showing buses, trucks, tanks, male prisoners, corpses and disturbed ground where the executed men could have been buried. The failure of this Imint to arrive on time (i.e. not until early August) on the desks of the policy-makers was probably due to the priorities within at the US intelligence community. Other hard targets were more important than the eastern enclaves, where no US troops were stationed at that moment. A foreign intelligence evaluation therefore concluded that Imint was useful but, given the guerrilla character of the fighting, few regular units could be photographed from the air and space.<sup>1706</sup>

In addition, the American analysts had no idea that the VRS was planning to seize the whole enclave. The expectation was that the Bosnian Serbs would be deterred from such action because it would bring heavy losses on their side, air attacks and floods of refugees which they could not cope with. These points will be discussed in the next chapter. Spy planes had spotted bus convoys at various locations at the end of June, but it was assumed that these were being used to transport VRS troops.<sup>1707</sup> CIA Director Deutch referred to this when he categorically denied that the CIA had foreknowledge of the attack. He once again called attention to the laborious process that eventually led to the discovery of the photos of the mass graves.<sup>1708</sup>

The general picture that emerges from the currently available information indicates that the eastern enclaves were not (high) priority for Imint analysis. Executions on such a large scale were totally unexpected. Although it must be said that some analysts in Zagreb anticipated executions, but the eventual scale of thousands of dead was far beyond expectations. Though satellites and U-2s were active, other instruments such as UAVs were not fully operational above Bosnia until a later date. Moreover, the American services never analysed this Imint on time. However, it must be said that if some of the photos referred above to were TACRECCE photos, than the analysis was done by NATO analysts at various bases near the Adriatic, not by American analysts. That being the case then NATO was also very slow. Though the UK Defence Intelligence Staff had actually identified the concentration of troops around the enclave on the basis of Imint, it had not paid too much attention because the VRS had always had enough troops on hand to take the enclave in any case. Most of the intelligence on the troop concentrations came from Imint; whether from satellites or U-2s never became clear. There was, at all events, no Imint on the executions; but there was Imint on the ABiH prisoners and on the start of the journey to Tuzla. This is borne out by information from an American report which stated that ‘there was no usable coverage between 13 and 27 July because of bad weather or poor image quality’. There can be no doubt that the US community had permanent (near-) real-time information on what was going on in and around Srebrenica via satellites and spy planes. The claim by a member of the Dutch Cabinet to the effect that Washington had, at ‘his’ special request, taken satellite photos of the area around Bratunac showing probable mass graves is, however, incorrect.<sup>1709</sup>

<sup>1703</sup> Alan Boyle, ‘spies in the watch for atrocities’, *MSNBC Interactive*, 26/03/99.

<sup>1704</sup> Interview with J. Schouren, 04/12/99.

<sup>1705</sup> Confidential interview (46).

<sup>1706</sup> Confidential interview (8) and confidential information (29).

<sup>1707</sup> Charles Lane and Thom Shanker, ‘Bosnia: What the CIA Didn’t Tell Us’, in *The New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96.

<sup>1708</sup> ‘The CIA and Bosnia: An Exchange’, *New York Review of Books*, 06/06/96.

<sup>1709</sup> Objectivized summary of the minutes of the Ministerial Council meeting of 18/08/95, prepared for the purposes of the present NIOD study.

The inevitable conclusion is that not enough personnel were deployed to quickly utilize and analyse this real-time coverage of Eastern Bosnia in the summer of 1995 and pass it on to the allies. Also, military intelligence support for the UN ground troops, such as Dutchbat in Eastern Bosnia, did not have top priority in the US intelligence community. According to Hayden,<sup>1710</sup> the military intelligence priorities in the summer of 1995 were as follows:

1. Force protection; chiefly to combat terrorism against US troops in Macedonia and the anti-aircraft threat to NATO planes;
2. Ground truth; information on what was happening between the warring factions;
3. Support for air operations, such as searching for suitable targets;
4. Support for NATO ground force planning;
5. Support for UN ground troop operations.

This list of priorities in itself is not surprising, as the Americans were not yet deploying ground troops. On the other hand, it indicates that American intelligence support to, for example, Dutchbat, was not high on the agenda. Again to be frank: it was also not very high on the Dutch intelligence agenda. Perhaps it ranked even lower. But the lack of US intelligence support for UN troops on the ground places in perspective the comment by 'a senior intelligence official' at NATO in Mons that General Rose 'lost ownership of the picture of the battlefield to the point where it was irrecoverable'. In his view, this resulted in operational decision-making, which was not based on an objective picture.<sup>1711</sup> What was left unsaid was that the Americans distrusted Rose and therefore slowly cut off the flow of intelligence. Apart from this, at the BND it was noticed by senior officials that there was no good Imint coordination within the US intelligence community and hardly any analyses was done regarding Eastern Bosnia.<sup>1712</sup>

All of this does not alter the fact that Imint could have played a key role in intelligence-gathering before and during the fall of Srebrenica. The availability of good intelligence on the operations of the warring factions is always absolutely vital to the troops on the ground, also in peacekeeping operations. All peacekeepers should have clear military insight into the operational zone. One might therefore expect commercial satellites to have a future in peacekeeping operations. The authors Stout and Quiggin are pessimistic in this respect. They maintain that warring factions, rebels and terrorists are more likely to use the information provided by satellites than the UN or other international organizations involved in peacekeeping. This is because, they say, good Imint is greatly in the interest of the warring factions: it always pays for itself and can be used immediately in the theatre of war. There is always an inherent urge to stay one step ahead of the enemy; otherwise the war may be lost. International organizations do not share this kind of Darwinian perspective. Probably, all the warring factions in Bosnia would have made use of commercial Imint if it had been easily and relatively cheaply available in 1995.

In addition, the command structure of terrorist or rebel groups is usually small and new procedures and methods are more easily accepted and adopted there than in a highly complex structure such as that of the UN. Moreover, the UN suffers from a sort of 'intelligence phobia'. Though New York has had fewer qualms about intelligence since the establishment of the Situation Center for the processing of US intelligence, it is still to undergo a full cultural change. Both authors believe that the day when the UN will make use of commercial Imint is still far in the future, as someone will then have to control this form of intelligence and determine the targets. If this task is assigned to UN headquarters, the question still needs to be addressed as to who will perform the analysis, who will be the recipients and how the Imint can be quickly distributed among the recipients. The authors see the

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<sup>1710</sup> Michael V. Hayden, 'Warfighters and Intelligence: one team - one fight', *Defense Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 4 (1995) 2, p. 24.

<sup>1711</sup> 'Bosnia underscores intelligence gaps', *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 20/03/95, p. 56.

<sup>1712</sup> Confidential interview (98).

solution to such problems in *ad hoc* peacekeeping operations, where the communication lines are shorter.<sup>1713</sup>

It also must be stated that the Dutch Government was not properly briefed on Imint. An American memorandum, which was drawn up for The Hague in response to questions posed by the Dutch, proved to contain incorrect statements. The memorandum stated that there ‘was no usable coverage, however, between 13 and 27 July, because of bad weather or poor image quality - the principal factors affecting whether we have coverage’.<sup>1714</sup> This was factually untrue: there was certainly ‘usable coverage’. On 15 July, a Predator flew to Eastern Bosnia with the primary mission: ‘Bratunac males: key priority’. The quality of the subsequent video was disappointing, but other Imint was available: on 17 July, a U-2 flew over Branjevo farm at Donja Pilica, the scene of countless executions. A – rather blurred – photo of people who were executed shortly afterwards was released later by none other than the US Administration.<sup>1715</sup> The NIOD was even shown far sharper photos of the same target, which clearly showed a larger and a smaller group of bodies and lorry tracks and digging operations.<sup>1716</sup> Similar but less sharp photos were later given to the Yugoslavia Tribunal for use at the trial of General Krstic.<sup>1717</sup>

At 18.12 hours on 18 July, Imint on Srebrenica was again available within the US intelligence community. An asset had identified two tanks outside the headquarters in Potocari. U-2 photos also showed an APC in Glogova. The availability of US Imint came to light in Belgrade on 15 July during the negotiations with Milosevic and Mladic on Srebrenica. American Imint was lying on the table. According to an intelligence analyst with access to Imint, Satint of Srebrenica and the surroundings were already available on 19 July.<sup>1718</sup> Despite all of this, there was probably no conscious attempt to mislead: the American memorandum with the answers to the questions asked by the Dutch in which reference was made to these photos is dated 24 August 1995. At that time, the US community still did not have full insight into and access to all the Imint on the events around Srebrenica. The Dutch Government was therefore not incorrectly informed, but the US memorandum was certainly premature.

Finally, a word about the Dutch intelligence community and Air Force could have played in this respect. It is of course also a bit ‘easy’ to blame the US intelligence community for conceivable shortcomings. It is also not true that the Dutch were totally dependent on other sources for their Imint. As said earlier, the Dutch had excellent TACRECCE capabilities in the area. However, the last flight of the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron (mission 1357) of the Royal Dutch Airforce, which was stationed in Villafranca and in charge of photo reconnaissance missions above Bosnia, dates from 27 May 1995. The activities on the western side were more or less stopped after the American F-16 of Scott O’Grady was shot down. In fact, no reconnaissance flights were carried out at all between 11 and 30 June. Apparently, it was considered too dangerous to operate after this date, given the mounting threat from the Bosnian-Serb anti-aircraft guns.

As said earlier in this study. In brief, there were no additional enhancements in the area of *intelligence*; neither Parliament nor the Ministry of Defence nor the Cabinet insisted on it. However, the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the Royal Dutch Airforce could have provided the Dutch with an unique opportunity. One of the best, if not the very best Imint asset in the theatre was the Dutch RF-16 TACRECCE capability. It was newer, more flexible and better technology than any other TACRECCE system in the theatre. It can provide better resolution, more flexible coverage and offset the effects of foul weather better than any satellite. Unlike the UAV, it has a man on-scene, at the controls, with a full

<sup>1713</sup> Mark Stout and Thomas Quiggin, ‘Exploiting the new high resolution satellite imagery: Darwinian imperatives?’, *Commentary*, No. 75 (Summer 1998), pp. 5 - 10.

<sup>1714</sup> MoD, DCBC, *box 61, No. 2850*, American memorandum, 24/08/95.

<sup>1715</sup> For the photos: [www.fas.org/irp/Imint/bosnia16.html](http://www.fas.org/irp/Imint/bosnia16.html)

<sup>1716</sup> Confidential interview (7). During this interview classified U-2 photos could be studied.

<sup>1717</sup> See: ICTY, Krstic Case, OTP Exhibits, Volume II, Ex. 24/2-24/3.

<sup>1718</sup> Confidential interview (54).

situational awareness, which is always superior to a remote control system, and it yields far better imagery. One must conclude again, like in the precious chapters, that the Dutch shortfall in intelligence was recognized at the policy level, but that action was not properly taken. Dutch political and military leadership never took the courage to order the 306<sup>th</sup> Squadron of the Royal Dutch Airforce to fly over Srebrenica in order to support DutchBat.

The Dutch had assets at their command, which in many ways were superior to any others available. Perhaps the Dutch political and military structure deserve, according to an US intelligence official, far more blame regarding Imint than they do under the Sigint category. Perhaps they did not understand the value of their own Imint system, and the incredible utility it can provide. Experts who worked with TACRECCE systems and Imint collections systems of every stripe claimed that in a tactical situation, where the targets are troops on the ground (or prisoners for that matter), in a known area of limited dimensions, there is no other system that even comes close to TACRECCE. The Dutch RF-16 pod system in this respect was considered to be one of the very best in the world. And it was under the exclusive control of the Dutch. One American intelligence official posed these questions to the author: where was it when all this was going on? What was the higher priority that they sought to satisfy somewhere else with that precious Dutch Imint system and was that more important than DutchBat? They knew they wanted information, they had the assets, and they did nothing to get the information. Instead, the 'voice from the sofa' vilifies, according to this official, the US intelligence effort.<sup>1719</sup>

Despite this critique it remains a serious fact that on the basis of the above and the released Imint it has to be concluded that photos were available which were taken by US spy satellites, U-2s and UAVs of the events before, during and after the fall of the enclave. However, this Imint was not made readily available to the Dutch.

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<sup>1719</sup> Confidential information (80).



## Chapter 8

# Was 'Srebrenica' an intelligence failure?

'Gentlemen, I notice that there are always three courses (of action) open to an enemy and that he usually takes the fourth.'

- General Helmuth von Moltke

'Intelligence did not prepare us adequately for the attack on Srebrenica.'

- Richard Holbrooke.<sup>1720</sup>

'Many intelligence reports in war are contradictory; even more are false, and most are uncertain and in short, most intelligence is false.'

- Carl von Clausewitz.<sup>1721</sup>

### 1. Introduction

Ever since the fall of Srebrenica there has been speculation about prior knowledge of the VRS attack. The Dutch *Nova* current affairs programme, for instance, revealed on 11 July 2000 that on 8 June 1995 the DutchBat commander Karremans had sent a warning to the Netherlands Ministry of Defence stating that he expected a major attack. Large troop concentrations and special combat troops had been reported around the enclave. This warning was apparently ignored and no further action was taken. Moreover, the Deputy Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army General Ad Van Baal did not consider it necessary to inform Defence Minister Voorhoeve about this. A Ministry of Defence spokesman referred the matter to the UN: according to him it was this organization that should have acted on the information, not the Army. But according to the report UNPROFOR did nothing with this information from Karremans.<sup>1722</sup>

This NOVA report can be seen as a late echo (prompted by a newly discovered document) of concerns that had already been raised in 1995. In earlier years it had been the press that had contained most of the speculation on this matter. It was claimed that in June 1995 American and German intelligence services had spectacular evidence that the Bosnian Serbs were planning to take the enclave: it was reported that as early as three weeks before the dramatic fall, the US government was already informed of the details. Washington, it was said, did not want to share this prior knowledge of the attack with the UN. As already discussed in the previous chapter, spy aircraft and satellites reportedly photographed the fleet of dozens of buses that were to be used to transport the Displaced Persons after the fall of Srebrenica. In the process, journalists wrote, they could hardly have overlooked the tanks and artillery pieces at Zeleni Jadar.<sup>1723</sup>

<sup>1720</sup> Roy Gutman, 'UN's Deadly Deal', *Newsday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>1721</sup> Howard and Paret (ed), *Clausewitz von, Carl: On War*, p.117.

<sup>1722</sup> 'Alarm Karremans over enclave werd genegeerd' (Karremans' alarm for the enclave was ignored), *De Volkskrant*, 12/07/00. Also the VPRO radio programme *Argos*, Radio 1, 11.00-12.00, 02/07/01. In fact, in Chapter 5 of Part III of the Srebrenica report it was proven that Voorhoeve was indeed informed.

<sup>1723</sup> 'VS wisten al weken tevoren van val Srebrenica' (US knew about Srebrenica weeks in advance), *De Gelderlander*, 13/10/95; Bert Steinmetz, 'Voorhoeve door VS fout ingelicht' (Voorhoeve wrongly informed by US), *Het Parool*, 15/05/96; Westerman & Rijs, *Het Zwartste Scenario*, pp. 149-150.

Speculation was rife not only in the press. This question was also put to Akashi by New York. On the day of the fall of Srebrenica Annan declared that the situation raised serious and urgent questions for UNPROFOR:

‘How was it that UNPROFOR was taken unaware again, as with Gorazde and Bihac last year, by the true extent of Serb intentions? What intelligence resources do you [Akashi] have and what information, if any, was provided to UNPROFOR by those troop-contributing nations with intelligence-gathering assets in the area?’

Annan continued: ‘I find it difficult to accept that no “early warning” was possible when the evidence suggests that a major build-up of troops and heavy weapons by the VRS occurred prior to the offensive’.<sup>1724</sup> It was to prove no easy matter to answer this.

The central question in this chapter is whether intelligence and security services or other directly involved parties had prior knowledge of the VRS plans for the attack on Srebrenica, or in other words whether they were forewarned. Were there intelligence indications before the attack that the VRS planned to reduce the enclave in size or possible to conquer it entirely? And if these indications were received in time, who gathered or withheld this dramatic information, and why?

The answer is to be found in the intelligence situation of various intelligence and security services on the eve of the fall. In the process, a distinction must be drawn between ‘strategic’ and ‘tactical’ prior knowledge, or forewarning. Strategic prior knowledge relates to the patterns of expectation extending over a long period. This knowledge existed in plenty, because the Bosnian Serbs had often declared that they would one day take over the enclaves. Various officials of one European intelligence service thus expected that the eastern enclaves would be conquered sooner or later, and they were not surprised when this finally happened.<sup>1725</sup> A memorandum from the MIS/Army written in June 1995 predicted that the tension around the eastern enclaves would continue unabated, and would increase even further if the smuggling of weapons and ammunition from Zepa to Srebrenica were to continue. An attack on the enclave was not expected, but attempts to create better lines of communication were forecast.<sup>1726</sup> But as a member of the MIS/Army declared after the fall: such strategic indications offer little or no practical insight. The core of intelligence work is formed by tactical indications, such as troop concentrations, tanks, trucks and new trenches.<sup>1727</sup>

If these tactical indications were not noted, then the attack on Srebrenica should indeed be regarded as an ‘intelligence failure’. Section 2 first provides a description of this term. The primary causes of such a failure are described; this may relate to a lack of intelligence, or to a failure to correctly interpret, or to evaluate in time, the intelligence which did exist.

Section 3 then examines strategic prior knowledge. The issue here is whether it was expected that the Srebrenica enclave would disappear in the long term, either as a result of political negotiations or through an attack. Section 4 deals with intelligence aspects of the actual course of the attack on the enclave.<sup>1728</sup> Section 5 turns to the information situation of UNPROFOR, and looks at the tactical prior knowledge in more detail. The question asked here is whether any prior knowledge based on hard indications really existed. This involves an examination of the Signals Intelligence (Sigint), Imagery Intelligence (Imint) and Human Intelligence (Humint) gathered by the various national intelligence services. An important question is whether this information was shared with the UN or the troop-contributing nations. Then the various parties in the enclave are dealt with, such as Dutchbat, the JCOs, UNHCR, NGOs and the ABiH. The Sigint capabilities of the ABiH are analysed. If these players

<sup>1724</sup> Confidential collection (7); Annan to Akashi, ‘situation in Srebrenica’, No. 2280, 11/07/95.

<sup>1725</sup> Confidential interview (48).

<sup>1726</sup> MoD, *SMG*, IntSum MIS/Army, Department I&V, 010609-070695, 07/06/95.

<sup>1727</sup> MoD, *SMG*, Report of a conversation with an Military Intelligence Service official, 03/08/95.

<sup>1728</sup> The attack itself is described in detail in Chapter 6 of Part III of the main Srebrenica report.

gathered intelligence, then it must be asked what elements of this arrived at UNPROFOR's headquarters in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Zagreb, and the UN, New York.

This analysis of the tactical prior information that was available with regard to the preparations for the attack is concluded in Section 6 with a review of the information present in the Netherlands at various levels. A description will be given of what information was received by NATO and what the information situation of the Dutch MIS was. Section 7 then takes a closer look at the information situation of the foreign intelligence services. This chapter ends with conclusions in Section 8 about the available prior knowledge regarding the Bosnian Serb attack. An answer is then given to the question: was this operation expected or did it come 'out of the blue'?

## 2. An intelligence failure?

Many publications describe the attack on Srebrenica as an intelligence failure. In the words of the author Metselaar: 'Increasingly, the attack tended to be seen as a tragic consequence of a combination of failures in intelligence estimates, of failing anticipation, or, perhaps even worse, as a cynical chess game in international "Realpolitik".'<sup>1729</sup> Military and political policymakers within UNPROFOR and NATO are said not to have received indications and warnings in time.

A warning can be associated with four possible aspects:

1. Hit: a warning is given and the event takes place;
2. Miss: no warning is given and the event still takes place;
3. False Alarm: a warning is given and the event does not take place;
4. Correct Rejection: no warning is given and the event does not take place either.

Whether a warning is correct or not depends on the actions of the recipient of the warning and of those who plan to take action. If the recipient makes the right analysis and takes action then he will try to reduce the future uncertainties.<sup>1730</sup> If warnings were received about the attack on Srebrenica, then the next question is whether these warnings were correctly identified and taken seriously by the recipient (e.g. UNPROFOR or others), whether no warning at all was given, or whether this came too late, or whether it was taken seriously enough.<sup>1731</sup>

A warning may not be effective for a number of reasons. One reason may be that there is a lack of information about the capabilities of the opponent. This does not seem to have been the case however: UNPROFOR had a reasonably reliable picture of the capabilities and the order of battle of the VRS. But it was harder to gain good insights into the short-term and long-term aims of the VRS. Mladic and Karadzic had, after all, often announced that the eastern enclaves would be reduced or conquered; this was nothing new. The more important question was *when* this would happen.

In fact, in the spring of 1995 there were continual rumours that an attack was going to take place. Both UNPROFOR and the US government were regularly warned by the Bosnian Muslims that a VRS attack was about to begin. But each time this proved to be a false alarm. This could easily create a 'Cry Wolf' mechanism: the more often a false alarm was sounded, the less credibility was attached to a following warning.<sup>1732</sup> One particular CIA report concluded that this mechanism did indeed affect UNPROFOR. There were indications of the attack, such as the flow of reinforcements, but the authors of this report themselves noted: 'similar troop movements had been recorded around the enclave

<sup>1729</sup> M.V. Metselaar, 'Understanding Failures in Intelligence Estimates - Unprofor, the Dutch, and the Bosnian-Serb Attack on Srebrenica', *Netherlands Annual Review of Military Studies. The Bosnian Experience*, 1997, p.25.

<sup>1730</sup> Arie Ofri, 'Crisis and Opportunity Forecasting', *ORBIS*, Vol. 26 (1983) 4, pp. 822-827.

<sup>1731</sup> R.K. Betts, 'Intelligence Warnings: Old Problems, New Agendas', *Parameters*, Spring 1998, pp. 26-35.

<sup>1732</sup> Handel, *Diplomacy*, pp. 478-479. In the Netherlands this is referred to as the 'Major Sas Syndrome'. Sas was the Dutch military attaché in Berlin who since November 1939 had repeatedly warned of a German attack that always failed to materialize. In the end he was no longer believed, after which the attack then came. See: De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*, pp. 117-143.

dozens of times in the past, and the VRS was constantly adjusting its forces all across Bosnia. There was no special indicator, which would particularly distinguish these reports among hundreds of reports over the months and across the country.<sup>1733</sup>

Another aspect of the Cry Wolf mechanism is that the credibility of the messenger starts to be doubted.<sup>1734</sup> Toby Gati, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Intelligence and Research, made an interesting observation about this: '[The Bosnians] wanted us in more (...). Do you know how many times we heard this? They were getting bombed out. Which one do you respond to? The times they cried wolf in one month - the problem is, they were crying about a real wolf.'<sup>1735</sup>

Intelligence and security services are well aware of the Cry Wolf mechanism. The credibility of policymakers is also affected if reports sound the alarm too often. As a consequence the services generally wait to see which way the wind is blowing in an attempt to gather extra information on the nature of the threat. But this often leads to a new problem: services tend to gather as much information as possible for fear of missing something. This can often result in the information flow becoming 'uncontrollable in the search for eventual certainty as a basis for decisions and the essential information will be obscured by "noise"'.<sup>1736</sup>

Metselaar, drawing on the work of the late Handel, who published a great deal about surprise attacks, wrote that the stream of information is sometimes filtered by 'noise barriers', such as the enemy and the international environment. Mladic had already declared several times that he wanted better control of the route to the bauxite mine at the southern tip of the enclave, and therefore wanted the relocation of a Dutch observation post, OP-E in this specific area.<sup>1737</sup> However, he left open how and when he planned to do this. Plans that are continually and frequently changed at the last moment also form a filter. As Metselaar comments 'Obviously, what an aggressor does not yet know himself can hardly be expected to be determined by one's own intelligence sources. Even the enemy's military and political elite itself is often, until the last moment, not completely certain about many of these elements'.<sup>1738</sup>

The international environment can also function as a noise barrier, because the attention of the political and military policymakers, such as Janvier, Akashi and R. Smith, was directed at issues of a more strategic nature and not at the eastern enclaves. This is revealed by Janvier's remark on Operation By-Pass. The general recognized on 8 July, when the attack on Srebrenica had already begun, that the situation in Sarajevo was certainly not the only problem in Bosnia requiring a solution, but 'the focus of attention is such that we must deal with Sarajevo first'.<sup>1739</sup> This indicates that the attention in Zagreb and Sarajevo was directed towards other, more strategic issues.

Finally, the aspect of self-generated noise can also play an important role. This happens when policymakers are not able to adjust their expectations about the intentions and capabilities of a party on the basis of reality.<sup>1740</sup> This is also known as the 'sheer nerve scenario': the VRS would never have the 'nerve' to conduct an attack on the enclave. On 7 July, for instance, Karremans thought that the VRS attack was an attempt to provoke and intimidate the ABiH.<sup>1741</sup> Analysts in the US intelligence community did not suppose either that Mladic was aiming for the entire enclave: after all, what would he do with so many Displaced Persons?<sup>1742</sup>

Indeed, even on 10 and 11 July the true intentions of the VRS were not believed; not only in Dutchbat, but also in Zagreb, Sarajevo and The Hague. It did not fit the pattern of expectations that

<sup>1733</sup> Confidential information (57).

<sup>1734</sup> Michael Handel, 'The Study of Intelligence', *ORBIS*, Vol. 26 (1983) 4, p. 819.

<sup>1735</sup> Roy Gutman, 'UN's Deadly Deal', *Newsday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>1736</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 34.

<sup>1737</sup> See also Chapter 6 of Part II of the main Srebrenica report at: [www.srebrenica.nl](http://www.srebrenica.nl)

<sup>1738</sup> M.V. Metselaar, 'Understanding Failures in Intelligence Estimates', p. 37.

<sup>1739</sup> Confidential collection (7); Janvier to Akashi and Smith, Z-1129, 11/07/95.

<sup>1740</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>1741</sup> M.V. Metselaar, 'Understanding Failures in Intelligence Estimates', pp. 39-40. See also: *Debriefing Report*, p. 23.

<sup>1742</sup> Confidential interview (7).

the VRS attack should aim to take over the entire enclave. This aspect of self-generated noise was, according to Metselaar, actually the logical consequence of the fact that Dutchbat had been a 'hostage' of the VRS for a longer period. The Serbs had always been in a position to take over the enclave; why should that suddenly happen now? Both UNPROFOR and The Hague assumed that the VRS 'would not dare to go to such brutality and thereby provoke the whole international community'. It was viewed as totally inconceivable that Mladic would in fact do precisely this.

The policymakers clung to belief systems: a cohesive collection of views, convictions and values that have adopted an influential position in one's thinking. These belief systems form a filter in the perception of reality and the corresponding statements one makes. Here, reality is not determined by the actual situation but by the picture that those involved have formed of it. They try for as long as possible to perceive their surroundings in the most cohesive way possible and to avoid certain contradictions. Many tend to avoid what is known as 'cognitive dissonance' (the tension between new information and established ways of thinking).<sup>1743</sup> A study of the operations in Somalia, for instance, showed that important 'intelligence indicators were not assessed and analysed from first principles but were rather conveniently tailored to fit around what was wanted to be believed'.<sup>1744</sup>

Another aspect of self-generated noise is the exaggerated value assigned to air power. It was long assumed that this would prove a sufficient deterrent to the VRS. After the fall of Akashi's advisers stated: 'The magic of air power is gone.'<sup>1745</sup> Self-generated noise can also occur if the analyst 'allows his own cultural background to influence the result rather than the culture, ideology, society and logic of the country concerned, giving rise to the Mirror Image phenomenon'. This refers to the inability to understand that the opposing party would act differently to the way the analyst himself would act. Decision-makers often tend to report the events that confirm their predictions and 'ignore those that fail to conform'.<sup>1746</sup>

On the basis of the information available at the time, Metselaar concluded in 1997 that the way in which warnings of a VRS attack were handled can be regarded as an intelligence failure. At the same time he asks how great the failure was and to what extent it also explained the later tragic events. 'Could it be possible that the lack of capabilities and (probably even more importantly) the lack of willingness of (most if not all) members of the international community (at least until the end of July 1995) were more crucial?' In other words: would the result have been different if the indications and intelligence had been taken more seriously?<sup>1747</sup>

One important question is whether there were sufficient intelligence capabilities to perceive the preparations in time. It is often assumed that a surprise attack is able to take place because enemy preparations are not discovered early enough to sound the alarm. According to the author Brady, history shows that in many successful surprise attacks the attacked party had enough information to make an accurate prediction of the enemy's intentions. The problem was that the signals were ignored or interpreted wrongly.<sup>1748</sup> Preventing a surprise attack is 'not simply a problem of detection, but very much a problem of assessment and acceptance'. The Argentinean attack on the Falkland Islands can serve as an example. Despite many warnings, the British government did not believe that Argentina would attack the islands. In turn, the Argentineans did not believe either that the United Kingdom would take the trouble to regain the territory.<sup>1749</sup>

Previous chapters have described the resources and capabilities deployed by the international intelligence and security services in Bosnia. Attention has been given to the resources at the disposal of

<sup>1743</sup> Van Staden, *De fuik*, p. 10.

<sup>1744</sup> Connaughton, *Military Intervention*, p. 127.

<sup>1745</sup> UNNY, *ICFY, SRSG*, Mark Baskin to Akashi, 'How is the Fall of Srebrenica a Turning point for the Mission', 14/07/95.

<sup>1746</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, p. 37 and 41.

<sup>1747</sup> Metselaar, 'Understanding Failures in Intelligence', p. 46.

<sup>1748</sup> Christopher Brady, 'Intelligence Failures: Plus Ça Change ...', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 8 (1993) 4, p. 86.

<sup>1749</sup> Gordon H. McCormick, 'surprise, Perceptions, and Military Style', *Orbis*, Vol. 26 (1983) 4, pp. 836-837.

the ABiH. The question to be examined now is what intelligence services or the ABiH were able to discover and report about the military preparations of the VRS. Did they provide indications in time, and if so, how were these evaluated and interpreted, and finally: what was done with this intelligence?

### 3. Strategic prior knowledge

Ever since the establishment of the Safe Areas there had been discussions – albeit quiet ones – in the international political arena, about the inevitability of giving up the enclaves. This could take place through forced or voluntary surrender or through an exchange of the Safe Areas for other territory. Robert Hayden reported for instance that staff of the State Department had told him at the start of 1994 that they were convinced that Srebrenica would no longer be under Muslim control at the end of the war, but that they ‘were unwilling for moral reasons to urge the Muslims to cede the town’.<sup>1750</sup> The author Sadkovich pointed out that US negotiator Charles Redman travelled to Pale at the end of 1994 with a proposal that the eastern enclaves be exchanged for territory around Sarajevo.<sup>1751</sup> Indeed, during international consultations Redman had indeed considered the option of exchanging Srebrenica and Zepa for territory around Sarajevo. At the same time, however, he thought that public opinion and the Clinton government would block this proposal.<sup>1752</sup> But even before this, the matter had been discussed within the Bosnian government.

It was clear that the abandonment of the enclaves had been the subject of discussion in diplomatic circles for some time, because it was generally acknowledged that they were not viable. A senior German diplomat confirmed that Redman was aiming for ‘an exchange of territories. However, Bosnia had to agree. Sarajevo always maintained mixed feelings about the enclaves as a bargaining chip.’ The Bosnian Serb side showed interest too, as revealed by all sorts of direct bilateral contacts. Karadzic regularly bombarded Bonn with all sorts of secret letters and memos in this respect.<sup>1753</sup> Members of the US intelligence community confirmed that in Pale there were advocates of the plans for the exchange of territories.<sup>1754</sup> The existence of mixed feelings in Sarajevo was confirmed by a member of the State Department. The body language of the Bosnian representatives showed that some of these too were in favour of ‘swapping away the enclaves’: this issue created tensions within the Bosnian government.<sup>1755</sup> All things considered, there was thus some willingness among the warring factions to exchange the enclaves for other territory.

From the military perspective too it was assumed that the enclaves had little chance of survival in the long term. In a secret memorandum to the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff in the autumn of 1994, the Canadian Major General Ray Crabbe, at the time Deputy Force Commander of UNPROFOR, reported that UNPROFOR staff in Zagreb had ‘a very uneasy feeling regarding the situation in the eastern enclaves’ and regarding ‘the potential vulnerability of the enclaves to military action by the BSA [VRS]’. This latter possibility should not be ruled out, according to Crabbe.<sup>1756</sup> He did not fear an imminent attack, but in the long term the situation could only get worse. A briefing at the Ministry of Defence in December 1994 also stated the expectation that ‘in the long term, the enclave will fall to the Bosnian Serbs’. But the aim of the VRS was not, it was thought, the conquest of Srebrenica, because it had no military significance and a conquest would provoke a serious international response. Srebrenica would fall because of the intolerable humanitarian and socio-economic situation there.<sup>1757</sup>

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<sup>1750</sup> Robert M. Hayden, ‘Reply’, *Slavic Review*, Vol. 55 (1996) 4, p. 777.

