

## The Siege of Sarajevo, 1992-1995

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Like all of the studies of this volume, the struggle for Sarajevo from 1992 to 1995 offers a unique perspective on urban operations (UO). Within the wide range of UO, the siege of Sarajevo seems to fall at a mid-intensity level roughly halfway between full-scale house-to-house fighting and noncombat disaster relief. Yet, perhaps more than most other entries in this collection, the three-year clash at Sarajevo represents the largest variety of UO in a single campaign. At various times, the siege included moments of high-intensity street fighting, lengthy siege operations dominated by bombardments and sniper fire, and political posturing. In fact, all factions in the Bosnian war found that operations in Sarajevo could serve more as a tool for propaganda than as a means for military advantage. All the while, UN forces were involved in the struggle, initially in a limited and almost impossible effort to bring humanitarian aid to the city and later in a more active peacekeeping and mediation role.

The complexity of the conditions and conduct of the siege are a cautionary tale and a lesson in the pitfalls of attempts to simplify the bitter war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the role of Sarajevo in that fight. Still, there are some themes that emerge from the conflict for Sarajevo that provide insight into UO. First, the reluctance of all factions to commit to an intensive house-to-house struggle for the city reinforces the impression that urban fighting demands greater resources, especially manpower and ammunition, than battles on most other terrain. Second, as the factions realized they were unable or unwilling to pay the price for the complete capture of the city, they also discovered that they could still use the battle for the city for political gain. This realization spawned a wide variety of tactical techniques that contributed little to capturing or relieving the capital but was designed to elicit political dividends. Finally, in connection with the potential political advantages to be gained in Sarajevo, many of the combatants came to view the city's civilian population as a chip in the game of Bosnian power politics.

The siege of Sarajevo was part of a vicious war in Bosnia-Herzegovina (for brevity, hereafter referred to as Bosnia) from 1992 to 1995. While historians have debated the supposed "ancient ethnic" origins of this war, the more immediate causes lay in Yugoslavia's collapse after the death of Josip Broz Tito.<sup>1</sup> Since World War II, this former partisan leader had held together the diverse republics of



Map 1

Yugoslavia with a combination of propaganda, incentive, and brute force. Without Tito, nationalistic movements reemerged and drove several of the republics toward independence. This nationalism ultimately led to conflict among the newly independent states of the old Yugoslavia, and it was a key element of the political and military factors that dominated the fighting in Bosnia and the siege at Sarajevo (see Map 1).

The first republic to leave Yugoslavia was Slovenia, which initially declared itself a sovereign state on 27 September 1989. For the next year, there was high tension, but relatively light military conflict, between Slovenia and the federal government of Yugoslavia, which was becoming increasingly dominated by Serbia and its leader, Slobodan Milošević. According to several accounts, Milošević agreed

in January 1991 to allow Slovenia its independence primarily because there were so few ethnic Serbs in Slovenia.<sup>2</sup> This decision revealed that Milošević had shifted from his earlier goal of maintaining a united Yugoslavia to a more nationalistic aim of building a “greater Serbia.”

Croatia’s assertion of independence in June 1991 was far less simple and much bloodier than that of Slovenia. Most Croatians were Catholic, but helping to generate friction with Serbia, the new Croatian Republic also included a significant population of Eastern Orthodox Serbs located primarily in a region known as the Krajina. In addition, parts of Croatia bordered Serbian and Bosnian Serb lands. In spring 1991, Milošević and Croatian President Franjo Tuđman maneuvered militarily and politically as conflict loomed between the two republics. Milošević had the stronger military forces, while Tuđman hoped to portray the Serbs as aggressors to the international community. At the same time, extremist groups on both sides sent forces to the Krajina to stir up passions among the local population.<sup>3</sup> Open warfare broke out in summer 1991, and the brutality of the struggle came to be symbolized by the fight for Vukovar from September to November 1991. After the fall of Vukovar to pro-Serbian forces, Croatia and the Krajina Serbs (backed by the Serb Republic) came to an uneasy truce, and by early 1992, UN soldiers were in Croatia administering a cease-fire between the warring factions.

The Croatian war exhibited several factors that influenced the war that later engulfed Bosnia. First, at the highest political levels, both Milošević and Tuđman were flexible in tactics and goals. They were capable of extreme nationalistic pronouncements, yet willing to sacrifice nationalistic allies for the sake of support from the international community. Second, the fighting in Croatia transformed the Yugoslav People’s Army (known by the Serbo-Croatian acronym of JNA) from a multiethnic force fighting for a federal Yugoslavia to a pro-Serb force that supported Milošević’s agenda for a greater Serbia.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, one of the JNA’s major commanders in Krajina who became familiar with the conditions of urban fighting was Ratko Mladić. He later emerged as the overall Bosnian Serb commander at Sarajevo. Third, the problems UN forces encountered after the cease-fire in Croatia prefigured the difficulties UN forces faced in Bosnia.<sup>5</sup> Their underlying neutral stance and their general lack of substantial military strength meant that they had to perform their mission with great awareness of political conditions and the limits of their own military power.

Finally, pro-Serb forces used tactics in the battle for Vukovar that were similar to those later employed at Sarajevo. The JNA showed its

sympathies to the Serbs and used its heavy weapons outside Vukovar to bombard and devastate the city. Serb paramilitaries (soldiers Bosnian Serb leaders raised outside of the official military structure) were more willing to do the urban fighting but found that the cost of fighting from house to house was costly. Although the Serbs had taken the city, the price for Vukovar was high, not only in the manpower and time expended but also in the international support lost in the effort.<sup>6</sup> After Vukovar, the JNA and Serb paramilitary forces tended to rely on heavy weapons to bombard urban areas while remaining reluctant to commit to costly street fighting.

Unlike Slovenia, which did not have a significant ethnic minority, and Croatia, which had a single and relatively concentrated Serb minority, Bosnia consisted of three ethnic groups, none of which commanded an absolute majority of the population. According to the April 1991 census, Bosnia's ethnic mix was 43.6 percent Muslim, 31.3 percent Serb, 17.3 percent Croat, and 5.2 percent Yugoslav (this last category mainly representing people of mixed ethnic backgrounds).<sup>7</sup> This demographic factor meant that no single ethnic group could rule Bosnia with an absolute majority, making it difficult to create a workable unified political structure. It was just as difficult to partition Bosnia along reasonable and simple ethnic lines. These ethnic groups were not divided into clearly defined geographic areas. In the cities, especially Sarajevo, the ethnic groups were often intermingled, and in the countryside, the more ethnically homogenous villages dotted the landscape in a mixed fashion that defied a regional pattern.

These problems had been apparent in Bosnia's first free elections in November 1990. Each of the republic's three ethnic groups formed strongly nationalistic parties that dominated the elections, with the vote dividing almost strictly along ethnic lines (the one party that fostered multiethnic unity gathered few votes). Thus, the Muslims captured the most votes but not a majority, and after some complicated political maneuvering, one of the Muslim leaders, Alija Izetbegović, became Bosnia's president.<sup>8</sup> The three national parties agreed to govern as a coalition, but relations were strained.

The new coalition government in Bosnia watched events in Slovenia and Croatia with a careful eye. Izetbegović initially had hoped that Bosnia could remain in Yugoslavia, along with Slovenia and Croatia, in an autonomous status. However, once both Slovenia and Croatia had declared their independence from Yugoslavia, Bosnia was forced to choose between remaining in a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia or declaring its own sovereignty. By spring 1991, Izetbegović had become

a proponent of an independent Bosnian state, while the Bosnian Serbs, under the leadership of Radovan Karadžić, preferred to remain a part of Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Serb members of Parliament often boycotted legislative sessions, and finally on 14 October 1991, they left Parliament indefinitely.<sup>9</sup>

As nationalist elements gained ascendancy on all sides, the possibility for compromise diminished. The Bosnian Serbs threatened to create their own Bosnian state if Izetbegović pushed toward independence, and they called on the JNA to protect the four self-declared Bosnian Serb autonomous regions within Bosnia. Ironically, Izetbegović also tried to woo the JNA to his side, hoping that the federal army could prevent the Serb paramilitaries' intervention.<sup>10</sup> These efforts collapsed. Subsequently, Izetbegović, perhaps hoping for international recognition and protection, called for a referendum on Bosnian independence that took place on 29 February and 1 March 1992. Karadžić and the Bosnian Serb leadership called for a boycott of the referendum. Most Bosnian Serbs did not vote, and the overall turnout was 64 percent. However, the Muslims and Bosnian Croats voted almost unanimously for independence.<sup>11</sup> The day after the vote, at a Bosnian Serb wedding ceremony in Sarajevo, Muslim gunmen killed a member of the wedding party, and tension in the city reached a new high. The factions managed to avoid open fighting in Sarajevo for another month, but by late spring, war seemed inevitable.

In the events leading up to the outbreak of the war, all of the major factions and their leaders staked out their positions, which was to have considerable influence on the siege of Sarajevo. Alija Izetbegović, the Bosnian Muslim leader, wanted a united and independent Bosnia, multiethnic but with Muslims as the largest segment of the population. Radovan Karadžić, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, initially pushed for all of Bosnia to remain in a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia, but by 1992, his aim was to partition Bosnia and bring the Serb regions, as a contiguous unit, into Yugoslavia. This goal required physically relocating significant parts of the ethnic populations and "ethnic cleansing." This term came to describe a variety of actions—threats, house burnings, beatings, rape, and executions—designed to force opposition ethnic groups out of a region, thus leaving that area ethnically pure. These actions were not a full-scale policy of genocide but were usually designed to create larger, contiguous regions populated by single ethnic groups. In the Bosnian war, the Bosnian Serbs were the first to employ this tactic, but all factions eventually engaged in ethnic cleansing. Milošević initially supported Karadžić because they shared the

common goal of a greater Serbia; however, the occasional conflicts between these two leaders grew worse as the war continued. Karadžić tried to keep some measure of independence from Belgrade for the Bosnian Serbs while Milošević distanced himself from the Bosnian Serbs when their ethnic cleansing brought increasing international pressure and economic sanctions.

The final Bosnian faction, the Bosnian Croats, wavered between supporting the Muslim and Serb sides. In the independence referendum and at the opening of the war, the Bosnian Croat leadership supported the concept of a multiethnic Bosnia, but the idea of a partition—with segments of Bosnia being incorporated into newly independent Croatia—was always a possibility. Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban supported partition, but the Croatian president, Tudjman, had firmer control over his Bosnian counterpart than Milošević had over Karadžić. Tudjman appeared to be the ultimate opportunist, willing to support any policy in Bosnia that benefited Croatia. He wavered between a partition that could add parts of Bosnia to Croatia and keeping a unified Bosnia as a buffer between Croatia and Serbia. The one constant for Tudjman was to support any action that could aid in the recovery of the Krajina.

The role of actors outside Bosnia also had a major influence on the conflict. The most obvious external players were Serbia and Croatia, whose political goals clearly influenced (but did not control) their Bosnian clients' policies. Just as important, the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats could count on military support from contiguous benefactor states. This support included heavy weapons and money. Additionally, the JNA was clearly a pro-Serb force, and it would be the crucial force that enabled the Bosnian Serbs to lay siege to Sarajevo. The Muslims had no adjacent ally, and Izetbegović hoped that the international community, primarily the UN and NATO, would aid the Muslim side. However, a UN arms embargo on Bosnia actually hurt the Muslims the most because they started the war with no heavy weapons and could not smuggle them in from adjacent allies. Later in the war, Izetbegović's forces would get some support from Muslim nations that managed to get weapons through the embargo.

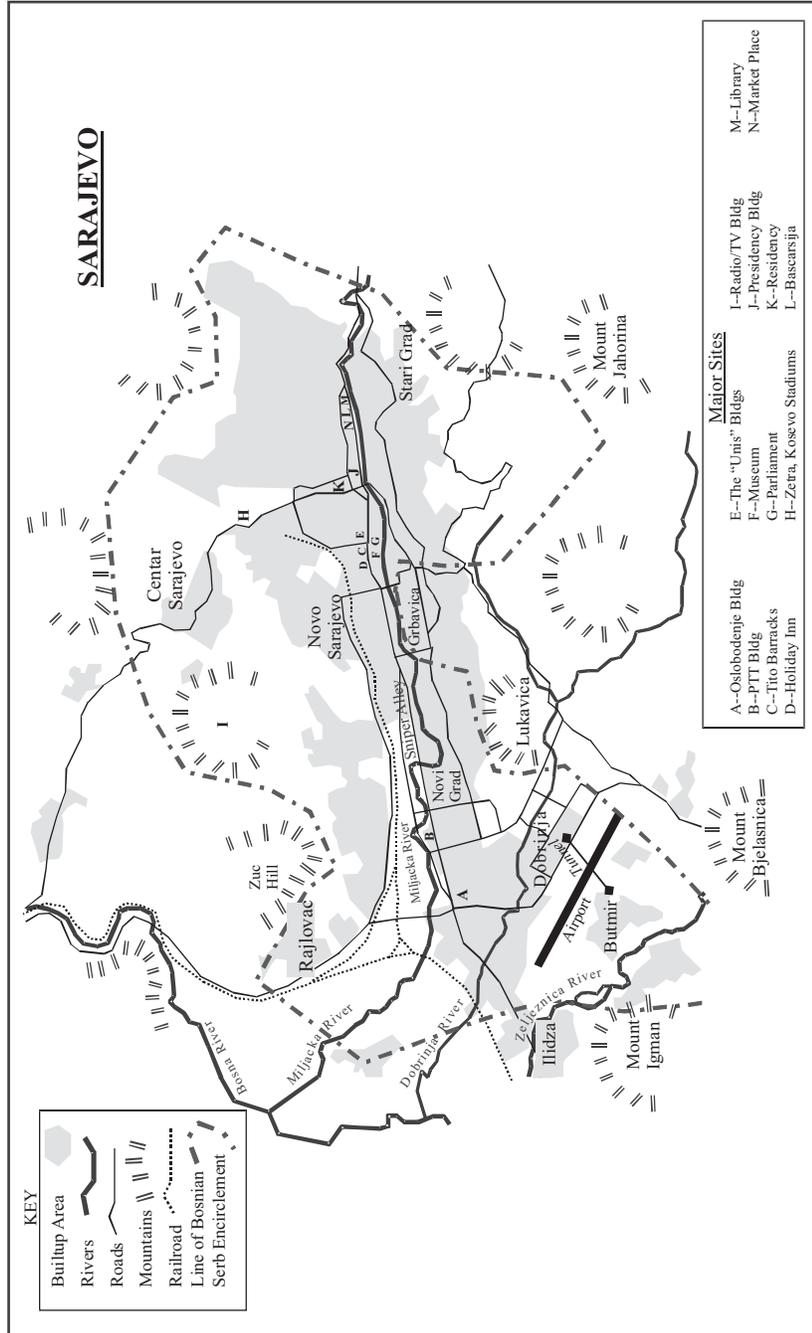
All of the factions in Bosnia with their varied aims fought for more than three years. During this time, the fighting spread to almost every region of the country, but throughout the conflict, Sarajevo remained a focal point of the struggle and the most visible symbol of the war. During the siege, as it does today, the city of Sarajevo stretches out along both sides of the Miljacka River in a narrow, oblong shape approximately 13 kilometers (km) long from east to west but generally only 3 to

4 km wide as it follows the river (see Map 2). The urban area contained virtually all of the types of terrain and structures that are found in most modern cities. However, the truly dominant characteristic of the city was the ring of mountains surrounding it, placing the city in a bowl visible and vulnerable to anyone who occupied the rim of high ground on the outside edges. Keeping in mind that there was only limited fighting in the streets of Sarajevo itself, it is worth examining key pieces of terrain that influenced the siege both militarily and politically.<sup>12</sup>

Transportation routes into and out of the city, rivers and roads, provided only limited capacity. The Miljacka River, like almost all watercourses in Bosnia, was nonnavigable, and thus Sarajevo had no port facilities. The river roughly divided the Bosnian capital in half. The Miljacka is a tributary of the Bosna River that, along with the eljeznica River, bounded the city on its western border. There were numerous bridges across the Miljacka throughout the city, including the famous “Latin Bridge” where Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated. The Miljacka was only a limited barrier to movement between the northern and southern portions of the city and played only a minor role in the siege.

