

# Inside the Serbian War Machine

## The Milošević Telephone Intercepts, 1991-1992

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This article examines the arguably most interesting pieces of evidence used during the trial of Slobodan Milošević at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia—more than two hundred recordings of intercepted conversations that took place in 1991 and 1992 between Milošević, Radovan Karadžić, Dobrica Ćosić, and various other protagonists on the Serbian side of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Analysis of the intercepts presented in this article makes several important contributions to the interpretation of events in former Yugoslavia during that period. First, it identifies the ideological foundations of Milošević-led Serbian war campaigns in the political influence of Dobrica Ćosić and his platform of “unification of Serbs.” Second, it contributes to the vigorous debate regarding the possible deal between Milošević and the Croatian president Franjo Tuđman for the division of BiH. It confirms that negotiations took place, but that Milošević and his associates had no intention of respecting any agreement and wanted the whole of BiH until at least late 1991. Third, it provides indications that Milošević held the position of the de facto commander-in-chief in the operations of the Yugoslav People’s Army in Croatia and BiH. And fourth, it establishes that the two institutions of force Milošević had direct legal control over—Serbia’s State Security Service and Ministry of Interior—were his principal means of control over Croatian and Bosnian Serbs and instruments in the aggression against BiH even after its international recognition.

**Keywords:** *Slobodan Milošević; Radovan Karadžić; Dobrica Ćosić; war in Croatia; war in Bosnia and Herzegovina; former Yugoslavia; Greater Serbia; ICTY*

The death of Slobodan Milošević in March 2006 marked not only the end of his trial at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) but also the end of the hope for many in the region that the main culprits for the carnage of the 1990s would get a just punishment. Though the wars that led to the destruction of Yugoslavia ended more than a decade ago, a great number of questions about their origin, nature, and conduct still remain to be answered and important debates

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persist both in the public and in the academic community. Did Yugoslavia collapse in a string of more or less spontaneous ethnic civil wars or was it destroyed by a pre-planned project of expansion and aggression of its largest nation—the Serbs? Was this oft-mentioned plan of forming an expanded Greater Serbian state on the ruins of Yugoslavia the true strategic goal behind Milošević’s campaigns in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), or was it just an invention of his adversaries used to mask other possible origins of conflict like the protection of Serb populations in those two republics? What did the Serbian leader and the apparatus he built around himself actually want? Was Milošević truly, as the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) argued, the leader of a “joint criminal enterprise” responsible for severe crimes he individually “planned, instigated, ordered, committed, or in whose planning, preparation, or execution he otherwise aided and abetted?”<sup>1</sup> How much control over various events, military units, structures, and personnel did he actually have? Had he lived long enough, would he have even been convicted?

Although the Tribunal did not get a chance to pass its verdict on the role of Serbia’s former president in a string of Balkan conflicts of the 1990s, the trial and the impressive collection of evidence and testimonies used in its proceedings did leave us with valuable material for a more informed assessment of the true nature and motivation of Milošević’s war projects. Even though the Serbian leader was known to leave few paper trails of his battlefield tactics, the Tribunal managed to penetrate into the mechanism of his regime and to expose its inner workings. Almost three hundred witnesses testified about various aspects of the charges brought against Milošević regarding his campaigns in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo (this article deals only with the first two), and some of those testimonies were truly damning.<sup>2</sup> The most interesting insight into the nature of the Serbian war machine and the logic and planning behind the campaigns in Croatia and BiH, however, arguably did not come from any of the witnesses. It was provided by the very voices of the former president of Serbia and his associates in more than two hundred telephone intercepts of their conversations that took place between May 1991 and May 1992.

The story of how these intercepts were created and eventually used by the Tribunal and released into the public sphere is partly shrouded in mystery. The Counterintelligence Service (KOS) of the Yugoslav People’s Army (JNA), the State Security Service (SDB) of BiH, and different foreign intelligence services (usually British and American) all feature more or less prominently in the various interpretations of the origin of the intercepts.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the case may be, it is certain that the ICTY ultimately acquired the intercepts from the British and American governments, though only after a protracted public battle that was particularly heated with the Conservative government of John Major.<sup>4</sup> Only the 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia and Montenegro and the resulting Western campaign for the ICTY indictment of Milošević finally secured the OTP’s greater—though still hardly complete—access to the intercepts and other available intelligence.<sup>5</sup> The admittance of the intercepts into evidence by the Tribunal was also far from straightforward and was in the

end resolved only in June 2004, with the judges—over strenuous protests from Milošević—accepting most, though not all, of the intercepts.<sup>6</sup> The OTP in the meantime publicly released the intercepts and their transcripts through the non-profit Web site [www.domovina.net](http://www.domovina.net), mostly in the ultimately futile attempt at bringing about some sort of a mood swing in the Serbian public.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, only a few of the intercepts have been analyzed in the press and in academic publications, and thus far there has been no concerted effort of looking into what all of the intercepts as a broader body of evidence can tell us about the period they cover and their principal protagonists.<sup>8</sup> This article aims to remedy that.

Obviously, the use of intercepts as historical sources has its drawbacks. They were first screened and pre-selected by the intelligence services before being passed on to the ICTY, and were then additionally screened and pre-selected by the OTP officials before being used as evidence and presented to the public. More importantly, the intercepts on their own cannot provide us with a complete picture of events and must be understood as only pieces of a greater puzzle. That being said, the contextual and factual depth that the intercepts present us with does warrant our greatest attention. This article does not attempt to encompass all possible aspects of the analytical reach that the intercepts could provide, but instead concentrates on two topics that the intercepts shed some revealing light on: the strategic goals of the Milošević-led Serbian war machine and the operational nature of its mechanisms of force.

The first section of the article thus evaluates the evidence we can extract from the intercepts regarding the process of evolution of Serbian war objectives. It identifies the strategic foundations of Milošević's campaigns by directly tying the Serbian leader with the most well-known modern ideologue of Serbia's expansion—the writer Dobrica Ćosić. It then tracks the changes in the Serbian leadership's exact perception of what an expanded state should look like, especially vis-à-vis the position of BiH and its possible division with the Croats. It confirms that negotiations on this issue between Milošević and the Croatian president Franjo Tuđman did take place, but—contrary to the commonly held view, especially in BiH—the analysis suggests that Milošević and his associates had no intention of respecting any deal with the Croats and worked on securing the *whole* of BiH for the new Serbian state until late 1991 and early 1992 when the refusal of the Bosnian Muslims to be silent accomplices in this scheme became definite.

The second section of the article assesses the contribution of the intercepts to our understanding of how the military side of Milošević's apparatus functioned. It provides indications that Milošević held the position of the de facto commander-in-chief in the operations of the JNA in Croatia and BiH during the second half of 1991 and the first half of 1992. It then helps define the role of institutions of force Milošević had direct legal control over—Serbia's State Security Service (SDB) and Ministry of Interior (MUP)—in the war operations during the same period. These two institutions are shown to be Milošević's principal means of control over Croatian and Bosnian Serbs, and the instruments in the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina even after its international recognition.