<sup>1751</sup> Sadkovich, *Media*, p. 216.

<sup>1752</sup> Honig & Both, *Srebrenica*, p. 163.

<sup>1753</sup> Confidential interview (53).

<sup>1754</sup> Confidential interviews (7).

<sup>1755</sup> Confidential interview (3).

<sup>1756</sup> Confidential information (58).

<sup>1757</sup> MoD, CRST. G-2 Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff to Military Intelligence Service/CO, 07/12/94.

In January 1995 a European intelligence service also concluded that the VRS could have taken the enclave long before; Pale probably had political reasons for not launching an attack. An important factor in all considerations was what would happen to all the refugees. Moreover the VRS saw advantages in the current situation too, according to this source, because UNPROFOR soldiers were hostages in the enclave. The VRS could make excellent use of this in both the political and military arenas. It was thus expected that no attack would take place in the short term.<sup>1758</sup>

But in February 1995 the British Lieutenant Colonel C.A. Le Hardy of Sector North East (SNE) in Tuzla concluded that 'srebrenica has to be dealt with before the situation further deteriorates'. He warned that the Security Council resolutions on Safe Areas provided no guarantee whatsoever of stability in or around the enclave.<sup>1759</sup> Analysts in Western intelligence agencies thought that the VRS would take action before, during or after the summer and that this could well mean the end of the eastern enclaves. Mladic and Karadzic wanted to end the war; the VRS and above all the Drina Corps was approaching the end of their resources and the VRS was simply no longer able to bring the war to a positive conclusion in any other way. So sooner or later the VRS would have to get rid of the enclaves.<sup>1760</sup> Since early 1995 US intelligence analysts had also been expecting the offensive as part of a VRS campaign 'to finish up the eastern enclaves this summer'.<sup>1761</sup>

The analysis of a European intelligence service reflects this sombre view of the future of the eastern enclaves. In a report dating from May 1995 it was claimed that one of the VRS goals was to exert maximum control over Eastern Bosnia. The most extreme variant of this scenario was the annexation of the enclaves. According to this analysis, the operational goal of the ABiH was to secure the links between Zepa and Srebrenica. An intelligence report of June 1995 said that Karadzic believed he could achieve the following goals through escalation: breaking through the isolation; re-establishing his own internal political position; extending the war and demonstrating to Milosevic that the latter could not make an agreement without including Pale. And it was noted that Karadzic could not afford a further escalation of the war. The only possible success could be achieved in the eastern enclaves.<sup>1762</sup> The same opinion was put forward during a briefing for the NATO council.<sup>1763</sup>

After the event too it transpired that UNPROFOR had viewed the eastern enclaves as untenable. In an interview General Smith admitted that Srebrenica would fall sooner or later. He received the first confirmed intelligence during his first meeting with Mladic in Vlasenica on 7 March 1995, when the latter declared that the eastern enclaves were definitely in his way; Mladic wanted to get rid of the Safe Areas. In Smith's estimation, from that time on the VRS strategy was aimed at freeing troops and resources, because Zepa, Srebrenica and Gorazde caused a constant drain that Mladic could not afford.<sup>1764</sup> The Military Assistant to General Smith, Lieutenant Colonel Baxter, later added that during this visit Mladic showed a map on which one could clearly see that the size of the enclave had been reduced.<sup>1765</sup>

Smith's view was confirmed by an American official. In early 1995 general Smith had told the US ambassador in Sarajevo: 'If I were Mladic, I would take the enclaves.' The ambassador and Smith were good friends and the American visited Smith or Baxter at least once a week. This was not a forecast, but a rational calculation.<sup>1766</sup> Smith himself wrote in a Situation Report in April 1995 that Mladic had a choice: either to concentrate his troops on the western front (the Krajina and Bihac) or on the eastern front. Fuel shortages, the proximity to Serbia and the possible strategic plans for Sarajevo

<sup>1758</sup> Confidential information (59).

<sup>1759</sup> Simms, *Unfinest Hour*, p. 316.

<sup>1760</sup> Confidential information (60)

<sup>1761</sup> R.J. Smith, 'Bosnian Forces Capturing Territory From Serbs, Intelligence Indicates', *Washington Post*, 21/07/95.

<sup>1762</sup> Confidential information (61).

<sup>1763</sup> NMFA, PVNATO. PVNATO to Foreign Affairs, No. brni665/8434, 04/05/95.

<sup>1764</sup> Interview with R.A. Smith, 12/01/00.

<sup>1765</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00 and NIOD, *Coll. Westerman*. Notes from a conversation with Lt. Coll. Jim Baxter, 03/05/96.

<sup>1766</sup> Confidential interview (3).

'lead me to think that his main effort will be in the east. In order to achieve a sufficient concentration of force, he will probably have to neutralize one or all of the Eastern enclaves.' His intelligence staff shared this opinion.<sup>1767</sup> One of Smith's intelligence officers, the American Brian Powers, later concluded that Mladic would probably take over the enclaves in June. A source in the Serb general's staff is said to have confirmed this.<sup>1768</sup> An officer who analysed the intelligence for Smith later told Roy Gutman: 'We felt it would occur by June.'<sup>1769</sup>

At the meeting with Akashi and Janvier in Split at the start of June 1995<sup>1770</sup>, Smith declared that he was convinced that the VRS would continue to challenge the international community to show that the Serbs would not submit to control. In his opinion this could lead to an intensification of the siege of Sarajevo, or in the long term an attack on the eastern enclaves. He said that UNPROFOR would have great difficulty in finding a suitable response to this crisis, with the exception of air strikes. Smith reportedly stood alone with this sombre analysis; the French intelligence community attached little credit to this view. General Clark at the Pentagon did not believe either that an attack would take place.<sup>1771</sup>

Early in the year the intelligence section in Sarajevo pointed out, with regard to the capabilities of the VRS for conducting offensive operations, that the VRS response to the ABiH offensives had not yet materialized. In previous cases this response had been relatively swift, with the use of heavy equipment and troops. Possible reasons cited for this phenomenon were: problems with logistics and supplies, lack of infantry, dissatisfaction among the officers and NCOs about the course of the war, long preparation periods needed to carry out military operations, internal disputes within the political leadership in Pale and finally the possibility that the Bosnian Serbs had not closed all their doors on a peace agreement. Every major operation aimed at the enclaves would exclude the possibility of an international settlement. The VRS counteractions would thus not be aimed at the enclave, but at other areas. The goal was thus to lure ABiH troops out of other areas and thereby to force the Muslims onto the defensive.<sup>1772</sup>

In 1995 a discussion on the possible abandonment of the enclaves also began within the UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). The fact that this option was discussed was typical of the mood at that time. According to the Assistant Secretary-General for Planning and Support, the German General Manfred Eisele, the idea of letting the enclaves go originated with Smith and Janvier. The Security Council opposed this, however, because agreement to the proposal would be an admission that the Safe Area concept devised by the Council had failed. Moreover, most of the Security Council members generally took their lead from the United States and the US felt that the eastern enclaves should be maintained.<sup>1773</sup>

At the end of May tension in Bosnia increased. The NATO bombardments near Pale on 25 and 26 May, following by the taking hostage of UN personnel, had a strong influence on the situation. The Bosnian Serbs not only took UN personnel hostage, but also threatened observations posts around the eastern enclaves. This happened around Gorazde and Zepa, but Dutchbat was to encounter problems too.

The question is whether the threat to the enclaves increased at the start of June 1995, following intensification of the hostage crisis when western countries announced their plans for troop reinforcements in the form of a Rapid Reaction Force. An analysis by the intelligence staff in Zagreb

<sup>1767</sup> Confidential collection (7), BHC Situation Report by General Smith, No. 8800 Confidential, 05/04/95, and BHC G-2 Assessment, 05/04/95.

<sup>1768</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Westerman*. Interview Cable Bruce with Brian Powers, undated.

<sup>1769</sup> Roy Gutman, 'UN's Deadly Deal', *Newsday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>1770</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Banbury*. SRSG's Meeting in Split, 09/06/95; See also Chapter 1 of Part III.

<sup>1771</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

<sup>1772</sup> Confidential collection (4). Memorandum *VRS – Ability to conduct offensive operations* from Capt. Wallace to COS, Zagreb, 11/04/95.

<sup>1773</sup> Interview with Manfred Eisele, 14/10/99.



stated that the deployment of the Rapid Reaction Force could have serious implications. Although it was not intended for deployment in the enclaves, the VRS could well view the Rapid Reaction Force as a renewed threat and as additional proof of support for the Bosnian government.<sup>1774</sup> The VRS could take retaliatory measures against UNPROFOR, including direct attacks on troops and installations. It would also become more difficult to move reinforcements to the enclaves. Sarajevo would initially welcome these developments, but the reaction would be negative if the new troops were intended to assist the withdrawal of UNPROFOR from the enclaves.<sup>1775</sup>

Smith remained gloomy about the long-term prospects. In an analysis issued on 6 June he concluded that the VRS 'wants a conclusion this year'. In his opinion the ABiH had no interest in a ceasefire; moreover UNPROFOR was no longer seen as a peacekeeping force. The VRS wanted to neutralize UNPROFOR; as said, the troops in the enclaves were actually hostages. Moreover, Close Air Support would in the future be 'of doubtful value except as a measure of last resort and once potential hostages have been removed to safety'.<sup>1776</sup>

The low-level effect of Close Air Support was also revealed by a conversation held on 2 June in Naples between the British Foreign Minister, Douglas Hurd, and the NATO Admiral Leighton Smith, who gave a detailed account of the problems in the relationship between the UN and NATO. Admiral Smith saw no political goals in Bosnia that could still be achieved in the long term. The existing mandate was mainly responsive in nature; consequently there was no realistic military goal. Admiral Smith was satisfied with the air operations; he had 216 aircraft at his disposal. But, emphasized Smith, 'it was impossible to win the battle with the Serbs by air power alone'. Hurd then asked if it was a myth that the enclaves could be defended and protected from the air. Admiral Smith's answer to this was: 'absolutely'. Most attacks were carried out with mortars, which were often transported by two men; these could be set up and dismantled within a few minutes and then be concealed in barns or houses. Close Air Support could do nothing against this type of operation.<sup>1777</sup>

Despite this General Smith did not expect any operations by the VRS in Sarajevo in view of the political implications, negative publicity and lack of infantry. The VRS tactics boiled down to increasing pressure 'to degrade and deplete the ABiH to the point of capitulation'. Mladic was convinced that this method of slow strangulation would not provoke any response from NATO, and thus the VRS would continue to attack military targets in and around the enclaves. He expected that the ABiH would slowly lose much of its territory around the eastern enclaves and would gradually run out of ammunition. This would force the ABiH to withdraw for its own safety into more populated areas among the large numbers of Displaced Persons. The ABiH would try to use UNPROFOR as a shield and this in turn could provoke a VRS response against UNPROFOR.<sup>1778</sup>

Following the fall of OP-E the intelligence section of Unprofor in Zagreb drew up an 'Eastern Enclaves Assessment' which predicted that the VRS would try to gain a stronger hold on the activities of the ABiH in the enclave. Although it was not expected that the VRS would attack the enclave, one could expect operations intended to force the ABiH further away from the most important communications links to the north and south of the enclave. Since the ABiH was not in a position to take effective countermeasures, the intelligence cell predicted that the VRS operation would progress slowly and methodically so as to minimize the number of casualties in its own ranks. The intelligence officer was convinced: 'The VRS is not expected to seize the Safe Area, preferring to leave the refugee problem to the local ABiH authorities to solve.' This analysis was partly based on the previously mentioned report and estimate by Karremans.<sup>1779</sup>

<sup>1774</sup> United Nations, *Srebrenica Report*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>1775</sup> Confidential collection (4). Memorandum *Warring factions' responses to UN 'reinforced' peacekeeping* from Capt. R. Theunens to COS, Zagreb, 02/06/95.

<sup>1776</sup> Confidential collection (4). Memorandum *Unprofor reinforcements* from General Smith, No. 8190, 06/06/95.

<sup>1777</sup> Confidential information (62).

<sup>1778</sup> Confidential collection (4). Memorandum *Eastern Enclaves Operations - Assessment* by General Smith, No. 8940, 06/06/95.

<sup>1779</sup> Confidential collection (4). *Eastern Enclaves Assessment*, Annex A to Unprofor 800, 06/05/95.

On 9 June the intelligence staff in Zagreb produced the analysis entitled 'Intentions of the Warring Factions in the Eastern Enclaves'. The VRS, it was thought, would maintain its strategy of keeping a firm hold on the enclaves. This could lead to a further deterioration of the living conditions and possibly to civil unrest. Augmented by military pressure, in the long term this could lead to the capitulation of the ABiH. The VRS did not need to make any extra efforts to achieve this. 'Consequently, large-scale offensive operations of the VRS to eliminate the enclaves are not likely.' The intelligence officer expected that the ABiH would continue with small-scale sorties and ambushes, to which the VRS would respond with heavy weapons. The ABiH would continue to try to involve UNPROFOR or NATO in the conflict. 'sudden abandoning of positions along the confrontation line or (unconfirmed) alarming reports from Bosnian side on the situation in the enclaves, will be indicators for this.' In conclusion, the intelligence staff assessed the intentions of the VRS as follows: 'Large scale operations (assessed to be very unlikely), would only serve psychological aims'. In the short term the VRS would continue to pressurize Dutchbat to withdraw from certain OPs. Once this succeeded, the VRS would then try to reduce the size of the enclave in order to secure the communications links and access routes. A major military operation to eliminate Srebrenica was considered unlikely.<sup>1780</sup>

On 29 June General Smith indicated that he was uneasy. If the ABiH continued its offensive elsewhere in Bosnia, then: 'we can expect the VRS to counter attack at some stage'. He then wrote: 'I am particularly sensitive to the situation of the units in Sarajevo and the Eastern Enclaves who for no fault of their own are without clear direction.'<sup>1781</sup> This expectation was of a more strategic nature, however, because Smith did not indicate where he expected a VRS operation and at what time. This sombre view of Smith's was reproduced a year later in an article in *Newsday*. Smith's intelligence cell had predicted that a 'major push' directed at the three enclaves would take place sometime around the summer.<sup>1782</sup> This is in line with the accounts given to the journalists Charles Lane and Thom Shanker by the CIA staff. In early 1995 the CIA had reportedly had 'bad indications'.<sup>1783</sup> It was not specified what these were.

The ABiH high command also had little hope that the enclaves could survive in the long term. The great weakness of the Safe Area concept was that the fear of attack continued: the Areas were not safe. In 1998 Minister Muratovic declared that Srebrenica had not been defensible.<sup>1784</sup> It was estimated that the main obstacle for the VRS would be the refugees; in the logistical sense this was bound to present a major problem. The general expectation was, as often said, that the VRS would never want to take the entire enclave, and was only interested in its southern tip. According to the Commander in Chief of the ABiH, General Rasim Delic, this was a flawed estimate. He later said that he had seen omens of the coming events:

'I was not 100% sure about what was going to happen, but I had my fears, partly because of the bilateral contacts with Akashi. But all we could do was to tell the population of Srebrenica to be on their guard (...) We tried to alert the international community, we didn't stand around with our arms folded, event though our hands were tied'.<sup>1785</sup>

However, Delic never expressed this fear directly to General Rupert Smith in 1995.<sup>1786</sup>

<sup>1780</sup> Confidential collection (4) Memorandum *Intentions of the Warring Factions in the Eastern Enclaves*, from G-2 drafter R. Theunens for COS, UNPF HQ, 09/06/95.

<sup>1781</sup> Confidential collection (7). General Smith to FC, 'Commander HQ Unprofor Directive 3/95', 29/06/95.

<sup>1782</sup> Roy Gutman, 'UN's Deadly Deal', *Newsday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>1783</sup> Charles Lane and Thom Shanker, 'Bosnia: What the CIA Didn't Tell Us', *The New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96.

<sup>1784</sup> Interview with Hasan Muratovic, 30/01/98.

<sup>1785</sup> Interview with Rasim Delic, 21/04/98.

<sup>1786</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

The Military Intelligence Service of the Central Organization of the Ministry of Defence (MIS/CO) made a negative estimate of the long-term viability of the enclave right from the start. Since the creation of the Safe Areas, the MIS/CO had consistently pointed to the risk inherent for UNPROFOR. The strength of UNPROFOR was not sufficient to be able to successfully defend the existing positions. This was indeed not the aim, because the mandate stated that attacks or aggression should primarily be deterred by the presence of the UN troops.

From the moment that Dutchbat arrived, the VRS was in a position to take the enclave. The question was not *whether* the VRS was able to do this, but whether and when the VRS *wanted* to do it. The MIS/CO did not expect, however, that a potential offensive would go further than occupation of the south-eastern corner of the enclave, which was of tactical relevance to the VRS.<sup>1787</sup> On 23 May Karadzic stated that the VRS would conquer the eastern enclaves and Sarajevo unless the ABiH was disarmed and withdrawn in these areas. The MIS/CO analysis was that he had primarily said this in order to direct international attention to the fact that the UN had not responded to the presence of Bosnian heavy weapons in towns and enclaves. MIS/CO also pointed to the recent sorties from these 'safe areas'.<sup>1788</sup> Karadzic's declaration on 23 May that the VRS was going to conquer the eastern enclaves was also by the Canadian diplomat Snider and the Canadian intelligence community not viewed as a threat. Only if Mladic were to say the same would it have been a real threat.<sup>1789</sup>

It was thus expected by many organizations and persons that in the long term the enclaves were not viable and would disappear. However, no major attack was expected. But strategic prior knowledge is not the same as tactical prior knowledge. The latter involves clear intelligence which makes it very clear that an attack is being prepared. Below it is examined whether this type of prior knowledge was present or not. This is done by reviewing the hard intelligence that was available at various levels. Were there tactical indications, such as military transports, troop concentrations and reports that provided mutual corroboration? Before answering these questions it is important firstly to give a brief reminder of how the actual attack took place<sup>1790</sup>, as this will provide a framework for answering the formulated questions.

#### 4. The attack on Srebrenica

On 3 June, OP-E at the southern tip of the enclave fell into the hands of the VRS. After this attack Dutchbat expected on 4 June that the VRS would continue the assault within 36 hours. The indirect declared objective of the VRS was to take the valley of the River Jadar and the mountains to the north of this up to Mount Kak: 'As a coincidence this line matches the southern border of the enclave as the VRS sees it.'<sup>1791</sup> In an assessment a day later Karremans reported that the VRS attitude had hardened and the *status quo* had disappeared. He feared that if UNPROFOR did not take any effective military countermeasures, the VRS would respond to this by trying to take the entire southern flank, which would make the situation of the population worse. Karremans did not consider the use of air strikes to be opportune either.<sup>1792</sup>

The situation remained threatening. On 8 June ABiH representatives requested an urgent meeting with Dutchbat. The deputy commander of the ABiH said that he expected a major attack. The VRS was concentrating around the enclave and special combat troops had been reported; these units were the same ones that had attacked OP-E. Zero Hour was expected to be the evening of 8 June or the morning of 9 June. Mladic was to personally lead the attack, which was intended to neutralize all

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<sup>1787</sup> NIOD, Memo from Military Intelligence Service to the NIOD, January 1998.

<sup>1788</sup> Military Intelligence Service/CO. Memorandum on Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation, No. 24/95, 23/05/95.

<sup>1789</sup> Interview with Dennis Snider, 17/11/99.

<sup>1790</sup> This is dealt with in detail in Chapters 5 and 6 of Part III of the main Srebrenica report.

<sup>1791</sup> MoD, DCBC, Box 4, HQ Dutchbat to CO SNE, T-068, 04/06/95.

<sup>1792</sup> MoD, CRST. No. DE00309, Karremans to C-KL Crisis Staff, TK9589, 05/06/95.

OPs. Karremans noted that this information should be regarded as reliable because it came from the same source that had announced the attack on OP-E. Nonetheless Karremans was not impressed by the situation. He concluded with: 'Reaction Dutchbat: continue task and, if necessary, defend the OPs.'<sup>1793</sup>

The intelligence report sent by the liaison officer of the 28th Division of the ABiH, Ekrim Salihovic, to the 2nd Corps in Tuzla was less alarming in its tone, like the reports from Karremans. This report did indicate that Dutchbat had been informed of details regarding the possible attack, but the reported activities of the VRS mostly related to the north-western section of the enclave. The VRS was engaged in intensive reconnaissance in Zalazje close to OP-R, but the ABiH had not seen this for itself in the area.<sup>1794</sup> Other ABiH officers were however of the opinion that the situation was alarming and that a VRS attack on the enclave was imminent. There was intensification of VRS propaganda, logistical support had been received from Serbia and the morale of the VRS was improving. These indications led Captain Nijaz Masic (responsible for the morale of the 28th Division) to conclude that the VRS definitely planned to conquer Eastern Bosnia.<sup>1795</sup>

In his book, Karremans mentioned that on 8 June the British Joint Commission Observers (the JCOs) who had been detailed to the battalion came to him with the suspicion that the VRS would attack all the enclaves within two weeks. Karremans also reported in his book that he had passed on reports from the JCOs and from the ABiH to the higher command,<sup>1796</sup> but the report that he sent to Tuzla, Sarajevo and The Hague in fact gave only the information that the ABiH had gathered about an attack, and not the suspicions of the JCOs.<sup>1797</sup>

Strangely enough this 'alarm letter' from Karremans was never passed on to the MIS/Army. Its Head at that time, Bokhoven, confirmed that in May and July 1995 Karremans had written two alarm letters to the Commander in Chief of the Army, for the attention of the minister. He had expected that a copy of these letters would be sent to the MIS/Army, but this never happened. As Head he knew nothing about the letters. If he had received copies; then the MIS/Army might have been able to make an analysis of the situation and his service might have been more alert. But he first heard about these two letters during the major debriefing operation in Assen.<sup>1798</sup>

The MIS/CO did however receive Karremans' reports and analysed the report deriving from the ABiH. The MIS/CO concluded that there were no indications of large-scale troop concentrations. On the other hand, this analysis concluded that the VRS around the enclave was strong enough to carry out a limited operation on the territory of the enclave and it did not seem unlikely that, just as in Gorazde, the VRS would try to gain control of parts of the enclave. The MIS/CO considered however that it was premature to view the limited operation against OP-E as the start of further operations. In Gorazde such warnings from the ABiH had reached UNPROFOR, but they seemed intended to prompt Dutchbat to abandon the observations posts so that the ABiH could take them over. It was conceivable that the Bosnian warnings on Srebrenica had the same goal. Another possibility considered by the MIS was that the ABiH warnings could be intended to place responsibility for any escalations with the VRS right from the start. The minister was properly informed of the matter.<sup>1799</sup>

The United Nations Military Observers, the UNMOs, had not expected the attack on OP-E either. The UNMOs had a very limited perspective in and around the enclave. This was later confirmed

<sup>1793</sup> MoD, *DCBC*, Box 4. HQ Dutchbat to CO SNE, 08/06/95. See also: MIS/CO. Memorandum to CDS; Re: Intelligence on attack on Srebrenica; Author: L. Col. Van Geldere; Annotation: Col. J. Mulder Head MIS/Army; 18/03/97.

<sup>1794</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*. ABiH Komanda 28. Divizije to Komanda 2. Korpusa, , Str. Pov. Br. 02-06-27/95, 08/08/95.

<sup>1795</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*. ABiH Komanda 28. Divizije to Komanda 2. Korpusa RBiH Odjeljenje morala, Str. Pov. Br. 04-93/95, 09/08/95.

<sup>1796</sup> Karremans, *Srebrenica*, p. 149.

<sup>1797</sup> MoD, *DCBC*, Colonel R. van Dam to the Minister, 09/06/95.

<sup>1798</sup> Interview with H. Bokhoven, 16/05/01.

<sup>1799</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*. Memorandum from Head of Operations (Col. R.S. van Dam) to the Minister, Junior Minister, CDS, PCDS and SCOCIS, 09/06/95, unnumbered. The press reports to the effect that the minister was not informed are thus incorrect. It is not clear if and how Karremans was informed of the findings of the MIS/CO.

by the Norwegian Brigadier General Haukland, Commander of SNE, who said that the UNMOs had a difficult time and knew no more than Dutchbat. They had no freedom of movement and the team was not able to travel through the region around Srebrenica.<sup>1800</sup> This is also clear from the reports made by the UNMOs and their later debriefing following their return from Srebrenica. A Dutch UNMO, Major A. de Haan, did however report that on 2 June rumours were circulating with regard to an attack on OP-E. A day later these rumours proved to be true. Their report showed that the attack on OP-E was evaluated by the UNMOs on 3 June as an operation aimed at gaining control of the southern road,<sup>1801</sup> and not taking over the enclave itself. Furthermore, the report portrayed things as not so serious. At that time neither the observers nor anyone in Dutchbat imagined that the Bosnian Serbs would take the entire enclave. It was however thought that the VRS might try to carve off pieces of the enclave.<sup>1802</sup>

The loss of OP-E was not experienced as a shock within SNE. Ken Biser, the head of Civil Affairs, stated in his weekly report of 9 June that this was not a surprise. It had long been known that the VRS wanted to use the southern road. If UNPROFOR was not prepared to permit this 'they might feel the need to take it by force'. In a summary Biser wrote that on the basis of the 'rhetoric of the past few days, I warned that they would seize it by force. I did not think they would do it prior to Sunday or Monday though.' Biser did however expect problems in the long term. Moreover, the Bosnian governor in Tuzla had urged that OP-E be regained 'without regard to civilian casualties from any subsequent shelling', as in the event of such a retaking the VRS would shell the enclave. In Biser's opinion the situation around the road would probably escalate, because the VRS was already using it. It would not be long before the ABiH started setting up ambushes. In turn the VRS would then take reprisals and shell the enclave, and would then proceed with 'seizure of additional territory'.<sup>1803</sup> However, things remained fairly quiet until the start of July.<sup>1804</sup>

The first sign that the VRS intended to do something around Srebrenica was the arrival of a group of staff officers of the Drina Corps in Eastern Bosnia at the end of June,<sup>1805</sup> led by the Chief of Staff of the Drina Corps (and after 13 July its commander), Major General Radislav Krstic. This marked the start of the planning for *Operation Krivaja '95*.<sup>1806</sup> On 2 July this led to the issue of an operations plan by the Drina Corps. The aim of *Krivaja '95* was to separate the enclaves of Zepa and Srebrenica, to reduce them to the built-up areas and to create the conditions for their 'elimination'. This goal was to be achieved with a surprise attack. Units around the enclave were ordered to conduct an active defence, while separate combat units were to reduce the enclaves. Full radio silence was to be observed so that no military traffic could be monitored.

The consulted Bosnian Serb sources claim that the continual ABiH sorties from the enclave were a major reason for this operation. The former Chief of the General Staff of the VRS and later Minister of Defence of the Republika Srpska, General Manojlo Milanovic, stated that the attack was a response to the sortie towards Visnjica, in the direction of the headquarters of the VRS in Han Pijesak. This attack resulted in many civilian casualties.<sup>1807</sup> The historian Milivoje Ivanisevic also believed that the attack on Srebrenica was caused by the ABiH sorties. In order to prevent a repetition the ABiH lines had to be taken.<sup>1808</sup> The journalist Zoran Jovanovic, at the time the information officer of the Drina Corps, confirmed when asked that the murder of the five VRS woodcutters close to Milici on 28 May and the sortie on 26 June near Visnjica, followed by an attack on a VRS signals patrol at Crna Rijeka (three kilometres from the headquarters of the Drina Corps) prompted Mladic to take definitive

<sup>1800</sup> Interview with H. Haukland, 03/05/99.

<sup>1801</sup> SMG. UNMO SNE to UNMO HQ, Sarajevo, No. IN 854, 03/06/95. The UNMO headquarters at BHC came to the same verdict. UNMO, BHC to UNMO, HQ Zagreb, No. IN. 891, 04/06/95.

<sup>1802</sup> Interview with L.C. van Duijn, 02/07/99.

<sup>1803</sup> UNGE, *UNPROFOR*, Box 55. Biser to Joseph, SSN 467, 05/06/95 and Biser to Corwin, SSN 209, 09/06/95.

<sup>1804</sup> How the VRS attacked is described in detail in Chapter 5 of Part III of the Srebrenica report.

<sup>1805</sup> This brief reconstruction draws on Part III (Chapters 5 and 6) of the Srebrenica report.

<sup>1806</sup> ICTY (IT-98-33) OTP Ex. 403/a, Butler Report, p. 6 and 15.

<sup>1807</sup> Interview with Manojlo Milovanovic, 18/11/98.

<sup>1808</sup> Interview with Milivoje Ivanisevic, 17/09/99.

action on the enclave.<sup>1809</sup> At the time there were varying accounts of the numbers of Serb dead resulting from ABiH attacks.

Another significant reason for the VRS general staff to start the operation was to release troops who were badly needed elsewhere. The troops were required around Sarajevo and elsewhere on the front line held by the Drina Corps.<sup>1810</sup> The NATO bombardment on Pale on 25 and 26 May also influenced the decision to attack the enclaves, according to the ABiH. The bombardments led to a further degradation of the military infrastructure and strengthened the support for a military solution to the crisis.<sup>1811</sup> Moreover, the morale of part of the VRS was low and a victory at Srebrenica could help to restore this.<sup>1812</sup> Possibly the strategy pursued by the Croats also influenced the decision to initiate the attack on Srebrenica. Releasing troops to resist the Croatian operations in the Krajina (which had started on 4 June 1995) could, according to ABiH Corps Commander Sead Delic, also have played a role.<sup>1813</sup> On the Bosnian side there were no further insights into the motivation for the VRS attack.

As regards the progress of the attack: it suffices to say here that the operational plan for *Krivaja '95* was developed in a very short period and that there was also little time for the preparations. Moreover, the aim of the operation was not the conquest of Srebrenica but to reduce the size of the enclave in order to cut the links with Zepa. It appears that UNPROFOR and the Bosnian Muslims had no knowledge of the VRS plans for this operation. Although Mladic once again pointed out to Janvier on 29 June that there were a large number of armed men in the enclaves who formed a threat to the VRS,<sup>1814</sup> there was little that pointed to preparations for an attack. At the start of July it was still fairly quiet in the enclave, despite an increase in battle incidents, which was however limited. The last situation report issued by Dutchbat on 5 July, hours before the start of the attack, reported that the general situation was assessed as calm and stable. No major changes were expected in the coming 24 hours.<sup>1815</sup>

On 5 July the 28th Division of the ABiH in Srebrenica reported to 2nd Corps in Tuzla that there were indications of a possible major offensive. The population had been observing troop movements for some time and reconnaissance had revealed that VRS units had arrived in the area around Zeleni Jadar in the afternoon of 5 July.<sup>1816</sup> It is striking that it was not until the morning of 6 July that the 28th Division reported that a large column of armoured and mechanized units was moving from the area around Zvornik towards Bratunac.<sup>1817</sup> The relocation of the VRS's heavy equipment, chiefly moved in from Zvornik, had not been noted by the ABiH and had also not been revealed by intercepts of radio traffic. This would have been the chief indication of an attack. It was pure coincidence that a passing convoy of the UN's refugee organization, UNHCR, noticed these convoys. Starting from the positions that had been taken up around the enclave on 5 July, the Bosnian Serbs were to conduct the final act in what was to become the drama of Srebrenica.

On 6 July the VRS started its attack on positions of Dutchbat and the ABiH at the southern edge of the enclave. Almost all efforts were aimed at this sector, which was in line with the primary goal to separate Srebrenica and Zepa. The VRS advance went so well that the evening of 9 July saw an important 'turning point' of which Dutchbat, UNPROFOR and the ABiH were not aware. The

<sup>1809</sup> Interview with Zoran Jovanovic, 13/09/99.

<sup>1810</sup> ICTY (IT-98-33) D 160/a, Radinovic Report, section 3.3.

<sup>1811</sup> Interview with Semsudin Murinovic, 17/05/99.

<sup>1812</sup> Interview with Sefko Tihic, 08/03/99.

<sup>1813</sup> Interview with S. Delic, 10/03/99.