The city’s major roads were a much larger factor in the struggle. As might be expected, Sarajevo was (and is) a nexus of major highways for Bosnia (see Map 3). Two roads led out of the city north toward Tuzla, a major Bosnian Serb stronghold, and Zenica, one location the UN designated as a safe haven. Toward the east, one highway connected the city with Višegrad, and more important Pale, which was the capital of the Bosnian Serb faction within Bosnia (later to be called the *Republika Srpska*, or RS, in its Serbo-Croatian acronym). One major route from the city passed near the airport and continued south to Trnovo, Foča, Dubrovnik, and Split. This was the main path connecting the city with Bosnian Croat strongholds and, to a lesser extent, the Muslim ones in the south. Finally, the main road to the west connected Sarajevo with Mostar, the scene of some of the bitterest fighting of the war when Bosnian Croats and Muslims turned against each other in 1993 and 1994. All factions, as well as the UN, used the roads to attempt to transport supplies and humanitarian aid and to evacuate refugees, children, the sick, and the elderly.

One other road, the infamous “sniper’s alley,” is also noteworthy. Starting in the west, the road name changed several times until becoming Marshal Tito Boulevard as it entered the old city. This was the main east-west path through the city. It was not a highway, but for much of its route, it was a wide, four-lane street with a median in the



Map 2



Map 3

middle for the city's tram. From its origins on the west side of the city up to the point where it split near the "old city," the street was an open area that was visible from many high buildings and most of the surrounding mountains, thus rendering it vulnerable to sniper fire. The single, ground-level tram down the center of the boulevard was Sarajevo's only internal mass transit system, but as a transportation line, it often did not run during much of the siege and had little effect on the fight for the city. However, the tram cars were sometimes turned on their sides and used as obstacles and barricades.

Looking at the various sectors of the city, one can start with the western area of Sarajevo, best known during the siege for the suburb of Ilid a and the Sarajevo airport. Ilid a is split by the eljeznica River and, at the time of the siege, consisted of modern residential homes and small apartment buildings. Its most famous site is a spa consisting of

several hotels that served as a Bosnian Serb headquarters during much of the siege and later was the headquarters for the multinational Implementation Force (IFOR) that replaced the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in 1996. The airport lies slightly east of Ilidža, and like the highways emanating from the capital, its significance at the time was more political than military. Neither side used the airport for combat aircraft or military supply, but it became a symbol of contact with the international community and a major connection for humanitarian aid.

Just north and east of the airport was the sector of the city known as Dobrinja. It consisted largely of three- and four-story apartment complexes. The open area of the airport on the southwest side of Dobrinja gave clear fields of fire from the surrounding mountains, and much of Dobrinja was devastated during the siege. This part of the city also became known for being the eastern end of a tunnel that ran under the airport. The Bosnian (Muslim and Croat) forces built the tunnel to aid in resupplying the city while avoiding the Bosnian Serb guns that dominated the region around the airport. It is also interesting to note that the tunnel was the one example of underground operations in the siege; Sarajevo did not have a subway and had only a small sewer system. Unlike some other urban conflicts, Sarajevo saw virtually no subterranean fighting.

Just north of Dobrinja, but still south of the Miljacka River, was the area of town known as Novi Grad. Most of this sector was made up of housing for the city's industrial laborers, and it included several massive apartment buildings built in the old Communist style of repetitive, high-rise structures. These tall buildings provided perches for snipers from all of the factions. Also in this region was the Oslobodjenje building, the home of Sarajevo's pro-Bosnian (Muslim) press, which was devastated in the siege. Farther east was the Postal, Telephone, and Telegraph (PTT) building, which was the headquarters for UNPROFOR during part of the siege.

Moving farther east in the city past residential apartments and moderately sized buildings on both sides of the Miljacka, the center of the city contained several areas and structures that figured prominently in the struggle. On the north side of the main east-west boulevard (sniper's alley) lay Tito Barracks, a complex of large concrete buildings that housed the old JNA garrison for the city. Close by was the Holiday Inn that gained fame as the favorite location for the international press during the conflict. Slightly farther east were two high-rise buildings called the *Unis*, also known locally as *Mono* and *Uzier*, two famous

characters from jokes told by Sarajevo's residents. Although tall, the *Unis* buildings were not a popular site for snipers because they were subjected to heavy mortar and artillery fire throughout the struggle. Across the boulevard from the Holiday Inn—but still north of the Miljacka—were the Parliament Building and National Museum. These buildings received only moderate damage during the fighting; the Muslim defenders held trench lines closer to the river rather than occupying the structures themselves. Just across the Miljacka from the parliament and museum was the district of Grbavica, a residential area of mostly two- and three-story apartments. This district marked the farthest advance of the Bosnian Serbs into the city itself.

Continuing eastward toward the old sector of the city, a road called Alipašina branched north from Marshal Tito Boulevard. This road climbed rapidly upward toward mountains on the north side of the city. About 2 km from the center of the city, the Alipašina passed two stadiums built for the 1984 Olympics: the Koševo outdoor stadium and the Zetra indoor ice rink. Across the Alipašina from the stadiums was a large open hillside that contained a small cemetery before the siege. During the war, many of the dead bodies were stored in Zetra stadium before being buried on the hillside across from the rink. Often, snipers killed mourners during these funeral processions. By 1995, the cemetery was four times its original size.

Returning to the area near the intersection of the Alipašina and Tito Boulevard, there were two significant buildings: the Residency and the Presidency. Neither structure is particularly large or militarily important, but both had political significance. The Residency was Tito's old vacation home in the city, and it later functioned as UNPROFOR headquarters. The Presidency was the office of Bosnian President Izetbegović during the war.

Finally, the eastern sector of the city is a mixture of closely packed residential buildings, stores, and famous historical structures centered on the Muslim old city known as Baščaršija. The old city was interlaced with numerous narrow streets and cobblestone pedestrian paths. On the eastern tip of this sector, a large stone building constructed in the Austro-Hungarian era (1894) as the City Hall later became the city's library. Although not a major factor in the siege, the building suffered heavy artillery fire, which tragically destroyed a substantial number of priceless books. Just west of the library, the most prominent Muslim mosque, Catholic cathedral, and Orthodox church lay within 500 meters of each other—miraculously little damaged during the war—perhaps symbols of the potential for peaceful coexistence. Near

these places of worship lay a more tragic symbol, the central market place (the Markale market), a small open area (a square about 200 meters on all sides) filled with wooden stands for produce and other vendors. It had no military importance, but bombings of the market and the resultant civilian deaths had a great impact on the politics of the siege.

The high ground surrounding Sarajevo was the dominant terrain of the struggle. During the siege, almost every road to Sarajevo had to go through a pass dominated by mountains the Bosnian Serbs controlled. The most publicized of these high points was Mount Igman on the southwest outskirts of the city. Two other sectors of elevated terrain stand out. First, on the south side of the city, the Bosnian Serbs held a series of hills starting at Lukavica and continuing east past the location of the bobsled run of the 1984 Olympics. Control of these southern heights gave the Bosnian Serbs their best artillery and sniper shots into the city. Second, although the Bosnian Serbs also controlled much of the high ground on the northern half of the city, the Bosnian Muslims held one hilltop less than 1 km from the Zetra stadium, which was also the location of the Bosnian television broadcasting station. This station continued to broadcast throughout the siege.

As mentioned earlier, the population of Sarajevo was cosmopolitan and relatively tolerant of religious differences. Its ethnic groups extensively intermingled throughout the city. According to the 1991 census, the total population was 428,617. Sarajevo had a relatively small land area for a major urban area and, therefore, was more densely populated than many comparable cities. As in the nation at large, the Muslims made up the largest percentage of the city population at 49.3 percent. The Bosnian Serbs were 27.4 percent of the total. Interestingly, the Yugoslav percentage of the city population (12.1) was greater than the Croat portion (7.3). This factor shows that a sizable segment of Sarajevo's population was the product of mixed ethnic backgrounds. Finally, 3.9 percent of the city was listed as "others," which included a small but growing Jewish population.

Before the siege, the distribution of the ethnic groups throughout Sarajevo was so mixed that almost no sector, except for the old city (Baščaršija), could claim a majority of one faction. The large apartment buildings had people from each group, and the residential areas usually had Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic homes side by side. However, not long after the siege began, segments of the population shifted. In particular, significant numbers of Bosnian Serbs left their homes to seek safety behind Bosnian Serb lines around the city. Thus, in addition

to the old city, a few other sectors of Sarajevo became predominantly Muslim and subject to bombardment.

The opposing forces at Sarajevo were a mix of military, paramilitary, pseudo-military, armed civilian, and even some criminal elements that represented the myriad of factions vying for control of the city. For simplicity, it is useful first to discuss the concept of Total National Defense and then each of the factions' forces in turn: the JNA, Bosnian Serb irregulars, Croat and Bosnian Croat units, and the Muslim-dominated forces initially designated as the Bosnian Defense Force (BDF) and eventually renamed the Army of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (known by its Serbo-Croatian acronym of AFBiH). After examining the factions, we will examine the other major player in Sarajevo, UNPROFOR. Scrutiny of the leadership, organization, weaponry, doctrine, training, and experience of all of the fighting elements reveals a general lack of UO preparation and a shortage of the resources (and in some cases the will) needed to carry out a sustained city fight.

Before its breakup, Yugoslavia's armed forces were based on a concept called Total National Defense. Not surprisingly, this concept grew out of Yugoslavia's experience in World War II as well as the nature of the country's terrain and Yugoslavia's position as a nonaligned player between the Soviet Union and the United States in the Cold War.<sup>13</sup> Under Total National Defense, the active army (JNA) was not expected to defeat a major power in a conventional war. Instead, the JNA acted more as a training vehicle for conscripts who became members of the Territorial Defense Force (TDF) after completing their two-year term in the JNA. The TDF, fighting as partisans, was expected to carry most of the fight against any invader (much like in World War II).

The forces needed for Total National Defense doctrine had several unique characteristics. Both the JNA and TDF trained in small-unit tactics with an emphasis on partisan warfare. The TDF was locally based and reflected the ethnic composition of its region. The JNA was multiethnic (at least before 1990) and answered to the Yugoslav federal government. The TDF had access to small-arms caches that were distributed throughout the country, with a particular concentration of weapons in the rugged terrain of Bosnia. The JNA had all of the heavy weapons: tanks, armored personnel carriers (APCs), artillery, and mortars. As the Yugoslav wars evolved after 1990, the TDF fragmented into supporting its local regions while the JNA generally became more of a pro-Serbian force.

When fighting broke out in Sarajevo in April 1992, the Yugoslav federation controlled the JNA units in Bosnia. By this time, Slovenia and Croatia had departed Yugoslavia, leaving the federation dominated by Serbia, and thus Milošević had a preeminent influence on the JNA's role. This being said, it is important to emphasize that the JNA, especially at the outset of the war, was not simply an unquestioning tool of Serbian nationalism. It still contained some non-Serbian officers and several moderate Serb officers who hoped to restore Yugoslav unity or at least to mitigate the suffering in Bosnia. Additionally, at the beginning of the Bosnian war, the Bosnian Serb leader, Karadžić, had only limited influence on JNA operations. Finally, not long after the fighting erupted in April 1992, the federal government ordered the JNA to withdraw from Bosnia. However, only limited parts of the JNA withdrew, while many of the JNA soldiers and most of their heavy equipment remained behind and eventually became the basis of the Bosnian Serb Army (later known by its Serbo-Croatian acronym as the VRS).<sup>14</sup>

Just as fighting erupted in Sarajevo, General Ratko Mladić, a veteran commander of JNA forces fighting in Croatia, became the JNA commander in Bosnia. Mladić was a Serb nationalist who did not hesitate to take whatever measures he felt were necessary to eradicate Croat and Muslim opposition in Bosnia. Initially, as a JNA officer, he reported to the Yugoslav government, but he did all he could to support the Bosnian Serbs. Later in 1992, when parts of the JNA departed Bosnia and the rest became the Army of *Republika Srpska* (VRS), Mladić received command of this new force. At that point, he no longer kept up the façade of Yugoslav unity, and he worked directly for Karadžić. Mladić remained the VRS commander for the rest of the war.