## **Evolving Strategic Objective: Greater Serbia**

A good number of books and articles have to date been written about Slobodan Milošević and his political career.<sup>9</sup> Although he has been called many things—from a “malignant narcissist”<sup>10</sup> or “the perfect postmodern politician . . . [for whom] truth holds no value,”<sup>11</sup> to “a potential Balkan Gorbachev,”<sup>12</sup> “one of the cleverest men I had to deal with,”<sup>13</sup> or simply “the factor of peace”<sup>14</sup>—a certain consensus regarding Milošević’s personal traits has remarkably been reached in the press, the academic literature, and in the more general public perception and remembrance of his rule. Milošević is commonly seen as a former devout communist who used Serbian nationalism and the nationalist demagoguery solely in order to grab and hold on to the only thing he ever wanted—power.<sup>15</sup> As a result, Milošević’s leadership of the Serbian war campaigns is invariably seen as a combination of his myopic willingness to throw people and states into a whirlwind of conflict in order to amass more power in the ensuing chaos, and of his blundering misconceptions and miscalculations as a supposedly “brilliant tactician, but a disastrous strategist.”<sup>16</sup>

This rather prevalent view unfortunately often serves to mask the ideological intent and the system behind Milošević’s campaigns. The precise details of the goals behind the war operations led by the former president of Serbia did adjust and change as the situation on the frontlines and in international negotiations evolved. Nevertheless, the ideological and strategic intent of those war operations was clear and simple from the very beginning of armed conflicts—it was the creation of a new and enlarged Serbian state. The evidence we can extract from the available communications intercepts in the period between 1991 and early 1992 clearly confirms this in two important ways. First, it enables us to trace the thinking in Milošević’s inner circle regarding what this Greater Serbian state should exactly look like, particularly vis-à-vis the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina (i.e., whether or not this republic should be divided with the Croats or swallowed as a whole). And second, the communications intercepts assist us in identifying the ideological sources of Milošević’s drive and in confirming that Serbia’s boss was truly and personally committed to the goal of crafting an enlarged Serbian state.

### **Ideological Intent: Dobrica Ćosić and the Unification of Serbs**

Milošević’s inspiration and pursuit of the idea of forging an enlarged Serbian state was a product and a logical continuation of a lengthy buildup of nationalist hysteria in Serbia throughout the 1980s. That decade was—even prior to Milošević’s rise to power in 1987—marked by the intense revisionist radicalization of Serbia’s intellectual elite that publicly portrayed the modern Yugoslav state as a spiritual, economic, and political loss for the Serbs and which called for a new and more assertive platform for change based on true Serbian national interests. That platform, first openly presented in the infamous 1986 *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of*

*Sciences and Arts* (SANU), challenged not only Yugoslavia's obvious economic, political, and constitutional inefficiencies but also attacked some of the foundational elements of the Federation's post-World War II equilibrium—the autonomies of Kosovo and Vojvodina, the equality of the republics, and the inviolability of inter-republican borders.<sup>17</sup>

The communications intercepts clearly imply that Milošević had the best possible mentor in the “science and art” of Serbian nationalism and irredentism—the most popular exponent of Serbia's intellectual life of the time, the writer and nationalist ideologue Dobrica Ćosić. Although he did not directly participate in the crafting of the SANU Memorandum, Ćosić was the one Serbian intellectual who best vocalized the perceived grievances of the Serbian nation and who clearly identified the goals Serbian political leaders should pursue in opposition to the status quo in the Yugoslav Federation. His contribution to the explosion of nationalism in Serbia of the late 1980s is immeasurable and well documented.<sup>18</sup> What is perhaps somewhat less known is that in spite of Ćosić's semi-dissident status during communism and in spite of Milošević's obvious past commitment to the system under which he became a high functionary, the two men apparently grew to be confidants and personal allies during the critical stages of the crisis in former Yugoslavia in 1990 and 1991.

According to some of Milošević's intercepted communications, Ćosić proofread Milošević's speeches,<sup>19</sup> personally phoned Milošević to exuberantly praise his public appearances and interviews,<sup>20</sup> and—most importantly—advised both Milošević and the leader of the Bosnian Serbs Radovan Karadžić on policy matters. Ćosić's opinions were so highly valued that Milošević, for example, personally invited Karadžić on 11 June 1991 to come to Belgrade for their joint policy review meeting with Ćosić, exclaiming, “We shall build a nation.”<sup>21</sup> What Ćosić might have advised Milošević and Karadžić at that meeting (or at a number of similar previous meetings that are recounted in the memoirs of Milošević's close associate Borisav Jović) is easy to deduce from Ćosić's writings and speeches at the time.<sup>22</sup> If there is any doubt, one can simply refer to his fascinating conversation with Radovan Karadžić of 11 November 1991. “The unification of the South Slavs collapsed historically,” Ćosić told Karadžić at the time, “but the unification of the Serbs did not. It is now being historically finalized or will fail. . . . This tactic of yours, your strategy; I don't know what would have happened if you had not done what you did.”<sup>23</sup>

The praise that Ćosić bestowed on Karadžić's “tactic” and “strategy” on this occasion came in the midst of the Bosnian Serb referendum on whether to remain in a common state with Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>24</sup> It also came some two months after the formation of Serbian Autonomous Regions in Bosnia, which later formed the Republika Srpska, and only two and a half weeks after Serbian deputies walked out of the BiH Parliament (with Karadžić exclaiming from the floor that “Muslims will disappear as a people from these territories if Bosnian sovereignty is proclaimed!”) and formed their own “Assembly of the Serbian Nation of Bosnia and Herzegovina” on 24 October 1991. The implications of the aforementioned exchange between Karadžić

and Čosić were thus clear—the actions of the Bosnian Serb apparatus under Karadžić were for Čosić the essential elements in the process of “unification of the Serbs.”

### **The Peak of Expansion: Krajina, Dubrovnik, and Swallowing Bosnia and Herzegovina Whole**

Further evidence provided by the communications intercepts helps us in understanding how the idea of “the unification of the Serbs” developed and evolved in practical terms. Throughout 1991 the new state that would unify the Serbs was conceived as something very close to the historically recurring ideal of a Greater Serbia, which would include the *whole* of Bosnia and Herzegovina and whose western border would be carved deep in the territory of Croatia. A number of intercepts are particularly instructive on this issue. Milošević bluntly outlined the contours of the new state in a conversation with Karadžić on 1 July 1991: “Concerning Slovenia—I would let them go immediately . . . and [the Croats] as well after they have settled the issue of borders with us. And I cannot let your man [president of Bosnia and Herzegovina Alija Izetbegović] go.”<sup>25</sup> Or as he repeated in a similar conversation on 6 September 1991, the new state was to consist of the three republics of Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, plus the Croatian Serbs.<sup>26</sup> The implication of these statements is that—in contrast with the growing consensus in the literature, particularly in BiH—throughout 1991 Milošević wanted the whole of Yugoslavia’s central republic and did not seem to (yet) have a set deal with the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman for its division.