<sup>1814</sup> UNNY, *DPKO coded cables*. Code Cable Janvier to Annan New York, No. UNPF Z-1082, 01/07/95.

<sup>1815</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Sitreps*, HQ Dutchbat to Sector HQ North-East, Sitrep for period 041700 to 051700B Jul 95.

<sup>1816</sup> ICTY (IT-98-33) OTP Ex. 403/a, 28th Division Combat Report, No. 01-161/95, 05/07/95. Butler Report, p. 17. In a report of 6 July as well, the 28th Division indicated that a strong concentration of tanks and artillery had been seen the previous day. See also: Collection NIOD, Collection CD-ROMs, Komanda 28. Divizije to Komanda 2. Korpusa, Str. pov. br. 01-163/95, 06/07/95.

<sup>1817</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*. ABiH 28. Divizije to Komanda 2. Korpusa, odjeljenje bezbjednosti, General Stab ARBiH Uprava bezbjednosti, Str. Pov. Broj. 13-05, 06/07/95.

Bosnian Serbs decided that they would no longer confine themselves to the southern part of the enclave, but would extend the operation and take the town of Srebrenica itself. Karadzic was informed that the results achieved now put the Drina Corps in a position to take the town; he had expressed his satisfaction with this and had agreed to a continuation of the operation to disarm the 'Muslim terrorist gangs' and to achieve a full demilitarization of the enclave. In this order, issued by Major General Zdravko Tolimir, it was also stated that Karadzic had determined that the safety of UNPROFOR soldiers and of the population should be ensured. Orders to this effect were to be provided to all participating units. The safety of the population should also be guaranteed in the event that they should attempt to cross to the territory of the Republika Srpska. The orders made no mention of a forced relocation of the population. The VRS units were to be ordered not to destroy any civilian property unless they met with resistance. Buildings were not to be set on fire. A final instruction, also of significance, was that the population and prisoners of war should be treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention.<sup>1818</sup> On 11 July all of Srebrenica fell into the hands of the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>1819</sup>

The conquest of Srebrenica was, according to some authors, 'not to be attributed to an unexpected decision taken by unpredictable Serb leaders at an unguarded moment; it was probably a carefully planned operation that had been prepared four months before the actual start of the attack'.<sup>1820</sup> This is incorrect. The plans for an attack on the enclave were actually drawn up at a very late stage and in a very short time; there was no months-long preparation. It was a question of days. Equally, it was not intended to occupy the enclave in its entirety. This decision was taken only on the evening of 9 July. This *ad hoc* decision was confirmed by a VRS soldier in an interview with the *Banja Luka Srpska Vojska*. He took part in the attack and was involved in the 'rectification' of the chaotic situation that arose later. According to him the Bosnian Serbs had not planned to take Srebrenica at all, but on 9 July the VRS had come so close to the enclave that it was decided to press on. This was due to the lack of any serious resistance by the ABiH.<sup>1821</sup>

The question of whether there was prior knowledge of the attack on the entire enclave is thus relevant only to 9 and 10 July; the issue of prior knowledge of the attack on the southern tip of the enclave, by contrast, must focus on the period from 2 to 6 July, because this is when preparations for the *Krivaja '95* plan were made. It needs to be established what information was gathered during this time and how this was interpreted by the UNPROFOR staff in Tuzla, Zagreb and Sarajevo. Following this, it will be examined whether documents of UNPROFOR, DPKO and official documents from private and government archives or conducted interviews cast light on the question as to whether there were relevant indications, and whether Western intelligence services passed on intelligence to the political and military policymakers within UNPROFOR.

## 5. The intelligence situation of UNPROFOR

According to press reports General Smith had been warned by an UNPROFOR report that if the ABiH continued its offensive around Sarajevo, the VRS would attack the enclaves in order to conquer them and thus to free soldiers for the battle in other areas.<sup>1822</sup> Smith himself claimed that the attack came as a great surprise and the Political Director at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and former chairwoman of the British Joint Intelligence Committee, Pauline Neville-Jones, stated the same.<sup>1823</sup> By the same token, the Swedish negotiator Carl Bildt said he had no indications of a military

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<sup>1818</sup> ICTY (IT-33-98) OTP Ex 64B, Main Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska to President of Republika Srpska, for information, Drina Corps IKM/Forward Command Post, Generals Gvero and Krstic, personally, 09/07/95, Strictly Conf. No. 12/46-501/95.

<sup>1819</sup> For a detailed analysis of the fall of Srebrenica: Chapter 6 in Part III of the main report.

<sup>1820</sup> Van Staden, *De fuik*, 1997, p. 9 and Westerman & Rijs, *Het Zwartste Scenario*, p. 148.

<sup>1821</sup> Zeljko Planincic, 'The call for help goes out to the best', *Banja Luka Srpska Vojska*, (FBIS translation), 03/11/95.

<sup>1822</sup> S. Sullivan and A. Sage, 'Britain's UN forces gave warning of Serb attacks', *The Times*, 15/07/95.

<sup>1823</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

build-up or of the aim to conquer Srebrenica. Bildt stated that the general assessment by ‘all analytical and intelligence units in and out of the theatre of war at this point of time’ was that the VRS did not intend to take the entire enclave.<sup>1824</sup>

When verifying these views it is important to examine the flow of information within UNPROFOR. Such prior information would initially have had to come from players operating within the enclave, such as Dutchbat, UNMOs, the British JCOs (SAS units), or non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition, the ABiH in the enclave and in the 2nd Corps in Tuzla could have been an important source of intelligence for UNPROFOR. Information from these sources would have reached SNE, from where it would have been passed to Bosnia Hercegovina Command (BHC) in Sarajevo and then to the UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb. This would have been the route for the most important intelligence concerning Srebrenica, which could then have been supplemented by the information available to the various national intelligence and security services. The issue to be examined next is to what extent this actually happened.

*Prior knowledge held by, and assessments made by, Dutchbat and the UNMOs*

All documents and interviews indicate that Dutchbat was completely surprised by the attack: Karremans had no prior knowledge. The final situation report sent by Dutchbat on 5 July, just hours before the start of the VRS attack, stated only that the situation was calm.<sup>1825</sup> Things were quiet in the enclave. At one OP 43 men and women set off in a southerly direction at the end of the afternoon. The only other report that indicated military activity was that the ABiH had occupied many positions close to the line of confrontation and that another OP had reported seeing a trailer with a tank.<sup>1826</sup> In Bratunac nothing had been noticed of the build-up for the attack on the enclave. The VRS liaison officer actually heard from Dutchbat, through the special telephone line, that the attack on the enclave had begun.<sup>1827</sup> The commander of the SAS reported to his headquarters that he too had received reports mentioning VRS troop movements. He did not believe that Karremans regarded the VRS as a serious threat. In June Karremans had told a doctor of *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF) that the ABiH would be able to resist for at least seven days and was strong enough to prevent the fall of the enclave.<sup>1828</sup>

A first indication of the approaching storm was received on 5 July. Dutchbat reported that a convoy had been seen consisting of five APCs, four T-55 tanks and five trucks, and the relocation of five artillery pieces from Bratunac to the south, as well as reporting that five tanks had been seen on the road south of Zvornik. The report about the tanks originated from a UNHCR Field Officer, and the report about the artillery from the Dutchbat liaison team.<sup>1829</sup> These were not however indications that led Dutchbat or UNPROFOR to draw conclusions about an attack. The closest thing to a ‘storm warning’ came from the G-2 (intelligence staff) of SNE. The reports from Dutchbat here led to the following comments:

‘It is not known what the final destination is for the convoy or the arty [artillery] pieces but it may be a show of strength to keep the pressure on the enclave or to stop the movement of arms between the two enclaves of ZEPA and SREBRENICA. This may mean an increase in Warring Faction activity around

<sup>1824</sup> Bildt, *Peace Journey*, pp. 55 – 57.

<sup>1825</sup> MoD, *Sitreps*. HQ Dutchbat to Sector HQ North-East, Sitrep for period 041700 to 051700B Jul 95. The report of the tanks to the south of Zvornik came from a UNHCR Field Officer, and the report of the artillery at Bratunac from the LO Team of Dutchbat. (Supplement to Daily Milinfosum 4 Jul 95. Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff).

<sup>1826</sup> MoD, *SMG*. Fax S2/3 Dutchbat to A-Comp. (Simin Han), 1 (Nederland/BE) Logtbat, Logbase Zagreb, Comcen Crisis Staff, Milinfo 040600 - 050600B Jul 95.

<sup>1827</sup> Interview with Jovan Ivic, 20/10/00.

<sup>1828</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>1829</sup> MoD, *CRST*. Supplement to Daily Milinfosum 04/07/95 and SMG 1004/59, Logbook G3 Sarajevo 4 July 18.00B.



the enclaves in the very near future. The tks [tanks] were not reported as being on low loaders so it is assumed that they will not be going too far remembering that DUTCHBAT will shortly be in the process of rotating and the BSA [VRS] may wish to test the new boys out'.<sup>1830</sup>

This test came even faster than 'the near future' and Dutchbat was completely unaware of the peril. This danger showed itself totally unexpectedly in the early morning of 6 July, when shells landed in the enclave. The fact that this marked the start of the VRS attack on the enclave penetrated only slowly to the higher echelons.

It does not seem likely that the UNMOs had noted the preparations, otherwise they would have reported this to Dutchbat. The UNMOs were a separate organization. When the Canadian battalion arrived in Srebrenica, the UNMOs took up accommodation in the Post Office building in the centre of Srebrenica because of the central location and the good telecommunications facilities.<sup>1831</sup> According to the UNMO interpreter Emir Suljagic the UN and Dutchbat should have known about the impending attack. According to him, a month before the attack several UNMOs travelled from Srebrenica to Sarajevo. En route, about twenty kilometres from Srebrenica, they reportedly saw large numbers of tanks, soldiers and weapons, including SA-3 missiles. According to Suljagic it was obvious that something was going to happen. He reportedly also passed on this intelligence to the ABiH.<sup>1832</sup> But in fact these observations had nothing to do with the attack on Srebrenica because at that point the preparations had not yet begun.

The alarming vision can also be found in claims that the UNMOs had prepared a confidential report on 2 June regarding the presence of the Arkan Tigers (a notorious Serb paramilitary unit) in the vicinity of Bratunac. According to the author Hartmann, Arkan's reputation '*aurait dû alerter les hauts commandements militaires de Sarajevo et de Zagreb*' ('should have alerted the military high commands in Sarajevo and Zagreb'). The UNMOs in the region should have concluded that the Arkan Tigers 'were evil enough to cleanse "an enclave" and emphasizing the probability of an offensive in the near future'. This report of Arkan dated from the end of May, however, at a time when the VRS preparations had not yet begun.<sup>1833</sup>

Westerman and Rijs also refer to reports from the UNMOs, who concluded from the arrival of the Arkan Tigers that the VRS was not able to conquer the enclave. The Arkan Tigers were needed to do this.<sup>1834</sup> Apart from the issue of whether this is a correct estimate of the military strength of the VRS, it must be established that the UNMOs did not present hard and concrete indications for a coming attack. Statements were confined to vague suggestions that something like that might possibly happen.

It seems that the UNMOs observed nothing of the VRS preparations. According to the Canadian UNMO Bob Patchett, who remained in the enclave until the end of June 1995, no VRS build-up had been noted. In the months of April and May it was even possible to cross the ceasefire line to talk to VRS soldiers, which at the time comprised local military personnel. They asked about people in the enclave whom they knew and about the state of certain houses. Patchett was the only UNMO who was allowed to leave on 23 June; he had not expected to be permitted to travel via Bratunac. He saw no military build-up or checkpoints in the town. He also saw no artillery positions close to the bridge over the Drina. For weeks the VRS had been complaining that the ABiH had been

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<sup>1830</sup> MoD, *SMG*. HQ Sector NE Daily Milinfosum from 031700B to 041700B Jul 95. UN Confi. The report of the tanks to the south of Zvornik came from a UNHCR Field Officer. MoD, *SMG*, LO Team to UNMOs Srebrenica, Milinfo, 05-07-95 16:46.

<sup>1831</sup> Interview with Emir Suljagic, 24/05/99.

<sup>1832</sup> Interview with Emir Suljagic, 23/11/97.

<sup>1833</sup> Florence Hartmann, 'Chronologie d'une négligence criminelle: le génocide de Srebrenica', in: Allain, e.a., *L'ex Yougoslavie and Europe*, p. 115, and 'AICG call to indict General Janvier', *Bosnia Report*, No. 1, November-December 1997, p. 3.

<sup>1834</sup> Westerman & Rijs, *Het Zwartste Scenario*, p. 149.

digging trenches and was going around heavily armed. The VRS had however showed Patchett a map with new lines of confrontation, which indicated that the Swedish Shelter Project would come under VRS control. He expected that once the VRS had started its attack this would be continued; that was the usual pattern. The VRS aim was to bring its own lines closer to the boundaries of the enclave. In June Patchett observed that the VRS was cutting down a lot of trees and dragging them away with tractors. This could be to open a route, or for commercial purposes. It was not possible to say that the VRS was engaged in a build-up.<sup>1835</sup>

On 25 June the UNMO team in Srebrenica reported that there was very little news about the VRS. The ABiH were openly displaying their weapons and new uniforms were reported.<sup>1836</sup> The overview for the period 25 June to 1 July, drawn up by the UNMO headquarters in Zagreb, also gave no indication that an attack was imminent. No forecasts to this effect were made.<sup>1837</sup> The UNMOs were therefore surprised when ABiH commander Becirovic reported that two buses and two trucks had been observed at Zeleni Jadar on the afternoon of 5 July which had dropped off VRS troops. All through this day, 5 July, troop concentrations had been observed around the enclave. In their report the UNMOs expressed their surprise that the ABiH had not reported these preparations (which had not been observed by Dutchbat).<sup>1838</sup>

It was only on 6 July that more serious reports were received from the UNMOs. It reported serious bombardments; at this point however the attack had already begun. Becirovic stated at a meeting with Dutchbat and the UNMOs that in the past 24 hours a concentration of VRS troops had gathered. He requested Karremans to plan his rotation of DutchBat III with its successors, the Ukrainians, carefully so that the VRS was given no chance to allow UN soldiers to depart and then not to permit any replacements. He seems not to have expected the conquest of the enclave.<sup>1839</sup> The UNMOs commented that the ABiH had prior knowledge of these preparations but had not reported them, which can be interpreted as an indication of the 'underrated attitude they attached to it'. The UNMOs thought that if the VRS movements on 5 July were reported at an early stage then the attack of the following day 'could have been pre-empted and counter measures taken to prevent it'.<sup>1840</sup>

According to all three UNMOs the collapse of the defence was due to a weak chain of command in the ABiH. The orders, sometimes contradictory, were simply not followed by some units. This led to total confusion, which in turn resulted in pointless troop movements from one side of the enclave to the other. The VRS knew about this weakness and exploited it.<sup>1841</sup> In addition the weak position of Commander Becirovic, following the departure of Oric from the enclave, may have played a part as well. To summarize: diaries, UNPROFOR reports, debriefings of and interviews with UNMOs provide evidence that is at odds with the claims by various cited authors: the UNMOs did *not* have prior tactical knowledge.

### *The observations of the JCOs*

In an analysis of reports by Joint Commission Observers in Tuzla and Srebrenica it is concluded that they had no indications whatsoever of an attack.<sup>1842</sup> It should be noted here that the JCO team in the

<sup>1835</sup> Interview with Bob Patchett, 19/11/99.

<sup>1836</sup> MoD, *SMG*. UNMO SNE to UNMO HQ, Sarajevo, No. IN 551, 25/06/95. See also the report from UNMO HQ Zagreb: UNPF, *Geneva, Box 75*, UNMO HQ Daily Sitrep, 25/06/95.

<sup>1837</sup> UNGE, *UNPF, Box 75*, UNMO activities, UNMO HQ Zagreb, MIO Office, Infosum for the period 25 June-01 July, 1995, 03/07/95.

<sup>1838</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*. Komanda 28. Divizije to Komanda 2. Korpusa, 6 July 1995, Str. pov. br. 01-163/95. UNMO Srebrenica to TX 061700B Jul 95 and Archive MoD, *MIS/Army*. UNMO HQ Sector BH-NE to UNMO HQ BH COMD, 06/07/95.

<sup>1839</sup> Confidential collection (5). Report: *Report on The Battle of Srebrenica*, 21/07/95.

<sup>1840</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. No. 153, UNMO Srebrenica to TX, No. 5220, 06/07/95.

<sup>1841</sup> Confidential collection (5). G-2 Air, Flt. Lt. Hooper, 'Debrief in UNMOS from the Srebrenica enclave', 23/07/95.

<sup>1842</sup> Confidential information (1).

enclave was seriously confined by Karremans in its freedom of movement; they were allowed only to accompany Dutch patrols. The commander of the JCOs reported in May that 'there were constant rumours at this time from the ABiH that the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) were planning to attack the Enclave'. On 25 May the JCO commander reported that BHC had informed him that 'a move on the eastern Enclaves was a real possibility and that if this occurred then Srebrenica would be the first'. This was probably an analysis by Smith following the NATO bombardments near Pale. This information was passed to Dutchbat, 'who it is reported, did not believe it'.<sup>1843</sup>

On 8 June representatives of the ABiH convened an urgent meeting with Dutchbat and the JCOs and 'gave them detailed plans for an 'imminent attack' on the Enclave'. This did not lead to any alarms being sounded: the JCOs were not impressed. Such rumours had often been heard and 'were thus hard to take seriously'. Furthermore the JCOs had received 'no confirmatory evidence for the plan'. From this it can be deduced that General Smith and the British intelligence services also knew of no such plans. This was also revealed during the morning briefing on 25 June, where General Smith declared that the problems was 'that we have very little intelligence on what Mladic's movements are'.<sup>1844</sup>

On 5 July five tanks, five APCs and four trucks were seen heading in a southerly direction. This report came from a UNHCR official and the commander of the JCOs reported this to his headquarters in Sarajevo; the attack started a day later. On 7 July the commander reported that Dutchbat and his headquarters in Sarajevo both believed that the VRS operation would be on a limited scale and was intended only to teach the ABiH a lesson. He did however add: 'There was (...) no way of knowing for sure.' The attack was continued but the JCOs still remained uncertain about the intentions of the VRS. The team clung to the analysis that the attack was aimed only at the southern tip and 'even after the attack had started in July it was only in the last 2 days that it became evident that the Serb objective was to overrun the whole enclave'.<sup>1845</sup> It must therefore be concluded that the JCOs, due in part to their limited operational freedom, knew little or nothing about the build-up of the VRS troops and the planned attack. There was constant uncertainty about the true aims of the VRS. Apparently the JCOs' headquarters had no additional information either.

#### *Prior knowledge at UNHCR*

In a report of 25 June the UNHCR representative examined the situation around Srebrenica in more depth. The population was starting to become worried by statements made by Karadzic about stopping the supplies to the enclave.<sup>1846</sup> The following day the director of the hospital in Srebrenica gave an interview to the Bosnian state broadcasting company. The director declared that if nothing was done within 14 days to improve supplies, the situation in Srebrenica would become disastrous. The policymakers in Pale could not have wished for a better confirmation that the Serb strategy of strangulation was working. The director mentioned the many rumours about military operations outside the borders of the enclave. ABiH troops had reportedly infiltrated in Han Pijesak; a Serb village had been burned down close to Milici; there was fighting around Vlasenica, and shelling of the enclave was expected. Dutchbat had warned the population not to gather at the marketplace.<sup>1847</sup>

The UNHCR reports contain no further references to a planned attack. Nonetheless, according to an article written in 1997 by the UNHCR special envoy to the former Yugoslavia, José Maria Mendiluce, things were very clear.

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<sup>1843</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>1844</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 130.

<sup>1845</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>1846</sup> MoD, *CRST. UNHCR, Srebrenica to UNHCR, Zagreb, No. IN. 001, 25/06/95.*

<sup>1847</sup> MoD, *CRST. UNHCR, Belgrade to UNHCR, Zagreb, No. IN. 004, 26/06/95.*

‘We knew what was going to happen in Srebrenica. Mladic was going to be more merciless than ever to get revenge for his setbacks. Only a fool couldn’t have seen it coming, or someone very badly informed. I don’t know whether General Janvier is a fool or very badly informed, but he is an accessory to this genocide’.<sup>1848</sup>

The question is whether Mendiluce had this knowledge at the time or whether he first arrived at this viewpoint after the event; the latter seems more likely.

*Prior knowledge held by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)*

MSF was the only organization that heard the rumours that the VRS was busy preparing an attack. This is revealed by an MSF report of 27 June 1995. Important sources ‘close to the VRS said that the VRS might soon launch a large-scale offensive on Srebrenica with the intention of taking the entire enclave’.<sup>1849</sup> This report came one day after the ABiH attack on Visnjica.<sup>1850</sup> It was probably not passed on to Dutchbat or Zagreb UNPROFOR HQ. Since the actual order was first issued on 2 July, one might ask whether this MSF information was of a tactical or strategic nature. It is also unclear who the source in the VRS was.

*Prior knowledge held by the ABiH*

The ABiH claimed to have had prior knowledge. The commander of the 2nd Corps in Tuzla, General Sead Delic, claimed afterwards in an interview that the attack did not come as a surprise. The 2nd Corps, said Delic, had corresponding intelligence and warned Karremans, but he did not believe this.<sup>1851</sup> It is strange, however, that no traces of this have been found in the Dutchbat reports. It is also strange that the reports of the 2nd Corps to the ABiH headquarters in Sarajevo also make no mention of this fact. On 3 July the Corps reported exclusively on the humanitarian situation in Srebrenica. There was an almost catastrophic shortage of food and the ABiH troops could not operate properly without enough food.<sup>1852</sup> Moreover, the 8-page post-mortem analysis drawn up by the 2nd Corps for the ABiH headquarters in Sarajevo does not indicate any prior knowledge.<sup>1853</sup>

The ABiH also sent reports to UNPROFOR, but there too, according to Delic, nothing was done about the Bosnian warnings.<sup>1854</sup> As described in Chapter 6, Sigint played an important role for the ABiH and reportedly provided important information. The most important monitoring stations were in Tuzla, Okresanica and Konjuh, operated by the Electronic Warfare unit of the 2nd Corps and the Sigint section of the Bosnian national security service. This latter section worked independently of the Electronic Warfare unit, but shared intelligence with it. The goal of these stations was to monitor and record the military radio traffic of the VRS. This was also carried out before, during and after the fall of Srebrenica, according to various testimonies for the Tribunal during the trial of General Krstic. Konjuh focussed chiefly on the Drina Corps and the general staff of the VRS.<sup>1855</sup>

<sup>1848</sup> AICG call to indict General Janvier’, *Bosnia Report*, No. 1, November-December 1997, p. 4.

<sup>1849</sup> Archives MSF, Brussels. *MSF Capsats*, Message IN 481, 27/06/95.

<sup>1850</sup> MoD, DCBC, Box 66. Captain RNLAf P.C.J. Blonk, ‘*Chronologisch overzicht Srebrenica 1 maart 1996 t/m 26 juli 1996, Stg. Geheim*’ (Chronological overview of Srebrenica 1 March 1996 to 26 July 1996, Strictly Confidential), 11/07/96.

<sup>1851</sup> Interview with Sead Delic, 10/03/99.

<sup>1852</sup> ABiH, Tuzla. *Archive 13-05-95*, Report from 2nd Corps to HQ, no. 02-2-13-489, 03/07/95 and Report from 2nd Corps to HQ, unnumbered, 04/07/95.

<sup>1853</sup> ABiH, *Tuzla, Archive 13-05-95*, Report from 2nd Corps to HQ, Report of the events in Srebrenica for the General Staff of the ABiH in Sarajevo, Document No. 24, Draft Top Secret (8 pp.), 28/08/95.

<sup>1854</sup> Interview with Sead Delic, 09/03/99.

<sup>1855</sup> Overview of Court Proceedings, statements by 8 witnesses, 30/06/00 and 23/06/00, on: <http://www.un.org/icty/news/Krstic/Krstic-cp.htm>

The VRS's most important communications station was located on Mount Veliki Zep close to Han Pijesak. This communications tower had a wide range and, according to Bosnian military personnel, the Electronic Warfare unit had access to real-time intercepts and intelligence. In each case, it would seem that the ABiH in Tuzla was aware of the preparations. Lieutenant Colonel Semsudin Murinovic, as Deputy Commander responsible for security in the 24th Division of the ABiH, stated that the 2nd Corps had prior knowledge. About four months before the attack reports were already being sent to the headquarters in Sarajevo that 'something' was going to happen. This was indicated in particular by intercepts of VRS traffic. According to Murinovic it was chiefly Comint that betrayed this fact. The surface-to-air missiles at Srebrenica had to come from another area, and the instructions for their relocation were intercepted. All air defence resources were concentrated in Eastern Bosnia. Comint also showed that Mladic was seriously planning, in the event of continued air strikes, to take Dutchbat hostage and to expose the soldiers to the strikes.

Another Sigint expert, Captain Hazrudin Kistic, confirmed that thanks to Comint the 2nd Corps was informed well in advance.<sup>1856</sup> His unit intercepted real-time intercepts and intelligence from its base in Tuzla. On 3 June the ABiH received new indications that something was about to happen;<sup>1857</sup> this was after the attack on OP-E. General Sead Delic confirmed that intercepts of messages from Mladic showed that he was planning an attack.<sup>1858</sup> On the basis of Comint it was possible to report to Tuzla by the ABiH in the enclave about the results of the Muslim attack on Visnjica. A day later the army received an overview of the most important intercepts relating to this attack. The VRS wanted to track down the units involved in this attack and to this end sent special instructions to troops, codenamed 'yellow'.<sup>1859</sup> On 2 July Kistic discovered, through intercepts, the plans for an attack on Srebrenica: one week before the actual attack he had intercepted messages which incontrovertibly showed that the VRS was going to attack. This also indicated that the VRS was requesting logistical support and a large number of buses. The intercepts were of conversations between Krstic and his deputy; the operation was led from Prebicevac.<sup>1860</sup>

The trial of Krstic showed that around 5 July the ABiH in Srebrenica and the 2nd Corps in Tuzla were informed about the planned military operations. Humint from the local population indicated that extra VRS units had arrived. ABiH reconnaissance groups discovered that these fresh units arrived in the afternoon of 5 July. The aim of the VRS operation was to cut the line of communication between Srebrenica and Zepa.<sup>1861</sup>

Some of the intercepts at the disposal of the Yugoslavia Tribunal had already been published by Mehmed Pargan in *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna*. Pargan revealed that at the end of June the commander of the Drina Corps passed on to the local commander in Zvornik Mladic's instruction to prepare for the attack. Following initial reconnaissance, on 3 July the Drina Corps sent more than 40 vehicles, including buses and trucks, towards Srebrenica. The next day the Corps already had more than 1200 litres of fuel and four tanks were dispatched. On 6 July the logistical preparations were complete and the armbands were distributed.<sup>1862</sup> In Pargan's article the transcriptions of the intercepts made of the attack by the 2nd Corps are printed. His account also indicates that the intelligence section in Kladanj closely followed the progress of the battle.

In short, the ABiH and the Bosnian security service seem to have been well-informed about the imminent attack, but also about the battle and the later murders. In this context one can also refer to the statements by Becirovic, who on 6 July told Dutchbat that the ABiH had observed the build-up by

<sup>1856</sup> Interview with Hazrudin Kistic, 17 and 18/05/99.

<sup>1857</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*. 28e Division to Section MV, 2nd Corps, No. 02-06-25/95, 06/06/95.

<sup>1858</sup> Interview with Sead Delic, 10/03/99.

<sup>1859</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*. Section MV, 2nd Corps to 28th Division, No. 02/8-01-998, 27/06/95 and 02/8-01-1012, 28/06/95.

<sup>1860</sup> Interview with Hazrudin Kistic, 17 and 18/05/99.

<sup>1861</sup> Rapport Butler, *Srebrenica Military Narrative – Operation Krivaja 95*, 15/05/00, pp. 950763 - 950764.

<sup>1862</sup> Mehmed Pargan, 'B-H Army Eavesdropped on VRS', *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna*, (FBIS translation), 11/07/98.

the VRS on 4 and 5 July but had not passed this information on. A reason for this was not given.<sup>1863</sup> The report drawn up by Butler for the Tribunal reveals that a report was indeed prepared by the 28th Division.<sup>1864</sup> It is unclear however what then happened to this ABiH report. Westerman and Rijs also reported that two weeks before the fall the Bosnian Intelligence Service had clear indications that the Bosnian Serbs were planning something. An elite Serb unit had been reported; unusually busy military traffic had been observed and intercepts revealed large deliveries of fuel.<sup>1865</sup>

Despite this, one must seriously question all the aforementioned claims about prior knowledge of the attack on Srebrenica. To begin with, there were in fact no preparations that started weeks before. The planning for the operation only started on 2 July. Secondly, in Chapter 6 it has been shown that the Bosnian Muslims did not have real-time Sigint at their disposal. It thus seems probable that their knowledge of preparations was gained only after the event. After all, although there were Bosnian intercepts which show that it was possible to monitor VRS communications traffic, the Bosnian military or political leadership never shared these intercepts with UNPROFOR or the UN in New York.

The intercepts were however later provided to journalists and to the NIOD (directly and via the MIS). It is important to ask whether these were near-real-time or even real-time intercepts. If this was the case, then the Bosnian intercept operators listened in live to attack orders. Konjuh, Okresanica and Tuzla reported both to the 2nd Corps and to the ABiH headquarters in Sarajevo and to the higher political leadership. The Bosnian national security service in Okresanica reported chiefly to the political leaders of Bosnia.<sup>1866</sup> The fact that the Bosnian permanent representative to the UN was certainly not informed is revealed by statements by Sacirbey. On 10 July Sacirbey called Minister Voorhoeve with the news that Bihac was to be the next VRS target. He made no mention at all of the other eastern enclaves.<sup>1867</sup>

Were real-time intercepts possible? As previously described, a simple calculation shows that the number of channels to be monitored multiplied by the required personnel was larger than the number of people available to process and report in near-real-time. The processing of the Comint was very slow and labour-intensive. Chapter 6 concluded that some telephone calls and VHF channels may have been monitored live, but that the large majority of the substantial VRS military communications traffic was recorded on tape and first analysed much later. Moreover, up to 6 July the VRS had maintained radio silence. As a result, much of the context was lost and VRS messages that were indeed intercepted in real time could never be placed in the correct context.

Reviewing the Bosnian Comint efforts, it can be concluded that the service responsible for Sigint was simply too small (ten people per monitoring station) and too poorly equipped to fulfil its mission adequately. When the attack started it is possible that a great deal was intercepted (mostly traffic via walkie-talkies), but there was not enough processing and analysis capability for these intercepts, and insufficient reporting of the intercepted messages. Intercepts were not processed in a computer, but written by hand in logbooks. Tapes of intercepts were re-used and almost no use was made of computers to process and disseminate the stream of information. Moreover, there were no Comint analysts working at the monitoring stations to analyse the intercepts and to evaluate its true value. In addition, there was a lack of fixed, secure communications links to the ABiH headquarters.

Moreover, there are no indications that the Bosnian services had analysis capabilities at the level of brigade, corps or higher to facilitate the swift integration of Comint with other intelligence, such as Humint. Even if the political will to publicize these dramatic intercepts had existed, this would still not have succeeded because the intelligence structure was not geared to this. The real-time intercepts were too fragmentary. In any case, the study of archives of Dutchbat, UNPROFOR, the MIS and of foreign

<sup>1863</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Brantz*, Diary Brantz, pp. 277, 281 and 284.

<sup>1864</sup> Rapport Butler, *'srebrenica Military Narrative – Operation Krivaja 95'*, 15/05/00, pp. 950764.

<sup>1865</sup> Westerman & Rijs, *Het Zwartste Scenario*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>1866</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1867</sup> Diary Voorhoeve, p. 103.

archives, together with interviews, has not indicated that the ABiH shared intercepts with Dutchbat, UNPROFOR or Western intelligence services. General Delic is thus not correct in claiming that intercepts of Mladic already in June and July revealed he was planning an attack.