The JNA leader in the Sarajevo region was Colonel-General Milutin Kukanjac. While he disliked Izetbegović and the new Muslim-dominated Bosnian government, Kukanjac focused on protecting and preserving his JNA forces and was uninterested in taking the city by storm. He seemed to have a genuine interest in acting as a moderating force, but he nonetheless permitted Bosnian Serbs to occupy dominant positions in the hills around Sarajevo, gave them heavy weapons, and occasionally assisted in bombarding the city. Kukanjac's actions reflected the JNA's mixed role at the beginning of the war.

The fighting in Slovenia and Croatia had prompted a significant reorganization of the JNA in December 1991 that had a major influence on the composition of Kukanjac's forces around Sarajevo. The Yugoslav federation shuffled its old military districts (MDs) and

created a new one, the 4th MD, to operate in Bosnia with its headquarters at Sarajevo.<sup>15</sup> The 4th MD was actually redesignated once more before April 1992, when it became the 2d MD. It consisted of four corps and approximately 60,000 men throughout Bosnia. The 4th Corps was positioned at Sarajevo and consisted of 15,000 to 20,000 men. These soldiers reflected a transition in the composition of the JNA in 1991 and early 1992; the JNA lost its multiethnic mix as Muslim and Croat soldiers, and particularly officers, left the federal army or were purged by the dominant Serbian leadership. By the time fighting broke out in Sarajevo, the 4th MD consisted largely of Bosnian Serb, Serb, and Montenegrin soldiers. (Montenegro was the only Yugoslav republic to remain with Serbia in the rump Yugoslavia that remained after 1992).

The JNA forces were the best equipped of any of the factions fighting for Sarajevo, including possessing heavier weapon systems than those of UNPROFOR. While there are rough estimates of the total number and types of JNA equipment throughout former Yugoslavia (about 800 to 900 tanks, 740 APCs, 6,400 mortars, and about 1,300 field guns), it is difficult to estimate the numbers available for the Sarajevo fight. Simple mathematics would indicate that the 2d MD in Bosnia might have had about one-quarter of the JNA totals, while the JNA troops at Sarajevo had only a portion of the 2d MD's total (for example, perhaps 50 tanks, 400 mortars, and 80 field guns). In any case, the JNA at Sarajevo deployed a wide mix of heavy weapon systems that included T-34, T-54/55, and M-84A tanks; wheeled and tracked APCs from both Western and former Soviet stocks; some multiple rocket launchers; an extensive variety of artillery and mortars (from 60-millimeter [mm] up to 155mm); and Gazelle and Mi-8 helicopters. The number and types of JNA equipment may not seem impressive, but this was virtually the only heavy equipment available in the siege for any of the factions.

By April 1992, the JNA was in the process of transforming its role and doctrine based on experiences in Slovenia and Croatia. The federal army was no longer a training ground for multiethnic conscripts to join the TDF. Instead, the JNA became a force of long-term Serb and Montenegrin soldiers whose mission was to support the Serb-dominated federal government in Yugoslavia's internal wars. Despite this change in roles, the JNA transformation was incomplete. It still carried traditions of partisan doctrine and training (small-unit actions, decentralized control), and it lacked the numbers to conduct a large-scale conventional war in Bosnia's rugged terrain. Increasingly, the JNA relied

on its heavy weapons to destroy or intimidate its opponents while Bosnian Serb irregulars did the close fighting. The JNA, like all of the factions in Sarajevo, had no special UO training or doctrine. Some of the JNA officers had seen the high cost of the fighting in Vukovar, and they were reluctant to commit their forces in house-to-house fighting in Sarajevo.

The Bosnian Serb irregular forces were initially more aggressive than the JNA and more willing to engage Izetbegović's Bosnian forces in urban combat. However, they lacked the strength necessary to take the city, and after parts of the JNA converted to a Bosnian Serb force, the irregulars adopted the JNA tactics that relied on heavy weapons in order to avoid casualties that might result from a city fight.

To imply that all of the irregulars in support of the Bosnian Serbs at Sarajevo were Bosnian Serbs under Karadžić's control is an oversimplification. While most of the irregulars were probably Bosnian Serbs, some were Serbians, Montenegrins, and even Croatian Serbs who were fighting for the overall cause of Serb nationalism.<sup>16</sup> Karadžić certainly had more control over most of these units than he had over the JNA, but due to the irregulars' disparate nature, the Bosnian Serb political leader never had complete command of them.

Similarly, the Bosnian Serb irregulars did not have a unified military commander in April 1992. The most infamous of the irregular leaders went by the *nom de guerre* of "Arkan" (his real name was Vukobrat Rađević). He commanded a unit known as the Tigers, similar to other irregular units called the White Eagles and Panthers. Although Arkan did not participate significantly in the siege at Sarajevo, the collection of virtually independent battalion-level commanders like him at Sarajevo only loosely reported to Karadžić while intermittently working with the JNA.

The irregulars were mostly light infantry, and they began the war in Bosnia with sufficient quantities of small arms and ammunition but limited numbers of heavy weapons. However, they could often count on the support of JNA weaponry, and in fact, they inherited most of the 4th MD's equipment when the JNA ostensibly withdrew from Bosnia. Estimates of Bosnian Serb irregular strength vary between 20,000 and 35,000 throughout all of Bosnia, thus leaving a very rough estimate of 4,000 to 8,000 men immediately available for the fight in Sarajevo. These forces usually operated in battalion-size units or smaller, and it was difficult for the Bosnian Serb leadership to coordinate the irregulars' efforts.

Reflecting their light infantry structure (and aspects of their former partisan training), the Bosnian Serb irregulars relied on small-unit doctrine that emphasized sudden attacks on enemy weak points while avoiding decisive confrontations with enemy strengths. The irregulars did not have a specific UO doctrine, but some of the units deployed near Sarajevo had fought in builtup areas in Croatia and probably knew more about city fighting basics (for example, methods for clearing a building) than the JNA.

Overall, the Bosnian Serb irregulars presented an unusual combination of characteristics. They were more ideologically motivated than most of the JNA soldiers, and they had some city fighting experience; thus they seemed more likely to engage, and succeed, in a house-to-house struggle for Sarajevo. However, their numbers were limited, their units and leadership were divided, and heavy casualties in the urban battles of Croatia had tempered their enthusiasm for city fighting.

Croat and Bosnian Croat forces had less influence on the conflict in Sarajevo than in other parts of Bosnia because the Bosnian Croats tended to focus on terrain that was adjacent to Croatia, particularly Herzegovina. At the start of the Bosnian war, there were two Bosnian Croat armies fighting in Bosnia: the Croatian Defense Forces (HOS) and the armed forces of the Croatian Defense Council (HVO). The HOS started as local paramilitary units, while the HVO clearly had closer ties with the more regular units of the Croatian Army (HV). In August 1992, the HOS merged with the HVO. Their combined forces often wavered between supporting the Muslims and the Bosnian Serbs, depending on the political situation.<sup>17</sup> A group of moderate Bosnian Croats, under Stjepan Kljuić, supported Izetbegović, but a large percentage of Bosnian Croats, particularly those in Herzegovina, sided with the more nationalistic Boban. As the Bosnian Croats shifted their support, they had a significant but not decisive effect on the siege.

Overall, the HVO was under the political control of Boban, and just as Boban clearly relied on the support of Croatian President Tudjman, the HVO often called on the HV for assistance in its campaigns. In addition, the HVO command largely seemed to answer to orders from the HV main staff in Zagreb. The HVO was organized on a territorial basis, with locally recruited soldiers serving close to home. They had some heavy weapons and were generally better armed than the Bosnian (Muslim) forces and less well armed than the Bosnian Serbs. HVO doctrine carried some of the old partisan traditions, and, except in Mostar, the troops proved reluctant to engage in city fighting. The

HVO's overall strength in Bosnia was about 35,000 troops, but few of these troops took part in the siege.

The only HVO force in the Sarajevo region was a regiment of 2,000 men in the suburb of Stup. During the siege, these troops did not directly engage in city fighting or even in shelling Sarajevo. Their main effect was in holding one of the resupply routes into the city. Throughout 1992, the HVO forces in Stup usually allowed Bosnian (Muslim) convoys to proceed to the city. For parts of 1993, the HVO closed this route as part of the bitter Muslim-Croat fighting of that year. However, after the Washington Accord between Muslims and Croats in February 1994, the route was reopened to Bosnian supplies. Some Bosnian Croat soldiers who served in Izetbegović's forces had a more direct role in the fight for Sarajevo, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

The forces that supported Izetbegović's Bosnian government were usually more numerous than their opponents, especially in the Sarajevo region, but they started with little organization and experience and were woefully lacking in equipment and heavy weapons. Before the outbreak of fighting in Bosnia, paramilitary Bosnian Muslim units such as the Green Berets and the Patriotic League of the People had formed in Sarajevo and other Muslim-dominated regions in Bosnia. However, most of the BDF came from former TDF soldiers and local police forces. In any case, the BDF had to start virtually from scratch, taking elements from a variety of sources.<sup>18</sup>

The ad hoc nature of the early BDF makes it difficult to determine its exact structure, strength, equipment, and ethnic composition. On the issue of ethnic composition, writers and observers of the Bosnian war have offered widely varying views of Izetbegović's forces. Some accounts portray the BDF as a true multiethnic force that reflected the Bosnian government's desire to tolerate an inclusive Bosnian unity. Other works argue that only a small number of Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats joined Izetbegović's forces, usually because they were coerced, and that the Bosnian government made a cynical show of multiethnic participation without sharing any real power. There are elements of truth in all of these accounts, but in the end, the Bosnian government, even if only out of necessity, was the only faction that made any effort to incorporate all of Bosnia's ethnic groups. Only a few Bosnian Serbs continued to serve in the BDF, but the Bosnian Croats made up a significant percentage of the BDF units. During the siege, Bosnian Croat units serving in the BDF do not appear to have openly turned on the Muslim forces and engaged them in combat, but in several

cases, Bosnian Croat units refused to cooperate with BDF attacks and gave tacit assistance to the Bosnian Serbs.

Whatever the post facto arguments of BDF composition, most accounts agree that Izetbegović's Bosnian government was the least prepared faction at the outbreak of war in April 1992. The Green Berets were available but were small in number. At first, Izetbegović negotiated with the JNA, perhaps naively in an attempt to woo it to the Bosnian side, and thus neglected efforts to build his own force. It was his belated recognition of the need for more substantial Bosnian forces that led to his call to mobilize the Bosnian TDF and police forces on 4 April 1992, which was the immediate cause (or excuse) for the outbreak of the war. Even after these events and the significant fighting that continued for two months, it was not until 26 June that the Bosnian government declared a formal state of war.

Initially, the Bosnian government relied on three types of forces to hold Sarajevo: Muslim paramilitary units, TDF and police forces (containing some multiethnic troops), and Muslim "criminal" elements. This last group, as might be expected, have been the subject of much controversy, with some accounts portraying the Izetbegović government as nothing more than a collection of Muslim thugs. While some members of the Bosnian government (and Izetbegović's family) probably had connections to organized crime, using Muslim gangs seems to have come more out of military necessity than out of profit. In any case, the initial defense of Sarajevo fell to disparate units that were ill equipped, lacked centralized control, and were untrained in UO doctrine. However, perhaps out of desperation, the Bosnian troops showed a willingness to engage in costly street fighting to hold the city. Many of these soldiers also had the advantage of knowing the terrain—as residents of Sarajevo—and thus felt more comfortable in a city fighting for their own neighborhoods.

It was only after the outbreak of fighting that the Bosnian government began to structure its forces and formally create the Bosnian Army (later known as the BDF). The commander in chief of the Bosnian forces was President Izetbegović, and his defense minister was Jerko Doko, a Bosnian Croat. While the political leaders provided overall guidance, details of the fighting were left to the Bosnian main staff in Sarajevo. The chief of staff was Colonel Safir Halilović, a Muslim, and his two deputies were Colonel Stjepan Šiber, a Bosnian Croat, and Jovan Divjak, a Bosnian Serb. Almost all members of the main staff had been former members of the JNA or TDF. Although the main staff divided control of the BDF into seven district staffs with one located in

Sarajevo, the main staff and the Bosnian government stayed in Sarajevo throughout the war, and they exercised what amounted to direct control of the city's defense.

Arms and equipment were a constant problem for the BDF. At the beginning of the conflict, small arms and ammunition were barely adequate at best while heavy equipment (artillery, mortars, tanks, and APCs) was almost nonexistent. This is part of the reason for the Bosnian government's willingness to turn to organized crime in Sarajevo where the local "mafia" provided small arms to the pro-government forces. The UN embargo on arms hurt the Bosnian government more than its enemies because Bosnia began the war with the fewest weapons on the ground, and it did not have an adjacent benefactor nation to supply it arms. Beginning in late 1992, Izetbegović turned to other Muslim nations (especially Arab) to help finance the purchase of arms and ammunition, some of which were smuggled through Croatian ports. Although the BDF was never as well equipped as its adversaries, the Bosnian forces eventually acquired some T-54 (and later, T-62) tanks; APCs; 60mm, 82mm, and 120mm mortars; a hodgepodge of old Yugoslav and former Eastern bloc artillery pieces; the Soviet-designed RPG-7; and German and Yugoslav antitank missiles.

The pro-Bosnian forces did not have UO doctrine or experience at the beginning of the war, although the units fighting within the city had the advantage of fighting on familiar terrain. As the BDF became more structured, it does not seem to have adopted any formal UO doctrine, but the units within the city became more experienced in urban fighting, thus making any Bosnian Serb attempt to take the city more difficult as the war progressed.

UNPROFOR soldiers rarely engaged the factions in direct combat during the siege; however, they engaged in various activities such as escorting convoys and guarding the airport. Their mere presence at key points in the conflict significantly influenced the struggle for the city. UNPROFOR units were in Sarajevo at the onset of hostilities almost by accident, as UN leaders chose the Bosnian capital as the headquarters of the peacekeeping forces deployed in Croatia (for the Krajina conflict) over the objections of UNPROFOR's military leaders who felt that Sarajevo was too far from Croatia. Thus, UNPROFOR troops in Sarajevo were initially only a small headquarters guard force not intended for intervention in Bosnia's conflict.<sup>19</sup>

The UNPROFOR commander in 1992 was Lieutenant General Satish Nambiar, an experienced Indian officer. His deputy was a flam-

boyant French officer, Major General Philippe Morillon. Both Nambiar and Morillon were focused on the deployment of UNPROFOR in Croatia. They spent most of their time outside of Sarajevo, and they were not heavily involved with UN operations in the city in the early months of the Bosnian war. By default, the UNPROFOR officer most involved in the early fight for Sarajevo was third in the UNPROFOR hierarchy, Brigadier General Lewis MacKenzie, a Canadian officer with considerable experience in peacekeeping operations.