This issue is significant because the proponents of the idea of Tuđman and Milošević dividing Bosnia and Herzegovina invariably point to their two tête-à-tête meetings of 25 March and 15 April 1991 where they discussed the issue of division, and to the series of by now confirmed secret conferences between the two presidents’ teams of experts during that spring.<sup>27</sup> However, the communications intercepts, as well as some first-hand accounts recently made available, imply that at this time no deal was completed exactly because of Serbian maximalist demands.<sup>28</sup> On 29 May 1991, Milošević instructed Karadžić to push to keep the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina in what would remain of Yugoslavia.<sup>29</sup> On 12 June 1991, he recounted to Karadžić the tripartite talks he had that day with Tuđman and Alija Izetbegović in Split where Tuđman apparently “scared” Izetbegović with talk of division, while Milošević’s platform was to keep all of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the remnants of Yugoslavia.<sup>30</sup> In a conversation of 26 July 1991, Milošević openly told Karadžić, “The Croats are continuously asking for an agreement with me. . . . For me to agree with Franjo, if we want his scheme, I can make an agreement with him in five minutes,” implying that no agreement had until then been reached (though it was obviously discussed).<sup>31</sup> Even more significantly, on 2 November 1991 the Minister of Defense of Serbia General Tomislav Simović told Karadžić in their conversation regarding military supplies and mobilization, “Bosnia is ours . . . as long as you are there and I am here . . . and it will be lengthened and widened.”<sup>32</sup>

From the movements on the battlefield and from a number of other communications intercepts we know that this “lengthening and widening” of Bosnia and Herzegovina clearly referred to the process of annexation of certain parts of Croatia. In a 28 July conversation with his party’s functionary in Banja Luka, Radovan Karadžić openly stated that “we want the whole of Bosnia” and that the so-called Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina—the Serb-occupied territory in Croatia—would be “annexed to us,”<sup>33</sup> making the idea of a running deal with the Croats appear improbable at this time. It is questionable how Milošević might have had an agreement with Tuđman for the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina while the army machinery under his command was working on the annexation of not only the Croatian areas of Northern Dalmatia, Lika, Kordun, and Banija where the Serbs were a majority but also of the border areas with mixed populations in Slavonia and—rather significantly—of the part of Croatia that had an overwhelming Croat majority, like the Southern Dalmatia with Dubrovnik. Milošević’s military pursuits in the Dubrovnik area and the communications intercepts regarding this issue also give us a better sense of what role was BiH to play in the new state that would “unify the Serbs.”

In an almost surreal 7 October 1991 conversation with a local Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) strongman from Eastern Herzegovina who was assisting the JNA and reservist forces in the battles around Dubrovnik, Radovan Karadžić clearly stated that “Dubrovnik needs to be saved for Yugoslavia. Let it be a Republic. . . . Some citizens should be found there to decide on that when they are liberated.”<sup>34</sup> Later that week, he also mused to Gojko Đogo (a Serbian poet and famous 1980s dissident of political stock similar to that of Dobrica Ćosić) that Dubrovnik “has to be put under military command and that’s it. . . . Dubrovnik was never Croatian!” with Đogo responding that the territory around Dubrovnik needs to be cleansed—“burn everything and good bye! . . . up north of Dubrovnik River kill everybody!”<sup>35</sup> The new border seems to have been set at the Croatian port of Ploče, some one hundred kilometers north of Dubrovnik—a territory that could not be occupied and eventually annexed without Bosnia and Herzegovina. As Karadžić explained in his request to the Chairman of the so-called rump Yugoslav Presidency and the JNA’s self-proclaimed Commander-in-Chief Branko Kostić on 26 November 1991, “Ploče is vital to [the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina]. . . . And [the JNA] can take the part from Ploče downward.”<sup>36</sup>

The intercepts unfortunately do not provide us with any evidence of how the original negotiations on the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the spring of 1991 were conducted. Were they Milošević’s trick to lull Tuđman’s defenses and lure him into a morally equivalent position of an aggressor? Were they the product of Tuđman’s well-documented enthusiasm for the idea or simply his tactic of baiting Milošević with a part of Bosnia in order to keep him from going after Croatia? Whatever the case may be, the intercepts suggest that Milošević and his allies had no commitment to a deal throughout 1991. The new and enlarged Serbian state, as it was conceived

and built by arms during the critical stages of the Croatian war in 1991, was to include the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was not to be divided with the Croats but to be expanded at the expense of Croatia.

### **Reduced Demands: The Blackmail of Bosnian Muslims and the Division of Bosnia and Herzegovina**

The main problem with Milošević's plan to swallow the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina together with parts of Croatia, and the ultimate reason for its failure (in addition to Croatia's determined defense), was that it hinged on the complacency of the Bosnian Muslims. With only 31% of the BiH population being Serb, Milošević desperately needed Izetbegović. His strategy vis-à-vis the Bosnian Muslims during this time, however, was solely an expression of his feeling of military superiority. Apart from a reported cosmetic offer to Izetbegović to be the president of the new state, Milošević's approach was simply blackmail. Izetbegović and the Bosnians were expected to succumb to Milošević's pressure to "voluntarily" join the new state that was built in part on war exploits in Croatia. In case of their refusal, they were to face the wrath of the dissenting Bosnian Serbs and of the military might under Milošević's control. As Milošević directly threatened Izetbegović, "If you do not want to [accept], there will be those within Bosnia who will. . . . Of course I mean the [Bosnian] Serbs!"<sup>37</sup>

According to the available intercepts, it was only once Izetbegović stood up to Milošević's blackmail and pursued a policy of a sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina that the first signs appeared in the Serbian camp of a significant change of plan regarding a possible division of the republic.<sup>38</sup> With the Bosnian Muslims' refusal, the original goal of a Greater Serbian state that would include Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the occupied parts of Croatia had to be adjusted. Since the entire BiH could not be secured, the new objective was the largest possible part of this republic. The exchange between Karadžić and Milošević after the sovereignty proclamation of the BiH Parliament in late October 1991 is particularly instructive: "We will establish full authority over the Serbian territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina! [Izetbegović] will not be able to exercise power there! He will not have control over 65% of his territory! That is our goal!" Karadžić stormed. Milošević, on the other hand, was partly skeptical and partly dumbfounded that the Muslims would actually dare stand up to him and the military power under his control. Milošević: "I don't believe that they dare to fight. I don't believe that." Karadžić: "If they knew they would be humiliated, they would fight!" Milošević: "But they know very well they cannot win that."<sup>39</sup>

Although Milošević's hopes of holding onto the whole of BiH did persist for some time after this conversation with Karadžić from late October 1991,<sup>40</sup> the Bosnian proclamation of sovereignty marked the beginning of a profound shift of strategy. While the intercepts do not help us on the issue of new and this time

successful Serbo-Croat negotiations regarding the division of Bosnia, substantial other evidence suggests a bargain was struck during the spring months of 1992.<sup>41</sup> The intercepts, however, do clearly show something equally important. They show that the vast military apparatus at Milošević's and Karadžić's disposal within Bosnia and Herzegovina throughout early 1992 became more than just the source of supplies for the campaigns in Croatia and the instrument of blackmail against the Bosnian Muslims. It became the primary tool for achieving the new and adjusted goal of Greater Serbia that Karadžić so bluntly outlined in his fit of rage at Izetbegović's defiance—65% of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