Another ABiH general claimed, however, that intercepts in real time did exist.<sup>1868</sup> This must however be doubted. If the Bosnian Muslims did indeed have real-time Comint, why did they not make use of it? According to a senior US intelligence official, it would have been the best public relations stunt of all time because the Muslims could have shouted 'bloody hell and murder'. The ABiH would never have missed this chance if they had had real-time intelligence. This official supposed that the ABiH simply did not have real-time capabilities.<sup>1869</sup> One must also ask why the ABiH, if it knew of the attack, did not pass on this knowledge to UNPROFOR or Western intelligence services. All available intelligence was actually passed on to UNPROFOR, according to Major Sefko Tihic, Head of Intelligence of 2nd Corps. Intelligence was passed on to SNE, but nothing was done with it there, according to Tihic. Supposedly it was estimated that the VRS wanted to take over all of Srebrenica and that June/July would be the best time for this. There were indicators, such as the relocation of surface-to-air missiles from the left bank to the right bank of the Drina.<sup>1870</sup> No proof has been found for this latter claim.

The diary of the Deputy Commander of Sector North East, Colonel C. Brantz, shows that officers of the ABiH did indeed regularly give indications that the developments around the enclave were being monitored closely. On 28 June, for instance, Brantz spoke to the Chief of Staff of the 2nd Corps, who showed on a map the place where ABiH reconnaissance units operated to monitor developments. They had established that increasing numbers of soldiers and amounts of equipment were being moved from Serbia to Srpska.<sup>1871</sup> During this conversation the Chief of Staff was constantly informed by telephone of the situation around the enclave. But it was not until 6 July that Dutchbat heard anything from the ABiH about the build-up of the VRS on 4 and 5 July.<sup>1872</sup> This is very late. If the 2nd Corps was already informed at an early stage, then why were no stronger warnings given to UNPROFOR? Various Bosnian Muslims claim that they did this but that they were not heeded. This is categorically denied by officials working at SNE and other staff at UNPROFOR.

Was it then, as Mehmed Pargan accused the 2nd Corps, a question of gross negligence and enormous passivity?<sup>1873</sup> Probably not: there was simply not enough real-time intelligence available. Interviewed ABiH military personnel continue to claim that the crucial intelligence was passed on. But UNPROFOR officials who would have been the recipients of this intelligence state that they never received it. Their statements are supported by the fact that little to nothing has been found in the UNPROFOR reports. Virtually nothing was found that could be interpreted as alarming information or explicit prior knowledge at the ABiH. According to Lieutenant Colonel Baxter the ABiH have never provided a snippet of intelligence to General Smith, his staff or the rest of UNPROFOR.<sup>1874</sup> In various other interviews with staff of foreign intelligence services, interviewees also denied that Bosnian intelligence had been received. In short, it must be concluded that the ABiH did not have prior tactical knowledge.

#### *Prior knowledge at Sector North East (SNE) in Tuzla*

The attack on the enclave came as a total surprise to the Norwegian Brigadier General Haukland, the commander in SNE. He went on leave on 25 June. At that moment some troop movements had been

<sup>1868</sup> Confidential information (71).

<sup>1869</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>1870</sup> Interview with Sefko Tihic, 08/03/99.

<sup>1871</sup> NIOD, *Coll. CD-ROMs*, Ziulich Mehmed to 28th Division, No. 06-05-171/95, 24/06/95.

<sup>1872</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Brantz*, Diary Brantz, pp. 277, 281 and 284.

<sup>1873</sup> Mehmed Pargan, 'B-H Army Eavesdropped on VRS', *Sarajevo Slobodna Bosna* (FBIS translation), 11/07/98.

<sup>1874</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

reported, but the reasons for these could only be guessed at. As said, it was not thought that these presaged an attack. There was no reason that the staff of SNE could see why Haukland's planned holiday leave should not go ahead. Following his return he discovered that Tuzla had known nothing. He doubted whether the ABiH had indeed known of the attack. If that had been the case, then Delic would have contacted him, but he never did this. The Norwegian did not receive any intelligence from UNPROFOR or NATO. His SNE was 'blindfolded in the dark'.<sup>1875</sup> In April 1995, for instance, the Sector command had submitted five requests to NATO for Imint, but NATO had refused to supply these.<sup>1876</sup> According to the British Lieutenant Colonel C.A. Le Hardy of SNE in Tuzla, his organization had insufficient priority at BHC in Sarajevo. When SNE sent documents to Sarajevo no answer was received. When Le Hardy paid a visit to BHC, no map of SNE could be found 'Outside Sarajevo we couldn't get BHC's attention for any case', he added critically. No intelligence was ever received from BHC.<sup>1877</sup>

The attack also came as a great surprise to the Commander of the Danish tanks in Tuzla, Captain N. Petersen. In the preceding months he had never received any reports about a possible military build-up of the VRS. Just a few days before the attack he received reports about a troop build-up, supplied by the intelligence officer of the Swedish battalion. The final attack on Srebrenica was a major surprise. He immediately put his unit in the highest state of alert and started deploying his tanks over various defensive positions. If he had had any earlier indications, he would have taken these measures earlier too.<sup>1878</sup> The same went for the Commander of the Scandinavian battalion, Colonel G. Arlefalk.<sup>1879</sup>

But according to the liaison officer of the 2nd Corps, Mehmed Suljkanovic, UNPROFOR was indeed informed. All available intelligence, according to him, was shared. Before the fall Suljkanovic also tried to make clear to the Deputy Commander of SNE, Colonel Brantz, that the matter was serious, but the latter attached little credibility to the reports.<sup>1880</sup> On 8 July it was still (rightly) assumed at SNE that the VRS did not plan to take the entire enclave. In line with this, in the evening of 8 July 1995 the Chief Political Officer of UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, Phillip Corwin, received a telephone call from the Civil Affairs Officer in SNE, the American Ken Biser, who told him that the VRS planned to take over a few OPs in order to control the southern route. This would shorten the Serb supply line by about 60 kilometres. According to Biser the VRS did not appear to want to take the entire enclave 'since there are 50,000 Muslims in it and they wouldn't know what to do with them'.<sup>1881</sup>

#### *What was known by Bosnia Hercegovina Command (BHC) in Sarajevo?*

BHC not only had all UNPROFOR reports at its disposal, but also national intelligence. General Smith could call on the British intelligence services, and his own intelligence officer was an American. On 15 June the Office of the Regional Senior Military Observer in Sarajevo reported in a general, periodic assessment that the situation in Srebrenica was possibly the most threatening, compared with the two other eastern enclaves. According to this organization Mladic had instructed his VRS to conduct offensive operations. The VRS was reportedly concentrating troops around the enclave for this operation, or had already done this. Here too it was not expected that an attempt would be made to conquer the enclave, but possibly Mladic wanted to reduce the size in a first phase, or to better control

<sup>1875</sup> Interview with Hagrup Haukland, 03/05/99. Early in 1995 he received constant complaints about ABiH attacks from the enclave on Serb villages. Haukland then went to General Sead ('little') Delic and asked him to end these provocations. This was because the VRS retaliated with artillery and mortar bombardments on the population of the enclave. General Delic declared: 'I do not care'.

<sup>1876</sup> NIOD, Letter from Minister J. Pronk to NIOD, 29/05/01.

<sup>1877</sup> Interview with C.A. Le Hardy, 08/10/97.

<sup>1878</sup> Interview with N.E. Petersen, 29/10/99.

<sup>1879</sup> Interview with G. Arlefalk, 18/05/00.

<sup>1880</sup> Interview with Mehmed Suljkanovic, 18/05/99.

<sup>1881</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Clingendael*. Note for the File, Drafter P. Corwin, 08/07/95.



the hills and mountains along the boundary, and might then aim to achieve the rest later in the summer.<sup>1882</sup> It was clear that BHC was concerned. But it would be another matter if there had been hard indications at the end of June for a planned attack aimed at taking over the southern tip of the enclave.

General Smith stated that while he was in Sarajevo he had never received any prior indications, not from national military sources or intelligence channels either. In any case, he said, he received no British intelligence with any indication of a VRS attack. He consistently and categorically stated that he received nothing from MI6, DIS or GCHQ, because 'otherwise he would have done certain things differently'. In fact, Smith left Sarajevo for a short holiday during the fall of Srebrenica. He said that 'there were no forewarnings regarding an imminent attack on Srebrenica'. If any British intelligence was supplied, then it mostly regarded Gorazde, because that was indeed a national issue.<sup>1883</sup>

This was confirmed by his military assistant, Lieutenant Colonel Baxter. Smith was dependent on the reports from Tuzla and the UNMOs. The American intelligence officer Brian Powers occasionally supplied something, and they also had a direct link to the British services. They did not have any direct access to US Imint. Photographs from UAVs first became available in August and September 1995. According to Baxter an attack on Gorazde was considered more likely. Baxter commented: 'In Sarajevo we had absolutely no intelligence about a build-up of the VRS around the enclaves.'<sup>1884</sup> Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, who was on Akashi's staff as a political adviser in 1994 and 1995, confirmed the expectation that Gorazde would be the next target.<sup>1885</sup> The Chief Political Officer of UNPROFOR in Sarajevo, Phillip Corwin, also noted on 10 July 1995 in his diary that it was clear 'that our intelligence has been faulty'. Sarajevo expected a limited operation but, according to Corwin, 'we were dead wrong'.<sup>1886</sup>

According to press reports UNPROFOR supposedly intercepted telephone calls which revealed the military organization of the offensive, in collaboration with the VJ, and the arrival of new troops and weapons from Serbia.<sup>1887</sup> This is not a credible statement, because UNPROFOR did not have its own interception capabilities. This information could, at the most, have been supplied by the one of the countries that had troops stationed in Bosnia but it is strange that this is not to be found in UNPROFOR documents. Another member of Smith's staff declared that no one at BHC believed that the VRS intended to conquer Srebrenica.<sup>1888</sup> The American intelligence officer in Sarajevo, Powers, was surprised too. According to the Dutch Lieutenant Colonel A. de Ruiter, at that time Military Assistant to the Chief of Staff of BHC and as someone who knew Powers well, the G-2 analyses were produced under the auspices of Powers. If US services had possessed any indications, then Powers certainly did not have this information at his disposal. No hard indications were available in Sarajevo.<sup>1889</sup> This was confirmed by the deputy military assistant, the Danish Major J.M. Wallin.<sup>1890</sup> The Canadian Lieutenant Colonel R. Hatton, operations officer in Sarajevo, admitted that things were 'cooking' around Srebrenica and Zepa; the frustration of the VRS was known and had been pointed out several times. But the intention of the VRS to take the enclave had never been clear.<sup>1891</sup>

<sup>1882</sup> Confidential collection (5). RSMO's Periodical Assessment 16 May to 15 June 95, 15/06/95.

<sup>1883</sup> Interview with R.A. Smith, 12/01/00.

<sup>1884</sup> Interview with James Baxter, 16/10/00.

<sup>1885</sup> Interview with Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, 06/06/97.

<sup>1886</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 203.

<sup>1887</sup> 'AICG call to indict General Janvier', *Bosnia Report*, No. 1, November-December 1997, p. 3.

<sup>1888</sup> Confidential interview (56).

<sup>1889</sup> Interview with J.A.C. de Ruiter, 29/06/00.

<sup>1890</sup> Interview with J.M. Wallin, 28/10/99.

<sup>1891</sup> Interview with Rick Hatton, 16/11/99.

*The level of knowledge of Zagreb*

The attack and conquest thus came as a surprise to BHC in Sarajevo. But did the UN headquarters in Zagreb have prior knowledge? Janvier had national French intelligence input at his disposal, with an US deputy intelligence officer who had national intelligence input. What warnings arrived one way or another in Zagreb? About a week before the attack on OP-E Janvier wrote down his Personal Directives for Smith. In his analysis Janvier concluded that the VRS had restored the balance and even held the advantage. Were the eastern enclaves a target for the VRS? According to Janvier there were two goals. The first was to neutralize UNPROFOR and secondly to achieve military goals which until now had been hindered by the presence of UNPROFOR. These goals included the complete isolation of the eastern enclaves. According to Janvier the situation there was exacerbated by Bosnian provocations in the form of attacks which then led to counter responses by the VRS. All that UNPROFOR could do was to remain alert and undertake initiatives without unnecessarily endangering its own troops.<sup>1892</sup> This shows that Janvier did not reckon with a rapidly planned conquest of Srebrenica, but simply pointed out that the eastern enclaves could be in danger.

According to journalists Janvier is said to have been told about the VRS plans for an attack on the enclave at least two weeks in advance by the French Military Intelligence Service, the *Direction du Renseignement Militaire* (DRM). The DRM, just like the British ones, are said to have managed this without US intelligence. This French Comint was reportedly passed to Janvier in his capacity as French commander, not as commander of the UN forces.<sup>1893</sup> However, in view of the author's findings one can doubt this. On 27 June General Janvier wrote a 'Dear Rupert' letter to General Smith in which he mentioned a 'window of opportunity' for the peace process. This could however close again within three to four weeks. He would quickly arrange a meeting with Mladic. Gaining time and exercising patience was the most important thing at that moment.<sup>1894</sup> If Janvier had had specific prior knowledge (possibly from French national sources) then he would have surely have couched his letter in different terms and would have struck a more alarming tone. Others at the headquarters in Zagreb lacked this prior tactical knowledge as well. The Canadian Deputy Force Commander, Ashton, started the briefing for Akashi on 6 July 1995 with the words: 'overall a quiet day militarily'. During the fall Janvier was initially in Paris for discussions. It is clear that he would not have departed if he had had advance warning. Janvier discussed a wide range of questions, but in Paris that day Srebrenica was not on the agenda.<sup>1895</sup>

General Ashton stated that the available intelligence did not indicate that an attack on Srebrenica was imminent.<sup>1896</sup> Zagreb was not aware of any attack because the reports generally related to the past 24 hours. Tony Banbury, who at that time was working in Zagreb as Political Affairs Officer for Akashi, confirmed that they knew nothing about it.<sup>1897</sup> This was corroborated by Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein. He pointed out that there was no 'early alarm'.<sup>1898</sup> The daily report sent by Akashi to New York also made no mention as yet of the bombardment of Srebrenica. The situation in Croatia, the Croat offensive in the Livno Valley and the increase in fighting around Bihac were the centres of attention. As was often the case, the situation in Sarajevo dominated the agenda of the morning briefing in Zagreb, together with a statement by the French Chief of Defence Staff, Admiral Lanxade: he wanted to use the Rapid Reaction Force to open a corridor for the withdrawal of the French troops

<sup>1892</sup> Confidential collection (7), FC Janvier to General Smith, *FC's Personal Directives to Unprofor Comd*, File Ref. FC/95/0801, 29/05/95.

<sup>1893</sup> Andreas Zumach, 'Grosser Lauschangriff auf Srebrenica' (Major bugging operation for Srebrenica), in: *Die Tageszeitung*, 30/10/95 and Ian Bruce, 'Allies hamper inquiry', *The Glasgow Herald*, 01/12/95.

<sup>1894</sup> Confidential collection (7). Letter from Janvier to Smith, 27/06/95.

<sup>1895</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, No 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de M. Jaen-Claude Mallet, 05/04/01.

<sup>1896</sup> Interview with Barry Ashton, 30/05/00.

<sup>1897</sup> Interview with Tony Banbury, 11/05/00.

<sup>1898</sup> Interview with Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, 06/06/97.

from Sarajevo, because they were at too much risk. Srebrenica was indeed mentioned in the Zagreb briefing, but only because UNHCR reported that it had heard from Bosnian sources that 13 people had died of hunger. UNHCR was however unable to confirm this.<sup>1899</sup> The Canadian Major David Last, Military Assistant to General Ashton, also emphasized that the attack came as a total surprise to Zagreb. Srebrenica was a low-profile point of attention, and an issue that was marked with a yellow and not a red flag. Zagreb needed to concentrate on much more urgent matters, and in this respect Srebrenica was only a minor issue.<sup>1900</sup> The same picture is provided by the diary of Emma Shitaka, personal assistant to Akashi in 1994-1995. On 7 July all she noted with regard to the Zagreb briefing was that Gorazde was of strategic importance. No attack on the enclave was expected. The VRS would try 'to reduce size of enclaves and cutting of humanitarian aid'.<sup>1901</sup>

At that time the intelligence section in Zagreb was led by the Swede Svensson and his military assistant Ljunggren. Their diary notes reveal that on 11 July they still expected that the VRS would not take the entire enclave. When that actually happened, it came as a total surprise to Zagreb. The two Swedes noted that the French officer General Andre Soubirou held a briefing that morning in the Zagreb headquarters in which he declared that the VRS wanted a stronger hold on the enclave. Soubirou did not expect the VRS to conduct a major attack with infantry. Mladic needed these troops in Sarajevo and the VRS would mostly attack Srebrenica with artillery. But at that moment the enclave had already fallen. Both Swedes came to the conclusion afterwards, on the basis of all available information, that Srebrenica was a retaliation for the ABiH hit and run operations conducted from the enclave, the use of Close Air Support and the creation of the Rapid Reaction Force.<sup>1902</sup> However, Srebrenica did not remain a topic on the agenda for long. Major Last noted in his diary at 4 pm on 12 July that all attention had shifted to the Croats and the Krajina.<sup>1903</sup>

Officials who worked for the intelligence staff in Zagreb were later to declare that information was withheld by the Americans. Their claims were, however, fiercely disputed by US and European intelligence officials. According to them The US Deputy G-2, Morgan, had indeed direct access to all US intelligence, but there was no prior knowledge of the assault. Up to the last moment, according to an UNPROFOR official who worked in Zagreb at the time, Morgan and others remained convinced that the VRS planned only to take the southern part of the enclave.<sup>1904</sup>

The fact that also the US military establishment was taken by surprise can be deduced from a later analysis. The document was drawn up by the wholly US Joint Analysis Center in Molesworth in the United Kingdom, the final destination of all available intelligence from various (inter)national channels, and gives an overview of the event. The analysis of the operation notes that the VRS attack 'runs counter to what has been expected of them for several years'. Normally pressure was exerted only on the borders of the enclave to take control of the high ground. No attempt to attack the entire enclave or the town was expected, due to the number of soldiers needed for house-to-house fighting. The US Joint Analysis Center in Molesworth thought that the VRS had insufficient infantry and that the ABiH would be too strong. In retrospect it was supposed that ABiH units had departed at the end of June and that those who remained behind had insufficient courage and fortitude to put up a long and determined resistance.<sup>1905</sup>

The British intelligence cell in Sarajevo also had no insights whatsoever into the true intentions of the VRS. In fact, consultation took place between G-2, Zagreb and the British cell in Sarajevo, but

<sup>1899</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Banbury*. Diary Banbury, 06/07/95 and UNNY, DPKO coded cables. Code Cables Akashi to Annan, No. Z-1104, 06/07/95 and Janvier to Annan, No. Z-1111, 06/07/95.

<sup>1900</sup> Interview with David Last, 05/07/00.

<sup>1901</sup> Interview with Emma Shitaka, 11/05/00.

<sup>1902</sup> Interview with Jan-Inge Svensson and Ingmar Ljunggren, 04/11/99.

<sup>1903</sup> Interview with David Last, 05/07/00.

<sup>1904</sup> Confidential interview (54) and confidential information (80).

<sup>1905</sup> Confidential collection (4), JAC Analysis Balkan Crisis Group to Capt Theunens, 14/07/95. Also: Interview with General George Joulwan, 08/06/00.

BHC also had no indications of VRS goals beyond the southern tip of the enclave.<sup>1906</sup> The US ambassador in Zagreb, Peter Galbraith, also stated that he had not seen any intelligence about the attack.<sup>1907</sup> The operations officer in Zagreb, the Danish officer Colonel K. Bache, could only surmise at a possible attack. He expected that the VRS would respond to the ABiH's nightly hit and run operations. The VRS could no longer summon the patience and wanted to put an end to this. He also made the following observation. Zagreb was totally dependent for its decision-making on the reports supplied by Sarajevo. And this was precisely the problem: in General Smith's perspective Zagreb was a long way away. Little information arrived from Sarajevo. According to Bache Zagreb was completely 'out of touch with the events in SNE' due in part to the relationship between Janvier and Smith: 'they did not like each other'. The attack on Srebrenica ultimately came as a great surprise to Zagreb.

Bache's diary and that of Tony Banbury clearly show that the possibility of an attack on Srebrenica did not once appear on the agenda of the daily briefings.<sup>1908</sup> Colonel Harm de Jonge, who attended all crisis meetings in Zagreb, also confirmed that the attack came unexpectedly.<sup>1909</sup> The reports of the Senior Staff Meetings chaired by Akashi and the Force Commander give the same picture. A study of the reports from 30 June to 12 July indicates that Srebrenica received almost no attention in Zagreb and that the VRS build-up was completely overlooked.<sup>1910</sup>

All official documents, diaries and interviews indicate that the VRS intentions remained unclear right up to the last moment and up to the very highest level of UNPROFOR. The records of the daily council between Akashi and Janvier in Zagreb shows that even when the enclave had already fallen into the hands of the VRS, there was still uncertainty about the intentions of the Bosnian Serbs. On 12 July an Interoffice memorandum from the Zagreb intelligence section provided an estimate of the VRS intentions. This update was based on the events of the previous day. Two options were noted; a limited VRS operation to take a firmer hold on the enclave, to minimize the ABiH activities, to free troops, to take hold of the black market in the enclave and to further increase the pressure; or conquest of the enclave. The reasons for the second option were the same as the first, plus to test how far UNPROFOR was prepared to respond seriously and to send a strong signal to the ABiH. The VRS showed in this way that it was still able to carry out such operations. The bombardments in the north of the enclave 'point to VRS intentions to collapse the Enclave further'. Possibly the events around Sarajevo had led to a decision to free troops more quickly, and this 'now outweighs the political bargaining value of the enclaves'. If Mladic wanted Srebrenica, then it was expected that Zepa would soon follow. The VRS might leave Gorazde alone.<sup>1911</sup> An 'after action analysis' by the G-2 Staff in Zagreb also shows that no tactical prior knowledge was present. This document kept to the view that, in the short term, the VRS would continue to concentrate on the strategy of strangulation and the use of the 'humanitarian weapon' instead of launching major operations. The conquest had created a totally new situation.<sup>1912</sup> To summarize: there are no indications that senior military and political officials of UNPROFOR in Zagreb had any knowledge of the troop build-up around the enclave. Officials in Tuzla, Sarajevo and Zagreb were totally in the dark as to the intentions of the VRS.<sup>1913</sup> But did the same go for New York too?

<sup>1906</sup> Confidential interview (45).

<sup>1907</sup> Interview with Peter Galbraith, 23/06/99.

<sup>1908</sup> Interview with K. Bache, 29/10/99.

<sup>1909</sup> Harry Meijer, 'Voor VN kwam aanval onverwachts' (Attack came as surprise to UN), *NRC Handelsblad*, 27/07/95 and interview with J.H. de Jonge, 27/09/99.

<sup>1910</sup> UNNY, ICFY, *Archive FC*, Senior Staff Meetings, 30/06/95-14/07/95.

<sup>1911</sup> Confidential collection (4). G-2 UNPF HQ, *Update: Assessment on Srebrenica enclave – VRS intentions*, G-2 Rick Morgan (drafter Capt. Theunens) to COS, 12/07/95 and G-2 UNPF HQ, 'BIH Hostile Attitude towards Unprofor', G-2 Rick Morgan (drafter R. Theunens) to COS, 12/07/95.

<sup>1912</sup> Confidential collection (4). G-2 UNPF HQ, *Srebrenica: the Aftermath*, G-2 Rick Morgan (drafter Capt. Theunens) to COS, 13/07/95.

<sup>1913</sup> See also: Westerman & Rijs, *Het Zwartste Scenario*, p. 148.

*The UN headquarters in New York*

The headquarters of the UN did not have its own intelligence channels. As described earlier, the headquarters had a ‘situation centre’, which included a special cell with representatives of the intelligence services of the five permanent members of the Security Council. Intelligence was provided to the Secretary-General, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and specially selected officials. Within the DPKO, not everyone at the highest level received intelligence from all services. Some received intelligence from the Russian foreign intelligence service but not from Western services. The CIA sometimes supplied Imint and the British mostly Humint. But this special cell too received no intelligence about Srebrenica.<sup>1914</sup> The report of the informal consultation with the members of the Security Council held on 3 July 1995 indicates that no major military operation was expected. The eastern enclaves were not even mentioned.<sup>1915</sup> The Canadian General M. Baril, the Canadian Chief of Defence Staff and former Senior Military Adviser to the Secretary-General of the UN, had no forewarning either. However, it did not surprise him that Srebrenica fell. Very laconically he remarked: ‘If deterrence works, it works, if not, not.’<sup>1916</sup>

In other words, senior policymakers and the UN headquarters in New York had no relevant intelligence. Akashi declared that he did not have intelligence and had no knowledge of the Bosnian Serb plans. ‘If any government had such reports, they were not shared with the UN.’ Akashi did not know whether Mladic aimed for the fall of the enclave right from the start. Perhaps the VRS general was an opportunist who, when he realized that no resistance was being offered, pressed on. ‘NATO may have had intelligence’, but Akashi did not wish to comment on press reports to this effect. He had earlier asked for intelligence reports on Rwanda and Zaire, and then received documents of foreign origin on a non-attributable basis. He had never received anything about Srebrenica.<sup>1917</sup>

It should be noted that Akashi, of course, was speaking figuratively rather than literally. For example, during the month of June alone, Srebrenica was reported on in the Zagreb Defense Information Summary on 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 20, 25, 26, 28, 29. Akashi and his staff were the primary consumer of this report, along with the Force Commander and his staff. Of these 18 reports on Srebrenica, none predicted the imminent collapse of the enclave. Presumably Akashi was referring to any predictive intelligence which spoke unequivocally of the collapse of the Srebrenica enclave. The deputy G-2 Morgan personally briefed Mr. Akashi on 29 June, covering the overall theatre situation. His intelligence brief covered the following strategic issues: Croatia: 1) polarization of factions over Krajina; 2) Sector east update. Bosnia: 1) Summer long VRS campaign expected to focus on north-south lines of communication as well as stabilizing the Posavina Corridor. 2) emerging tactical confidence on part of the ABiH. 3) Parallels between factions in BiH and VRS. However, no predictive intelligence of an attack on the Srebrenica enclave (or any enclaves) was broached, but anticipation of a summer-long VRS offensive was discussed. Not only was this anticipated for some time, and it was the usual pattern for summertime warfare in Bosnia and Croatia. Additionally, VRS strategists recognized that without substantial gains in the summer of 1995, any negotiated settlement would be that much more disadvantageous to the Serbs. However, a major problem with Akashi was also that he was not very often available. The US Deputy G-2 personally tried to brief Akashi as often as possible whenever his schedule would permit, which was not terribly often. Akashi did receive genuine all-source briefings during the tenure of the US intelligence official in Zagreb.<sup>1918</sup>

At the time Annan had put critical questions to Akashi about the ignorance of Zagreb and what was ‘provided to UNPROFOR by those troop-contributing nations with intelligence-gathering assets in the area’? He had also stated: ‘I find it difficult to accept that no “early warning” was possible when the

<sup>1914</sup> Confidential interview (58).

<sup>1915</sup> UNNY, DPKO. *Coded cables*. Annan to Akashi, No. MSC 2182, 03/07/95.

<sup>1916</sup> Interview with Maurice Baril, 21/12/99.

<sup>1917</sup> Interview with Y. Akashi, 29/11/99.

<sup>1918</sup> Confidential information (80).

evidence suggests that a major build-up of troops and heavy weapons by the VRS occurred prior to the offensive.<sup>1919</sup> Akashi declared that the possibilities for monitoring the military activities of the VRS, apart from static OPs, were very limited. The exchange of national intelligence between countries was governed by bilateral treaties to which the UN was not party. Sometimes local ambassadors or national contingents supplied extra information, but this did not happen in the case of Srebrenica. Furthermore, Akashi had received no additional intelligence relating to Zepa and Gorazde. Akashi continued with the notable statement: 'It would not be appropriate for us to attempt, at our level, to improve access to national intelligence.'<sup>1920</sup> In fact one might have expected just the opposite. In view of the threatening situation for the other enclaves and the fate of the refugees, an order to gather extra intelligence would have been highly defensible.

A week later Akashi returned to Annan's questions. The general issue of the availability of intelligence and the problems with its dissemination were complex and required separate treatment. Some countries had access to a 'very large pool of detailed tactical and strategic intelligence'. After all, Yugoslavia was an object of interest for all intelligence services. A part of the intelligence gathered by the leading troop contributors was Sigint. This was 'the most jealously guarded of all intelligence products'. In the case of the US, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand this was arranged through agreements and 'sharing outside this agreement is simply not possible', according to Akashi. This is not correct: it is permitted to share national intelligence products. He mentioned that special arrangements had been created for senior officers to receive intelligence support from their national governments, but this exchange was 'so surrounded by national caveats that it takes considerable effort and ingenuity to make use of it in any multi-national activity'. This led to unavoidable tensions which could better be solved among the military. After all, they were used to such problems.

Akashi recommended Annan to review, when times were quieter, whether new mechanisms for the operational aspects of peacekeeping should be created within the UN; these could serve the task of gathering national intelligence to be made available to a special secure information unit<sup>1921</sup> at the New York headquarters. Akashi concluded with the following observation: 'For the moment enquiries here suggest that with the current group of TCNs [Troop Contributing Nations] and the support of NATO the flow of intelligence is as efficient, timely, and detailed as it can be within the constraints of individual perceived national security considerations.'<sup>1922</sup> It is not clear who prompted Akashi to say this, but this conclusion certainly did not apply to all the troop-contributing countries at that moment. In June 1996 Akashi repeated in a conversation with Dutch Foreign Minister Van Mierlo that Janvier 'did not have the US intelligence and in fact had insufficient insights into the intentions of the Serbs'.<sup>1923</sup>

Annan later complained to the Netherlands Permanent Representative at the UN about the fact that 'the UN was not given intelligence available to some allies about the imminent Serb attack'. Game-playing had been widespread. He referred to an article that had earlier been published in *Time* about a deal between the US and Milosevic, whereby the Serbs could take over the enclaves and the Croats the western part of Bosnia.<sup>1924</sup> And during a meeting of the NATO Council at which Annan was a guest, he had declared that Srebrenica had involved an intelligence failure. At that time he had given no further explanation.<sup>1925</sup> So, New York was in the dark too.<sup>1926</sup>

<sup>1919</sup> Confidential collection NIOD (7). Annan to Akashi, 'situation in Srebrenica', No. 2280, 11/07/95.

<sup>1920</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, Box 239, File 6/15. Akashi to Annan, Z-1147, 12/07/95.

<sup>1921</sup> Akashi was apparently still unable to utter the word 'intelligence'.

<sup>1922</sup> UNGE, UNPROFOR, Box 139, File Crypto Fax In 46. Akashi to Annan, Z-1189, 18/07/95.

<sup>1923</sup> MoD, DCBC. Van Mierlo to PR New York, No. 183, 07/06/96.

<sup>1924</sup> MoD, DCBC. PVTN Biegan to Foreign Affairs, No. 389, 05/06/96.

<sup>1925</sup> NMFA, PVNATO. Feith to Foreign Affairs, No. 1467, 03/11/95.

<sup>1926</sup> See also: United Nations, *Srebrenica Report*, 15/11/99, §486, p. 143.

Who did have prior knowledge? In 4 July 1995 in Belgrade, Vladimir Matovic, the former adviser to President Cosic, heard from his foreign ‘political friends’ that something was going on near Srebrenica. He did not wish to reveal who these friends were. He called political sympathizers in Pale, but they knew nothing. On 7 July local newspapers wrote that the VRS was going on the offensive. Matovic knew nothing. ‘His friends’ had told him on 4 July that an attack was imminent, but advisors of Karadzic and Mladic in Pale said (after Matovic contacted them) this was not the case. Who should be believed? He later realized that people outside Mladic’s circle did indeed know nothing.<sup>1927</sup> If Matovic’s claims are true, then the VRS army command was the only group to be aware of what was coming. This can also be deduced from a conversation with Dragan Milovanovic, who at that time had already been a war photographer for eight years. A woman had told him that two days before the attack women in Bratunac noticed that something was about to happen. Mladic had told local military personnel that they should reveal nothing of what they were doing, not even to their mothers and wives. Milovanovic found this striking, because other Serb attacks had generally been discussed long and openly beforehand.<sup>1928</sup>

In Belgrade, however, politicians responded to the events with incredulity. The Canadian diplomat Dennis Snider, who worked at the Canadian embassy, experienced this for himself. According to him the mood in Belgrade was one of disbelief. The hunting of the column of men on the route to Tuzla was understandable, but not the later executions. Most of the people he talked to found this hard to accept. General Momcilo Perisic<sup>1929</sup> of the VJ apparently did know of the attack. He told the Canadian diplomat that he knew of a ‘significant force to Srebrenica’. Officers of the VJ were stationed at the headquarters in Han Pijesak and regular officers of the VJ constantly accompanied Mladic.<sup>1930</sup> The question is whether he had informed Milosevic of this. An interview with Rajko Dukic, who talked to Milosevic after the fall of the enclave, indicates that the president was indeed surprised. The president had asked the group of persons that included Dukic ‘which idiot’ had taken the decision to attack Srebrenica. According to the president the enclave would have bled dry or have become depopulated anyway. Milosevic then drew a comparison with letting water flow away over a plank of wood. According to Dukic the struggle for prestige between Mladic and Karadzic also played a role. Mladic needed a success.<sup>1931</sup>

## 6. Did The Hague have prior knowledge?

According to staff of the MIS, they never received hard intelligence from sister services which warned of an attack. One of the sources from which intelligence might have been obtained was NATO. Reports were sent daily from the Deployed Shed Facility (DSF) in Naples. The DSF was an intelligence cell operated by several member states (including the Netherlands). It should be stated again: NATO has no intelligence capabilities of its own apart from AWACS, and is totally dependent on the intelligence supplied by the member states. If a tactical warning had been available then it would have been very likely to have arrived through NATO channels. An analysis of the reports, which the NIOD was able to access gives the picture described below.