In accordance with their initial mission in Sarajevo as an administrative headquarters, UNPROFOR forces located in the Bosnian capital were small. The staff included officers and support personnel from multiple nations. The only real fighting force in April 1992 was a company-size unit of Swedish guards whose mission was to protect the headquarters. These guards performed their mission admirably, but clearly, UNPROFOR lacked the physical strength to influence events in the city, and MacKenzie had to rely mostly on negotiation, persuasion, and bluff to have some restraining effect on the conflict. The initial small UNPROFOR was located in the PTT building in downtown Sarajevo.

Although UNPROFOR gained some strength as the war progressed, it never had the mission of direct military intervention. This increased strength included troops from several nations who occupied the airport and a French battalion at Mount Igman that endeavored to keep this dominating height neutral. All of the UN contingents that rotated through service in Sarajevo came with their own national equipment. This included sufficient small arms, some APCs, and wheeled vehicles, but no heavy weapons (tanks and artillery). Toward the end of the siege, the main source of military striking power for UNPROFOR became NATO airpower.

Describing the full course of the siege of Sarajevo presents unique challenges. The conflict lasted over 30 months—along with Leningrad, arguably the longest siege of the twentieth century. Events of some importance occurred almost each day, including bombardments and sniper fire, yet neither side made an effort to achieve a decisive victory within the city's urban environment. Perhaps the best way to capture the importance, as well as the feel, of the struggle for Sarajevo is to trace the siege chronologically with a focus on three areas: major attempts to take the city or lift the siege, efforts to cut or open supply lines into Sarajevo, and actions that had significant political effects on the conflict.

Although tensions had been mounting for some time in Bosnia and armed conflict had erupted in Bijelina, Bosanski Brod, and other locations in early April, all of the factions seemed unprepared for the outbreak of fighting in Sarajevo.<sup>20</sup> On 4 April, Izetbegović made preliminary steps toward mobilizing the Bosnian TDF—on paper, still accountable to the Yugoslav government—in support of his Bosnian government. The next day, students and other residents from all of Sarajevo’s ethnic groups conducted a peace march along Tito Boulevard that protested the nationalistic policies of each of the factions’ political leaders. Snipers from the Holiday Inn fired on the crowd, killing a young medical student from Dubrovnik, Suada Dilberović, the “first casualty” of the siege. Muslim police entered the Holiday Inn and arrested several armed Bosnian Serbs. Also that day, Bosnian Serb paramilitaries attacked the Sarajevo Police Academy.

All sides now scrambled to mobilize forces. On 6 April, the same day that the European Community (EC) formally recognized Bosnia, Izetbegović completed the mobilization of the Bosnian TDF and called on the Sarajevo police to support the Bosnian government. The Sarajevo chief of police, Dragan Vikić (a Muslim), took nominal command of the combined TDF and police forces and issued a decree that attempted to reassure the city’s population: “the defenders of Sarajevo will not open fire on members of the Yugoslav People’s Army and will not pose a threat to any citizen.” However, another account claims that Vikić was far less sanguine and felt that the situation in Sarajevo was “out of control.” Bosnian Serb paramilitaries began setting up checkpoints and roadblocks on the roads surrounding the city, and they seized control of the airport. The JNA took little action, largely because its forces were divided and positioned in several locations. At the outbreak of the fighting, a large part of Kukanjac’s troops was located at Tito Barracks near the center of the city. Bosnian forces quickly surrounded these soldiers, and Kukanjac devoted much of his effort to getting them out of the city. Another large element of the federal army was located in the barracks at Lukavica, and these soldiers also hesitated to join in the city struggle. The rest of the JNA was split into smaller units and positioned in the mountains surrounding the city. The JNA’s divided positions hindered its ability to make a concerted effort in the fighting.<sup>21</sup>

After Izetbegović declared a state of emergency throughout Bosnia on 7 April, the JNA stepped up its air strikes on Sarajevo’s suburbs. Still, the JNA ground troops within Sarajevo remained quiet while pro-Muslim forces (TDF, police, and irregulars) set up roadblocks

throughout the city. By 8 April, Bosnian roadblocks controlled the routes within the interior of Sarajevo, and Bosnian Serb roadblocks on the perimeter of the city controlled access from the outside. At the same time, Izetbegović called for the formal organization of the BDF, and he declared that any irregular forces in Bosnia not submitting to the control of the Bosnian Ministry of Interior were considered “enemies.” In effect, the Bosnian president was condemning the use of Bosnian Serb paramilitaries while trying to avoid completely alienating the JNA “regular” forces.<sup>22</sup>

As the opposing sides settled into their positions for the siege, there were some last-minute attempts at compromise. Kukanjac, perhaps concerned for the safety of his troops at Tito and Lukavica Barracks, declared that paramilitaries were the main cause of the conflict (he did not specify which faction’s paramilitaries), that the JNA’s main aim was “protecting the town and citizens from clashes and so forth,” and that the JNA would not bombard Sarajevo. Although this last claim proved hollow, Kukanjac seems to have genuinely hoped to minimize the conflict. As the JNA preached moderation to an extent, Izetbegović met one of Karadžić’s key subordinates, Momčilo Krajišnik, in Sarajevo to attempt an eleventh-hour agreement. The discussions came to naught, and Krajišnik left the city. He would not return for almost three years.<sup>23</sup>

For the next several weeks, there was sporadic fighting in and around the city. Mostly this took the form of air and artillery bombardments and sniper fire. None of the factions endeavored to take the city by storm. The Bosnian forces were far too weak and fully engaged in building their army’s strength, the JNA forces in the center of the city remained in their barracks, and the Bosnian Serb irregulars devoted their efforts to strengthening the ring around the city. The JNA retained control of the airport and kept it closed for part of the month. All sides put up more and more checkpoints and roadblocks but no clearly discernable front line separated the opposing forces.<sup>24</sup>

The situation changed in early May with two major events: a substantial assault on the city by the Bosnian Serbs and the kidnapping of Bosnian President Izetbegović. The Bosnian Serb attack on 2 May 1992 seems to have been intended to split the city in two, and it coincided with offensives throughout much of the rest of Bosnia. For the assault on Sarajevo, the Bosnian Serbs advanced in two columns of armored vehicles. One column came from the south out of Vraca and the Trebovic mountains. It advanced into the district of Grbavica and attempted to cross the Miljacka River at Skenderija. The other column

advanced from the west, near the airport, and appeared to be aiming for the *Oslobodjenje* building. Both columns were supported with mortar and artillery fire.<sup>25</sup> This fire support probably included JNA units surrounding the city, but Kukanjac's troops in the barracks within the city did not join in the attack. Clearly, the Bosnian Serbs and the JNA were reluctant to engage in a dismounted house-to-house fight; they relied on troops mounted in armored vehicles, supported with heavy indirect fire.

The results of the attack were some limited gains against ill-equipped, but desperate, Bosnian resistance. The western column advanced far enough to take the suburbs of Nedarići and Mojmilo and isolate the suburb of Dobrinja near the airport. However, this column stalled quickly once it ran into more serious Bosnian defenders in and around Dobrinja. The eastern column pressed its attack with more determination. It reached the river, took all of Grbavica, and even fired some tank rounds into the Presidency building. Nonetheless, Bosnian TDF, police, and Muslim irregulars—armed with a few crucial antitank weapons—fought from the surrounding buildings and halted the advance. One key shot took out a lead Bosnian Serb vehicle on one of the narrow streets leading to the bridge at Skenderija, thus blocking a large part of the attacking force. Other portions of the Bosnian Serb attackers were reluctant to advance into kill zones, and they would not dismount to clear the defenders from the surrounding buildings. Although the ground attacks had stopped, the heavy shelling continued throughout 2 May and into the next day. One report claimed that the shelling was the worst yet in the war, “setting buildings ablaze and covering streets with debris and shrapnel.”<sup>26</sup>

The Bosnian Serb attack revealed several aspects of the fight for Sarajevo. First, whether from doctrine and experience with the costs of taking a city or from a simple lack of ground soldiers, the Bosnian Serbs showed that they were going to rely heavily on armored vehicles and firepower. In fact, they grew more reluctant to commit any forces (armored or otherwise) into the urban area, and for the rest of the siege, they put most of their effort into fighting on the perimeter of Sarajevo to close routes into the city. Second, the Bosnian Serb difficulties confirmed the vulnerability of armored columns without dismounted support in an urban fight. Armored vehicles gave the Bosnian Serbs mobility (but only on the roads), protection against small-arms fire, and additional firepower from mounted machine guns and tank main guns. But they were too vulnerable to hand-held antitank weapons and bombs that could be thrown from adjacent buildings. The armored columns

needed to be teamed with dismounted infantry to clear the buildings and with engineers to clear obstacles and mines. Finally, although the Bosnian Serbs ultimately failed in their goal to split the city, they made significant gains in many of their other offensives throughout Bosnia. They came to realize that Sarajevo had a large symbolic value to the Izetbegović government, as well as to the Western media, and that they could use the city as a diversion for their more general goal of partitioning the rest of Bosnia.

The other crucial event of early May, Izetbegović's kidnapping, also helped shape the future fighting in Sarajevo. The Bosnian president was returning from negotiations in Spain on 2 May when, after several delays, his flight landed at the Sarajevo airport. Usually, an UNPROFOR escort would pick up Izetbegović to take him to the Presidency building, but after waiting several hours (and perhaps thinking that the heavy fighting had canceled the flight), the escort had departed. The president had now fallen into the lap of the JNA that controlled the airport. From Tito Barracks, Kukanjac ordered the JNA commander at the airport to detain Izetbegović and move him to Lukavica Barracks. At first, Izetbegović refused to go to Lukavica. In a bizarre sequence of events, while Izetbegović argued with his captors, a phone call from a woman in downtown Sarajevo rang at the airport desk. She was calling to see about canceled flights, but Izetbegović quickly picked up the phone and held the following remarkable conversation:

Good evening Madam, this is Alija Izetbegović, the President of Bosnia on the phone. There was a brief pause. She was confused. He said, Yes, yes. That's right, Alija Izetbegović, the President of Bosnia. Could you please be so kind, I am here at the airport, sitting in the director's office, and the Army won't let us go. We are kept here. Could you please call the Presidency and tell them that you talked to me, that I am here, at the airport, and if you can't reach the Presidency, please call radio and TV and inform them.<sup>27</sup>

Amazingly, the astonished woman informed both the Presidency (Izetbegović's deputy, Ejup Ganić, eventually got word of the kidnapping) and the local television and radio stations, which broadcast the "detention" to Bosnia and the West. Izetbegović, concerned for the safety of his daughter who was detained with him, later agreed to go to Lukavica, but the unusual phone conversation at the airport and the subsequent publicity certainly gave him some leverage in negotiating his release.

While the Bosnian resident wrestled with his situation, Kukanjac telephoned Belgrade for guidance. The JNA leader was not interested in removing Izetbegović from power, but he asked for and received permission to use his captive as a bargaining chip in getting the JNA troops out of their city barracks. Kukanjac told the press that he wanted a cease-fire and exchange of Izetbegović that would allow the JNA to “pack and peacefully leave the centre of Sarajevo.”<sup>28</sup>

The UNPROFOR commander in Sarajevo, MacKenzie, acted as a mediator and helped to arrange the exchange between Kukanjac and Izetbegović. UNPROFOR elements in Sarajevo were still basically headquarters units with minimal security (the main peacekeeping mission remained in Croatia), and MacKenzie wanted to keep the UN intervention to a minimum. After much arguing, the plan was for a column consisting of a few UNPROFOR APCs along with 20 empty JNA vehicles to escort Izetbegović and his daughter from Lukavica to Tito Barracks. The convoy would then pick up Kukanjac and a large segment of the JNA garrison and return to Lukavica (where they could later be moved outside the city). Along the way, a part of the convoy with the UNPROFOR escort would break off and deliver Izetbegović to the Presidency building.

Not unexpectedly, the convoy did not go exactly as planned on 3 May; in his diary, MacKenzie called 3 May “the worst day of my life.” The initial leg of the journey to Tito Barracks proceeded relatively well. Once at Kukanjac’s headquarters, there were delays and additional demands from Kukanjac (he wanted to evacuate a larger number of men) and confusion between Izetbegović and Ganić over whether the Bosnian government could guarantee the convoy’s safety. The convoy finally left Tito, and within about 1 km, it came under fire. The Bosnian forces wanted to disarm the JNA troops in the convoy, but Kukanjac refused. Neither the small UNPROFOR escort nor the road-bound JNA were able to battle the Bosnian forces that controlled the buildings surrounding the convoy. Even with the tension and some casualties, cooler heads prevailed. Izetbegović switched to another vehicle, and MacKenzie dismounted to help diffuse a confrontation farther back in the column. After moving about another km, some of the UNPROFOR vehicles, along with Izetbegović and his daughter, left the column and arrived safely at the Presidency building. The main column was hit once more before reaching Lukavica. Kukanjac managed to keep the convoy moving, and it finally arrived late that night. After its arrival, JNA and Bosnian Serb mortars and artillery unleashed a heavy barrage on the city. Overall, twenty-five were killed and wounded during the

exchange, and over ninety JNA soldiers were taken prisoner, most of whom were exchanged by 5 May.<sup>29</sup>

The kidnapping and convoy ambush had a major impact on the combatants. Izetbegović finally abandoned all hope of using the JNA as a moderating force in the conflict and was convinced that he needed to build the Bosnian units (the BDF) into a force capable of defending his government on its own. The old-guard members of the JNA, including Kukanjac, were only too happy to get out of Sarajevo and the rest of the Bosnian conflict. Following the JNA's major reorganization on 8 May, the Serb-dominated government of Yugoslavia removed most of the old Titoist officers. This date also marked the beginning of the JNA's official withdrawal from Bosnia; however, as noted earlier, most Bosnian Serb soldiers of the JNA remained behind, along with much of their heavy equipment. They joined the Bosnian Serb irregulars to form the VRS and came under Mladić's command (and Karadžić's control). Those JNA forces that did not remain behind conducted the initial part of their withdrawal from Sarajevo between 19 and 25 May with some harassment at Bosnian checkpoints along the way.<sup>30</sup> After May, the lines separating Bosnian Serb forces surrounding the city and Bosnian forces within Sarajevo were set, with only minor changes, for the rest of the siege.