### **The Mechanism Exposed: Milošević's Levers of Force**

The essence of Milošević's policies was always force. He relied on the support of former army generals in 1987 when he was coming to power;<sup>42</sup> he relied on the special police and army units to keep Kosovo under control in 1989; he relied on the army intervention to stay in power during the mass opposition protests in March 1991; and most importantly, he relied on an impressive military and secret service apparatus under his direct control to wage the campaigns in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. As he told Karadžić in August 1991, "We are strong. And since we are strong, we can establish peace"<sup>43</sup> (this being, naturally, not any peace but peace on his terms). Or as he fumed in another, less savory, conversation, "They can go f— themselves! Whoever wants to fight, we are here and we are stronger!"<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Milošević and the forces under his command were stronger than any of their opponents. As the former leader of the Croatian Serbs Milan Babić explained in his testimony at the ICTY, Milošević had under his decisive control two vitally important levers of power—the full military arsenal of the Yugoslav People's Army and the volunteer and police forces organized jointly by the State Security Service (SDB) and the Ministry of Interior (MUP) of Serbia.<sup>45</sup> Both of these sources of power were essential not only in the actual advances on the battlefield, but also in the process of setting the political and military foundations for the initiation of conflict.

### **Yugoslav People's Army as the Backbone of Expansion**

The JNA was, obviously, vital for all of Milošević's plans and he did everything he could to achieve full control of its command structure. A number of important sources have already revealed a long sequence of collaboration between the Army and Milošević, starting all the way back in May 1990 when the JNA disarmed the Slovenes and the Croats by emptying their Territorial Defense depots, and soon thereafter began to arm the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs.<sup>46</sup> The available communications intercepts help complete the picture of the relationship between the Army and the Milošević-led Serbian regime. They do so not only by exposing the JNA's

and Milošević's coordination regarding virtually all major aspects of the Army's movements in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina but also by providing strong implications that Milošević indeed was the Army's de facto commander-in-chief.

To be fair, the intercepts do suggest that Milošević had nothing to do with the JNA's actions in Slovenia.<sup>47</sup> The JNA's brief engagement in that republic during June and July 1991 was most likely the last gasp of the Yugoslavist wing in the Army High Command which, because of the failure of that operation, eventually completely lost out to the staunchly pro-Serbian camp.<sup>48</sup> When it comes to Croatia and BiH, however, the intercepts imply something starkly different—Milošević's leading role in the Army's operations was unchallenged. In an 8 July 1991 intercept that received much press already in September 1991 when it was made public by the federal Prime Minister Ante Marković (who apparently got it from the Bosnian SDB), Milošević instructed Karadžić that "it is of strategic importance for the future 'Ram' ['Frame' in Serbian] . . . that the Banja Luka Corps is able and mobile. . . . Call [the JNA commander of the Banja Luka Corps] General Uzelac in one hour with a reference to the agreement at the highest place. . . . All the people you supply . . . he will arm. We will bring helicopters and everything."<sup>49</sup> Marković's interpretation of the intercept at the time was more than prescient: "Let it be known that it clearly follows . . . where Slobodan Milošević is giving orders to Karadžić to make contact with Uzelac, in order to, according to an agreement with the top military commanders, hand over the Army weapons to the Territorial Defense of Bosnian Krajina [the wider Banja Luka region]. This forms a part of the Plan 'Ram', which allegedly refers to the plan for Greater Serbia."<sup>50</sup>

That intercept was, however, not the only one exposing the coordination between the Serbian leadership and the JNA. In an earlier intercept of 29 May 1991—almost a full month before the 10-day war in Slovenia—Karadžić explicitly instructed his party's functionaries in Banja Luka to mobilize as many men as possible and to "give them to Uzelac to arm them" because "what is being defended is what remains as Yugoslavia."<sup>51</sup> Throughout the coming months, Milošević on a number of occasions charged Karadžić with specific mobilization and deployment tasks. On 19 September 1991, for example, Milošević instructed Karadžić to mobilize more men in the Bosnian Krajina.<sup>52</sup> On 22 September 1991 he instructed him to make sure those who were mobilized actually went to the front around the Croatian town of Slunj.<sup>53</sup> On 24 September 1991 he charged him with making certain that the JNA units coming from Serbia have a free passage through Bosnia and Herzegovina to the battlefields of Krajina.<sup>54</sup> And if there was any doubt who was fully in control, Karadžić dispelled it when he urged Milošević earlier that month to have a reserve candidate for the army chief-of-staff, saying "If you do not know [the reserve candidate], then there is none. [The JNA] is not in a condition to prepare the reserve option. . . . You should prepare that tonight."<sup>55</sup> Karadžić's implication was clear—the president of Serbia was the ultimate authority in the federal army.

## Ensuring Direct Control: Serbia's Security Structures

Although the JNA was the largest element of Milošević's arsenal, it was not the only supplier of armed force under his control. An arguably even more important lever of his power was the joint apparatus of the State Security Service of Serbia (SDB) and the Serbian Ministry of Interior (MUP). A number of valuable sources have already clearly identified these two institutions as the tools of Milošević's full control over the political and military activities of the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs. Milošević's former collaborators have during his ICTY trial identified the Serbian SDB and MUP as the instigators of the so-called log revolution of the Croatian Serbs in August 1990,<sup>56</sup> the additional suppliers of weapons to the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs during 1990 and 1991,<sup>57</sup> the main obstacles to a peaceful settlement between the Croats and the Croatian Serbs during 1990,<sup>58</sup> the principal coordinators and suppliers of various volunteer shock units of the Serbian forces,<sup>59</sup> and the essential elements in the planning and execution of the Serb takeover of eastern Bosnia in the spring and summer of 1992. The available communications intercepts go a long way in confirming these roles of the Serbian SDB and MUP in the period between May 1991 and May 1992.

In a conversation between Karadžić and Milošević's close associate in the SDB and MUP structure Mihalj Kertes on 24 June 1991 regarding deliveries of supplies for the Bosnian Serbs, Kertes affirmed that "Slobo has given me and [the head of Serbian SDB] Jovica [Stanišić] carte blanche."<sup>60</sup> In a further conversation between Stanišić and Karadžić on 7 August 1991, Stanišić confirmed he would be sending a new batch of supplies to the Bosnian Serbs and that he was working hard on controlling and disciplining the leader of the Croatian Serbs Milan Babić, who was acting too independently.<sup>61</sup> In a revealing conversation between an SDS functionary in the Banja Luka area and Karadžić later that month it was further confirmed that Stanišić was also controlling and disciplining the local SDS politicians and that he was in charge of setting up and equipping military training camps in the area.<sup>62</sup> In a 15 December 1991 conversation between Karadžić and his men in Banja Luka, Karadžić confirmed his coordination with Stanišić and the Serbian Minister of Interior Zoran Soloković regarding mobilization.<sup>63</sup> The picture that these and a number of other intercepts from 1991 paint is clear—the security structures under direct *legal* command of Milošević (which was obviously not the case with the JNA, where Milošević exerted his control *illegally* since the JNA was supposed to be responsible to the federal presidency) were instrumental in the political and logistical preparations for the war in BiH.