The Balkan Intelligence Summary by the purely US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth on 6 June, i.e. shortly before Karremans’ ‘alarm warning’, predicted for the next 24 to 96 hours that the VRS might possibly increase its military activities on the line of confrontation in Bihac, but not elsewhere. Such a development was not expected in SNE. Only certain OPs would come under heavier

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<sup>1927</sup> Interview with Vladimir Matovic, 16/12/00.

<sup>1928</sup> Interview with Dragan Milovanovic, 17/12/99.

<sup>1929</sup> Perisic was later accused for working for the CIA. ‘Court Postpones Spy Trial of Former Yugo Army Chief’, *Reuters*, 24/12/02.

<sup>1930</sup> Interview with Dennis Snider, 17/11/99.

<sup>1931</sup> Interview with Rajko Dukic, 14/06/00.

paramilitary pressure, now that the Arkan Tigers had been reported in Bratunac at the end of May.<sup>1932</sup> In a memorandum for the period 8 to 9 June, and sent on 10 June by the DSF, the military developments were noted but no predictions of a conquest of the enclave were made.<sup>1933</sup> After this time things were comparatively quiet, but at the start of July tensions rose again. The Balkan IntSum for 2 July made no mention of preparations.<sup>1934</sup> The summary for 6 July noted the outbreak of fighting. For the next 24 to 96 hours it was predicted that warfare activities in Bosnia would be increased, because the ABiH would undertake new sorties around Sarajevo and the Majevica hills. No indications could be found that the VRS planned to launch an attack.<sup>1935</sup>

A 'Cosmic Top Secret Bohemia' report in a Balkan Intelligence Summary on 8 June noted that fighting around Srebrenica was escalating. It was expected that the VRS would try to reduce the size of the enclave.

'However, this course of action had been forecast for several months. The VRS would probably shift forces from other areas before totally reducing any of the eastern enclaves. Such a VRS move could potentially be risky given the ABiH pressure in such areas as Sarajevo'.<sup>1936</sup>

Once again there is no prediction whatsoever of a major attack. Rather, in fact, it contains the expectation that such an attack would not take place. Another analysis concluded that the intensification of fighting was a consequence of the local military situation and the conflict around Sarajevo. It seemed that the VRS goals were limited, aimed at reducing the ABiH defence line and not at conducting a general assault. If the VRS was successful, however, and the number of Serb casualties remained low and the ABiH intensified the fighting around Sarajevo and Bihac, then the VRS might possibly expand its operations and could thereby take the enclave.<sup>1937</sup> On 9 July it was predicted for the next 24 to 96 hours that the VRS would continue the attacks in order to neutralize the ABiH. A report of the latest military developments was made, in which it was concluded that the VRS would do all it could 'to avoid involvement with UNPROFOR troops'. It was expected that the relationship between the ABiH and Dutchbat would seriously deteriorate as a result of the death of the Dutch soldier R. van Renssen.<sup>1938</sup> He was killed by an ABiH soldier. Another NATO report, drawn up on 10 July, still did not expect that the VRS would take the entire enclave. The true intentions of the Bosnian Serbs remained unclear right up to the last moment.<sup>1939</sup>

During telephone calls on 9 and 10 July Mladic assured Janvier that he did not intend to attack the enclave. On this basis it was concluded that the VRS had successfully carried out a limited attack to gain possession of the bauxite mines to the south of the town.<sup>1940</sup> On 10 July the US Chargé d'Affairs in Zagreb discussed the situation in Srebrenica with Akashi and Janvier. The Japanese diplomat declared that following consultations with Major General Herve Gobilliard (the French commander Sector Sarajevo), Janvier and himself on 9 July a warning had been sent to Mladic. It was demanded of Mladic that the offensive be halted and that the VRS withdraw 'to the perimeter of the demilitarized zone as delineated by the Morillon agreement of 8 May 1993'. Akashi threatened the use of air power. Although Mladic had not yet responded, Akashi believed that the suspension of the offensive by the VRS was a 'strong sign' that the warning had been received. In an American commentary it was remarked that this comment was totally opposed to a statement by an adviser to Akashi that the VRS

<sup>1932</sup> Confidential information (64).

<sup>1933</sup> Confidential information (65).

<sup>1934</sup> Confidential information (66).

<sup>1935</sup> Confidential information (67).

<sup>1936</sup> Confidential information (68).

<sup>1937</sup> DCBC, Box 66. Balkan Intsum, Nato Secret, No. CT9507072217270, 07/07/95.

<sup>1938</sup> Confidential information (69).

<sup>1939</sup> Confidential information (70).

<sup>1940</sup> Confidential information (182).



offensive was stopped before the ultimatum. An US diplomat later spoke to one of Akashi's political advisers, John Almstrom. He recounted that the offensive with 100 to 200 soldiers had been halted at 1pm. Janvier had sent the warning to Mladic at 6pm but, Almstrom remarked that 'it was not an ultimatum'. Since no deadline had been set, no answer had been received until then. Almstrom was surprised that the VRS had attacked from just one side, had used such a small force and had suddenly stopped its advance for no apparent reason. He concluded that the VRS simply wanted to exert pressure and did not plan to take Srebrenica: 'Perhaps the worst is over.'<sup>1941</sup>

Janvier declared later that in view of the small size of the VRS force he did not expect that the VRS would try to take Srebrenica or one of the other enclaves. 'What would they do with them if they did?' he wondered. Janvier regarded the action more as a signal to Sarajevo to show what the VRS was capable of. Furthermore the VRS offensive could in part be prompted by recent ABiH sorties in which a Serb village had been destroyed.<sup>1942</sup> This shows that Janvier was not aware that on the evening of 9 July Mladic had decided to take the entire enclave. This is also indicated by the diary entries of the military assistant to the deputy FC, Major David Last. On 9 July at 11pm a further briefing took place in Zagreb. The US intelligence officer Morgan informed those present that the VRS was not aiming to cause the collapse of the enclave: 'The BSA [VRS] was moving from the West'. The ABiH was responsible for the tense situation due to the sorties from the enclave: 'This incident was triggered by the ABiH attacks.' The events were local, but tank bombardments had taken place in Zepa and the crisis could well start there too.

A briefing for Janvier was held on 10 July at 10am. Last noted in his diary that it was around mid-morning that Zagreb began to fear the worst. They still had no idea of the VRS aims. 'BSA [VRS] is unworldly in their logic.' On 10 July at around 3pm Zagreb began to suspect that Srebrenica would fall. The deputy G-2, Commander Morgan, reported that the attack had originally been a local initiative but had now become VRS policy. It was only on 11 July at 11am that Janvier realized that the issue at stake was the conquest of the entire enclave. Until then two options had constantly been applied: a limited attack or the conquest of the enclave. It was not yet clear in Zagreb which option was being followed. Late in the morning of 11 June Janvier concluded that the attack was aimed at the entire enclave.<sup>1943</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Baxter, the military assistant to General Smith, passed on the latest intelligence at 4.50pm. Dutchbat had withdrawn to Potocari, where more than 20,000 Displaced Persons had gathered. The NATO liaison officer announced that the situation was very poor and 'the enclave was lost'.<sup>1944</sup>

On 10 July the situation in Srebrenica was discussed during informal consultations in the Security Council. The representative of the Secretary-General, C. Gharekhan, briefed the members about the latest developments. He reported that the ABiH had attacked a Dutch APC. According to Albright the Security Council should first have additional information before conclusions could be drawn. In response to her question about Close Air Support, Gharekhan stated that the commanders on the ground could request this if their troops were endangered. He declared, *nota bene*, that 'there had not yet been any requests for close air support'.<sup>1945</sup> If Gharekhan really said this on 10 July, then it would seem that he informed the Security Council wrongly. Indeed, earlier on that day Karremans had already made various CAS requests.

In the Balkan IntSum of the JAC at Molesworth on 10 July it was reported that air strikes had been threatened if the VRS continued with attacks. The prediction for the next 24 to 96 hours was that the VRS attack on Srebrenica and Zepa would be continued with a possible escalation around Zepa. In an analysis the JAC concluded that despite the threats it was unlikely that air strikes were imminent above all because the VRS had taken Dutch soldiers hostage. Boutros Ghali had spoken out in support

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<sup>1941</sup> Confidential information (71).

<sup>1942</sup> Confidential information (72).

<sup>1943</sup> MoD, DAB. Notes of the meeting regarding the fall of Srebrenica, 01/11/95.

<sup>1944</sup> Interview with David Last, 02/07/00.

<sup>1945</sup> Confidential information (73).

of the use of air power, but since final approval still lay with Akashi, and in the light of previous UN reactions, the threat of air strikes presumably remained ‘a hollow one’. The VRS knew this and this was why the Dutch had been taken hostage.<sup>1946</sup> In a Cosmic Top Secret Bohemia report by the Combined Air Operations Centre (CAOC) in Vicenza on 11 July, all the developments were summarized. The attack had been interrupted for some time. The VRS had now set an ultimatum that UNPROFOR and the ABiH should depart, leaving behind their weapons and equipment. Even now, no mention was made of the intention to take the enclave as a whole.<sup>1947</sup> In the Balkan IntSum of 11 June, however, it was noted that the VRS now controlled Srebrenica. For the coming 24 to 48 hours it was predicted that more UNPROFOR soldiers and UNMOs would become hostages or targets. The VRS operation could well be the start of a new (either planned or *ad hoc*) strategy. The aim could be twofold: force the Bosnian Muslims to accept Bosnian Serb conditions for peace negotiations and/or the elimination of the eastern enclaves (‘always a thorn in their side’). In addition it would release troops for other purposes.<sup>1948</sup>

An analysis by JAC Molesworth on 11 July noted that the attack ‘runs counter to what has been expected of them for several years’. The VRS had encountered little resistance and had conquered more territory than expected. After Srebrenica the focus turned to Zepa and Gorazde. It was also expected that the VRS would pressure the population to leave the town and to head for the surrounding hills and villages or to go to Zepa. This stream of refugees would cause a humanitarian crisis, by which the VRS could achieve one or possibly two goals. First of all, Srebrenica was no longer a military factor. Secondly Sarajevo would be forced to the negotiating table. In the meantime 400 Dutch soldiers could be used as hostages against possible air strikes. ‘It is basically a no-lose situation for the Bosnian Serbs’, according to JAC, Molesworth. If Sarajevo did not wish to negotiate, then the VRS had at least eliminated the enclave and the Serb army would switch its attention to Zepa. The story would be repeated and once again the VRS might manage to achieve its earlier goals: elimination of Zepa and force Sarajevo to negotiate. If this once again failed to work, then it would be Gorazde’s turn. Although the ABiH was stronger in Gorazde, the VRS would have new troops (about ten brigades) at its disposal.<sup>1949</sup>

Intelligence briefings at NATO in Brussels in the days after the fall were confined to the actual course of the battle around Srebrenica. No attempts were made to predict VRS strategy. It was thought unlikely that the VRS was carrying out a coordinated attack on the eastern enclaves, or that the conquest of Srebrenica had been ordered by the high command.<sup>1950</sup> In short, it can be concluded that no intelligence reached the MIS that indicated an attack. But was intelligence possibly received in a bilateral context? And how did the MIS actually analyse the situation?

#### *The Military Intelligence Service and the attack on Srebrenica*

As earlier described, the information situation of the Military Intelligence Service of the Central Organization (MIS/CO) and the Military Intelligence Service of the Royal Netherlands Army (MIS/Army) was not a unique or special one. Analyses by the MIS/Army made following the fall of OP-E regarding a possible VRS attack went no further than the supposition that the VRS could continue to take over OPs and that the ABiH would try to increase the tension through provocation, resulting in bombardment of ABiH positions and possibly of civilian targets.<sup>1951</sup> This analysis was confirmed a few days later: a repeat of the scenario that had been applied during the taking of OP-E was possible, but as long as the hostage crisis was not solved, this would be unwelcome to the

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<sup>1946</sup> Confidential information (74).

<sup>1947</sup> Confidential information (75).

<sup>1948</sup> Confidential information (76).

<sup>1949</sup> Confidential information (77).

<sup>1950</sup> Confidential information (168).

<sup>1951</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. INTSUM 107/95, 07/06/95.

leadership of the Republika Srpska for political reasons, according to an analyst. If the VRS should nonetheless take action, then this would probably be confined to OPs; occupation of large sections of the enclave was thought unlikely for the time being.<sup>1952</sup> At the end of June the MIS/army did not expect any major changes in the positions of the warring factions.<sup>1953</sup>

A briefing by the MIS/Army on 5 July dealt with the chances of an attack. Which advantages and disadvantages could this have for the VRS? One reason to attack was that the VRS needed a success that could not be achieved elsewhere. Furthermore, this could be conducted with relatively little effort and without many casualties on its own side. Moreover, the VRS would then have a free hand in Eastern Bosnia and could significantly shorten the line of confrontation. A disadvantage was that the Bosnian Serbs would be seen as the guilty party and the Americans would urge reprisals. There were a variety of reasons not to attack. The ABiH in Gorazde was strong and well-organized. Zepa, in contrast to Gorazde, did not provide any improvement to road and river communications. The analysts believed that Srebrenica could indeed be taken in a relatively short time, but that the VRS would have to make considerable sacrifices to do it. It was easier to work for collapse from within. Moreover, the enclave could be taken piece by piece.

It was already possible to use the southern road following the taking of OP-E. From April 1993 onwards the road lay on VRS territory with the exception of a small section at OP-E. The bauxite mine was also in VRS hands, but lay within reach of the ABiH. Taking the entire enclave could be attractive in that it would provide a good north-south route. If the VRS decided to take apart the enclave piece by piece, then considerable difficulties could be expected with the ABiH. The Muslims could isolate OPs, use UN troops as a shield or kill a number of UN soldiers and then give the VRS the blame. The ABiH could attack Dutchbat to gain heavier weapons, or isolate the battalion by surrounding it with civilians. This could be organized in a few hours and would render Dutchbat immobile.<sup>1954</sup> The MIS/Army briefing thus did not give indications of an attack, even though a certain predictive value could not be denied.

The MIS/Army therefore did not have prior knowledge. The intelligence section of the Army Crisis Staff had its suspicions, but it never expressed these out loud. In the daily briefings it constantly stuck to the MIS/Army analysis. All parties involved thought that the attack was aimed at the southern road and the adjacent bauxite mines. In the worst case Dutchbat would be forced back into a small (VRS 'recognized' Safe Area) around Potocari. This reduction in size would have roughly corresponded to the Bosnian Serb interpretation of the enclave borders, i.e. the actual demilitarized area of April 1993.<sup>1955</sup> According to one MIS official the MIS/Army had started to receive reports of movements around the enclave as early as the end of June. Communications links were being laid by the VRS along the line of confrontation, which indicated the desire to communicate securely. Buses had been observed too. What did this mean? Tanks had also been reported and heard by OPs, but it was consistently assumed that the VRS was interested only in the southern road.<sup>1956</sup>

The Head of Intelligence Production and also acting Head of Intelligence of the MIS/Army declared, however, that there were 'absolutely no' tactical indicators that revealed a pattern. Observations from the enclave were particularly summary, and the only possible source of information could have been American UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles). But the Americans never passed this intelligence to the Netherlands. However, the Dutch official forgot to mention that the Dutch F-16s were also very suitable TACRECCE assets which could have been used outside UNPROFOR. In this respect a senior US intelligence official complained to the author that it was all too easy to lament about

<sup>1952</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. INTSUM 109/95, 09/06/95.

<sup>1953</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. INTSUM 120/95, 26/06/95.

<sup>1954</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. Notes on briefing dates 5 July 1995. No author indicated.

<sup>1955</sup> MoD, *SMG*. Report of conversation with Colonel Dedden, 10/08/95.

<sup>1956</sup> Confidential interview (38).

the US behaviour. However, 'the Dutch never got their own information from assets under their control!'<sup>1957</sup>

Nonetheless, on the other hand the value of the UAVs should not be exaggerated, because the VRS had sufficient options for concealing its troops, tanks, artillery and mortars in the mountainous terrain. Apart from this the US intelligence services did not expect a further VRS advance either, but instead that Mladic would be content to control the southern road. The conclusion by British intelligence services, as reported in the press, that an attack was imminent was a typical report at strategic level that was of no use to the MIS. A few MIS officers talked to the British services but the report was too vague and did not fit any pattern.<sup>1958</sup>

The former Head of the MIS/Army, Colonel Bokhoven, also stated that his service did not anticipate the crisis and the fall. The problems were associated with the approaching rotation, whereby the battalion due to be relieved (and now under-strength) was subjected to 'pricking'. Perhaps the VRS was angry about the attack on a Serb village two weeks earlier. The only thing that possibly gave more insight was a report made when the 2nd Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla was ordered to lay mines on all roads to and from Srebrenica. The reason for this was that a VRS attack was expected from the direction of Milici and Han Pijesak.<sup>1959</sup> But this report dated from 7 June. Conversations with other MIS officers show that small-scale actions such as that in Srebrenica can almost never be predicted on the basis of intelligence. The VRS already had sufficient military resources in the region to conduct such an operation.<sup>1960</sup>

On 6 July the MIS/Army concluded that the VRS would attempt to occupy one or more Dutchbat OPs. It was assumed that this did not involve 'a large-scale attack (Srebrenica has no great strategic value), nor an attempt by the ABiH to break out (too weak)'.<sup>1961</sup> The situation was analysed a day after the start of the attack. One possible reason cited for a large-scale attack was the need for a success that could not be achieved in other parts of the operational area. The occupation of the enclave would cost the VRS relatively little effort. This would then give the VRS greater freedom to act in Eastern Bosnia, the line of confrontation would be reduced, troops would be freed for other tasks and the Drina crossings could be better used and exploited. The disadvantages of a major attack were condemnation by the international community and the use of NATO air power.

Such an attack might not be necessary, because the VRS could switch to a battle of attrition and simply wait for the enclave to collapse from within. Dutchbat was faced with considerable potential problems, such as individual blockades within and outside the enclave, organized group actions, attacks, taking of hostages, escalation through provocation, etc. In the event of the enclave being dismantled the ABiH could be expected to try to isolate the OPs and to use the troops remaining there as a shield. A direct ABiH attack on Dutchbat to gain possession of heavy weapons was also possible. The ABiH could quickly achieve complete isolation and total division of Dutchbat. The VRS could in turn also isolate OPs and then give Dutchbat the chance to withdraw or to take them off as hostages or prisoners. It could well be expected that the VRS would try to occupy one or more OPs but, once again, it was not assumed that a major attack was underway. Srebrenica had no great strategic value. No attempt by the ABiH to break out was expected either.<sup>1962</sup>

This analysis probably never reached Dutchbat. In any case on 5 and 6 July Karremans told the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff that he did not expect any notable changes to the situation in the

<sup>1957</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>1958</sup> MoD, *SMG 1006/18*. Report of conversation, 03/08/95. For the reports see also: *House of Commons Hansard*, Vol. 264, Column 1010, 25/10/95.

<sup>1959</sup> Confidential information (36). Also: MoD, *SMG 1006/18*. Report of conversation, 20/07/95 and Confidential interview (36).

<sup>1960</sup> MoD, *SMG*. Report of a conversation, 09/08/95.

<sup>1961</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. Intrep Srebrenica from the Director of Operations, AIV/KL, No. 32729/4, 06/07/95.

<sup>1962</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. Kooijmans to YUGO Dept., around 07/07/95 and INTSUM No. 129/95, 07/07/95.

coming 24 hours.<sup>1963</sup> On 11 July the analysis of the MIS/Army still stated that it was ‘hardly likely’ that the Bosnian Serbs wanted to take the entire enclave. After all, the VRS did not have sufficient infantry to occupy the enclave in the long term.<sup>1964</sup> In an analysis from March 1997 of the information position of the MIS/Army it was established that the service’s own sources and those of its counterparts offered little indication that the VRS was planning an attack. Shelling and troop movements were in evidence at the start of July, but these occurred frequently and ‘were thus not of an exceptional nature’.<sup>1965</sup>

Was there thus no specific plan from which such an operation could be inferred? As early as August 1995 a MIS officer claimed that the conquest was not a preconceived strategic plan. The VRS wanted to control the southern road and to achieve this had to clear the adjoining area. When the VRS troops realized how weak the resistance was, they pushed on further. When the resistance of the ABiH proved to be negligible, the enclave fell swiftly and unexpectedly. Perhaps an operational plan had been prepared and ‘shelved’ earlier, which the VRS then put into practice when the resistance proved to be weak. This could explain why Dutchbat considered that the whole operation was prepared and executed so well.<sup>1966</sup> This is an analysis which seems to fit the later findings of the Tribunal. *Operation Krivaja ‘95* originally did not envisage the conquest of the enclave, but when the resistance of the ABiH and UNPROFOR proved to be so limited on 9 July, on that day it was decided to conquer the entire enclave.<sup>1967</sup> The *ad hoc* nature of the VRS decision-making was confirmed by the military security officer of Dutchbat IV, N. Franssen. He spoke to a Dutchbat soldier who was among the 55 prisoners. He attended a celebration in Bratunac at which high-ranking VRS officers were also present. They told him that they originally had no intention of taking the enclave as a whole. But their probing attacks met with almost no resistance, and so the VRS proceeded with the conquest.<sup>1968</sup> A former official of the Tribunal confirmed this *ad hoc* nature of the VRS attack to the French parliamentary investigation commission.<sup>1969</sup>

What was true of the MIS/Army was also true of the MIS/Air Force. One year after the fall an analyst drew up a ‘Chronological Overview Srebrenica 1 March 1995 to 26 July 1995’ on the basis of the facts available at the time. This once again shows that the MIS/Air Force had no prior tactical knowledge. Troop movements were observed at the eastern edge of the enclave on 5 July, although these were not reported by Dutchbat. On 6 July the same happened in the south of the enclave. This time it was reported by Dutchbat.<sup>1970</sup> But an attack on the enclave was not expected.

#### *The Military Intelligence Service of the Central Organization (MIS/CO)*

A study of the reports by the MIS/CO produces the picture described below. At the start of May 1995 the Intelligence Department of the MIS/CO stated that probably no new major military operations would be undertaken by the ABiH and the VRS. It was, however, conceivable that the VRS would once more take the military initiative. The possibilities for doing this seemed limited in view of the shortage of infantry.<sup>1971</sup> At the start of June it was reported that VJ troops were regularly being deployed, around the eastern enclaves in particular. This was chiefly being done to allow VRS soldiers to take a few days’

<sup>1963</sup> MoD, *SMG*. Report on Srebrenica project, Overview Sitrep Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff Morning Report, 05/07/95 and 06/07/95.

<sup>1964</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. INTSUM No. 131/95, 11/07/95.

<sup>1965</sup> MoD, *MIS/Army*. Memorandum: to CDS; Re: Intelligence on attack on Srebrenica; Drafter: Lt. Col. Van Geldere; Annotation: Col. J. Mulder Head MIS/Army; 18/03/97.

<sup>1966</sup> MoD, *SMG*. Report of conversation, 03/08/95 and confidential interview (28).

<sup>1967</sup> Butler, *Srebrenica Military Narrative – Operation Krivaja 95*, 15/05/00, pp. 950764-950765.

<sup>1968</sup> MoD, *SMG 1006/18*. Report of conversation with N. Franssen, 15/08/95.

<sup>1969</sup> AFP Press release, Testimony by Ruez, 22/02/01.

<sup>1970</sup> MoD, *DCBC, Box 66*. ‘Chronological overview of Srebrenica 1 March 1995 to 26 July 1995’, 11/07/96 and confidential interview (31).

<sup>1971</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Memorandum: ‘Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation’, No. 20/95, 02/05/95.

leave. No mention was made of the chance of a coming attack.<sup>1972</sup> A study of the weekly reports by the MIS/CO about the developments in Bosnia also provided no indication that an attack was predicted.<sup>1973</sup>

The report from the end of June stated that the political leadership in Pale had hinted at possible negotiations, but with conditions unacceptable to Sarajevo. Mladic, however, had declared that the chances for peace in the short term were negligible. Following the ABiH sorties from Srebrenica, Pale had once again cast doubt on the neutrality of UNPROFOR. There was no indication that the cited Serb accusations of ABiH infiltrations and sorties were accurate. According to the MIS/CO it was conceivable that with such reports the VRS was hoping to create a justification for new operations in Eastern Bosnia.<sup>1974</sup> In fact, just three days after the attack on Visnjica the MIS/CO was wrong in this respect.

The first report by the Intelligence Department in July mentioned Karadzic's announcement that the VRS would shortly start offensive operations to force the Muslims to accept a political solution. According to Karadzic a rapid and coordinated attack on the ABiH would enable the VRS to gain maximum advantage from its dominance in heavy weapons. This was preferable to a continuation of the current situation in which the initiative lay with the ABiH, forcing the Bosnian Serbs to deal simultaneously with a large number of relatively small-scale operations. The MIS/CO judged this statement as notable because Mladic had just predicted a longer war.<sup>1975</sup>

On 5 July the MIS/CO prepared a briefing for the Defence Crisis Management Centre. One reason for a 'major' attack could be that the VRS needed a success that could not be achieved in other parts of Bosnia. The advantage was that these enclaves could be occupied with relatively little effort. After clearing away the enclaves, the VRS would be free to act in Eastern Bosnia, the line of confrontation would be reduced and troops would be freed for other tasks. Srebrenica would probably not be attacked because the enclave could be reduced piece by piece, partly through collapse from within. The taking of OP-E provided an example of this. Although the VRS could take the enclave in a relatively short time, it would probably result in a large number of casualties. A disadvantage of such an attack was thought to be that the VRS would be seen as the main guilty party and UNPROFOR could be prompted to use NATO air power.<sup>1976</sup> The MIS/Army drew an identical conclusion.

The fact that both the MIS/CO and the MIS/Army remained in the dark as to the intentions of the VRS after 9 July is also indicated by the weekly report by the Intelligence Department of the MIS/CO issued on 11 July. In this document it is concluded that for the time being there was no reason to assume that the latest VRS operations were the start of attempts to take total control of Srebrenica. The VRS units involved (a hundred men and four tanks) were insufficient for the task. It was assumed that the VRS would maintain pressure on the enclave and would continue with gradual and modest territorial gains. It was true that the VRS had advanced close to the edge of the town, but the main road was now blocked by Dutchbat.<sup>1977</sup> This conclusion was not remarkable, because all the analyses available up to then (BHC in Sarajevo, Zagreb, Deny Flight Intelligence Summary in Naples, the UK Defence Intelligence Staff (DIS) and JAC, Molesworth) pointed in precisely the same direction. And since the MIS analysts mostly gained their information from these sources, their conclusions and prognoses were in line with the other available analyses. It was only in the analysis made after the fall

<sup>1972</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Memorandum: 'Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation', No. 27/95, 08/07/95.

<sup>1973</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Intelligence Dept., 'Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation', No. 28/95, concluded 14/06/95, No. 29, concluded 21/06/95 and No. 30/06, concluded 27/06/95.

<sup>1974</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Intelligence Dept., 'Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation', No. 31/95, concluded 29/06/95.

<sup>1975</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, 'Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation', No. 32/95, concluded 04/07/95.

<sup>1976</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Memorandum on briefing dd. 05/07/95.

<sup>1977</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Intelligence Dept., 'Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation', No. 33/95, concluded 11/07/95.

that it was established that the initial analysis of the previous week had been off the mark. Everything seemed to indicate that the lack of ABiH resistance had led to the rapid conquest.<sup>1978</sup>

What precisely did the MIS/CO receive from its foreign counterparts? According to MIS/CO personnel they never received any hard intelligence which gave explicit warning of an attack.<sup>1979</sup> Staff of a Canadian intelligence service claim that a warning did go to the MIS but ‘in disguised form’ so as not to reveal the Humint source.<sup>1980</sup> This was nowhere to be found in the MIS archives. A British warning can, however, be reconstructed. Interviews with British and Canadian officials revealed that at the end of June the DIS became concerned about the eastern enclaves.<sup>1981</sup> This was also indicated on 28 and 29 June during a bilateral meeting between the MIS/Army and the DIS. A Dutch analyst was told in confidence that there were indications for a VRS attack on the eastern enclaves.<sup>1982</sup> This intelligence originated from MI-6 and according to a DIS official this threat deserved particular attention. It was assumed that the VRS was busy increasing the pressure on all three enclaves, whereby the British expected that the first move would be an attempt to take Srebrenica. The threatening, reduction or conquest of the enclaves could be an extra means of bringing Sarajevo to the negotiating table. It would also put the UN in a difficult position. Karadzic’s position was still seen as stable, but Mladic’s attitude was a cause for concern. He wanted to solve the conflict on the battlefield, while Karadzic envisaged a solution through political consultation.<sup>1983</sup>

The assessment of the conversation with the DIS led to a difference of opinion within the MIS/Army. The most important question was whether this was an official DIS position that had been taken outside the bilateral discussions. This proved not to be the case, because it was revealed in confidence. A fierce discussion then ensued within the MIS. How seriously should this report be taken? The majority of the analysts continued to believe that the VRS aimed only to take the southern road. Another problem was that Dutchbat reported no military details, making it difficult to form a complete picture. Sometimes the gathered intelligence was confusing. Several analysts weighed up the British report and set it off against the other intelligence available at the time. The British intelligence sounded unlikely. The VRS would never have the ‘sheer nerve’ to do something like that. The report on the bilateral talks with the DIS was never passed to the Heads of the MIS or the MIS/CO. The only Balkans analyst in the MIS/CO first heard about this report years later. The MIS/Army was a very closed organization and the DIS information remained ‘stranded’ there. The matter needed to be weighed up because there was no further corroboration.<sup>1984</sup>

In an assessment after the attack the MIS/CO concluded that the international community seemed to accept the fall as a *fait accompli* and to be awaiting the further course of events. The unexpected nature and speed of the operation had taken the international community by surprise. How could this have happened? It was unclear whether the VRS plan had been established beforehand or whether the VRS had exploited its unexpected success in taking the south-western part of the enclave. On the other hand the occupation of the enclaves had always been a strategic goal. Perhaps the easy conquest of OP-E had given the impetus for further action. Following this more VRS troops were shifted to the southern edge of the enclave, also serving to cut off the link with Zepa. The speed and effectiveness of the VRS showed – according to the MIS – that Srebrenica had been taken with clear intent. The entire operation indicated lengthy preparation and the presence of Mladic ruled out a spontaneous local offensive.<sup>1985</sup>

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<sup>1978</sup> MoD, MIS/CO. ‘Developments in the former Yugoslav Federation’, No. 34/95, concluded 20/07/95.

<sup>1979</sup> Confidential interviews (25) and (40).

<sup>1980</sup> Confidential interview (9).

<sup>1981</sup> Confidential interviews (8) and (9).

<sup>1982</sup> Confidential interview (38).

<sup>1983</sup> Confidential information (30) and MoD, MIS/CO. Report Bilat 28-29 June 1995, q.v. (late June/early July 1995).

<sup>1984</sup> Confidential interviews (25), (26), (28), (37) and (38).

<sup>1985</sup> MoD, MIS/CO. The situation in the former Yugoslavia, briefing, ± 13/07/95.