In addition, the kidnapping and convoy incident illustrated the primacy of political factors in the war. It hardened all of the factions' positions and soured the UNPROFOR leadership's attitude. Even at the tactical level, political considerations came to the fore. The UNPROFOR-JNA convoy of vehicles was completely at the mercy of the Bosnian forces—particularly so in the urban environment where the Bosnians held the buildings that dominated the road. This had nothing to do with an unsure UN mission or supposedly restrictive rules of engagement; UNPROFOR would have needed large numbers of ground troops ready to fight house to house to guarantee the convoy's safety. However, the Bosnian militia did not annihilate the convoy, partly because of political repercussions. In fact, although pundits have criticized Izetbegović, Kukanjac, and MacKenzie over their role in the convoy ambush, all three leaders effectively used persuasion rather than military force to keep a bad situation from getting out of control.

For the next several weeks, sniper fire and bombardments punctuated several cease-fires. On 27 May, artillery shells hit a group of Sarajevo citizens lined up outside of a store. The incident gained notoriety in the West as the "bread queue bombing" and placed the Bosnian Serbs in a negative light.<sup>31</sup> At about the same time, another series of

artillery strikes received less publicity, but a recorded radio conversation revealed that the purpose of Mladić's VRS bombardments was clearly psychological and political:

“Mladić: [to Colonel Vukasinovic, artillery chief]: Are you up there?

Vukasinovic: Yes, everything is ready.

Mladić: Which weapons have you got ready?

Vukasinovic: I have those up there, in Kresa.

Mladić: What can you hit?

Vukasinovic: I can fire all the way to the garrison.

Mladić: Do not fire at the garrison. Can you pound Velesici?

Vukasinovic: I can.

Mladić: Are your guns pointed toward the target?

Vukasinovic: They are.

Mladić: And tell me, can you pound Baščaršija [the old Muslim historic area]?

Vukasinovic: I can.

Mladić: What?

Vukasinovic: Yes, no problem.

Mladić: Keep the Presidency and the Assembly building under steady, direct fire and pound slowly in intervals until I give the order to stop.”<sup>32</sup>

Mladić was clearly more concerned with destroying historic, cultural, and political targets than he was with striking at the enemy's military forces (the garrison).

At the end of May and early June, negotiations for withdrawing the last JNA elements from Tito Barracks continued while bombardments and sniper fire grew more intense. MacKenzie recorded in his diary that “things are heating up. Very heavy fighting in Sarajevo,” and that “all hell has broken loose in Sarajevo. Heaviest shelling yet.” A *London Times* account confirmed “the worst night of shelling in almost two months of seige.”<sup>33</sup> That same *Times* article also reported a Bosnian Serb attack on the coastal town of Dubrovnik. As was to happen on several occasions, a major Bosnian Serb offensive in some region of Bosnia coincided with actions in Sarajevo, thus dividing the attention of the Western media and the international community. On 5 June, the last remnants of JNA troops at Tito Barracks, perhaps 300 soldiers, departed the city during a brief cease-fire. Shortly thereafter, the

Bosnian Serbs unleashed a particularly heavy bombardment aimed at Tito and nearby locations that appeared to be targeted at destroying JNA equipment left behind by the evacuation.<sup>34</sup>

As the JNA departed the center of the city, it also negotiated with UNPROFOR and the Bosnian presidency to turn over the Sarajevo airport. These negotiations proved tortuous. An initial trilateral agreement on 5 June fostered optimism within UNPROFOR's leadership and among the citizens of Sarajevo.<sup>35</sup> However, both the Bosnian Serbs and the Izetbegović government obstructed the implementation of the agreement, and fighting around the airport continued.<sup>36</sup> Tactically, the JNA troops at the airport were subject to harassing fire from the three- to five-story apartment buildings in the adjacent pro-Bosnian community of Dobrinja. Yet, the JNA could retaliate with heavier weapons such as tanks positioned at the airport as well as artillery and mortars in the hills to the south and west. Neither side needed the airport for military purposes—the factions lacked combat aircraft, and the airport was too vulnerable to ground fire to be a good base for such tactical aircraft. Given this situation, the withdrawing JNA had no desire to hold the airport, but it and the Bosnian Serb forces hoped to extract as much political benefit as possible from the “concession” of turning over the airport to UN control. At the same time, Izetbegović's Bosnian government seemed just as interested in provoking the JNA and Bosnian Serbs into retaliations and bad publicity as in letting UNPROFOR control the airport.

French President François Mitterand's dramatic visit to Sarajevo helped to give UNPROFOR control of the airport. Mitterand's appearance illustrates how much the political machinations of the warring factions dominated their military actions. The JNA, Bosnian Serb irregulars, and pro-Izetbegović forces could have easily stopped the French president's visit; they all could sweep the airport runways with direct and indirect fire. Instead of choosing military options, the fighting factions seemed to focus on the benefits of gaining favor with Mitterand and Western opinion.<sup>37</sup> While the French president's visit was delayed as UNPROFOR frantically tried to negotiate his safe arrival, Mitterand finally arrived in Sarajevo on 28 June. He had originally planned to meet only with Izetbegović, but UN representatives scrambled to ensure that he also saw Karadžić. Both leaders gave Mitterand their standard speeches. After listening to their combination of pleas and harangues, the French president departed the next day.

While some accounts portray Mitterand's visit as self-serving, the French president deserves credit for considerable personal courage as

well as helping to push the factions into fulfilling the terms of the airport agreement. Soon after his visit, the fighting around the airport was considerably reduced, and UNPROFOR was able to occupy it at the end of the month. Although under UNPROFOR control throughout the rest of the siege, the airport still was bombarded and had to close on several occasions. However, it is significant that the Bosnian Serbs did not attempt to cut completely this line of communication from the West to the city. Again, they may have feared the political repercussions, and perhaps they thought they could better use the city as a diversion with Western journalists and relief efforts focused on Sarajevo.

At the end of June, the Bosnian forces (now officially the BDF) made their first serious effort to break the ring around the city. The main attack was in the suburb of Vraca, but it failed after only modest gains. The BDF lacked heavy weapons (although they made moderate use of mortars for the first time), and the VRS forces, using inherited JNA weapons, had too much firepower to be dislodged.<sup>38</sup> Two other factors may have influenced the battle. First, Vraca is a suburb of small residential buildings that lies on the outskirts of the city. Thus, the terrain—while still containing buildings—was more open than the more constricted area near the city center, thus favoring the larger firepower of the VRS. Second, the BDF command complained that its Croatian units were not supporting their attacks, a complaint voiced even earlier by Deputy Commander Jovan Divjak.

After this attack, Sarajevo settled back into its siege routine for a few months. During this time, the UN approved an expansion of the UNPROFOR mission that finally added Bosnia to the original mandate for peacekeeping in Croatia. The new, combined UN forces were designated UNPROFOR-2 (although, for simplicity, we will continue to refer to it as UNPROFOR). Many of the Canadians, including MacKenzie, rotated out of Sarajevo, and a mixed force of troops from Egypt (Muslim), France (Catholic), and Ukraine (Eastern Orthodox) took over peacekeeping duties in Bosnia and Sarajevo. Lieutenant General Nambier retained overall control of UNPROFOR, and his former deputy, French Major General Morillon, took command of the forces in Bosnia from MacKenzie after a short interlude. Morillon soon moved UNPROFOR headquarters from Sarajevo to the smaller town of Kiseljak. In fact, the new commander of UNPROFOR's Bosnian contingent—though active in many confrontations in Bosnia, particularly Srebrenica—showed little concern with events in Sarajevo and had little influence on the siege. The new UN forces in Bosnia totaled 1,500 troops, with perhaps fewer than 300 in the capital, and

while this contingent was larger than the original headquarters in Sarajevo, it was still far too small to attempt to enforce the UN mission through force.<sup>39</sup>

At the end of August, the Bosnian Serbs unleashed some of their heaviest bombardments coinciding with the opening of the London Peace Conference, a new round of peace talks hosted in the British capital. One series of strikes killed eleven and wounded fifty-five. Another barrage left fourteen dead and 126 wounded in downtown Sarajevo. During this heavy fire, the BDF attempted to open a reliable lifeline to the city. It employed an armored train on the rail line through Ilid a, but the Bosnian Serbs repulsed its attack. Also during this time, the Bosnian Serbs targeted the Bosnian National Library with indirect fire and destroyed priceless books and manuscripts representing Bosnian culture.<sup>40</sup>

After the heavy shelling of August, which culminated a flurry of activity that had started in April, the city settled into a tragic routine of bombardments and sniper fire. Often, it was difficult to pinpoint the origins of this fire, and all of the factions used this uncertainty to accuse their opponents of unprovoked aggression. On the Bosnian (pro-Izetbegović) side, the lack of heavy weapons and the disadvantage of occupying positions in the low ground of the city did not allow for using indirect fire. It appears that the pro-Izetbegović forces often shifted their mortar positions within the city, perhaps aided by observation from the radio/television building that was located on the one piece of high ground in Bosnian hands, the hill just northwest of Zetra stadium. Bosnian snipers were also located throughout the city. Not surprisingly, they were almost always in the taller buildings that provided the best fields of fire. This included the Holiday Inn, the *Unis*, the Europa Hotel, and the workers' apartment complex at Alipašino Polje (in Novi Grad). Perhaps the favorite location for Bosnian snipers and even some heavier weapons was the suburb of Dobrinja, a location that gave the Bosnians opportunities to harass the VRS positions on the western side of the airport near Ilid a.

The VRS held dominant high ground on all sides of the city, but their preferred locations for bombardments and sniper fire were on the south side of Sarajevo. The most well-known VRS artillery and mortar position was the former JNA barracks at Lukavica. In fact, this was only one of several locations for VRS indirect fire south of the city—locations that spread from Mount Igman to Lukavica, past Vraca, and farther east to the former Olympic bobsled run in the Stari Grad section of the city. Even today, one can see the Bosnian Serb artillery

and mortar positions along this path, marked by cement foundations and buildings without roofs to allow for emplacement of cannons and mortars. These same hills also provided commanding positions for snipers who dominated sniper's alley in the center of Sarajevo. In addition, the VRS position at Grbavica provided an excellent location for snipers in moderately high buildings adjoining the Miljacka River. Positions on Mount Igman and Mount Bjelasnica gave the VRS good fields of fire on the airport and the Muslim stronghold at Dobrinja. Although less popular than the positions south of Sarajevo, the VRS occasionally used firing positions on the Zuc hills northwest of the city.

The regular rhythm of the siege included other repeating, if sporadic, events. Cease-fires would come and go on a frustratingly routine basis. Occasionally, these cease-fires allowed valuable humanitarian aid into the city and medical evacuations out. However, they rarely lasted more than 48 hours. The airport frequently opened and closed due to shelling, and relief aircraft received fire on several occasions. The UN would usually suspend flights for several days at a time when its aircraft received fire. The city's water and power supplies were frequently disrupted, making life even more miserable for its citizens.

In December, Karadžić offered a cease-fire for "humanitarian" evacuations from Sarajevo. The Izetbegović government rejected the offer as a ploy to partition Sarajevo, a means of ethnically cleansing the capital by consent. At about the same time, the BDF reinforced its positions near Mount Igman to keep open that vital route to the city.<sup>41</sup> Additionally, the Bosnian government began to bring the varied pro-Bosnian combat units under better control and put the BDF into a regular structure. By the end of 1992, the BDF had formed five infantry corps totaling about 80,000 men, although perhaps only 44,000 of these were fully armed. The 1st (Sarajevo) Corps was deployed in the Sarajevo region with a rough strength of 35,000 men (it is not known how many of these troops were fully armed). The 1st Corps was divided into brigades, but the actual number and designations of these brigades changed repeatedly. It appears that the corps relied on three to four brigades derived from the local Sarajevo region, one brigade recruited from Visoko, and the 1st Tactical Group (about a battalion-size unit) from Kiseljak. Similarly, the VRS furthered the integration of former JNA forces and equipment with the Bosnian Serb irregulars. The VRS designated its units in the Sarajevo region as the 1st (Sarajevo-Romanija) Corps under the command of General Momir Talić. VRS infantry troop strength was only 29,000, but they continued to retain their advantage in weapons over their BDF foes.<sup>42</sup>

The new year began with considerable tension when Bosnian Serb irregulars killed Bosnian Deputy Prime Minister Hakija Turajlić on a road entering Sarajevo. He had been traveling in a convoy with UNPROFOR escorts, but the UN troops were unable (or unwilling depending on accounts) to intervene.<sup>43</sup> Despite this incident and the continued routine of sniper, mortar, and artillery fire, there were no major moves in Sarajevo for the first four months of 1993 as all sides seemed engrossed with the negotiations surrounding the Vance-Owen Peace Plan.

In fact, political events involving the international community took center stage during this period. The Vance-Owen plan, named after UN envoys Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen, divided Bosnia into a series of provinces (three Muslim, three Serb, two Croat, and one Muslim-Croat) with a weak federal Bosnian government. Sarajevo was to be its own multiethnic province.<sup>44</sup> During the negotiations for the plan, relations between Karadžić and Milošević soured; the Serbian leader feared economic sanctions and urged Karadžić to accept the plan, while the Bosnian Serb chief did not want to cede any of the territory that his forces had gained in the first six months of the war. While the Bosnian Serbs hesitated to accept the agreement, NATO began enforcing the UN-approved “no fly” zone over Bosnia on 12 April (more in response to events in Srebrenica than in Sarajevo). The no fly zone over Bosnia meant that NATO aircraft patrolled Bosnian airspace to ensure that none of the factions flew combat aircraft in the country. It was the first time that the UN turned to NATO to apply military pressure to its peacekeeping effort in Bosnia. Near the end of the month, the Vance-Owen plan was finalized and Karadžić reluctantly signed, but the RS Assembly rejected the plan on 5 May. The next day, the UN approved the concept of safe havens in Bosnia, one of which was Sarajevo. This new designation for the city had little practical effect on the siege.