What is equally important, however, is that the engagement of the Serbian SDB and MUP did not cease once that war truly began in the early spring of 1992. As the available intercepts from 1992 demonstrate, the forces under the command of the Serbian SDB and MUP actively participated in the aggression on Bosnia and Herzegovina well after it was recognized as an independent state. Particularly

instructive is a series of intercepted communications between the infamous warlord Željko Ražnatović-Arkan and one of his deputies Milorad Ulemek-Legija in mid-May 1992.<sup>64</sup> The connection between Ražnatović, his paramilitary units called the “Serb Volunteer Guard” (or just “Arkan’s Tigers”) and the Serbian SDB and MUP is well established. The Tigers were directed, equipped, and paid in cash by the SDB and MUP throughout their involvement in Croatia and BiH between 1991 and 1995.<sup>65</sup> The aforementioned intercepts between Ražnatović and Ulemek clearly demonstrate that the Tigers fought both in the Eastern Bosnian towns of Zvornik and Bijeljina, where they committed particularly horrific atrocities in the first two weeks of April 1992,<sup>66</sup> and that they operated on the outskirts of Sarajevo throughout May 1992, where they set up a military training camp and collaborated in the shelling of the Bosnian capital with the Army units under General Ratko Mladić’s command.<sup>67</sup> In other words, the evidence in the available communications intercepts persuasively demonstrates that forces under Milošević’s direct control through the Serbian SDB and MUP had a decisive role not only in the preparation but also in the carrying out of the most notorious early acts of aggression on the sovereign and internationally recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## Conclusions

The trial of Slobodan Milošević was in many ways the ultimate embodiment of catharsis that the ICTY hoped to provide for the former Yugoslav region, particularly because Ratko Mladić is still at large and Radovan Karadžić long evaded capture, and even more so because the Tribunal’s Chief Prosecutor Carla Del Ponte zeroed in on Milošević and eschewed going after some of his main collaborators.<sup>68</sup> Although hope for the region’s (and particularly Serbia’s) open confrontation with the crimes committed by Milošević’s war machine was arguably already lost with the sluggish and drawn-out conduct of the five-year-long trial, Milošević’s controversial death and the resulting lack of a verdict rendered those hopes of catharsis as almost utopian.<sup>69</sup> Despite such obvious failures of the Tribunal in some of its principal tasks, the benefits of the whole process against Serbia’s former president have been unquestionable. The trial has left us with vast resources essential in evaluating the events in former Yugoslavia, and the communications intercepts analyzed in this article are only the most interesting tip of the iceberg.

Much work obviously still needs to be done by the academic community to properly assess the importance and the validity of the evidence provided by the intercepts and to appropriately place it into the larger puzzle of existing information regarding the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. This article argues that the intercepts substantiate the claims that the mechanism of the Serbian war machine that undoubtedly committed horrendous crimes in the towns and villages of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina was constructed and commanded by Milošević and his closest associates. The analysis

of the intercepts presented in this article also strongly suggests that Milošević's war machine had a very specific strategic goal, which was crafted by Serbia's most renowned nationalist ideologues. This goal was "the unification of Serbs" in a new Greater Serbian state that would be built on the ruins of federal Yugoslavia at the expense of both Croatia and of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While the intercepts provide us with a number of very important answers, they however also leave us with some troubling questions. These intercepts were produced and collected by intelligence agencies that had access to important centers of political power. According to credible press sources, though at least some of the intercepts seem to have been produced by the SDB of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Western intelligence services were in possession of the intercepts virtually as the recorded conversations were taking place. Their "contemporaneous intelligence" in fact "convinced them that Milošević's responsibility for ethnic cleansing and the general conduct of the war in 1991 and '92 were direct and clear. . . . It was an elaborate and very systematic series of campaigns, employing a combination of military assets and local paramilitaries."<sup>70</sup> Why then, in spite of that awareness and conviction of Milošević's responsibility, did the international community do virtually nothing to stop at least the buildup of his war machine in Bosnia and Herzegovina? Perhaps members of Western governments (particularly of the Conservative government of John Major) who fought tooth and nail that these intercepts never see the light of day know the answer.

## Notes

1. Formulation used in Milošević's indictments for both Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, "The Prosecutor of the Tribunal against Slobodan Milosevic," Case No. IT-02-54-T at <http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/mil-ai040421-e.htm> and <http://www.un.org/icty/indictment/english/mil-2ai020728e.htm> (accessed 11 April 2007).

2. See in particular the testimonies of protected witnesses B-129 and C-048, who revealed an almost mafia-like nature of decision making and war crime planning in Milošević's inner circle and the regime's symbiotic relationship with infamous warlords such as Željko Ražnatović-Arkan. Both described in Chris Stephen, *Judgement Day: The Trial of Slobodan Milošević* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2004), 203-8. See also a series of testimonies of Milošević's prominent former associates, like the leader of the Croatian Serbs Milan Babić or the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) General Aleksandar Vasiljević, who confirmed that the ultimate control over war operations of military units and over political strategies of Croatian and Bosnian Serbs rested solely in Milošević's hands. For Babić, see Testimony of Milan Babić, The Trial of Slobodan Milošević at the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia [hereafter TSM-ICTY], 18 and 20 November 2002, pp. 12918-20, 12936, 13065-66, at <http://www.un.org/icty/transe54/021118IT.htm> and <http://www.un.org/icty/transe54/021120ED.htm> (accessed 11 April 2007). For Vasiljević, see Sabrina P. Ramet, "Martyr in His Own Mind: The Trial and Tribulations of Slobodan Milošević," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, Vol. 5, No. 1, Summer 2004: 126-27.

3. For the interpretations that the Bosnian State Security Service was behind the recording of the intercepts, see "Prosecutors Play Tape of an Intercepted Call at Milosevic's Trial," *The New York Times*, 23 November 2002, Section A, p. 5. Also, Ana Uzelac, "Milosevic Wire Tap Revelations," *Tribunal Update*, No. 342, 6 February 2004, at [http://iwpr.net/?p=tri&s=f&o=166487&apc\\_state=henitri2004](http://iwpr.net/?p=tri&s=f&o=166487&apc_state=henitri2004) (accessed 11

April 2007). On the other hand, a series of press reports claimed not only that the United States and the United Kingdom possessed “damning telephone intercepts” but they also provided pretty clear and ultimately correct descriptions of the intercepts’ contents. For a view that stressed the role of the U.S. intelligence agencies (DIA, CIA, and NSA) see Stephen J. Hedges et al., “Will Justice Be Done?” *U.S. News & World Report*, 25 December 1995/1 January 1996, pp. 44-47, 49-51. And for a view that stressed the role of the British intelligence agencies (especially the GCHQ intelligence staff in Cyprus), see David Leigh and Jonathan Calvert, “Rifkind Put Paid to War Crimes Inquiry,” *The Observer*, 18 May 1997, p. 11.