*The Central Organization and the attack on the enclave*

What elements of the intelligence gathered by the MIS actually reached the policymakers? In the Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC) the question as to the true intentions of the Bosnian Serbs consistently remained unanswered. Did they want the entire enclave or just the southern road? During a hearing in Dutch Parliament a senior Defence official, J. de Winter, declared that ‘only later’ did he realize that the aims of the Bosnian Serbs went further. ‘That became clear, at least as far as I am concerned, three or four days before the fall’. As explanation for this De Winter cites the fact that the VRS then started to attack OPs at the western and northern edges of the enclave. ‘That would be strange if they aimed only to occupy the south-eastern tip’. De Winter thus concluded on 6 or 7 July that there was something strange going on, but declared that his further inquiries resulted in nothing apart from the statement that the only Serb goal was the southern road.<sup>1986</sup>

General Couzy was on holiday but was in constant contact with the Ministry of Defence. The Deputy Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army, Major General A.P.M. van Baal, also appears to have had no prior knowledge, and was also unaware that warnings had been received. He was completely in the dark.<sup>1987</sup> The same was stated by Lieutenant Colonel M.C.J. Felix, Head of Operational Affairs of the Royal Netherlands Army. No signals regarding the coming danger had been received from foreign military attachés in The Hague either. Regarding the Dutch intelligence situation Felix said: ‘The Netherlands is a small country. In the intelligence community you’re at the bottom of the pile if you yourself have nothing to offer. In my view, this played a role during that period as well.’<sup>1988</sup> However, the Dutch with their excellent F-16s had TACRECCE to offer.

It is also important that in the decisive weeks before the fall of Srebrenica, the MIS/CO and the MIS/Army were not present at the DCBC for crisis consultations. Their presence was in fact not customary and was obviously not considered necessary during this time of tension.<sup>1989</sup> Minister Voorhoeve confirmed to Parliament that no prior knowledge was held. The MIS appeared not to have had any. Voorhoeve admitted that The Hague remained in great uncertainty right up to the end and did not have its own independent intelligence.<sup>1990</sup> Couzy also admits in his memoirs that he had no prior knowledge. He thought that the operation was aimed at the southern road, and it was only on Thursday evening, 10 July, that Couzy realized that the VRS were out to take the entire enclave.<sup>1991</sup>

In short: ‘The Hague’ was surprised at the sudden attack. Is it true that, apart from a few unclear indications from the DIS, no other foreign intelligence and security services were aware of the situation? It is almost inconceivable that with all their Sigint and Imint, the US services should have gathered no information. Moreover, the Bosnian intelligence and security services also had good Sigint. Was this not shared with UNPROFOR or the United States?

## 7. The foreign intelligence services

In Section 3 it was established that the plans for a VRS attack on the enclave were made only at a very late stage and in a short time. There were no preparations beginning months earlier. The preparations for the attack on Srebrenica took place between 2 and 6 July. The goal of the operation was, as said, not to conquer the Safe Area but to reduce it in size and to cut the link with Zepa. Prior knowledge about the occupation of the entire enclave could thus only have been available after 9 July, because this was when the decision was taken. The question as to whether prior knowledge existed must thus focus on a

<sup>1986</sup> TCBU, *Vertrekpunt The Hague*, Part 1, pp. 182-183.

<sup>1987</sup> Hearing of Bakker Commission, Stenographic report of testimony by A. Van Baal, X19/14-06-2000, No. 121U.doc-3, 31/05/00.

<sup>1988</sup> Interviews with M.J.C. Felix, 06/04/00 and A.M. van der Togt, 04/05/00.

<sup>1989</sup> Confidential interview (26).

<sup>1990</sup> TCBU, *Vertrekpunt The Hague*, Part 1, p. 182.

<sup>1991</sup> Couzy, *Mijn Jaren*, pp. 155-163.



very short period: 2 to 6 July. This was when the preparations took place. In addition 9 and 10 July are important because this was when it was decided to take the entire enclave. What was perceived during this time and how was this interpreted?

According to claims in the press Western intelligence and security services had prior knowledge of the attack. In the autumn of 1995 various daily papers reported that the Americans knew about the assault plans three weeks before the fall. This was reportedly held back from NATO and the UN in order not to disrupt the peace efforts of Clinton's emissaries. These articles<sup>1992</sup> were to a great extent derived from an article by Roy Gutman in *Newsday* and an article by Andreas Zumach in *Die Berliner Tageszeitung* on 12 October in which it was reported that unmanned US reconnaissance planes (UAVs) had followed and photographed the preparations for the Srebrenica attack for days in advance. US intelligence services had intercepted the daily conversations between the Chief of Staff of the VRS, General Perisic, and Mladic more than three weeks before the attack began, from 17 June 1995 onwards. In these calls the generals planned the operation. Excerpts from the reports of these conversations had been shown to him, and proved that the initiative for the operation came from Belgrade. Perisic reportedly commanded the actual attack. Moreover, UAVs had collected Imint on the build-up of the VRS around the enclave and relocation of tanks and artillery.<sup>1993</sup> As shown in Chapter 7, the question is whether UAV's were flying over Bosnia around this time and if so, whether this Imint was analysed in time. This was very probably not the case.

According to journalists the German government also knew about the VRS plans. Through liaison the *Bundesnachrichtendienst* (BND) is said to have received about 90 per cent of all its intelligence on Yugoslavia from the US services. But a senior BND official seriously distrusted this percentage.<sup>1994</sup> This would have been a more substantial intelligence liaison than with the British or French services, while NATO received even less intelligence. The US cooperation with the BND is said to have intensified even further from September 1994 onwards when the US intelligence services cut back their cooperation with the French and the British. Independently of the Americans, the BND was able to monitor the communications traffic between the Serbs and the Bosnian Serbs. Journalists also claimed that the BND eavesdropped on the traffic between Mladic and Perisic. A joint CIA-BND listening post even monitored 'all' key telephone conversations between Belgrade and Serb field commanders in Bosnia.<sup>1995</sup> The German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Klaus Kinkel, categorically denied that the BND or the government had known anything.<sup>1996</sup> A senior German diplomat with permanent access to BND intelligence confirmed this statement. No immediate forewarning was provided by the BND. There had been rumours, but these caused a sort of 'cry wolf' effect.<sup>1997</sup>

Interviews by the author established that the BND was initially quite successful from 1993 onwards as regards Sigint operations against the VRS and VJ. However, the Bosnian Serbs soon found out and began to use different crypto and better equipment. The BND could not any longer eavesdrop on the Bosnian Serb traffic. For this reason there was no Sigint available regarding the VRS attack on Srebrenica.

<sup>1992</sup> See for instance: 'Amerikanen verzwegen voorkennis Srebrenica' (Americans kept prior knowledge of Srebrenica to themselves), *De Stem*, 13/10/95 and 'Verenigde Staten wisten al weken tevoren van val Srebrenica', *De Gelderlander*, 13/10/95.

<sup>1993</sup> Andreas Zumach, 'US Intelligence knew Serbs were planning an assault on Srebrenica', *Basic Reports*, No. 47, 16/10/95. See also: 'VS wisten van komende val Srebrenica', *Nederlands Dagblad*, 13/10/95; 'VS wisten al weken tevoren van val Srebrenica', *De Gelderlander*, 13/10/95 and Ian Bruce, 'Massacre helped Nato take charge of Bosnian conflict', *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 12/07/01.

<sup>1994</sup> Confidential information (87).

<sup>1995</sup> Andreas Zumach, 'BND wusste von Srebrenica-Angriff' (BND knew about Srebrenica attack), *Berliner Tageszeitung*, 20/10/95; 'Angriff auf Schutzzone Srebrenica. BND wusste angeblich vorab von serbischer Offensive' (Attack on Srebrenica Safe Area. BND allegedly knew about Serb offensive in advance), *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 20/10/95; Ian Bruce, 'Massacre helped Nato take charge of Bosnian conflict', *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 12/07/01; 'Woman of iron with a steely resolve', *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 07/07/01 and 'Why these guilty men remain free', *The Herald (Glasgow)*, 09/05/97.

<sup>1996</sup> Andreas Zumach, 'Ich muss diese Enklaven loswerden' (I have to get rid of these enclaves), *Die Tageszeitung*, 01/11/95.

<sup>1997</sup> Confidential interview (53).

A senior BND official also confirmed that the BND had no foreknowledge regarding the attack on Srebrenica and was completely surprised by it. Like the US and British services, the Germans also had recruited sources close to Mladic but they apparently produced no timely warning. The BND knew all the time that the VRS had the capabilities and intentions in the longer run but the attack and also the scale of the subsequent atrocities was a surprise.<sup>1998</sup> And the BND did also not receive much intelligence from its European partners like the French. According to German intelligence sources the French were even reluctant to share information with the BND.<sup>1999</sup>

On 29 October 1995 the *New York Times* responded to the European reports. In June the US intelligence community received indications that the VRS was going to concentrate on the enclaves. At that time it was unclear what the scale of the operation would be.<sup>2000</sup> On the same day the *Washington Post* also provided a reconstruction. At the end of June US intelligence services reportedly observed a build-up around the enclave. Mladic was furious about the raids being conducted from the enclave and wanted to put an end to them. But analysts had concluded that the aim was to neutralize Srebrenica 'rather than take it over all together'.<sup>2001</sup>

In a new article a day later it was claimed that the French intelligence services were also aware of the situation. The French also intercepted the communications traffic between Perisic and Mladic.<sup>2002</sup> Florence Hartmann received, more or less, a confirmation of this in a conversation with a high-ranking member of the French military intelligence service. According to Hartmann's anonymous source the buses and trucks had been waiting for days on the border with Serbia. The French service knew that a large-scale operation to deport the population was going to take place. However, these latter claims are both completely untrue and totally unfounded. Hartmann's source directly added that it was absolutely impossible to predict the mass murders.<sup>2003</sup> This last statement is directly at odds with that of a British official of the DIS. In an interview this person declared that the murders did not come as a surprise. It was only the scale that was surprising and that Mladic let them take place, which was 'a very stupid thing to do'.<sup>2004</sup> Also a US intelligence official claimed the same. In the Force Commander's briefing at 1630 on 7 July when a question was asked about the aftermath of a collapse of the enclave to a VRS offensive the US Deputy G-2 response was 'there will be a bloodbath'. Anybody who had watched the war in Bosnia and Croatia unfold could not rationally believe otherwise, according to this official. On the contrary, the only question in the minds of reasonably informed observers was not whether atrocities would occur, but rather how bad they would be. After all, military logic demands that the worst case is assumed, which in this case was still that the VRS wanted to capture the enclave. But on the other hand, according to a senior US intelligence official, even if the intelligence was available that the enclave was to be collapsed by the VRS that still provided no indication that a massacre was about to happen. Any knowledgeable observer of the war in Bosnia and Croatia would still have doubted that the VRS had the audacity to do it anyway.<sup>2005</sup>

After this things remained quiet for a while, but an article in *The New York Review of Books* in May 1996 caused a new stir. According to the journal, US intelligence services had sufficient warning of an attack. Research revealed that the intercepts as described did indeed exist. The VRS planned, it was said, 'to shave the enclave'. Analysts expected that the VRS would not take the entire enclave for fear of major losses, air strikes and the problem of the thousands of refugees. It was true that US spy aircraft had observed large numbers of buses at Bijeljina but it was assumed that these would be used to

<sup>1998</sup> Confidential interviews (98) and (99).

<sup>1999</sup> Confidential interviews (98) and (99).

<sup>2000</sup> 'srebrenica: the Days of Slaughter', *The New York Times*, 29/10/95.

<sup>2001</sup> M. Dobbs & R. Jeffrey Smith, 'New Proof Offered Of Serb Atrocities', *Washington Post*, 29/10/95.

<sup>2002</sup> Andreas Zumach, 'Grosser Lauschangriff auf Srebrenica' (Major eavesdropping offensive against Srebrenica), *Die Tageszeitung*, 30/10/95.

<sup>2003</sup> Hartmann, *Milosevic*, p. 338.

<sup>2004</sup> Confidential interview (57).

<sup>2005</sup> Confidential interview (46) and confidential information (80).

transport VRS troops.<sup>2006</sup> However, it was forgotten to mention that this town was outside the territory of the Drina Corps and that the observed buses therefore had little to do with the attack on Srebrenica. Just like the ABiH, the VRS transported all its soldiers by bus. The CIA director John Deutch, in a letter sent to *The New York Review of Books*, denied that his service had had prior knowledge. This was a remarkable step, because in the past the CIA had seldom responded to a wide range of accusations. There were also no intercepts of conversations between Perisic and Mladic. An internal State Department document also denied that there had been any prior knowledge.<sup>2007</sup> In addition the author spoke to two U.S. intelligence officials who independently from each other checked US Sigint archives and not a trace could be found of the intercepts.<sup>2008</sup> Apart from this, these important intercepts certainly would have ended up in the daily reporting of the purely US Joint Analysis Center (JAC) in Molesworth. The author was able, thanks to a foreign intelligence agency, to study these reports over a period of many months before, during and after. However, these intercepts as mentioned by journalists never showed up in the daily reporting of JAC, Molesworth, which sometimes had the highest classification grade. It was again an indication that one can have doubts about the existence of these intercepts.

In a response the authors of the article in *The New York Review of Books* stood by their story. An anonymous source confirmed the existence of these raw intercepts. There was a 'week's worth of such intercepts about the coming assault on Srebrenica'.<sup>2009</sup> As the VRS had imposed radio silence and communicated over secure landlines, this claim may be doubted. *Nemday* also wrote about the existence of prior knowledge. General Nicolai saw reports concerning the Arkan Tigers. 'They always showed up at places where something was about to happen', according to Nicolai. 'That also was an indication that Srebrenica was on their wish list'.<sup>2010</sup> But a report of the wandering Arkan Tigers, weeks before the attack, is absolutely not the same as a hard indication of an attack on Srebrenica.

What was the response in the Netherlands to all these revelations? The information was so disturbing that Voorhoeve contacted his US colleague and asked him for clarification. Perry assured Voorhoeve during their meeting in Williamsburg that the Pentagon knew of nothing. An investigation by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) showed that a 'review of the intelligence prior to 10 July does not reveal any tangible evidence of an intent to completely take control of the enclave'.<sup>2011</sup> The question of whether the CIA or the NSA knew something was not asked, and so was not answered either. In order to be quite sure, General Van den Breemen also inquired with the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), General John Shalikashvili, who assured him that no crucial intelligence had been kept back.<sup>2012</sup> The military adviser to Boutros-Ghali, General Van Kappen, had also talked to various sources in the Pentagon about the issue of prior knowledge, where he had been assured 'hand on heart' that the information in question had not been held. He had no reason whatsoever to doubt this.<sup>2013</sup>

So what is true of all these claims in the press and other publications that the CIA or other agencies was aware of the preparations for an attack? Since Mladic first decided on 2 July to 'shave' the enclave at the southern edge and on 9 July to take over the entire enclave, any prior knowledge of the attack would have been minimal and the aforementioned press reports cannot be true. Ambassador

<sup>2006</sup> Charles Lane and Thom Shanker, 'Bosnia: What the CIA Didn't Tell Us', *The New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96. For Lane's background in the debate on Bosnia: cf. UNNY, UNPROFOR, *Archive SRSG, Box 87717*. Jim Shear to Akashi, 15/10/94 and Charles Lane, 'Brock Crook', *The New Republic*, 05/09/94.

<sup>2007</sup> American FOIA, State Department memorandum, 19/12/96.

<sup>2008</sup> Confidential interviews (13) and (54).

<sup>2009</sup> 'The CIA and Bosnia: An Exchange', *New York Review of Books*, 06/06/96.

<sup>2010</sup> Roy Gutman, 'UN's Deadly Deal', *Nemday*, 29/05/96.

<sup>2011</sup> Charles Lane and Thom Shanker, 'Bosnia: What the CIA Didn't Tell Us', *The New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96.

<sup>2012</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*. Memorandum: to CDS; Re: Intelligence on attack on Srebrenica; Drafter: Lt. Col. Van Geldere; Annotation: Col. J. Mulder Head MIS/Army; 18/03/97.

<sup>2013</sup> B. Ummelen, 'Verenigde Staten ontkennen wetenschap aanval op Srebrenica' (United States denies knowledge of attack on Srebrenica), *De Limburger*, 14/10/95.

James Pardew, who was the head of the Balkan Task Force (BTF) at the Pentagon, confirmed that there was no prior knowledge. The BTF did indeed note an increase in fighting and troop movements from the end of June onwards, but an attack was not expected. The enclave was of no great value to the VRS, which would then also become responsible for all the Displaced Persons. Moreover, it would mean a direct confrontation with UNPROFOR and NATO.<sup>2014</sup> It thus seems more likely that the troop movements and tanks were first established in analyses made after the event. Indeed, Srebrenica did not enjoy high priority in the US intelligence community. Moreover, American officers in the G-2 staffs in Sarajevo and Zagreb, Powers and Morgan, had no prior knowledge.<sup>2015</sup> When journalists write that US intelligence services were informed ‘weeks in advance’, one can doubt this.

Nonetheless, the ABiH also declared that the Americans knew about the intentions of the VRS. This was stated by a Bosnian officer, General Andjeljko Makar. He even spoke of knowledge a month in advance. He came to hear of the VRS plans from a foreign source. According to him the German services also knew about it. The raid on Visnjica on 26 June was thus not the ‘famous last straw’. Knowledge a month earlier would be logical too, because the planning for the attack required at least four weeks.<sup>2016</sup> Just as with other claims, these statements can be questioned because all foreign intelligence analyses in 1994 and 1995 established that the VRS was in a position to take the enclave at any moment without having to make any substantial extra preparations beforehand.

Various military analysts of the US intelligence community interviewed by the author also denied that they had prior knowledge. In fact, the CIA had great difficulty in keeping tabs on the VRS. Most of its troops were infantry, and this field of VRS operations was well-organized. It was difficult to keep track of its structures. There were no hard indications that the VRS wanted to take over the enclaves in their entirety; no significant build-up was observed. One should also not forget, according to the interviewed analysts, that ultimately it was only a small unit that attacked Srebrenica. At the time it was almost impossible to establish which VRS units carried out the assault. This knowledge was first gained by the US intelligence community in retrospect. Regarding the motives for the attack on the eastern enclaves, US analysts stated that the VRS was afraid of losing the war. This fear also played a role in the decision to attack Srebrenica. Pale wanted to put an end to the war and therefore they had to get rid of the enclaves.<sup>2017</sup>

In this respect there are two important parallels between the attack on Srebrenica and Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait. The assessment by the CIA on the eve of Iraq’s invasion was that Saddam Hussein would likely launch a military campaign to seize a limited piece of Kuwaiti territory. This ‘limited objective’ was forward leaning at the time. Many of the most astute observers of Middle East politics, including Arab heads of state intimately familiar with Saddam Hussein such as King Hussein of Jordan and President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, were predicting that Iraq was militarily posturing to politically pressure the Kuwaitis over oil production levels. King Hussein even assured President Bush in a phone conversation that the crisis between Iraq and Kuwait would be resolved without fighting. Another parallel between Srebrenica and Iraq’s invasion was the lack of Humint. A major shortcoming in warning of the Gulf war was the lack of Humint to help decipher Saddam’s political intentions. And the poor Humint achievement is not an isolated incident in CIA’s history. Civilian policy makers shared this assessment. As U.S. Secretary of State James Baker characterized the situation: ‘U.S. intelligence assets on the ground were virtually nonexistent’. He judged that ‘there wasn’t much intelligence on what was going on inside Iraq’. The same applied to Bosnia: there was also a lack of Humint regarding short-term Bosnian Serb intentions.

<sup>2014</sup> Interview with James Pardew, 01/04/98.

<sup>2015</sup> Confidential interviews (9) and (54).

<sup>2016</sup> Interviews with Andjeljko Makar, 12/06/00 and 16/06/00. For the attack on Visnjica see for instance: Part III, Chapter 6 of the main report. Also: Stephen Kinzer, ‘Government Troops attack Bosnian Serb village’, *The New York Times*, 26/06/95.

<sup>2017</sup> Confidential interviews (9) and (54).

In this respect the author Russell points to the following distinction. Secrets are facts that can be stolen by Humint collectors. Mysteries, on the other hand, are projections of the future that are less vulnerable to human collection and tend to be the bailiwick of analysis.<sup>2018</sup> However, as Russell correctly observed, these criticisms, moreover, neglect the fact that CIA is not designed to be a 'combat support agency'. CIA's charter has been to provide strategic-level intelligence primarily to civilian policy makers and not tactical intelligence to battlefield commanders. While military commanders are often prone to fault CIA for perceived shortcomings, they appear reticent to fault their own military service intelligence shops and the DIA whose charters are to provide tactical combat support to field commanders. Accordingly, DIA and military intelligence manpower for conducting tactical military analysis dwarfs that of CIA.<sup>2019</sup>

Nevertheless, an initial signal regarding Srebrenica was sent by Karadzic in his speech on 23 May, in which he said that he wanted to get rid of the enclaves, but at that time the CIA was unaware that this announcement fitted in with the VRS strategy. According to US analysts the operations in July 1995 were to some extent coordinated with Belgrade. There was no pressing military need for the VJ to assist the VRS in an attack; the VRS had sufficient manpower. But did the VRS only want the southern section, or did it want the entire enclave? This question long remained unclear. The CIA did not expect Mladic to go for the entire enclave. The service had little intelligence regarding Serb intentions and the actual course of events, and was confronted with an army that operated with small units and a few tanks in the woods.<sup>2020</sup> This made it hard to keep track of the VRS and no hard indications were obtained. What was the situation for other US intelligence services?

The Bureau of Intelligence & Research (I&R) at the State Department had no prior knowledge either. This bureau was in a unique position: it liaised with all US intelligence and security services. A great deal of tactical military intelligence was held on the warring factions. The Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) did some fine work and kept track of the order of battle. There were few surprises in the *modus operandi* of the VRS because this did not deviate from that of the VJ. The standard approach was: firstly artillery and mortar bombardments, then the deployment of tanks and infantry, and then paramilitary units and special police. This was the systematic pattern that almost always presented itself. This service managed to chart all VRS positions involved in the siege of Sarajevo. The DIA also had excellent intelligence on Northern Bosnia, but there was very little intelligence on Eastern Bosnia. One problem was that the DIA gathered a great deal of humanitarian intelligence, but this was never analysed within the DIA and was thus often lost. The DIA concentrated only on military operations and many humanitarian issues were not passed on to I&R. Besides this, although the DIA was good on 'capabilities' it was weak on 'intentions'.

Much tactical military intelligence was not shared with other services, but retained by the DIA for itself. Four months after Srebrenica, for instance, much DIA material was discovered in Washington that had never been sent to Zagreb. Much of its intelligence was chiefly examined for its military value, and in this case attention was mostly devoted to variations in the military battle order. The best sources were formed by the press, NGOs and Displaced Persons. In any case the State Department's I&R did not expect an attack.<sup>2021</sup> Many interviews confirm that most intelligence and security services were not aware of the coming attack. This is not so surprising in view of the short time needed by the VRS to set up the operation. Moreover, the radio silence observed by the VRS meant that little was intercepted.

<sup>2018</sup> Richard L. Russell, 'CIA's Strategic Intelligence in Iraq', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 117 (Summer 2002), 2, pp. 196-197 and 206.

<sup>2019</sup> Richard L. Russell, 'CIA's Strategic Intelligence in Iraq', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 117 (Summer 2002), 2, p. 204.

<sup>2020</sup> Confidential interview (7).

<sup>2021</sup> Confidential interviews (12), (13) and (76).

*So which organizations did have clear indications?*

The question remains: despite Mladic's late decision to undertake an assault on Srebrenica might there, notwithstanding all denials, be indications that foreign military intelligence services knew something? Research has shown that this Canadian did have suspicions that the VRS was up to something. For some considerable time Ottawa had been warned by Canadian staff in Zagreb and Sarajevo that in the longer term the VRS would go on the attack. Reportedly the build-up was monitored by Ottawa through Humint, Sigint and Imint. But it still remained unclear whether the VRS aims were confined to the southern tip or encompassed the entire enclave. It had often happened that the VRS massed troops at certain places. Everyone then expected an attack or an operation, but ultimately it failed to materialize. When the ABiH did this, however, it was a sure indication that a military operation was going to take place.<sup>2022</sup> On the basis of Imint the J-2 Military Intelligence Cell at the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND) reportedly ascertained that two groups of T-54 tanks were moving in the direction of the enclaves. One later turned off towards Srebrenica, heading for the southern tip of the enclave, and the other unit headed for Zepa. This happened 2 to 3 weeks before the event, and the intelligence officials wondered whether this was a reconnaissance mission. 'What was going on?' The Canadian military intelligence service also established that the VRS had moved new and heavier long-range artillery to Sugar Hill, the mount that controlled Tuzla and Tuzla Air Base. Relocations of other artillery in the direction of Zvornik and Bratunac were also observed.

Imint from satellites and U-2s over Eastern Bosnia was, according to some Canadian sources, rapidly available in Ottawa. One can, however, doubt if this was indeed so rapidly as outlined to the author. Even if DIA gave the Canadians the second copy from RAF Alconbury, they still had more than a week's delay, because the shipment out of the UK was usually at least a week after the U-2 mission was flown. If the DIA took the time to make a third copy for the Canadians from their own DIA copy, one must add at least another day. Satellite imagery is a different story of course, but it does not provide the comprehensive coverage required to maintain the sort of picture as described by the Canadians.<sup>2023</sup>

In addition, the SAS had managed to take photographs of the new artillery and tanks from close up. Reports were also received that frequently changing VJ units had been observed at the southern tip of the enclave. This was evident from the shoulder emblems on the uniforms and the Belgrade dialect spoken. Partly on the basis of this intelligence a briefing was given to the Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, General Armand Roy, two weeks before the attack. In this briefing analysts forecasted that something would happen around Srebrenica in the near future. Roy is said to have rejected the however: he did not believe in an attack. Ottawa probably had the same intelligence at its disposal as the British DIS, but a different conclusion was drawn.

It also seems that the Bosnian Muslims, on the basis of Comint, also knew of a Serb action long in advance. In Chapter 6 of this study it was established that they did have intercepts, but that these were first analysed weeks or months later. The Muslims had insufficient personnel, interception equipment, cryptoanalysts and analysis capabilities, and no internal communication network to get the gathered Comint to where it was needed quickly and efficiently. The method of interception and processing was too labour intensive, meaning that many messages were 'missed'. It is likely that only fragments were intercepted. Nonetheless, these fragments could sometimes have provided quite important intelligence, but not the full picture. But let us suppose that these intercepts were indeed available in real time and not too late. Were they then passed on to the US intelligence services? Or did the Americans gather such information themselves via satellites or aircraft? In June 1995 US officials admitted that intelligence about tactical military matters provided largely through technical sources

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<sup>2022</sup> Confidential interviews (9) and (60).

<sup>2023</sup> Confidential information (80).

(presumably they were referring to Elint and low-grade Comint) would be a much easier issue for them than gathering political intelligence on what the Serbians and Bosnian Serbs were thinking.<sup>2024</sup>

If the CIA or the NSA were able to access Bosnian intercepts, then one must ask what reasons there might have been for not sharing these. One of the biggest problems seems to be the dissemination of Sigint among the US and foreign consumers. In the US intelligence community this is referred to as the Green Door Syndrome, in which the vast majority of political and military policymakers do not have access to Sigint. This prevented an effective integration of Sigint in other intelligence products. It was only in the course of the 1980s that Sigint started to be spread a little more widely, but this process still cannot be described as optimal.<sup>2025</sup>

But if Sigint on operation *Krivaja '95* was possibly available to the CIA or the National Security Agency, why was it not passed on? A variety of possibilities present themselves. The Green Door Syndrome may have played a role. The highly sensitive nature of Sigint may have led to the intercepts not being fed into 'the line'. Perhaps the US services wanted to conceal the original source and the relationship with the 2nd Corps. A third possibility is that the intercepts did enter the pipeline but then remained 'stuck' due to a lack of analysis capability. Despite all the publications implying that intelligence services have become 'deaf' due to the avalanche of information,<sup>2026</sup> it seems that gathering intelligence is no problem. In reality the biggest problem is 'the continuing decline of its Sigint processing, analysis and reporting infrastructure'.<sup>2027</sup>

But in Bosnia this was not the case. The Bosnian Sigint was not passed on to UNPROFOR. Was it perhaps passed on to the Americans, and was there a special liaison between the 2nd Corps and the US services? Hagman establishes that 'it was general knowledge that US advisers (without any affiliation to the UN) were deployed in Sarajevo and Tuzla throughout 1994 and 1995, working out of, for example, the HQ ABiH 2 Corps (Tuzla) and Bosnia Hercegovina Government buildings.' According to various reports this was a 'two-way street', as Americans are said to have passed on intelligence to the ABiH.<sup>2028</sup> It is likely that staff of the CIA and DIA were active in the region, but they concentrated mostly on Humint. The CIA did not open its first official station in Sarajevo until September 1995. There was also no official representation of the NSA and no formal or informal liaison with the Bosnian intelligence services.<sup>2029</sup>

However, as already stated in Chapter 6, the Americans never gained access to these intercepts. Following publication of the first press reports, a US intelligence analyst undertook a lengthy search but it was found that these Bosnian intercepts were not held in the relevant archives. The conclusion was that these were not shared. This analyst pointed out that his government would not have kept such information to itself and would have immediately publicized it in order to save many lives.<sup>2030</sup> This was also indicated by interviews with other US policymakers. Like the head of the Balkan Task Force at the Pentagon, James Pardew, who categorically denied that this Task Force ever received this intelligence in 1995. One or more (video) conferences between the Pentagon, the NSA, the CIA and the US EUCOM were held almost daily in order to exchange intelligence, but these intercepts were never mentioned.<sup>2031</sup> An intelligence analyst of the US State Department also denied ever having seen Bosnian intercepts and declared that this material would certainly have been used by the State Department.<sup>2032</sup> This is a further

<sup>2024</sup> James Risen, 'Experts Warn U.S. Intelligence Help Has Limits', *Los Angeles Times*, 07/06/95.

<sup>2025</sup> Matthew M. Aid, 'Not so Anonymous: Parting the Veil of Secrecy About the National Security Agency', Theoharis, *A Culture of Secrecy*, pp. 64-65 and confidential interviews (6) and (13).

<sup>2026</sup> Seymour M. Hersh, 'The Intelligence Gap: How the Digital Age Left Our Spies Out in the Cold', *The New Yorker*, 06/12/99, p. 58.

<sup>2027</sup> See: Matthew M. Aid, 'The Time of Troubles: The US National Security Agency in the Twenty-First Century', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 15 (2000) 3, pp. 1-32.

<sup>2028</sup> Hagman, *UN-NATO*, p. 92.

<sup>2029</sup> Confidential interview (13) and interviews with James Pardew, 30/11/00 and Matthew Aid, 02/12/00.

<sup>2030</sup> Confidential interview (54).

<sup>2031</sup> Interview with James Pardew, 30/11/00.

<sup>2032</sup> Confidential interview (13).

confirmation that the ABiH intercepts released later were not in real time. And again, the reports of JAC, Molesworth as studied by the author also did not contain any reference to these intercepts.

To summarize: American, British, Canadian and perhaps other agencies did have some indications of troop movements and the relocation of equipment, but did not conclude from this that a large-scale attack was imminent. If something was about to happen, then it would be a limited operation. The warning from the DIS to the MIS/Army was on a confidential, personal basis. It is also quite possible that all this 'prior knowledge' was first established after the event and that the indications were not signalled in time in July. After all, Srebrenica was not assigned high priority. Then there is the analysis of the Canadian intelligence cell at DND, made at the end of June, that an attack was imminent. How can this be explained? To begin with this information came from a single source and can be confirmed nowhere else. One possible explanation is that the Canadian analysts had access to the same intelligence as did their US and British colleagues but took a different view of it and drew different conclusions. It is also possible that the Canadian unit in Bosnia made an extra national contribution which tipped the general analysis of the situation in a different direction. Another possibility is that the Canadians may have followed developments in Eastern Bosnia more closely. The American and the French concentrated mostly on Sarajevo and the British mostly on Gorazde.<sup>2033</sup>

One of the political advisers to Akashi, Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, noted that at the end of June attention was directed mostly at Sarajevo and Gorazde.<sup>2034</sup> However, the involved Canadian analysts failed to impress the significance of their findings on their superiors, who rejected their analysis. The latter apparently continued to adhere to the general view of the Western intelligence community that no VRS attack would take place. This is also indicated by a Canadian intelligence analysis of 11 July, which still did not expect that Mladic would try to take the enclave. It was thought that the VRS would probably concentrate on limiting the abilities of the ABiH to conduct operations from the enclave.<sup>2035</sup>

If the Bosnian Muslims were unable to share intelligence because their Sigint was not in real time, then did Western intelligence services gather relevant Sigint? As concluded in Chapter 5, high-level intercepts did indeed exist. The NSA will have concentrated mostly on international political developments. The question as to whether these intercepts also contained important tactical military intelligence on the attack must, in all be probability, be answered in the negative. The NSA did not assign the eastern enclaves high priority either. This also went for GCHQ, which focused on Gorazde, and the French DRM, which was mostly interested in Sarajevo. The head of the French military intelligence service, General Heinrich, confirmed that his service had only limited sources. The capabilities that his service had were concentrated in the zones for which the French troops were responsible. 'We had very few exchanges with the British and no relations with the Dutch at that time.'<sup>2036</sup> In fact, during the fall of Srebrenica the DRM was reportedly totally unaware of what was happening.<sup>2037</sup>

Furthermore, the Comint coverage in Eastern Bosnia was poor. The VRS had imposed strict communications security and observed the radio silence conscientiously; the communications that the NSA was nonetheless able to intercept were uneven; due to a lack of analysis and translation capacity they will have landed in the 'pending but not urgent pile'. What remained were often items of Elint. Moreover, the history of the exchange of Sigint is not exactly encouraging. Since 1945 this liaison has never been optimal, and the exchange of important diplomatic and military Comint between the troop-contributing

<sup>2033</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>2034</sup> Interview with Prince Zeid Ra'ad Zeid Al-Hussein, 06/06/97.