Events heated up in early July with a VRS offensive south of Sarajevo that captured the town of Trnovo and blocked the route to Gora de. Shortly thereafter, the Bosnian Serbs attacked the northern slopes of Mount Igman, but the BDF clung to a part of the mountain and barely held open that path to the city. Clearly, the Bosnian Serbs, while still avoiding the urban terrain in the city, were renewing their efforts to close the routes surrounding Sarajevo. These efforts intensified throughout July with renewed assaults at Hrasnice (near the airport), a fresh attack on the suburb of Rijlovac, and more efforts on Mount Igman and its neighboring heights of Mount Treskavica and Mount

Bjelasnica.<sup>45</sup> In each case, the attacks were on open, if mountainous, terrain or suburbs with low residential houses, ground more favorable than the center of Sarajevo for the VRS advantage in armored vehicles and heavy firepower. Each attack made limited gains but could not achieve its entire objective.

During the course of the fighting for Igman, the pro-Izetbegović forces finished a tunnel under the Sarajevo airport that, at the time, the Western media and Bosnian Serbs did not notice. This tunnel could only provide limited relief to the supply difficulties of the BDF and Sarajevo's citizens, but these supplies also provided a morale boost to the city's defenders. In January 1993, the Bosnian forces began construction on the tunnel from both ends at the same time: Butmir on the west side of the airport and the Muslim stronghold in Dobrinja on the east. The tunnel was completed on 30 July 1993. It was 800 meters long and 1.5 meters high, and the main mode of transport was a manual pushcart on rail tracks that carried 50 kilograms of supplies at a time. Gas, electric, and telephone lines also ran along the side of the tunnel, a considerable safety risk given that the tunnel often had ankle-deep water on its floor.<sup>46</sup>

On 2 August, Mladić renewed the efforts to take Mount Igman. He threw in the newly arrived 1st Krajina Brigade and took a few more bits of ground against stubborn BDF resistance. The situation was desperate for the BDF, and the Bosnian delegation walked out of the Geneva talks in protest over the VRS attack on Sarajevo, a supposed safe haven. Allegedly, UN officials made a false report that Karadžić would order Mladić to pull back from Mount Igman if the Bosnians would return to the Geneva negotiations. By 4 August, three-quarters of Mount Igman was in VRS hands, but the offensive appeared to have run its course. In addition, the increasing international pressure may have deterred Mladić from more assaults. In any case, the VRS commander met with UN observers and agreed to pull back some of his forces and allow UN (French) peacekeepers to take up positions on part of the mountain. A few days later, Mladić kept his word and pulled part of his force back to Mount Bjelasnica. He also rotated the 1st Krajina Brigade out of the Sarajevo region to use in other offensives in Bosnia.<sup>47</sup>

After the Mount Igman struggle, Sarajevo settled back into the routine of the siege for the next several months. However, during this time, relations between the Muslims and Croats reached a low point. These two groups conducted open warfare in several regions of Bosnia, although Sarajevo saw very little. In an attempt to crack down on organized crime in the city, Izetbegović removed some of his military

commanders who had ties to the criminals in late October. While the goal of minimizing the criminal element seemed genuine, it also gave Izetbegović a cover for dismantling the few separate HVO units in Sarajevo. After November, the Bosnian government had firm control of the remaining pro-Bosnian Croat units in Sarajevo, which were broken into smaller groups and made to report through the BDF chain of command. Perhaps in response to Izetbegović's actions, a particularly heavy barrage (nine dead, forty wounded) occurred on 9 November, and this barrage appears to have been from HVO-controlled units outside of the city.<sup>48</sup>

The year ended with increasing suffering for the citizens of Sarajevo. A Christmas truce fell apart, and the resulting week's bombardments killed thirty-two people and wounded 200 more. There was virtually no electricity in the city, and water supplies were constantly interrupted. UN attempts to evacuate the elderly made only the barest progress, and most of the elderly remained behind to suffer the winter with little or no heat.<sup>49</sup> Despite these conditions, UN and private humanitarian efforts deserve credit for bringing at least a bare minimum of food and medical supplies. Although there was much malnutrition in Sarajevo, the city's civilians did not experience mass starvation or epidemics.

In early 1994, two Bosnian Serb bombardments forced the international community into further action. On 22 January, shells fell in an area where Bosnian children were playing, killing six and wounding thirty-five. On 5 February, mortar rounds hit the old central (Markale) market, resulting in sixty-eight dead and 197 wounded. Four days later, NATO announced a ten-day ultimatum. Bosnian Serbs had to withdraw their heavy guns 20 km from Sarajevo or face NATO air strikes. Karadžić protested and walked out of the Geneva talks, an act called "the height of brinkmanship" by one observer. As tension mounted and NATO planes went on alert, the new UNPROFOR commander, General Sir Michael Rose, worked to avoid the NATO bombardment. He was helped when Russian troops arrived as part of the rotation of units in UNPROFOR and occupied parts of Grbavica, allowing their fellow orthodox Slavs to withdraw in one area and save face. On 20 February, the NATO deadline passed, but Rose claimed that the Bosnian Serbs had pulled back in twenty-three of forty-two artillery sites. Some reports suggest that Rose exaggerated these claims, but NATO decided that there had been enough progress and did not launch airstrikes. However, NATO did shoot down several Serb warplanes over Bosnia, and on 7 March, all factions agreed to an uneasy cease-fire in Sarajevo.<sup>50</sup> Although occasionally violated, the cease-fire eased living conditions

in the city for the next three months. However, the Bosnian Serbs maintained their control of almost all of the surrounding routes, and they kept supplies flowing into the city to a bare minimum.

Two major factors influenced the Bosnian Serb's limited concessions in Sarajevo and the subsequent, albeit temporary, cease-fire. The most obvious factor was the threat of NATO air strikes and the actual downing of Serbian fighter aircraft. However, the VRS also may have loosened the grip on Sarajevo because it was beginning its major offensive on Gora de. All of the posturing at Sarajevo had succeeded initially in distracting Western media and BDF attention from Gora de.

In July, the cease-fire broke down when Karadžić rejected a new peace proposal from the "Contact Group" (Russia, the United States, France, Germany, and Britain). By the end of the month, the Bosnian Serbs were tightening their hold on Sarajevo, and sniper fire and bombardments grew in intensity.<sup>51</sup> The Bosnian Serb rejection of the Contact Group proposal brought about the final split between Milošević and Karadžić. The Serb leader, upset that RS intransigence was keeping the international community from lifting sanctions on Serbia, cut off supplies from Serbia to the RS (the UN had imposed economic sanctions in May 1992 and tightened them after the RS rejection of the Vance-Owen plan in May 1993). The siege continued for the next six months at a level only slightly less than that of 1993 while fighting raged in other parts of Bosnia, particularly in Bihać. During this time, the Muslims and Croats reached an agreement that formed a federation of their factions in Bosnia, ended their open warfare, and paved the way for some cooperation in the war against the Bosnian Serbs. Also, Milošević, angered over the Bosnian Serbs rejecting the Contact Group proposal, withdrew much of his support from the Karadžić regime. The war was beginning to turn against the RS.

In March 1995, Karadžić, Mladić, and other RS leadership members developed a plan to bring a favorable end to the war. They decided to increase pressure on Sarajevo and complete its isolation while conducting offensives to wipe out the Muslim enclaves in eastern Bosnia, all of which were UN safe havens. The offensives began throughout Bosnia in April, with the first immediate step in Sarajevo being the Bosnian Serbs forcing the humanitarian airlifts into the city to end. Bosnian Serb shelling also increased, and in May, one bombardment killed eleven people in the suburb of Butmir. Later in the month, the VRS took the bold step of attacking UNPROFOR (French) peacekeepers holding the Vrbanja bridge open on the outskirts of Sarajevo. Acting with direct military action, uncommon for UN forces,

UNPROFOR counterattacked and retook the position, losing two men and killing four Bosnian Serbs.<sup>52</sup>

The next month, BDF forces launched an offensive in an attempt to break the siege of Sarajevo, their largest such attack of the war. However, the Bosnian forces still lacked the heavy weapon systems needed to drive the VRS from the high ground around the city. The Bosnian Serbs repulsed the attacks, and the BDF suffered heavy losses. One account called the renewed struggle the “heaviest fighting since 1993.” During this time, UNPROFOR abandoned the weapons-collection sites around Sarajevo, and the Bosnian Serb forces had complete freedom to bombard the city. The renewed fighting in Sarajevo again distracted some of the attention from outside battles, in particular the struggle for Srebrenica.<sup>53</sup>

After the failed BDF offensive, the Bosnian Serbs continued to increase pressure on Sarajevo with heavy artillery, mortar, and sniper fire. This increase was reflected in the growing number of civilian and military casualties in the city. The year had begun with the relatively light losses of one killed and twenty-one wounded in January. By May the numbers had grown to sixty-four dead and 221 wounded, and by July the losses were 152 dead and 547 wounded.<sup>54</sup> This expanded pressure on the city coincided with a major VRS offensive on the last Muslim town deep within RS territory, Gora de. However, if the Bosnian Serb leaders hoped that they could use the Sarajevo siege to divert Muslim-Croat attention from the war in the rest of Bosnia, they miscalculated. The Muslims held Gora de with renewed determination. Bosnian Muslim-Croat forces, now acting with better cooperation as the AFBiH, launched successful offensives, particularly in central Bosnia, that took back significant land that the Bosnian Serbs had captured earlier in the war. The success of the Muslim-Croat offensive was a crucial factor in convincing the Bosnian Serbs to accept a peace agreement in 1995, but it took a more publicized event in Sarajevo to bring the international community to firm action that forced the Bosnian Serbs to accept peace terms.

The signal event that finally ended the siege was a second bombing of the central marketplace on 28 August that killed thirty-eight people. It occurred more than eighteen months after the tragic market bombing that brought the first significant NATO involvement in the war in 1994, and despite some similarities between the two events, essential differences contributed to the end of the siege. Initially, as in 1994, the Bosnian Serbs denied any responsibility for the bombing and accused the Izetbegović government of manufacturing the market bombing to

gain sympathy for the Muslim cause. They even dredged up a former JNA “ballistics expert” to accuse the Muslims of firing on the market. Not surprisingly, the Bosnian government accused the Bosnian Serbs of conducting the tragic shelling, and Izetbegović promised retaliation. However, unlike their vacillation in the 1994 bombing, the international community reacted decisively in 1995. UNPROFOR inspectors quickly determined that the Bosnian Serbs had launched the shells that hit the marketplace, and most European nations and the United States did not hesitate to condemn the Bosnian Serbs for the massacre. Even the normally cautious UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, demanded action.

The market tragedy finally steeled the international community to unleash NATO air strikes and artillery fire. The strikes began on 30 August 1995 and included heavy attacks on Bosnian Serb radar sites; artillery positions; and ammunition dumps around Sarajevo and on Bosnian Serb positions in Tuzla, Gora de, epa, Mostar, and the RS capital in Pale. One report talked of “wave upon wave” of NATO aircraft ranging over the Bosnian capital in the largest operation in NATO’s history. The aircraft were joined by the UN’s Rapid Reaction Force (RRF): British, French, and Dutch combat units that had been inserted on Mount Igman in 1994 to ensure that the Igman resupply route to the city stayed open. The RRF bombarded Bosnian Serb positions surrounding Sarajevo with 105mm and 155mm artillery fire. The air and artillery attacks were effective; the Bosnian leaders, while expressing the usual complaint about UN hesitations since 1992, expressed their approval of the NATO offensive. Even the Bosnian Serb government admitted that their forces in Sarajevo and elsewhere had suffered “immense” damage.<sup>56</sup>

After two days of bombardment, NATO paused, hoping that the Bosnian Serbs would comply with their demands to withdraw their heavy weapons from around the capital city. The United States made a peace proposal in Geneva that the UN and NATO hoped would draw a reply from the Bosnian Serbs. Mladić and Karadžić sent out feelers that they might accept the peace offer, but they remained defiant with their weapons around Sarajevo. On 4 September, the NATO strikes resumed and continued to take a heavy toll on the Bosnian Serbs, who finally agreed on 9 September to the Geneva proposal that would eventually become the Dayton Accords ending the fighting in Bosnia and Sarajevo.<sup>57</sup> The Bosnian Serbs also began withdrawing their heavy weapons. The long siege was over.

While some city struggles have produced generally straightforward outcomes (for example, Aachen and Stalingrad), Sarajevo's results are more ambiguous. The Bosnian Serbs never took the city, and thus the BDF—in various permutations as pure Muslim, Muslim-Croat, and multiethnic forces—could claim victory for having held the city. On the other hand, the Bosnian Serbs made only limited attempts to take Sarajevo, and they quickly concluded that a less costly siege could achieve their ultimate military and political goals. For a time, the siege accomplished this purpose; the Bosnian Serbs used events in Sarajevo to distract attention from their larger goal of taking other Bosnian territory that could be joined into a unified state and ultimately linked to a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. However, the Bosnian Serbs overplayed their hand. Their intransigence at Sarajevo, along with atrocities in other regions, eventually aroused the outrage of the international community. In short, the concept of using Sarajevo as a diversion for other operations may have been a sound initial concept, but the Bosnian Serbs failed to adjust when the siege became more of a liability.

At the operational and tactical levels, politics continued to have a huge impact on the siege. For example, the lack of airpower involvement in the fight (until the last month of the siege) was not because of the urban terrain but was related to concerns over political fallout and UN and NATO no fly zones. The airport and ground routes into the city probably could have been closed completely, but instead they opened and closed intermittently based on the potential political gain, particularly with the international community. Bosnian Serb bombardments (and occasionally BDF strikes) were aimed at political or psychological targets rather than at any target that could help take the city. Sniper fire was random and designed to make life miserable for the citizenry, not to support an overall military assault as at Stalingrad. Understanding the dominance of these political factors, it is worth emphasizing several considerations of the urban siege at Sarajevo.