4. The 1995 offer of the U.S. government to share its intelligence and communications intercepts with the ICTY was apparently vetoed by the U.K. Foreign Secretary and former Secretary of State for Defense Malcolm Rifkind, who persisted in his refusal in spite of personal appeals by the president of the ICTY Judge Antonio Cassese. For the 1995 U.S. offer, see Jane Perlez, “War Crimes Tribunal on Bosnia Is Hampered by Basic Problems,” *The New York Times*, 28 January 1996, Section 1, p. 1. For the activities of Sir Malcolm, see Leigh and Calvert, “Rifkind Put Paid to War Crimes Inquiry,” p. 11.

5. Although Britain became more cooperative shortly after the change of government in 1997, the Tribunal did not receive substantial access to intelligence nor did it truly commit its resources to investigating Milošević until the Kosovo crisis in 1999. See Ian Black, “Britain Opens Its Files to Bosnian War Tribunal,” *The Guardian*, 12 June 1997, p. 16. Also, Ed Vulliamy et al., “How I Trapped Butcher of the Balkans,” *The Observer*, 1 July 2001, p. 17.

6. The intercepts were used throughout the trial, but the final decision on their admissibility was reached only on 14 June 2004. See the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, “Final Decision on the Admissibility of Intercepted Communications,” Case No. IT-02-54-T, at <http://www.un.org/icty/milosevic/trialc/decision-e/040614.htm> (accessed 11 April 2007).

7. The intercepts were turned over to the mentioned Web site in December 2003 and were published during that and the following month. Personal correspondence of the author with an anonymous source close to the ICTY Office of the Prosecutor, 17 March 2007.

8. In addition to a number of press reports in the West and throughout the Balkans, a limited number of academic publications usually mention only in passing a few of the more notable intercepts as sources of historical evidence. See, e.g., Ramet, “Martyr in His Own Mind,” 122; Gary J. Bass, “Milosevic in the Hague,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, Issue 3, May/June 2003; and Adam LeBor, *Milosevic: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2002), 175-78.

9. For a useful presentation of the most known works, see Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 159-84.

10. Louis Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (London: Duke University Press, 2002), 173.

11. Various press sources, as quoted in Ramet, “Martyr in His Own Mind,” 117.

12. This was the view of some prominent U.S. diplomats in the late 1980s. See LeBor, *Milosevic*, 67-68.

13. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, as quoted in his authorized biography by Mark Stuart. See Mark Stuart, *Douglas Hurd: The Public Servant* (London: Mainstream, 1998), 331.

14. This was the favorite phrase of many Western politicians reserved for Milošević at the Dayton Peace Accords negotiations. See Filip Švarn, “Spider’s Web,” *Bosnia Report*, New Series No. 55-56, January-July 2007, [http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report\\_format.cfm?articleid=3176&reportid=173](http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=3176&reportid=173) (accessed 11 April 2007).

15. For one characteristic view, see Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic*, 4. Sell identifies “Milosevic’s true objectives” as “to gain, expand, and finally, simply hang onto power.” Most of Milošević’s opponents felt the same. The last Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković in his testimony at the Milošević trial stated: “Slobodan Milošević used everything he could to ensure power for himself and power over people. And if that was nationalism, well, then he used nationalism. But in principle, he wasn’t a nationalist. He was quite simply somebody who was ready to use everything at his disposal to secure power for himself.” Testimony of Ante Marković, TSM-ICTY, 23 October 2003, p. 28042 at <http://www.un.org/icty/transe54/031023ED.htm> (accessed 19 April 2007).

16. The perception of Milošević as weak on strategy and strong on tactics is rather common with many observers of his rule and war campaigns. See Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia*, 160. The exact quote can be found in Sell, *Slobodan Milosevic*, 4.

17. For a complete text of the Memorandum, see Kosta Mihailović and Vasilije Krestić, *Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts: Answers to Criticisms* (Belgrade: Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, 1995), 95-140. The Memorandum was written by a committee of SANU members formed in June 1985 and was not directly “sponsored” by Slobodan Milošević or any other members of the Serbian communist leadership, though its impact on that leadership and on Serbia as a whole is well documented. For a solid account of the issues surrounding the Memorandum’s creation and public presentation, see Jasna Dragović-Soso, *‘Saviours of the Nation’: Serbia’s Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism* (London: Hurst, 2002), 177-88. For a string of attacks on Yugoslavia’s internal borders from Serbia’s prominent intellectuals, see *ibid.*, 236. Also, Mladen Maloča, “Meki trbuh Hrvatske,” *Danas*, 19 September 1989, 11; and Darko Hudelist, “Jugoslavija u sjeni noža,” *Start*, 16 September 1989, 51-57.

18. See in particular Audrey Helfant Budding, *Serb Intellectuals and the National Question, 1961-1991* (PhD diss., Harvard University, 1998), 367-75. Also, Dragović-Soso, *‘Saviours of the Nation.’*

19. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 6 September 1991, ICTY Office of the Prosecutor’s reference number [henceforth OTP No.] B6672-B6959, Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian [henceforth BHS] transcript, p. 2. The recording and transcript of this and all other intercepts were downloaded between 6 and 12 December 2006 from the Web site [http://www.domovina.net/tribunal/page\\_006.php](http://www.domovina.net/tribunal/page_006.php).

20. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 7 August 1991, OTP No. C2521, BHS transcript, pp. 1-2.

21. Interestingly, Milošević’s quoted statement was part of his refusal of Karadžić’s request to bring along the leader of the Croatian Serbs Milan Babić to the meeting. Milošević saw Babić as “a fool unfit for serious conversations” whom he would not allow to jeopardize the “building of a nation.” Intercepted communication between Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, 11 June 1991, OTP No. B6549, BHS transcript, p. 2.

22. In addition to the meeting of 11 June 1991, Jović recounts a few other meetings with Čosić. On at least two occasions—25 March and 11 September 1990—Čosić conveyed to Milošević and Jović that he thought Yugoslavia outlived its purpose. At the September meeting Čosić went even further and outlined his plan for a new Serbian state that was to include all of the Serb “ethnic areas,” further claiming he had the ideological control over the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) of Croatia, the SDS of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the People’s Party in Montenegro. He wanted all of those parties to form a joint front with Milošević’s Socialist Party. See Borisav Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ: Izvodi iz dnevnika* (Belgrade: Politika, 1996), 191-94.

23. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Dobrica Čosić, 11 November 1991, OTP No. C2352-B6770-B6767, English transcript, p. 2.

24. The results of the Bosnian Serb referendum—announced one day after the conversation between Karadžić and Čosić—were overwhelmingly in favor of Bosnia and Herzegovina staying in what would remain of Yugoslavia. The official referendum on Bosnia and Herzegovina’s independence (largely boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs) took place on 29 February and 1 March 1992. On that occasion the mostly Bosnian Muslim and Croat voters overwhelmingly endorsed Bosnia and Herzegovina’s independence.

25. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 1 July 1991, OTP No. B6580-B6577, English transcript, p. 2.

26. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 6 September 1991, OTP No. B6672-B6959, English transcript, p. 3. Macedonia at times featured in Milošević’s plans, but only as a potential bargaining chip with the West. He seems to have not had much interest in it from the beginning.