<sup>2035</sup> Confidential information (78).

<sup>2036</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, No 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de Jean Heinrich, 08/02/01, p. 186 and 'US not keen to nab Bosnian Serb leaders in 1996: French general', *AFP* press release, 08/02/01.

<sup>2037</sup> Assemblée Nationale, *Srebrenica: rapport sur un massacre*, Assemblée Nationale, No 3412, 2 parts, Paris 2001, Part 2, Audition de M. Bernard Janvier, Remark by Member of Parliament Lamy, 21/06/01.



nations and within NATO never took substantial form in Bosnia either (apart from Elint). With regard to the non-exchange of strategic and tactical Sigint, an US military expert declared: 'NATO-releasable Signals Intelligence reporting consistently was a day late and a dollar short. It often comprised only marginally useful information as much as three to four days old.' He concluded that in Bosnia Humint formed a much more valuable, precise and rapid source of tactical military intelligence than Sigint.<sup>2038</sup> His remark referred to the SFOR period after the Dayton Agreement. It can be inferred that the situation before the summer of 1995 was no better, because at that point there were no US ground troops in Bosnia. It must be concluded that much intelligence material was gathered by national strategic platforms such as satellites and special aircraft. It was sometimes released to NATO like Elint data which, as already established, was collected by US national platforms and which was automatically released to NATO via the LOCE system, and this worked quite well. But this kind of intelligence was of course not automatically released to UNPROFOR. Much Comint is never analysed, or not analysed on time, or due to its high classification is not permitted to be distributed – not among NATO partners and sometimes not even to a country's own national commanders.

Did spy satellites, U-2s, UAVs or other national assets possibly take photographs of the preparations? The section on Imint established that photographs were available of the events before, during and after the fall of the enclave. This has created a general pattern of expectation that Imint functions as a sort of 'Eye of God': an eye that is able to perceive absolutely everything on the ground. Satellites, U-2s, UAVs and other national assets may have impressive capabilities, but most systems are sometimes impeded by weather conditions above a certain area that can influence the operational possibilities. As described in Chapter 7, other elements play a role too. The speed of analysis, the specific focus of the analyst's expertise and other factors can all affect the quality of the Imint product. It is not so much the speed of transmission of the Imint to the ground that is the problem, but rather the speed of the entire process of analysis, processing and searching for further confirmation. One author concluded in this respect: 'For that reason, it would be difficult to intervene in a specific incident of ethnic cleansing. Nevertheless, tracking the civilian toll had value in a war where the political stakes are high'.<sup>2039</sup> As said earlier, the characteristics of Imint, analogous in many regards to the shortfalls in the Sigint realm, resulted in documenting the war crimes, but not preventing them.

From the start of July 1995 onwards, spy satellites, U-2s, UAVs and other national assets started collecting large amounts of Imint, which presented images of buses, trucks, tanks, etc. The fact that this Imint did not arrive promptly on the desks of the US policymakers (i.e. not until the start of August) is closely related to the set priorities, as demonstrated in Chapter 7 of this study. Other hard targets were more important. Furthermore, a foreign intelligence evaluation concluded that Imint was 'useful', but in view of the guerrilla nature of the fighting few regular units could be photographed from the air and from space.<sup>2040</sup> The overall picture created by the currently available data is that the eastern enclaves did not enjoy (high) priority with regard to Imint.<sup>2041</sup> Satellites and U-2 aircraft were indeed active, but other resources such as UAVs only became fully operational over Bosnia at a later stage. In addition, the Imint gathered about Srebrenica was not analysed in time. The imagery intelligence process will always remain a balancing act between available analytical resources, and the urgency of the tasks at hand. As more imagery comes in the door, the ability to analyze all of it becomes dependent on the resources that can be committed. Even as that imagery is analyzed, more continues to come in the door, every frame ripe with more urgent tasks. Prioritization of analytical tasks becomes paramount. Moreover, the intelligence community did not assign top priority to supplying military intelligence support to UNPROFOR. According to Hayden<sup>2042</sup>, in the summer of 1995 the provision of support for

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<sup>2038</sup> Lt. Col. George K. Gramer, Jr., USA, 'Operation Joint Endeavor: Combined-Joint Intelligence in Peace Enforcement Operations', *Military Intelligence*, October-December 1996, p. 13.

<sup>2039</sup> Alan Boyle, 'spies in the watch for atrocities' *MSNBC Interactive*, 26/03/99.

<sup>2040</sup> Confidential information (1).

<sup>2041</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>2042</sup> Michael V. Hayden, 'Warfighters and Intelligence: one team - one fight', *Defense Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 4 (1995) 2, p. 24.

UN operations took fifth place in the list of priorities for military intelligence. In this context it is not surprising that ‘a senior intelligence official’ at SHAPE, Mons stated that General Rose ‘lost ownership of the picture of the battlefield to the point where it was irrecoverable’. According to this official, this resulted in decision-making on military operations that was based on a non-objective picture.<sup>2043</sup> What was not stated here was that the US services did not trust Rose and thus slowly cut off the supply of intelligence.

Another important factor was that US analysts did not expect that the VRS would wish to take the enclave due to the risk of high losses, air strikes and the problem of the refugees.<sup>2044</sup> CIA director John Deutch emphatically denied that his organization was forewarned and also pointed to the difficulties experienced in finally discovering the photographs of the mass graves.<sup>2045</sup> Deutch’s claims were confirmed by others. The Intelligence Head of the US EUCOM and later Director of the NSA, General Michael Hayden, concluded in the *Defense Intelligence Journal* with respect to the attack on Srebrenica: ‘The quick fall of Srebrenica was as significant as it was unexpected. It was brought about by the “massing” of a force that would have been a disappointing crowd at many high school basketball games.’ The major strategic changes that were usually generated by long-term processes were in this case, according to Hayden, the result of just a few tanks.<sup>2046</sup>

And Hayden was in a position to know because he had access to virtually all intelligence. His Yugoslav Joint Planning Cell at US EUCOM interpreted ‘the gathering of groups of people in school yards in connection with the capture of Srebrenica as being “in the nature of a demonstration” when these had in fact been troops belonging to the Serb Army in Bosnia’.<sup>2047</sup> There was a consensus at the State Department, the Pentagon and the CIA: the VRS would never want to conquer the entire enclave. Following the assault the US intelligence community established that intelligence was indeed available, but that the indications were too vague to be analysed effectively and in time. The journalists Stephen Engelberg and Tim Weiner of the *New York Times* were told more or less the same at a confidential briefing at the State Department and NSA. They were reportedly presented with a very accurate picture in which the Americans held nothing back.<sup>2048</sup> A former director of the NSA declared: ‘Gleaning hard facts from the avalanche of information was like trying to take a drink of water from a fire hose.’ It transpired that the best information was obtained from NGOs, the UN and the press.<sup>2049</sup>

After the fall of Srebrenica the Netherlands MIS started an investigation into what its foreign partners knew. It transpired that in June 1995 the CIA and SIS received indications that the VRS was planning to start operations. The CIA had a ‘variety of reports’ which stated that an offensive would start in June 1995. According to the CIA the ABiH offensive around Sarajevo had caused a temporary delay in the VRS operations. A CIA report of 10 July, that was first received by the MIS/CO after the fall of Srebrenica on 12 July, also showed that the aforementioned ‘variety of reports’ never reached the MIS. The British foreign intelligence service is also said to have had indications that the VRS would attack the enclave with ethnic cleansing as the ultimate objective. The report itself was dated 15 June but (just like the CIA report) it was first received by the service on 12 July. Due to a misunderstanding it remained at the British embassy. The report was in fact not dated, had no attached evaluation, no indication of the reliability of the source, etc.<sup>2050</sup> The news of the attack had, according to a senior British intelligence official, been passed to SIS by a source close to Mladic. This possible attack was the subject of discussion within the British intelligence community, where opinions were divided as to the reliability of the source. In the first week of June the British Joint Intelligence Committee repeated the

<sup>2043</sup> ‘Bosnia underscores intelligence gaps’, *Aviation Week and Space Technology*, 20/03/95, p. 56.

<sup>2044</sup> Charles Lane and Thom Shanker, ‘Bosnia: What the CIA Didn’t Tell Us’, *The New York Review of Books*, 09/05/96.

<sup>2045</sup> ‘The CIA and Bosnia: An Exchange’, *New York Review of Books*, 06/06/96.

<sup>2046</sup> Michael V. Hayden, ‘Warfighters and Intelligence: one team - one fight’, *Defense Intelligence Journal*, Vol. 4 (1995) 2, p. 18.

<sup>2047</sup> Välimäki, *Intelligence*, pp. 104.

<sup>2048</sup> Confidential interview (13).

<sup>2049</sup> Stephen Engelberg and Tim Weiner, ‘srebrenica’, *The New York Times*, 29/10/95 and confidential interview (13).

<sup>2050</sup> Confidential interview (18)

expectation that ‘on balance it is judged that the Bosnian Serbs will probably not seek to over-run the “safe areas” for the moment’.<sup>2051</sup> It must be doubted whether this US and British intelligence about an imminent attack was ‘hard’, as Mladic first decided at the end of June to set the operation in motion.

At a meeting in The Hague on 15 November 1995, a senior DIS official, Commodore J.G.F. Cooke, emphatically denied that the British services had had prior knowledge of the attack. Cooke had been sent to The Hague on behalf of this service to calm matters at the request of the British Chief of Defence Staff, Field Marshall Sir Peter Inge. There was great concern at the Dutch Ministry of Defence that British and other Western services had withheld information. Cooke talked to the Commander in Chief of the Army and to the Head of the MIS and made clear that the DIS had not known anything more than had been passed on to the Dutch.<sup>2052</sup> The CIA later also denied that it had held such information.

The highest US military commanders also firmly denied having had prior knowledge of the event. According to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe of NATO (SACEUR) General George Joulwan, it was only two or three days before the fall of Srebrenica that a feeling arose that an attack might take place. It was clear that the VRS wanted to take control of Eastern Bosnia. This intention did not change over the years, and in this respect their aims were clear. Good intelligence was available about the way that the VRS acted; the VRS very quickly gathered troops around Srebrenica ‘to support forward elements already in place’. The same later happened at Zepa. This should have been a ‘trigger’: the reports of troops being massed and artillery being moved into position.<sup>2053</sup> Admiral Leighton Smith also stated that he had had no hard intelligence that Mladic was planning to attack. His intelligence was not good; the VRS efficiently rendered its communications secure. It was only three to four days beforehand that troop movements were observed. At this point it became clear to him that an operation was probably imminent.<sup>2054</sup>

Despite this, articles about prior knowledge continued to appear. In response to a spate of publications at the end of 1996 the Dutch Chief of Defence Staff, General Henk van den Breemen, wrote to his British colleague Inge and requested him to investigate what signs the British intelligence community had received concerning the attack on Srebrenica. Would a warning have been possible? The response from Inge and the enclosed DIS Assessment from 30 June 1995 indicates the following. The assessment was based on various sources and no further analysis was made until after the fall. The DIS regarded the enclave as ‘virtually indefensible’. The VRS had the military strength to take the enclave at any moment they wished. When the attack finally materialized, the DIS believed that the VRS was interested only in the southern road. ‘It was only the rapid and unexpected collapse of government defences which led them to push on and take the enclave at that point.’

According to Inge the Ministry of Defence in London had once again checked the archives of the British intelligence community to see whether this analysis still stood. Following a detailed study of documents it appeared that this was still the case. Inge concluded with the remark: ‘I am clear that we had no tactical warning on timing which might have helped to forestall events there.’<sup>2055</sup> A study of the DIS Assessment of the situation around Srebrenica on the eve of the definitive attack reveals that the DIS was highly uncertain about the intentions of the VRS. This document was drawn up shortly before the final attack on Srebrenica and the DIS did not have a ‘tactical warning of an upcoming attack’. There were no indicators that the ‘VRS would launch an attack without warning’. The service did, however, establish that the VRS had long been complaining about the ABiH sorties conducted from a ‘demilitarized zone’. At the end of June 1995 the DIS concluded that ‘tension is high around the Srebrenica enclave, but there are no indicators to suggest that the VRS are about to launch an attack to

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<sup>2051</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>2052</sup> Confidential interview (8).

<sup>2053</sup> Interview with George Joulwan, 08/06/00

<sup>2054</sup> Interview with Leighton Smith, 06/06/00.

<sup>2055</sup> NIOD, *Coll. Van den Breemen*. Letter from Sir Peter Inge to Henk van den Breemen, No. D/CDS/1/8/6, 29/01/97 plus DIS Assessment, 30/06/95.

take the whole pocket'. If the VRS did however attack, it was not expected that the ABiH would be able to stop this. The Bosnian Muslims might be able to delay the assault for a few days, but 'they are not strong enough to halt indefinitely a pre-planned assault'. The UN was also not in a position to 'dissuade or prevent' the VRS from such an action. Armed resistance by Dutchbat 'would be of no value even if the UN mandate authorised such action'. The nature of the terrain and the small number of VRS soldiers required for such an attack 'would render air strikes relatively ineffective as a preventative measure; NATO would have difficulty in acquiring worthwhile targets as the VRS forces would be relatively dispersed.'

The VRS did not need to bring in troops from elsewhere because the local units were sufficient. It would thus be difficult 'to identify a VRS attack before it had begun. It is anticipated that if the VRS did decide to attack Srebrenica there would very little, if any, warning time.' The VRS would not be significantly deterred by the presence of the UN once the final decision had been taken to attack Srebrenica. However, there were no indications that the VRS had taken a 'command decision' to attack Srebrenica, although this 'does not preclude opportunistic campaigns as happened in Gorazde last year'. If the VRS did however attack then 'there would be little or no warning from imagery; the VRS do not need to move troops and equipment into the area to take the enclaves, the local troops are sufficient in number for the task'. In reality it was only the forbearance of the VRS that allowed and enabled the continued existence of the enclave. Srebrenica and Zepa had always been completely indefensible, according to the UK Defence Intelligence Staff.<sup>2056</sup>

This analysis was confirmed by British intelligence officials. The DIS had no hard tactical intelligence on the attack. The concentration of troops had been noted, but the service had attached little importance to this because in fact the VRS constantly had sufficient troops at its disposal. The intelligence about the 'massing of troops' that was supplied was chiefly obtained through Imint. These pictures definitely did not indicate that the VRS was about to start an assault. Furthermore, it should be remembered that Srebrenica was not a major area of attention for the DIS. Its eyes were turned towards Gorazde and Sarajevo.<sup>2057</sup>

Up to a week before the actual attack the service did not reckon on a planned attack. It can be assumed that the DIS analysis was based in part on information obtained from other British services such as SIS and GCHQ and on intelligence supplied by foreign partners such as US and Canadian agencies. This was confirmed by Dame Pauline Neville-Jones, who was the chairwoman of the British Joint Intelligence Committee in 1993-1994. Srebrenica came as an enormous surprise; there were no prior indications. Mladic conducted the operation without consulting others. 'London was completely ignorant as regards the upcoming attack.'<sup>2058</sup> It must be concluded that foreign intelligence and security services did not have specific operational information or hard indications from sources and technical intelligence resources indicating that the Bosnian Serbs would move to attack Srebrenica on a particular date. Indeed, the presence of such information was not likely either in view of the very short-term preparations needed by the VRS to set up the operation.<sup>2059</sup>

## 8. Conclusions

Many organizations and persons expected that in the long term the eastern enclaves would be given up and would disappear. At the diplomatic level, as early as the start of 1994 the eastern Safe Areas were seen as an obstacle to the peace process that needed to be 'cleared up'. The US mediator Redman had already made reasonable progress in persuading the Bosnians to give up the Safe Areas; abandoning and exchanging these areas were options that Sarajevo was prepared to discuss, but it remained a very

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<sup>2056</sup> NIOD, *Coll. van den Breemen*. DIS Assessment of the UN's Prospects in the event of a VRS Assault on Srebrenica as at 30 June 1995, NATO Restricted, 30/06/95, appendix to letter from Inge to Van den Breemen.

<sup>2057</sup> Confidential interviews (8) and (43).

<sup>2058</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>2059</sup> Confidential information (83).

thorny issue. A foreign intelligence service established that opinions were divided in Sarajevo on this issue.<sup>2060</sup> That was understandable, because as long as the enclaves had military value and could be used in the propaganda war against the Bosnian Serbs, some Bosnian ministers were not prepared to consider giving up this bargaining chip.

It was clear that in particular Srebrenica and Zepa would not be able to continue for long, in both humanitarian and military terms. The VRS had the areas in a stranglehold and the 'neck' was being squeezed ever tighter. Less and less humanitarian aid was arriving and the Serbs had a constant military advantage in equipment, firepower and troops, making a swift conquest a constant possibility. In addition, there were no logistical limitations. The main reasons why the Serbs had still not taken the enclaves were international political motives and because they would become responsible for the population.<sup>2061</sup> In short, most negotiators assumed that the enclaves would disappear sooner or later through a political or military solution. Srebrenica was tolerated by Mladic.<sup>2062</sup> Nothing more and nothing less.

However, strategic prior knowledge is not the same as tactical prior knowledge. Did the latter exist? According to some publications it did. US services reportedly had indications that the Bosnian Serbs were planning an attack. It was even written that the US government was informed in detail three weeks before the fall of the enclave. Washington was said to have intentionally withheld this information. In view of the above, what evidence still stands?

First of all it must be stated that no one can have known of an attack intended to conquer Srebrenica as a whole. Although the options contained in *Krivaja '95* included the conquest of the enclave, it was only late in the evening of 9 July that it was decided to actually take this step. Hence there cannot have been any prior knowledge of this. There can only have been prior knowledge of the preparations, which had a limited military goal, namely the southern road.

Furthermore, an essential element is overlooked in many publications: the attack was not comparable to Operation Barbarossa or the invasion of Normandy, with hundreds of thousands of troops, aircraft and tanks involved. This was a small military operation with a limited amount of troops, a maximum of ten tanks and APCs and supported by twelve artillery pieces and mortars that were already in position around the enclave. The VRS needed to bridge only a short distance to reach Srebrenica, and since the troops and equipment were hidden in the wooded hills there was an extremely limited chance of issuing a warning in time.<sup>2063</sup> ABiH reconnaissance troops observed something on 5 July but this was not reported to Dutchbat until 6 July.

But let us assume that preparations such as troop concentrations, tank movements, new artillery positions, etc. had been observed and reported. The question then remains: preparations for what precisely? The intentions of the VRS remained unclear up to the last moment. The players in the enclave had little information; Dutchbat's view of the situation was very limited view. The little intelligence available came from patrols, observations posts, convoy commanders, the local population and authorities, and at the higher level from SNE, BHC and UNPROFOR headquarters in Zagreb. Since operations were strictly limited due to lack of fuel and by military activities, Dutchbat became dependent on static OPs. Reports based on Humint became ever fewer, partly because DutchBat Commander Karremans sharply reduced the interaction of Dutchbat with the local population. As little was supplied through other channels, the information situation of Dutchbat was very weak indeed. The sources of information dried up more and more. The only possible method was photo-reconnaissance flights, but these were limited after an American F-16 was shot down on 2 June. Besides this, the VRS apparently strengthened the air defences around the enclave after the decision to attack was taken. This

<sup>2060</sup> Confidential information (61).

<sup>2061</sup> Confidential information (59).

<sup>2062</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

<sup>2063</sup> This conclusion is also drawn in the CIA report made available to the NIOD. See the chapter 'srebrenica: Background and Battle', CIA, 'Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1991-1995', unpublished, p. 17, 13/07/99.

latter fact could have been an important source of intelligence for NATO if the VRS had activated the radars.<sup>2064</sup>

However, were the Dutch military not again too prudent? TACRECCE played an important role throughout the summer, and into the air campaign in September. There may have been tactical restrictions placed on NATO aircraft due to the proximity of Srebrenica to the Serbian border and the SAM defenses on the other side. Nevertheless, there were tactical aircraft operating in the vicinity of the enclave (as shown in the previous chapter) before, during and after the fall. But such restrictions would certainly not prohibited them. Nothing would have prevented the Dutch from flying their own TACRECCE assets over their own troops and in support of the interests of the UN. According to a US intelligence official 'no NATO commander would stand in the way of such action, especially not a man like Admiral Snuffy Smith'.

The F-16 would probably have been ideal for such reconnaissance missions. Probably even better than an UAV, which often encountered frequent morning mist and low cloud cover. An UAV loiters at medium altitude and uses its substantial focal length to observe objects on the ground. Typical loiter altitudes were 5000 feet above ground level, well above any small arms fire. But TACRECCE is most capable against medium foul weather, and a properly equipped aircraft like the F-16 can use cloud cover to its significant advantage, especially in a heat-seeker SAM threat. According to a senior US official, the SAM can't see through the clouds, and the aircraft can drop below the cloud cover, to altitudes of 500 meters or even less, just long enough to collect the imagery and then retreat to safety back above the clouds, or in the clouds. 'That sort of flying takes guts, and willingness to take some big chances'. For TACRECCE aircraft, there's no intent to remain hidden while taking the pictures, unlike the UAV. One TACRECCE pilot once said: 'I know I never bombed any of the enemy, but by God, there's a bunch of them that can't hear too good'.<sup>2065</sup>

A number of precautionary measures were taken following rumours that the Arkan Tigers had been sighted. After consultation between BHC and Karremans it was decided to prepare a swift evacuation of the OPs. The report of Arkan Tigers in the area is cited by many publications at the ultimate proof that something was going to happen. However, this was information that dated from the end of May.<sup>2066</sup> It was assumed that, in view of the number of VRS troops, their strength and the lack of heavy weapons on the ABiH side, there would be hardly any warning. An attack could take place at any minute and this situation had actually existed since 1993. In short, most of the players in the region had no clear indications. This also went for the JCOs (SAS), NGOs, SNE and BHC.<sup>2067</sup> At the end of June there were a few indications that something was going to happen, but nobody knew exactly what. The UNPROFOR intelligence officers in Sarajevo and Zagreb had no forewarning and continued to believe that the operations were aimed at the southern tip of the enclave. On 12 July it dawned in Zagreb that the VRS had taken over the enclave.<sup>2068</sup>

The Force Commander's meeting on 12 July announced that the UN forces had accomplished their task within the means available. In the aftermath of Srebrenica, the Force Commander's primary concern was the food, health of refugees; secondary concern was assisting DutchBatt in their retrograde (from the fallen enclave). The Force Commander's meeting concluded that support from NATO had been good and DutchBatt had reacted in a remarkable way.<sup>2069</sup>

The MIS/CO and MIS/Army were equally unaware of what was coming. Right up to the end analysts were unsure as to the real intentions of the VRS. The MISs assumed, just like UNPROFOR and other intelligence services, that the attack would be aimed at the southern part of the enclave. This

<sup>2064</sup> Interview with Jan-Inge Svensson and Ingmar Ljunggren, 04/11/99.

<sup>2065</sup> Confidential information (80).

<sup>2066</sup> Confidential interview (3).

<sup>2067</sup> Annan stated the same. See: United Nations, *Srebrenica Report*, 1999, p.143.

<sup>2068</sup> Interview with Jan-Inge Svensson and Ingmar Ljunggren, 04/11/99.

<sup>2069</sup> Confidential information (80).

was a correct analysis, as was later revealed by VRS documents.<sup>2070</sup> Although conversations in London had indicated that the British services were fairly concerned, there was no hard intelligence on this either. The Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) doubted the reliability of a source in the VRS. The reports of the Defence Intelligence Staff and the CIA only reached the Netherlands MIS after the fall. A study of it shows that these did not contain any hard indications. Furthermore, the Service did not receive any intelligence from other services, such as the German or the French organizations. Dutch analysts concluded that other foreign intelligence services had no information either. The DCBC and civil servants on the Minister's staff, who were dependent on the reports from UNPROFOR and the MIS, therefore knew nothing either. Perry gave his word to Voorhoeve that the Pentagon also had no prior knowledge. The report to the effect that the US intelligence community had discovered from intercepted telephone calls before the attack that buses were being gathered was not confirmed either.<sup>2071</sup>

The Americans did not have good Sigint coverage in Eastern Bosnia and did not operate with their own interception equipment from Tuzla. In any case, documents and interviews have not indicated that active Sigint support was provided to the ABiH. The only assistance came from the US Special Forces officer, who worked in Tuzla as a liaison officer. According to an UNPROFOR official the US services always worked through this officer.<sup>2072</sup> This officer was probably involved in the secret flights to Tuzla and was probably the contact man for the MPRI staff who were sometime reported to be in Tuzla.<sup>2073</sup>

It was not only that the attack came totally unexpectedly but, as the Dutch Ministerial Council also established,<sup>2074</sup> from the Western perspective it also represented new tactics and a new strategy, irrespective of whether these were applied *ad hoc* or had been devised beforehand. The usual approach was to exert pressure on the boundaries of the Safe Areas to gain control of the higher ground. No one expected that the enclave would be taken. This was because some assumed that the VRS had insufficient troops to overcome the numerically superior ABiH forces in house and street fighting.<sup>2075</sup> Apparently the Western intelligence services overlooked the possibility that more local factors might play a role in deciding to attack. Giving evidence to the Yugoslavia Tribunal, General Krstic of the VRS stated that the decision to attack Srebrenica was taken for two reasons. The first was a directive from the general staff in March 1995, ordering the separation of Srebrenica from Zepa. The second reason was the hit and run operations conducted from the enclave and the constant infiltrations into Bosnian Serb territory.<sup>2076</sup> The Western services had an insufficient perspective on the local events and the effects these had on the thinking of the Bosnian Serbs. Their goal – to reduce the size of the Safe Area – was not known either. This also applied to the decision of 9 July to go ahead and take the entire enclave, when this appeared opportune due to the weak resistance of the ABiH and possibly also due to the lack of a vigorous response by UNPROFOR in the form of NATO air strikes or armed resistance on the ground.

The Bosnians had equally little insight into the reasons for the VRS attack. Insofar as can be established they never became aware of the directives issued by Karadzic and Mladic for the separation of Srebrenica and Zepa. Unfortunately there are no reliable sources which can be consulted to give a precise answer to the question why the decision was taken to attack, and why 6 July was chosen.<sup>2077</sup> The

<sup>2070</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Chronology of the Events by Lt. Col. Van Geldere, 23/10/97.

<sup>2071</sup> MoD, *MIS/CO*, Chronology of the Events by Lt. Col. Van Geldere, 23/10/97.

<sup>2072</sup> Interview with Hans Holm, 13/03/99.

<sup>2073</sup> Interviews with C.L.Brantz, 11/06/99 and H. Haukland, 03/05/99. See also UNGE, *UNPROFOR, Box 193*, SNE 23 May – 15 October 1995. Haukland to Comd. Unprofor, 31/05/95 and Hagman, *UN-NATO*, p. 93.

<sup>2074</sup> Objectivized summary of the minutes of the Ministerial Council meetings of 18/08/95 and 25/08/95, prepared for the purposes of the present NIOD study.

<sup>2075</sup> Confidential information (25).

<sup>2076</sup> ICTY, (IT-98-33), OTP Ex. 399/a bis, Interview with Radislav Krstic, 18/02/00.

<sup>2077</sup> Attempts by the NIOD for interviews with Karadzic or his political advisor Zametica faltered. An appointment for an interview with Mladic was granted by the Bosnian Serb general but the war in Kosovo did him change his mind.

explanations given for this are taken from testimonies after the event, although they do not contradict each other. The general picture created here is that the main reason was the activities carried out by the ABiH outside the enclave. This already played a role in March, when Karadzic and Mladic issued their directives. The military activities in June will simply have confirmed the VRS in this aim. It also cannot be ruled out that Mladic's fear of an ABiH corridor from Tuzla to the eastern enclaves played a role. In addition, the elimination of the enclave offered several further advantages, even if these did not constitute a primary motivation. Freeing troops from around the enclaves would help the infantry-starved VRS and a victory would bolster the flagging morale. Moreover, it would force new political negotiations by turning the map of Bosnia on its head.

Many publications have described Srebrenica as an intelligence failure. The preceding sections have established that military and political policymakers within UNPROFOR and NATO did not receive the indications in time. However, a senior British intelligence official observed to the author that intelligence did as much as it could reasonably be expected to have done about the attack on Srebrenica. The problem, according to this official, was that decision-makers all too often expected analysts to be prophets with the ability to forecast coming events. What the analyst must do is set out the range of possible outcomes and the assessed likelihood of each and leave it to the policy-maker or the military commander to judge the probability and damage equation. He knew from experience that policy-makers are very resistant to unwelcome messages from intelligence. In the opinion of this official, policy-makers 'know' their policies are right and don't want unwelcome reality to intrude.<sup>2078</sup>

Nonetheless, as previously said, a warning about an upcoming event or war can have four relationships with reality: hit, miss, false alarm and correct rejection. But like Von Clausewitz once wrote: 'War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action in war is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty'.<sup>2079</sup> It is clear that 'false alarm' and 'correct rejection' are not applicable here. So 'hit' and 'miss' remain. The ABiH has constantly claimed that Srebrenica was a 'hit'. It gave the warning, but Karremans in Srebrenica and SNE refused to believe it. As indicated above, one must doubt the reliability of claims that real-time Sigint was available. However, a military build-up was established on the basis of Humint. This took place on 4 and 5 July, but the reports by Dutchbat, the UNMOs and JCOs show that this was not passed on by the ABiH until 6 July, after the start of the attack. ABiH commander Becirovic's request to Karremans to plan his rotation with the Ukrainians carefully so that the VRS was given no opportunity to allow Dutch soldiers to depart and then not to allow in any replacements was an indication that he too did not expect a reduction or conquest. Hence one must doubt the claims that a warning of the VRS assault plan was given. No indications of this were contained in the UN reports and in interviews conducted with UNPROFOR officials.

But let us suppose that the ABiH did sound the alarm. In this case, why was the warning not effective? There was no lack of intelligence about the capabilities and the battle order of the VRS. UNPROFOR had a relatively reliable picture in this respect. However, obtaining a good insight into intentions was more problematic. Mladic and Karadzic often announced that the eastern enclaves would be reduced or even conquered. The chief question was: when would this happen? In early 1995 there were constant rumours that an attack was imminent. Every time it proved to be a false alarm. Did a 'cry wolf' mechanism creep into people's minds? Did the alertness of the recipient grow less each time the warning proved not to be true?<sup>2080</sup>

This may well have played a role. To give one example, on 26 June 1995 the UNPROFOR Chief Political Officer in Sarajevo, Corwin, and his staff burst out laughing when the Bosnian radio reported troop movements around Srebrenica and Gorazde 'Nobody believes the local news. Nobody

<sup>2078</sup> Confidential information (82).

<sup>2079</sup> Quoted in: Richard L. Russell, 'CIA's Strategic Intelligence in Iraq', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 117 (Summer 2002) 2, p. 191.

<sup>2080</sup> Handel, *Diplomacy*, pp. 478-479.



believes any news in Sarajevo.<sup>2081</sup> This observation was also made in a CIA report, which stated that there were some indications, such as the bringing up of reinforcements. But:

‘similar troop movements had been recorded around the enclave dozens of times in the past, and the VRS was constantly adjusting its forces all across Bosnia. There was no special indicator, which would particularly distinguish these reports among hundreds of reports over the months and across the country’.<sup>2082</sup>

This mechanism may have been reinforced by the many false alarms, which the Bosnian Muslims frequently issued in their attempts to get UNPROFOR and NATO on their side. This applied to Eastern Bosnia too. In May the JCOs reported that ‘there were constant rumours at this time from the ABiH that the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) were planning to attack the Enclave’. This did not lead to all alarm bells going off: the SAS was not impressed. They had often heard such rumours and they ‘were thus hard to take seriously’. The same was true of 8 June, when a major alarm was sounded. But at the time that the VRS was busy with its preparations the ABiH did not issue any serious warnings.