First, the early Bosnian Serb decision not to engage in a street fight for the city was based on experience at Vukovar, the perceived high demand for dismounted infantry in an urban environment, and the high casualties that could result from such a fight. Because the VRS never pressed home an attack, the fight for Sarajevo does not prove the widely held concepts of troop-intensive, high-casualty fights for urban areas. However, Sarajevo does stand as an example of how the perceptions of these concepts permeate modern military thinking and act to discourage an attacking force from an all-out struggle for any city.

Second, despite the paucity of street fighting, some aspects of urban tactics were confirmed. Armored columns, without dismounted support, proved relatively ineffective. Dismounted troops, armed with even the most rudimentary antitank weapons, can occupy buildings that dominate city streets and block armored advances. On the other hand, the lightly armed BDF had difficulty in its own offensives against the Bosnian Serbs' heavy firepower, especially when the urban terrain was not as compact as in the inner city. In addition, neither side had adequate engineer support, which is normally essential to clear blocked streets in a city fight. In the end, all of the factions lacked aspects of the full combined arms team, and all struggled to succeed.

Third, sporadic, if occasionally heavy, shelling and sniper fire might have made life miserable for the city populace, but it did not bring about its surrender. This was particularly true because Sarajevo continued to have some lifelines for resupply. While the Bosnian Serbs clearly had political considerations behind their harassing fires, a true siege designed to bring about the city's capitulation would have had to close off the city completely and use much heavier fires.

Finally, looking at the UNPROFOR role in Sarajevo, it appears that the urban environment made it virtually impossible for peacekeeping (and peace enforcement) forces to use military force to impose their will on the opposing sides. These missions are difficult enough in more open terrain, but the need to control so many buildings and key terrain features in a city would have called for prohibitively high numbers of peacekeepers. This does not mean that peacekeeping cannot be done in a city. In fact, despite some harsh and unfair criticisms, UNPROFOR certainly moderated the conflict and helped with considerable humanitarian aid. Those cases of UNPROFOR success usually resulted from politically savvy negotiations and threats of international condemnation, not from using their own military units. Clearly, peacekeeping forces need to be adequate for inspection, observation, manning some checkpoints, convoy escort, and their own self-defense, but they are not designed to engage the factions in combat and compel them to come to the peace table.

## Notes

1. Unfortunately, the conflict in Bosnia was (and is) so politicized that substantial parts of its historiography are little more than biased propaganda sometimes bordering on diatribe. Four of the more respected works on Bosnia and background of the Balkans in general include: Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: MacMillan Publishers Ltd., 1996); Robert D. Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Rebecca West, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon* (NY: Viking Press, 1941); and Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Although all four of these works are clearly superior to much of the self-serving material available on Bosnia, they still present widely diverse views on the nature of conflict in Bosnia and the Balkans. In particular, Kaplan and Malcolm represent opposing views on the depth and severity of the ethnic roots of the fighting. Kaplan, a journalist who is well traveled in the Balkans, wrote that deeply engrained ethnic hatreds, particularly between Serbs and Croats, were the base cause of the fighting that erupted as Yugoslavia collapsed. Kaplan recognized that Sarajevo was a sophisticated urban center, but he saw the rest of Bosnia as villages "full of savage hatreds, leavened by poverty and alcoholism," and he claimed that the "fact that the most horrifying violence—during both World War II and the 1990s—occurred in Bosnia was no accident."

Malcolm, who is generally sympathetic to the Muslim cause, takes a dramatically different view of the Bosnian conflict from Kaplan. For Malcolm, one "great piece of misinformation" grasped by Western leaders was that the struggle in Bosnia was "the expression of 'ancient ethnic hatreds' welling up of their own accord." For Malcolm, "the animosities which did exist were not absolute and unchanging. Nor were they inevitable consequences of the mixing together of religious communities." Malcolm believes that while ethnic conflict has existed in Bosnia, it is not the essential root of the war of 1992-1995—a war driven by the self-seeking interests of groups and leaders outside of Bosnia rather than intractable differences within Bosnia's ethnic communities.

2. Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995 and 1996), 76-78 and 112-14; Christopher Bennett, *Yugoslavia's Bloody Collapse: Causes, Courses, and Consequences* (London: Hurst & Company Ltd., 1995), 13-14 and 143-45; and Malcolm, 214, 215-17, and 223.

3. Silber and Little, 170, and Bennett, 161-65.

4. See Jasminka Udovicki and Ejub Stitkovac, "Bosnia and Hercegovina: The Second War," in *Burn This House: The Making and Unmaking of Yugoslavia*, Jasminka Udovicki and James Ridgeway, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 175 for an account of the deal struck between Tudjman and Milošević for the partitioning of Bosnia. This deal, which both sides later renounced, shows that both the Croatian and Serbian leaders were unsure of their ultimate aims in Bosnia; they wavered between outright annexation and support of separate, but dependent, Bosnian client regimes. See Silber and Little, 171-72 and 175, and Bennett, 166-67, for accounts of the pro-Serb leanings of the JNA.

5. Silber and Little, 187-88, and Bennett, 172.

6. Silber and Little, 177-79, and Bennett, 168. See also Silber and Little, 224, and Malcolm, 226-27, who describe the initial use of Serb paramilitaries under Zeljko Raznjatovic (known by the pseudonym Arkan). Arkan's Tigers gained a reputation for doing the dirty work of ethnic cleansing within Croatian urban areas, while the JNA remained on the cities' outskirts and used their heavy weapons to keep the towns isolated.

7. Bennett, 180. Bosnia's total population in 1991 was 4,354,911. It is also interesting to note that of Bosnia's 109 municipalities, 17 had no majority of one group; of the rest, the majority group rarely had more than 70 percent of the municipality's total population. These numbers bear out the difficulty in trying to draw boundaries based on ethnic composition.

8. Silber and Little, 206-11. Although the vote divided along ethnic lines and the one multiethnic party received little support, the parties that won were not extremist parties. None of them campaigned on separatism, and all agreed to govern as a coalition.

9. Silber and Little, 211-20. Also see Jasminka Udovicki and Ejub Stitkovac, 178-86. Some accounts of Izetbegović's conduct before the opening of the war criticize him for his handling of the European community's recognition of Bosnia and his reversal on the Badinter Commission peace proposal. Even so, even the most negative views recognize that Izetbegović faced a hard decision between independence (and possible war) and remaining in a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. At the same time, Izetbegović supporters join his critics in recounting his naiveté that led to Bosnia's unpreparedness for war.

10. Malcolm, 227-30, and Silber and Little, 218.

11. Malcolm, 230-31.

12. The description of the terrain in and around Sarajevo comes from my personal observations. I was stationed in Bosnia with the multinational Stabilization Force (SFOR) from November 1999 to April 2000. During that time, I worked as the assistant SFOR historian and lessons learned analyst. I was able to travel through the city and its surrounding countryside to observe the build-

ings and terrain that were key during the war. I must also thank a member of the SFOR Multinational Division Southwest Liaison Team, Corporal N. Marshall, Royal Air Force (RAF), who took me on a battlefield tour of the city. The liaison team put together an information pamphlet of the tour: Corporal Mark Bladen, RAF; Corporal Chris Stone, RAF; and Corporal Gary Woodard, RAF, *Sarajevo Battlefield Tour*, prepared in August 1999.

13. David C. Isby, "War Returns to Europe: Military Aspects of the Conflicts in Yugoslavia, 1991-93," *Command Magazine, Military History, Strategy and Analysis* (July-August 1993), 28-35.

14. Silber and Little, 218.

15. Dr. Milan Vego, "The Yugoslav Ground Forces," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (June 1993), 247-53.

16. Edgar O'Ballance, *Civil War in Bosnia, 1992-94* (NY: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 29-30, and Isby, 31. O'Ballance puts the Bosnian Serb irregular strength at only 20,000; Isby estimates the irregular strength at 35,000 (these figures are for all of Bosnia).

17. Dr. Milan Vego, "The Croatian Forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (March 1993), 99-103. See Bennett, 199-200 for a good description of the shifts in Bosnian Croat politics and the roles of Boban and Tudjman during the Bosnian war. Also see Silber and Little, 131-32 and 144-45, and Bennett, 146-47, for a discussion of Milošević and Tudjman's relationship. Most sources agree that these two leaders, while engaged in war over the Croatian Krajina, were willing to make a deal that divided Bosnia between them at the expense of Bosnia's Muslims.

18. Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (London: M.E. Sharpe, 1999) 128-31; Dr. Milan Vego, "The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (February 1993), 63-67; Christopher Collinson, "Bosnia This Winter—A Military Analysis," *Jane's Intelligence Review* (December 1993), 547-50; Jovan Divjak, "The First Phase, 1992-1993: Struggle for Survival and Genesis of the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina," *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991-1995*, Branka Magas and Ivo Zanic, eds. (London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2001), 162-65; and O'Ballance, 29-30. Divjak gives an excellent explanation of the complex interplay of police, territorial forces, and paramilitaries in creating the BDF. He also has a table with detailed information on weapons and strengths, comparing 1992 and 1995. O'Ballance puts the police strength in Bosnia at 40,000 in mid-April with an additional 30,000 "available."

19. General Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993), 103-107 and 200-202.

20. Tim Judah and Dessa Trevisan, "Serb Assaults Push Bosnia to Edge of War," *London Times* (4 April 1992), 15.

21. O'Ballance, 28, and Silber and Little, 225-27. O'Ballance disagrees with Silber and Little on the initial date of TDF mobilization, but it is probably just a case of differing interpretations of the initial call for increased readiness on 4 April 1992 and placing TDF forces under the presidency's control on 6 April. See Silber and Little, 226-27, for a description of the first casualty of the war. See "Sarajevo Defense Units at 'Full Combat Readiness,'" excerpts from Sarajevo Radio Network Broadcast on 7 April 1992 in *Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), Daily Reports: East Europe* (hereafter *FBIS-EEU*) (8 April 1992), 18, and O'Ballance, 29, for views of Vikić's proclamation and attitude. Finally, see "Federal Army Takes Control of Airport," from Zagreb Radio, Croatia Network Broadcast of 6 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (6 April 1992), 39, and Silber and Little, 228, for descriptions of the JNA takeover of the airport.

22. O'Ballance, 28-29. For a report on the air strikes, see Tim Judah, "Yugoslav Jets and Snipers Join Battle in Sarajevo," *London Times* (6 April 1992), 14. Also note that the *London Times* places the "state of emergency" on 8 April. See "Sarajevo Leadership Declares Emergency," *London Times* (9 April 1992), 15. However, the declaration was probably issued to pro-Izetbegović forces on 7 April before being given to Western media sources on 8 April.

23. For Kukanjac's comments, see "Army Will Not Bombard Sarajevo," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 7 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (8 April 1992), 19. For the meeting of Krajisnik and Izetbegović, see Silber and Little, 229.

24. The sporadic fighting in April 1992 is reflected in several FBIS reports. See "Army Denies Shooting; Sarajevo Airport Closed," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 13 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (13 April 1992), 26; "Muslim Forces Blockade Sarajevo District," Belgrade Radio, Belgrade Network, 11 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (13 April 1992), 26; "Sarajevo Municipality Blockaded by Serbs," Zagreb Radio, Croatia Network, 20 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (21 April 1992), 18; "Sarajevo Radio Reports Hits From Mortars," Belgrade TANJUG in English, 21 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (21 April 1992), 18; "More Fighting Breaks Out in Sarajevo," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 23 April 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (24 April 1992), 20. See also Jonathan Landay and Louise Branson, "Beseiged Sarajevo Braced for Onslaught," *Sunday London Times* (26 April 1992), 17.

25. See Silber and Little, 232-34, for a description of the two-column attack. Also there are reports of heavy involvement of Serbian irregulars such as "Arkan troops" and "White Eagles," vice the JNA, in the attack. See "U.S. Ambassador Talks to Izetbegović," Zagreb Radio, Croatia Network, 2 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (4 May 1992), 29.

26. Louise Branson, "Yugoslav Troops Capture Bosnian Leader," *Sunday London Times* (3 May 1992), 15.

27. Silber and Little, 231 and 235-37 (see 235 for Izetbegović's phone conversation). See also "Detained on Arrival," Belgrade TANJUG, 2 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (4 May 1992), 29, and Branson.

28. *Ibid.*; "Release Negotiations Underway," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 2 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (4 May 1992), 29-30; "Izetbegović Discusses Detention," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 2 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (4 May 1992), 30-31; and "Presidency's Ganić on Izetbegović's Release," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 3 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (4 May 1992), 31.

29. Silber and Little, 237-43; "Izetbegović Released; JNA Convoy Surrounded," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 3 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (4 May 1992), 31; "Hostage Deal Ends in Bloodshed," *London Times* (4 May 1992), 1; Tim Judah and Dessa Trevisan, "Army Column Attacked After Releasing the Bosnian Leader," *London Times* (4 May 1992), 7; "Central Sarajevo Hit by Heavy Shelling," *London Times* (5 May 1992), 1; Roger Boyes, "Belgrade Guides Campaign to Dismember Bosnia," *London Times* (5 May 1992), 8; Tim Judah and our Foreign Staff, "Sarajevo Spares 156 Yugoslav Soldiers," *London Times* (5 May 1992), 8; and MacKenzie, 164-71.

30. O'Ballance, 41 and 46.

31. *Ibid.*, 44.

32. "Recording of Order to Bomb Sarajevo," Zagreb HTV Television, 29 May 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (1 June 1992), 36, and Tim Judah and Dessa Trevisan, "Serbs Defy UN and Bomb Old Dubrovnik," *London Times* (30 May 1992), 1.

33. MacKenzie, 194-95, and Tim Judah and Dessa Trevisan, "Serbs Defy UN and Bomb Old Dubrovnik."

34. MacKenzie, 200-201, and Bill Frost and Dessa Trevisan, "Besieged Troops Leave Sarajevo," *London Times* (6 June 1992), 13.