27. See, e.g., the contributions by Stjepan Mesić and Rusmir Mahmutćehajić in an excellent volume edited by Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić that captures well the state of popular and elite opinion in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina regarding this issue. Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić (eds.), *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991-1995* (London: Frank Cass, 2001).

28. The memoirs of Dušan Bilandžić, who was a member of the Croatian team of experts, are truly revealing in this respect. He recounts three meetings between the expert groups in April 1991 and notes that the Serbian team insisted on taking the Krajina region (even asking for its access to the sea in northern Dalmatia) and Baranja from Croatia, rendering any deal impossible. According to Bilandžić, the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman was enthusiastic about the prospects for an agreement and wanted the negotiations to continue, claiming that the Serbs would eventually reduce their demands. Negotiations of the two expert teams however soon ended when a half of the Croatian delegation resigned in protest at the strategy of the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina and out of a belief that a deal with Serbia was not possible. See Dušan Bilandžić, *Povijest izbliza: Memoarski zapisi 1945-2005* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2006), 372-77.

29. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 29 May 1991, OTP No. B6518-B6520, English transcript, p. 3. To the great displeasure of his associates, Milošević insisted on calling the new projected state Yugoslavia and not Greater Serbia. His insistence was largely motivated by hopes of getting the new state internationally recognized as the legal heir to SFRJ.

30. Intercepted communication between Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, 12 June 1991, OTP No. B6553, English transcript, pp. 3-4. Tuđman's enthusiasm for a division of Bosnia and Herzegovina is well documented in Attila Hoare, "The Croatian Project to Partition Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1990-1994," *East European Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, March 1997.

31. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 26 July 1991, OTP No. B6588, English transcript, p. 5.

32. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Tomislav Simović, 2 November 1991, OTP No. B9406, BHS transcript, p. 2.

33. Intercepted communication between Radoslav Brđanin and Radovan Karadžić, 28 July 1991, OTP No. B6619, BHS transcript, p. 4.

34. Intercepted communication between Jovan Tintor, Radovan Karadžić, and Božidar Vučurević, 7 October 1991, OTP No. C3621, BHS transcript, p. 5. Vučurević reported to Karadžić the troop movements around Dubrovnik and his assistance to the JNA and reservist forces.

35. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Gojko Đogo, 12 October 1991, OTP No. C2373, BHS transcript, pp. 10, 13.

36. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Branko Kostić, 2 November 1991, OTP No. B6916, BHS transcript, pp. 1-2. The rump Presidency consisted of the members from Serbia, Montenegro, Vojvodina, and Kosovo after the members from Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia refused to participate in its decision making. Karadžić called Kostić to request that the JNA makes a stronger push for the port of Ploče because of its "strategic and economic" significance for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kostić promised to do what he can, saying that he had already "agreed with [the JNA generals] to come with the detailed maps."

37. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 4 September 1991, OTP No. B6682, BHS transcript, p. 1.

38. During this period, largely as a form of pressure on Izetbegović, Milošević also attempted to find a Bosnian Muslim collaborator in the leader of a smaller Bosnian Muslim party (MBO) Adil Zulfikarpašić. This scheme, after some initial traction in the Bosnian public, proved to be a failure.

39. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 24 October 1991, OTP No. B6846, BHS transcript, pp. 5-6.

40. Milošević expressed his pleasure at Bosnia and Herzegovina not being recognized together with Croatia and Slovenia on 15 January 1992 and instructed Karadžić to tell the American ambassador in Yugoslavia Warren Zimmermann that the Serbs were for an integral Bosnia but within what would remain of Yugoslavia. Intercepted communication between Slobodan Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, 15 January 1992, OTP No. B7022, BHS transcript, p. 1.

41. For a discussion regarding the spring 1992 negotiations in Graz, Austria, between Radovan Karadžić and Tuđman's proxy in Herzegovina, Mate Boban, see Hoare, "The Croatian Project," 124-25.

42. According to a number of Milošević's contemporaries in Yugoslavia's positions of power, his rise during 1987 was decisively supported by former JNA generals like Nikola Ljubičić. Milošević deliberately courted their support with conservative and arguably even Stalinist measures while being the head of Belgrade's League of Communists. See LeBor, *Milosevic*, 63-74. Also, Ivan Stambolić, *Put u bespuće: odgovori Ivana Stambolića na pitanja Slobodana Inić* (Belgrade: Radio B92, 1995), 147-50.

43. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 7 August 1991, OTP No. C2521, BHS transcript, p. 6.

44. For some reason, Milošević's crude language that he reserved for Izetbegović was sanitized in the English translation of the transcript. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 10 September 1991, OTP No. C2352-B8409, BHS transcript, p. 3.

45. Testimony of Milan Babić, TSM-ICTY, 22 November 2002, p. 13129.

46. The Territorial Defense units were a constituent part of Yugoslavia's defense mechanism, created as a response to the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. They were constitutionally under the responsibility and command of the republics and autonomous provinces and were run as the military reserves and a foundation of possible future partisan warfare in case of external attack. The Slovenes did manage to save about a half of their stockpiles, which were well used during their 10-day independence war, but the Croats were more or less completely disarmed. Borisav Jović, who was at the time Serbia's representative and the president of the federal presidency, noted in his diary on 17 May 1990: "Practically speaking, we have disarmed them. Formally, this was done by the head of the General Staff, but it was actually under our order." Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 146. Jovan Divjak, brigadier-general in the Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina and a former commander of the Territorial Defense units in that republic, describes the process of JNA arming of the Bosnian Serbs throughout 1990 and 1991 in Jovan Divjak, "The First Phase, 1992-1993: Struggle for Survival and Genesis of the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1991-1995*, ed. Branka Magaš and Ivo Žanić (London: Frank Cass, 2001), 154.

47. A number of intercepts imply this. In fact, it seems that there was some fear on the Serbian side that the JNA might side with the federal Prime Minister Ante Marković and decide to force Slovenia to remain within Yugoslavia. These fears were dispelled very quickly after the action in Slovenia began. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 17 June 1991, OTP No. B6558, BHS transcript, pp. 1-2.

48. Borisav Jović in his diary entry for 27 June 1991 recounts a meeting that he and Milošević held with General Veljko Kadžević regarding the action in Slovenia. "Slobodan insists several times . . . that the military must defend the future borders of Yugoslavia: 'Why should it defend Slovenia's borders? That is temporary. We must defend that which will be permanent.'" Jović, *Poslednji dani SFRJ*, 343. Following the Slovenian declaration of independence on 25 June 1991, the Army actually used the request of the Prime Minister Ante Marković to secure the Slovenian border posts toward Italy, Austria, and Hungary as a pretext to start a full-scale military operation. The conflict ended after a forceful response by the Slovenian Territorial Defense forces on 7 July 1991 and the Brioni Accords, which agreed the withdrawal of the JNA from Slovenia.

49. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 8 July 1991, OTP No. B6587-B6527-B6523, BHS transcript, pp. 2-3.