Did ‘noise barriers’ play a role? At various times since the start of 1994 Mladic had declared that he wanted better control over the southern tip of the enclave, but he did not say how and when he wanted to achieve this. His intentions remained unclear right up to the last. The international context also worked as a noise barrier, because the attention of the major policymakers such as Janvier, Akashi and Smith was directed towards matters of a more strategic nature, and not Srebrenica. Eastern Bosnia had low priority and the same attitude was true of most of the Western intelligence and security services. According to an ex-member of Akashi’s staff, it was an enormous intelligence failure. If Akashi had known what was going to happen then he would have reacted differently: above all because of his political ambitions. He thus brought himself into an impossible position with regard to the leading members of the Security Council. Srebrenica proved the decisive reason for ushering him from the stage through a side door. According to this source it was a sort of standard thinking at the UN (and hence an intelligence failure) that the Bosnian Serbs simply would not know what to do with the tens of thousands of refugees. The greatest failure was that it was not imagined in advance that the VRS would murder all the men and less the question of whether they would take over half the enclave or all of it. In itself this is strange because military logic demands that one should assume the worst, i.e. the VRS wanted to take the entire enclave. The failure therefore also lay with the Dutchbat personnel, according to this source, because they were the only ones who, possibly with the help of the JCOs, could have gathered intelligence about an attack.<sup>2083</sup> However, this former member of Akashi’s staff forgot to mention that nobody could foresee the massmurders. There was no automatic link between the attack and atrocities.

Self-generated noise also played a role. Policymakers were not able to adjust their expectations about the Serb intentions and capabilities in accordance with reality. Thinking was dominated by the ‘sheer nerve scenario’ (i.e. the VRS would never have the nerve to attack the enclave).<sup>2084</sup> A VRS assault with the aim of conquering the entire enclave did not fit the general pattern of expectations. In other words, policymakers clung to belief systems, and these created a filter in the perception of reality and the making of corresponding judgements. Reality was not determined by the actual situation, but by the image that those involved had of it. For as long as possible they attempted to perceive their environment in the most cohesive manner possible and to avoid certain contradictions. Many were inclined to avoid cognitive dissonance (i.e. the tension arising between new information and established

<sup>2081</sup> Corwin, *Dubious Mandate*, p. 131.

<sup>2082</sup> See: CIA Report, Chapter Srebrenica: Background and Battle, p. 15, CIA, ‘Balkan Battleground: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1991-1995’, unpublished, 13/07/99.

<sup>2083</sup> Confidential interview (46).

<sup>2084</sup> Interview with P. Neville-Jones, 15/11/01.

patterns of thought). On 7 July, therefore, Karremans still thought that the VRS attack was an attempt to provoke and intimidate the ABiH. Analysts in the US intelligence community also failed to realize that Mladic was aiming for the entire enclave, because what would he then do with so many refugees? In such a situation signals are constantly interpreted wrongly and perceived intentions are subject to disbelief. This aspect of self-generated noise was important. Both UNPROFOR and The Hague actually assumed that the VRS 'would not dare to go to such brutality and thereby provoke the whole international community'.<sup>2085</sup> It was thought inconceivable that Mladic would do precisely this. Perhaps this self-generated noise also includes the exaggerated effect that was attributed to air power. Policymakers long assumed that this would prove a sufficient deterrent to the VRS.

Metselaar concluded that the way in which the warnings about a VRS attack were treated can be regarded as an intelligence failure. But the problem was precisely that there were no warnings. In spite of this, can Srebrenica still be called an intelligence failure, and under what circumstances could we call it a 'hit'? A warning would have needed to be based on adequate intelligence capabilities. In that case the preparations could have been noted in time. History shows that in the case of many successful surprise attacks, the attacked party had sufficient information to make an accurate prediction of the enemy's behaviour.<sup>2086</sup> However, the indications were ignored or interpreted wrongly. Preventing a surprise attack was therefore 'not simply a problem of detection, but very much a problem of assessment and acceptance'.<sup>2087</sup>

In Srebrenica it was possible for a surprise attack to take place because enemy preparations were not discovered in time. So in Eastern Bosnia it was indeed 'simply a problem of detection', and thus also 'very much a problem of assessment and acceptance'. If Dutchbat had had been given its own 'eyes and ears' then the preparations might have been discovered in time. Let us suppose that the Netherlands Army had agreed to the positioning of the US Sigint equipment in the enclave or that the MIS/Army had been permitted to operate with an Electronic Warfare unit from Tuzla or the enclave (and this option was possible, as shown in Chapter 5 of this study). In such a case the information situation could have been strongly improved. There was an 'intelligence shortage' and this could and should have been exploited. As it was, the Dutch intelligence and security services remained 'poor'. By agreeing to the US offer, The Hague would not only have been given 'ears' but also 'eyes', because the Americans would then have been dependent on the Dutch for a large proportion of their Sigint on the enclaves.

This could even have led to the timely provision of Imint from U-2s and UAVs in exchange for Dutch Sigint. The MIS would probably have analysed the Imint quickly. Sigint and Imint would have revealed more about the intentions of the VRS. And if Karremans had set up an active structure for gathering intelligence, had given his men explicit orders to have more contact with the local population in order to gather information, and had also given the JCOs a free hand within and outside the enclave, then his Humint situation might have improved. These were missed opportunities, because as it was the Dutch intelligence services had little or nothing to expect from their foreign counterparts and from UNPROFOR. The most important partners were concentrating on Sarajevo, Gorazde and Croatia. This could and should have been exploited, because intelligence on Eastern Bosnia would have considerably improved the *quid pro quo* position of the MIS.

On the other hand, one should not blame other intelligence services too easily. From day One, the Dutch policymakers and military leadership knew the incredibly precarious position of their troops in Srebrenica. They refused the assistance of foreign capabilities, offered to reduce the threat like the US offer to bring tactical Sigint equipment into the enclave. The Hague refused to employ their own assets to learn about the threat, both Sigint and Imint. No Dutch indigenous Sigint assets were deployed nor were the readily available Dutch TACRECCE assets like the RF-16s properly used. And

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<sup>2085</sup> M.V. Metselaar, 'Understanding Failures in Intelligence Estimates', p. 46.

<sup>2086</sup> See for instance: Hughes-Wilson, *Military Intelligence Blunders*, passim.

<sup>2087</sup> Gordon H. McCormick, 'Surprise, Perceptions, and Military Style', *ORBIS*, Vol. 26 (1983) 4, pp. 836-837.

as said before, this is not a natural fact, but the result of policy decisions hinged on funding, capability and political will. In the light of these refusals, the prospect of castigating American, British, Canadian, German, etc. intelligence for failing (albeit perhaps negligently) to do what the Dutch armed forces had deliberately and consistently refused to do themselves seems not always justified.

Nonetheless, various members of the MIS also believed that, for various other reasons, Srebrenica was an example of an intelligence failure. It was often posited that if the MIS had had more resources it could have exchanged more with foreign partners and thus could have gathered more intelligence through liaison.<sup>2088</sup> According to another MIS official it was a failure because the MIS/CO was not geared to supporting this operation in an adequate manner. Through its internal method of functioning the organization also made it difficult for itself to get information about Srebrenica to the right places. Couzy and Voorhoeve were given different pictures of events. This could have had fatal consequences in other ways too because, in the opinion of one MIS official, if things had gone a little differently an entire battalion could quite possibly have been killed.<sup>2089</sup> One official thought that Srebrenica was an intelligence failure because the Army had learned nothing from the events.<sup>2090</sup> For others it was the refusal of the US offer that represented a major failure.<sup>2091</sup>

Metselaar was of course correct when he wrote that a major noise barrier was created by Mladic's plans, which changed constantly and often at the very last moment.

‘Obviously, what an aggressor does not yet know himself can hardly be expected to be determined by one’s own intelligence sources. Even the enemy’s military and political elite itself is often, until the last moment, not completely certain about many of these elements’.<sup>2092</sup>

This does not detract from the fact that some indications of the preparations could still have been gathered in time. As it was, the assault but also the quick collapse of the enclave came as a total surprise to Dutchbat and UNPROFOR. This was therefore a ‘miss’: no warning was given, but the event took place. The same probably went for most of the other Western services, although the American, Canadian and British services did receive indications. There was Imint regarding buses, but it was thought that these would be used for the transport of troops. There was some Sigint about logistical support by the VJ.<sup>2093</sup> Troop movements and tanks were reported. There were Humint sources close to Mladic. But the indications were too unclear, the reliability of sources was doubted, intelligence was often interpreted wrongly or not analysed in time or had insufficient priority.

How big was the intelligence failure actually and would the result have been different if more intelligence had been available? This is of course a ‘what-would-have-happened-if’ question. Let us suppose that intelligence had been available on the directives from Karadzic and Mladic, the planning for operation *Krivaja '95*, the orders from the general staff of the Drina Corps and the operational plan issued by the Drina Corps on 2 July. Let us suppose that the initial preparations had been noticed and correctly interpreted. Then UNPROFOR and NATO would still have had time to react. After all, the Bosnian Serbs were not always insensitive to international political pressure, as the solution to the hostage crisis indicated, and as was later the case in Gorazde. This is also a conclusion drawn in the UN report on Srebrenica. ‘Had the United Nations been provided with intelligence that revealed the enormity of the Bosnian Serbs’ goals, it is possible, though by no means certain, that the tragedy of Srebrenica might have been averted.’ The UN report stated that this did not apply to Zepa. This

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<sup>2088</sup> Confidential interview (22) and (36).

<sup>2089</sup> Confidential interview (26).

<sup>2090</sup> Confidential interview (37).

<sup>2091</sup> Confidential interview (78).

<sup>2092</sup> M.V. Metselaar, ‘Understanding Failures in Intelligence’, p.37.

<sup>2093</sup> Confidential interview (6).

enclave did not fall due to lack of intelligence, but due to the unwillingness of the international community to do anything else than accept a *fait accompli*.<sup>2094</sup>

The intelligence failure described throughout this work made clear that there was no effective warning, except of the most general sort provided to commanders and policymakers, at virtually any level or nationality. The issue of a duty to provide warning becomes the next question. The author is not aware of any treaty, or a bilateral or multilateral agreement that definitively obligates any of the allied forces operating in Bosnia to provide intelligence of the sort involved here to the UN or the Dutch in particular. Even under the NATO Treaty, a member nation is not obligated to come to the aid of any other member if an attack occurs, rather, a member need take only 'such action as it deems necessary' to restore and maintain the security of NATO. All NATO intelligence sharing in voluntary and NATO members need share only that intelligence which they choose. There is no obligation to do so.

However, it should also be stated that this intelligence failure occurred within the context of a massive operational and policy failure by the UN, which placed civilians and soldiers in an impossibly indefensible position with full knowledge of its tenuous character. To lose sight of the monumental operational failure by focusing exclusively on the equally substantial intelligence failure is to doom oneself to repetition. The intelligence failure was of several days or even weeks duration, but the policy failure was systematically ignored for years at a variety of UN and national levels. The unsupportable operational posture at Srebrenica, and the decision by key policy-makers in the UN, and various western nations to ignore the volatile potential is directly connected to the lack of intelligence focus on the potential for a VRS effort to collapse the enclave. Intelligence assets are nearly always focused on collection issues as directed by the policymakers. It were those policymakers at the UN and national levels who chose to turn a blind eye to the desperate situation in the eastern enclaves. And as a result, the limited intelligence assets committed to the Balkans were much more rigorously applied to other problems where production was more fruitful and more central to the vital national interests represented. The enclaves in Bosnia fell off the collection priority list of a dozen countries when those limited collection assets were committed against the numerous intelligence problems elsewhere in the Balkans.

It can also be concluded from the above that if no structural intelligence gathering and intelligence activities take place, or if crucial decisions are taken only at a very late stage, then intelligence has only limited significance. But since the international community continued to hold the view that the Bosnian Serbs would ignore political pressure, this should clearly have led to greater alertness and should have been a signal to strengthen intelligence gathering. The same argument applies to the fact that UNPROFOR knew that Mladic was seriously short of troops for meeting the Bosnian offensive elsewhere in Bosnia and the Croatian operations in the Krajina

In the case of a good follow-up by UNPROFOR, it is possible that the southern part of the enclave would not have been attacked and that the rest of the enclave would therefore also have been spared. Perhaps the rapid collapse of the ABiH could have been prevented if it had been decided earlier to return the still serviceable heavy weapons at the Weapon Collection Point in Srebrenica to the ABiH, if agreements had been made about the joint defence of the enclave, and if Close Air Support had been deployed faster and more effectively. Although the first measures would have been at odds with the mandate of Dutchbat, this aspect should have been tolerated in view of the emergency at hand. This remains speculation of course but since it is now evident that none of those involved had prior knowledge of the assault, a 'proper' response was ruled out right from the start. In this respect Srebrenica was an intelligence failure.

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<sup>2094</sup> United Nations, *Srebrenica Report*, § 487, p. 143.

## Chapter 9

# Survey of archival records

### Introduction

A large number of records and collections of documents were consulted for the Srebrenica inquiry and this study. Private organizations and individuals also made documents available. It is a generally accepted rule that the curator, manager or owner of such archives or documents must give permission for third parties to consult them. This usually means, certainly in the case of all documents belonging to government agencies and international organizations, that applications have to be submitted to the bodies concerned in order to inspect the material. In several cases the institutions or individuals involved gave the Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (NIOD) permission to have third parties inspect the documents (originals or copies). In such cases the NIOD was obliged to check whether there were any restrictions on making the documents public by virtue of the Freedom of Information Act, the Personal Data Protection Act and the Public Records Act. It is possible that as a result of these Acts certain data and/or names of individuals must be made illegible. Below a survey is provided of the records, collections and separate documents consulted, with mention of the abbreviations used in the report. The aim of this survey is to provide insight into the archives, which were consulted for the purposes of this study. Important archives consulted in the Netherlands for this study were those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence. All other Dutch and foreign archives and private collections have been brought together in a section: other archives and collections.

#### *Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs archives (NMFA)*

1. Cabinet archives, strictly confidential codes, Red telegrams.
2. Documentary Information Service (Dutch DDI)
3. European Department (DEU)
4. Political UN Affairs (DPV)
5. Atlantic Security Department (DAV)
6. Archives of the UN Permanent Representation in New York
7. Archives of the Netherlands embassy in Washington.
8. Archives of the Canadian embassy in Washington.

#### *Collection Hattinga van 't Sant*

Working archive of the Deputy Director of the Europe department

#### *The Netherlands Ministry of Defence archives (MOD)*

The archives present at the Ministry of Defence on the subject of the Dutch mission in Srebrenica, its background and its consequences fill more than one hundred metres of shelf space. The study of the archives focused mainly on the period from 1993 to 1996, but in connection with the run-up to the Dutch military involvement in the former Yugoslavia and the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica, it also extended to 1992 and 1997.

1. Department of the junior minister of Defence.
2. Secretary-General's Department.
3. Defence Staff.
4. Defence Crisis Management Centre (DCBC).
5. Directorate for General Policy.

6. Directorate of General Information.
7. Directorate of Legal Affairs, Department of Administrative Law, Criminal Law and Disciplinary Rules.
8. Directorate-General of Personnel.
9. Directorate-General for Equipment.
10. Directorate-General for Economy and Finance.
11. Military Intelligence Service (MIS), Central Organization.
12. First Air Force Signals Group (1LVG),
13. The 898 Signals Battalion (898 Vbdat) of the Royal Netherlands Army in Eibergen,
14. Royal Netherlands Navy Technical Information Processing Centre (TIVC) in Amsterdam
15. Signals Intelligence Department (AVI) in The Hague
16. Defence attaché in Ottawa.

#### *Royal Netherlands Army Archives*

1. The Army Council.
  - Archive of the Cabinet/Staff Group of the Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army.
2. Archive of the Royal Netherlands Army Operational Staff.
  - The archive of the former Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff
  - Operational Staff's 'Lessons Learned' Section.
  - Department of Operational Affairs.
  - Archive of the Department of Operational Policy.
3. Archive of the Military Intelligence Service, Royal Netherlands Army (former Department of Intelligence & Security).
4. The First Army Corps.
5. The 11th Airmobile Brigade at Schaarsbergen.
6. Collection of the Military History Section.
7. Commander in Chief of the Royal Netherlands Army Archive of Srebrenica Debriefing.
8. The 101st MI platoon at Ede.
9. 'Lessons Learned' Section.
10. Archives consulted at the Royal Netherlands Air Force
11. Staff Department of Operations, Exercises, Plans, Evaluations & Reporting (STAOOPER)
12. The photo archive of the 306th Squadron at Volkel Air Base.

### **Other archives and collections**

#### *Ministry of Home Affairs, The Hague*

Collection of the Dutch National Security Service (BVD) in Leidschendam. Files 98272 and 116679 concerning the situation in the former Yugoslavia and its possible implications for Dutch national security and the democratic system were made available.

*Collection of the Economic Investigation Service, International Economic Investigations Branch in Utrecht.*

Documents concerning evasion of the embargo against the former Yugoslavia were consulted.

*Cabinet Office, The Hague*

1. The archive of the Prime Minister's office (KMP)
2. The archive of the Secretary-General.
3. Objectivized summaries of the minutes of the Ministerial Council meetings from 1992 – 1998 made for the purposes of the present NIOD study.
4. The archive of the Committee of the United Intelligence Services in the Netherlands (CVIN).
5. The archive of the Ministerial Committee for the Intelligence and Security Services (MICIV).

*United Nations, Geneva*

1. UNPROFOR Collection. The archive contained documents from the UN headquarters in Zagreb, Sarajevo and Tuzla. Many of the documents from Tuzla originally came from the UNPROFOR Civil Affairs official in Tuzla, who reported on a wide variety of subjects.
2. Collection of the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia (ICFY) Papers, Palais des Nations. This collection includes the most important correspondence between the European negotiators Lord Owen, Vance, Stoltenberg and Bildt, the UN Secretary-General's special envoy Akashi, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations led by Annan and the Unprofor military representatives in the period from 1992 – 1996.
3. Collection of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In the UN refugee organization's archive many documents concerning humanitarian affairs in the Srebrenica enclave were found.

*United Nations, New York*

1. Collection of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). This collection includes all of the United Nations coded cables which were exchanged between DPKO and the Unprofor representatives and diplomatic negotiators during the war in Bosnia. The part of this collection covering the period from 1992 – 1995 was inspected.
2. Collection of Siergo Vieira de Mello. This archive contains correspondence between DPKO and UPROFOR officials in Bosnia.
3. UNPROFOR Collection. This archive contains the most important correspondence between the UN Secretary-General's special envoy Akashi, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the UPROFOR commanders during the period from 1992 – 1996 and also the archives of the Force Commander, Deputy Force Commanders and Chiefs of Staff.

*International Criminal Court for the Former Yugoslavia, The Hague*

A collection of documents used in the trial of Serbian General Krstic before the Yugoslavia Tribunal (IT-98-33).

*Canada*

1. Collection of the Canadian Ministry of Defence in Ottawa. In the so-called *Green Folder Confidential* and *Red Folder Secret I & II* documents concerning the Canadian UNPROFOR units in Bosnia in general and Srebrenica in particular were inspected. They were mainly reports from Bosnia to the National Defence Headquarters (NDHQ) of the Ministry of Defence and correspondence with

Canadian UPROFOR units in Srebrenica. There were also Situation Reports from the Canadian UPROFOR unit in the enclave.

2. Collection of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) in Ottawa. A total of 39 dossiers from the so-called File No. 21-14-6-UNPROFOR were consulted from the archive of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). This collection contains Canadian diplomatic telegrams which were exchanged between the ministry in Ottawa and the Canadian diplomatic representations abroad relating to UNPROFOR affairs.

3. Canadian Access to Information Act (AIA), Kevin O Neill, *History of CBNRC* (1987) [Classified].

4. Canadian Access to Information Act (AIA), Dossier 1972.

5. Reports from ECMM observers in Bosnia were acquired through the Ministry of Defence.

6. A total of 76 documents of various sorts were sent by the headquarters of the 2nd Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla.

7. Several documents connected with the journey of the men of Srebrenica to Tuzla were received from the Ministry of the Interior of the Republika Srpska (*Ministarstvo Unutrasnjih Poslova*).

#### *Ivanisevic Collection.*

This collection contains documents which are kept at the *Centar za istraživanje zločina nad Srpskim narodom* at Belgrade, of which Milivoje Ivanisevic is the director. The collection contains about 300 documents including 86 Bosnian army documents from a plundered computer in Zepa, containing commands and reports connected with Srebrenica and Zepa. The authenticity of these documents has been confirmed by Ramiz Becirovic, former Chief of Staff of the 28th Division from Srebrenica. One hundred documents came from the Republika Srpska and were mainly witnesses' statements, drawn up in the Opstinas of Skelani, Srebrenica, Zvornik, Milici and Bratunac, about Muslim-perpetrated violence from 1992 to 1994. Also in this collection are about 60 UN documents dating from July and August 1995, from UNMOs, and messages exchanged between UN agencies in Bosnia about Displaced Persons from Srebrenica. Several Dutchbat documents were also found in the collection. At a later stage two diaries from Srebrenica were also made available through this centre; they are mainly concerned with administrative matters. The Ivanisevic collection also contains Bosnian Serb newspaper and magazine articles and videotapes recorded by private individuals, which give an impression of everyday life and were found in Srebrenica after 11 July 1995.

1. Trifunovic Collection. This collection is kept at the Law Projects Centre in Belgrade, an organization affiliated with the Republika Srpska. The collection contained video tapes from both Srebrenica and surrounding Bosnian-Serb towns and villages. The material includes pictures of victims of Muslim attacks in 1993 and 1994. A small number of documents relating to the presence of Dutchbat in Srebrenica was also found at this Centre.

2. Yugoslav Ministry of Information. A collection of articles from international periodicals and newspapers concerning the media warfare between the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnians was received from this ministry.

3. Situation reports dating from July 1995 and a few unrelated letters were received from the archive of the Danish Army Operations Command.

4. 'The Clingendael Collection', a pack of UNPROFOR documents thought to be originally from the archives and staffs of the United Nations in the former Yugoslavia. These documents were made available to the Clingendael Institute for research by an anonymous source in the autumn of 1996.

#### *Médecins sans Frontières, Brussels*

In the archive of *Médecins sans Frontières* (MSF) there were reports dating from 1993 about the situation in Srebrenica and a complete series of 'Capsat messages' exchanged between the coordinator of *Médecins sans Frontières* in Srebrenica and coordinators elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. In this



archive a number of messages from Dutchbat about medical matters were found, as well as messages concerning Dutchbat.

This organization ran the so-called Swedish Shelter project, a village made up of prefab houses offering shelter to about 3000 people. This organization made its 1994 and 1995 reports, written mainly in Swedish, available. The last report dates from 11 July 1995.

*Norwegian People's Aid (NPA, Norsk Folkehjelp), Oslo, Norway*

This organization was involved in humanitarian projects in Srebrenica and Bratunac and made all its documentation from Srebrenica and Bratunac available. The documents written in Norwegian and Swedish from collections 28 and 29 were adapted by Krsti Thørsen at the request of the NIOD.

*U.S. National Archives, Washington DC*

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2. RG 263, *CLA-records, Entry 27, Box 12*, Max F. Millikan, 'The Nature and Methods of Economic *Intelligence*', in: *Studies in Intelligence*, (1956)3(Spring), pp. 3-4.
3. RG 263, *NIE's 1951 - 1993, Box 6, Folder 47*, NIE 11/4-82: The Soviet Challenge to US Security Interests, 10/08/82.
4. RG 457, NSA-Records, Box 1028, Folder Monthly Production Trends Report, Tab E: Annual Production 1944 - 1945, June 1945.
5. RG-457, CP, SRH-264, A Lecture on Communications Intelligence by Captain J.N. Wenger, USN, 14/08/46.

*George Bush Library*

FOIA, National Security Directive 74, Peacekeeping and Emergency Humanitarian Relief Policy, 24/11/92.

*US Freedom of Information Act*

1. FOIA, State Department, Code Cable Dallaire to Baril/DPKO, No. 2052, 11/01/94.
2. FOIA, US Army Intelligence, Annual Historical Review, 1 October 1992 to 30 September 1993, no date ( $\pm$  late 1993).
3. FOIA, Letter of Daniel Krutzer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, to Vice-Admiral J. McConnell, Director NSA, 06/09/95.
4. FOIA State Department, Washington DC, US Mission Vienna to SecState, No. 2135, 26/07/1995.
5. FOIA State Department, John Shattuck to Secretary of State, 04/08/95.
6. FOIA, State Department, State Department memorandum, 19/12/96.
7. Sector North East Collection, 1994 and 1995.

*Collection of UNHCR Tuzla reports*

UNHCR messages to and from Tuzla, concerning relief for Displaced Persons after the fall of Srebrenica. Acquired from a private source.

*Voskamp Collection*

Documents concerning the provision of Close Air Support to Dutchbat in July 1995.

1. Collection of De Weerd, former adviser to the NATO Permanent Representative at Brussels: diary and abstracts of NATO documents, compiled for the purposes of the NIOD.

2. Sudetic Collection: abstracts of UN documents originally from the UN Headquarters in New York. At the time of the war in Bosnia, Sudetic was a correspondent for the *New York Times* and author of *Blood and Vengeance: One Family's Story of the War in Bosnia*.
3. Karremans Collection: letters and documents belonging to the former commander of Dutchbat III.
4. Rohde Collection: various documents including UN documents, collected during David Rohde's time in Bosnia as a correspondent for the *Christian Science Monitor*.
5. Westerman Collection: documents collected for the book *Srebrenica: Het zwartste scenario* (Srebrenica: the Blackest Scenario), of which Frank Westerman, at the time a correspondent for *NRC Handelsblad* in the former Yugoslavia, was a co-author.
6. Brantz Collection: documents belonging to the former Deputy Commander of UNPROFOR Sector North East at Tuzla. In addition to notes dating from the period when Brantz was Chief of Staff of the Royal Netherlands Army Crisis Staff, this collection also contains an (adapted) diary of the Crisis Staff Situation Centre which was not found anywhere else in the archives. The collection also contained a series of diaries which were supplemented over the years. The original version of the diary was not made available.
7. Van Duijn Collection: several documents relating to the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica.
8. Wahlgren Collection: documents belonging to the former UNPROFOR Force Commander, mainly about the realization of the Safe Areas.
9. Stagge Collection: several documents about the organization of the debriefing in Assen.
10. Nicolai Collection: documents originally belonging to the former BH-Command Chief of Staff in Sarajevo. The documents are mainly concerned with the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica and came from a Dutch source.
11. Collection of Momcilo Cvijetinovic: the diary of an ABiH soldier, found at Srebrenica, and a newspaper published in Srebrenica on 8 February 1994.
12. Stanojevic Collection: several diaries and a collection of internal ABiH documents pertaining to the administrative affairs of several brigades in Srebrenica.
13. Kolsteren Collection: diary notes and several documents from the UNPF Headquarters in Zagreb.
14. Vader Collection: correspondence relating to the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica.
15. Hegge Collection: documents about training and the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica.
16. Vandewijer Collection: diskettes containing notes and briefings dating from 1993-1994.
17. Hilderink Collection: chronology and notes on various subjects, written after the fall of Srebrenica.
18. Collection of Rupert Smith: 58 documents which were not found in the UNPROFOR archives in Geneva were selected from four files containing personal correspondence, documents and notes.
19. Vermeulen Collection: personal documents belonging to the commander of Dutchbat I.
20. Schouten Collection: diaries from Srebrenica covering the period from February to July 1995 and documents about medical matters and training courses.
21. Collection of David Moore (Commander of Canbat): documents about Canbat's time and rotation in Srebrenica.
22. Collection of Bo Pellnäss (Chief UNMO): diary and several documents.
23. Collection of General Kjeld Hillingsø (Commander of Danish Operational Forces): Danish situation reports.
24. Collection of Berry Ashton (Deputy Force Commander, United Nations Protection Force): diary notes and policy documents.
25. Collection of Tony Banbury (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General): diary notes, accounts of talks and a 'srebrenica dossier'.
26. Collection of Emma Shitakha (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General): diary notes and accounts of talks.
27. Meurkens Collection: correspondence and diary notes.
28. Jacobovits de Szeged Collection: diary notes.
29. Van den Breemen Collection: annotated copies of archive documents.

30. Uiterweer Post Collection: notes and documents about Tuzla Air Base and relief for Displaced Persons there.
31. Jansen Collection: Diary fragments and documents from the UN headquarters in Zagreb and intelligence briefings for the Army Council.
32. Lubbers Collection: notes made for the purposes of the NIOD enquiry.
33. Rave Collection: diary notes.
34. Neisingh Collection: diary notes dating from 11 July 1995.
35. Hicks Collection: documents concerning humanitarian affairs associated with the fall of Srebrenica.
36. Bourgondiën Collection: documents concerning humanitarian affairs associated with the fall of Srebrenica.
37. Groen Collection: notes of the debriefing in Zagreb.
38. Beneker Collection: document about the press conference in Zagreb.
39. TCBU Collection: documents collected for the purposes of the Temporary Committee for Despatch Decision-Making.
40. Svensson Collection: UNPF documents and diary notes.
41. Jacobovitz de Szeged Collection: diary notes made as NATO Permanent Representative.
42. Ter Beek Collection: archive documents and newspaper articles used to write his book *Manoeuvreren* (Manoeuvring).
43. Pennin Collection: several documents relating to the debriefing in Assen and the aftermath of Srebrenica.
44. De Ruiter Collection: documents originally from the UNPROFOR headquarters in Sarajevo.

#### *Personal memoirs*

1. For the purposes of the NIOD enquiry, the former Netherlands Minister of Defence J.J.C. Voorhoeve compiled a diary on Bosnia policy and Srebrenica covering the period from 22 August 1994 to August 1995.
2. Deputy Director of General Information of the Ministry of Defence, B. Kreemers, recorded his memories of Srebrenica and its aftermath for the purposes of the NIOD.
3. Adjudant Koreman (Dutchbat III) lent the NIOD a manuscript he himself had written about his time in Srebrenica, illustrated with abstracts of reports.

#### *Archives of Political Parties*

1. CDA, D'66, GroenLinks, PvdA and VVD.
2. Blaauw Collection: documents from the archive he had compiled on the former Yugoslavia as VVD parliamentary party spokesman and also from his term as chairman of the so-called Blaauw Parliamentary Committee on Srebrenica.
3. Valk Collection.

#### *CD-ROM Collection*

This collection appears to contain the complete correspondence between the 28th Division in Srebrenica and the 2nd Corps of the ABiH in Tuzla during the period when Srebrenica was a Safe Area. The CD-ROMs also contain material from civilian authorities in Srebrenica, and VRS archive material from the 'Zivojin Misic' barracks at Zvornik, which sheds some light on the conflict at Baljkovica where the retreating column had to fight its way through VRS lines after the fall of Srebrenica. The printouts of the most relevant documents in these CD-ROMs were about two metres long.

*Another twelve private collections were consulted which it was agreed would remain confidential.*

Confidential Collection (1): documents originally from the American State Department.

Confidential Collection (2): a large number of documents dating from 1994-1995 which were originally from G-2 UNPF Zagreb, and 11.000 military diary notes on CD-ROM.

Confidential Collection (3): report on Unprofor intelligence acquisition.

Confidential Collection (4): several Interoffice Memoranda from the Military Information Office UNPF-HQ.

Confidential Collection (5): UNMO documents from the UN headquarters in Zagreb.

Confidential Collection (6): diplomatic correspondence of foreign origin.

Confidential Collection (7): military documents of Canadian origin.

Confidential Collection (8): military documents of foreign origin.

Confidential Collection (9): notes and policy documents.

Confidential Collection (10): notes and policy documents.

Confidential Collection (11): notes and reports of Bosnian origin.

Confidential Collection (12): documents about secret arms supplies to Tuzla.

Confidential Collection (13): documents related to the trial of General Krstic before the Yugoslavia Tribunal, which were not included in the trial documents.

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Weinberger Casper  
Weiner Tim  
Weisband William  
Westerman Frank  
Western John  
Wickland Gene  
Wieffer E.G.B.  
Williams Paul  
Woolsey R. James  
Zametica Jovan  
Zeid Al-Huseein A.F.  
Zivanovic Milenko  
Zumach Andreas