35. MacKenzie, 198-200. MacKenzie gives most of the credit for the initial agreement to UN negotiator Cedric Thornberry.

36. MacKenzie, 207-40; "Sarajevo Fighting Said Fiercest of the War," Belgrade TANJUG, 8 June 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (9 June 1992), 37-38; "Roundup of Battles," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 9 June 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (9 June 1992), 39-40; Bill Frost, "Serbs Savor Artillery Power Over Muslims," *London Times* (7 June 1992), 10; Dessa Trevisan, "UN Sarajevo Convoy Comes Under Attack," *London Times* (11 June 1992), 12; "Serb Guns and Snipers Break Bosnian Truce," *London Times* (16 June 1992), 12; John Holland, "Airport Setback for Serbs," *London Times* (19 June 1992), 13; and John Holland et al., "Serbs Move to Take Suburb After Vow to Evacuate Airport," *London Times* (20 June 1992), 12.

37. MacKenzie, 241-64; "Roundup of Battles," Sarajevo Radio, Sarajevo Network, 9 June 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (9 June 1992), 39-40; "Heavy Fighting Prevents Withdrawal," Belgrade TANJUG, 27 June 1992,

*FBIS-EEU* (29 June 1992), 38; Louise Branson and Ian Glover-James, "Mitterand Flies to Sarajevo as EC Backs Military Action," *London Times* (21 June 1992), 1; and Tim Judah and Dessa Trevisan, "Mitterand Opens Way for Sarajevo Airlift," *London Times* (29 June 1992), 1.

38. O'Ballance, 57; and "Muslim Forces Reportedly Attack Serb Positions," Belgrade Radio, Belgrade Network, 30 June 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (1 July 1992), 26.

39. O'Ballance, 76-77 and 98-103; MacKenzie, 298-323; John Holland et al., "UN Troops Bring Hope to Sarajevo," *London Times* (3 July 1992), 1; and Dessa Trevisan and Tim Judah, "UN Supplies Relieve 71-Day Serb Siege of Sarajevo Suburb," *London Times* (13 July 1992), 8. According to MacKenzie, the temporary French UNPROFOR commander was Colonel Davout d'Auerstadt, and the temporary Egyptian commander was Colonel Abdel Abdelouahab Altahllawi.

40. Robert Seely and Dessa Trevisan, "UN Centre Hit as Shelling of Sarajevo Intensifies," *London Times* (22 August 1992), 7; Roger Boyes and Nicholas Wood, "Bosnian Muslims Launch Attack to Regain Territory," *London Times* (24 August 1992), 1 and 4; Michael Binyon et al., "Talks Blighted by Gunfire and Carrigan Resignation," *London Times* (26 August 1992), 1; Robert Seely, "Relentless Artillery Barrage Takes Toll on Civilian Morale," *London Times* (29 August 1992), 10; Robert Seely and Adam Le Bor, "16 Die as Serbs Shell Sarajevo Marketplace," *London Times* (31 August 1992), 1; "Serbs Deny Responsibility for Sarajevo Attack," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 30 August 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (31 August 1992), 27; "Sarajevo Shelled; Chemical Agents Reportedly Used," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 28 August 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (31 August 1992), 28; and O'Ballance, 85.

41. O'Ballance, 118-19, 121-22, 125-26, and 134-35; "UNPROFOR HQ Partially Moved From Sarajevo," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 26 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 27; "Serb Leaders, Morillon Discuss Sarajevo Situation," Belgrade SRNA, 26 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 27; "Karazdic, Morillon Discuss Evacuations of Civilians," Belgrade Radio, Belgrade Network, 25 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 27; "Serbs Agree to Open Aid Corridor to Sarajevo," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 25 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 27-28; "Sarajevo Civilians Not Permitted to Leave City," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 25 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 28; "Muslims Reject Plan to Evacuate Civilians," Belgrade TANJUG, 27 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 28; "Muslim Plan for Sarajevo Aid Corridor Rejected," Belgrade TANJUG, 26 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (28 December 1992), 28; "Sarajevo Radio Reports Shelling," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Network, 29 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (29 December 1992), 38; “Civilians Prevented From Leaving Sarajevo,” Zagreb Radio, Croatia Network, 28 December 1992, *FBIS-EEU* (29 December 1992), 39.

42. Vego, “The Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” 63-67; Collinson, 547-50; Jovan Divjak, 162-65. See also “Wargamer” Internet site, copyright 2001, accessed on 5 March 2002 <[www.wargamer.com/sp/military/bih/armija](http://www.wargamer.com/sp/military/bih/armija)>. As with many Internet sites, it is difficult to verify the information posted on the site, and the orders of battle listed here give an impression of well-structured units that did not really exist in Bosnia on either side. However, the site includes some good information, including the unit designations of the brigades fighting on each side.

43. O’Ballance, 138; “Intense Fighting Reportedly Continues in Sarajevo,” Paris AFP, 1 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 January 1993), 58; “TANJUG Reports Muslim Offensive in Sarajevo,” Belgrade TANJUG, 2 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 January 1993), 58-59; “Deputy Prime Minister Shot by Serb Troops,” Paris AFP, 8 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 31; “Met With Turkish Officer,” Ankara TRT Television Network, 8 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 31; “Turajlic Buried in Sarajevo,” Paris AFP, 9 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 January 1993), 31-32; “Government Issues Communique,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 9 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 32; “Government Holds UNPROFOR Responsible,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 8 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 32; “Ganić Orders Halt to Talks,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 9 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 33; “Serbs Issue Statement,” Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 9 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 33; “Serb Army Blames UNPROFOR,” Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 10 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 33-34; “Morillon Reacts to Shooting,” Paris France-2 Television Network, 9 January 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 January 1993), 34-35; and David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (NY: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 150-51. Rieff is particularly critical of the French commander, Colonel Patrice Sartre, of the UN column escorting Turajlic.

44. Silber and Little, 276-90, and Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 242-44 and 307-308. David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey* (NY: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1995), 94-159, covers the details of the plan; 160-97 cover the ultimate rejection of the plan. These three works offer interesting variations on the Vance-Owen plan. Silber and Little see the plan as an honest, but misguided, attempt at peace—an example of Western efforts that failed to understand the complexity of the Bosnian situation. They also point out the cynical attitudes of the factions (particularly the Serbs) who feigned support of

the plan but never expected it to be implemented. Owen, not surprisingly, views the plan favorably. He is more critical of the American role in the struggle, which he sees as undermining the peace efforts with constant threats of air strikes but an unwillingness to commit ground troops. Woodward is one of the most vociferous critics of Western efforts at peace, but her book has surprisingly little detail on the Vance-Owen plan.

45. O'Ballance, 184-90; "Bosnian Army Prepared to Repel Attacks on Sarajevo," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 14 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (15 July 1993), 36; "Serbs Respond to Attack on Ilidža," Belgrade Radio, Belgrade Network, 19 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (20 July 1993), 25; "'Considerable' Serb Losses Reported on Mt. Igman," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 19 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (20 July 1993), 25-26; "Muslims Continue to Repel Serbs," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 19 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (20 July 1993), 26; "Muslim Offensive 'Continuing Unabated,'" Belgrade TANJUG, 20 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (20 July 1993), 26; "'Considerable' Muslim Losses," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 20 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (21 July 1993), 29; "Muslim Counteroffensive," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 20 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (21 July 1993), 29; "Serbs Continue Attacks," Zagreb Radio, Croatia Network, 20 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (21 July 1993), 29; "Muslims Continue Attack," Belgrade Radio, Belgrade Network, 20 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (21 July 1993), 30; "'Unusually Intense' Shelling," Paris AFP, 22 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (22 July 1993), 49; "Muslim Attacks Repelled," Belgrade TANJUG, 22 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (23 July 1993), 34; "Serb Shelling of Mt. Igman Continues," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 22 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (23 July 1993), 34; "Mt. Igman Front Reactivated," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 28 July 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (29 July 1993), 30.

46. Alix Kroeger, "Sarajevo's Tunnel of Hope," BBC News Online, posted 16 April 2001, accessed 10 February 2002 at <[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/europe/newsid\\_128000/1280328.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_128000/1280328.stm)> and the author's visit to the Tunnel Museum and personal conversations with Edis Kolar. Edis and Bajro Kolar (and their father) are owners and proprietors of the museum, which lies on the western end of the tunnel in Butmir. The Bosnian forces selected the Kolar farm as its start point for the western terminus of the line under the airport in January 1993. At the time, both Kolar brothers and the father were serving in the BDF. Edis stated that his family was willing to lend its farm to the cause, but he also admitted some trepidation over the fact that their land would certainly come under heavy fire and be useless as farmland for the duration of the war. On the other hand, his face lit up with unrestrained pride when he described the time that he was given the honor of pushing a

special railcar with a chair that carried Izetbegović safely into the city during one occasion when the airport was closed.

47. O'Ballance, 194-98 and 202; "UNPROFOR Says Serbs Poised to Capture Mt. Igman," Paris AFP, 3 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 August 1993), 36; "Serbs Consolidating Positions," Paris AFP, 4 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 August 1993), 37; "UNPROFOR Arrives on Mt. Bjelasnica," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 4 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 August 1993), 37; "Serbs Continue Offensive on Mt. Igman Front," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 5 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (5 August 1993), 25; "Attacks on Igman, Bjelasnica Continue," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 4 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (5 August 1993), 25-26; "UN Officer, Mladić on 'Fall of Igman,'" Paris AFP, 4 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (5 August 1993), 26; "Serbs Invite UNPROFOR Observers to Bjelasnica," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 3 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (4 August 1993), 28; "Gen Mladić: Army Will Not Take Sarajevo," Belgrade TANJUG, 6 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (6 August 1993), 39; "Agrees to 'Framework of Withdrawal' From Igman," Paris AFP, 6 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (6 August 1993), 39; "Karadžić: UN to be Allowed on Igman," Belgrade TANJUG, 6 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (6 August 1993), 40; "Muslims Say Serb Offensive Continuing," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 5 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (6 August 1993), 40-41; "Serbs Preparing New Strikes on Bjelasnica," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 6 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (6 August 1993), 41-42; "UNPROFOR Arrives on Peaks," Belgrade TANJUG, 9 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (10 August 1993), 31; "Military Leaders Sign Cease-Fire Agreement," Belgrade Radio, Belgrade Network, 11 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 33; "Commanders on Agreement," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 11 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 33; "Sarajevo Radio on Talks," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 10 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 33-34; "UNPROFOR: Serbs 'Not Budging,'" Paris AFP, 10 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 34; "Serbs Repel Muslim Infantry Attack on Mt. Igman," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 10 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 34; "Mladić's Serbs Continue Offensive," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 10 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 34-35; "UNPROFOR Deployment Reported," Belgrade TANJUG, 10 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 35; "Sarajevo Radio Reports Withdrawal," Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 11 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (12 August 1993), 22; "Serb Army, UNPROFOR Chiefs Visit Mount Igman," Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 13 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (13 August 1993), 39; "UN Commander on Withdrawal," Belgrade TANJUG, 10 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (11 August 1993), 39-40; and "Last Serb Unit

Leaves,” Zagreb Radio, Croatia Network, 16 August 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (17 August 1993), 38.

48. O’Ballance, 222-25; “Presidency Arrests Commanders in Sarajevo,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 26 October 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (26 October 1993), 22; “Commanders Held in ‘Isolation,’” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 26 October 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (26 October 1993), 22; “Rebel Commanders Surrender, Topalovic Killed,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 27 October 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (27 October 1993), 23; “TANJUG Reports Clashes,” Belgrade TANJUG Domestic Service, 27 October 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (27 October 1993), 23; “Delic, Alispahic Discuss Sarajevo Crackdown,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 27 October 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (28 October 1993), 33-34; and “Army Disbands Croatian Forces in Sarajevo,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 6 November 1993, *FBIS-EEU* (8 November 1993), 25.

49. O’Ballance, 234.

50. *Ibid.*, 237-39; Silber and Little, 309-18; General Sir Michael Rose, *Fighting For Peace, Bosnia 1994* (London: The Harvill Press, 1998), 16-17 and 42-68. Silber and Little are highly critical of Rose, accusing him of deliberately misleading the UN and NATO as to the extent (or lack) of Serbian withdrawals of heavy guns around Sarajevo. Rose’s own account emphasizes that air strikes would have placed the ground UNPROFOR troops in danger with little benefit. Even though Rose does seem inclined to give the Bosnian Serbs a bit too much credit for their efforts, he still concludes that the market bomb was from a Bosnian Serb mortar, 43-44.

51. Silber and Little, 335-44.

52. Roger Cohen, *Hearts Grown Brutal: Sagas of Sarajevo* (NY: Random House, 1998), xlvii-xlviii.

53. “Sarajevo Being Strangulated,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 8 May 1995, *FBIS-EEU* (8 May 1995), accessed 26 February 2002 (note that in late 1994, the FBIS reports have been placed on the Internet instead of on microfiche at <http://199.221.15.211>; all remaining FBIS notes refer to this website); “1st Corps Reports Intensified Attacks on Sarajevo,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 10 May 1995, *FBIS-EEU* (10 May 1995), accessed 26 February 2002; “Heaviest Fighting in Sarajevo Since 1993,” Paris AFP, 10 May 1995, *FBIS-EEU* (10 May 1995), accessed 26 February 2002; and Cohen, xlvii-xlviii.

54. “Army Reports on Military Situation in Sarajevo,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 3 August 1995, *FBIS-EEU* (3 August 1995), accessed 26 February 2002; “Presidency Appoints 1st, 4th Corps Commanders,” Sarajevo Radio, Bosnia-Herzegovina Network, 16 August 1995, *FBIS-EEU* (16 August 1995), accessed 26 February 2002; “Government Reports on Sarajevo Casualties,” Ljubljana OSLOBODJENJE, 17 August 1995,

*FBIS-EEU* (17 August 1995), accessed 26 February 2002; “Muslims Launch ‘All-Out’ Attack on Serb Sarajevo,” Belgrade TANJUG, 22 August 1995, *FBIS-EEU* (22 August 1995), accessed 26 February 2002; and Stacy Sullivan, “UN Pounds Serb Guns as Sarajevo is Shelled,” *London Times* (23 August 1995), 12. During the increased fighting in August, the Bosnian 1st (Sarajevo) Corps commander, Vahid Karvelic, became the head of the Bosnian General Staff’s operations and planning division. He was replaced by Brigadier General Nedžad Ajnadžić, the former 37th Division commander. This appears to have been a normal rotation of duties for both men, not a comment on their performance.

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