50. "The Statement of Ante Marković," *Vreme News Digest Agency*, 30 September 1991, No. 1-2. [http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/serbian\\_digest/](http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/serbian_digest/) (accessed 19 April 2007). Territorial Defense units in the Serb-inhabited parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina (like the Bosnian Krajina) and Croatia were not disarmed by the JNA during 1990 and 1991 but were supplied with even more weapons and were used as an institutional basis for the future forces of the local Serbs. Marković's revelation did cause a media sensation at the time, but it resulted with virtually no policy changes of any of the actors, including the international community.

51. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić, Radislav Vukić, and Slobodan Bošković, 29 May 1991, OTP No. B6525, BHS transcript, p. 2.

52. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 19 September 1991, OTP No. B6725, BHS transcript, p. 1.

53. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 22 September 1991, OTP No. B6737, BHS transcript, p. 1.

54. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 24 September 1991, OTP No. B6748, BHS transcript, p. 9-10.

55. Karadžić was concerned that the federal Minister of Defense, General Veljko Kadrijević, would resign following the Croatian successes in acquiring weapon depots from the military barracks. Karadžić thought that “someone younger, smart and arrogant” should take Kadrijević’s place and made such a suggestion to Milošević. Milošević, however, kept Kadrijević in his post until his resignation in January 1992. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Slobodan Milošević, 19 September 1991, OTP No. B6724, BHS transcript, p. 1.

56. Testimony of Slobodan Lazarević, TSM-ICTY, 29 October 2002, pp. 12351, 12371-72, at <http://www.un.org/icty/transe54/021029IT.htm> (accessed 19 April 2007). Slobodan Lazarević was a former KOS agent who was on duty in the Serb-occupied parts of Croatia during the war.

57. Testimony of Aleksandar Vasiljević, TSM-ICTY, 5 February 2003, p. 15772, at <http://www.un.org/icty/transe54/030205ED.htm> (accessed 19 April 2007).

58. Testimony of Milan Babić, TSM-ICTY, 18 November 2002, pp. 12933-36.

59. Both the leaders of these shock units and the Serbian government officials made no secret of their collaboration and coordination already throughout 1991 and 1992. The Serbian Minister of Defense General Tomislav Simović, e.g., publicly admitted in November 1991 that the infamous Željko Ražnatović-Arkan was “acting with the direct blessing of the [Republic of] Serbia government in the areas of Slavonia, Western Srijem, and Baranja.” Similarly, a well-known warlord from the Knin area called “Captain Dragan” (full name Dragan Vasiljković) in April 1992 publicly stated that “All that I was able to do successfully in the Krajina was while Mr. Radmilo Boganović was [Serbia’s] Minister of Internal Affairs.” Both statements are reproduced in Norman Cigar and Paul Williams, *Indictment at The Hague: The Milošević Regime and Crimes of the Balkan Wars* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 68-69, 102.

60. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Mihalj Kertes, 24 June 1991, OTP No. B6570-B6567, BHS transcript, p. 2. Mihalj Kertes was a man of Milošević’s greatest trust ever since the 1988 “yogurt revolution” in Vojvodina when Kertes helped Milošević overthrow the local leadership. He then worked in a series of posts in the SDB and the federal and Serbian MUP, and from 1994 until 2000 was in charge of an institution that had the greatest influence in a country under sanctions—the Federal Customs Administration.

61. Intercepted communication between Jovica Stanišić and Radovan Karadžić, 7 August 1991, OTP No. B6636, BHS transcript, pp. 2-4.

62. Intercepted communication between Nenad Stevandić and Radovan Karadžić, 17 August 1991, OTP No. B6654, BHS transcript, pp. 1-4. Stevandić referred to a local Banja Luka politician who needed disciplining being taken to Stanišić for a “grilling.” He also recounted their efforts at building and equipping a training camp claiming it was as good as the notorious training camp Golubić near Knin.

63. Intercepted communication between Radovan Karadžić and Mićević FNU, 15 December 1991, OTP No. C3641, BHS transcript, pp. 1-2.

64. Ulemek was in 2005 convicted to 40 years in prison for the murder of Milošević’s predecessor in the position of president of Serbia Ivan Stambolić and for the attempted murder of the former opposition leader Vuk Drašković. In 2007, he was convicted to 40 years in prison for the murder of Serbia’s Prime Minister Zoran Đinđić. Ražnatović and his units rose to notoriety during the wars in Croatia and BiH. He was assassinated in January 2000.

65. The protected witness B-129 convincingly demonstrated the clear connection between the Tigers and the Serbian SDB and MUP. See Testimony of B-129, TSM-ICTY, 16 April 2003, pp. 19426, 19445-55 at

<http://www.un.org/icty/transe54/030416ED.htm> (accessed 19 April 2007). In her words, “[The Tigers] were in the capacity of the reserve force of the MUP of Serbia or, rather, the DB of Serbia, state security.”

66. For the crimes committed around Zvornik, see Hannes Tretter et al., “*Ethnic Cleansing Operations*” in the northeast-Bosnian City of Zvornik from April through June 1992, Ludwig Boltzmann Institute of Human Rights Report, <http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/reports.html#BoltzmannZvornik> (accessed 19 April 2007). The Report is part of a larger 1994 Report of the UN Commission headed by Cherif Bassiouni (UN Doc. S/1994/674).

67. For the references of Zvornik and Bijeljina, as well as the setting up of a training camp, see Intercepted communication between Legija FNU, SNU Valter, NN, and Željko Ražnatović, 15 May 1991, OTP No. B9151, BHS transcript. For the coordination of the shelling of Sarajevo, see intercepted communication between Legija FNU and Milosav Gagović, 13 May 1991, OTP No. B9146, BHS transcript, and intercepted communication between Legija FNU and Milosav Gagović, 14 May 1991, OTP No. B9148, BHS transcript.

68. According to the ICTY’s indictments of Slobodan Milošević for crimes in Croatia and BiH, Milošević’s “joint criminal enterprise” also included Blagoje Adžić, Milan Babić, Momir Bulatović, Goran Hadži , Borisav Jović, Veljko Kadijević, Radovan Karadžić, Branko Kostić, Momčilo Krajišnik, Milan Martić, Ratko Mladić, Biljana Plavšić, Željko Ražnatović-Arkan, Franko Simatovi -Frenki, Tomislav Simatović, Jovica Stanišić, Radovan Stojičić-Badža, Vojislav Šešelj, Aleksandar Vasiljević, “and other known and unknown participants.” Of the aforementioned, only Plavšić and Krajišnik have been convicted—Krajišnik received 27 years in prison and Plavšić 11—and Karadžić, Martić, Simatović, Stanišić, and Šešelj are currently on trial. Babić committed suicide, and Ražnatović and Stojičić were assassinated. Hadžić and Mladić famously remain at large. Most appallingly, Adži , Bulatović, Jović, Kadijević, Kostić, Simović, Stojičić, and Vasiljević were not indicted at all!

69. Ramet notes that in spite of all the hopes for catharsis in Serbia as a result of the trial, “within a year, most Serbs had grown *bored* with the trial, and only ‘a very small number’ of Serbs were still following the trial with any particular attention.” Ramet, “Martyr in His Own Mind,” 118.

70. Karsten Prager and Massimo Calabresi, “Message from Serbia,” *Time*, 17 July 1995, Vol. 146, Issue 3.

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